

THE VOICE OF THE WORKING WOMAN

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Call of the Third Convention of Working Women

Fight for the demands unitedly

The third convention of working women was held on 12-13th of February 1991 at Leela Sundarayya Nagar, Salt Lake (Calcutta) with 475 delegates and a few observers. The convention was a part of the 7th Conference of CITU held from 13-17th. The delegates came from various industries such as coal, mines, jute, as well as electricity, transport, hotel, LIC, GIC, and women from Anganwadi. The most attractive part of the delegation was the presence of about 15 delegates or so from the airhostesses from Indian Airlines.

The convention began at 2.30 PM. on 12th afternoon with the welcome speech by Com. Manoranjan Roy, the outstanding leader of the working class. He gave hearty tribute by Com. BTR without whom the cause of the working women could not have flourished. He mentioned the role of women in the freedom struggle and the present plight of working women who have to fight for their rights, equality and equal wage. He insisted that the women must be in the forefront of the organisations, along with men. He then spoke on the national and international situation which was very grave due to Gulf war and said working women have to play their role for peace.

The Election of the Presidium

The proposal for the presidium then was placed before the delegates by Com. Vimal Ranadive, Secretary as follows :—Com. Gangamma (West Bengal), Com. Bhanumathi (Kerala), Com. E. Parmeshwari (Tamilnadu) Com. Tanti (Tripura), Com. Birender Kour (Punjab), Sita Devi (Rajasthan) and Com. Ahilya Rangnekar (Maharashtra).

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The condolence resolutions on Com. BTR, Com. Saroj Mukherjee, and Com. Ismail were moved by the presidium with two minutes silence. The martyr's resolution mentioning our courageous sisters who faced deaths, molestation, from Punjab, Tripura, Assam and Darjeeling was placed by the presidium and passed.

Inauguration of the convention

Com. Samar Mukherjee, the General Secretary of CITU inaugurated the convention, delegates giving him big ovation with clapping. He said the international situation of the world, the future of humanity is in danger and the entire working class has to play its role in the present situation to stop the war for maintaining peace. USA is threatening to use chemical weapons and capture the oil empire for itself, killing the innocent people including women and children in Bagdad and elsewhere. He mentioned Com. BTR's role in the struggle against imperialism. He spoke on the present communal situation which may divide our country and appealed for maintaining secularism, democracy in India. He appealed to working women to fight for the cause. Com. BTR stood for to defend the interest of working women and have a social change. The right to work and employment have been taken up by the whole working class. The formation of National Commission on women was done by V. P. Singh Govt. Now Chandrasekhar and Rajiv Gandhi have come together to rule. Under such circumstances this convention will take proper decisions to overcome the problems and continue to fight for their own interest, he said.

AIDWA Greets the Working Women

Com. Shyamali Gupta, the General Secretary of AIDWA greeted the convention and expressed the solidarity of women and working women together for their emancipation. While speaking about the role of working women and

their problems she said the working women should come under the CITU banner, and the problems as a whole should be focussed in the convention of working women as an integral part of the working class as well as their own specific problems. In this connection she mentioned the 8th September rally, 1989 which was initiated by AICCCWW and AIDWA and was a grand success. Women she said are facing the acute poverty, illiteracy, health hazard and unemployment. These problems were discussed in the all India conference of AIDWA recently. The rural women in our country are a big force and the AILWA is organising them on their problems. She appealed in the end to combine the forces of all women as a whole so that we can fight for our common demands.

The Credential Committee and the Steering Committee was announced. The AICCCWW this time decided to give the credential form to be filled up by the leader of the state delegation for getting the specific information on the membership of women of the unions they belonged to, the women members as office bearers if there are and how many and whether the leadership of the CITU and other associations co-operate in taking up the problems of working women. The purpose of this form was how far the CITU has progressed in promoting women on the leadership and enrolment of women in their union.

Resolutions taken up on Gulf Crisis

Com. Ahilya Rangnekar then placed the resolution on Gulf crisis seconded by Com. Prasannakumari from Kerala. Ahilya placed the main responsibility on USA and its war mechanism which heaped the burden on the common people, suffering of women and children. She also blamed Chandrasekhar Govt. who is helping USA by giving permission for refuelling their war planes. Prasannakumari explained as to how the people in Kerala are suffering due to war and demanded end of the Gulf war. The resolution was unanimously

passed.

The resolution against President's rule in Tamilnadu, and condemning the Govt was placed by Com. Susheela Gopalan and supported by Com. Krishnabai from Tamilnadu. A resolution congratulating to Kerala Left Front Govt and the people was moved by the presidium which explained the great victory of District Council election where many women were elected in 13 district out of 14. The 30% reservation of seats for women were granted and implemented in Kerala which gave chance for ordinary women to come forward and intervene in the council's work. This reservation also included women from SC/ST.

Working Women Greet the Japan Airhostess

As the delegation consisting of Michiko Mochizuki and others from Japan Civil Workers Association entered the hall, the women rose spontaneously to greet them expressing their solidarity with the women air hostesses in Air India. Michiko said, "She was thrilled to meet such a gathering of women in Calcutta. She told the gathering about her own case which was being fought in the Court. The case of retiring age upto 58 as others is being fought together with the joint struggle of the Air India hostesses. In Japan early age retirement scheme is abolished and equal opportunity is now in force. She said she loved her job and prepared to work in Air India. I am fighting for my right but company's answer is only 'No'. The matter was settled with a joint struggle of Indian air hostesses. We got success. But all of a sudden, last February after 5 months of flying and settlement, again "I was grounded without any reason." She again approached the Court but Air India insisted and "our trade union rights are denied. All our Air hostesses in Japan and India feel this is an unfair action and should be condemned." She expressed hope and her determination to fight against this discrimination and get justice.

She hoped for the support from Indian women..." In the midst of slogans of solidarity with Japan Aviation Union with Indian working women in every field, she thanked the leadership for the invitation.

Secretary Placed the Report

While submitting the report for the convention, Com. Vimal Ranadive placed the main points raised during the last 10-12 years.

Since the copy of the report was sent earlier to Kerala, Tamilnadu and Bengal, it was translated in their languages and discussed earlier. The main points were the progress on this front by CITU and other unions while taking up the specific problems and their promotion on the higher bodies. She said, in the beginning after the 1st convention held in 1979 at Madras, the CITU did take up the issues, held conventions and conferences in various state but that progress was halted after 7-8 years. The functioning of the many committee was stopped and the help by the CITU was not coming forward with the result in many states, especially in the North, the committees do not function except Punjab. Recently Rajasthan has showed progress in holding an Anganwadi conference in which the ICDS committees could mobilise thousands of women. She pointed out despite the great possibilities in Bihar, UP, MP, Delhi, Maharashtra, Haryana and other places of mobilising working women who are coming forward in common struggles of the working class, the CITU and other federations are lagging behind.

Another important feature during last 7-8 years was the great awakening among middle class employees, who have formed women's wings in their unions like LIC, GIC, Electricity, NGO's, Central Govt, etc., held their conventions with their leaders participating along with women. It was also observed that many active working women are taken on their committees and as officebearers. In West Bengal, working women under CITU have

taken up the leading positions in their unions.

