

'LABOUR IN TATA IRON AND STEEL COMPANY,
- (JAMSHEDPUR) : 1920-1928

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A Thesis submitted for the Degree of M.Phil.
of the (School of Social Sciences) -
Centre for Historical Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University

NEW DELHI

1976

DECLARATION

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'LABOUR IN TATA IRON AND STEEL COMPANY :
JAMSHEDPUR - 1920-28' submitted by Miss Vinay Bahal
in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the degree
of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.), of this University,
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List of Abbreviations

1. A.B.P. : Amrit Bazar Patrika
2. B.S.A. : Bihar State Archives
3. B.L.E.C.R. : Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee Report
4. I.E.S.H.R. : Indian Economic and Social History Review
5. I.I.C. : Indian Industrial Commission
6. I.L-L : Industry and Labour department proceedings - Labour branch
7. I.L.O. : International Labour Organization
8. I.T.B. : Indian Tariff Board
9. J.L.A. : Jamshedpur Labour Association
10. P.T. : Purshotamdas Thakurdas
11. R.C. : Royal Commission on Labour in India
12. TISCO : Tata Iron and Steel Company.

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Introduction.

In 1957, on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of TISCO Jawaharlal Nehru paid a tribute to the memory of Jamshedji Nasserwanjee Tata by calling him 'one of the big founders of Modern India'.¹ This is true, for it was he who first thought of building a national industry in India, namely the Tata Iron and Steel Company. However, the phenomenal growth of TISCO was due to the hard work of the working class which took the production from 3000 tons in 1912 to 600,000 tons in 1927-28. Though the number of workers producing the same declined from the figure 25,221 in 1923-24 to 24,208 in 1927-28. These workers were forced to sell their labour at cheap rates, to work at odd hours under unhealthy conditions and have a hand to mouth existence. They were exploited by the very people who claimed to have started the national industry for the welfare of India. My thesis is concerned with the initial stages of the struggle of this working class. First chapter deals with the origin, growth and composition of TISCO labour force. The second chapter, deals with the wages and living conditions of this labour. In the last chapter I have traced the events leading to the first three strikes at TISCO after the First World War, their causes and their consequences. These details give us some idea of the origin of the labour movement in TISCO and show how the workers of this national

1. B.Sh. Saklatwala : 'Builders of Modern India: - J.N.Tata'
(March 1970)

industry were treated by its founders and their supporters in the political field.

In studying the subject under discussion in this thesis the most serious hurdle has been that of collecting scattered and discontinuous data. I have tried to consult as many sources as I could in the limited period available for data collection. Apart from consulting files in the National Archives and Bihar State Archives, I have tried to get data from TISCO itself. The TISCO does not possess complete records for this early period; this is specially true of service records till 1928.

I also tried to meet those people who are still alive and had joined TISCO in the 1910-30 period. One labour leader Manick Homi, involved in 1928 strike, is still alive and I could discuss with him in detail the various stages of strike and his motives etc. Others whom I interviewed were Mr. Moni Ghosh, also the author of the book 'Our Struggle', Mr. Tirumal Rao, who was assisting Jamshedpur labour Association in 1928 and was a stenographer in TISCO. Mr. Aiyaswami, who was one of the members of Conciliatory Committee formed in 1924 to solve the question of recognition of Jamshedpur Labour Association. All of them gave me useful information and clarified many doubts.

Other primary sources I used are the private papers of Purshotamdas Thakurdas available in Nehru Memorial Library

as well as the Jamshedpur Labour Association's correspondence with TISCO management, which was in possession of Mr. Moni Ghosh and Tata Worker's Union.

Along with these I had to depend on Newspapers like Amrit Bazar Patrika, Bombay Chronicle, Statesman, Times of India, Jamshedpur Chronicle, etc., mostly for accounts of the strikes of 1920 and 1928.

I came across some cuttings in Government Records from newspapers like Forward, Pioneer etc. which gave interesting comments and information on the 1928 strike. Since the reports of newspapers are not always adequate I had to use the reports prepared by the Singhbhum Deputy Commissioner in 1928, some available labour bulletins, and some notices issued by TISCO management from time to time which are available in the Government records. Moreover the Royal Commission on Labour in India in 1931, discussed the causes and events of various strikes which took place in TISCO till 1930. All these sources helped in reconstructing the history of these strikes.

On the source and migration of the labour the Census data were useful. Singhbhum District Gazetter was published first in 1940 and then only in 1958, and hence was not very useful for my purpose. Information was scarce on the trends of labour migration, turnover etc., until the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee Report of 1939. Most difficult was to find

the chronological data on rates of wages of various types of workers in TISCO, salaries paid to Europeans, difference between European and Indian salaries - all these with department-wise breakup, the total number of direct and indirect employees in various departments and the total number of Europeans, Indian employed etc. Even the TISCO publications I collected at Jamshedpur during my visit there, did not contain any detailed information. Therefore, I had to depend on the various statistics published in Indian Tariff Board Reports, Indian Industrial Commission Reports, Royal Commission on Labour in India 1931 etc., in this regard. Recently a few articles had been written on this topic. Mr. S.K. Sen gave some useful information in his article in Marxist Miscellany(1974). One may also mention an article in Bengalee language written by Somnath Lahiri based on his memory and his observations, when he went to Jamshedpur in 1930. The article was published in the Commemoration of CPI's 50th Anniversary Journal 'Communist'(1975). The article is useful more for the period after 1930 but it did contain some useful information about 1928 strike.

Only two books have come out so far dealing to some extent with the labour movement in TISCO during 1920-28 viz., 'House of Tata' by S.K. Sen and 'Our Struggle' by Moni Ghosh. On the steel industry and the founder of TISCO there are several books like those by, L. Fraser, F.R. Harris, J.N. Keenan, etc.

Another useful work on the background of the TISCO workers movement is 'Indian Working Class' by R.K. Mukerjee. Since he was one of the members of Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee in 1938, his reports and comments were revealing. So far as TISCO is concerned there is little one can glean from works such as G.K. Sharma's 'Labour Movement in India', C. Revari's 'The Indian Trade Union Movement' etc.

In the end my acknowledgements are due to my Supervisor, Professor S. Bhattacharya of the Centre of Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. He has carefully looked through all the ~~xxx~~ chapters and made several useful suggestions.

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Chapter - I

ORIGIN, GROWTH AND COMPOSITION OF THE TATA IRON
AND STEEL COMPANY (TISCO) LABOUR FORCE :

This chapter deals with the main sources of supply of labour to the Iron and Steel Company at Jamshedpur, migration of the labour and its fluctuation, the labour turn-over in TISCO and its causes. I have tried to give the composition of labour force of TISCO explaining the different categories and their numerical strength over the years. In the last section, a brief account of women and child labour is given.

Jamshedpur, where Tata Iron and Steel Company is situated is in the Singhbhum district of Bihar state. On its west is the river Kharkai, on the east a cluster of villages; north of the city is covered by river Subernrekha and south is bound by Eastern Railway line. Jamshedpur is situated near its ore mines and quarries. Gurumaishini Iron ore deposits is 40 miles away, Jharrisa coal field 115 miles and almost at the same distance are its lime stone quarries. The main railway line connecting Calcutta and Bombay passes through its station called Tatanager. Calcutta is 155 miles and Bombay 1007 miles away from Jamshedpur. The areas like Chattisgarh, Chaibasa, Purulia, from where a considerable number of unskilled workers came to the steel city are at a distance of 200, 40 and 62 miles respectively.

The villages around Jamshedpur and Chota Nagpur had a large number of blacksmith¹. They had a certain amount of knowledge of local ores². The smelting of copper and iron ore was known in Singhbhum district from ancient times. "In the Central Provinces, the villages naming Tendulkhera and Narsinghpur had a great reputation in Iron and from there it used to be exported over a wide area of surrounding country in the early nineteenth century³. An English official noted in 1905 that 'Tata's scheme will at any rate offer the smelters who find it impossible to continue his trade a means of abiding in his hereditary craft at the cost of independence and a not distant exile and before long we may behold the spectacle of our local smelters emigrating to seek their future at Singi (later Sakchi)⁴. Even in 1897 one ICS officer B.A. Collins also stated that 'Moghyr in Bihar province used to manufacture guns annually about 3000 in number⁵. The founder of Iron and Steel Company rightly chose Jamshedpur (earlier Sakchi) for its factory, as the surrounding areas were sure to supply unskilled and semi-skilled labour to steel industry. Though no proper records of the origin, qualification, experience etc. of TISCO workers were kept by the

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1. 'Bihar District Gazettee'
1958, Pg. 288, -(Bihar Govt. publication)
 2. T.M.N. Singh Deo : 'Singhbhum, Seraikella and Kharswan through the ages', 1954, Calcutta. P.7
 3. L.F. Bagbia : 'Monograph on Iron and Steel Industry in Central Province and Bihar, 1905
 4. Ibid.
 5. 'Bihar Industrial Directory (1939)
Bihar Commercial Museum, P.20

Company⁶ for the period under review, the following quotation shows very clearly the policy of the founder of the TISCO, Mr. J.N. Tata, about the recruitment of labour for Indian industries. He wrote as early as 1888 that he 'wanted to draw workers (for textile industry) from many regions to make the threat of combination and dear wages less likely in the future..... and the same time prevent the larger strikes'⁷. This philosophy was followed by his successors in TISCO and we shall notice in the chapter III, how this heterogenous character of labour force was one of the weaknesses of labour movement in the steel industry.

TISCO employed in 1908 about 2500 workers of whom 175 were European. Most of the Indian workers were unskilled consisting of Hos, Santhals, Bhumijas and local tribes which resorted to the mills. Many Khalasis, as the superior type of coolies were called, came from Orissa and neighbourhood of Vizagapattam. 'Bombay Khalasis' who were engaged in ship building were recruited for the erection of Iron and Steel works for building blast furnaces⁸. There was also a group of Khatriya Khalasis from Surat in these Blast Furnace Department of TISCO⁹. The local Hos and Santhals proved very efficient and it is found that by 1920 they had taken up the job of straighteners in the place of Europeans in the Rolling Mills Department. B.A. Collins, who visited Jamshedpur in 1920 has reported that 'about 28,000 men were

6. Industry and Labour Proceedings - July, 1921 'Welfare works for the labour employed in TISCO'. (NAI)

7. Quoted by D.E. Wacha in 'Life and Life Work of J.N.Tata'
PB. 83-84

8. Annual Report of TISCO - 1909-10

9. Census of Bihar and Orissa - 1921, Vol. III.

in TISCO, of 17,000 were coolies and great majority of them were aboriginals, remaining were skilled or semi-skilled and came from all over India¹⁰, Another official recorded in 1921 that there were '3,000 Punjabis, 3,000 Bengalis, 2,000 Muhammadans, 2,000 Oriyas in TISCO¹¹. Bihar and Orissa Census of 1921 also reports that in Jamshedpur 'Punjabis, local aboriginals, Chattisgariahs were most noticeable¹².

Electrical Department employed in 1921 under 1,000 hands. Amongst the fitters Kamars, Sikhs, Muhammadans, Brahmins, Kayasthas were important. The pattern shop employed 2,000 men. Most skilled labourers were the Chinese while Indian carpenters were mostly Barhis. The Foundry employed 1,000 hands, half of the moulders were Muhammadans. In the Mechanical Department especially amongst the fitters, Mohammadans were predominant. Sikhs, Kamar, Brahmans, Kurmis, Rajputs were also important. In terms of caste/communities, the per centage break up of TISCO labour force in 1921 was :

10. IL, July 1921. (op.cit.)

11. Ibid.

12. Census of Bihar and Orissa:
1921, Vol. III

Table - I

Number and Per centage break-up of skilled and unskilled labour of TISCO - 1921 (13)

Castes :	Skilled labour	Percentage of total skilled labour	Unskilled labour	Per-centage of total unskill-ed labour	Total labour (ii + iv)	Per-centage of the total
(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)	(v)	(vi)	(vii)
Mohammadans	1936	34.62	1070	13.17	3006	23.8
Rajputs	1008	18.02	428	6.08	1436	11.1
Brahmans	897	16.04	--	--	897	7.1
Kayasthas	729	13.03	--	--	729	5.5
Kamars	375	6.71	--	--	375	3.2
Sikhs	336	6.00	--	--	336	3.1
Goals	311	5.56	657	9.32	968	7.1
Telis	--	--	1826	25.89	1826	14.3
Tribals	--	--	2708	38.40	2708	21.4
Tantis	--	--	363	5.15	363	2.4
Total :	5592	99.98	7052	100.01	12644	99.0

We do not have the data to show the increase or decrease over the years of the caste break-up of TISCO labour force. But the survey conducted by Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee in 1939 does give the information of distribution of workers

(13) . Ibid. Colmn (i), (ii), (iv) from Census 1921, op.cit. Colmn (iii), (v), (vi), (vii), worked out on the basis of colma (ii), (iv).

in TISCO according to religion on the basis of sample survey of 1035 families.

Table - II

Distribution of Workers according to Religion¹⁴
(1938)

	Hindus		Mus- lims	Chris- tians	Sikhs	Budd- hists	No religion
	Non- aboriginals	Aborgi- nals					
Bihar	168	77	27	8		4	
Bengal	66		40	-		1	
Orissa	102		17	2			
U.P.	69		27	1			
C.P. Berar	149		-	-			
Punjab	7		16	1	55		
Madras	77		6	10		4	1
NWFP	-		10	-			
Bombay	6		-	-			
Assam	-		5				
Sindhi							
Central Districts							
Native States	47						
Independent States	40						
Total	731	77	148	23	55	5	1
Percentage	77.69		14.21	2.21	5.28		

14. Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee Report
Vol. II, 1941 (P.11)

These above tables can be seen in the light of the movement which took place in 1928. It was mostly aboriginals and Sikhs who were most militant, though they were not strong in number. We do not have accurate annual figures of labour force in Jamshedpur. The most dependable is that furnished by Royal Commission on Labour in India - 1931.

Table - III¹⁵

Total Number of Workers in Jamshedpur (1924-25
to 1929-30)

<u>Year :</u>	<u>No. of workers</u>
1924-25	29,106
1925-26	32,078
1926-27	32,521
1927-28	31,484
1928-29	28,842
1929-30	28,660

The largest part of the population of Jamshedpur had to be immigrants and such immigration would be largely from

15. Report of the Royal Commission of Labour
in India, 1931 , P.33

the rural areas. The Royal Commission on Labour in India, after examining the migration question felt that there were particularly two special characteristics that could be observed¹⁶ - (i) that the smaller centres everywhere drew on the surroundings rural areas for all the workers they require, except labour demanding special skill (ii) that among the centres which have reached the stage of being compelled to go ~~as~~ far a field for the bulk of their labour, are the three big industrial areas of Bombay, Hoogly and Jamshedpur.

The labour supply for TISCO was mainly from Bihar but other regions also sent a considerable number to Jamshedpur. In the sample survey of 1040 families of Jamshedpur by Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee it shows that Biharis made 27.94 per cent of the total of 1040 families.

U

16. Ibid.

Table - IV

Territorial Distribution of Working Families in
Jamshedpur¹⁷.

Total number of families surveyed	637
Bihar	178
Bengal	71
Orissa	73
U.P.	74
C.P., Berar	111
Native States	31
Punjab	34
Madras	51
NWFP	9
Bombay	-
Assam	-
Nepal	1

(Also see Appendix-I for town-wise details of the labour supply)

Local labour was mainly supplied by Bihar of which two fifth was from Singhbhum, Manbhum and Chotanagpur district. Next main supply of labour came from Central Provinces.

17. Report of Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee:

1940, Vol.II, P.3

Chatisgarh area of C.P. was the main source from which since 1918 exodus took place 'due to famine conditions'¹⁸ there. Orissa and U.P. were the third in the hierarchy, followed by Bengal, Madras, Punjab etc. The Labour Federation informs in its memorandum that by 1928 'Pathan population has appreciably increased due to the preference shown by employers to recruit this class of labour in time of labour troubles, as being the least likely to be interfered with by the striking workmen'¹⁹.

The catchment areas of the labour recruited to TISCO came from one of the relatively backward areas of India. In Bihar over 90 per cent of the population was dependent directly or indirectly on agriculture for its prosperity. In ~~the~~ the whole province there were only four towns, 'Patna, Gaya, Bhagalpur and Jamshedpur till the year 1928'²⁰ with 5000 or more inhabitants. Its mineral resources though unusually rich were concentrated in a comparatively small area. Few large scale industries that were there, were also confined to the same area. Thus the great bulk of population was dependent on land as its only means of livelihood. 'Out of every thousand persons 963 live in villages, 814 are directly dependent on agriculture, 652 ordinary cultivators'²¹. The

18. Memorandum by Labour Federation of Jamshedpur to Royal Commission on Labour in India - 1931.
RC - op.cit. (Vol.IV, Pt.I, P.106).

19. RC (op.cit.) Vol.IV, Pt. I, P. 106

20. Royal Commission on Agriculture in India :
Vol.XIII(1928), Cal. P.xxv.

21. Bihar and Orissa in 1927-29 (Bihar Govt. Pub.)
P. 85

number of those employed in Iron and Steel trade, 'in 35 oil mills, 22 tobacco factories, 15 large sugar mills which the Bihar Province maintained, and in lac industry, was insignificant'²². The following table gives the comparative per centages of population supported by various occupations in Bihar and Orissa for 1911 and 1921.

Table - V

Per centage of population supported by Agriculture, Industry, Commerce, Professions etc. in Bihar and Orissa along with its divisions in 1911 and 1921²³.

Divisi- on	Percentage of popula- tion supp- orted by Agriculture		Percentage of popula- tion supp- orted by Industry		Per centage of popula- tion supp- orted by Commerce		Percentage supported by professi- ons		Percentag supported by others	
	1911	1921	1911	1921	1911	1921	1911	1921	1911	1921
Bihar & Orissa	78.3	79.7	7.7	6.9	5.2	4.8	1.0	0.9	8.8	7.7
North Bihar	85.4	87.3	5.1	4.0	4.3	3.4	0.6	0.5	4.6	4.8
South Bihar	72.9	71.6	10.4	9.2	8.1	6.8	1.8	1.4	6.8	10.0
Orissa	73.8	69.0	10.6	11.5	6.5	7.2	2.2	2.2	6.9	10.1
Chota Nagpur	75.0	79.7	8.0	8.1	4.0	3.6	0.7	0.6	12.3	8.0

But Bihar being predominantly an agricultural area, the question is closely linked with the agricultural condition of the

22. Ibid.

23. Census of Bihar and Orissa :
1911 and 1921, Vo.III.

Province. Therefore the question of emigration and supply of labour force to the industry is closely linked with the poor agricultural conditions of the time. The migration does not necessarily mean either a corresponding growth of urban population or even a transfer of population from agriculture to industry or commerce. Royal Commission of Agriculture in India reported in 1928 that 'the proportion of the urban to the rural population in Bihar and Orissa has remained practically stationary since 1891'²⁴. The total population in the province in 1921 showed a slight decrease over the total returned in the Census of 1911 which is accounted for mainly by the terrible visitation of influenza in 1918 which was aggravated by severe scarcity'²⁵.

Fluctuation in Labour Migration : Seasonal migration was a striking feature in North Bihar. 'It begins in November and is at its height after the winter rice crop has been reaped in December. The return begins about March, April. Crop cutting in northern Bengal is a special attraction for the family party, as the labour of the women and children is a useful asset. But trade, domestic and factory service, day labouring and casting absorb many into Calcutta. Many other scatter all over Bengal often playing the business proper to their caste as cobblers, boatman, earth-worker etc. Most of the coolies at the railway station are Biharis, south Bihar share in the periodic migration as does also Orissa mostly going to Calcutta. Chotanagpur also sends large number to the coalfields and tea gardens for 2 to 6 months'²⁶.

24. R.C. On Agriculture - op.cit. 25. Ibid.
26. Royal Commission on Agriculture in India - op.cit.

From the following table we can have the clear picture of migration to and from Bihar and Orissa in two Census years 1911 and 1921 :

Table - VI

IMMIGRANTS AND EMIGRANTS IN BIHAR AND ORISSA :
1911 and 1921²⁷

District	1911		1921	
	Immigrants	Emigrants	Immigrants	Emigrants
Bihar & Orissa	4,49,712	19,16,706	4,22,244	19,54,793
North Bihar	3,10,517	5,82,513	2,67,914	4,75,744
South Bihar	1,58,371	6,54,604	1,34,067	5,77,394
Orissa	59,955	2,31,502	51,733	3,49,255
Chotanagpur	4,35,105	9,55,612	4,38,974	9,85,026

The above table shows that in both the census years the emigration is more than immigration in Bihar and Orissa as a whole and in its divisions separately.

The main factors responsible for migration in Bihar were the scarce rainfall, failure of crop, epidemics, floods, drought etc. which forces the workers to leave their villages to survive. Sometimes the migration is facilitated by better means of communication. The 1921 census reports that 'the inflow of emigration to Assam was falling off due to high rates of wages in Jamshedpur while the inflow of immigration in Bihar and Orissa is rapidly increasing'²⁸.

27. Census of Bihar and Orissa 1911 and 1921.
Vol.III

28. Census 1921 : op.cit.

Saraikela was close to Jamshedpur and the population of Kharaswan also emigrates freely to Jamshedpur in hot weather in search of high wages to be obtained there. Due to famine in Central Provinces in 1920 'about 5707 men and 4884 women from Chattisgarh emigrated to Jamshedpur'²⁹. Santhals also sent out emigrants. In Saran district labourers generally went in November and December and returned in hot weather though 'others would return only at intervals of one, two or three years'³⁰. The annual exodus was an established feature in this district. The collector of Saran district reported in 1911 that 'the system of annual emigration no doubt had its origin in the inability of the soil to support its population. Having however once acquired the habit of emigrating for wages, and having found that it is easy to save money in this way, the people now emigrate yearly as a matter of habit to supplement their incomes whether agricultural conditions are prosperous or the reverse'³¹.

It is not possible to locate in detail the extent and nature of migration from various districts of Bihar and Orissa or to make a micro-analysis of the causes of and motivation ~~behind~~ behind all such migration. In a general way the most significant cause for migration was economic and the migrants motivation could be mainly explained in terms of income and employment. Our data do not permit us to make a complete

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid. - 1911

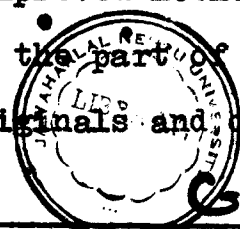
31. Ibid.



quantitative analysis of inflow of these migrants from these districts or outflow from the respective districts into Jamshedpur. The point we attempt to make here is that pauperisation of the peasantry as a cause for adequate supply of an 'industrial reserve army' was not untrue in the case of TISCO though all pauperised peasants were not necessarily converts into actual parts of the industrial reserve army of Jamshedpur. Here in brief we shall see the various factors which pushed the workers of the district out of their villages. In the year 1909-10 the new Kalimati Gurumaishini railway line was under construction. The installation of steel factory was also going on and a new phase of the mining operation in different part of the Singhbhum was being taken up. The new projects attracted the agricultural labourers where they could readily have work. In this period a decline in emigration and recruitment of coolies for tea gardens at Assam and other places was noted. The annual recruitment figures showed 2005 as against 4454 in 1909³². Labour also went to Duia and Mattigara mines. TISCO gave employment to a large number of coolies. The Deputy Commissioner Mr. Cooks remarked in 1911-12 'TISCO etc. means more money in the district, a portion of which will be distributed among the poor class. It will mean in all probability that the poorer raiyat will discard agriculture and its place will be taken by outsiders with improved methods³³. It was found that there was a tendency on the part of mostly immigrants to buy up the lands of the aboriginals and other poorer sections of tenants.

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32. Bihar District Gazette - Singhbhum - (1958)
33. Ibid.

In the year 1913-15 a fall in emigration to Assam was noticed as TISCO and others like Cape Copper Mines, Iron Mines, Stone and Lime quarries employed a large number of labourers. PWD also constructed a road from Badgaum to Jaintgarh, a 84 miles to facilitate the movement of labour and trade. But in the following years rainfall was scanty and badly distributed, with the result in October 1915 famine was declared in Kolhan state. The starving landless labourers and others emigrated mostly to Jamshedpur or surrounding areas where they could get employment. Since TISCO had opened 2 new furnances in its factory and its scheme of Greater Extension was being implemented, it could absorb a large number of labourers flocking at its gate. A Government official noted that 'As a matter of fact the greater demand of labour by TISCO, Cape Copper Company, Iron Mines at Duia was a great stand by in these years of agriculture distress'³⁴.

But in 1920 emigration fell in comparison to 1919 due to good rainfall. A famine in Central Provinces was reported in 1921 from where a large number of migrants from Chattisgarh Division came to Jamshedpur³⁵. Harvest in Bihar was again very depressing in this year due to serious failure of crop. The following years are found to be comparatively better for agriculture of Bihar. In 1927 a considerable increase of imigration from Chotanagpur was

34. Ibid.

35. Census of Bihar and Orissa - 1921 : op.cit.

noticed to the tea gardens, as the place was extremely sensitive to fluctuation in rainfall. It seems that Assam Tea gardens had improved the terms and introduced short term engagements for employing labour and this reversed the trend of the outflow of Bihar labourers towards Assam. Orissa had to face a famine also in this year which further increased the number of emigration. Thus it ~~seems~~ seems that the causes of migration lay not so much in 'pull' factor as much in the 'push' factors. This and the implications of this was noted clearly by the Royal Commission on labour in India in 1931, which could have as its data base 1921 census or earlier. The Labour Investigation Committee in 1946 examined whether the Royal Commission's findings continued to be valid in the mid-forties also, and found that there was virtually no change in the situation³⁶.

This kind of source distribution may not have been equally true of all the areas, particularly in places like Jamshedpur which was geographically placed in a somewhat unique position by virtue of its nearness to tribal belts. Some of the causes of migration of Jamshedpur labour is given by ^{its} Labour Federation as follows³⁷ : (i) Dearth of Industries in their own province (for skilled, semi-skilled workers),

36. Report of the Labour Investigation Committee (1946)

P.71 (Govt. publication)

B.P. Misra has also in his article 'Factory Labour during the early years of Indian Industrialisation' concluded that 'the majority of the workers rather belong to the category of those who had been pushed out of the village'. IESHR Vol.XII, No.III (1975)

37. R.C. op. cit. P. 106

(ii) Better Wages, (iii) Extensive turn-over of labour and better opportunities of employment, (iv) Prohibitive laws against holding lands in their own province, (v) Escape from indebtedness and consequent poverty, (vi) Native daring'. These economic causes of migration is further substantiated by Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee in 1939 in its Sample Survey of 935 families in Jamshedpur³⁸.

Table - VII

Migrated Workers' account for 935 families in Jamshedpur

Causes of Migration	Number of families in which causes occur
1. Family disputes	3
2. Social disabilities	-
3. To earn living	301
4. Unemployment	223
5. Poverty	156
6. In search of job	91
7. Lack of resources at home	40
8. To supplement family income	55
9. Followed relations who had migrated earlier	10
10. In course of business	1
11. Loss of family holdings	9
12. Death of the bread earner	6
13. Discharge from old jobs	5
14. Indebtedness	26
15. Pressure on land	4
16. Invited by the employer	7
Total :	935

38. Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee Report :
Vol.I, 1941 P.24

Table VI clearly shows that out of 16 causes 10 are economic causes for migrating. This also proves that labour did not have enough connection with agriculture.

