

ried couples is projected to increase more slowly in coming years. Such changes will undoubtedly have some impact on the family earnings profile. Thus, to understand the significance of changes in family earnings, analysts will need to examine the many demographic trends relating to families. □

— FOOTNOTES —

¹ The Bureau of Labor Statistics first released quarterly family earnings data in a press release entitled "New Data Relate Workers' Earnings to the Families in Which They Live," USDL 80-188, Mar. 27, 1980. The data continue to be published on a quarterly basis.

Earnings information is obtained from the Current Population Survey (CPS) only for families with wage or salary workers. The CPS is a sample survey of some 60,000 households (65,000 prior to May 1981) conducted monthly for the Bureau of Labor Statistics by the Bureau of the Census, with coverage in all 50 States and the District of Columbia. The survey provides basic information on the labor force, employment, and unemployment. The earnings information is collected each month from only a quarter of the sample and cumulated to provide quarterly and annual estimates. For a description of the procedures used to develop the weekly earnings data, see *Technical Description of the Quarterly Data on Weekly Earnings from the Current Population Survey*, Bulletin 2113 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1982).

² For an extensive discussion of these data, see *Weekly and Hourly Earnings Data from the Current Population Survey*, Special Labor Force Report 195 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1977).

³ For a description of these data, see "Explanatory Note" in *Employment and Earnings*, January 1981, pp. 228-35.

⁴ See Beverly L. Johnson, *Women Who Head Families*, Special Labor Force Report 213 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1978).

⁵ The CPI-W refers to the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers. For a discussion of the general method of computing the Consumer Price Index, see *The Consumer Price Index: Concepts and Contents over the Years*, Report 517 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1978).

⁶ It should also be noted that in 1981, on average, about 2.9 million people a week received unemployment insurance benefits which averaged a little over \$100. Data on unemployment insurance recipients and amounts can be obtained from the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Unemployment Insurance Service, Division of Actuarial Services.

⁷ For a discussion of demographic trends and how they will affect families by the end of the century, see George Masnick and Mary Jo Bane, *The Nation's Families: 1960-1990* (Joint Center for Urban Studies of MIT and Harvard University, 1980).

Analysis of work stoppages in the Federal sector, 1962-81

EUGENE H. BECKER

Since 1962, 39 work stoppages by Federal Government workers have been recorded by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Office of Personnel Management.¹ These

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stoppages occurred despite legislation explicitly prohibiting any type of strike activity by Federal workers.

The statutory prohibition began with the Lloyd-LaFollette Act of 1912. This act gave postal workers the right to organize, as long as they did not join unions asserting the right to strike.² Later, the strike ban was extended to cover other Federal workers and was codified in section 305 of the Labor-Management Relations Act of 1947, which read, in part:³

It shall be unlawful for any individual employee of the United States or any agency thereof including wholly owned government corporations to participate in any strike. Any individual employed by the United States or any such agency who strikes shall be discharged immediately from his employment, and shall forfeit his civil-service status, if any, and shall not be eligible for reemployment for three years by the United States or any such agency.

Criminal penalties were added to the body of antistrike legislation in 1955.⁴ In 1966, strike activity by Federal workers was further proscribed in the U.S. Code relating to Federal employment. The statutes prohibited the holding of a Federal job by persons who (1) participate in a strike, (2) assert the right to strike, or (3) belong to an organization that asserts the right to strike against the U.S. Government. The penalties for noncompliance were a fine of not more than \$1,000, or a jail sentence of up to a year and a day. More recently, the ban on Federal strike activity has been codified in Title VII of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, which states that, for a Federal employee, ". . . it shall be an unfair labor practice . . . to call, or participate in, a strike, work stoppage or slowdown, or picketing of an agency in a labor-management dispute if such picketing interferes with an agency's operations, or . . . to condone any activity described in this paragraph by failing to take action to prevent or stop such activity . . ."⁵