Though it was a fact that the AICCWW is recognised as an active wing of CITU, while other central trade unions have not yet formed their wings seriously. There is still lack of interest of CITU in developing women cadre to the leadership. In this context she gave many examples when women fought, went to jail and sacrificed their lives, they were not taken on the higher bodies. Considering their double work, exploitation, illiteracy, male leadership of the unions must consider these factors sympathetically and help them to put them as speakers and to participate in the activities.

She pointed out, in almost all journals brought out by federations and unions, they give news about the women's struggle conferences etc. Still the discrimination continues. There is no creche, no equal remuneration and no promotion for working women.

The great progress of Anganwadi women in forming the all India federation and an action committee formed of 4 different federations calling women for 'Delhi chalo march' on 4th March was a significant step for the most exploited women of the society.

The work in Tamilnadu with regard to the problems of working women under the unions as well as in Kerala, in bringing all the sections of working women was pointed out by the secretary. In the end she said we should not forget that the question and problems of working women is a part of the total toiling working class struggle and as such it has to be taken up. Com. BTR always emphasised the point that without the common class struggle of men and women under CITU, the total movement of the working class will remain weak. The membership of working women is only 10% of the total membership of the CITU. We have to take up the question seriously and remove the weaknesses in the movement. She appealed that the charter of demands given at the end of the report should be discussed and suggestions given.

Delegates speak on the Report

The attendance of the delegates was from 17 states. And the time was short for the speakers. But all states participated in the discussion. It was important to note that West Bengal, Kerala, Tamilnadu, Orissa, Bihar and MP have submitted their written reports while speaking.

Com. Shibani Sen Gupta, Transport union, from West Bengal said, "Unfortunately, since the opening conference in 1979 we failed to hold another conference of working women in West Bengal. This indicates our failure. But, at the same time, the working women have played an important role in various activities campaigns and programmes of CITU. The issues of working women were highlighted. In the last CITU conference 74 women took part as delegates and this figure was higher than the corresponding year. The women workers have worked as an integral part of the trade union movement under the banner of CITU. While speaking on the problems of working women in West Bengal she said, "despite the greater emphasis on the problems facing the working women not enough progress has been achieved in terms of the basic issues repeatedly raised in the conferences.

The working women are paid less for the same jobs. They are denied promotion. They are curtailing the labour force and women workers are the first target of attack by the employers. Modernisation makes displacement of women. The specific demands of the women workers for creche, hostels, maternity benefits are overlooked. The welfare legislations in favour of working women have become excuses for the management to deny the work to them.

Despite the Left Front Govt and several pro-working women measure the employers disregarded them in mines, plantations, etc. The equal pay is not paid. Many women work in small scale industries where working conditions are bad. The work in Anganwadi has developed very well.

At the end she said such committees will be formed of working women wherever they are not formed and more efforts should be given to prepare for future work.

Com. Ushakumari from Kerala while paying tribute to Com. BTR dealt with widening struggles and problems of working women. WWCC in Kerala is taking up the problems of all sections of women in the unorganised sector. In the campaign for literacy participation of all women was there.

Com. Anima Banerjee (W. Bengal) raised the question of technology and of women under Central Govt. She demanded the provision of creche to be implemented.

Com. Sandhya Bakshi from Bihar said women's movement was progressing but wage discrimination still prevails. The rapes on Adivasi women continue.

Com. Kumudini Behera, Orissa said that political consciousness among working women is less due to weak democratic set up. Two conventions were conducted in Orissa to strengthen the movement of the working women. Regularisation and employment of women is an important problem. There is no creche facility any where.

Com. Sandhya Shaily, M.P. said that conditions of working women have not improved much though in some pockets there is some work. But some 'hesitation' still remaining among comrades. Due to this many times comrades cannot attend the working women's problems and cannot develop the cadres and leaders. She expressed difficulty for working since there is no whole timer for their work. In the recent conference of CITU three hours were given for women's session. In this session women from PWD, Copper mines, Gota Makers and Bhopal Gas Tragedy victims were present. She emphasised the work should be divided in different districts so that it can improve.

Com. Ersala Francis from Kerala while supporting the report said our work will not be successful without the help of CITU. TU improves the status of women. They must

participate in all the struggles. They should fight for secularism, democracy and political awareness.

Com. R. Umanath, the vice-president of CITU was the chief guest. Intervening in the discussions he made some important points for the delegates. In the beginning he said yes, some progress in the working women's movement is there during last two conventions. It is also a fact that feudal thinking in the trade union still prevails, though it is lessening. We must have tremendous initiative and energy to improve our work on this front.

Then he dealt with the relationship between AIDWA and AICCWW CITU. AIDWA is a mass organisation and enrol members into it irrespective of any class they have come from. Working women's Co-ordination Committee is not a mass organisation but a Committee and is a part of trade union which is a class organisation of working class. Thirdly AIDWA mainly deals with socio-economic problems of women, but they help with their strength to working women's problems also. WWCC deals with problems of working women in their working sphere and also fight for social justice, help DWA. WWCC and DWA should increase their sales of publications like Equality and Voice of the Working Women. These two are quite distinct but complimentary to each other. CITU and other trade unions raise the problems of working women, but functioning of co-committees must be done alongwith trade unions. Trade union activities and of WWCC must go hand in hand, strengthening the T. U. creating new leaders and cadres. One can not function apart from other. Ultimate aim is the same.

Regarding the relationship of CITU and working women members of other trade unions, CITU want to organise on them on common demands of women irrespective of trade unions and political parties they belong to. When other unions have a particular problem to be solved we stand with them. Working women must be taken to the leadership though

she may not be a member of CITU. Various Co-ordination Committees must be co-ordinated without affecting the identity of each organisation.

Turning to the question of promoting of women to leadership, Com. Umanath said, the central point of CITU is correct leadership. We must create opportunities and give chance to carry over their responsibilities as working women, mother or housewife. Dominance of men in the leadership must be discouraged. Women also must come forward as leaders changing their feudal attitude. They must fight for their trade union activities and the leadership must be made on women's part itself.

Lastly, he said most oppressed women are the Anganwadi workers and they must be organised and the 4th March demonstration planned by different Federations and action committee must be a grand success.

Com. Laxmi Saigal moved the resolution on communal harmony. She said the 42 years of Congress rule caused so many problems to our country. Riots are taking place more, rich becoming richer and poor poorer. The present Ramjanambhoomi-Babri masjid problem was created by the Congress (I) Govt for their own political gains. The BJP and VHP etc are making the situation worse with the help of Congress (I). She said the Rath Yatra was planned with the knowledge of Rajiv Gandhi for political gains. Muslim personnel law was framed with this intention. This law is dangerous and against the interests of Muslim women as a whole. Women have a role to play in this critical situation. Com. Manjulekha Basu from Tripura supported the resolution which was passed. Com. Uma Maheshwari from Tamilnadu spoke on the report. She said their committee of WWCC was mainly consisting of middle class women and functioning well. It is conducting classes and gradually political awareness is being raised. Agitations are going on to mobilise the women masses to safeguard their rights under the CITU.

Com. Dipali Bose from Durgapur while

discussing the report said common programmes should be taken up and charted out. There are many problems in the steel industry.

Com. Rajamma from Karnataka demanded working women's hostels for working women. LTC is not being given to some employees. There is no equality for giving maternity leave. She said there should be more emphasis on the international situation.