Labour Turn-over : As we have noted earlier TISCO is placed in favourable position as far as the supply of labour etc. is concerned. Though the problem of labour turn-over was not always a very serious one for it, but it had to face the problem no doubt. If we are to go by the relative per centage of workers area/region-wise and if we can depend on the statement that by 1939 and 10 per cent of total work force came from the adjacent districts - as compared to at least 21.4 per cent tribals in 1921, most of whom came from the neighbouring districts. It becomes clear that permanent migration continued to be restricted while temporary migration was quite significant.

In spite of all that has been stated above, it will be too oversimplified a conclusion to say that migrant factory workers were essentially agriculturists or that all factory workers continued to have strong functional links with agriculture. What possibly is correct, is that the push factor being the predominant cause for migration, ties with rural life were not snapped in many cases. When lack of alternate employment in urban area confronted the worker thrown out of his job, he chose in many cases to go back to his village. He may then again migrate to some other area for agricultural opportunities for industrial employment being very limited ~~employment~~. As we shall see later, many workers in TISCO had gone back to their homes after the strike had been a prolonged one. Bihar Labour

Enquiry reports that 'there are hardly any worker who do not wish to return to their ancestor home when industries no longer need them³⁹.

In TISCO it was found that high turn-over was amongst the unskilled labour. 'The workers living in Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Orissa and Punjab usually take their leave annually, but those living in southern India accumulate this leave for two or three years. Daily rated usually take four to six weeks a year, monthly rated take them fortnightly or a little more. Over staying leave was frequent⁴⁰. Thus the labour turnover varied according to the distances from which the labour came. In the earlier years the labour turnover was considerable. The following table shows the number of labourer who were working for over two and half years in the factory till 1920 :

Table - VIII

NUMBER OF WORKERS WITH OVER 2½ YEARS SERVICE
IN TISCO (1920) ⁴¹

Department	Number over 2½ years service	Department	Number over 2½ years service
Brick Deptt.	29	Traffic Foreman Staff	24
Loco Crane	17	Traffic Loco Deptt.	22
Pipe Line	13	Traffic Miscellaneous	25
Timber Yard	5	Band W. Boilers	55

39. BLRC - op.cit.

40. R.C. op.cit. P. 178

41. Re-analysis of Pay Roll of TISCO-1920 - II Dec. 1922

Paint shop	21	Electric Deptt.	45
Machine shop	36	Electrical	53
Pattern Shop	23	Coke Ovens	45
Blacksmith shop	107	B.P. Plant	58
Balst F. Shop-I	114	Steel Works Furnace	47
Balst F. Shop-II	19	Blast Furnace	116
Traffic Yard Switching	16	Steel Works Mech.	31
Steel Mason Deptt.	38	Rail Mill	81
Steel Gas Deptt.	58	Bar Mill	112
Steel Miscellaneous	57	Finishing Mill	89
Rolling Mill Deptt.	67	Mill Weight Deptt.	77
Rolling Mechanical	57	Shipping Deptt.	39

TISCO reported to the Royal Commission that average duration of employment was one to four years, and that their labour turnover during the following years of normal working⁴² was:

1925	-	36.3 %
1926	-	31.3 %
1927	-	24.1 %

In 1928 the recruitment that took place in TISCO had 75 per cent of the new applicants who had already served in the TISCO. The later years show that TISCO was gradually having a permanent labour force as the turnover was getting less. The Company's labour force was 'composed of 10.45 per

cent monthly rated and 89.55 per cent of daily rated in 1929⁴³. The turn over amongst the monthly paid was 3.30 per cent by 1937. As noted earlier TISCO did not keep service records till 1937 of weekly paid labour so it could not be accurately computed but it is estimated by Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee that 'the turn-over in 1936 was 16.5 per cent and in 1937 14 per cent. In 1938 there was no large turn-over'⁴⁴. The Sample Survey of 935 families of Jamshedpur shows the following frequency of visits.

Table - IX⁴⁵

Frequency with which the Immigration worker visit to their homes:

<u>Frequency of visit :</u>	<u>Number of families:</u>
Not visiting at all	221
Visiting once in less than a year	105
Visiting once in one but not two years	278
Visiting once in two but not three years	148
Visiting once in 3 years and above	183
Total :	<u>935</u>

The table shows that by 1938 they had more or less turned into a permanent labour force in Jamshedpur. One of the reasons of this change must be as put by Bihar Labour Committee Report the local labour is mostly the landless

43. R.C. op.cit. P.178

44. BLECR Vol. I, op.cit.

45. Ibid.

rural workers..... Certain and regular work yielding cash (in the works) preferred to work than on uneconomic holdings or to uncertain and casual rural labour.⁴⁶ This therefore further shows that the labour drawn to TISCO was not having any strong ties with agriculture. 'About 90 per cent of all the workers at Jamshedpur have to depend on industry and are connected with home only for social or other reasons.'⁴⁷

Even Royal Commission reported in 1929 that '.....unskilled labour.....had.....their holdings uneconomical and they must fall back to manual labour in town. But skilled and semi-skilled go to their native place for marriage and death.'⁴⁸

In the following table we shall notice that the various occasions on which the visits were made, were mostly of social nature.

Table - X⁴⁹

Sample Survey of 714 Families

Occassions on which the visits were made by Jamshedpur labourers :

<u>Occasion of last visit</u>	<u>Number of families</u>
I. <u>Personal or Social cause not being</u>	
<u>Social cause :</u>	390
1. Holiday	8
2. Meeting Relations	216

46. Ibid. P.18

47. Ibid. P.27

48. R.C. : Vol.IV, P.108

49. Bihar Labour Enquiry : Vol.I, P.25

Table - X ctd....

3. Change	20
4. Bringing family to place of work	60
5. Reaching family home	1
6. Illness of worker or member living with the worker	40
7. Illness of other members of the joint family	45
II. <u>Social Ceremonies :</u>	210
1. Marriage own or of member of family	124
2. Marriage of other member of joint family	47
3. Death of member of the workers family residing with worker	8
4. Death of other member of joint family	27
5. Birth in the joint family	2
6. Upnayan ceremony, hair cutting ceremony	2
III. <u>Religious Causes :</u>	20
1. Festival, workshops	14
2. Pilgrimage	6
IV. <u>Economic Causes :</u>	94
1. To build or repair house	24
2. To help in agriculture	19
3. To settle land for cultivation	6
4. Dispute regarding property	4
5. Litigation regarding property	15
6. To pay debt	1
7. To pay rent	3

V. Involuntary un-employment :

1. Company worker closed	5
2. Discharge	4
3. Compulsory leave	2
4. Temporary loss of job	4
5. Strike	7

Total : 714

Thus on the one hand the rural world was not fully lost to the bulk of workers while on the other hand that world could not be easily chosen for repatriation. We do not ^{no} propose to go into further details of the migration question in the absence of more detailed data on the question like land holding, rents paid, agricultural prices, ruination of traditional household industry etc.

Number of Employees in TISCO :

On the basis of figures available ^{we} present now the number of employees according to their classification and also their distribution in plants, shops etc. wherever possible. But we shall see, these figures can at best be regarded as approximate⁵⁰. We will first discuss the number of

50. Accounts from different sources, are at wide variance, one with the other. For example, the figures in Indian Tariff Board Report, 1926 and those in the table IX giving break up for 3 years plant/millwise, do not tally. The time-series of the two are not of course comparable, since the ITB figures are for calander years, while those in the Statutory Commission Report are for financial years. But even then, ITB figures for 1926 is 26,290, whereas the total of all the hands in different departments/mills in the Statutory Commission Report for 1925-26 comes to 16,493. Even assuming
...../-

covenanted and European employees who constituted the top managerial cadres. Secondly, we will try to estimate the number of uncovenanted (entirely Indian) employees, distinguishing direct from indirect (i.e., contract) labour. In the end we shall also deal with the female and child labour in steel industry.

TISCO Directors were depending on European experts to run its Works. For the technical personnel it had to rely on American and European. The post of General Manager was always held by Americans till 1937. R.G. Wells was appointed General Manager in 1909-10 on a monthly salary of Rs.7500. He was replaced in 1912-13 by A.E. Woolry. In 1914-15 B.R. Shover was appointed. T.W. Tutwiller who joined TISCO as General Superintendent in 1915 became General Manager in 1916. G.A. Alexander succeeded him in April 1925 and remained there till 1929.

.....that ITB figures included all mine labour, this figures cannot be explained, since all workers in the mines were 8344. Besides combining mines with factory labour of TISCO, for calculation of total TISCO labour force is not logically tenable either. It can at best give the number of persons employed by the Company. We have tried to exclude mine labour everywhere from our consideration particularly due to two facts:

- (a) wages of mine labour and factory labour were not and could not be similar
- (b) the distance between Jamshedpur and collieries - Jamadoba and Malkera, Chotidih collieries in particular - was such that the factory labour at Jamshedpur would hardly make any direct impact on the mine workers or vice versa

For the technical positions TISCO again appointed only Europeans upto 1930's. In the Blast Furnace Department the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent and all the six foremen were Europeans. In the open Hearth Department there were 40 Europeans and only 3 Indians. We have some details of the number of covenanted hands employed in TISCO in certain years which we give below :

Table - XI

NUMBER OF COVENANTED HANDS⁵¹

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number</u>	
1909-10	31	
1910-11	25 + 18 (Local European)	
1911-12	-	
1912-13	125	
1913-14	135 + 50	"
1914-15	121 + 50	"
1915-16	102 + 53	"
1916-17	93 + 51	"
1921	137 + 60	"

51. Annual Reports of TISCO :

1909-1917 and 1921

In the following table we can also see the distribution of covenanted employees in various departments of Tata Iron and Steel Company.

Table - XII⁵²

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coke Ovens</u>	<u>Blast Furnace</u>	<u>Steel Works open Hearth</u>	<u>Blooming, Bar, Rolling Mills</u>
1911-12	6	27	49	37
1912-13	5	16		39
1913-14	3	10	55	39
1914-15	3	10	53	38
1915-16	2	9	-	-

In 1921 the proportion of European and Indian was approximately 1 to 230.⁵³ Out of 197 Europeans employed 75 were considered to be highly qualified and indispensable in the works. Their distribution in different departments was as follows, in 1921.

Table - XIII⁵⁴

<u>Department</u>	<u>Europeans</u>	<u>Indians</u>
Steel Melting Furnace	40	2000
Rolling Mill	35	2200
Blast Furnace	8	1600
Mechanical Deptt.	6	3000
For Traffic Deptt.	1	1500
Coke Ovens	-	2600
Open Hearth	34	2300

52. Indian Industrial Commission Report : 1916-18, Vol.VI, P.59

53. Times of India : April 3, 1921

54. Ibid.

TISCO found it profitable to replace the European hands by Indians for it lowered the overhead costs. By 1921 the Coke Ovens was completely run by the Indians. The following table shows the comparison of 1915-16 and 1921-22 in replacing the covenanted hands by Indian hands in various departments :

Table - XIV

NUMBER OF COVENANTED HANDS AND LOCAL HANDS
REPLACED 1915-16 AND 1921-22⁵⁵

Department	Number of Covenanted hands local hands replaced.	
	1915-16	1921-22
Coke Ovens	3	10
Blast Furnace	10	8
Open Hearth F.	32	51
Rolling Mills	30	43

During the period 1923-24 and 1917-28 the proportion of covenanted and uncovenanted was as follows :-

Table - XV

	Number of Covenanted and Uncovenanted hands in TISCO ⁵⁶	
	<u>Covenanted</u>	<u>Uncovenanted</u>
1923-24	172	8500
1924-25	164	9838
1925-26	117	9620
1926-27	105	9029
1927-28	100	8506

55. I.L. - Dec. 1922

56. For the source please see Appendix II, Table XIV is worked out from this Appendix.

Table - XIV shows the constant decrease of covenanted hands over the years. But the uncovenanted hands increased during 1924-25 and after that there was a constant decrease. The year 1914-25 was the period when Greater Extension of TISCO was completed. After that, as it will be explained^a later in chapter III, that according to the recommendations of Indian Tariff Board, TISCO started reducing its uncovenanted staff. The table shows clearly that from 1926-27 to 1927-28 a considerable number of uncovenanted hands were reduced. This reduction was one of the main causes of the 1928 strike. One other important cause of 1928 strike was the question of employment of Europeans. Contrary to the claims made by TISCO management the declared desire to Indianise the Steel Industry was not becoming a reality. One of the changes put by Jamshedpur Labour Association and many others representing the feelings of labourers, was that more jobs were created during this period for employing Europeans on high salaries when uncovenanted hands were reduced in thousands. This point will be taken up in a greater detail at the appropriate place. Among the labour force the white collar employees constituted a rising category. Clerks and supervisory workers were employed in most of the departments (e.g. Town Engineering, Loco Crane, Traffic Loco, Electrical, Steel Works Electrical, Rail Mill, Bar Mill). The Bengales Parsis and south Indians formed a large proportion of the white collar employees. In 1925-26 the white collar employees

comprised less than one third of the total labour force. We have the following details of factory workers and white collar workers of TISCO.

Table - XVI
AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE OF WORKERS IN TISCO⁵⁷

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of workers in Production Deptt.</u>	<u>No. of workers in Service Deptt.</u>	<u>Total</u>
1925-26	66,393	9,897	26,290
1926-27	14,068	10,988	25,056
1927-28	13,622	10,586	24,208
1928-29	11,116	10,750	21,866
1929-30	12,307	10,546	22,853
1930-31	11,925	9,810	21,735
1931-32	11,139	8,407	19,546
1932-33	9,777	8,336	18,113

The other category was uncovenanted workers who were classified as direct and indirect. Direct labour was further ~~div~~ divided into monthly rated, weekly rated, daily rated and casual or temporary workers. The indirect labour was actually employed through labour contractor.

The contract labour were weekly paid coolies and were all unskilled. In 1928 about 12,000 to 14,000 were weekly paid⁵⁸. TISCO in its report to Royal Commission in 1929 said that it has been found more profitable and expeditious to employ

57. Statutory Enquiry Report - Steel Industry.

1933, Vol.I, P.76

58. R.C. : 1931, op.cit.

contractors for getting this class (unskilled labour) to get the work done than if the company employed its own staff. This is because the work given on contract is principally the work which can be done on a piece work basis. The contractors have quarters that accommodate approximately 600 workers, who form the nucleus of their staff. The workman therefore, are readily available for work of useful nature on account of their proximity of the works. As most of the work for which they are employed can be completed within 5 to 6 hours, this labour is not employed for a longer period than the prescribed⁵⁹. Inspector of Factories also reported that 'Contract labour does not seriously violate the rules regarding hours of work'. We have some figures to show that the trend in TISCO was to increase the indirect labour.

Table - XVII⁶⁰

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Direct labour.</u>	<u>Number of Indirect labour.</u>
1923-24	8092	2932
1924-25	10789	3712
1925-26	10599	4549

Along with contract labour which can be considered as temporary labour, there was also casual labour in TISCO. This casual labour was employed for new emergency work, for rebuilding or relining of furnace or for large despatches of steel from the works, to give relief to the men in hot weather, to fill, leave vacancies. This casual labour

59. Ibid.

60. The figures are worked out from Appendix-III

could be skilled, semi-skilled or unskilled. Though this category of labour force was not ~~every~~ very large but the trend was increasing. TISCO told to Royal Commission in 1929 that the casual labour employed in 1927 was 0.03⁶¹. But it gave written evidence in 1939 to Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee that this 'casual labour varied in 1937-38 from 6 per cent to 8 per cent.⁶²

Men in production department whether skilled or unskilled were all daily rated and in clerical jobs, administration, they were monthly rated. The daily rated were paid in the end of the month. Among these workers in semi-skilled were included helpers, hammermen, stokers, cleaners, mates, brick layers, firemen, packers, furnace men, Khalasis, heaters, moulders. Among skilled were fitters, mason machinemens, crane drivers, bolt makers, chargemen, gas workers, oilers, firemen, turners, drillers, wiremen, sawer, mistries, Unskilled monthly paid were office boys, sweepers, Jamadars, Sanitary coolies etc.

Female and Child Labour : In Jamshedpur proportion

of Female to male was only 67 : 100. It is noted by the Census in 1921 that these are exceptional as the population born in the town is very small and less than half of population was born ever in the district. The population therefore consists

61. R.C. : op.cit.

62. BL Enquiry : Vol.I, P.213

of immigrants many of them unattached and the proportion of permanent houses being less, the number of females in the town were small⁶³! Nevertheless about 7000 women were employed in the works who do the job of stacking up the coal for boiler, clearing away the coke from the ovens and filling it into wagen beds, carrying pieces of pig iron on their heads and filling them into wagons. They were also employed in masonry work connected with furnace. Before 1921 women were working in the night shift also and in 1921 there was still one shift of women working at night carrying away the coke from the coke ovens. The rest of the womens' night labour shift had been replaced by the engagement of men. We have the following figures to show that employment of women labour was constantly decreasing in TISCO.⁶²

Table - XVIII⁶⁴

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of women employed in TISCO</u>
1923	4949
1924	3474
1925	3753
1926	3172
1927	2634
1928	1933

A certain number of women were employed in the single shift system which started from 6 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. and

63. Census - 1921 : op.citt

64. R.C. op.cit. P.61

from 1.30 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. Young girls were also employed for the same work but they were paid less than the woman coolies. A woman coolie used to get 5 annas a day as masonry work and 5 annas 9 pies a day for carrying coke. But young girls for the same work were given 4 annas 6 pies a day. The women incharge of other used to get 7 annas a day but after a long continuous service can rise up to 12 annas a day. Children were also employed in the works 'on a small scale'. The children used to get 4 annas a day. 'In 1927 there were 5 children employed in TISCO who were of over 12 years age'⁶⁵. TISCO had to remove all the children under 14 years from the works but as noted in a letter of General Manager that 'Office Chokras, were still kept in TISCO' under the new Factory Act'⁶⁶. The various correspondence between TISCO management and Govt. department of industries show that no maternity benefits were given to women labour in TISCO till 1928. I have noted in the chapter dealing with strike that maternity benefits was one of the demands put up by all the departments who were on strike. On letter written in 1927 by Tutwiller says that 'We are waiting for government legislation in this matter'⁶⁷.

65. R.C. op.cit.

66. BSA - Local Self Government Department - Commerce Branch. Aug. 1922 - 'Measures for the protection of workers employed in TISCO' - F.No.5.

67. M. Ghosh - Appendix. op.cit. - Letter by TISCO GM, Mr. Alexander to the Chairman of International Textile Delegation - 1927.

Summary :-

Summing up this chapter we can observe the following points. Jamshedpur is situated favourably in an area from where it could get easily the large supply of unskilled and semi-skilled labour who were earlier migrating to Assam. The local smelters in iron who found it impossible to continue their job independently in face of cheap imported iron and TISCO iron, also found their way to Jamshedpur. 27 per cent of TISCO labour force consisted of Biharies. It was mainly the tribal people from Santhal Pargana who were unskilled labour. The skilled labour came from all over India like south India, Bombay, Punjab, Bengal, Central Provinces etc. The highly skilled technical jobs were handled by Europeans.

The TISCO labour was heterogeneous in its character and consisted of all types of castes and religious groups. There were Mohammadans, tribals, Sikhs, South Indians, Bengalis, Parsies, Brahmins, Rajputs. This affected the unity of the workers during the strike. Among the workers Sikhs, Santhals and Chattisgarhians were most noticeable and it is interesting that they played a prominent part during the three strikes in TISCO from 1920 to 1928.

(Thus the largest part of the population of Jamshedpur, which was mainly employed at TISCO had to be immigrants and this would be largely from the rural area, except for labour demanding special skill.) The unskilled labour belonged to Bihar - Orissa which was mainly an agricultural area. The main factors responsible for migration in Bihar were the

scarce rainfall, failure of crop, epidemics, floods, drought etc. TISCO being the only large scale industry in the province provided the source of livelihood to the people suffering due to natural calamities and underdevelopment of the Province in regard to other gainful employments.

(Table-VII, shows that main cause of the families migrating to Jamshedpur was economic.)

This helped TISCO in having a constant flow of labour supply though the turnover was considerably large in the earlier years. (It was among the unskilled workers that turnover was high, may be due to the temporary jobs offered by TISCO and not mainly due to their ties with the agriculture.) Turnover was decreasing over the years. We have pointed out in Table X, that the various occasions on which the visits were made by the workers to their native places were mostly of social nature. Also when they were thrown out of industry and there was no other gainful employment in the towns the workers chose in many cases to go back to villages. As we shall see later during the strike a large number of workers left TISCO which affected the strength of the workers' movement. In the other section of this chapter we have taken up the composition of TISCO labour force. Managerial work and highly skilled technical jobs were handled by Europeans and Americans who were called covenanted workers. Their number was being reduced after 1919 to minimise the cost of production. (But the claim of Tatas' that they were Indianising the steel industry by reducing the number of Europeans in TISCO does not

hold ground. We shall see in chapter III that the Indian workers who went on strike on various occasions charged the management that it was creating new jobs for the Europeans and not giving chance to Indians of equal qualifications. This created anti-European feeling amongst the Indian workers and became one of the main cause of strike. Whenever there was any retrenchment the proportion of the number of Indian workers retrenched was always ^{far} greater than the Europeans.)

We have also pointed out that there were ~~two~~ types of uncovenanted workers and also that indirect labour was appointed through contractors whose number was increasing. The indirect labour was found less troublesome and more profitable to TISCO. Amongst the uncovenanted direct labour most of them were daily rated and had temporary jobs which also helped TISCO in reducing the cost of production. The service department workers were monthly rated and were more or less permanent.

It is also noticed that considerable number of women workers were working in TISCO but their number was being reduced, may be due to the Government legislation. Also it is in the common knowledge that highly mechanised industry would need more skilled hands and women being unskilled

workers would be needed less in such industries. This reduced the number of earning members in Jamshedpur workers' families and the workers found it further difficult to meet the high cost of living. It is also important to note that TISCO did not employ any child under the age of 12 and that they were employed only in service department where their number rarely exceeded four to five children.

With this background we can consider the details of living conditions of these workers to understand what forced them to go on strikes.

Chapter - II

MODE OF EMPLOYMENT, WAGES, BENIFITS, WORKING
CONDITIONS OF TISCO WORKERS :

(This chapter deals with the mode of recruitment of workers, nature of contract between worker and TISCO in terms of permanent, temporary, contract labour etc. These factors together and some of them separately have significant implication for the character, extent and strength of organisation and movement of workers. Then I have taken up the rates of wages for different catagories of workers in TISCO in the period under review and tried to relate it with the cost of living, to see whether the demand of workers for higher wages was genuine. In the last section I have given the detailed description of other benefits and welfare schemes inside and outside the Works, enjoyed by the TISCO workers. These details will help in understanding the conditions of TISCO workers when they went on strike in 1928.

Mode of Employment and Role of the Agents :

Methods of recruitment varied according to the nature of the labour required, whether it was unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled or contract labour. For unskilled the method of recruitment was rough and crude. It was directly done by the officers having vacancies but the system led to various abuses and complications so a Central Employment Bureau was substituted¹.

The Government reports reveal that 'large sums were exacted by Head mistries and even the foremen on first appointment, this money is usually borrowed from Kabulies, of whom there were 40 or more at Jamshedpur, at 4 annas a month interest i.e., 300 per cent per annum'². In 1920-21 half of the working population of Jamshedpur was directly employed by TISCO³. Unskilled workers and coolies were usually obtained without the assistance of a recruiting agency. Advances were commonly given to the labourers even when they come on their own accord. Census reports state that 'after 1920 strike, wages were sufficient to attract labour without a special system of recruitment offering advances to contractors to get labour. But whenever any difficulty was faced in getting unskilled labour' an emissary in the shape of a mate or gomashtha is sent out armed with advances to look for them.... the larger contractors sometimes employ sub-contractors and in that case the advances are made to them⁴. (Thus TISCO did depend on labour contractors to some extent to recruit labour force from Manbhum, Singhbhum, Mayurbhuj, Sambalpur areas, The contractors were mostly Bengalies, Biharies, Parsies and Sikhs. 'Thekadars'^g were mostly Bengalies who recruited tribal peasants from neighbouring villages) particularly

2. I.L. 1921 - op.cit. - Report prepared by Collins

3. Ibid.

4. I.L. - July 1921.

at times of floods and drought⁵. These contractors and jobbers played very important role of intermediate employer, so that contract labour worked side by side with labour under the direct employment of the TISCO management and without the privileges of the latter. (The contract labour was receiving (for the same work) through the contractor, less wages than what the direct employees of the TISCO received, the exact share of the contractor in this early stage of indirect labour employment is unknown.) TISCO in a reply to the questionnaire of Bihar Labour Enquiry in 1939 stated that 'in the case of contractors' labour a provision has been introduced in their contract compelling them to pay not less than 8 annas per man a day and 6 annas per woman a day!. At the same time TISCO maintained that 'it has introduced a minimum wage of 8 3/4 annas per man and 7 annas per woman for its direct labour'⁶. It would, therefore, seem that in 1939 the contractors were at least taking per day 3/4 annas from male labourers and 1 annas from female labour under their contract.

(It is probable that the indirect labour was getting much less in proportion to the direct labour due to the tyranny of the contractors.) 'Foremen and others of that class who held the power in their hands to give jobs, knew

5. S.K. Sen : 'The House of Tata : - Capital - Labour Problem' - Marxist Miscellany, 1974.

In my interview with those people who joined TISCO in 1915 or so, I was told that during those days men were sent to the station at midnight with lamps, for getting hold of tribals sleeping there, and were brought to the works as labourers.

6. Bihar Labour Enquiry Report - op.cit.

well enough how to make the best use of the situation and to obtain financial benefits whenever new men were given jobs. It was not unusual to find some of them dismiss existing hands and recruit new men for monetary considerations'⁷. It is also noted in a Government report that 'large sums were exacted by head-mistries and even the foremen, on the first appointment'⁸. These foremen were also responsible for recommending promotion of the subordinates which further gave them power to exploit the labourers.

The selection to the posts of skilled labour carrying a rate higher than Rs. 2-8-0 a day required the approval of General Manager. (Semi-skilled were mostly temporary or semi-permanent in nature. 'The permanent posts in semi-skilled were filled by unskilled promoted from lower ranks'⁹. All these categories were called uncovenanted workers.)

(The highest paid services were called covenanted, which was mainly manned by Europeans, though after some time Indians were also given some highly paid jobs, and were paid two-third less than the Europeans for the same type of job. These were employed directly by TISCO on contract basis for a particular period. Company considered by Europeans indispensable, as Indians were not available of the same

7. Moni Ghosh : 'Our Struggle' P.1

Mr. Ghosh was an employee of TISCO since 1920 as a Chemist and was the vice-president of JLA. He is still alive and wrote this book on the basis of his memory and the correspondence of JLA which is in his possession.

8. I.L. : July, 1924

9. R.C. on Labour in India, 1931

qualifications. Mr. Padshah, the agent of TISCO wrote to Mr. Tutwiller the General Manager, about the policy of the company in this regard in the following words, '....the 500 Whitemen are indispensable as the 50,000 Indians will not be. bonus is not willingly given by the company to the Europeans workmen but the company expects to benefit by this, by increasing production. Merely giving bonus to Indians would not benefit the company.....the condition of work of imported workmen and the local workers being necessarily different, the condition of remuneration have to be different also'¹⁰. They were given bonus on the output. TISCO also took care in building special bungalows according to western style for the Europeans though 'they normally came as single'. Special care was also taken to look after their entertainment and other facilities according to western tastes.)