In 1971, the United Federation of Postal Clerks challenged the constitutionality of the laws proscribing strike activity by U.S. Government employees.⁶ Among other complaints, the union contended that terms such as "strike" and "participates in a strike," language common to all the laws in question, are so vague as to be unconstitutional. However, the court held that there was no vagueness in the two terms, and that, indeed, they "occupy central positions in our labor statutes and accompanying case laws . . ." Subsequently, the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed the ruling of the lower court that the laws under attack were constitutional.⁷

Work stoppages by Federal employees occurred as far back as 1835, when civilian blue-collar yard workers of the Navy Department in Washington, D.C., struck over working hours and for a "general redress of grievances."⁸ After appealing to the Secretary of the Navy, but gaining little satisfaction, the workers returned to

Table 1. Work stoppages by Federal employees, 1962-81

Beginning date	Duration (calendar days)	Establishment and location	Union involved	Workers involved	Issues	Penalties
1962: Jan. 16	2	Tennessee Valley Authority, Paradise Power Plant; Drakesboro, Ky.	International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (AFL-CIO)	190	Dispute over alleged unsafe working conditions	Employees returned to work without penalty after labor-management interviews.
Mar. 16	6	Tennessee Valley Authority, Paradise Power Plant; Drakesboro, Ky.	International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers of America (Ind.)	85	Assignment of truck driving duties to driver temporarily idle	Employees returned to work following labor-management interviews; three employees were suspended for 28 days.
June 20	10	Tennessee Valley Authority, Paradise Power Plant; Drakesboro, Ky.	International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Shipbuilders, Blacksmiths, Forgers and Helpers (AFL-CIO); International Association of Bridge, Structural and Ornamental Iron Workers (AFL-CIO)	350	Jurisdictional dispute over erecting slag tanks by employees represented by Iron Workers	Employees returned to work without penalty after labor-management interviews.
July 30	24	Tennessee Valley Authority, Paradise Power Plant; Drakesboro, Ky.	Sheet Metal Workers International Association (AFL-CIO)	2,500	Work assignment procedures and pay scales	Employees returned to work following labor-management interviews; the 85 sheet metal workers who began the stoppage were fired.
1968: Nov. 30	3	St. Elizabeth Hospital; Washington, D.C.	American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFL-CIO)	103	Alleged violation of position classification standards, work relationships, and laundering of uniforms of male nursing assistants	Issues settled through labor-management meetings. No penalties were imposed.
Dec. 11	8	Tennessee Valley Authority, Brown's Ferry Nuclear Plant; Athens, Ga.	International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (AFL-CIO)	1,496	Suspension of entire electrical crew for violating published job rules	Employees returned to work without penalty following labor-management interviews.
Oct. 9	2	Hunter's Point Naval Shipyard; San Francisco, Calif.	Laundry and Dry Cleaning International Union (AFL-CIO)	80	Grievance procedures, working conditions, and disciplinary actions	Employees returned to work without penalties when shipyard agreed to immediate negotiations on a contract.
1969: June 18	2	Federal Aviation Administration; interstate	Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (AFL-CIO)	485	Alleged remarks made by head of FAA downgrading the role of controllers in policing air traffic	About 100 workers were temporarily suspended and PATCO lost its dues check-off privileges.