Com. Gunni Tanti from Tripura spoke about the conditions of tribal women and atrocities on them by the present Govt of Congress. She said in Tripura, activities are banned. The present govt supports the high class. The WWCC is functioning under CITU and a conference of working women was held recently in Tripura. Com. Surendra Kaur from Punjab gave the information about their WWCC committee formed some months ago. She said many problems are faced by the Govt and semi-govt and public sector women's representations in Pay Commission was partially accepted. The women employees get CL for 20 days, it is our demand because they require it for their family and children. The demand of creche is not yet fulfilled. The discussions are going on.

Nasmi Kishimoto, Representative of Japan TU—Was given a rousing welcome by the delegates. She is Asst. Secretary General, National Confederation of Trade Unions (ZENROREN) Japan. She said She was very pleased to have a chance to attend this meeting. I extend our solidarity greetings to you, Indian working women, on behalf of 1,400,000 members of Zenroren.

After giving the background of the formation of their militant organisation in Nov. 1989 she said this organisation fights for the protection of the interest of workers and people who are oppressed. Our organisation, she said fights for equality between men and women, for the emancipation of women and for the protection of fundamental rights of all people.

Turning to the problems of working women in Japan she said the number of working

women was speedily increasing. About 18 million workers, 40% of total workforce are women, and 70% of them are married and they had to work hard at both the workplaces and at home. The work of the women is taken as 'supplementary' work to home account. There is a lot of discrimination against women, in recruitment, promotion and retirement. Many women are employed in small and medium sized enterprises where wages are low and working conditions are much worse. Later on after describing the present rule in Japan as 'Japan is notorious for long working hours including women, she mentioned the new technology and its effects on women. Due to this deaths are occurring on a large scale. Turning to the present situation of Gulf war she protested against the U.S. and said "The Japanese Govt don't give hand to the US. It is natural that women who give birth and rear their children firmly stand against war and we continue our efforts for 'No more Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Middle East'.

A thunderous applause followed after the speech was over. The presidium thanked her on behalf of the AICCWW.

Sita Devi from Rajasthan made the point of right to work and fight for the right of working women. Com. Veena Vaidya from Himachal Pradesh said justice and help must be given to poor women like Anganwadi. All unions existing in our country must unite to safeguard women's right. Com. Konan Ajatha from Delhi told the convention as to how the Chandra-shekhar Govt brought miseries to the common people. Movement of working women must be strengthened and cadres must be developed.

Sepan Kolar from U.P. spoke on Anganwadi women. Veena Vaidya from MP also supported her while describing the conditions of Anganwadi.

Com. Monika Pal from West Bengal said the situation in our country is grave and the role of working class is very important. The WWCC must be strengthened to take the problems of working women.

Indira from Kerala explained the situation in coir, Cashew, handloom workers and their problems which were solved some what because of the help from Left Front Govt many welfare measures were taken for women like a statutory Commission for women is formed.

Jamila from Kerala also spoke on the joint actions. Selvi from Tamilnadu from Anganwadi spoke on the problems of Anganwadi women not getting maternity benefit. Com. Hemalata from Andhra suggested that the conditions of working women in European countries must be included in the report. The problems of various sections must be taken by WWCC. Feudal tendencies in the trade unions must be fought.

Com. Gangamma from West Bengal, who is representing the jute industry blamed the present govt for not doing anything for the workers in jute. Bhoola Thapa from Assam told about the miseries of women in Assam and said conditions must be created through struggle so that India remains united.

Com. Iswari from Tamilnadu tried to raise the problems of women through WWCC. Com. Aparna Bhattacharya, Bihar also spoke on the conditions of working women in colleges and schools.

Due to shortage of time many speakers could not express their thoughts to their satisfaction. Problems were many and the presidium had to finish the deliberations.

Com. Ramanika Gupta moved the resolution on price rise, supported by Com. Pramila Pandhe.

Report of the Credential Committee

The report was placed by the Convener Com. Girija Potti. She reported about the number of delegates as 438+3 observers and no. of states participated as 17, number of unions about 85 besides the women members from the centre CITU.

It is to be noted that delegates discussed the report in their camp and sent some amendments. Some of them were quite important. But all of them were in support of the report,

to strengthen the report. While replying to the debate Com. Vimal Ranadive explained the gist of the amendments and they were all accepted. While replying she made two points about the journals "Voice of the Working Women and Kamkaji Mahila" in Hindi. Considering the high rates of paper, stamps etc the price of the journals has to be increased to Rs. 2/- per copy. Secondly she suggested to form the state co-ordination committees and functioning of them was an important work.

Com. Susheela Gopalan then placed the panel of names from different states as per the list and quota given to them and it was put to vote and passed. The name of Com. Vimal Ranadive as secretary of the AICCCWW was placed by the presidium and she was elected as the secretary.

Com. Ahilya Rangnekar thanked the delegates, volunteers, guests and others for making the convention successful and purposeful. It was a part of 7th CITU conference and she hoped the delegates in the convention will speak about this in the CITU conference.

Amidst slogan shouting the 3rd convention ended at 12.30 P.M.

Total Delegates Attending the AICCCWW Convention

1. Kerala	41
2. W. Bengal	225
3. Tamilnadu	41
4. Punjab	7
5. Madhya Pradesh	15
6. Tripura	10
7. U.P.	6
8. Bihar	17
9. Orissa	10
10. Andhra	13
11. Delhi	4
12. Rajasthan	11
13. Assam	5
14. Karnataka	21
15. Maharashtra	—
16. Himachal	3
17. Assam	3

429+3

4 From the centre

Speech by Com. Michiko Mochizukki, Minkororen, (Japan)

It is my privilege and honour to be invited here today. I was extremely thrilled to meet such a large number of the women in Calcutta. As I have not prepared anything about my speech, I don't know what to say, but I will give you the brief information about my court case. I would like to inform you that the case which was filed in Zekya District Court against Air India on air hostesses' sex discrimination has been carrying on favourably for us together with the joint struggle of the Indian air hostesses.

In Japan early age retirement scheme was abolished because of Equal Opportunity Law which came into force 3 years ago. So I requested Air India's management the extension of the air hostesses' retirement age as I really loved my job and wanted to continue to fly. I tried best by negotiation, but the company's answer was always 'No', so as the last resort, I tried a case. Two years ago, the matter was settled with a joint struggle of the Indian Air Hostesses. I was extremely happy about this historical moment. Then I started to fly after 45 years. But all of a sudden, last February, 5 months after settlement of the previous lawsuit, was grounded without any reason. I had no other choice but approaching the court again. The settlement was reached in the presence of a judge. Air India's current action ridicules the trade union rights and is intolerable machinations. I and we, the all aviation workers in Japan feel that this is an unfair and abnormal action which should be severely condemned.

As this is my second court case. It is very painful, but I trust justice and never give up till I win the case. Fortunately I have so many friends in Japan who support me in every respect. I have my strong determination of winning the suit in Zokya District court. When I see you next time, I will certainly give you the good news.

Thank you very much for your kind invitation.

Michiko Mochizuki

Resolutions

On Com. B.T. Ranadive

The Third Convention of Working Women, CITU held on 12-13th of Feb. 1991 expresses its profound grief at the passing away of Com. B T Ranadive, the founder President of CITU and the senior-most member of the Communist Party since 1929-30. The working class movement and specially working women, lost its defender who worked for the interest of the working class and for its unity on the basis of the class struggle.