Wages and Salaries :

As mentioned above the nature of the appointment of covenanted and uncovenanted hands were different, so also there was a large gap in their wages and salaries.

We have some data to see this gap which is put below in the table :-

Table - XIX¹¹

Total expenditure on labour - Jamsshedpur Staff^(a)
in 1927-28

<u>Covenanted Employees:??</u>	<u>1927-28</u>
Wages	17.70
Overtime Allowance	0.10
Leave Pay	1.80
Bonus	10.70
Contigent Fund	2.60
<hr/>	<hr/>
Total :	32.90

Uncovenanted Employees:??

1. Monthly Paid

Wages	84.60
Overtime Allowan ce	4.20
Leave Pay	4.10
Deptt. Bonus	0.60
Coy.'s contribution to PF	5.50
Accident and death compensation	0.50
<hr/>	<hr/>
Total :	99.50

11. ITB . ^{to} Statutory Enquiry - Steel Industry - 1933, Vol.I

(a) These figures cover the whole organization except construction, town and agri. deptt. This include all the expenditure which enters into the cost of producing iron, steel, by products.

<u>Uncovenanted Employees</u>	<u>1927-28</u>
<u>2. Weekly Paid</u>	
Wages	9.10
Accident and Death compensation	<u>0.10</u>
Total :	<u>9.20.</u>
<u>3. Contract Labour</u>	
Wages	
Accident and Death compensation	5.10
Total :	<u>5.10</u>

We have noted in chapter-I, that the monthly paid staff was more in number than the covenanted staff, so the bill for monthly paid worker is larger. The weekly paid and contract labour was still larger in number but the bill carries only 14.30 lakhs for both the categories put together, when ~~the~~ covenanted bill was 32.90 lakhs alone and the number of covenanted hand was only 100. The uncovenanted employees were working in this factory for a long time on temporary basis and there was no system of making them permanent on regular basis. This was not only the case with the weekly paid or casual worker but even in the highly mechanised plant the men were working as temporary worker for a pretty long time on

lower wages. This was stated in Tata Workers' Union Memorandum in 1939 that 'In the construction department workers representing more than half of the personnel are employed on a temporary basis though they have been working for even 5 years..... even in a highly mechanised plant like Bar Mill men are on temporary jobs for a number of years at wage rates 10 annas per diem, much lower than the regular rate of Rs.2 per diem'¹¹.

The Memorandum also pointed out that 'the workers had been on the same scale of wages for ten years, that now recruits obtain the same wages as many workers of several years experience, that recruits are brought in without giving chance to temporary men when a permanent vacancy occurs, that a worker officiating for a job carrying say, a wage of Rs. 3-10 annas cannot obtain more than Rs. 3-2 annas if his substantive wage is Rs. 2-4 per diem, that there is difference in rates for the same job in different shifts and that the daily and monthly rates for similar jobs are sharply unequal'¹².

In the absence of complete data it is not possible to trace the exact variation in the rates and wages of uncovenanted workers in TISCO. (However, from the available source it can be seen that the difference in wage rates between temporary and permanent, male and female worker

11. Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee Report :
Memorandum presented by Tata Workers' Union, 1939 op.cit.

12. Ibid.

was very wide. A rough idea of the wage rates of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers can be had from the following tables, which will make it clear that the demand of the uncovenanted workers for the increment was very reasonable.)

Table -XX¹³

Wage rates for the year 1920-21

<u>Category of worker :</u>	<u>Minimum wage rates:</u>			<u>Maximum wage rates:</u>		
	<u>Rs.</u>	<u>Anna</u>	<u>Pies</u>	<u>Rs.</u>	<u>Anna</u>	<u>Pies</u>
Head fitter	0	12	6	4	0	0
Fitter	0	12	6	4	0	0
Head Turner	0	12	6	3	6	0
Turner	0	12	6	3	6	0
Head Carpenter	0	12	6	2	0	0
Carpernter	0	12	6	2	0	0
Head Blacksmith	0	15	0	2	0	0
Blacksmith	0	15	0	2	0	0
Mason	0	14	0	1	15	0
Boilerman	0	12	6	3	10	9
Furnaceman	0	12	6	1	6	6
Electrician	2	0	0	5	12	9
Machinemen	1	6	6	3	6	0
Painters	0	12	6	1	9	0
Moulders	0	12	6	2	6	3
Hammerman	0	12	6	1	4	0

13. I.L. (L) Dec. 1921 -- TISCO pay roll from pre-war to 1921

Ladder man	0	-	12	-	6	1	-	4	-	0
Cobbler	0	-	12	-	6	1	-	14	-	0
Mate Coolies	0	-	8	-	0	1	-	11	-	6
Male Coolies	0	-	6	-	3	0	-	8	-	9
Female Coolies	0	-	4	-	6	0	-	7	-	0
Boy Coolies	0	-	3	-	6	0	-	7	-	0

This table shows the disparity between the wages of the same category of workers specially in the case of blacksmith and headfitters. Electricians and Headfitters who should be in the same category of labour have considerable difference in their wages. Later on I will show how such differences can cause unrest among the workers. ~~Lowest~~ Lowest paid worker was Boy coolie and female coolies. These rates were established after the 1920 strike. The Government records tell that 'after the strike, wages were raised by amounts varying from 40 per cent for the lower paid one to 20 per cent for higher grades'¹⁴. But as we shall see presently that actually this increment did not fully take place. In other departments of TISCO, in 1921 the wage rates were following ¹⁵

Table -XXI

1. Blast Furnace:

Pig Iron Breaker - 12 annas to Rs. 1-9-6 a day

2. Open Hearth :

Smeltors - Rs. 720/- a month

Furnace Helpers - 12½ annas a day

14. II : July 1921, also Labour Gazzette 1927-28, P.759

15. Bihar Orissa Census - 1921, P.279, Vol.III

3. Rolling Mill :

Roller (Indian) - Rs.300 a month to
Rs.2-1-6 a day

Straighteners
(Ho's Santhals) - from 7½ annas to
Rs. 2-14-7 a day

4. Finishing Mill :

Mates, Mixers - Rs.50 to Rs.60 a month

5. Coke Ovens :

Quenchers - 10 annas to 11½ anna a day

6. Patternshop :

Chinese carpenters - Rs. 3-9-0 a day

Indian Carpenters - Rs. 1-8-0 to
Rs. 2-3-0 a day

7. Foundary :

Helpers - 7 annas to
Rs. 1-1-3 a day

the
for/subsequent years we have only the following data:-

Table - XXII¹⁸

Daily Wages in TISCO (in Rs. Annas-Pies) 1922-28.

	1922	1926	1928
Charge man of skilled workers	3-8-0	4-0-0	4-0-0
Chargeman of unskilled workers	1-0-0	1-8-0	1-0-0
Engineer Driver Loco	5-8-0	5-0-0	- - -

18. R.C. : Vol.IV, Pt.I, P. 17, opocit.

	1922	1926	1928
Fireman	0-14-0	0-14-0	1-4-0
Fitter	2-0-0	2-0-0	2-0-0
Turner	2-0-0	2-0-0	- -
Blacksmith	2-0-0	2-0-0	- -
Carpenter	1-8-0	1-8-0	1-8-0
Mason	- -	1-8-0	- -
Male Coolie	0-7-0	0-7-0	0-8-0
Female Coolie	0-5-9	0-5-9	0-6-0
Child Coolie	0-6-0	0-5-9	0-6-0

This table gives us an idea of the wage rates of some of the skilled and unskilled categories in the years 1922, 1925 and 1928. It seems that in 1928 some increment was given to only unskilled workers, which must be due to the strike. The table gives a depressing situation regarding the regular increments of TISCO workers. We do not have the records of wage rates for every year of the period under review. These three years may be taken as a standard to understand the trend of wage rates. It can be understood that there was no change in rates between 1922 to 1925 and between 1925 to 1928, and also for the struggle of the workers in TISCO explains that no increment was given to them till 1928. Thus it is evident that there was no appreciable change in the earnings of workers in TISCO between 1922 and 1928, but there is one important change in TISCO during this period : this is regarding the ratio of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled labour

employed . The following table can help in understanding this change:-

Table - XXII(19)

Year	Coke Ovens		Blast Furnace	
	Wages per head per month (Rs) (1)	Total Labour (2)	Wages per head per month (Rs) (1)	Total Labour (2)
1923-24	23-12-0	3228	36-0-0	3256
1924-25	21-4-0	3174	31-2-0	3076
1925-26	27-0-0	2388	33-9-4	2939
Year	Open Hearth		Duplex Plant	
	Wages per head per month (Rs) (1)	Total Labour (2)	Wages per head per month (Rs) (1)	Total Labour (2)
1923-24	56-5-4	1617	33-12-0	801
1924-25	57-13-4	1611	45-8-0	1836
1925-26	61-2-8	1554	51-5-4	1791
Year	Old Blooming Mill		New Blooming Mill	
	Wages per head per month (Rs) (1)	Total Labour (2)	Wages per head per month (Rs) (1)	Total Labour (2)
1923-24	49-12-0	523	26-14-8	167
1924-25	42-0-0	506	43-14-8	541
1925-26	40-14-8	373	44-2-8	894
Year	Old Rail Mill		New Rail Mill	
	Wages per head per month (Rs) (1)	Total Labour (2)	Wages per head per month (Rs) (1)	Total Labour (2)
1923-24	35-8-0	1650		
1924-25	37-1-4	1436	43-5-4	673
1925-26	38-9-4	933	41-14-2	1159

19. Colmn (1) from Statutory Commission Report on Steel Industry 1926, Vol.II, Figures are worked out from annual figures.
Colmn (2) from Indian Tariff Board Report. 1934 - P.15

Year	Wages per head per month	Total Labour	Wages per head per month	Total Labour
	Bar Mill		Merchant Mill	
1923-24	35-4-0	1132		
1924-25	42-14-8	991	76-8-0	397
1925-26	36-4-0	930	31-6-8	1048
	Plate Mill		Sheet Mill	
1923-24	49-9-4	392		
1924-25	50-5-4	368	39-14-2	1242
1925-26	49-6-8	405	90-6-8	1703

(Due to the introduction of Greater Extension since 1914 which was completed in 1925, there was a tendency to move towards more capital intensive techniques affecting skilled-unskilled labour ratio and wage bills. The other fact which should be kept in view is that by and large all skilled labour and large part of semi-skilled labour were semi-permanent or permanent hands, while the overwhelming majority of unskilled labour if not all, were temporary hands. These two facts reflect clearly in Table XXIII. The number of mills increased from 6 to 12 by 1923-26. [This by itself shows a more intensified division of production process, and corresponding intensification of division of labour. The latter only means a more important role played by skilled labour than earlier. This of course, obviously has its impact on the distribution of proportion between skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled labour

and the weightage of the first will increase generally at the highest rate and the other categories specially the third will decrease in highest proportions.)

The average wage rates can be worked out from Table XXIII and from the table given in the Appendix, taking the maximum and minimum of each department as follows :-

Table - XXVI¹⁸

	<u>Coke Ovens (in Rs)</u>	
	<u>1911- 16(a)</u>	<u>1923-26(b)</u>
Minimum	13.97	21-4-0
Maximum	17.27	27-0-0
	<u>Blast Furnace</u>	
Minimum	17.20	30-0-0
Maximum	31.41	33-9-4
	<u>Old Blooming Mill</u>	
Minimum	32.62	40-14-8
Maximum	41.99	49-12-0
	<u>New Blooming Mill</u>	
Minimum	32.62	26-14-8
Maximum	41.99	44-2-8
	<u>Bar Mill</u>	
Minimum	6.18	35-4-0
Maximum	24.04	38-9-4

18. (a) For years 1911-16 see Appendix - IV
(b) from Table XXIV.

Even if we take the statement about 'wage increase in 1920 as fully valid '40 per cent increase in lower paid workers wages and 20 per cent in those in higher grade'¹⁹ - the increase reflected in Table XXV remains much higher than actually possible. Besides, we also know that apart from almost constant reduction in the number of unskilled labour between 1924 and 1926' more than 2000 workers were dismissed'²⁰

Wages excluding bonus etc. of a large number of workers did not increase after 1920 and before 1920 also the increase in their wages was much less than 40 per cent, if at all there was any increase. This is also borne out by all available information about different actual wage rates of unskilled workers, some of which I have listed above. Actually the total wages fell by 2 per cent as noted by R.K. Mukerjee²¹. He has compared the figures as follows :-

Table - XXV

	<u>Wages upto 1918</u>	<u>Wages in 1928</u>
✓ Men	5 Annas	7 Annas
Women	3 Annas 6 pies	5 Annas

In 1927 'the unskilled men get from 7 annas to 12 annas and unskilled women from 5 annas to 7 annas a day. Semi-skilled used to get from 14 annas to Rs. 1-12 annas, the skilled for Rs. 1-12 annas per day to Rs.700 per month'²².

19. IL - 1929 - Also see Labour Gazette, 1927-28

20. S.K. Sen : 'House of Tata', op.cit.

21. R.K. Mukerjee : 'The Indian Working Class' P.153

22. M. Ghosh : op.cit. Letter written by TISCO, General Manager to Thomas Shaw, the Chairman of International Textile Delegation - 1927 March

In fact the latest information available from TISCO publication about the minimum wages of coolies, weekly paid workers, majdoors did not show increase anywhere between 1911 and 1938, ~~indications~~ indications that the gains of 1920 strike did not percolate down to these workers.

Table - XXVI²³

Minimum wages of Coolies, Majdoors in TISCO

(Rs. per month)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Basic rate</u>	<u>Basic wages</u>
1911	0-8-0	15.00
1920	0-8-0	14.00
1934	0-8-0	14.00
1938	0-8-0	14.00

Even the company's statement that the minimum wage was 8 annas is at variance with earlier statements of the company before the ITB that wages in some cases were as low as 6 annas per day. Tata workers' Union in its memorandum to Bihar Labour Enquiry in 1939 wrote that 'As a result of Subhash Bose's efforts the minimum wages for unskilled worker was raised 8 annas a day in 1928²⁴.

Living Wages, Cost of Living and Prices :

It was alleged by TISCO management that any wage less than Rs. 20 a month could not be regarded as living wage in

23. A.D. Singh : (ed.) 'Man Management in Tata Steel'
TISCO Pub. 1974, P.112

24. BLECR : op.cit. Vol.III, Pt.C, P.49

Jamshedpur²⁵. Actually the wages given as stated earlier, were 5 annas for men and 3 annas 6 pies to women upto 1918, and 7 annas for men and 5 annas for women in 1928 .

One must also consider few other points before deciding the minimum wage in a metallurgical works i.e. the cost of living in the industrial centre, the irksomeness and hazard of the metallurgical jobs. It is of importance that even till 1947 TISCO could increase the minimum wages only to Rs.1 a day to its unskilled worker.

The levels of living of workers can be ascertained obviously, not from wage figures, but by relating wages with prices. For the purpose of such comparison we depend on the Company's own statements and the average earning figures in Tables XXII, XXIII, XIV on the one hand and on the other average prices for the period till 1922 and cost of living indices for 1922 onward.

(Jamshedpur had the highest cost of living in Bihar - Orissa Province during this period which is put in Table below:-

Table - XXVII²⁶

Mean Average at cost of living of 7 centers - Index No.

Centre	1921-24	1924-25	1925-26	1926-27	1927-28
Patna	159	163	162	171	170
Muzzaferpur	160	174	163	170	171
Mongyer	168	165	166	169	167
Jamshedpur	186	196	200	201	195
Jharria	190	202	198	198	190
Cuttak	133	155	159	159	151
Ranchi	--	--	188	179	166

26. Ibid. - Extracts from the figures of mean average also see R.C. - evidences op.cit.

25. Raghuraj Singh - Movement of Industrial wages in India (1955) Pg. 247

(The table shows that both the industrial centres were closely following each other in the cost of living. Both Jamshedpur and Jharria were having the highest cost of living, but after 1925-26 Jamshedpur is maintaining the highest number in this regard.)

We have the following prices of staple articles in Jamshedpur for the years 1916-20 :-

Table - XXVIII²⁹

Prices of staple articles in Jamshedpur (1916-1920)
in Rs. - Annas - Paise

Name of the article	1916	1917	1918	1919	1920
Rice per Rs.					
Rice good quality.	7 seers	6½ "	8 "	4½ "	4½ "
Rice inferior	7 "	8½ "	10 "	7 ^x "	7 ^x "
Ata per seer	0-3-3	0-2-9	0-3-0	0-3-6	0-3-9
Floor +"	0-4-0	0-3-6	0-4-0	0-5-3	0-5-3
Dal "	0-2-3	0-2-0	0-2-3	0-3-3	0-3-9
Rape oil "	0-8-0	0-7-0	0-8-0	1-1-0	1-3-0
Ghee "	1-5-0	1-6-0	1-9-0	2-2-0	2-9-0
Potatoes "			0-2-6	0-5-3	0-5-6
Brinjals "				0-2-9	0-2-0
Onions "			0-1-0	0-2-0	0-2-9
Milk "			0-2-0	0-3-3	0-3-3
Kerosene (per bottle)	0-1-9	0-2-0	0-2-6	0-2-5	0-2-9

29. IL - June 1921 - Articles commonly purchased by artisans and coolies in Jamshedpur (x) Subsidised by TISCO

This shows that prices of all the commodities were constantly rising since 1918. It may be noticed that the prices of inferior rice was brought to the level of 1918 prices only when TISCO subsidised it for some time. But the prices of good rice went up and reached 4½ seers per rupee in 1919 from 7 seers per rupee in 1916. All the other commodities also show the same trend of price increase.

For the years 1922 to 1928 we have the cost of living indices which is put below :-

Table - XXIX²⁸

Cost of living indices in Jamshedpur (1922-23-1928)

	<u>1914 = 100</u>			
	<u>Food grains</u>	<u>Other articles of food</u>	<u>Light Fuel</u>	<u>Clothing</u>
<u>1922-23</u>				
Minimum	128	160	171	244
Maximum	163	268	187	269
<u>1924 :</u>				
Minimum	113	184	196	206
Maximum	135	271	207	206

28. Source : For 1922-23 - IL. Oct. 1924
 " 1924 - BSA - F.No. X4-4 Revenue Deptt.
 " 1925 - IL - 1927 "
 " 1926 - BSA - May 1928 "
 " 1928 - BSA - May 1928 "

ctd.....

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	<u>Food grains</u>	<u>Other articles of food</u>	<u>Light Fuel</u>	<u>Clothing</u>
<u>1925 :</u>				
Minimum	135	192	190	187
Maximum	146	246	207	200
<u>1926 :</u>				
Minimum	144	203	196	175
Maximum	168	242	205	187
<u>1928 :</u>				
Minimum	155	191	161	150
Maximum	170	237	171	150

This table shows that the trend of price increase was continued in these years also. Almost in all the years the maximum of earlier year is fixed as minimum of the subsequent year. In 1924 the maximum of foodgrain indices was 135. In 1925 we can notice that its minimum was 135. The maximum of 1925 was 146 and the minimum of 1926 was 144. In the same way 168 of 1926 had come to settle in 1928 at 155.

Along with this data, we have direct empirical survey data about family budgets of three families, surveyed in 1920 at Jamshedpur, probably by the Company itself after the first strike which took place there. The income of these

families varied between Rs.35 and Rs. 53 per month. On the basis of those consumption figures, in quantum of goods, along with prices of those goods given in Rupees, the consumption expenditure per adult per month is worked out²⁹. (see Appendix-V and VI for the detailed budgets).

If the expenditure of only food grains from total expenditure is separated, for the main expenditure of coolies are always on food, it is found that the per centage spent on foodgrains per month are in the above mentioned budgets are 40.4. 27.2, 28.8 in first, second and third budgets respectively. In actual terms these are Rs. 5-6-6, Re. 4-3-0, Rs. 3-0-0 respectively. It is fairly well recognised (see Appendix-VI for other budgets prepared by BLECR) that the per centage of expenditure on foodgrains - of such income range families is actually much higher than those manifested in their family budgets. Assuming that even these budgets are valid, the following observations are important.

According to Table XXIX indices of the cost of living, the per centage increase of foodgrains prices (open Market) at Jamshedpur was of the following order :-

Table - XXX³¹

Year	Per centage increase of minimum foodgrains prices over the previous year (excluding TISCO Sales)
1925	+ 19.5
1926	+ 6.6
1927	+ 13.9
1928	+ 2.4

29. see Appendix - V,

30. see Appendix - VI

31. ~~see Appendix~~ Per centage is worked out on the basis of indices given in Table XXIX

There is no evidence suggesting that the company continued to sell foodgrains at the same price irrespective of increase in market prices. There is nothing on record on that the company was increasing the rate of subsidy. Thus if it is assumed that the subsidy rate was constant, the income of workers to neutralise the increase in food grains ~~price~~ prices alone (not taking into account other commodities) should have increased at the following rate :-

Tables - XXXI³²

Year :	Budget-I			Budget-II			Budget-III		
	Rs.	As.	Ps.	Rs.	As.	Ps.	Rs.	As.	Ps.
1925	1	0	0	0	13	0	0	9	0
1926	0	6	0	0	4	8	0	3	0
1927	0	12	0	0	9	3	0	6	0
1928	0	1	8	0	1	0	0	1	0

These increase would have neutralised increase in food grains expenditure alone. If other prices are also taken into account, the increase in wages necessary for neutralisation of price rise, would be much more. But ~~above~~ above calculation is enough to show the trend of price rise and cost of living.

(We have the sample survey report of 1040 ³³ families in 1928 to show that there were 1052 men and 132 women who were

32. This table is worked out by taking the per capital expenditure on food grains only in each budget and then working it out on the basis of Table XXXI the probable per centage increase over the previous year.

33. BLEC - Vol.II, P.38 see Appendix-VII

earning members in Jamshedpur. It has been pointed out in chapter-I that there was a constant decrease in employment of women in TISCO. All this make it clear that in case of overwhelming majority of households the earning member was one. On the otherhand the average family size as various sources inform, in Jamshedpur was 4.296³⁴. That would mean, if the wage income of a worker was Rs.15, the per capita income per month would come to Rs.3 or little more. Even for those who were getting higher wages e.g., between Rs. 40 and Rs. 50 per month - the per capita income (between 9 to 10 rupees p.m.) would be just the level of subsistence³⁵, or near to that. It is already made clear that this category was in considerable number employed in TISCO. No more elaboration is necessary. What is important is to point out that wages were much less than the means of subsistence and a large number of workers actually belonged to what is today known as 'below the poverty' level.)

Working Conditions inside and outside the Works:-

(It is already made clear that the covenanted hands were given special privileges and favours and uncovenanted workers were treated on different basis. Here I shall take up only the working conditions of uncovenanted hands. It was this category which went on strike. Till 1920 TISCO had no proper rules and regulations for uncovenanted workers and they were

34. see Appendix-VIII

35. BLEC - Vol.II, P.29
also - Raghuraj Singh - op.cit. P.43

treated arbitrarily. After 1920 strike a pamphlet was issued stating the service rules for monthly rated and daily rated, weekly paid workers. Monthly paid were mostly supervisor and official staff who were given 30 days privilege leave on full pay for every completed year. They were also given 3 months full pay leave after 3 years completed service. Daily rated were given 2 weeks leave with full pay after every completed year. This could be accumulated to 6 weeks in total. But weekly paid staff was given no leave. The strikers in 1928 demanded a revision of these rules for majority being weekly paid workers were not benefited by these rules. Sunday was not a holiday for all the department. Two religious festivals days were granted as holidays to all the workers, not counted either against privilege or casual leave. But it is interesting to note that these service rules were not actually given effect to as the appeal made by Jamshedpur Labour Association in 1924 shows³⁶. One of the demands was that 'No rest day except to Europeans and General Office staff.....about 3000 out of 30,000 get three hours off on Sunday on general shift.... those working on Sunday should be paid double the ordinary rates'³⁷.)

The monthly rated workers were also given casual leave of 5 days in a year but there were no separate rules for sickness leave with pay³⁸.

There was a provision of accident pay when an employe^{plant} was incapacitated due to ordinary/risk the accident pay amounted to

36. IL - 1924 Aug. Appeal issued by Jamshedpur Labour Association to the members of Legislative Assembly.

37. Ibid.

38. R.K. Mukherjee : op.cit. P.50

full pay upto 3 months. It could be extended further by 3 months at the discretion of the management. But if the employee was incapacitated due to his carelessness no compensation was given. There was a Safety First Committee in TISCO since 1921 to decide whether the accident occurred due to carelessness or not. The role of this Committee was well explained in Government record as 'merely a white washing body that arrives at once on the scene and covers up the trail'³⁹. It is noticeable that number of accidents were increasing in TISCO.

Table - XXXII⁴⁰

<u>Years</u>	<u>Total men employed in TISCO</u>	<u>Total accidents</u>
1923	5244	209
1924	6022	280
✓ 1925	5977	312
1926	5784	524
1927	5526	412

There was no system of periodical increment or increase in pay in TISCO. 'Increase in pay is given but they are not regulated by any fixed system and depend on the recommendation of the foreman. Favouratism, bribery are the results and many men had no increment for years'⁴¹. It will be seen in chapter III,

39. BSA - Local Self Govt. - comments by the Director of Industries of Bihar and Orissa - Aug. 1922.

40. BLEC - Vol. IV, Pt. I, P.42

41. IL - 1921 op.cit. Notes prepared by Coolins.

that lack of any such rules for increment became a major issue for strike, workers demanded a regular system of increment and rejected the management's offer of a bonus scheme.

The service rules also provided that monthly rated men would be given one month notice in case of dismissal and daily rated would be given 10 days notice or pay in lieu ~~thereof~~ thereof in both the cases. The same was expected to be done by employee to the company in case he resigns. Men drawing less than Rs.20/- a month or Re.1/- a day were not entitled of notice of dismissal. These rules gave a free hand to the company with the majority of labourers. There was no provision for maternity benefit to TISCO women workers⁴².

The working hours were also varying in different departments and different shifts. One of the demands in 1922 strike was 'the general shift should be for 8 hours from 8 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Including half an hour for ~~lunch~~ lunch. (Earlier it was from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.) Clerks should work only from 10 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.⁴³ Though TISCO claimed that they had fixed 8 hours duty in their works it is shown in the demands

42. Though it was claimed by Mr. Saklatwala in his letter to the Deptt. of Industries in 1921 that woman working for 11 months were given two months with pay leave, but in 1927 a letter written by the General Manager TISCO, Mr. Alexander to Mr. Shaw, chairman of International Textile Delegation says 'the matter of maternity benefit has been under consideration for some time and we are waiting for Govt. legislation in this matter' (quoted in M.Ghosh op.cit.) One of the demands made by strikers in 1928 was granting of maternity benefits (see Ch.III)

43. R.C. P.123, op.cit.

of strikers in 1928 also that actually it was not so. This point is discussed in detail in chapter-III. Here it should be taken note of that there were different shift. Those on the three shift system worked from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m., 2 p.m. to 10 p.m., 10.p.m. to 6 a.m. in either of the shift. There was also a single shift system from 6 a.m. to 11.30 p.m. and 1.30 p.m. to 5 p.m. The labour working on three shift system did not get any interval for taking meals but the same was provided on single shift system. Workers on 8 hours shift normally worked 4 hours overtime. The pay in such cases was strictly in proportion to the daily wages. 'Sikhs particularly worked overtime'⁴⁴. It seems there was a custom of compulsory overtime in TISCO. One of the demand in 1922 by the strikers was 'no compulsory overtime and that for overtime at night 4 days pay should be drawn for 3 days work'⁴⁵. (One incident can also be taken note ofⁱⁿ this regard; before 1922 strike, one European supervisor gave blows to one worker when he refused to work overtime after his duty was over⁴⁶. This worker became unconscious and was taken to hospital. Strikers demanded that the European Supervisor must apologise.)