July 1	2	U.S. Post Office Department; New York City	National Association of Letter Carriers (AFL-CIO); National Postal Union (Ind.)	72	Size of second year wage increase	Employees called in sick; those found not to have been sick were placed on leave without pay for 2 weeks.
1970: Mar. 18	9	U.S. Post Office Department; nationwide	National Association of Letter Carriers (AFL-CIO); National Postal Union (Ind.); United Federation of Postal Clerks (AFL-CIO); The National Association of Special Delivery Messengers (AFL-CIO)	152,100	Retroactive pay increase, postal reform, and compression of pay schedule	All issues were settled by special legislation (PL 91-23), which provided for a 6-percent retroactive pay increase and the enactment of the Postal Reorganization and Salary Adjustment Act. No penalties were imposed.
Mar. 25	22	Federal Aviation Administration; nationwide	Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (AFL-CIO)	2,319	Employee reassignment, mediation of grievances, and union recognition	66 controllers were fired; about 1,800 were suspended 1 day for each day they stayed off the job.
May 25	1	U.S. Government Printing Office; Washington, D.C.	Columbia Typographical Union (AFL-CIO)/International Typographical Union	1,400	Manner in which the pay-setting formula was applied	Formula was revised. No penalties were imposed.
June 8 ¹	7	U.S. Department of Agriculture; Alabama	American Federation of Government Employees (AFL-CIO)	Not known	Federal poultry inspectors refused to cross a National Farmer's Organization picket line for fear of physical harm	Inspectors who had not reported for work were considered absent without leave and were not paid for the time of their absence.
1971: April 5	10	Tennessee Valley Authority, Nuclear Project; Daisy, Tenn.	International Association of Bridge, Structural and Ornamental Iron Workers (AFL-CIO)	990	Work assignment	No information available.
May 4 ¹	3	Department of Housing and Urban Development; Washington, D.C.	None	175	Alleged bias in employment practices	Some employees were charged with being absent without leave; others were warned about their actions.
June 17 ¹	1	Naval Publication and Forms Center; Philadelphia, Pa.	Laborer's International Union of North America (AFL-CIO) was official representative but judged not to be involved	19	Dissatisfaction over workload and low pay	Involved workers were listed as absent without leave and given formal letters of reprimand; two supervisors were given 1-day suspensions.
June 23	5	Library of Congress; Washington, D.C.	None	35	Wages and working conditions	All employees suspended and ordered to report back to work; 13 who did not were fired.
1973: Jan. 1	1	St. Elizabeth Hospital; Washington, D.C.	None	14	Position classification	Letter given to each employee spelling out the illegality and consequences of concerted actions against the Federal Government.
May 1 ¹	5	Army Air Force Exchange; Charleston, Ohio	American Federation of Government Employees (AFL-CIO)	61	Job classification	Three employees were discharged; the others were not paid for the time they were out.
July 31 ¹	1	Air Force base post exchange; Ft. Dix, McGuire, N.J.	None	60	Reduction in workweek from 40 to 35 hours	No penalties were imposed.
Sept. 24	12	Tennessee Valley Authority, Brown's Ferry Nuclear Construction Site; Athens, Ala.	United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States (AFL-CIO)	460	Hiring of nonunion welders because union allegedly did not furnish TVA with union welders	Following labor-management interviews, 165 steamfitters were fired; others returned to their jobs.