The loss of such a great leader at the time of the present national and international situation is felt by the working class and democratic people. Com. BTR had to spend many years in jail under British rule when he was in the freedom struggle. He had also to pass many years in jail and underground under Congress rule also. He was a great ideologue and wrote many books and articles on various subjects. The working women especially feel the loss of Com. BTR. The foundation work he has begun on the question of raising the status of working women and women in general and fought for their cause while fighting against the feudal deviation in the trade union movement. Not a single meeting or a conference of workers or employees went without his raising the issue of working women and their promotion on the committees.

Com. B T Ranadive devoted himself with inflexible loyalty to the revolutionary essence of Marxism-Leninism in his life long endeavour for concrete application of Marxism-Leninism and against any attempt of subverting its basic tenets, in the working class movement. He was a firm believer of Proletarian internationalism and never deviated against it despite the current political trends existing at that time.

His whole life was an ideal life for any Marxist, working from morning till night thinking and working for the aims and objects

which the party stood for. His latest guidance to the trade union movement on the 'Right to Work' and work for unemployed and unorganised workers deserves special mention. He always emphasised the point of socialist consciousness to be raised among the working class to create a correct and militant class line against the exploitation by the capitalist rule.

His passing away is a irreparable loss for the working class movement as a whole including the working women. This convention feels that only the united and collective efforts of CITU on every important issue can fillup the gap, gradually and the void created. We, the working women assembled here from all over India, pledge to carry forward the cause he defended till last. We pay our respectful homage to Com. BTR.

On Com. Md. Ismail

This Third Conference of Working Women held at Calcutta on 13th February 1991 pays its respectful homage to Com. Md. Ismail Vice President of CITU and a pioneer of the trade union and Communist movement in India.

Born in a landless peasant family of Unnao, Uttar Pradesh, Com. Mohammed Ismail had no formal education. His entire life was a saga of devotion to the fight against imperialism and the bourgeois-landlord structure of our country.

He joined the Khilafat movement in his teens and the communist movement in 1935. He played a leading role in building the mighty trade union organisations in the major industries like, Jute, Port & Dock, Textile, Tram workers, Road Transport, Railways, etc. from the beginning.

Not only in the big industries, he was instrumental in building up trade unions in the most unorganised sections of the working class like rickshaw pullers, tailoring etc. and was

closely associated with their struggles.

His struggles and simple life will always inspire the coming generation of fighters. We convey our condolences to the West Bengal State CITU and the members of his family and pledges to carry forward his work.

On Com. Saroj Mukherjee

The 3rd Convention of Working women held on 12-13th Feb. 1991 at Calcutta deeply mourns the passing away of a veteran leader of the Communist Party, Com. Saroj Mukherjee. He was the secretary of West Bengal Committee of the CPI(M) and chairman of the Left front in the state till his death.

Com. Saroj Mukherjee had a revolutionary career and had to spend 12 years in jail both during freedom struggle and under Congress regime. He had to go underground for 5 years for his revolutionary work.

Com. Saroj Mukherjee proved his capability in journalism, writing books on the working class movement, and in various journals. All through his writings and speeches he upheld the principles of scientific socialism and the tenets of Marxism Leninism to give correct guidelines to the coming generation.

In his death, the working class and the communist movement has lost a veteran leader and a fighter. This convention pays its respectful homage to the departed leader and conveys its heartfelt condolences to Com. Kanak Mukherjee and other members of the family.

On Working Women

The 7th Conference of CITU held at Calcutta on 13th—17th February 1991, viewed with grave concern that the deteriorating working conditions, growing discrimination and continued absence of any protection to the Working Women in the organised, unorganised and service sectors in the country.

The Conference notes that there is virtual stagnation in the share of Working Women to the total workforce. As against 30% to 40%

in many developing countries, women employment in India remains stagnated at 11% to 12% with symptoms of further decline. The current industrial crisis coupled with indiscriminate modernisation has affected the Working Women in respect of employment and service security in mining, quarries and many manufacturing industries. Their conditions are further worsening in traditional industries like coir, cashew, handloom etc.

The Conference hold that the Government of India's policy of not expanding the area of women employment, which is restricted mainly to offices, education, welfare institution and hospital etc. has contributed in the low rate of women employment. Lack of opportunities for vocational training to the women is an obstacle for the employment of women in technical categories. The meagre rate of women employment in public sector which is only around 6% speaks about the negligent attitude of the Government of India.

Absence of effective Government Inspection system for implementation of the statutes like equal remunerations etc. is perpetuating the discriminations against women workers. Even in Public Sectors working women are discriminated in respect of retiring age housing, medical facilities. Maternity benefit is discontinued after the birth of two children in many enterprises and Government services. Besides, lack of primary conveniences and facilities like baby creche, restrooms, separate toilets etc. even sex harrasments and other forms of atrocities are some of the problems of discriminations that are faced by the working women. As for the contract and casual women workers protection provided for them by law do not at all reach them.

This Conference notes that compelled by these conditions and due to the persistent effort by the CITU unions various section of women workers are showing interest in coming to the path of agitation and getting organised. Whereever minimum effort is made, working women are responding to the movement despite

the variance of demands and problems from sector to sector. Working Women in professional or clerical service in establishments like Airlines, LIC, GIC, Medical institution, Electricity Boards, industrial units are also turning out in large number in the pursuit of redressal of their demands. Recently held Public Sector Working Women convention at Bangalore has provided new opportunities to strengthen the movement. Similarly, Anganwadi workers who represent the lowest paid workers in the country are in a countrywide sustained struggle and organised into an All India Federation.

The Conference appreciates the initiative taken by the WFTU for convening the 5th. World Trade Union Conference on the problems of Working Women during September '89. The Conference highlighted the task of trade unions to defend the Working Women's right and interest made, reference to their special problems arising out of their triable responsibilities as mother, Workers and citizens are commanded before the trade union movement to take special care of these problems. Conference endorses the recommendations of the 5th World Trade Union Conference.

The Conference records its appreciation of the initiative taken and progress made in implementing the Bombay Conference decisions by some State committees, as well as some Industrial and National Federations.

The Conference draws the attention of all CITU affiliated unions, that notwithstanding the improvement noted, the major section of working women in the industrial sector, particularly in the unorganised sector, are left unattended to by our unions. Co-ordination Committees are yet to be formed by many States Committees and major unions, and in many cases, where they are formed, sustained functioning is still lacking. Even in places where initiatives are taken, the lag in promoting working women to the union leadership continues. The Conference calls upon all the affiliated unions to take serious steps to overt-

come these weaknesses and register further advance.

This Conference endorses the charter of demands formulated by the 3rd. All India Convention of Working Women held at Calcutta on 12-13th February. Conference demands to the Central Government and the concerned State Governments to take all administrative and legislative steps to redress the grievances of the Working Women at the earliest and to initiate discussions with the trade unions. The Conference call upon all the State Committees and affiliated unions to take concrete steps to develop working women sub-committees in respective units to rally working women and all workers around the charter and take initiative to organise struggle to implement the demands.

On Gulf War

The 3rd convention of working women held on 12-13th Feb. 1991 denounces the brutal war unleashed by US imperialism and its allies on Iraq, heaping immense loss of innocent lives of men, women and children including. There is massive destruction of property leading to suffering to common people. It is reported that thousands of children and women were killed or wounded and escaped death and injury. About 200 Indian nurses were stranded due to non-availability of Aeroplane and only recently they arrived in India. This convention expresses its grave concern about the Gulf war spreading to other fields and nation engulfing them and making it the 3rd World War. Already the price rise in petrol and of other essential products have affected the common people in India.