Till 1928 TISCO used to impose fine on workers in case any damage was done to the company. Following was the sum fined by TISCO from 1925 to 1928 ::

	(in Rupees)
1925-26	10,854
1926-27	5,039
1927-28	334

44. IL - July 1921, op.cit. 45. RC - op.cit.

46. Ibid. also see Keenan 'Steel Man in India'.

But this system was slowly being withdrawn as is clear from the above table.

TISCO did not have much problem in getting the labour but it did try to check the large turnover by introducing a bonus system in a small scale 'For 26 days continuous work they get a bonus of one day's wage and a bonus of 2 days for 27 consecutive days. They were also given plots of lands on payment of ground rent to build houses. A bonus was given for good time keeping and a woman who had not lost a single day during the month got in addition of 2 days pay at the end⁴⁸. Along with this a grain store was also run by TISCO on cheap rates after the First World War. But it is clear from the JLA appeal in 1924 that TISCO used this as a coercive measure to break the strike in 1920 by stopping the sale.

Some care was taken to provide taps in various departments all over the works for pure drinking water and a staff of 200 sweepers was kept in factory premises to look after the sanitation. One Welfare Superintendent was also appointed in the Works and first aid appliances were provided in all departments.

Labour Welfare :-

(In an effort to create a permanent labour force TISCO built houses and bungalows for its uncovenanted and covenanted

47. R.C. - op.cit. P.71

48. IL - July 1921, op.cit.

workers. By 1927 it had built 5290 pucca quarters and 275 bungalows. But it was not adequate. These pucca quarters were occupied by more than 10,000 employees mostly skilled and semi-skilled. Unskilled labour were allowed to build their own houses, with the result 1200 huts came up accommodating 8 persons in a room. Some were advanced loans upto the maximum of two third of the value of the house.) But this was 'not applicable to those who were drawing less than 8 annas a day'⁴⁹. 'The changes on those occupying quarters realised was on an approximate return of 4 per cent to 5 per cent on capital expenditure without providing for maintenance and repair'⁵⁰.

The issue of housing facilities was also a major demand of strikers in the three strikes. Memorandum presented by Jamshedpur Labour Federation to Royal Commission in 1928 says '.....(the housing problem has ever been acute, adding to the shortage has been the hardship of the inadequate accommodation provided in the various types of houses built by the company... the houses are one room about 10 feet square with or without a slip of verandah about 2 feet by 3 feet wide, in that is to be accommodated a family with one or 20 members, the company not caring to worry as to how many occupy that quarter, neither is there any machinery for taking into consideration the number of family members before allotment of a quarter which is at present based solely on service and rates. This resulted

49. TISCO report to International Textile Workers Delegation - 1927 quoted in M. Ghosh op.cit.

50. M. Ghosh - op.cit. P.186

in town much unhealthy congestion and unhealthy agitation⁵¹).

(Even the water supply was hopelessly inadequate. Bustees were without any water supply. In the various quarters water taps were not provided, as a rule one tap to each quarter. Actually there was one tap to several quarter leading to frequent quarrels and bad feelings in the town, as the supply was inadequate.....the sum total of these hardships react very adversely on the moral tone of the workmen and his family..... ties of family life so loose that one might assert that there exists no family life at all. One of the visible signs is the number of cases in criminal courts of offences dealing with women⁵². One other major problem faced by Jamshedpur town was sanitary arrangements. Leaving aside the northern town or European quarters where a complete flush system is provided, in town and other localities sanitary accommodation is next to non-existent. There may be one latrine to several quarters or in others on latrine at all..... in busties with a growth of population, all open spaces gradually came into occupation and the inconveniences suffered by the people can be more imagined than described.....any old nalla with water that may be green with dirt, still affords the only chance to people and we see sights of washermen using the same unhealthy source for cleaning clothes, that would put to revolt

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51. R.C. op.cit. P.109
Memorandum of Labour Federation - Feb.1928

52. Ibid.

the conscious of malariologist and other medicologists⁵³. This was the living condition of poor class in Jamshedpur in 1928 when all other sources claim that it was the best industrial town coming into existence in India.

TISCO did provide to some extent the free medical facilities to its worker. By 1927 there was one main hospital with 72 beds, 12 were for women. It had four branches in the town. But medical aid was not free to the dependents of the workers. A charge of Re.1/- for Assitant Medical Officer and Rs.2/- for Senior doctor was made. Workers demanded in 1922 the free medical aid for their wives~~and~~ children. There was no lady doctor and the nurses employed were also inexperienced⁵⁴.

Facility for educating the children of TISCO employees was taken care of. TISCO opened night schools for its workers to learn arithmetic etc. in 1916. Commercial schools for adult employees learning typing, shorthand was also run by the company. Three reading rooms, public library and 2 technical libraries were opened by the company since 1918. There was one English primary school, 11 boys' primary schools, 2 schools for girls. One middle school for girls and 2 for boys upto matric were also opened. Some of them were run by missionari~~es~~ or some trust. Obviously these were meant for higher paid employees.

53. Ibid.

54. IL - July, 1921.

It is noted earlier that a grain store was run by the company on cheap rates since 1919. Although the TISCO ~~was~~ was the landlord of Jamshedpur town markets it did not actually try to check profiteering by shop keepers in the markets. 'In 1923 April it closed the selling of cheap grain and cloth to its workers. This resulted in heavy profiteering in the bazar of Jamshedpur for want of competition which made cost of living higher than in Calcutta....⁵⁵. Directors of TISCO recognised this fact as stated in their letter from Bombay on 6 - 7 Aug. 1920, para 6 reads 'the principal cause of such discontent as exists is of course the high prices. We have already recognised this and are trying to organise a co-operative store which will supply all classes of the population from coolies upwards⁵⁶. But actually the cooperatives which came into existence were mostly supplying the needs of either Europeans or highly paid Indians, as noted by Jamshedpur Labour Association. in their appeal.

There was no transport facilities provided by the company in the period under review. Since the whole town belonged to TISCO and most of the residents were its employee, a great deal of high handedness on the part of

55. Appeal issued by JLA - 1924, op.cit.

56. Ibid.

officers was noticeable . Jamshedpur Labour Association complained that 'there are instances, of quarters having been broken open by the officers of the company without possessing any legal authority⁵⁹. Life and property, was very insecure in the town caused by abnormal frequency of thefts, dacoities and murders since 1920⁵⁸. Also there was not enough light arrangements on the street.

~~With~~ The above situation in respect of cost of living and working, living conditions of TISCO workers provide the background to the three big strikes during 1920 to 1928, which will be discussed in chapter-III.

59. Ibid.

58. Ibid.

Chapter - III

MOVEMENTS AND STRUGGLE

This chapter deals with the beginning of Trade Union movement in TISCO which was the outcome of the spontaneous strike of its workers in 1920. The following account will show that the movements and struggles of TISCO labour force, during 1920 to 1928 were not organised by any established Union or any political party but it was the result of the workers' desire to get their grievances redressed in better organised form. Since the workers were not guided by any political ideology and did not fully understand the capital labour relationship they looked towards the Directors of TISCO and Government for the help, with the result their struggle proved always to be a failure. In all the three strikes in 1920, 1922, 1928 the same thing can be noticed that when situation became intolerable the workers would suddenly go for a strike without any plan or proper notice and all the strikes were militant in nature, but always came to an end bringing nothing to the workers. Lack of proper education and proper leadership was always a great hurdle in making TISCO labour movement progress on right lines. One more interesting point is that the Jamshedpur Labour Association (JLA) which came into existence during 1920 strike could never be popular among the workers and by 1927 workers in fact became anti-Jamshedpur Labour Association due to its pro-management attitude. This helped the TISCO management and by the end of 1928 strike two

labour unions existed in TISCO and the whole issue could be diverted from the TISCO management to these two unions fighting with each other rather ^{than} that labour fighting with capital.

After the first World War, the cost of living had increased everywhere and Jamshedpur always having the highest in the cost of living index in the Province was affected the most. Workmen were dissatisfied with their wages and there was no system of increments etc. So 'they sent a deputation to the General Manager in the beginning of 1920 and asked for 50 per cent increase of wages to meet the increased cost of living. Various other grievances were laid before him, of which the principal was that more liberal compensation should be given when an accident occurred in the works, and that the dues of deceased workmen should be paid to their relatives more promptly. The General Manager promised to make enquiries and to collect figures on which he could make recommendations for increments'¹. But men were losing their patience and could not wait for the long process of enquiries, suggestions and recommendations. It seems that the burden of high prices was too heavy for the workers to wait any longer. The 'General Manager Tutwiller went to Bombay to explain the matter to the Director; the workers on 24 Feb. laid down their tools without any previous warning'². Their example was followed by the workmen in other branches and in less

1. R.C. op.cit. P.117

2. Ibīd.

than an hour the entire body of Indian employees with the exception of the clerks had ceased to work. The workers were asked to resume the work but they refused. 'About 30,000 workers were out'³. The workers held a meeting and decided not to resume work unless an increase of pay was granted. They also formulated their demands as (i) Fifty per cent increase in wages, (ii) leave with pay for one month in a year (iii) leave with pay for disability owing to accidents (iv) payment of amenities to families of persons killed by accident in the works (v) Adequate housing, (vi) Arrangements for the selling of foodstuff at a cheaper rate, (vii) Periodical increments⁴.

In the beginning of the strike workers assured the Deputy Commissioner Mr. Scott that 'they would supply sufficient labour to keep going the power house but subsequently they disregarded it'⁵. This compelled the European employees to work day and night. On the third day it seems workers were almost giving up as the Government reports say, for a considerable number of men gathered at the gates of TISCO for resuming work⁶. But they were dissuaded by the strike leaders who were mainly up country men⁷. When all this was

3. Amrit Bazar Patrika ; Feb.26, 1920.

4. M. Ghosh, op.cit. P.2

5. R.C. : op.cit.

6. Communique issued by the Government (Patna)
28 March,1920 - ABP - 20th Apr. 1920

7. Ibid.

going on the representative of Government came with full force in Jamshedpur to protect the industry. 'Town was filled up with Gurkha and European soldiers'⁸, creating terror. On February 27, some of the strikers were hit with stones from inside the workshop compound while passing by the Works. One of them had his forehead wounded⁹.

At the end of the month the management issued a statement that "if the strikers refuse to join work at 6 a.m. on Sunday, 3rd March : (i) the terms of settlement on the principle that the authorities would consider the strike as having not occurred, would not hold good after 6 a.m. on Sunday, (ii) No people would be allowed to assemble in a meeting after Sunday (iii) Military forces and police would be employed to stop the present picketing. (iv) The Tata Company would serve strikers, refusing to join, with notices to quit within 7 days. On the expiry of that period the people who would continue staying would be tried for criminal trespass etc. Their water would be cut off and latrine arrangements would be stopped. But strikers did not resume work'.¹⁰

Since the workers had no leader to guide the strike they approached Bangiya Jana Sabha¹¹ to send an adviser to guide the men on strike. Mr. S.N. Halder (see the Biographical sketch in Appendix-X), a barrister in Calcutta was sent to

8. ABP - March 2, 1920

9. Ibid.

10. ABP - March 3, 1920

11. Ibid. Feb.28, 1920 (also see Appendix-X)

study the situation. He was accepted by the strikers as their spokesman. On 26 Feb. Mr. Halder along with 6 strike leaders met the Company's officials and the Government representatives. By then one more leader was sent by Bangiya Jana Sabha, Mr. Boyemkesh Chakravorty (see the biographical sketch in Appendix-X) to help Mr. Halder at Jamshedpur in handling the strike. Those leaders soon forfeited workers' confidence by a policy of compromise.

These negotiators in their meeting with company officials and Government officers came to the following agreement subject to ratification by the strikers as a body.

1. That the men should resume work voluntarily as they left it.
2. That no action should be taken or ill-will borne by the company against the strikers.
3. That the company would make no reduction from the men's pay on account of the days during which the strike lasted
4. That the Manager would have his statistics ready by 1 May and that he would consult the leaders of the men in each department before forwarding his report and recommendations to the Directors
5. That the strike would be treated as if it never existed and that as a guarantee to restored good relations a mass meeting of the strikers should be called that evening at which the General Manager, Deputy Commissioner and leader from Calcutta should address the strikers and get the seal on the agreement"¹²

But the strikers naturally did not agree with these terms, for they were to bring nothing to them and they would be no better placed than ~~was~~ before the strike. Therefore, when Halder and B. Chakravorty attempted to address the meeting in order to persuade the strikers to accept the terms offered, they were denied a hearing¹³. When Mr. Scott asked the strikers if they had faith in Tutwiller, the General Manager, every one said 'no'.¹⁴ This meeting made it clear that workers were determined to get their grievances solved and would not go back on anything else.

Strike continued and General Manager refused to consider the grievances until the men resumed the work. The Director of TISCO supported the stand of General Manager fully. In the beginning of March some of the workers started resuming the work. Chinese workers were persuaded by Europeans and Mr. Scott, who joined back the work with a promise of getting Rs. 13/- a day as wages where formally they were getting Rs. 1 to 3 a day¹⁵. By 7 March, 20 Chinese, 25 fishman helpers resumed the work on boiler, 12 mistries in Mechanic shop, some discharged workmen in blast furnaces, coke oven, open hearth also resumed works. About 3000 coolies and some hundred semi-skilled labourers were working by that day. But the conduct of the strikers was very peaceful. During this period the local officers including DIG of police, Mr. Swair, Commissioner Mr. Heycock, Deputy Commissioner Mr. Scott were making efforts to bring about a settlement and

13. Ibid. 14. ABP : March 4, 1920

15. Ibid. March 6, 1920. This statement seems to be an exaggeration for the rates can not jump from Rs. 1 or 3 to Rs. 13/- at once.

working as a mediator between the strikers and the Company. In a meeting with two important employees of TISCO, Babu Bholanath Pandit Mohene and Padmraj Jain, the Deputy Commissioner said, that "Government would help the Company with all their power against the strikers"¹⁶.

These leaders in an attempt to organise the workers formed a union called Jamshedpur Labour Association (JLA) Mr. Halder was elected the President, Jogesh Ghosh a Chemist of TISCO, its Secretary, V.J. Sattay of drawing department became its treasurer. The Government reports say that 'the Executive ~~was~~ Consisted of those who took a leading part in the strike'. One more interesting development took place during this strike when the Company tried to divide the workers by starting a 'Tata Workers Welfare Union'¹⁷ as a rival to JLA. But as nothing more is heard of it it must have ceased to exist after some time. Jamshedpur Labour Association had very little influence on the workers since its beginning and the Company actually conducted the negotiation with an independent committee of representative of the workers and avoiding the issue of recognising any proper union¹⁸.

On 8 March the TISCO made one more offer in accordance with the terms offered by the Directors. As per the terms the resumption of work was an essential preliminary to the

16. ABP - 6 Mar. 1920

17. R.C. : op.cit. P.123

18. Ibid.

grant of any concession, but if the men returned by 6 p.m. on 9 March, all the strikers including their leaders would be reinstated and paid their wages up to the date on which the strike broke out. Negotiation would then be opened regarding the other demands. The Company would reconsider the question of paying the men for the period of the strike and undertook that there would be a definite increase in pay if the financial position of the Company permitted¹⁹. But again the strikers refused to accept this empty offer.

Here it is noteworthy that the strikers never demanded that they should be given a settlement and that they would leave the town. But the leaders without realising the consequences, that this demand may weaken the movement, asked that 'arrangements might be made to pay off at once those who wished to leave the Jamshedpur'²⁰. On 9 March, Mr. Halder complained on behalf of the strikers that the 'management' were trying to starve them into submission by refusing to sell grain to the workers'.²¹ The town administrator Mr. Sawday brought out a notice that rice, grain would be sold inside the Works at the usual rates only to those who would join²². But it seems the Company had accepted the request of Mr. Halder of paying workers up to the date on which the strike commenced and also railway tickets to the

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. ABP : 10 Mar. 1920

home village or town of those who wanted to leave. This message was given by Mr. Scott to the strikers in a public meeting.

After using such coercive methods to break the morale of the workers, the Company again issued on 11 March²³ one ultimatum to join the Works. But there was not much response. Most of the skilled men did not return to Works and many decided to get payment upto 23 February and leave the town.

On 12 March Mr. Chakravorty presented the final list of demands to the General Manager claiming²⁴ :

- (i) Immediate increase of 15 per cent in all wages which before the strike did not exceed Rs.8 per day. This increase was to be liable to enhancement or reduction in accordance with the result of the statistics which the General Manager was preparing
- (ii) No man was to be discharged and sympathetic consideration of the subjects enumerated in the following memorandum was to be promised :-
 - (a) Increment 55 per cent and 50 per cent
 - (b) Provision against accidents - temporary, permanent, death
 - (c) Production bonus, general and laboring staff.
 - (d) Annual leave, holidays, sick leave, casual leave.
 - (e) Medical treatment, Nurses, Midwives to be appointed, cattle dispensary, veterineary treatment

23. Ibid. 15 March 1920

24. R.C. : op.cit. P.119

- (f) Codification of service rules and graduation
- (g) Number of working hours
- (h) Treatment of Indian subordinates
- (i) Town management
- (j) ^{Te}Gust houses
- (k) Temple, Masjid
- (l) Railway facilities
- (m) the department of Greater extension to be included
- (n) strike wages.

The above list for the first time included all the demands and grievances of the workers. So far the workers were talking only in the meetings and the Government officials were trying to mediate. Now in an organised manner the strike was handled by JLA. The General Manager laid the demands before the Directors of TISCO.

It seems that Government officers had their own fears that the situation had become grave, for, if the Directors would decline to entertain the proposals and adhere to their refusal to consider concessions until work was resumed, disorder ^{was} would likely to occur²⁵. With this apprehension the local government officials brought 100 military policemen including 50 mounted men. The military authorities were also asked to keep ready with a batch of infantry²⁶.

25. R.C. : op.cit.

26. Ibid.

So far workers were behaving well, as the reports of the Deputy Commissioner show. But they were infuriated by the decision of the management to recruit new hands. Workers increased picketing. The Deputy Commissioner and others were helping the company in bringing in the workers in motor lorries. But the workers were so angry that on the night of 13 March they sat at the gates of Works and drove back all those who tried to enter the factory²⁷. Strikers also barricaded the roads so that lorries could not come. When nothing could persuade the workers to move away the Deputy Commissioner gave them a warning to disperse in an hour or he would use force. This time the workers agreed. The same thing happened on 14 March. On the morning of 15 March the excitement and anxiety of the workers reached the limit. They were getting impatient of the delay made by the Directors who were sitting 1500 miles away and did not bother to come to the spot. Strikers had blocked the railway line which was used to bring the workers from and to the factory through the train. When the news reached the DIG of police he despatched two troops²⁸ of police under Inspector Pearson with direction to round up the Men who were destroying the railway track. Also an engine and railway carriage containing 8 Gurkhas military police with 2 British soliders as guards on the engine was sent out along with Mr. Ashly the Deputy Superintendent.

27. Ibid.

28. R.C. : op.cit. P.120

A second party of mounted police was also sent shortly after and was accompanied by Mr. Sawdey, an employee of the company, as a town Administrator, who was also an honorary magistrate. Both the parties were told not to fire unless absolutely necessary.

Mr. Sawdey's party reached earlier and found chiefly Punjabies in large number completing the obstruction by putting signal posts, pig iron, boulders etc. on the railway line. About 50 to 40 men were arrested which infuriated the strikers who were only armed with lathis. Spontaneously they collected in thousands to rescue their comrades who were arrested²⁹. The police parties including mounted men could not control the situation and the prisoners also joined the mob in pushing back the police. The mob used stones and lathis and the police was forced to retreat to the Railway Room. At this moment Mr. Sawday gave the Order to fire, but the crowd continued pressing the police hard³⁰.

In the meantime two local strike leaders Gopi and Bhuta brought Mr. Scott who ordered for the firing to cease. Since the mob of strikers was getting more furious and violent after the death of 5 persons on the spot, Mr. Scott accompanied with Gopi and Bhuta went to the strikers and requested to stop the war. Thus the situation was saved though 5 had died, 10 severely wounded 24 injured. Total 100 shots were fired³¹.

29. Ibid. - also ABP - 18 Mar.1920 'Strike appeared to have been engineered by Sikhs'.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid. 161 Ibid.

This collision marked the end of active picketing. Next day many workers joined the factory and large number started leaving the town³². But it seems Punjabis (Sikhs) and other 'up countrymen' were not happy with the situation and in their own way they tried to stop the workers from joining the factory. On 18 March a Committee of Directors along with Dorabji Tata arrived in Jamshedpur and after consultation with the General Manager the following notice was issued³³.

- (1) The Committee of Directors of TISCO have decided to give time to the men till 6 a.m. on Saturday, 20th March to return^{to} the work
- (2) If the men resume in sufficient number to enable work to be commenced the committee will at 10 a.m. announce the decision at which they have arrived as regards to concessions demanded by the men.

On 20th practically all men resumed work and the decision was announced that 'All men drawing Rs.50 and less would receive a permanent increase of 25 per cent in lieu of 10 per cent bonus, while men drawing over Rs. 50 would receive a permanent increase of 20 per cent in lieu of bonus³⁴.

These development make it amply clear that inspite of the struggle and sacrifices made by the TISCO workers, the management announced the decision only when they agreed to

32. ABP - 18 March 1920

33. R.C. : op.cit. P.121

34. Ibid. also ABP - 22 Mar. 1920

join the Works. This was the ultimatum given by the Company from the very beginning of the strike. In this way TISCO refused to recognise the right of the workers to approach through the union. Union, which was already not very popular was pushed to the background. TISCO Directors obviously were delaying the decision deliberately and using police and other coercive methods to break the strike. Had the collision not occurred on 15 March the attitude of the TISCO management might have prolonged it further. The editorial of Amrit Bazar Patrika rightly charged the Directors by asking 'why Directors did not come earlier to avoid delay in reply from 1100 miles to avoid bloodshed.³⁵

The records of the time shows that the final settlement was not reached without friction and unrest. On 20 March a further announcement regarding service rules for regulating employees discharging, disablement, sickness, leave, provident fund rules etc. ^{was} made. This was not well received as there was no allowances to strike pay and extension of the bonus on production to all ranks. Directors refused to recognise the JLA and agreed to reconsider the question 'if further experience showed that the Association was a genuine body which desired to work with the co-operation of Management³⁶. It shall soon be proved in further details how JLA always tried to prove true to the above saying of the Directors even at the cost of the loss of the workers. With the above announcement all was

35. ABP - 16 March 1920

36. R.C. - op.cit.

not peaceful in Jamshedpur. Police and military was trying to take their revenge. When one man was assaulted by the Burmese regiment in the Bazar and complaint was lodged with the SP who replied, 'this would happen if people are cheeky or even would look crossly at them'³⁷. On the other hand contrary to Dorabji's promises, Company discharged on 16 April two strike leaders. One of them named Karamet of Bar Mill who refused to work overtime to Mr. J. Doyal³⁸ was beaten by him on the nose and neck. This made him unconscious. The workers had a rough time in the market also as the reports of the Government says, 'shopkeepers in the town were undoubtedly profiteering and had managed to force up the price of food grains directly the first increment was granted in March'³⁹.

Before we discuss the reaction of the public and nationalist leaders to the 1920 TISCO strike, we shall try to trace the causes of the trouble and the influences working on the workers.

The demands listed during the strike and the attitude of the workers who would not agree to anything but increment in wages, makes us believe that the fundamental causes of the strike were economic. As we have already mentioned, prices were increasing all over the country and Jamshedpur was the most adversely affected even in this respect. On the top of it, workers were aggravated by the influx of workmen employed on the construction of the 'Greater Extension' which nearly

37. ABP , 20 March, 1920

38. ABP , 16 April, 1920

39. ABP, 20 Apr, 1920, - Communique issued by the Govt.
also R.C. op.cit. P.123

doubled the size of workers, Added to 'it was a time of scarcity in the province, for 2 years, the turn out of staple crops had been poor and there had been practically a famine in cotton cloth'⁴⁰. Though TISCO did sell grain and cloth for some months to the employees below the cost price this was not enough to meet the rising cost of living. The Government report says, 'the purchasing power of a man's earnings was less than it had been before'⁴¹. The nature of the strike and events also prove that there was no external influence active among the workers. When the shooting on 15 March took place Mr. Halder and B. Chakravorty who were the outside leaders in Jamshedpur were in Calcutta on that date. Even when the second offer was given by the TISCO, the workers without waiting for their leaders refused to accept the offer. The reports of the Government also say that 'it has been established at least by negative evidences that no outside influence of any kind had been at work in bringing about the strike'⁴². One very important thing to be noticed in this strike was that there was a 'complete alliance of Government and TISCO'. Infact the Directors of TISCO passed a resolution expressing their appreciation of the services of the officers of the Government not only in the matter of enforcing law and order but also "in assistance rendered by them in

40. R.C. op.cit. P.122 (also the Appeal issued by JLA in 1924 says 'During the First World War when the cost of living had increased by more than 100 per cent the TISCO did not give any general increase of wages to their employee.....')

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

bringing about the termination of strike⁴³.

Immediately after the strike newspapers like Bihar Herald, Amrit Bazar Patrika, Capital, all took up the issue and demanded an enquiry. Rai Purender Narain Singh⁴⁴ of Bihar and some members of Imperial Council like Mr. Chanda, Abrahim Jagangir suggested to Sir Thomas Holland, President of Board of Industries to hold the inquiry⁴⁵. Bihar Herald even demanded that Mr. Sawdey be charged in the court as to how an employee could be given the charge of law and allowed to shoot labour just because he was an 'honorary magistrate'. All these reactions compelled the Government to release a Communiqué on the strike in which it tried to prove that labourers resorted to violence which forced the police to open fire. We need not go into further details because the events explained earlier speak for themselves.

Finally, we should note that the question of the recognition of JLA was unsettled. The subsequent events will show how JLA leaders worked hard to get recognition and were ready to compromise in 1922 strike if they could get recognition.

After 1920 Strike : After the strike JLA concentrated on increasing its strength and influence though it was still

43. Ibid.

44. ABP - Apr. 2, 1920

45. Capital : 27 Mar. 1920

unorganised. It passed a resolution on May 1920 condemning the victimisation of strikers by the Company and demanded their reinstatement. But it went unheard. It is noticeable that the leaders of JLA activists were the same persons who took lead in Congress politics. Halder who was the President of JLA, was also an active Congress Leader in Calcutta. The early connections of JLA with the Indian National Congress is important as it was this connection ^{which} with largely explains its policy its failure and its successes. The subsequent strikes proved as uncertain and fruitless as the 1920 strike, for the JLA leaders would follow the advice of Indian National Congress to run the strikes rather than caring for the solution of TISCO workers' problems. These leaders would only try to take charge of the strikes when it came into being and try to give it the directions which served only the interest of Indian National Congress. This does not mean that outside influence was working among TISCO workers, for no strike was ever organised by any outsider during the period under review.