Table 1. Continued—Work stoppages by Federal employees, 1962–81

Beginning date	Duration (calendar days)	Establishment and location	Union involved	Workers involved	Issues	Penalties
1974: Jan. 21	4	U.S. Postal Service: Jersey City, N.J.	American Postal Workers Union (AFL-CIO)	475	Change in working hours	U.S. District Court ordered workers to return to work and submit grievances to arbitration.
May 1 ¹	2	Mare Island Naval Shipyard: California	Metal Trades Council	80	Change in pay structure	Employees were not paid for the days they were out.
May 9	3	Army and Air Force Exchange Service: Charlestown, Ind.	American Federation of Government Employees (AFL-CIO)	64	Protest over Department of Defense wage and salary survey	Employees returned to work without penalty following labor-management talks.
May 16 ¹	3	Puget Sound Naval Shipyard: Washington	Metal Trades Council	60	Change in pay structure	Employees were not paid for the days they were out.
May 16	1	Washington National Airport Police: Virginia	International Brotherhood of Police Officers (NAGE)	33	New work rules prohibiting airport police officers from carrying home their service revolvers	No penalties were imposed.
1977: June 30 ¹	1	Federal Aviation Administration: Los Angeles Oakland, Calif.	None	16	Job classification	No penalties were imposed.
1978: July 21	8	U.S. Postal Service Bulk Mailing Center: New Jersey and California	American Postal Workers Union (AFL-CIO)	4,750	Dissatisfaction over terms of tentative agreement reached by union and Postal Service (main issue was size of wage increase)	About 125 workers were fired, 120 temporarily suspended, and 2,500 received letters of warning.
1979: Nov. 11 ¹	1	Norfolk Naval Shipyard: Virginia	None	23	Pay rules in effect for trial run of new aircraft carrier	No penalties were imposed.
1980: April 21 ¹	1	Department of Energy (Phoenix Western Area Power Administration): Arizona	None	60	Retroactive pay	Involved workers charged with being absent without leave.
June 20 ¹	1	Department of the Interior (Grand Coulee Dam): Arizona	International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (AFL-CIO)	183	Protest over size of Federal wage increase	No penalties were imposed.
June 25 ¹	1	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (hydroelectric dams in Oregon, Idaho, Washington, and Montana)	None	250	Protest over size of Federal wage increase	59 workers were reprimanded.
July 28	10	Tennessee Valley Authority, Phipps Bend Nuclear Plant: Surgoinsville, Tenn.	15 construction unions	900	Discharge of ironworker who allegedly struck supervisor.	42 workers were fired and 210 were suspended for 1 year.
Aug. 5 ¹	1	Immigration and Naturalization Service: New York City	American Federation of Government Employees (AFL-CIO)	50	Immigration and Naturalization Service policy towards Iranians	No penalties were imposed.
Aug. 19 ¹	1	Veterans Administration: Denver, Colo.	None	12	Disapproval of proposed pay raises	Involved workers charged with being absent without leave and reprimanded.
Sept. 17 ¹	1	Federal Aviation Administration: Anchorage, Alaska	None	15	Recruitment policies	Involved workers charged with being absent without leave and reprimanded.
Dec. 15 ¹	1	Veterans Administration Hospital: Los Angeles, Calif.	None	13	Disapproval of proposed special pay rates	Involved workers charged with being absent without leave and reprimanded.
Dec. 20 ¹	1	Veterans Administration Hospital: San Francisco, Calif.	None	18	Pay comparability	Involved workers charged with being absent without leave and reprimanded.
1981: Aug. 3	81	Federal Aviation Administration: nationwide	Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (AFL-CIO)	12,500	Size of wage increase, length of workweek, and early retirement	About 11,500 workers who did not return to work during a presidentially mandated grace period were fired.

¹Information provided by the Office of Labor-Management Relations of the Office of Personnel Management (formerly the U.S. Civil Service Commission).

their jobs. Between 1835 and 1937, there were at least 25 other stoppages by Federal employees, mostly civilian blue-collar workers of the Army and Navy Departments. These stoppages were “primarily strikes of mechanics for wage and hour improvements just as were strikes of such workers in the private sector.”⁹

There were some exceptions to the general rule of Federal strikes by only blue-collar workers. For example, in 1907, 26 postal employees in Butte, Mont., struck over wage and reclassification issues. Eight of them were replaced when they failed to return to their jobs. In 1937, a strike by Federal public health workers

ended when the national union, the American Federation of Government Employees, expelled the local for violating the no-strike clause in its constitution.

Between 1937 and 1957, the Bureau of Labor Statistics did not keep separate statistics on Federal strikes. Rather, it distributed such data among the industries in which the strike occurred. There were no Federal strikes during 1958–61. However, between 1962 and 1981, there were 39 stoppages involving Federal workers.¹⁰ (See table 1.) No stoppages occurred in 8 of the years, and almost a quarter of them occurred in 1980.

All types of workers—blue-collar, white-collar, ser-

vice, professional and technical, and laborers—have participated in strikes against the Federal Government. Eight of the 39 strikes involved construction workers at Tennessee Valley Authority installations, most of which were under construction at the time of the strike; four involved postal carriers and mail clerks, and the 1970 postal strike involving 150,000 workers was the largest Federal stoppage; air traffic controllers participated in five strikes, including an 81-day dispute in 1981, the longest Federal strike on record, which resulted in the firing of approximately 11,500 controllers; U.S. Naval shipyards had four stoppages; Army and Air Force post exchanges and the Veterans Administration each had three; and other Federal stoppages involved police, hospital workers (nurses' aides), custodial workers, typographers, and clerical workers. (See table 1.)