The convention is of the opinion that while the immediate concern of US is to protect the massive oil empire of its companies, whose interests were being threatened by Iraq, its long term plan is to rule the oil empire and the world. The convention condemns the US for threatening to use of Nuclear weapons in this war, and welcomes the efforts being made for

peace by NAM and other countries. We demand the Indian Govt. should play vital role for peace instead of giving permission to refuel the US war planes, a shameful act for the Indian people.

While demanding withdrawal of American and allied forces from the Gulf and the beginning of negotiations on the question of withdrawal of forces from Kuwait by Iraq, the convention strongly appeals to the people and especially women to come forward to demand the withdrawal of all the armed forces and other weapons used by American imperialism and allied forces.

On Price Rise

The 3rd Convention of Working Women held on 12-13th Feb. 1991 at Calcutta expresses its grave concern at the sky-rocketing prices existing today. It has become difficult to run the house with the high prices of essential commodities like oil, ghee, pulses, etc, which are not available in the market. The women are the most affected of such policies who cannot continue with the existing rates of essential commodities.

In a situation where the highest ever production of about 170 million tons of foodgrains last year, and the prospect of a bigger crop this year, the food prices are the highest so far. The prices of all essential commodities have increased between 30 and 70% in a period of two years. The consumer price index with 1960 base, now stands at nearly 900 points, indicating almost nine fold increase in the cost of living of the working people consequent on the policies of successive govts at the centre, which include deficit financing in ever increasing scale, frequent increase in administered-prices, erroneous proportion of indirect taxes, manipulation of market by the monopolies and multinationals, depreciation in the value of the rupee etc.

The conference regrets to note that the failure of National Front Govt. to reverse these policies, and the continued pursuing of these

policies, kept up increasing trend of prices. The gulf situation has further accelerated the rate of increase. The conference notes with concern that the Chandrasekhar Govt. is continuing the same policies more vigorously, by the recent hikes in customs and excise duties to the tune of Rs. 1430 crores. Inflation has already crossed double digits. The move under pressure of IMF and World Bank to reduce subsidies threatens to endanger the public distribution system. Taking advantage of the Gulf-war, black marketeers and profiteers seek to create artificial shortages and further raise the prices of essential commodities exorbitantly.

The conference demands that the govt. should give up the move to cut subsidies and further strengthen the public distribution system by supplying more articles of public consumption at cheaper prices and extend the system to wider sections of population and remote rural areas. It demands that strong legislative and administrative measures against hoarders and black marketeers be taken.

The conference calls upon the working class to build up a massive united movement to compel the government to accede to the above demands and for reversal of the policies leading to the price rise.

While extending full support to the decision of the National Campaign Committee to observe 13th March as Anti-Price Rise Day throughout the country and court arrest at Delhi, this conference calls upon the affiliated unions to organise protest demonstrations and rallies etc from 28th February which will culminate in successful observance of the anti-price rise Day on 13th March.

On Dismissal of DMK Government

The 7th Conference of the CITU held at Calcutta on 13-17 Feb. 1991, vehemently denounces the Chandrasekhar Government for its heinous political crime of dismissing the elected DMK ministry and dissolution of the Tamilnadu Assembly.

The Conference views that this is the biggest

authoritarian blow of recent times on democracy and federal structure of our country. In spite of the loud protestations and statements of the Prime Minister himself during the recent session of Parliament Chandrasekhar Government has launched its brazen attack on the Constitution and violated it in letter and spirit.

The plea of 'breakdown of law and order' is not only false, but also hypocritical in so far as the very same Government is tolerating the continuation of Cong (I) in Tripura, where law and order and administration has totally collapsed according to an MPs team headed by the present Finance Minister, which visited Tripura earlier. Nexus between DMK Government and LTTE also did not hold water, in so far as the recent actions taken by the DMK Government against the LTTE, had invited the LTTE's wrath on the Karunanidhi Government, in so far as LTTE issued an open statement accusing the DMK Government as 'traitors to the cause of Tamils'. These two pleas put forth by the Chandrasekhar Government was palpably so false, that even the Governor of Tamilnadu refused to accept them despite tremendous pressure put on him.

The Conference goes on record that a government at the Centre with no mandate of the people, carried out the dictates of the ADMK which could not command the loyalty of even a dozen of MPs in the Parliament. The Conference charges the Chandrasekhar Government of having despotically felled the Tamilnadu Government to sustain himself in power, and to satisfy the power-hunger of ADMK leader to become a chief minister by hook or crook.

The Conference congratulates people of Tamilnadu, Pondicherry West Bengal, Bihar, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh for having observed massive protest Bandhs and to people all over the country for holding massive protest demonstrations and rallies.

The Conference warns the workers and people of the country, that the recent threat by Chandrasekhar to Left Front Govt. of West

Bengal, and of the Central Minister Subodh Kant Sahay to Bihar government, shows the continuing threat of toppling elected Governments and calls upon the working class and the democratic forces to write and halt this nefarious Cong (I) inspired move.

Resolution Congratulating the L D F Govt Victory in Kerala in the Recently Constituted Dist. Council Election

In the recently constituted Dist. Council in Kerala the LDF have a sweeping victory by winning 13 Districts out of 14 This conference hails the left and democratic front Govt who has taken steps to conduct the district council elections because it is a big step forward in passing on the powers to the people. The people of Kerala has given a landslide victory to the LDF forces who has taken the initiative.

It is remarkable that they have given 30% reservation to women including women belonging to SC and ST communities. Now out of 437 councillors elected 144 councillors are women. LDF was not only campaigning for the cause of women but also making it practical. It is also noted that Cong (I) ruled state govts never so far taken any steps to hand over the powers to lower level instead they are taking it back like what they are doing in Karnataka. This conference greets and congratulates the Kerala people and LDF govt for this victory.

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Anganwadi Women Demand Regularisation—Minimum Wages

The grand rally of Anganwadi Workers and Helpers under the All India Samyuktha Sangharsh Samithi, consisting of 4 main organisations working among Anganwadi women was certainly beyond the expectation of the organisers. Despite the Holi festival, women arrived in jathas from old and New Delhi Railway Station, with volunteers walking and giving slogans, to the camp at the Red Fort. The registration from the CITU Reception Committee in the camp was about 3000. Rajasthan sent 886, Maharashtra 800, Punjab 700—who were the largest contingents. Bengal sent 22, U.P. 75, Andhra 16, H.P. 10, J&K 7 and Tamilnadu 3. Many women arrived at the time of the rally. Other Federations too brought women from other states. The magnificent rally started at 9.30 AM from the camp with the leaders of the Federations in front of the rally. The rally was led by the Punjab contingent with the big festoon of All India Samyuktha Sangharsha Samithi in the front. Com. Ahilya Ranganekar, Vimal Ranadive, Nilima Moitra, as well as the leaders of AITUC, NFTU, HMS and others led the procession. The procession was very much disciplined with their own banners belonging to different organisations. A number of women belonging to all the trade unions participated making the grand total of about 12,000. In fact, their inhuman conditions were brought out very well in every delegation to the ministry, from Rajiv Gandhi's Congress(I) to Chandra Shekhar ministry. Promises were given by the V P Singh Ministry, discussion was held in Parliament when suddenly the ministry was toppled by Rajiv Gandhi. Later again on 1st February, the Dharna was organised by the All India Samyukhta Sangharsh Samithi and they were

promised by Mr. Ramji Lal Suman, Labour Minister of wage increase. This hope and assurances of all the governments brought women to Delhi with the resolution that unless we get the increase we will not go back.' Therefore despite the difficulties they faced, they came in thousands when again they had to face the political crisis with the desolution of the Chandrashekhar Government.