In the middle of 1921 JLA again became active, for the workers demanded that the increase of wages which were given after strike were not adequate to meet the cost of living. They presented to the management three demands⁴⁶:

- (i) Bonus of one month pay ~~from~~ the profits of the previous year

46. R.C. op.cit. - also IL - 1924 -
also ABP - 25 July 1922

- (ii) an all round increase of 33 per cent
- (iii) a minimum 8 annas a day for weekly paid worker.

To this the General Manager very coldly replied that 'those who were not satisfied with the wages were at liberty to leave the company's service'⁴⁷. This caused disappointment among the workers. Again in September, 1921 when R.D. Tata visited Jamshedpur, a deputation representing JLA waited upon him and put up the demands. But he told the deputation that there is 'no money' and 'no profit' as the increase cannot be given. Thus it failed in its negotiations which discredited it to some extent. Actually JLA representatives were not pressing the demands with enough seriousness. The report of the Government says, 'the executive had presented to the management demands considerably more moderate than those which the mass meeting had by resolution, authorised them to present and this brought such criticism and suspicion upon them'⁴⁸. This is substantiated further from the Appeal issued by JLA in 1924 where it is written '.....when a person like R.D. Tata says (no money - no profit) it must be quite true. So we remained quiet'⁴⁹. The workers felt that they were cheated

47. Appeal by JLA - op.cit.

48. R.C. op.cit.

49. Appeal - op.cit.

and not fairly dealt with, when '1921-22 profit of TISCO was shown as Rs.88 lakhs⁵⁰. At this stage also JLA felt that 'the prices of steel were falling and realising the other difficulties with which the Company had to meet and not in the least wishing to add to their difficulties'⁵¹, it only requested the General Manager and the Board of Directors to grant one month's pay as bonus out of the profits made that year. It also included few other demands like 'change of working hours, weekly holidays, maternity benefits etc'⁵². But to this humble, moderate, compromising request of JLA the General Manager did not pay any heed and refused to receive any deputation on this issue. Above all the Company issued a circular threatening that if 'they persisted in making the demands the Works will be closed and the workers may be reduced to starvation'⁵³.

The workers got agitated at this but JLA leaders were against any strike. The Reports of the meeting of the workers show that the President, Mr. Halder was strongly against a strike. The local Government officials gained the impression that 'JLA wanted not^{To} call or instigate a strike, but if one occurred they would take charge of it and manage it'⁵⁴. This impression seems to be correct as the later events will show. JLA was always against the strikes in TISCO and it actually never called any strike but it did always try to

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid. also R.C. op.cit. P.124

54. R.C. op.cit. Report prepared by Mr. Dain, the Dy. Commissioner Singhbhum, also ABP - 21 Sept. 1922

take charge of it. This is possibly due to the reluctance of the Congress leaders to allow a labour movement to reach a militant stage.

Inspite of the efforts of JLA to avoid any strike, workers were in a different mood. One Government official while commenting on the situation then prevailing in Jamshedpur pointed out that 'large number of workers were attending the mass meetings called by the JLA⁵⁵ though all of them were not its members and did not have faith in JLA. A counter manifesto was issued signed as 'WORKERS' to the reply of Company's statement. It said that 'it is not the speakers at the meeting who clamour for an increase of wages and other concessions, but it is we who want a reasonable share of the produce of our labour and right and justice done to us in other respects'⁵⁶. It also examined the balance sheet and urged that 'shareholders and the rescue fund had had more than fair share of the profits and the allegations that wages had been reduced in Europe was fallacious, since the reduced wages in Europe were still more than double the pre-war level, while in India there had been no such inflation of wages to justify a reduction or the refusal of an increase⁵⁷.

This above statement gives us the real cause of ⁵⁸ 1922 strike. The purchasing power of workers since the war

55. R.C. op.cit.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid.

58. Even the Govt. Reports say that 'the real cause was the high price of food and necessities and the failure of the Company to control prices and profiteering'.
quoted in Ibid.

decreasing inspite of a little increase in wages in 1920. All those grievances which were the cause of 1920 strike, as it is already discussed, remained unsolved. They were accumulating and again burst out in 1922.

JLA once again bent the following list of demand to the General Manager and the Directors, when it felt that a strike was impending in August of 1922.

- (1) Some dismissed employees should be reinstated
- (2) the Company should recognise the JLA, permit its members to enquire into grievances and give the Association a quarter at ^{BISTOPUR} Bistipur, (3) the general shift should be for 8 hours only from 8 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. including half an hour for lunch, instead of 6 a.m. to 4 p.m., the clerks should work only from 10 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. , (4) there should be no compulsory overtime and for overtime at night 4 days pay should be drawn for 3 days work, (5) victims of accidents should draw full pay while absent from duty (irrespective of any fault in the matter) (6) the services rules should be amended to enable employees to take leave at the time of their choice and not at the discretion of the company, *gratuity* should be paid for 10 years service, (7) worker drawing less than Rs.300 a month should receive free medical attendance at their houses for wives and families (8) Out of the profits for 1921-22 the Company ~~gr~~ should grant a bonus of one months pay to all its employees. (9) female labour should draw full pay for 6 weeks before and after delivery⁵⁹.

To the above demands the acting General Manager replied on 19 September that they could be considered only on the return of the permanent General Manager Mr. Tutwiller. This answer was an effort of the TISCO management to delay the issue. But the workers were adamant and the same evening in a mass meeting they resolved to go on strike⁶⁰ and at 10 p.m. shift did not go to work. The Works was deserted except for Europeans. The strike was complete.

About 20,000 workers, came out of the Works⁶¹. The number included not only Sikhs, Santhals etc. but also the Bengalee clerical staff and Anglo-Indians⁶². The strikers were all peaceful, as the news in Amrit Bazar Patrika and the Government reports noted. As usual the police took immediate action to concentrate large force of police and military in the town. Amrit Bazar Patrika report says that 'the company officers were provoking the strikers by riding up and down on horse-back through the crowds, going to meeting, jumping on the crowded in post office verandah and trying to take back the coolies inside the works by breaking their huts⁶³. But the workers were determined to maintain on orderly strike.

The attitude of the TISCO management was uncompromising which is proved by notice issued on 24th Sept. saying that

60. ABP - 21 Sept. 1922 - also R.C. P.125 op.cit.

61. Ibid. 22 Sept. 1922

62. R.C. op.cit. But 'Statesman' of 11 Oct. 1922 published a letter from Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European Association denying that Anglo-Indians in TISCO join the strike.

63. ABP Sept. 1922 P.23

'those men who return to work on 25 Sept. according to their proper shifts and hours of duty will be retained on their present rates of pay, those who do not return by that time cannot be taken back on their present rates of pay and their pay will be reduced to 10 per cent. The Company reserves the right to retire or to reinstate those employees whose services it does not wish to detain⁶⁴. These notices increased the bitterness of the workers and a deadlock reached in the very beginning of the strike.

On the other hand Directors protected strongly against the declaration of strike and the statement that the Company could make no concessions which involved surrendering to the JLA the proper function of⁶⁵ the management in matters of discipline and administration. Therefore, no discussion was possible. The government officials noted that 'with regard to JLA it appears that the recognition of that body was under consideration but the presence of outsiders in the executive was a stumbling block.... Specially when JLA was affiliated to Trade Union Congress'. It was also felt that 'Mr. Halder attached little importance to the actual demands of the men, but was more interested in solving JLA and extending its power. He could call off the strike for two concessions (1) no victimisations (2) recognition of JLA⁶⁶. Thus situation was much more complicated for an

64. R.C. : op.cit.

65. quoted in R.C. op.cit.

66. Ibid.

ordinary worker whose representative body was more worried about recognition and non-victimization than caring for immediate problems of the workers. On 25 Sept. therefore a large number of coolies and some clerks rejoined the Works.

On 2 October when Mr. Tutwiller returned and announced that he would carry out the policy of his predecessor, the workers who were dissatisfied with JIA sent their deputations to the General Manager each representing each community. Halder could not be successful in his negotiations. About 10,000 workers joined back the Works. This time a large number of skilled workers also joined⁶⁷. In this situation Mr. Halder left for Calcutta and wrote to the Deputy Commissioner that his services were still at the disposal of the men if he would be of any use. Once again, as in 1920, he suggested that men should be given their settlement so that they might leave Jamshedpur⁶⁸. This proposal was also given prominence in workers meetings. This shows that the weakness of leaders could not solve the problem but would divert the issue and weaken the movement.

By the middle of the October about 14,000 men and 3000 skilled workers had joined the works⁶⁹. This made the Company's position as against strikers impregnable and it used the situation to reorganise the labour at their own time and in their own manner. At the same time large number of

67. Statesmen: Oct.6, 1922, also see R.C. op.cit.

68. Quoted in R.C. op.cit. - Report of Mr. Dain,
the Deputy Commissioner.

69. Statesman : 18 October 1922.

police and military was at the disposal of the Company. Even the Deputy Commissioner realised, as he noted that 'Company could prolong the strike indefinitely to their own advantage'⁷⁰. The situation became further grave when the General Manager issued a notice on 20 October forbidding the holding of public meeting. This resulted in increased picketting and the Deputy Commissioner imposed section 144 C.P.S.

It seems that JLA made an effort to bring AITUC President Chamanlal who came to Jamshedpur at this juncture. At first the General Manager refused to see him but with the efforts of one MLC Mr. Sajjnath and Deputy Commissioner a meeting could be possible. The General Manager made it very clear before the meeting that he would not go beyond the conditions already made public by the Company. Since there is no record to show what exactly happened between Chamanlal and Tutwiller but the speech made by Chamanlal in a workers meeting after the above mentioned meeting, does give some idea of it. On the evening of 22 Oct. Chamanlal told the workers that a settlement had been reached on the following terms 'Everybody was to return to work at 6 a.m. the following morning. A Committee of 10 from each side would be appointed to arrange a settlement of demands, everyone would revert back to the wages drawn before the strike the recognition of the union shall be undertaken by Trade Union Congress'⁷¹.

70. Quoted in R.C. op.cit.

71. Verbatim from Hindi speech of Chamanlal - quoted in R.C. op.cit. and in ABP, 23 Oct. 1922.

It is very interesting that there was nothing to show the authority on which Dewan Chamanlal made his statement. There was no statement on this regard in black and white to prove that the Company is bound to enforce above settlement though it actually brought nothing to the workers. There was no reference in the statement of Chamanlal of the approval of Directors or the right of the Company to refuse to re-employ some of the men, even the function of the Committee to be formed was not known. The strike was thus over. The Company held its position that they would not negotiate with JLA and actually negotiated with the larger labour organisation that stood behind it. Again as in 1920, the main issues of strike remained in the air to be settled in future.

On the other hand the moment the strike was called off. The General Manager derecognised the Association and two leaders Sethi and Sheshram were discharged⁷². About 1000 workers lost their jobs in one month. Some of the workers found themselves in less lucrative jobs than those they had left. The most important consequences of the strike was that the Company refused to accept the ⁷³ ten members nominated by the Association for negotiation and the said Committee never came into existence.

72. M. Ghosh - op.cit.

73. Ibid.

JLA's Struggle for recognition (1922-25) :-

It seems that workers of TISCO inspite of their efforts time and again could not get their grievances redressed. In the meantime the emergence of JLA diverted the issue. Nothing is known as to what happened since the end of 1922 to 1924. Indian Tariff Bill on steel came to the legislative Assembly to give protection to Steel Industry in India. JLA became active in an endeavour to gain in conjunction with the Congress, some concessions for themselves in return for the assistance, to be given to the Company "at the expense of the tax payer". JLA published a pamphlet⁷⁴, appealing to the Indian legislators and public demanding the following :-

1. The recognition of the JLA by the Management.
2. The provision of facilities for workman's cooperative stores.
3. A weekly rest day for all operative and suitable working hours.
4. The provision of maternity benefits for woman workers.
5. The payment of production bonuses and gratuties at increased rates after 10 years service with the company.
6. Profit sharing.
7. The provision of open spaces for meeting.
8. Additional housing accommoda-tions.
9. Open sale of liquor.
10. Improvement in the attitude of the company and its officials towards the workers.

74. Labour - 1924.
also R.C. op.cit. - also Labour Gazette - 1926

But soon JLA lost its credibility when it issued a statement of withdrawal of certain portion of the pamphlet admitting that there were one or two actual mis-statement and in other passages the picture was overdrawn⁷⁵. This statement cast doubts on the JLA pamphlet. However, by 1925 the Government did think that JLA was the only organised body that purported and represent labour in Jamshedpur⁷⁶. Before Tatas recognised the Association Government had already consulted JLA in 1924 about its views on industrial legislation. It was also considering the idea of consulting JLA for preparing the notes for International Labour Conference which was to take place in 1925⁷⁷.

When JLA was trying to move the Legislative Assembly, Tatas rushed to contact Pandit Motilal Nehru and proposed that a conciliatory Board with C.R. Das as its chairman be ~~for~~ formed to solve TISCO labour problem and that the decision of the Board would be binding on the management⁷⁸. With this assurance Swarajists absented themselves from the Assembly when protection Bill was put up and it was passed without obstacle. After this the Conciliation Committee met at Jamshedpur headed by C.R. Das, Chamanlal, Joshi, C.F. Andrews. Motilal Nehru and Mr. Rajaswami Iyengar were among the visitors, R.D. Tata and other officers of the company were also

75. BSA - Revenue Deptt. Industries Branch - Jan.1925.
also Labour Deptt. Proceedings, 1924.
(please see Appendix-IX, for the details of the clauses
of the pamphlet which were withdrawn by JLA)

76. Ibid. - BSA

77. Ibid.

78. Bihar Distt. Gazettee, 1950. P.271

Since no other Bihar Distt. Gazettee was published except
in 1920, I have relied on the statement given in this Gazettee.

in the Committee. The proceeding of the Committee are not available and all I could find out was that it was a complete failure as the Company refused to recognise the Association if the outsiders remain in its executive. Again the Capitalist and leaders played its game in favour of the capitalist leaving the workers as help~~less~~ as ever.

It could be only in 1925 that JLA got recognition from Tatas through the persuasion of Gandhi. In 1925, C.F. Andrews, the President of AITUC persuaded Gandhi to visit Jamshedpur, where Gandhi was given a warm welcome by R.D. Tata on behalf of the Company. Gandhi stayed there for two days and persuaded Tatas to recognise the Association. Gandhi urged the Tatas to work as trustees and accordingly it was decided that the Company would deduct the monthly subscription of the workers from their pay and hand it over to the Association. Gandhi asked Association to follow the model of Ahmedbad Majoor Mahajan Union⁷⁹.

It seems that the General Manager was reluctant to implement the Gandhi-Tata agreement. Andrews had to ultimately threaten him that he would write to the Press if the agreement was not implemented⁸⁰. After the recognition of the Associa-

79. K.K. Datta; 'Freedom Movement in Bihar', P.471
Gandhi said 'I hope you will serve the company faithfully and demonstrate that you deserved the generous concession agreed to by R. Tata...and you deserved Andrews... He is now your paid servant. His services are given to you for the joy of giving'.

80. M. Ghosh. op.cit. P.15

tion, JLA constitution was remodelled. It provided that every department must have its own sub-committee with a Secretary. These department sub-committees would investigate the grievances of the workers in their respective departments and apprise the Association of the same. The General Council would be composed of the members of all department sub-committee and the Executive was to be formed by the Secretaries of the department sub-committee. C.F. Andrews was elected the President of the Association.

It is important to note that JLA was not a large body and was not registered under Trade Union Act till 1928. JLA which got recognition in 1925 and established itself as the mouthpiece of workers was 'actually fostered by the Trade Union Congress and Congress political party'⁸¹. The leaders of 1920 strike who came in the executive of JLA, had since risen to responsible and well-paid posts in the Company⁸², except a few like Sethi. It is also interesting that JLA supporters were mainly educated babus and Bengalis. It never appealed to the uneducated worker⁸³. In the 1928 strike the workers openly expressed their hatred towards JLA by calling it 'Company ka Dalal'. Even the DC of Singhbhum had written in his report that 'it was artificial and unrepresentative of men and worked more as an agency of the Company for dealing with labour than as workers' representative'⁸⁴.

81. R.C. : op.cit. P.133

82. Ibid.

83. Ibid. P.139

84. I.L. 1928 - Mr. Dain's Report. also R.C. op.cit.

With this reputation obviously JLA did not play any important role in initiating the 1928 strike. Even before the strike commenced workers felt that JLA had betrayed the workers. Not much is known about the developments between 1925 to 1927 except that Indian Tariff Board gave its third report in 1926 in which it suggested that TISCO should reduce its staff to reduce the cost of production. Accordingly TISCO management introduced a new system of reorganising the labour by reduction and simultaneously increasing the efficiency per man. The overburdened worker who was already unhappy with his wages, cost of living and arduous work, adding to it their movements and struggle bringing them more hardships, was further asked to increase the efficiency with no promise of increments. In this situation once again the reaction of the workers was not surprising when they went on a strike in 1928.

Strike by TISCO Workers in 1928 :-

The strike of 1928 at TISCO cannot be characterised as one general strike by all the departments together. It was a very complicated affair and infact no general strike was properly planned before the management declared a lock-out. Actually the workers had to go on a forced strike. The nature of this trouble was such that it does not look like a part of All India Labour Movement prevailing at that time. It was ~~almost~~^{an} isolated incident and the basic reason was economic. Since the workers of TISCO were aware

of their rights and the importance of direct action they resorted to it on their own when its representative body called Jamshedpur Labour Association (JLA), refused to cooperate with them. It is a pity that the labour of TISCO was not educated and channelised on proper lines to fight their case with the capitalists. Naturally, the strike was to be a failure.

The deep rooted economic reasons pointed out earlier were accumulating over the years, accounted for the various short lived strikes in different departments of TISCO in 1928. Before we trace the immediate causes of these strikes we must understand the background in which those minor incidents in the various departments brought such a long period of uncertainty and unrest.

Causes of Unrest :

One of the main reasons of labour unrest in TISCO was reduction in the number of staff. Tariff Board had stated in its Report in 1924 that 'We consider that the number of men employed in TISCO/ to be unduly high and in our estimation we must presume a substantial reduction..... The Company has not attempted and does not intend to reduce the labour cost per ton by reducing wages, but aims at increasing the output per man.....(TISCO has decided).... that as vacancies occurred they would not be filled'.⁸⁵ Accordingly TISCO introduced in 1926 the scheme of ~~XXXX~~

85. ITB - 1924, op.cit.

reorganisation of all departments and increasing the productivity per man. Tariff Board in 1933 noted about it that 'the maximum efficiency appears to have reached in February, March, 1928 when it will be seen that in the case of bars, plates, black sheet, sleepers, the lowest cost was equal to or below those estimated by the Tariff Board for 1933-34. In each of these cases the production for the month in question was substantially above the average for the year'⁸⁶. One concrete example can be quoted here to prove this. In the rail department when the mills were started, 250 rails were finished per shift, later the men were told to increase the output and were promised increased wages. The output was raised to 400 rails but no increment were given. Strangely enough these hands were reduced all round. The output further increased to 700 rails per shift with a further assurance of increment in wages but this time too the management broke its promise⁸⁷. Thus since 1926 production of TISCO was increasing phenomenally and the TISCO annual reports show that since 1923 no addition was made to the capital of the Company but its output was expanded from 2,50,000 tons of finished steel to 4,20,000 in 1927. This obviously established in increase in the industrial efficiency of the workers. The number of labour force in 1927 was reduced to 24,238. On the other hand we

86. Ibid. 1933, P.15

87. Forward : Calcutta, 1928, March 21,

notice an increase in the depreciation fund to TISCO 'In 1924-25 it was 61 lakhs rupees, in 1925-26 was 60 lakhs and 78 lakhs in 1926-27'⁸⁸.

While efficiency of worker was increased he was not given any increment in wages or any compensation. 'The rates of good number of the lower ranks have been persistently decreasing instead of increasing during the last 6 years'⁸⁹. On the other hand cost of living was getting higher. We have discussed in chapter II that there was no revision on the wage rates of coolies. Subhash Bose also said later on in his speech that 'They were standing out for a living wage and though it was said that labour was better treated at Jamshedpur than anywhere also I would like to know whether labour elsewhere had such onerous and trying duties and whether there were any place in India where the cost of living was so high as at Jamshedpur'⁹⁰. It was also admitted by the management of TISCO that 'the work-ers wages were fixed not on a graduated time scale, but on the basis of the work that they do. The question of periodical increment does not arise'⁹¹.

88. Annual Reports of TISCO - 1924-29

89. An anonymous letter to the Editor of Amrit Bazar Patrika - 27 Apr. 1928

90. Fortnightly Report of Govt. of Bihar and Orissa - Sept. 1928 . IL - 1929

91. Amrit Bazar Patrika : 9 May, 1928.

Jamshedpur Labour Association while contradicting the report published in Statesman said, 'quite a large number of workers were getting very low wages while the cost of **living** here is the highest in the province.....the average income inspite of increment in 1922 had gone down in great many cases...92...
.....

The other important reasons of Labour dissatisfaction were the discrimination in favour of Europeans in appointments, reduction of staff, wages, bonus and language used with the subordinate Indians. An anonymous letter written to the editor of 'Amrit Bazar Patrika' explains it very ^{fit} specially as follows :-

- (i) The company has in its service hands who were covenanted years ago, shifted from one job to other showing that although the work for which they were first hired is now being **done** by Indian. They were being provided at the expenses of 'costs' that is at the expense of Indians.
- (ii) In case of strike these covenanted or once covenanted hands who are so retained at the cost of Indians cannot run one entire **mill** even,
- (iii) Indians of ability such as Mr. D.C. Gupta, S. Ghose who did their work marvellously well for years from the start had to leave either for want of prospect or through indirect compulsions to be replaced by Englishmen and Americans.
- (iv) **D6**-Indianisation has been set in practice in filling up higher posts and by creation of new **fat** **salaries** posts,
- (v) In many departments like sheet Mills some covenanted hands are drawing less for the same

work as the Indians and are in fact their co-workers but while covenanted men draws something like Rs.3 - 4 an. a day pay and a bonus amounting to 15 per cent of his wage (the bonus starts only from April 1928)..... this caused discontent amongst the awakened Indians -

- (vi) Three to four hundred employees draw between 9 to 10 lakhs or less a month
- (viii) When the Indian want increase their number is sought to be decreased and effect the saving to counteract the increase in cost, but there is no question of saving in the cost of the European⁹³.

These grievances are futher substantiated by an open letter of Workers' Publicity Committee during the strike which ~~state~~ 'while the Management has been on the one hand reducing the low rated staff, holding back departmental increment slips, making deliberate attempt to curtail the little privileges ~~highly~~ hitherto enjoyed, but high salaried supervisory staff, and white officials far from being reduced and affected in any way are well enjoying even the benefit of usual increments from time to time and all sorts of privileges.... new posts created to bring white officers and Indians are replaced by Europeans⁹⁴. These charges show that the claim of Tatas that they were trying to Indianise the Steel Works was baseless. The following statement issued by JLA on Indianisation of covenanted posts and creation of new posts for European also gives us the idea of other grievances. The causes of strike were 'the introduction

93. ABP : 27th Apr. 1928

94. Bombay Chronicle - July 17, 1928

of regulation calculated to restrict the privileges of workers, increased sense of insecurity of tenure owing to discharge of men on the ground of retrenchment, stoppage of general increment for the last 2 years to low rated staff, inequality in the treatment of European and Indian workers in distribution of wages, bonus, retrenchment, slow reduction of monthly rated men to daily rated men, etc.⁹⁵

The other reason which was also responsible for the discontentment was that 'workers had a vague sense that full justice is not being done in carrying out the reorganisation scheme as noted by Amrit Bazar Patrika. Parsees were being given higher posts and were employed more in number 'for which their qualifications are unknown'⁹⁶. 'Parsees occupy in this industry the same position in native industry as Anglo Indian in Railway'⁹⁷. There was a strong feeling amidst the workers that 'the management have set up a machinery to take out one after the other lists of privileges the workers got after 1920 strike and after 1922 strike another machinery has been set up manned mostly by parsees to spy amongst the labourers, cause dissensions amongst them and exploit them in the worst form'⁹⁸. Actually one Mr. Naoroji, the grandson of Dadabhai Naoroji⁹⁹, was appointed in TISCO Labour Department and he revised the service rules which snatched

95. ABP - May 9, 1928

96. Ibid. 27 Apr. 1928

97. Ibid.

98. ABP : 27 July, 1928

99. Bombay Chronicle : 20 July, 1928

away small privileges of leave etc. from lower paid staff and these pin pricks were making the workers feel more insecure. We shall see during the course of events that when lock-out was declared the deputation of foremen met the General Manager and told him that how these sections of the Management were hurting the workers.

All these above mentioned fears were accumulating in the minds of TISCO workers especially when they saw that these were put into practice. It is quite possible that they were further made conscious of their terrible plight by those various leaders who used to visit Jamshedpur once in a while to make speeches. For example in the January of 1927 a delegation of International Textile Workers consisting of Hindle Brothers, Firth, Schrader etc. visited Jamshedpur and made provocative speeches saying that Labour was ~~always~~ always exploited by Capital and it was upto the Indians to organise unions and to get their condition improved similar to those workers in England¹⁰⁰. Such speeches sometimes work ~~and~~ wonders if the ground is ready for it.

100. Fortnightly Report of Govt. of Bihar and Orissa: Jan. 1927

IL - 1929

Here it is also important to take note of the fact that probably in Feb. 1927, when B.N. Railway workers strike was on the Tata Company was helping the Govt. in suppressing the Railway Strike. This is clear from a telegram sent by Mr. Saklatwala to Tata Co., which is as follows:-

"I propose visiting Jamshedpur about the 25th instent. I shall appreciate reasonable assistance from the management in studying labour conditions. Astonished your firm, support from public funds by several crores of Rs. as steel producing concern, should now be used as a strike-breaking institute against half-starved railway workers. If as employer you join another employers' quarrel will not you workers' be justified striking in sympathy with Rly. Workers?" ABB - 19 Feb. 1927

Immediate Cause of Unrest :

As we have earlier said that the nature of this unrest is very different so we shall try to trace the causes of this from the link strike which took place in 1927. It seems that the germs of 1928 strike started taking shape in the end of 1927 itself.