The issues surrounding Federal work stoppages were as broad as those found in private sector strikes. Stoppages occurred over safety issues, work assignments, jurisdictional questions, pay scales, job classification, working conditions, job rules, wages, union recognition, union security, working hours, and general grievances.¹¹ However, wages or wage-related issues were either primary or secondary causes of more than half the strikes, suggesting that Federal employees, like their counterparts in private industry, most often strike to improve their economic standing.

Penalties for Federal employees who engage in strikes include dismissal, suspension for various periods of time, written warnings and reprimands, and loss of pay. The following tabulation summarizes the penalties imposed in the 39 Federal work stoppages (multiple penalties were imposed in some stoppages):

Penalty	Incidence
Reprimand	9
Loss of pay	11
Temporary suspension	8
Discharge	8
No penalty	14
Information not available	1

For most Federal employees, the settlement of disputes is governed by the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978. This act gives the Federal Labor Relations Authority the responsibility of deciding unfair labor practices cases which, among other things, include engaging in or failing to prevent or stop a strike or work stoppage. For the Tennessee Valley Authority, however, the penalties are determined by a labor-management board, the Committee of the Tennessee Valley Trades and Labor Council. The council members interview all participants of a strike to determine: (1) the cause of the dispute; (2) the person(s) primarily responsible for the strike; (3) if the participant(s) may return to work; (4) what statement, if any, to include in the employee(s) records, and (5) the appropriate penalty against individu-

als found to have instigated the strike or who failed in their responsibility to attempt to prevent the action. Since 1962, the council has determined that dismissals were the appropriate remedy in 3 of the 8 TVA strikes, and suspensions for varying lengths of time in at least two strikes; in three others, the workers returned to work without penalty.

In 2 of the 4 postal strikes, workers were discharged or suspended for varying lengths of time and received letters of reprimand. No penalties were imposed in the other two stoppages, including the 9-day strike in 1970 which involved more than 150,000 postal employees.

Air traffic controllers were penalized in 4 of their 5 stoppages, having multiple penalties imposed in at least one stoppage. In addition, the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization temporarily lost its dues checkoff privileges as a result of their 1969 walkout and was decertified as the controllers' bargaining agent following their nationwide stoppage in 1981. This is the only incidence of decertification in any Federal dispute since 1962.

The most prevalent disciplinary action was being charged absent without leave and, in most cases, losing a day of pay for each day off the job. Written reprimands were the second most frequent penalty, followed by temporary suspensions and discharge. □

—FOOTNOTES—

¹ Information on 18 of the 39 stoppages was obtained from unpublished records of the Office of Personnel Management.

² 37 Stat. 555 (1912), 5 U.S.C. 652. The act states, in part, that membership in unions "imposing an obligation or duty . . . to engage in any strike or proposing to assist . . . in any strike against the United States" would result in grade reduction or loss of the employee's job. See David Ziskind, *One Thousand Strikes of Government Employees* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1940).

³ Section 305 of the Labor Management Relations Act was repealed in 1955. However, at the same time, 5 U.S.C., Secs. 118p and 118r were enacted, retaining the prohibitions against strikes by Federal employees. These two sections were subsequently replaced in 1966 by 5 U.S.C., Secs. 3333 and 7311, and by 18 U.S.C., Sec. 1918.

⁴ Title 5, Sec. 118r of the United States Code.

⁵ Title VII had its antecedent in Executive Order 10988, which declared that an orderly and constructive relationship between unions and management was government policy. The number of Federal workers represented by unions increased substantially after this Executive Order was issued in 1962. See *Wage Chronology: Federal Employees Under the General Schedule Pay System, July 1924–October 1974*, Bulletin 1870 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1975), p. vii.

⁶ The challenged laws were 5 U.S.C., Sec. 7311 (3) which forbids anyone from accepting or holding a Federal job who "participates in a strike;" 18 U.S.C., Sec. 1918 which makes strikes against the Federal government a criminal offense and provides penalties for violations; 5 U.S.C., Sec. 333 (par. C) which requires no-strike affidavits from Federal workers; and Executive Order 11491. See *United Federation of Postal Clerks v. Blount*, D.C.D.C. 1971, 325 F Supp. 879.