Presentation of Petition on behalf of Anganwadi Women

[The petition to the Lok Sabha speaker signed by Anganwadi Workers was presented by CPI(M) MP Smt. Malini Bhattacharya on 5th March 1991. We are giving below the text of the proceeding—Editor]

Smt. Malini Bhattacharya CPI(M) : I beg to present a petition signed by Ms. Neelima Mitra and other female Anganwadi Workmen employed under the Integrated Child Development Scheme regarding demands and grievances of female Anganwadi Workmen employed under the said Scheme.

Smt. Malini Bhattacharya (Jadavpur) : I have a specific point to make with regard to the postponement of the budget.

The Anganwadi workers from all over the country are meeting in Delhi today to voice their just demands. When I raised the matter in the House the Prime Minister had said humorously that the National Front Government had no right to make promises which it could not fulfil because there were no budgetary provisions for the Anganwadi. Now there is this Vote-on-Account which will ensure that the demand of the Anganwadis will be hanging fire indefinitely. I protest against this and deplore this activity of the Government whereby the legitimate demand of the Anganwadi workers has been indefinitely postponed. I want to know what the Prime Minister has to say about this, and I would like him to make a promise which he would fulfil.

1st Tripura State Working Women Convention

The Convention of State level Working Women Co-ordination Committee was held on 16th December, 1990, at Agartala.

31 organisations including govt. Employees Nurses, Govt. Teachers, Semi Govt. Employees and the Constituent organisations of CITU participated. 13 delegates from different organisations took part in the discussion out of 45 delegates present in the Convention.

The Convention was inaugurated by the President of CITU Com. Baidyanath Mazumder. Com. Mazumder described the necessity of formation of Co-ordination Committee to organise the struggle on specific and most important problems of the Working Women throughout the country.

Com. Nripen Chakraborty, member Polit Bureau of CPI(M) was present as chief guest. In his Speech Com. Chakraborty pointed out the various problems Working Women were facing all over the country. He says though there are different legal provisions and rules in the constitution but those are not being implemented in order to keep the exploitation in existence. Out of total working force in the country 30% are women. Central Govt. as well as State Govt. are not taking initiative to implement the same. Working hours are not properly maintained. No regular steps have taken to make literate the illiterate working women.

He called upon the Working Women to unite themselves within the Co-ordination committee to fight against the exploitation and unlawful practice of the managements.

He also reminded the CITU leadership to take positive measure to resolve the problems of the Working Women specifically and also to

bring them in the leadership of the trade unions gradually.

The Convention was conducted by a presidium consisting of Com. Mangaleswari Deb Barma, Com. Anjali Sarkar and Com. Satyamani Kand.

Com. Manjulika Bose and Com. Sandhya Acharjee have been elected joint convenors. 25 members executive committee has been formed.

Statement Showing Female Membership of CITU According to Annual Returns as on 31.12.1990

State	1989
Andaman & Nicobar	—
Andhra Pradesh	4,545
Assam	9,631
Bihar	3,684
Delhi	1,787
Goa	147
Gujarat	528
Haryana	841
Himachal Pradesh	—
Karnataka	13,909
Kerala	1,39,909
Madhya Pradesh	1,204
Maharashtra	1,454
Orissa	7,436
Punjab	4,235
Rajasthan	376
Tamilnadu	7,272
Tripura	3,199
Uttar Pradesh	981
West Bengal	51,566
	2,59,704 (Approx)

Address by Com. Nasmi Kishimoro, Zenroren (Japan)

Dear Chairman and Colleagues,

I am very pleased to have a chance to attend your meeting. I have come from the National Confederation of Trade Unions, Zenroren, a national centre of Japan. I extend our solidarity greetings to you, Indian working women, representing 1,400,000 members of Zenroren.

Zenroren was formed on 21st November 1989. Its foundation was enthusiastically welcomed by the Japanese workers throughout the country because it was formed after 14 years of period when there had been no militant, class-oriented national centre in Japanese trade union movement.

In Japan, there have been two currents in the labour movement both before and after the war. A militant trade unions which fight for the protection of the interest of workers and people have been always oppressed, and after the war, a militant national centre (Congress of Industrial Organisations) was disbanded by the US Occupation Forces.

The inaugural conference of Zenroren held up a slogan. "Let us unite in fighting for our hopeful and bright future." We are now promoting our campaign not only for the demands of our union members but also for the entire 46,000,000 Japanese workers.

The action programme of Zenroren declares that it persistently struggles for the interest of workers and people as well as for equality between men and women, for the emancipation of women and for the protection of fundamental human rights of all people.

Now, the number of working women is rapidly increasing. About 18 million workers, 40% of total workforce are women. 70% of them are married and they work hard at both workplaces and at home.

Despite that working women are playing important role in the society and for economic

development, it is characteristic that their status is very low.

Wage level of working women stands approximately 50% of that of men, and it is a problem that their work is still regarded as "supplementary work to home account."

There are lots of discrimination against women through their employment life, such as discrimination in recruitment, promotion and retirement.

It is in big enterprises where the working women face a lot of difficulties, and is also one of the characteristics of our country that majority of working women are employed in small and medium sized enterprises where wages and other working conditions are much worse.

Management and supervisory posts are mostly occupied by men, and only 5% of junior management staff and 2% of senior ones are women. Most of working women continue to be ordinary workers until their retirement.

At present, the Prime Minister assumes the Head of the Headquarters for promotion of equality between men and women, but he never does start the position to work for elimination of their discrimination.

Five years have passed since the law on equality between men and women in employment opportunity was enacted, but recent trend shows that those women workers who cannot work in full time is on increase. One of three working women are part timers, whose working conditions are inferior in every aspects in comparison with those of full time workers.

Japan is notorious that workers work long hours and the working time of women is also getting longer and thus, working women in full time face lot of difficulties at workshops as well as at home.

24-hour operation of factories and offices are spreading due to the increased introduction

of new technologies and night work has rapidly increased even in women's work. As a result "KAROSHI" that is, deaths caused by over-work, has recently greatly increased even among very active age of workers.

At health and medical service workshops, where night work are needed, still being employed have increased and their average age is 42 years.

Nurses and other medical workers, who are organised in Zanroren's member union, have taken action including strikes, demanding better working conditions which can assure good nursing and for more nurses.

The struggle for the elimination of discrimination between men and women is an important task of Zenroren. We are striving in actions demanding the central and local governments and managements of enterprises for concrete measures to enable working women to continue their work and duties at workplaces and at home, public nursery schools and day care centre, paid maternity leave and nursing holidays, under the slogan "Let's chance workplaces and communities in more human way."

Japan is now called a "big economic super power" and "rich Japan". But, it is only big monopoly enterprises that have grown fat.

The Japanese working women, however, are really promoting their hard struggles for their own interest and rights. Ms Michiko Mochizuki is one of such persistently fighting women worker, never obeying to the discriminatory conduct by the management. I am very proud that such working women are more and more increasing. They are making every possible effort for better working conditions for better communities for working women and their children and for peace and democracy.