On the 21st Oct. of 1927 half a shift working at the Duplex Plant struck work. Next day they were threatened by the Superintendent with dismissal and they resumed work. The reason of this short lived strike was that one of the workers in this department was roughly handled by an American Supervisor¹⁰¹. In December 1927 TISCO decided to reduce the production of the Hot Mill Department of the Sheet Mill. Therefore the mill was kept running for ~~only~~ 4 days a week. Company decided to pay to the employees for 7 days on the condition that they would do the work of cleaning up metals, mending road etc. on those 3 days when the mill would be closed. Accordingly on 19 December workers were put on road mending but the labourers struck work, saying 'that the ground where they had to work contained night soil' and 'they being Hindus¹⁰² would not work there. Same thing happened again on 26 December. The next shift also followed their example. On 27 Dec. 400 labourers held a meeting and put up their

U

101. Ibid. Feb. 1928

102. It was said in a workers' meeting that Hindus in Dec. 1927 were asked to do menial work. - ABP; May 1928

grievances to Mr. Andrews. He asked them to resume the work unconditionally and himself took up the issue with the General Manager Mr. Alexander. This incident seems to have sealed the fate of JLA for future. The workers did not appreciate the attitude of the Association though they accepted the decision 'after some demur'. In the end of December the workers of Rail finishing department approached their superintendent for an increase in pay¹⁰³. But got no reply. This was making them restless. All these incidents and some other individual cases of victimisations forced the Association to register a protest in its resolution of January, 1928 saying 'several Indians who had been holding position of responsibility and trust for a long time had to leave the Steel Company's service for one reason or other, or have been removed to secondary position.¹⁰⁴

The first incident of the 1928 strike involved the Crane drivers whose number was 'reduced per shift from 4 to 3 and the consequent increase in the hourse of duty from 8 to 12 on 7 days in each month¹⁰⁵. In a mass meeting later on it was said that 'crane drivers for months were doing extreme work in the hope of higher wages but were not given so'¹⁰⁶. In the first week of February, 1928 they requested JLA to take up their case officially with the Management.

103. IL - 1929, op.cit.

104. JLA papers - 1928 Jan. (Jamshedpur Labour Asson.)

105. IL - 1929 op.cit.

106. ABP July 26, 1928.

Their demands were (i) substantial increase of pay, (ii) production bonus at half the rates given to the covenanted hands (iii) better quarters, (iv) only 2 days off duty in each month on full pay, (v) 12 hours day work. It was also proposed that 80 per cent of the savings affected should be distributed among the employees and 10 per cent should be given to the company¹⁰⁷. A committee consisting of 5 members of Executive Committee of JLA met the General Manager but nothing came out of it. Therefore, the crane drivers struck work in 17 February. But on 23 February the Association got a promise^e from the General Manager for increased wages for Crane drivers and no victimisation if they resume work immediately. At the same time the General Manager told the Association that reduction in labour force will continue and same will apply to all the departments¹⁰⁸. Before we go further into other strike we should know here that JLA leaders were divided in their view in handling the labour problems. On one side were followers of Andrews was all for Gandhian techniques and on the other was Nani Gopal Mukherjee (see biographical sketch), a revolutionary advocated militant action. He was once sent to Andaman and later on got a job in TISCO Town Administration department. He was an important functionary of JLA but due to the differences within

107. IL - 1929, op.cit.

108. JLA papers, 22 Feb. 1928.

JLA, he himself took initiative in organising the crane drivers who were discontented¹⁰⁹.

Crane drivers even after the new wages **scheme** were not happy for they said that 'it entails much harder work in hot weather for no appreciable increase of wages¹¹⁰. They felt so disgusted with the Association, that they formed (perhaps instigated by Nani Gopal) their own Association and collected Rs.600 for the same.

The other departments seemed to be catching the infections for the Rail Finishing department who had earlier in 1927 December approached their superintendent for increase in pay, were told that 'nothing could be done as the Company's financial position was bad'. The workers of this department did not care to consult the Association and on their own ~~struck~~ work on 15 March. About 800 workers were out. They were mostly Santhals, Hos and Chattisgariahs.¹¹¹ Their demand were the following :

(i) European used to get Rs.15 a day finishing 300 rails per shift so the Indian labour should get Rs.4 a day for the same at least. (ii) hundred per cent increase for all wages (iii) production bonus, (iv) promotion of experienced worker to foreman even if they do not know English, (v) use of filthy language by the superiors to be stopped, (vi) Housing arrangements,

109. Moni Ghosh : 'Our Struggle' P.14-15

110. IL 1929, op.cit.

111. Confidential letter of Singhbhum D.C. - 21 Mar. 1928
IL - 1929

water supply to be improved'¹¹². The workers of this department showed enough militancy to assert their demands but they were ignorant of the tactics of the Capitalists. The strikers were mostly illiterate tribes. They resumed work on 25th March believing innocently that a deputation has gone to see the General Manager and their demands would be conceded to.

During this period many mass meetings of the striking workers took place in Jamshedpur. In most of these meetings 'workers expressed their distrust in JLA'¹¹³, as it did not approve of strike on the basis that 'the demands were not reasonable and that JLA was not consulted before the strike'¹¹⁴. The workers were getting so distrustful of JLA that they refused to listen to its leader and on the other hand went out in search of a new leader who could guide them. In their search they found one Manick Homi, a local practitioner who was known for his anti-Tata attitude due to his personal grievances. The workers in their desperation to find a leader forgot that he was the same man who gave evidence to Indian Tariff Board in 1924 recommending the 18 per cent reduction in TISCO staff to reduce the cost of production of steel industry. Ironically the ~~same~~ same man emerged as a labour leader who fought against this reduction carried on

112. Ibid.

113. IL - 1929, op.cit.

114. Ibid.

by TISCO on the recommendation of IIB Reports. Homi was a Parsee and got a job in TISCO where his father was an engineer. He had resigned and had gone for training at the Carnegie Technical Institute; but he was disappointed when the Company did not give him a better job. He took up legal profession. His father also lost his job in TISCO. In this strike he proved an 'avowed enemy of Tatas'.¹¹⁵

On 17 March the representatives of all the workers who were on strike went to Homi and called a meeting of workers with Homi in the Chair. He was accepted as their leader and on the spot Rs.30 were collected. This meeting was attended by Nani Gopal and his colleague N.N. Biswas who were behind the Crane drivers' strike. Homi tried to tabulate the grievances of the workers in a general way as follows. (i) More work and low wages, (ii) abuse from superiors specially 'patels', (iii) Failure on the part of the superiors to understand their grievances.¹¹⁶

On the other hand TISCO management tried to recruit new people to place the strikers but it was difficult for TISCO to get drillers, straightners etc. In the workers meeting Nani Gopal was exciting the workers for prolonging the strike. The workers were actually trying to organise themselves under some leaders; as one of them Mr. Lachman Telnaga said, 'men had been sent to Kharagpur to fetch a labour leader'.¹¹⁷

115. Keenan : 'Steelman in India' P.135, also IL-1929,
116. IL - 1929 op.cit. Moni Ghosh op.cit.(see
117. Ibid. 23 Mar. 1928 Appen

Towards the end of March the workers of Coke ovens department submitted a list of their grievances to the General Manager and were ready to go on strike if the demands were not conceded. Naidu¹¹⁸, from Khargpur came to Jamshedpur at the request of the workers and promised them that he would organise their strike if increment would not be given within 3 months. C.F. Andrews the President of JLA once again tried to discuss the condition of Jamshedpur labour with General Manager. He told the workers 'let not the noble work of Deshbhandhu and Gandhi in raising this national industry to fall to the ground'¹¹⁹. But workers refused to listen to Andrews advice and did not see the 'importance of the national industry' which was busy in de-Indianising the better posts in its Works. Andrews made one last effort to pacify the workers. He negotiated with the General Manager for solving the situation with the result, TISCO which was already planning for a new scheme of profit sharing, declared it on 12 April hoping to save the 'national industry' from labour trouble. The scheme was introduced from the beginning of April 1928. A circular explaining the increments of wages, reduction of staff, grade system etc. was issued to all the heads of the Departments.

The circular maintained that 'a study of each department will be carried out and the scheme by which the wages of real workers could be increased..... the question of increase in

118. Naidu was a labour leader at Kharagpur.
(see also biographical sketch in App.X)

119. ABP - 11 Apr. 1928

rates was dependent on the continued successful operation of the plant and continued increase in the earnings of the company.....any necessary reduction in staff would as before be affected by not filling vacancies as they occurred. The surplus men would be kept on their old work or transferred to similar position on the same or higher rates of pay elsewhere¹²⁰. About standardisation of wages it declared that the fixing up of standard rates of pay at any time did not mean that the specific rates would continue indefinitely because they would be increased from time to time as increased tonnage, increased profits etc., would warrant the increase. Andrews was very satisfied with the scheme and was sure that labour problem would be over. He said 'it was a new step forward in the organisation of labour in conjunction with capital in India'¹²¹. The workers felt that this was to pacify them by throwing few crumbs at them. Therefore, the scheme was 'generally rejected by the workers'¹²². They were quite conscious that 'they are entitled to a bonus in any case'¹²³, but they wanted a definite monthly increase of wages. Their earlier experience had made them feel insecure about bonus as its duration was very uncertain. War bonus was withdrawn from them in 1922. Bonus was actually not the solution, for bonus under this scheme was related to production and profit in the industry and not with

120. Jamshedpur Chronicle : 25 Apr. 1928

121. Amrit Bazar Patrika : 25 Apr. 1928 122. I L-1929 op.cit.

123. I.L. 1929, op.cit.

the cost of living. Amrita Bazar Patrika has also commented that 'JLA made a tactical mistake in not taking workers into confidence while talking of bonus scheme with the Management¹²⁴. Government records show that Andrews realised that he had lost hold on the workers and 'he was reported to have washed his hands off the situation.....each department runs etc., own little strike¹²⁵.

Strangely after the declaration of schemes, rest of the departments also declared strike. On 18 April, 1200 men in the Sheet Mill struck work without a notice to the Company. Hot Mills had to be shut-down altogether¹²⁶. On 21st April Boiler Firemen, Khalasis went out. 'Total 4,000 men, were out¹²⁷. The men of Boiler Department alleged that they had put forward their grievances to the superintendent of the department 5 days earlier. They were told that their case was being looked into and reply would be given in due course. But men could not wait and on 26 April struck work. On 16 April the sweepers and scavengers of Jamshedpur who were virtually under the control of TISCO, went to see Mr. Andrews, in order to represent to him their difficulties with regard to smallness of pay, absence of service rules, their inability to get leave with pay, for a single day. 'At that time a sweeper man was

124. Amrita Bazar Patrika : 9 May, 1928.

125. Report by the Govt. of Bihar-Orissa: Apr. 1928. IL-1929

126. IL - 1929 op.cit.

127. ABP : 29 April, 1928

getting Rs.12 and women sweeper Rs.10-10 a month. They wanted Rs.15 for women and Rs.16 for men¹²⁸. They also pointed out that instead of having free quarters provided for them, as in the case of the sweepers of Kharagpur, they were obliged to build their own quarters. On Mr. Andrews advise they submitted a petition containing above demands to the Manager.

But it seems they were not sure that the grievances would be redressed. They did not wait for a reply and on 17 April went on strike. The sweepers of Golmuri area also ceased work on 20 April in sympathy¹²⁹. The sanitary conditions of the town became so bad that appeal was sent to local health authorities, Public Health Directors etc. to intervene. A mass meeting of citizen on 24 April was held requesting TISCO management to resolve the strike. The Deputy Commissioner of Singhbhum, Mr. Dain tried to convince the sweepers by promising to do anything for them. But strikers refused to believe him saying that 'in 1920 Mr. Scott, the then Deputy Commissioner, promised the same but could not do anything¹³⁰. It could be only on 3 May that the strike was put off when they accepted the mediation of the Labour Association and agreed to abide by the settlement. This time Jamshedpur Labour Association could win the confidence of sweepers only when they promised

128. Ibid. 27 Apr. 1928.

129. II - 1929 op.cit.

130. Amrita Bazar Patrika : 29 Apr. 1928

that 'JLA would pay a penalty to sweepers if it would not be able to bring them increment'¹³¹. The following was the revised scale granted to sweeper.

Table:¹³²

	<u>From</u> Rs. As.	<u>To</u> Rs. As.	<u>By Annual Increment</u> <u>of Rupees :</u>
Male	11 - 4	15 - 0	5 As.
Female	10 - 0	13 - 12	5 As.
Jamadar	13 - 12	17 - 8	5 As.

This was exclusive of the 2 days bonus which they get. This applied to new employees only. The earlier employed workers' wages would be calculated from the present pay together with the increase to which they would be entitled on the number of years service put in, calculated at the above rate.

Though the strike of sweeper was over in May, in various other departments strike continued. On 26 April number of Blast Furnace men decided to go on strike. By now 4,000 men were affected by these strikes. TISCO management kept the boilers fired and working by putting men from other departments, officials, apprentices and newly engaged men. A

131. Ibid. 11 May, 1928

132. JLA Papers - June 1, 1928.

confidential letter written by the Deputy Commissioner of Singhbhum says that 'Management by then decided that in view of the continuation of strike in Boiler and Blast Furnace department they would shut down those department which were affected by those strikers and send the men away in consequence of there being no work for them to do'¹³³. Board of Directors of TISCO also wrote to the Government of Bihar and Orissa that 'Communists were making propaganda in Jamshedpur and Government should help in eradicating their influence among the labour'¹³⁴. Thus faced with a labour movement which Tatas could not solve they raised the bogey of communism to win the favour and sympathy of the Government. It is interesting to note that the letter of Metallurgical Inspector of Jamshedpur to the Government of India says that 'General Manager whom I saw has no idea when the strike will end.....he thinks that there has been no outside influence.... The DC and DSP whom I also saw..... do not believe in outside influence in TISCO'¹³⁵. This effort of Tatas bore fruit only in 1929 when the 'spectre of communism united the British ruling class and Indian capitalists, which later on led to the arrests of prominent communists and labour leaders in Meerut trial case'¹³⁶.

133. Letter by Deputy Commissioner of Singhbhum to the Secretary of the Department of Industries.

IL - 1929

134. Ibid. also RC - 1921 op.cit.

135. Note prepared by Metallurgical Inspectorate on Strike in TISCO. also see RC - op.cit.

136. S.K. Sen : 'House of Tata' P.113.

On the other hand the workers were trying to strengthen themselves by reiterating their confidence in Manick Homi and also inviting the other active labour leader from Kharagpur like Mukundalal Sarker, and Ahuja, to advise them. These leaders told them in the mass meetings that 'there should be a general strike or unending series of department strikes as these not only paralyse the management but cause considerable financial loss, as wages would have to be paid to non-strikers who were rendered idle'¹³⁷. Most of the workers agreed on strike but JLA was against it. The workers were of the view that after the receipt of pay of April they would go on a general strike. Little did they know that this plan would be circulated to the Management and it had the greater strength and power to disrupt the plans of workers. Even before the TISCO Management issued a proper notice for lock out, the letter of the Secretary of Bihar and Orissa Government shows that the local government 'had already arranged for substantial force of police, also an indent on the Military for assistance'¹³⁸.

On 30 April company posted a notice of lock out in Boiler Department and Rolling Mill. It declared that no pay would be given to those men who would be shut out in consequence of this order. This lock-out was to affect 33 per cent of the staff.

137. IL - 1929 op.cit.

138. Ibid.

Events after the Lock-out on 1st May :

After the lockout TISCO gave the alternative to the Crane drivers that they would be dismissed if they refuse to check in at the beginning of their shift or ignore the rules, regulations inside the Works. On 6th May a deputation consisting of one representative from each department which was shut down as a result of Boiler Men's strike, waited on GM and desired to know the reason why they were held off. They also complained that in recent months Company had imposed many new restriction and monthly rated men were reduced to the level of daily employed worker thus depriving them of furlough, leave privileges etc. They insisted that there were manifold department grievances which though small in themselves, were large in their cumulative effect. They also told the GM that Labour Association had not taken the workers into its confidence. GM told the deputation that there was no work for them in the Mill so on 9th May 1,500 strikers from Sheet Mill and Boiler department were discharged¹³⁹.

On 14 May, 49 out of 59 monthly paid workers and 8 out of 48 coolies of Blast Furnace resumed work. That every day a meeting of the workers decided to observe one hour hartal in all the department, of TISCO on 18 May¹⁴⁰. In order to

139. Labour Gazette : Aug. 1928

140. Ibid. also ABP : 19 May, 1928

demonstrate their sympathy with strikers and to induce management to make a speedy settlement . A proposal was also made to form a ^{new} Council of JLA and elect Homi as President. But hartal of 18 May was not very successful.

Labour Association was also holding its separate meetings and asking the labourers to join it. V.V. Giri¹⁴¹ came on 13 May and address the TISCO workers but it was obvious that by then the Association had lost its credibility and the movement was virtually in the hands of Homi.

Between 18 to 23 May the Company was able to start the old Bar Mill, Old Booming Mill and Rail Mill; only 1,200 men of Sheet Mill and 250 of Boiler Mill were out. 200 of discharged men had taken settlement of their dues and left Jamshedpur. On 22 May, 260 men and women of traffic Department struck work but resumed next day. Company dismissed those men and recruited new ones¹⁴².

On 23rd May Homi sent telegrams to the Government of Bihar asking for interventi-on in the strike and urging for the appointment of a committee of enquiry. One ultimatum to the General Manager of TISCO was also sent giving a time limit of 2 days asking him to receive a deputation of the strikers headed by Homi, failing which a general strike would be declared for the whole works on 25 May.

141. ABP : 16 May, 1928

142. Labour Gazettee : 1928 Aug.

In this meeting speeches were made by Mukunda Lal Sarkar and Naidu asking the workers to be firm. Homi referred to the Vernom Hartshorn's remark about Tatas and said that the 'remark would prove true by this hartal, that the condition of the workers were not satisfactory'¹⁴³. It is note worthy that Andrews had left India for U.K. at this time.

Since then G.M. was determined not to see anyone but JLA, the strikers made arrangements for complete Hartal. On 25 May only 2,000 men remained inside the works. It was a complete success. The same day a resolution was passed by the workers demanding¹⁴⁴:-

1. A minimum wage of Rs. 1-2 a day or Rs. 30/- a month
2. A general increase in the pay of the various departments that have submitted representations to the G.M.
3. The immediate stoppage of the reduction of staff.

Appeals were also sent out to various labour organizations all over India for help. N.M. Joshi, the President of AITUC in his reply to the above appeal wrote 'The Jamshedpur Labour Association was a body affiliated to ~~ASH~~ AITUC and Mr. Homi

143. IL - 1929 - Mukundalal Sarkar and Chettiar (see biographical sketch in Appendix-X) were the labour leaders in Kharagpur and had Communist learnings. They were called to Jamshedpur by Homi so that the workers could remain in his hands./ Vernom Hartshorn was the member of Statutory Commission on Steel Industry in India, remark that 'No worse capitalist in the world than Indian Capitalist....Tatas....known to be the worst employee of labour in the world' - IL-L-1928.

144. Report of Bihar and Orissa-Govt. - June 1928. IL - 1929

was acting in opposition to it. Joshi as an officer of AITUC could not side with them unless he made up his differences with JLA.¹⁴⁵ Joshi came to Jamshedpur on 30 May in order to confer with the General Council of JLA on the strike situation. But when he tried to address the workers' meeting he was howled down by the workers and actually 'he had to escape in a car'.¹⁴⁶ At this stage Joshi wrote to the Government of India to intervene and appoint a conciliatory body or an arbitrator to settle the dispute 'in view of the fact the TISCO receives protection from the State'.¹⁴⁷

Strikers on the other hand again observed hartal on 1st and 2nd June. Only 1500 workers turned up to the gates. The shops in all markets also observed a partial hartal but the sweepers and the men in other works in the district did not observe it. Hartal was such a success that G.M. had to issue a notice that 'the work will remain closed until further notice'.¹⁴⁸

At first the strikers treated the notice with disbelief. But when it was realised to be an actual fact, it was propagated by the then leaders that 'it was nothing less than a general strike organised by them'.¹⁴⁹

145. IL - 1929

146. Ibid.

147. Labour Gazettee : Aug. 1928

148. Ibid. also ABP : 2 June, 1928

149. IL - 1929

General Strike :

Now the G.M. declared that he would not deal with Homi even if he is elected the President of JLA. On 2nd June Homi moved a resolution in the workers' meeting, urging a committee of Enquiry to be appointed from the Legislative Assembly, to go into the causes of present unrest and bringing ~~abe~~ about a settlement. It also asked the workers to present themselves for work on 3 June at TISCO gates. But on 3rd June all the strikers were refused admission. A lock-out was declared by the Company.

The Government records reveal that at this stage split in the camp of locked out and discharged men was noticed. Nani Gopal the leader of Sheet Mills discharged employees was said to be forming his own party which comprised about two-third of the Sheet Mill employees and nearly all of 45 Crane drivers. Gopal was against Homi's policies. Some labourers informed the police of Jamshedpur that they intend to organise a campaign against Homi, as he announced the first hartal even before they were ready for it and thus spoilt their plan of wrecking the boilers that day and follow-up with a hartal the next day.¹⁵⁰ Even the tone of Naidu's speeches were noticed as humbler this time. He said that 'Homi was never in favour of General Strike'....!¹⁵¹ This stage can very well be

150. Ibid.

151. Ibid.

said to be the declining period of Homi's leadership. He never had any clear strategy or ideology to run a labour strike.

At this juncture Labour Association ~~was~~ organised a meeting on 11 June and condemned the Lock-out of 9 per cent of employees and the aggressive policies adopted by the Company in the discharge of a large number of employees under the plea of reduction of staff¹⁵². A change in the minds of workers was noticed when on 12 June in JLA meeting Bhawani Prasad, a lieutenant of Homi said that 'Labour Association had not helped men so they had taken Homi's help. But they were prepared to work through the Association if the present office bearers resigned'¹⁵³. Even earlier on 10 June JLA resolved to stand at the back of men and fight for them but strikers declared that they would have no settlement without Homi and that they would have nothing to do with the Association until new elections were held.

At the same time the New Foremen's Association held a meeting and announced that its object was to help to bring about an honourable settlement. They first approached the G.M., if they be allowed in batches in the various department to return to works. G.M. refused to agree. So they met Homi

152. ABP : 8 June. One Hartali said that 'they thought that hartal was an order of the Government'.
also IL - 1929

153. Ibid.

and discussed the strike and pointed out that 'in view of the Management's attitude towards Homi they thought he should retired and let somebody who was acceptable to both sides take his place'¹⁵⁴. A unfriendly observer might say, by now Homi was trying to wriggle out of situation which he helped to be created. He had much telegraphic correspondence with Joshi. Government reports say that 'by 16 June crowd was getting tired of Homi and restless'. It further recorded that 'Homi' has been showing sign of want of confidence in the situation.....and reported to have told the Foremen's Association that he might not be able to continue to control the situation if the men became unruly through starvation'. Homi also told the Inspector of Police that he was in great trouble and he had lost 24 lbs. weight and he wanted to extricate himself from the terrible mess into which he had got¹⁵⁵. 15 June was declared by Homi a national day for labour in Jamshedpur. A huge demonstration took place with placards taken up by men and women displaying 'eternal vigilance is the price of liberty', 'united we stand united we fall', 'Beware of wolf in sheep skin'¹⁵⁶. About 20,000 people attended the procession.

154. ABP : 12 June, 1928. also Labour Gazettee 1928 op.citt

155. IL - I- 1922

Somnath Lahiri has noted in his article that 'in 49 1928 a peculiar picture was to be seen in course of labour movement in Jamshedpur. Whenever the workers went to attend any meeting or join any committee, immediately a sort of private non-official armed force with swords would attack them. Who might be the provoking agency? (means TISCO) Govt. was absolutely neutral in this. Once a meeting, addressed by Subhash Bose was attacked by this force (Bibliography) 'CPI 50th Anniversary Commemoration Vol. 'Communist' : 1975, PP. 171-179

156. ABP : 16 June, 1928

Simultaneously it is noticed that about 5,000 workers left the town and 'many more were following',¹⁵⁷. Again on 23 June a huge demonstration took place before Homi left for Bombay. The main feature of this procession was that women workers participated in larger number and they expressed their 'determination to share equal fate with their male colleagues',¹⁵⁸. They also pleaded 'for 8 annas daily rate for women workers in TISCO',¹⁵⁹

It seems Homi was still not sure of himself and know well that the strike would not come to an end in this way so he suggested that people should leave for their home and leave their addresses',¹⁶⁰. He was only concerned about keeping the leadership in his hand and was least worried that this exodus would weaken the labour strength. Homi thus, used the same tactics as Halder was using earlier. On 25 June Homi left for Bombay¹⁶¹. Saklatwala issued a notice on 26 June announcing the terms on which the company was prepared to reopen the works. The offer of bonus scheme was renewed, bonus being payable monthly when the production was 40,000 tons a month, all reasonable representations concerning increase of wages were to be considered and the earliest possible effect would be given to the decision arrived at, a reduction of appointment, a

157. Prabha Mitra of JLA sent a telegram to ABP - Ibid.

158. Ibid. 24 June 1928

159. Ibid. also see Pioneer - 25 June 1928

160. ABP : 27 June 1928

161. Labour Gazette : Aug. 1928

quarter of the men previously employed would be inevitable which would make more increment possible than could have been otherwise given. The company would in no circumstances grant pay for the period during which the works were closed as the regised service rules provide.¹⁶²

These terms were not favourably received. On 4th July Homi sent telegram that he had accepted arbitration by Visweswar Iyer, Subhash Bose or Joshi, provided all dismissed and retrenched hands were taken back. On 3 July JLA also published a list of grievances and demanded redress. This list goes further in general important details than the list formulated by Homi earlier.

The demands were¹⁶³ as follows :-

1. Sheet Mill and Boiler House men and all hands discharged or reduced for the hartals or their attitude towards the striker must be taken back and ~~their~~ there should be no victimisation.
2. Lock-out and strike period wages must be paid.
3. A general increment to all uncovenanted workers.
4. A general bonus to be extended to all uncovenanted irrespective of their department and nature of work.
5. The minimum wages of all labour to be raised to Rs.30/- and Rs.22/- per month for male and female respectively.
6. Detailed department grievances to be settled in consti tution with labour representatives.

162. Labour Gazettee : also see R.C. - 1931 op.cit.

163. Ibid.

7. A board comprising of representative of both labour and Management to be set up to effect any general retrenchment when necessary.

It also recorded an emphatic protest against the reduction scheme. Homi returned on 8 July empty handed and continued with his propaganda with the help of Sarkar and Chettiar. On 10 July a deputation of JLA met the G.M. and requested him to withdraw the present reduction policy but he remained adamant. Some day the Management opened an Employment Bureau for the re-engagement of those men of various department who wished to be re-engaged. Those who were not would be given a settlement on and after that date. Thus Plate Mill and Merchant Mill could be re-started. The same notices were put in all other departments¹⁶⁴.

This action of management made the strikers furious and a vigorous picketing started. The Metallurgical Inspector of TISCO reported that 'Sikhs, and Telugus were the die hards'¹⁶⁵ Women also participated in picketing with brooms and dirty water buckets posted at important points¹⁶⁶. Many assaults took place and a special magistrate had to be sent by the Government. He issued section 144 from 11 July to 17 July. About 4,000 people joined the works by 24 July. Police was very active ~~and~~ now and made frequent arrests of strikers. On 23 July Magistrate ordered that picketing would not be allowed.

164. IL - 1929 . also Labour Gazette : and ABP : 11 July, 1928

165. IL - 1929

166. Labour Gazette : 1928 . also Bombay Chronicle :
15 July 1928

This terror, brought the men and women back to the Works. But the official records reveal that 'the most skilled workers were not resuming duty'¹⁶⁷. At this stage Homi tried to make compromises with N.M. Joshi¹⁶⁸, and JLA to save the situation. With these efforts Joshi visited Jamshedpur on 16 July and tried to solve the issue but it proved fruitless. Homi was still trying to solve the strike and also trying to retain his leadership, as he discussed with Sethi, the JLA vice-president¹⁶⁹. All he did was to bring out a Labour Bulletin called 'Audi Altaram Partam'¹⁷⁰ in which he tried to explain that the movement was not influenced by Communists and then went on defending his case that he was fighting for justice and not out of revenge.