⁷ 92 S.Ct. 80, 404 U.S. 802, 30 L.Ed.2d38.

⁸ Ziskind, p. 24.

⁹ Ziskind, p. 32; the last Federal strike noted by Ziskind occurred in 1937.

In addition, during 1917–20, when the United States vested control

of the Nation's railroads and harbors in the Federal Railroad Administration, there were 46 stoppages involving railroad, marine, and waterfront employees. However, because of the temporary and emergency nature of Federal involvement in these industries, these stoppages are not considered bona fide Federal stoppages, nor are the large number of stoppages by participants in Depression-era Federal public works projects.

¹⁰ These disputes include all Federal work stoppages lasting a shift, full day, or longer, and involving at least six workers. The Office of Personnel Management, in addition, takes account of all Federal job actions including informational picketing, walkouts (however short), sickouts and sit-ins, and other actions that may interrupt or have the potential to interrupt work routine. However, unless the job action met the Bureau's definition of a full shift and at least six workers, it was not included in the 39 stoppages noted. Stoppages culled from the Office of Personnel Management records are noted in the table.

¹¹ Federal law limits collective bargaining by Federal employees to nonwage issues. Exceptions to this rule, however, are air traffic controllers and employees of the Postal Service, Government Printing Office, and Tennessee Valley Authority. Seven of the twenty wage-related stoppages involved employees of these four agencies.

An overview of the population below the poverty level

The number of persons below the poverty level rose from 24.5 million in 1978, to 25.3 million (11.6 percent of the total population) in 1979. Statistically significant is the fact that the percentage of the population below the poverty level was unchanged.

Although the poverty rate for all persons was 11.6 percent, many groups had poverty rates well above or below the national average. For example, persons in families maintained by women with no husband present, had a poverty rate of 30 percent, compared with persons in families maintained by men which had a poverty rate of only 6 percent. Despite the increase in the total number of persons below the poverty level during 1978-79, only a few of the major subgroups within the population experienced significant increases in the number of poor or the poverty rate.

There were 16.8 million whites and 7.8 million blacks below the poverty level in 1979—not significantly different from the previous year. As in earlier years, the poverty rate for whites (9 percent) was much lower than the rate for blacks (31 percent). Blacks accounted for 12 percent of the total U.S. population, but they

made up 31 percent of the poverty population. About 2.9 million persons of Spanish origin were below the poverty level (11 percent of the poverty population) in 1979. Their poverty rate, 22 percent, was the same as in 1978.

The number of poor persons 65 years old and over increased from 3.2 million in 1978 to 3.6 million (a 15-percent poverty rate) in 1979. This increase probably occurred because their income (other than Social Security) did not keep up with inflation (which rose to 11.3 percent in 1979).

There were 15.7 million persons below the poverty level living in metropolitan areas. Of these, 9.5 million lived in central cities and 6.2 million lived in suburban areas. Poverty rates were the highest in 1979 for central city residents (16 percent) and lowest for suburban area residents (7 percent).

Of the 25.3 million persons below the poverty level in 1979, 42 percent lived in the South. The poverty rate for persons living in the South was 15 percent, compared with 10 percent for those in the North and West Region (combined regions).

The poverty level for families with a female householder, no husband present (30 percent) was much higher than the rates of married-couple families (5 percent) and families with a male householder, no wife present (10 percent). In 1979, the majority of white families below the poverty level were married-couple families (59 percent). By contrast, most poor black families were maintained by women with no husband present (72 percent). Nevertheless, for both races, the proportion of poor families maintained by women has increased substantially since 1970.

Finally, 5.6 million unrelated individuals (15 years old and over, living alone or with nonrelatives) were below the poverty level in 1979; 1.9 million men and 3.7 million women. This group increased by 400,000 between 1977 and 1979, and accounted for 12 percent of all persons and 22 percent of persons below the poverty level.

The full report, *Characteristics of the Population Below the Poverty Level: 1979*, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No. 130, is for sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. □