Now, the world attention focuses on the war in the Gulf. Voices against the war, "the Japanese Government, don't give hand to the US." "Opposition to tax increase for making war cooperation fund"...the amount of tax

Credential Report of the 3rd Convention of Working Women

1. Total Number of Delegates (women) 438
" Observers 3
2. Total Number of Unions women represented 85
3. Total number of districts of the state they represented. 104
4. Participation in All India State Committee
Co-ordination Committee Member of Co-
and since when ordination
Committee

Above 10 years	4	—
Between 7—10	2	3
Below 7 years	7	31
	13	34
5. Conferences of women held
11 states held conference.

increase nature 70,000 yen (approx. Rs. 1,300) per capita, including babies...such voices are much stronger than in men.

Last autumn, we succeeded to till a bill to dispatch overseas the Japanese Self-Defence Forces with the power of huge massive action and broad public opinion against it. It is not exaggerate to mention that women have displayed their might full in this struggle and led the public opinion.

It is quite natural that women who give birth and rear their children firmly stand against war, and we continue our efforts for no more Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Middle East and in the world.

Let us strengthen our struggle against the war and for peace in respective countries and through these struggles, strengthen international solidarity of working women.

Working Women And The 7th Conference of CITU

The 7th conference of CITU held in Calcutta from 13-17th February was successful because of the team work at the CITU centre and the distribution of jobs among the various Secretaries. It was true and natural the delegates felt the absence of Com. BTR, his authority and guidance, the spirit at every occasion. Considering this particular aspect only the full Secretariat including the leaders of the West Bengal discussed the main issues, the arrangements, resolutions and the 3rd Convention of Working Women to be held on 12-13th as a part of the 7th conference.

CITU Takes Lead

It can not be denied by any other central trade union that it was only trade union, CITU who took up the issue of working women and their problems in their 1st convention at Madras in 1979. It was the CITU and its president Com. BTR who took special care and attention to the working women's problems in the trade union and women's movement in particular. Those speakers, therefore, in the conference and convention did remind the delegates not to neglect the work on this front. The CITU, never left any occasion to discuss or bring out the drawbacks to the notice of the male members of the unions in the conferences.

This task and its persuance since 1979 resulted a limited progress in the membership of women in the unions, their promotion on the Executive bodies and as Office Bearers, in achieving many demands like creches, Working Women's Hostels, transfers, implementation of legislations like equal remuneration and so on. It was because of the stand on this question the National Front Govt. when called a meeting of the 'Trade Unions and Women' we were invited and the main document introduced in the conference by the Labour Minister contained many paras from our 6th conference report

from the special working women session in the conference.

Progress Still Not Up To The Mark

Despite the progress the CITU made in this field, mainly on the middle class women employees, one must admit that progress on the CITU front on this question is not yet satisfactory. The CITU leadership is hesitant to promote women on the higher bodies or to take up the problems of working women, despite there are many possibilities of bringing women in the working class movement in the forefront which will strengthen the total movement of the working class.

What Does The Credential Forms Show ?

The credential form for the leaders of the state delegates in the working women's convention in Calcutta brings out many important things which we should take note of. In the Bombay conference in 1987 women delegates were 134 out of 2448 of the total delegates. Com BTR himself issued a circular to the states to include 10% women to the total delegates. Another important matter was 3 hours discussion on this particular question, the feudal deviations among male and women delegates with the placing of the report by Vimal Ranadive, Secretary, and the sharp reply by the President on these very issues helped to create a common understanding.

The Present Position

Now let us see the present position the Credential Committee brought out. Out of total delegates of 2341 women were 121 i.e., less than last conference. The last General Council there were 20 women out of 376 while this council has 26 out of 460 members. The last Working Committee had 5 women out of 107 while this

Working Committee has 4 women out of 130 members. Bombay conference elected 3 Office Bearers out of 36 while Calcutta 7th conference also elected 3 women out of 36 Office Bearers.

On the basis of this analysis, can we claim that we have progressed? Yes, some little progress may be there. But as a whole the CITU has still to go much ahead. West Bengal has 13 women council members, out of 212, while Kerala has elected 8 out of 108, Tamilnadu, Bihar, U.P. only one each and A.P. 2. All other states had no woman member in the General Council. This shows the weakness of CITU and also working women, not fighting for their problems seriously so that CITU would take them up.

Out of 58 speakers in the conference 7 were women. Com. Punnyawati from Andhra pointed out that not a single speaker till she spoke said anything about women's problems or what they were doing on their front. Some criticism also came in the forms of Credential Committee about not taking up their problems or problems not attended to.

Com. R. Umanath while moving the resolution on working women pointed out the various feudal deviations in the trade union movement and CITU in particular and appealed to take up these things seriously. Com. Nazimunissa supported him explaining the work being done in Kerala by the Co-Ordination Committee.

One important aspect of this problem is all the state CITU are in agreement that priority has to be given to this question for which Com. BTR insisted. State Co-ordination Committees are to be formed by the CITU Unions wherever they do not exist.

Working women have to take note that, they must come and discuss their demands with the CITU and insist that these should be taken up. The reality of the present social system, men and women both being the product of the bourgeois Landlord society should not be overlooked. Both have to fight as a class in the women's movement to overthrow the capi-

talist system and therefore the great need to bring the working women in the common fight with the working class and in Trade Unions.

Greetings on March 8 International Women's Day

We heartily greet women all over the world on this day who are fighting for their emancipation, equal rights and equal status for and peace. We assure our support to those women Soviet Union, Eastern Europe who are fighting for the principles of Socialism and Marxism-Leninism. We take the opportunity to greet our sisters in China, Vietnam, North Korea, Cuba and all women in Latin America who are fighting for Socialism and emancipation of women from the exploitation. We salute Nelson Mandela and Winni and many others whose courageous fight against Apartheid compelled the Apartheid government to release him.

We wish success to all the women in the world fighting for their emancipation and for peace on 8th March.

FORM IV

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sd/-

Vimal Ranadive, Publisher

Dated March 1, 1991

The Boat Club Rally of Anganwadi Women

The rally reached at the Boat Club at 12.30 PM after a long walk. When the speakers began the deliberations the procession was still to reach. Com. Babatosh Roy, the Working President of AIFAWH then suggested the names of the Presidium, one from each Federation.

Com. Geeta Mahajan (AITUC), Shri L. M. Patil (Mahasangh) Kiran Aurora (HMS) Ms. Rajkumari (NFTU) and Vimal Ranadive (CITU).

The main resolution of the rally was placed by Vimal Ranadive, the President of AIFAWH, which was translated in Hindi also. In her introductory remarks she welcomed the gathering and the dire need of the unity of all organisations due to which the rally was so successful. She explained the demands of the women as one regularisation of these women under central govt and pending that they should be given minimum wages.

Com. Sarala Maheshwari CPI (M), Indrajeet Gupta (CPI), Com. Samarendra Kundu (HMS) and Shri Sharad Yadav (J.D.) and other MPS addressed the gathering.

Sarala Maheshwari in her militant speech roused the women. She explained the inhuman working conditions of Anganwadi workers who are getting only Rs. 110/- and Rs. 225/-. She said with the Left Front Govt in W. Bengal and struggles of women for their demands women are now getting benefit including two maternity benefits, festival bonus, and after working 7-8 years, they get supervisory post after examination. She appealed to the women to fight till they get their demands.