On 24 July Saklatvala again issued a notice giving new terms of settlement, but they were also condemned by the worker on 7 August. Homi again went to Bombay to consult Jamuna Das Mehta, Joshi etc. Workers were so desperate with both Homi and JLA that when they heard of Subhash Bose passing by Tatanagar in the train they went to the station in large number to see him¹⁷¹. In the meantime by 10 August the attendance reached in the works by 9196 including 1600 hartals. On 11 August Company again put up a notice announcing the

167. Labour Gazette :

168. IL - 1929 and Labour Gazette :

169. IL - 1929

~~169~~

170. Ibid.

171. ABP : 9 Aug. 1928

liberal terms of settlement. But those were again rejected. Same thing happened on 17 th August as well. A printed notice addressed to the employees signed by shareholders also appeared in support of the Company. But its genuiness was doubted that local shopkeepers had signed it¹⁷².

Subhas Bose was approached earlier also many times to come to Jamshedpur but he refused. At this stage, Homi also requested him to come, and Bose accepted the invitation and reached on 17 August. S. Bose had written that he took up the leadership of the strike when it was about to collapse¹⁷³. He asked all the workers to join the strike and criticised the Association, with the result that on 20 August Company's Attendance further thinned down. Homi had called Subhash Bose for the Bengalis in TISCO were not joining the strike.

On the other hand JLA in its effort to restore its prestige requested Bose to accept the Presidentship of the Association in the absence of Andrews and assured him of its support in his guiding the struggle as its President. It is recorded that earlier on 11 August Homi had advised the workers to resume the Work on a slight modification of the terms offered by the Company. Now Subhash became the President of JLA and was widely accepted by the workers as their leader.

172. IL - 1929

173. S.C. Bose - 'The India Struggle' P.216 (1948)
also S.K. Sen . P.111 op.cit.

N.M. Joshi did not like a politician's success in capturing the labour Association. Now Labour Association passed a resolution supporting the activities of the workers and added that as long as a satisfactory settlement was not arrived at, they would continue to keep away from the Works altogether. This resulted in increased picketing. Subhas Bose in his speech said that 'he does not believe that the ultimatum of TISCO Directors was really an ultimatum as some Directors are in sympathy with its strike¹⁷⁴. He further stated that 'an important industry which claims to be a national industry is faced with ruin..... I would have been the first to recommend cessation of struggle if the management had shown a spirit of conceliation¹⁷⁵.

On 1st September, the Directors of TISCO had an informal meeting with the Indian Chamber of Commerce and discussed the strike situation at TISCO. Some of the members of the Chamber were reported to have pointed out that any loss to Tatas which was a national concern would react adversely on all Indian Industries. There had already been a heavy loss to India as foreign manufacturer had in the meantime taken the position which the Tatas had lost in the market¹⁷⁶. Directors then came to Jamshedpur and invited Bose to meet them to discuss the strike.

A prolonged conference from 2nd to 5th September went on. The proceeding of the meeting is unknown. By 5th Sept.

174. Labour Gazette :

175. ABP : 1 Sept. 1928

176. Labour Gazette :

attendance in TISCO rose to 8820. It was only on 12 Sept. that Bose could arrive at a settlement with the Management.

The terms of settlement with Bose were as follows :

1. The men of Sheet Mill, Boiler House, who were discharged for going on strike were restored continuity of Service
2. Payment of one and half month's wages as loans to be repaid in easy instalments.
3. Safety equipment was sanctioned wherever necessary.
4. Maternity benefit was agreed to.
5. The following procedure was adopted for reduction of men considered surplus in the standard force.
 - a) By allowing men to leave voluntarily within 3 weeks of time by providing them with Railway fares to their Homes.
 - b) Full payment of Company's contribution of Provident Fund and one month's extra wages for each year of completed service.
 - c) Reduction by not filling up vacancies in the normal course of events will continue for 12 months from the date of resumption. If at the end of this period the necessary reduction is not made the Company will be free to resort to immediate retrenchment.
 - d) Alteration in works service rules will not be put in force.
6. It was agreed to waive the claim for strike pay as the company agreed to sanction a further sum of Rs. 2 lakhs for increments to the staff making the total amount available for immediate increment

7 lakhs. Instead of 5 as previously announced.

Homi denounced the settlement laying special stress on the failure of Bose to get lock-out wages¹⁷⁷. On 13 September large number of workers went into the Works. But some of Crane drivers, came out again dissatisfied at being put into the spare gang, while some of the Rolling Mill Men also came out and complained of abuses by their Superintendent. The dispute was not really settled. The placing of the large number of excess employees into one spare gang led to considerable discontent. Further discontentment was caused by the failure in the first instance to make it clear to the men that the Company only offered the concession of one month's wages for each year's service to the surplus men and not to those whom they wished to keep. Homi who had recovered his lost prestige by taking up the issue of spare gang, got busy in organising a separate labour union. He encouraged men to take advances of pay from the company in order that he may get the necessary subscription out of them. He collected Rs.1500/- by the end of September, 1928¹⁷⁸. Homi also tried to use the popularity of Philip Spratt (see biographical sketch), by inviting him to address the labourers on 27 September. But it was of no use for he only advocated that labour should unite with JLA.

177. Labour Gazette and IL - 1929 op.cit.

178. IL - 1929

Some correspondence between S. Bose and TISCO General Manager shows that even after the settlement the Company was victimising the workers. Mr. Bose wrote 'power Engineer is still actuated by a vindictive spirit and that since the settlement there has been no change of heart so far'¹⁷⁹. Even the workers were not given the proper settlement and Mr. Bose had to again complain on 13 Oct. to the GM stating that 'men taking settlement had received less money than what they would be entitled to according to our circulation'¹⁸⁰. The application of the new increment scheme also caused considerable discontent as owing to the graded system many of the older hands received no increment, while inexperienced men were given that. 'Some of the Electrical Department men came out temporarily as a protest on pay day'¹⁸¹. Bose represented the matter and the scheme was suspended pending a revision. Homi's party again put all the blame in this connection on Mr. Bose. On 21 Oct. 1928 JLA elected delegates for AITUC session which was to be held at Jharia and passed a resolution condemning Homi's activities. They invited V.V.Giri, Godavari Misra, Sardaul Singh, Khargh Singh to Jamshedpur to do propaganda against Homi¹⁸². Same day Homi enrolled 1,000 members in his Federation. This number increased to 1,400 by the beginning of Nov. 1928. This encouraged Homi to threaten the Company and he declared that Company again will be brought to

179. JLA Papers - Letter of S.Bose to TISCO GM - 20-9-28

180. Ibid. 13 Oct. 1928

181. IL - 1929

182. Ibid.

the conditions to which the strike had reduced it, if early effect should not be given to the term of settlement¹⁸³.

In the beginning of December Homi put into effect his threat of partial strikes in vital departments. On 1st and 4th Dec. work was stopped for brief period by gas-producers, sheet mill, machine shop, blacksmith shop, general construction deptt. But this strike came to an end soon because Company brought a civil suit for damage against Homi and Homi left for Patna on 7th, the day when hartal was called. On 6th the arrival of Gurkha Military Police in Jamshedpur also helped the Company to put on end to the strike. Some picketting, mostly peaceful, did take place and it is reported that 70 to 80 per cent of them were Sikhs¹⁸⁴.

The directors of TISCO were also preturbed due to these development at Jamshedpur, Purushotamdas Thakurdas wrote to Peterson on 21 Nov. 1928 that 'I fear that the G.M. and the Agents have not yet diagnosed the situation correctly, because it appears to me most puzzling why a comparatively insignificant fellow like Homi should hold such a sway over labour than against not only the Executive there but even against such a confidence inspiring politician as Mr. S. Bose. If things are allowed to drift as they have been I am really surprised what might not be in store for steel Company before long'¹⁸⁵.

183. IL - 1929 - 30th Oct. 1928

184. Govt. Reports - December, 1928

185. PT Das Paper - 21 Nov. 1928

Even this did not compell the Management to yield to the demands of the workers and Peterson replied that 'personally I regard Homi as a symptom and not real disease and I am afraid Bose's great handicap is that he has no real knowledge of the conditions and mentality of any large labour organization. We hope to remedy the present position in 2 or 3 months if only we can keep the men working'¹⁸⁶

Inspite of Peterson's determination to solve TISCO labour problem within 3 months, it does not seem that actually it could be solved for a long time. A letter written by Homi on 24 Aug. 1929 to Mr. Peterson, and later on make it clear that at least till the middle of year 1929 the workers of TISCO were still pleading their case with the management to get 'lock-out wages and other such problems which arose during 1928 strike. The G.M., Mr. Alexender admitted in a letter to Mr. Peterson in April 1929, that 'the fact remains that men want lock-out pay and I do not think they will give it up easily, That is, a certain number of them, enough to make trouble if they want to. The men are still smarting under the reduction which they have all along objected to and this coupled with having been told all along that they will get strike or lock-out pay, has made them antagonistic and not

186. Ibid. 22 Nov. 1928

Peterson was the Agent to Tata Sons Ltd.,

care a damn whether they give us a day's work or not.....
Labour is not normal at present here any more than it is
in the Cotton Mills'¹⁸⁷. It was further added by Mr. Peterson
in a separate letter addressed to Purushotamdas Thakurdas
calculating the loss suffered by TISCO workers during 1928
strike that 'the men must have lost in wages last years a sum
of at least Rs. 36 lakhs.....against this loss.....
they have upto date got an extra Rs. 5.17 lakhs. They must
therefore today as a whole be worse off by about Rs. 30 lakhs,
the interest on which at the usual Mahajan's rate of interest
would be Rs. 50,000 a month or more considering the
normal economic condition of the ordinary Indian labour, I
do not see how our men can really stand this loss of Rs.30 lakhs
or pay it off without losing efficiency. Men with such a load
of debt on them, with a grievance against the Company and with
the economic condition so much worsened in a year will never
work properly'¹⁸⁸.

But inspite of this realisation on the part of TISCO
management Purshotamdas Thakurdas the Chairman of TISCO
Directors, did not agree to pay the lock-out wages on the plea
that 'the dangerous precedent of paying lock-out wages which
if set-up, may be quoted against TISCO Directors not only at
Jamshedpur but in all Industrial centres in India hereafter'¹⁸⁹.

187. Ibid. 30 Apr. 1929

188. Ibid. Letter from Peterson to Purushotamdas Thakurdas
1 May, 1929.

189. Ibid. Notes of Purushotamdas Thakurdas - 3 May, 1929

Purshotamdas on the other hand blamed the management and Agent of TISCO for misleading the Directors during the 1928 strike in not negotiating at that time with Homi.

Thus the issues which brought the 1928 strike remained unsolved and struggle, sacrifices of TISCO workers went in vain. Their sufferings increased further when their unity was threatened by the existence of two Unions which came into existence after 1928 strike in TISCO. Mostly militant and many uneducated workers rallied behind Homi who formed the Jamshedpur Labour Federation. Educated and mostly Bengalis remained in the Jamshedpur Labour Association under the leadership of Subhas Bose. Both the Unions tried to weaken each other by making anti-propaganda.

Effects of Strike:

The figures in the Table XXVII indicate the effects of the Strike on the production of steel industry from Jan. to Oct. 1928

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Table - XXVII
(in Tonns)

Month 1928	Pig Iron	Ferro Manganese	Steel Ingots	Finished Steel
January	10,035	154	57,144	39,005
February	58,987	1,380	50,058	35,522
March	60,462	1,038	54,731	33,080
April	56,360	661	48,894	25,791
May	43,810	Nil	43,033	19,058
June	13,962	Production discontinued	Nil	Nil
July	16,304	"	507	2,712
August	23,112	"	5,746	8,538
September	28,526	"	18,191	13,573
October	49,235	"	40,710	33,751

Tariff Board of 1933 had stated that 'the maximum efficiency appears to have reached in February, March 1928, when it will be seen that in the case of bars, plates, black sheet and sleepers, the lowest costs, was equal and or below those estimated by the Tariff Board for 1933-34. In each of these cases the production for the month in question was substantially above the average for the year'¹⁹¹

But that efficiency was reduced by 1928 strike as the above table shows. The same level of efficiency was not reached till 1929-30.

The number of men involved in TISCO 1928 strike was 26,000 roughly from 1 June and above ~~24,93,600~~, 24,93,600 man days lost. It was estimated that Company had to bear a loss of over Rs. 1 ~~crore~~ crore due to strike.

Attitude of the Management and other Forces during
1928 Strike :

TISCO Management's attitude was of a conventional capitalist. It was always anti-labour, as we can notice since 1920 itself, the events prove it. Tatas broke promises and agreements very frequently. Even in 1928 strike Tatas remained very adamant. It refused to revise any one of its policies and also refused to negotiate with the accepted labour

leader Homi. The tricks used by TISCO management were to break the unity of the labour. It went to the extent of diverting the whole issue by blaming 'Communists' for the unrest, when the events proved very clearly that there was hardly any communist influence prevalent among TISCO labour. Tatas tried to use the imperialist forces in the name of eliminating communist element and not solving the basic issues in hand. Later in 1929 Dorabji Tata, Petit Ibrahim Rahmtulla, Cowasji-Jahangir tried to form the Bombay Capitalist Association to put pressure on Govt. to suppress labour movement in India¹⁹². When TISCO failed to get any direct support from the Government it used other methods like locking out the workers and refused to pay wages for the same. Throughout the strike TISCO Management were determined to not to yield to the demands of the workers. Tatas from the very beginning of the strike made it clear that they would only negotiate ~~agreed to~~ ^{with} JLA, though the worker had lost all faith in it. Tatas ultimately agree to a settlement after 4 months strike, only when Subhash Bose became the President of JLA. Though it cost the Company Rs. 1 crore during the strike, the management succeeded in imposing their own terms of settlement on the strikers due to the weakness of the labour movement in TISCO.

192. Quoted by S.K. Sen from P.T.Das Papers F.No.42/2 Wherein a letter to Dorabji Tata, Birla and Thakurdas opposed the ~~movement~~ on the ground that this would upset the alliance between businessmen and Swarajists.

JLA had lost its credibility much earlier than 1928. But even in the beginning of 1928 it became very unpopular due to its compromising attitude and not solving the problem of workers. It refused to participate in any strike and only tried to negotiate with the Management. The workers were dissatisfied with JLA when it said that 'before the strike took place, JLA was not consulted and the demands were not fair, the labourer were not behaving according to JLA constitution¹⁹³. The Association could not read the need of the time and did not take appropriate steps to look into the grievances of the workers, which had reached its limit. The result was the elevation of a man like Mr. Homi to leadership. The disillusionment with JLA is demonstrated in an incident in June while trying to address strikers, N.M. Joshi was hooted out and he 'almost escaped in a car'. Later on the workers agreed to accept JLA representation if the then leadership was changed. But JLA did not held any elections till the end of August 1928. By August Homi had lost his command over the workers and then Subhash Bose merged on the scene, then JLA tried to capture its lost popularity by making Subhash its President. N.M. Joshi did not like Subhash, a political leader, taking over leadership in this important trade Union. However, under Subhash Bose's leadership the JLA took active interest in the workers' cause and issued many pamphlets and resolutions etc. It even

193. IL - 1929. also ABP : 10 Mar. 1928

gave a call for total strike on 29 August, which proved successful. But even Subhash Bose's attitude was open to criticism. When Directors of TISCO invited him for discussion and settlement he was convinced, that Indian industry should be saved as it will effect the independence of India¹⁹⁴. This resulted in a settlement on 12 September which was 'no better than the situation before the strike'.¹⁹⁵. This settlement further divided the Union and ultimately Jamshedpur labour had two Unions by the end of the year 1928. One was old Jamshedpur Labour Association and the other was under Homi, called Jamshedpur Labour Federation.

Homi who came in the picture as a labour leader in 1928, was an employee of TISCO till 1918. (like his father) It is a matter of speculation whether he was attracted in 1928 by ~~some~~ chagrin towards the Tatas. It is very interesting that/ⁱⁿhis evidence to ITB he criticised Tatas for being over staffed and asked to reduce the cost of production by reducing the staff by 18 per cent. And the same person later on fought rationalisation introduced in TISCO on the basis of ITB reports. Whatever his personal reasons may have been workers of TISCO found in him the right person to fight their cause when they were dissatisfied with JLA. As the events

194. The speeches of Subhash Bose mentioned earlier in this chapter makes clear his thinking reg. the Tatas. Also a letter written by Saklatwala to Bose in Sept. 1928 says 'You rightly call ours a national industry and I am certain that you will help us to keep it going'
- JLA papers.

195. IL - 1929

prove Homi was not a good organiser and was not interested in having any Strike. If need be he collaborated with local Government authorities or go to the share holders to use its pressure on Tatas.¹⁹⁶

His intentions were clear when he got panicky on the declaration of lock-out by Tatas on 3 June. He was so upset that he wanted to wriggle out of the situation as he told one of the S.P. that 'he wants to leave it for he has lost 22 lbs. of weight'¹⁹⁷. Government records even say that he was being used by one broker Gaffoor in Bombay who was sending money to Homi. He allegedly got money also from Holland for the strike¹⁹⁸. Since Tatas were not ready to negotiate with him he sought Bose's intervention. But in the process he lost his prestige. For some time Homi was pushed out of the scene. But soon he regained his position when Subhash brought about the settlement which actually brought nothing to the workers. Homi picked up some issues from the settlement like spare gang and lock-out wages and reorganised his group. Ultimately his efforts divided the workers of TISCO under two unions by the end of September 1928.

The above three strikes make it very clear though by negative evidences that no outside influence of any kind had been at work to bring about the strike. It is noticeable that

196. These details I got from Manick Homi in an interview at his place on 27 March 1976.

197. Quoted earlier in this chapter.

198. IL - 1929

after 1920 strike the Directors of TISCO passed a resolution expressing their appreciation of the services of Government officers in bringing about the termination of strike. Even the Government officials wrote in their report to the Department of Industries that 'none of the strikes at Jamshedpur has been either instigated by politicians or due directly to causes other than a labour disputes.....¹⁹⁹. It also noted that 'the real cause was the high prices of food and necessities and the failure of the Company to control prices'²⁰⁰.

In a report submitted by the Deputy Commissioner Mr. Dain in 1928 to the Department of Industries it is note-worthy that he wrote 'in its origin and nature the movement is economic and not political. It is conservative rather than Communistic..... the Communistic element that is a deliberate attempt to subvert the existing social order, played a negligible part in the present strike. Avowed Communist Singaravelu Chettiar and Mukund Lal Sarkar appeared at the outset but exercised very little influence and soon fell into the background. There were a few people of minor importance inside the works avowing the communist

199. Royal Commission on Labour in Bihar :

Vol.IV, Pt. I, 1931 P.123

200. Ibid. P. 125

creed, but they carried little weight. Homi, the chief leader is not a communist. He is an extreme individualist. Until Subhash Bose came the strike has been singularly free from the influence of outside politicians'²⁰¹.

This report of the D.C. of Singhbhum being on the spot study must be true to a large extent and the movement of events also prove the same. Homi relied on Chettiar and Sarkar not for their communist leaning but that they could help him in retaining his leadership. He called Subhash Bose again for the same reason though he turned against him later on. Same thing he did to consolidate his position when the strike was over by calling Phillip Spratt to influence.

201. Ibid. Also the Comments of the Editor of 'Basumati' in 18 July, 1928 say that 'Sarkar and Naidu were not Communist, Chettiar was too old to have any influence in Jamshedpur as also he came there not very often' .

CONCLUSION :

Tata Iron and Steel Company came into existence in 1907 with the efforts of Mr. J.N. Tata and it signalised a big step forward for the native bourgeoisie. Tata's successor received the support of leaders in the political field like Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das, Andrews, Subhas Bose etc. But the latter were not markedly responsive to the demands of the working-classes at TISCO and the Tatas were consistently following a policy of repressing labour movements, often characterising such movements as communist inspired.

We have tried to understand the three initial strikes which took place in TISCO between 1920-28 and also to see how the Indian labour of this national industry was treated by political parties and the owners of TISCO. As a background to this struggle we have tried to explain the composition of labour force, source of labour supply, their number and their wages, cost of living, other working condition etc., to trace the conditions in which the TISCO labour force was living during 1920-28. For labour recruitment in the steel industry its founder Mr. J.N. Tata laid down the policy much earlier. He wrote in 1888 that he 'wanted to draw workers (for textile industry) from many regions to make the threat of combination and dear wages less likely in the future...and the same time prevent the larger strikes'¹. As we have pointed out in

1. see foot note No.7 in ch. I,
P. 9

chapter-I, the TISCO labour force was heterogeneous in its character. This could enable the management to divide workers and thus disrupt their solidarity.

The largest part of the industrial workers of Jamshedpur was immigrant and this was largely from rural areas except for labour demanding special skill. The unskilled labour belonged mainly to Bihar and Orissa which were economically backward areas sending a steady stream of migrants especially at times when there was failure of crops, epidemics, floods, drought etc. This helped TISCO in having a constant flow of labour supply. A fair proportion of workers were freshly recruited from agricultural background and had various links with their home villages even after being 'pushed out' of their villages : this remained a major determinant in both the level of consciousness of workers and their solidarity in a new fraternity. The coercion by lockout and non-recruitment could be more effective in case of temporary, weekly or monthly rated workers. Most of the temporary workers leaving the city after a period of strike can only weaken the struggle as it happened in all the three strikes at TISCO.

Tatas claimed that it was Indianising the steel industry by reducing the number of European staff during the period under review. It is pointed out that this claim is not valid, for, the information from various sources have proved that more jobs were created for Europeans when Indians

who were on high paid jobs were being retrenched. This created strong racial hatred among the Indians which sparked off the strikes. The Europeans staff, in the highest paid and managerial jobs, were recruited directly on contract basis and were called covenanted. They were always given best facilities, extra bonus etc., and were pampered by the Tatas. We have pointed out that in 1927-28 the total wage bill of the covenanted was 32.9 lakhs when their number was only 100 and wage bill for ^{un}covenanted was 113.9 lakhs when their number was 24,208. This agitated the qualified Indians in TISCO who were paid two thirds less than the Europeans for the same work. The uncovenanted unskilled and skilled workers, consisting entirely of Indians, were disadvantaged because of the way they were recruited, besides their service rules, wages, increment etc., Uncovenanted workers were of two types, direct and indirect. Indirect labour was recruited by contractors who normally took away a share of their wages. TISCO found contract labour profitable and less troublesome. The direct labour was exploited by the headman, mistries etc., who demanded their share for helping them to get jobs. There was no system of regular increment till 1928 at least. The workers were on the 'same scale of wages from 10 years'². Further there was disparity in the wages for the same types of work. In 1923-24 the Greater Extension of TISCO was completed and the number of mills increased from 6 to 12. This brought a change in the ratio of skilled, unskilled workers

2. see F.N. No.12, Ch.II P.53

The ratio of skilled worker increased and other semi-skilled, unskilled workers decreased. But no change took place in the wage rates. Actually the total wages fell by 2 per cent in 1918-1928. In objective terms, differential working conditions, varying proportion of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers and the Company's discriminating wage policy together constituted the conditions that could have an adverse impact on the unity and solidarity of workers.

Since there was no system of regular increment and prices were increasing after the First World War, the workers of TISCO were compelled to go on strike to meet their essential needs. We have seen in chapter - II, that Jamshedpur was highest in terms of the cost of living index in the whole province. The TISCO Workers' wages were not keeping pace with the rise in cost of living, apart from price rise their living conditions were also very poor. Housing facilities were inadequate, the surroundings were most unhygienic, lighting and water facilities were negligible, the town officers were terrorising them, no security to their belongings was provided, in the factory the rates of accident were increasing and accident pay was not adequate and frequency remained unpaid, women were denied maternity benefits. All these factors played a role in bringing workers' discontent to the boiling point leading to strike in 1920, 1922 and 1928.

We have given a detailed account of the strikes at TISCO and the demands raised by the workers, on the basis of these facts we make some observations. Strike in 1920 was not caused by the emergence or growth of a well organised labour Union. On the contrary it is during the process of this strike and after a substantial success of the strike that a labour Union with considerable proportion of total workers as its members came into existence.

But the process of growth of the Union did not ipso facto unite the workers. The organizational cohesion necessary for launching and carrying on a strike was still missing. This is evident from the facts of ill-organised partial strikes, absence of persistent effort on the part of leadership for the education of workers, and occasional failure of labour leaders - in and outside the Union to control or direct the spontaneous actions of workers.

Most of the workers had shown an undefeated militancy but the character of the leadership was of a different kind. The facts of intervention and action taken by the well-known leaders of nationalist movement make it clear that they were not in favour of struggle beyond a certain point and except in certain forms. Whether or not they were all wedded to Gandhi's theory of 'trusteeship', they were not prepared to go beyond the conventional norms of collective

bargaining, which is essentially based on the linking of higher wages with higher productivity and higher profit. C.F. Andrews well known for his zeal and compassion as a missionary, but only within the framework of Catholic Christian view of life, could not have led the workers beyond a certain point. Persons like Homi - who does not make any secret of his purely subjective hostility towards the Company could afford to take very militant uncompromising positions, but this bordered on adventurism at the cost of workers' interests.

With the result the strike of 1928 proved a complete failure. Subhash Bose came to a settlement with TISCO management on 12 September 1928 which left the workers no better than before. This gave opportunity to Homi to form a new Labour Federation who picked up the unsettled issues to carry on the struggle. Most noticeable thing was that uneducated militant workers rallied behind Homi and mostly Bengalis and educated Babus remained in Jamshedpur Labour Association, both unions opposing each other. JLA went to the extent of inviting V.V. Giri, Khargh Singh etc. to do propaganda against Homi thus diverting the labour struggle to petty inner fightings.

Obviously this division in the TISCO labour did not help in solving the basic issues and Homi again threatened

in December 1928 to call a strike. This was easily put to an end with the help of Gurkha troops but the Directors of TISCO remained puzzled as to why, as Purushotamdas Thakurdas put it, "an insignificant man like Homi had more hold on workers than Mr. Bose ?"³ The popularity of Homi was not due to his personality or politics ; workers of TISCO did not have any faith in JLA, so they were clinging to the only alternative put up by Homi. We have pointed out in detail how JLA lost its hold since its emergence due to its pro-management attitude. Homi also could not solve the problems of workers till the middle of 1929 as correspondence⁴ between TISCO management and Homi . TISCO management did realize later on that the workers were suffering due to the financial loss but the Directors refused to yield to workers' demand of 'lock-out' pay on the plea that it would be a dangerous precedent for other Indian Industrial Centre as well as for Jamshedpur.

The actual loss suffered by TISCO workers as calculated by Peterson, the Agent of TISCO, was Rs. 30 lakhs during 1928 strike. According to him if usual Mahajan rate of interest was counted it would be Rs. 50,000 a month. On the other hand the Company suffered a total loss of Rupees one ~~lakh~~ crore and the level of efficiency in the Works which had reached on March 1928 to its maximum as calculated by

3. F.N. No. 185, in ch. III, P. 148

4. Foot Note No. 189, 187 in Ch. III, P. 150

Tariff Board for year 1933-34, could not be achieved again till 1930. The total man days lost roughly from 1 June to 12 September, was 24,93,600 and total men involved in the strike were 26,000.

Even this did not stir the TISCO Directors. Actually they continued to collaborate with the Government in their anti-labour attitude and suppressing the workers. The police was always used for breaking the strikes with all sorts of tyrrany, firing, beatings etc. The Company's arguments about productivity, profits etc. were not generally valid. It ultimately succeeded in imposing its own terms of settlement on the strikers due to the weakness of labour movement in TISCO. The movement was weak partly because JLA commanded little confidence and loyalty among workers. TISCO management also managed to influence leaders like Bose who (when directors invited him for discussion and settlement) became convinced that TISCO was a national industry and should be saved as it will affect the independence of India.

TISCO Directors also sent on several occasions appeals to the Government for help in crushing the strike on the plea that Communists were active there. This suspicion was baseless.

We have seenⁱⁿ the chapter - III, that in all the three strikes there was no outside influence active among TISCO workers. Even the Government reports indicate that, 'in its origin and nature the movement is economic and not

political . It is conservative rather than communistic...⁵
Till the arrival of Subhas Bose in Jamshedpur in the end
of August 1928 the strike was free from any outside influence.
Homi tried to bring Chettiar, Sarkar and P. Spratt to
influence the workers, but Homi had no intention to politi-
cally educate the workers and only wanted to keep hold on
Workers with the help of these leaders.

The Working Class did unite inspite of all these
weaknesses. The better paid employees may remain separate
but the workers essentially have that sense of unity which
in their daily experience emerges as the conflict between
capital on one hand and wage labour on the other. That such
unity was there, is proved by the essentially spontaneous
(unorganized) nature of their movement in general and strike
in particular, by the fact that they took initial steps in
many cases, inspite of their leaders.

At the same time spontaneity has its inherent limita-
tions. It cannot by itself generate a systematic process of
radicalisation. Organised conscious leadership which knows
the laws of social development and which acts on the basis of
the knowledge with a definite sense of direction is one
essential condition for really meaningful struggle of
workers.

This could have come only from the Communists but
there was no such hold of communists in this period in
TISCO.

5. Foot note No. 201 in Ch.III, P.157

Appendix - I

Migration in Jamshedpur

For Jamshedpur 1101 budgets were collected and 1040 were accepted. This was distributed over the various communities in the town. The number of Bihari families was as follows :-

<u>Total Number of Families</u>	<u>Number of Biharies</u>	<u>Per centage of Biharies</u>
637	178	27.94

Territorial Distribution of Working Families in Jamshedpur

Bihar	178	Punjab	34
Bengal	71	Madras	51
Orissa	73	N.W.F.P.	9
Utter Pradesh	74	Bombay	--
C.P. , Berar	111	Assam	--
Native States	31	Nepal	1

<u>Total = 637</u>			

105 out of 280 belong to Singhbhum in Bihar Provinces called local. Rest 175 were distributed as below :

<u>District :</u>	<u>Number of Working Families</u>	<u>District:</u>	<u>Number of working families</u>
Mambhum	42	Gaya	14
Ranchi	30	Shahabad	11
Saran	19	Patna	8
Monghyr	19	Muzaffarpur	6
Hazaribagh	17	Darbhanga	4
Champaran	3	Bhagalpur	2
<u>Total = 175</u>			

Local labour formed 37.5 per cent supplied by Bihar. 2/5th come from Singhbhum, Manbhum, Chotanagpur supplied 194 out of 280 or 69.64 per cent.

The distribution of 149 families over the distribution of Central Provinces :

		<u>District :</u>	<u>Number of families</u>
Chattigarh Division		Raipur	118
		Drug	15
		Bilaspur	12
		Chanda	1
		Bhandara	1
		Dhamtand	1
		Jabalpúr	1
		Total :	149

Chattigarh account for 97.3 per cent of total distribution of Central Provinces in Jamshedpur.

Orissa was third in source of labour

- 121 families or 11.63 per cent.

<u>District :</u>	<u>Number of families</u>
Cuttack	56
Sambalpur	32
Ganjam	19
Puri	11
Balasore	3
Total :	121

Bengal follows as 10.23 per cent of families :

<u>District :</u>	<u>Number of families</u>
Dacca	26
Midnapore	20
Bankura	15
Faridpur	11
Barisal	6
Nadia	6
Chittagong	3
Noakhali	3
Burdwan	3
Tippera	2
Hoogly	2
Calcutta	2
Birbhum	2
24 Pargana	2
8 Howarah	1
Darjling	1
Khulna	1
Jessore	1

107

Dacca leads with 26 working families, 22 of them were Muslims, from Faridpur and Noakhali is also important. Almost all the Muslims of Bengal being accounted for by these 3 districts

Madras with a quota of 98 families came fifth or 9.42 per cent.

<u>District :</u>	<u>Number of families;</u>
Vizagapattanam	42
Vellore	25
Madras	11
Godavari	5
Chicacole	3
Anantpur	2
Pulicat	2
Bezwada	2
Palampur	1
Kastna	1
Malabar	1
Raj Mehdry	1
Chittor	1
Dindivane	1
	<hr/>
	98
	<hr/>

Vizagapattanam, Chicacola, Godavari were nearer to Jamshedpur, Telugu curiously formed an overwhelming majority of worker in Jamshedpur.

U.P. sent 97 families consisting of 9.32 per centage.

<u>District :</u>	<u>Number of Families:</u>
Allahabad	17
Basti	12
Rai Barrelli	9

Pertapgarh	8
Benaras	8
Ballia	7
Fatehpur	5
Jaunpur	5
Gorakhpur	4
Banda	3
Azamgarh	3
Cawnpur	2
Mainpuri	2
Gazipur	2
Sultanpur	2
Mirzapur	1
Fyzabad	1
Sahranpur	1
Bulandshaher	1
Merrut	1
Bijnor	1
Lucknow	1
Shahjahanpur	1
	<hr/>
Total :	97
	<hr/>

Punjab consisted of 7.59 per cent:

Amritsar	31
Gurdaspur	21
Jullundhur	9
Camphelpur	6

Lahore	4
Gurgaon	3
Hoshiarpur	2
Hazara	2
Ludhiana	1
	<hr/>
Total:	79
	<hr/>

From Bombay there were 7 families - 6 from Surat
1 from Poona

NWFP sent 7 families from Peshawar, 3 from Mardar

Assam - 5 families all Muslims from Sylhat

Native States made 4.51 per cent

Saraikela	12
Raj Kharswan	10
Mayurbhanj	9
Rajnadgaon	6
Rewa	4
Viziangan	2
Khairagarh	2
Dewar	1
Punna	1
	<hr/>
Total :	47
	<hr/>

Gurkhas were 40 in number or 3.85 per cent
as Durbas. In factory they were negligible.

LABOUR EMPLOYED IN DIFFERENT DEPT.

(The No. of employees represent average daily attendance of men directly employed in the department)

<u>Year :</u>	<u>Covenanted</u>	<u>Uncovenanted</u>	<u>Total :</u>
		BLAST FURNACE	
1923-24	10	2196	2206
1924-25	13	2028	2041
1925-26	12	2004	2016
1926-27	10	1392	1402
1927-28	10	1063	1073
1928-29	10	961	971
1929-30	10	704	714
1930-31	8	828	836
1931-32	6	781	787
1932-33	5	486	491
		OPEN HEARTH	
1923-24	35	1208	1243
1924-25	31	1174	1205
1925-26	29	1076	1105
1926-27	26	921	947
1927-28	26	1007	1033
1928-29	23	713	736
1929-30	23	684	707
1930-31	19	670	689
1931-32	13-	088	701

Source : Statutory Enquiry
1933, Vol.I, P.83

ITB

Statutory Enquiry : 'On Steel Industry in India'
1913 - Vol.I, P.83

DUPLEX PLANT

<u>Year:</u>	<u>Covenanted:</u>	<u>Uncovenanted</u>	<u>Total:</u>
1923-24	20	515	535
1924-25	23	1345	1368
1925-26	20	1286	1306
1926-27	21	1093	1114
1927-28	21	1181	1202
1928-29	18	4870	888
1929-30	17	745	762
1930-31	19	743	762
1931-32	17	749	766

BLOOMING MILL

1923-24	3	305	308
1924-25	3	284	287
1925-26	2	213	215
1926-27	1	215	215
1927-28	1	198	199
1928-29	1	154	155
1929-30	1	169	170
1930-31	1	146	147
1931-32	1	139	140

NEW BLOOMING MILL

<u>Year</u>	<u>Covenanted</u>	<u>Uncovenanted</u>	<u>Total:</u>
1923-24	6	92	98
1924-25	5	353	358
1925-26	7	390	397
1926-27	7	561	568
1927-28	7	521	528
1928-29	5	369	374
1929-30	3	410	413
1930-31	1	432	433
1931-32	1	346	347

~~NEW BLOOMING MILL~~

<u>Year</u>	OLD RAIL MILL			NEW RAIL MILL		
	<u>Covenanted</u>	<u>Uncovenanted</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Covenanted</u>	<u>Uncovenanted</u>	<u>Total</u>
1923-24	13	1338	1351	-	-	-
1924-25	10	1168	1178	9	501	510
1925-26	3	738	741	11	791	802
1926-27	2	695	697	10	1075	1085
1927-28	2	599	601	8	1177	1185
1928-29	2	502	504	6	1032	1038
1929-30	1	595	596	4	956	960
1930-31	-	575	575	3	949	952
1930-32	-	536	536	2	917	9919 919

<u>Year</u>	BAR MILL			MERCHANT MILL		
	<u>Covenanted</u>	<u>Uncovenanted</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Covenanted</u>	<u>Uncovenanted</u>	<u>Total</u>
1923-24	3	873	976	-	325	-
1924-25	1	813	814	5	325	330
1925-26	1	789	790	3	899	902
1926-27	1	727	728	2	790	703
1927-28	1	487	488	2	730	732
1928-29	1	327	328	1	625	627
1929-30	1	366	367	1	921	922
1930-31	1	347	348	1	893	894
1931-32	1	284	285	1	891	892

Year	PLATE MILL			SHEET, BAR, BILLET MILL		
	Coven- anted	Uncoven- anted	Total	Coven- anted	Uncoven- anted	Total
1923-24	5	178	183	3	35	38
1924-25	4	191	195	3	84	87
1925-26	3	251	254	3	146	149
1926-27	2	390	392	3	175	178
1927-28	3	386	389	2	203	205
1928-29	2	263	265	2	162	164
1929-30	2	339	341	1	180	181
1930-31	2	354	356	1	182	183
1931-32	1	311	312	1	254	255

Year	SHEET MILL			SLEEPER PLANT		
	Coven- anted	Uncoven- anted	Total	Coven- anted	Uncoven- anted	Total
1923-24	65	935	1000	-	-	-
1924-25	56	1259	1315	-	-	-
1925-26	23	1174	1197	-	61	61
1926-27	20	1007	2027	-	48	48
1927-28	17	963	980	-	75	75
1928-29	17	1131	1148	-	57	57
1929-30	17	1196	1213	1	88	89
1930-31	13	1168	1181	-	138	138
1931-32	14	1305	1319	-	-	-

APPENDIX - III

Total Direct and Indirect Unconvenanted
Workers in TISCO 1923-26 :

<u>Year :</u>	<u>Coke Ovens</u>		<u>Blast Furnace</u>	
	<u>Total Unconvenanted Direct Labour</u>	<u>Total Indirect:</u>	<u>Total Unconve- nant Direct Labour</u>	<u>Total Indirect</u>
1923-24	2603	635	2196	1050
1924-25	2591	583	2028	1035
1925-26	1776	610	2004	923

<u>Year</u>	<u>Open Hearth</u>	
	<u>Total Unconvenanted Direct labour</u>	<u>Total Indirect</u>
1923-24	1008	374
1924-25	1174	406
1925-26	1076	449

Source : Statutory Enquiry Report
1926, Vol.II, P.115-126

ITB Reports - 1924 : On Steel Industry
~~Evidence~~ Evidence, Vol.I, PP.109-111

DUPLEX PLANT

<u>Year :</u>	<u>Total Direct Uncovenanted Labour</u>	<u>Total Indirect</u>
1923-24	515	266
1924-25	1345	468
1925-26	1286	485

OLD BLOOMING MILL

1923-24	305	215
1924-25	284	219
1925-26	213	373

NEW BLOOMING MILL

1923-24	92	69
1924-25	353	183
1925-26	390	497

OLD RAIL MILL

1923-24	1338	299
1924-25	1168	258
1925-26	738	192

NEW RAIL MILL

1923-24	-	-
1924-25	501	163
1925-26	791	357

MERCHANT MILL

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Direct Uncovenanted Labour</u>	<u>Total Indirect</u>
1923-24	-	-
1924-25	325	67
1925-26	899	146

SHEET MILL

1923-24	-	-
1924-25	935	242
1925-26	1259	388

SHEET, BAR, BILLET MILL

1923-24	35	34
1924-25	84	88
1925-26	146	129

APPENDIX - IV(a)

Monthly Wage per head of Uncovenanted
Workers in TISCO : 1911-1916 (₹ Rs.)

₹

<u>Shop</u>	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Maximum</u>
Coke Ovens	13.97	17.27
Blast Furnace	17.20	31.41
Old Blooming Mill	32.62	41.99
New Blooming Mill	32.62	41.99
Bar Mill	6.18	24.04

Source : ITB Reports, 1924 (On Steel Industry)
Evidence, Vol.I, P. 109-111

worked out from Appendix-iv(a)

APPENDIX - IV(b)

Annual Wages per head (in Rupees) of
Uncovenanted employees in TISCO : 1912-13 &
1915-16 :

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coke Ovens</u>	<u>Blast Furnance</u>	<u>Open Hearth</u>
1912-13	185.92	376.93	182.49
1913-14	207.25	339.48	242.27
1914-15	167.79	271.82	246.71
1915-16	167.90	206.54	236.35

	<u>Blooming Mill</u>	<u>28 inch Mill</u>	<u>Bar Mill</u>
1912-13	391.45	179.25	74.20
1913-14	414.98	185.23	106.29
1914-15	503.93	327.39	167.80
1915-16	483.55	370.07	288.57

Source : Indian Tariff Board Report -
Evidence - Vol.I, 1927

Report on Steel Industry.

P. 104-11

APPENDIX - V

BUDGET No.1

<u>Items</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>Items</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>
Rice	4 - 0 - 0	Matches	0 - 1 - 0
Dal	0 - 13 - 0	Tea	0 - 1 - 0
Atta	0 - 8 - 0	Earthen pots	0 - 4 - 0
Suji	0 - 1 - 6	Others : (House Rent)	2 - 2 - 0
Spices	0 - 8 - 0	Dhobi	0 - 2 - 0
Gur	0 - 6 - 3	Soap, soda	0 - 2 - 6
Salt	0 - 4 - 1 - 3	Correspondence	0 - 2 - 0
Vegetables	0 - 12 - 0	Clothes	4 - 0 - 0
Mustard oil	0 - 8 - 0	Bedding linen	1 - 4 - 0
Coconut oil	0 - 2 - 0	Boots	0 - 8 - 0
Kerosene oil	0 - 3 - 0	Cooperative stores	0 - 8 - 0
Fish	0 - 4 - 0	Religious travel	1 - 4 - 6
Meat	0 - 4 - 0	Home remittences	2 - 8 - 0
Tobacco	1 - 0 - 0		
		Total :	13 - 6 - 3

Source : IL - June 1921 - Family of Neelgonda Hazara, Electrical Control Driver - Wage rate 0 - 15 - 0 per day. Average monthly earning with overtime Rs.35/- ~~Rs. 37/-~~ - Two brothers with a average income of Rs.37/- Rs. 25/- respectively. The first brother is a clerk, second one is a pattern maker in 1920.

APPENDIX-VI

Budget No. II ⁽¹⁾

Budget No. III ⁽²⁾

<u>Items:</u>	<u>Expenditure</u> <u>Rs. ann. P.</u>	<u>Items:</u>	<u>Expenditure</u> <u>Rs. ann. p.</u>
Rice	3 - 9 - 0	Rice	1 - 12 - 0
Dal	0 - 6 - 0	Dal	0 - 12 - 0
Atta	0 - 4 - 0	Atta	0 - 8 - 0
<u>Other articles of food:</u>		<u>Other articles of food :</u>	
Spices	0 - 8 - 0	Spices	1 - 0 - 0
Salt	0 - 2 - 0	Tamarind	0 - 2 - 0
Vegetables	1 - 0 - 0	Salt	0 - 2 - 0
Ghee	0 - 5 - 0	Vegetables	0 - 12 - 0
Oil teel	0 - 6 - 0	Oil teel	1 - 3 - 0
Coconut oil	0 - 2 - 0	Coconut oil	0 - 2 - 0
Oil Kerosene	0 - 2 - 0	Kerosene oil	0 - 3 - 0
Meat	1 - 8 - 0	Sugar	0 - 4 - 6
Tobacco	0 - 8 - 0	Tea	0 - 2 - 6
Milk (condensed)	0 - 10 - 6	Meat	1 - 4 - 0
Tea	0 - 1 - 3	Earthen pots	1 - 4 - 0
Sweets	0 - 8 - 0	Fire woods	0 - 6 - 0
Drink	0 - 12 - 0	Matches, threads, needle	0 - 6 - 0
Earthen pots	0 - 1 - 0	House rent	0 - 6 - 0
Utensiles		Barber	0 - 2 - 0
Fuel fire wood	0 - 9 - 0	Washerman	0 - 4 - 0
Matches	0 - 1 - 3	Soap	0 - 1 - 6
House rent	1 - 2 - 0	Correspondence	0 - 1 - 0
Barber	0 - 4 - 0	Clothes	0 - 8 - 0
Washerman, soap	0 - 4 - 0	Bed linen	0 - 3 - 0
Clothes	1 - 8 - 0	Labour Association	0 - 2 - 0
Religious, social, object	0 - 4 - 0	<u>Total :</u>	<u>10 - 6 - 6</u>
Boots	0 - 8 - 0		
Labour Assosi-	0 - 5 - 0		
Interest ^{ate on} and debts	0 - 12 - 0		
<u>Total :</u>	<u>15 - 6 - 0</u>		

Source: (1) Family of Appaswamy who was a widower, had a widow sister with 2 children - wage rate Rs. 1-4-0 per day. Average monthly income Rs. 53/- including income from overtime work of 4 hrs. daily - in 1920. (2) Family of Sindhi, a carpenter in pattern shop, had a mother, wife & brother - wage rate Rs. 1-2-9

APPENDIX-VII

The size of family of different provinces in terms of
Adults and number of Adults Working in Jamshedpur

Province	No.of adult worker	Size of family in terms of adult	No.of adult supported by single family
Bihar	1.185	4.207	3.55
C.P.	1.298	4.022	3.10
Orissa	1.108	4.306	3.89
Bengal	1.056	4.612	4.37
Madras	1.051	5.092	4.84
U.P.	1.062	4.618	4.35
Punjab	1.038	4.036	3.89
Native States	1.298	4.447	3.45
Nepal	1.025	2.787	2.72
N.W.F.P.	1.000	3.800	3.88
Bombay	1.000	3.786	3.79
Assam	1.000	3.800	3.80
General Average	1.139	4.296	3.77

Size of Family in Jamshedpur - 1939

In 1040 families examined, were comprised of 1631 men, 1968 women, 2292 children. These include dependents living away from the workers. The dependents living away from the wage earner number 259 men, 327 women, 251 children. Thus an average family consisted of 1.564 men, 1.624 women, 2.205 children or 5.398 persons in all. Reduced into adults the size of the average family will be 4.296

APPENDIX - VIII

The consumption scheme of the Worker for each
income grade in Jamshedpur - 1938
(in per centage)

Commodities	Earning less than Rs.10	Earning Rs.10-15	Earning Rs.15-20	Earning Rs.20-30	Earning Rs.30-40	Earning Rs.40-50
1. Cereals, pulses -	68.83	56.42	51.05	45.02	43.22	38.12
2. Vegeta- bles -	8.88	13.45	13.45	13.38	13.40	14.06
3. Salts, spices, ...	5.45	4.93	4.46	4.18	3.89	3.56
4. Sugar	0.89	3.46	4.01	4.79	4.93	4.97
5. Fats	7.91	9.37	10.96	13.10	14.19	16.20
6. Miscella- neous	0.38	0.72	1.34	1.59	1.19	1.25

Source : Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee Report :

Vol.II, P.110

APPENDIX - IX

The Clauses of JLA Appeal withdrawn by the
Association from its pamphlet - 1924 :

P. 15 - clause - 14 :

General

..... there are several other things which should be looked into the Company if it desired the goodwill of their employees. The workers consider it to be harmful to their interests and independence that any officer of the Company should possess Magisterial authority in the town of Jamshedpur. Mr. Sawday one of the European officer of the Company and who had declared himself an avowed enemy of labour in a law court, is at present given magisterial powers which the workers claim, he should not possess, as this power is likely to be used to break the independence of the employees. The workers at Jamshedpur cannot forget the part played by Mr. Sawday during the strike in 1920 in which 5 men were killed and 23 wounded and also in the strike of 1922. The workers fear that if any officers of the Company possess magisterial authority the tragedy of 1920 may not be the last. If the Government of the Country cares to secure the confidence of the people in its judiciary they must avoid the most objectionable practice of investing an employer with magisterial

Source : Labour Department Proceedings - 1924
also BSA - Revenue Deptt. -
Industry - 1924 :

authority over its employees, Mr. Kirkpatrick popularly called 'Char Saheb' was recruited as labour Inspector some time back. Before he got his present job he was employed as Deputy Conservator of Forests in the Imperial services getting about Rs.900/- per month. It is not known why he left the Government service carrying a much higher pay and accepted service on a lower pay in a private Company. But this much is known that though he had put in about 11 years service under the Government, yet he is not getting the usual pension, but the minimum pension of Rupees 100 only a month. There is a decree of heavy sum of money against him. Half of his pay is under attachment. The appointment of such a person as labour Inspector is considered very objectionable by the men, the workers consider his activities at Jamshedpur as being detrimental to their interest as well as those of the Company.

P. 17 - Clause - 15

Gambling, Thefts, Dacoities, Murders :

..... serious affairs prevailing at Jamshedpur as regards the insecurity of life and property of the people caused by the abnormal frequency of thefts, dacoities and murders etc. There is lot of gambling going on,

what to say of thefts which are almost a daily occurrence, there are many instances of thefts having been committed in day time. A man goes to work looking his quarter, on his return home he finds that he has been deprived of his cooking utensils even. Often even coming home on days of payment of wages have been black mailed and even murdered in some cases. We regret to say that hardly any offender have been detected and the culprits punished. Government would be guilty of criminal neglect of duty which the state owes to the people if this terrorism is not put down in the near future.

APPENDIX - X

Biographical Sketches

1) Chakravorty, Byomkesh :

He was a reputed barrister and an industrialist, was also a prominent political worker since the days of the Swadeshi Movement in the early years of 20th century. Took a leading part in founding the student Association - 1874-75. His activities confined to Bengal. A member of Indian National Congress he joined non-Cooperation movement in 1920-22 , but did not follow Gandhi blindly. Later joined Swarajist party. He was against the abolition of the Zamindari system and was Secretary of Bengal Landholders' Association 1910, was associated with Bengalee journals. As a delegate to the special session of Indian National Congress held in Bombay, he went in 1918 and spoke on Reform Resolution and in 1919 analysed the Government policy of exploitation in India (Source : P.K. Sen's edited 'Biographies of Nationalist Leaders')

2) Suren, Halder :

He was an associate of B. Chakravorty and was also a lawyer in Bengal.

3) Bangiya Jana Sabha :

This association was contacted by Jamshedpur workers and since B. Chakravorty was associated with this

Sabha and nothing more is heard of this sabha, I can assume that this Sabha must be one of the small associations which came into existence in Bengal working for social welfare and non-cooperative movement in the area on the Congress line.

4) Chettiar, - Mylapor Singravelu :

He was head of the District Communist organization in Madras and issued a signed pamphlet at Indian National Congress, Gaya entitled 'New Manifesto to Congressmen' based on M.N. Roy's programme. Since 1920 he had taken but a small part in Communist affairs, though earlier he was arrested in 1924 and was accused of Cawnpore Bolshevick Conspiracy Case. In December 1924, M.N. Roy dropped him regarding him as stupid and inefficient. In 1928 he was running the Railway Strike at Khajapur along with Mukund Lal Sarkar and visited Jamshedpur for three four times at the request of Homi.

('Communism in India - 1924-27 ')
by D. Petric - Cal. 1972)

5) Mukherjee Nani Gopal :

He was one of the members of the Executive of Jamshedpur Labour Association. He was convicted at a very tender age in the Lal Bazar Bomb case and sentenced to transportation for 12 years in Andamans. Later he joined TISCO and organized the Crane drivers to go on a strike

in 1928. He was against the policies of JLA and for some time followed Manick Homi. Later on Nani Gopal turned against Homi also.

(M. Ghosh - 'Our Struggle'

also Somnath Lahiri's article in the
50th Anniversary of Communist Party
of India, Collections -

'Communist' - 1975)

6) Manick Homi : -

He was a parsi and was an ex-worker of TISCO. He went to America for higher studies and on his return asked for a higher paid job in TISCO. He was refused and in disgust he left TISCO to become a barrister. Since 1923 he is working in Jamshedpur Civil Court. His father was also an employee of TISCO but he was dismissed later due to Manick Homi's attitude towards TISCO. Manick Homi is still alive and owns a big house on the other bank of river Subernrekha. Earlier he owned an estate of 5,000 bighas. The events show that he was an individualist and was very vindictive. In 1924 he gave evidence to Indian Tariff Commission against the TISCO. He made friends with all types of people and tried to collaborate with Government officials, Englishmen working in TISCO, shareholders of TISCO, Police Officers etc., if it serve his purpose. He even tried to compromise with N.M. Joshi when he found that he was losing control over the workers. During his visit to Bombay he met the Directors of TISCO and he admitted to me ^{in an interview} that some of the Directors were his personal friends. It was he who brought Subhas Bose to Jamshedpur, though later on

he turned against him when Homi was pushed into the back-ground, during 1928 strike.

(Source : 'My Interview with Manick Homi,'
Government Records, and a Labour
Bulletin issued by Manick Home
naming 'Audi Alterani Partain'
dated 20-7-1928)

7) Naidu :

He was a pupil of V.V. Giri and was basically a trade union leader. He was active in Railway Strike at Kharagpur at the time of TISCO strike in 1928.

(IL - 1929)

8) Sarkar, Mukundlal.

He was a colleague of Chattiar and together with him in 1927-28 he was conducting Railway strike at Khargpur. In 1929 he was given along with Chettiar a sentence of 10 years by the Government. He was the first trade Union leader in the earlier years in B.N. Railway striks and organized their movement along with the foremen there.

(IL - 1929)

9) Spratt, Phillip.

He was a young Communist of Dowring College, Cambridge, came to India in Dec. 1926, ostensibly on behalf of a firm of book seller, but in reality to open a labour publishing houses in India through which Soviet money could be received and distributed. He attended the Communist Conference held in Delhi at the end of May 1927, and got in touch with leading Communists in India.

(D. Patric's: 'Communism in India'
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- Office-bearer of JLA
3. P. Aiyaswamy
- Member of Conciliatory Board, 1924
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