Com. Indrajit Gupta, General Secretary of CPI and leader of CPI Group in Parliament said that it is not sure whether the govt will survive or not. He said questions were raised in Parliament and they will continue to do so.

Com. Samarendra Kundu HMS and Kamala

Sinha MPs (HMS) too spoke giving all their support.

On behalf of Central Trade Union Com. P.K. Ganguli (CITU), Com. L.K. Mahendra (AITUC), B.N. Rajhans (HMS), B.K. Prasad (NFTU) and Kumar Rangarajan (INTUC) spoke. Com. P.K. Ganguly, while supporting the resolution, explained the terrific working conditions they are working at present and CITU always stood for fighting for their demands. Com. B.K. Prasad, with his inspiring speech promised to fight for the demands of the women. Com. K.L. Mahendru said it was a magnificent rally which was successful because of the united action.

Women of Anganwadi Speak

Women when they started speaking, their unbearable working conditions came out through their speeches. The presidium was unable to control them many times. The poor honorarium they get, the sexual harassment by the CDPO's, the corruption, the poor centres for which they have to pay from their own pockets and the threats of dismissal whenever any complaints were made to the authorities. There were so many women speakers from each federation. But considering the time about 15 women spoke on their problems. Coms Rajinder Kour, Geeta Mahajan, Pushpa Sharma, Malusare, Fatima and so many others spoke enthusiastically and courageously making their points.

Com. Ahilya Ranganekar spoke about the movement the women have been fighting and therefore more than 1000 women from Maharashtra have arrived here taking so much trouble. Unless we fight unitedly, no demand will be available from these govts. Shree L. M. Patil, leader of Mahasangh then summed up the discussion and placed the resolution for voting. In the shouting of the slogan the resolution was passed.

Leaders of the Federation Demand Minimum Wages for Anganwadi Women

After the massive rally of thousands of women under the banner of the Akhil Bhartiya Samyuktha Sangharsh Samathi, the delegation consisting of Vimal Ranadive (President of All India Federation of Anganwadi Workers & Helpers) Nilima Moitra, General Secretary AIFAWH, Ahilya Ranganekar, EX. MP and Member of Federation met the Prime Minister Shri Chandrashekhar on 5th morning. The other organisations and Federations belonging to AITUC, NFTU, HMS and Mahasangh were also there. The main demand discussed with the PM was about the increase in the wages as V.P. Singh Govt and also the present Govt promised. It was reported that Rs. 200/- and Rs. 300/- for helpers and workers would be increased and the recommendation has already been made. The delegation told the P.M. that considering the 6 lakhs anganwadi women only Rs. 150 crores will be required to pay to these most exploited women. This amount comes to only 0.5 per cent of the total budget for 1991-92. After hearing this the PM said they should get more and he knows the bad conditions, and he visited some centres but then we have to consider the employment possibilities which have to be curtailed. The delegation retorted that no workers or helpers be retrenched under the plea of giving more money to some senior employees. Rajiv Gandhi had put forward the same argument. The workers and helpers are giving full time job of 8 hours while they are treated as part timers and paid as 'honorarium' and treated as 'social workers'. The women workers present at the place sarcastically asked him whether it was possible to live on Rs. 110/- or 200/-. He said he would consider and he knew the situation. He also charged women that they do no work, they sit at home and get pay. Women reacted sharply to this. One Jaspal Kaur from Jodhpur was dismissed because she demanded leave. The wages of workers in Pune

were cut because they attended the Delhi rally last time. Shri Chandrashekhar told Com. Vasudev Acharya MP and Com. Ashis Sen MP who accompanied the delegation that a meeting may be fixed with an appointment with the leaders of federation to discuss as to how the demand can be met before the proper budget comes for discussion.

The interview was over within five minutes, the leaders and anganwadi women came out disappointed. The Sangharsh Samathi will fix the future programme of action in the next month and decide the course of action.

As one Anganwadi woman expressed in her speech, everytime they visit the Prime Minister, they get only promises and good words and the govt falls. Let us now atleast decide we will elect those people now who we are sure will give us justice.

Akhil Bhartiya Samyukta Sangharsh Samiti— Resolution placed at the Rally at Boat Club on 4th March, 1991

Lakhs of Anganwadi Workers and Helpers are employed under the Central Social Welfare Ministry at a pittance of Rs. 110/- for the helpers and Rs. 250/- Rs 300/- for the workers. The poor wages, neglect of their children, denial of maternity benefits and leave, corruption by CDPO's and sexual harassment by male employees are the conditions under which the ICDS scheme is being implemented all over the country. No one can live on this paltry sum paid to them. Even the amount of Rs. 325/- indicated by the Central Govt circular has not been implemented in most of the states. When the demand is raised they are rebuked and told that 'social workers have no right to make demands'. They are also told that their work is part time and if they demand an increase in the honorarium, the expansion of the ICDS scheme will be discontinued. There is also a fear that once money from foreign agencies stops, the scheme will be curtailed despite the

boast by the Ministers that the 'ICDS is the only scheme of its kind for women's development in the world'. Over 50 lakh unemployed women are on the register as job seekers as a result of the economic policies of the Govt of India and the modernisation of industry. They are being forced into the unorganised sector to seek arduous work at low wages. We therefore, place the following demands.

1. Regularisation of Anganwadi workers as govt employees.
2. Pending regularisation, minimum wages.
3. Promotional avenues on the basis of educational qualifications and experience. Promotion to the supervisors posts after 7-8 years as workers.
4. Maternity benefit for at least two children.
5. Earned and medical leave, Sundays and public holidays as per Govt rules.
6. Festival bonus.
7. Training facilities.
8. Proper supply of fuel, nutrition and medicines for the health and nutrition programmes.
9. Travelling allowance.
10. One representative of the union on the project committee.

We hope that the Central and State Govts will make a reappraisal of their attitude to the Anganwadi Employees after due appreciation of our services and the hard work done by them and expedite the acceptance of our legitimate demands.

Signatures	Name of the Federation
1. All India Federation of Anganwadi Workers and Helpers	Vimal Ranadive
2. Akhil Bhartiya Anganwadi Kamgar Union (NFTU)	B.K. Prasad
3. Akhil Bhartiya Anganwadi Workers Federation (AITUC)	K. Mahendra
4. Akhil Bhartiya Anganwadi Kamgar Union	M. Pa'il
5. H.M.S. Anganwadi Union	B.N. Rajhansa

Credential Forms Speaks of CITU's Weakness

The AICCWW had decided to issue a particular credential form for the leader of the delegation of the State. The intention was to bring out the progress of our tasks taken in the 1st convention in 1979. The 3rd convention of working women held at Calcutta distributed the form to the leaders of the delegation of various states. The information gathered from the forms is interesting, though we are giving a gist of it. From the forms it was noted that many have not submitted the required information, or they were not able to provide it. But even then, the progress achieved in promoting women to the posts of office bearers and leadership can be seen in the forms filled up since 1979. Many women were taken in the executive committees when there were none before.

But State Committees of CITU have still to go ahead comparing to the progress the middle class women employees and their organisation have made. The replies given by the leaders show that still no co-operation from the CITU State Committees are coming forward to encourage women to take up the leadership, though the problems are now being taken up in the unions, though they are not always taken up on the agenda. It is true that the Women's wings under the trade unions do insist to take them.

The credential form show that the working women have still to go ahead with the objective taken up in Madras Convention in 1979 i.e. to enrol women members in the union, promoting them on the higher committees and as office bearers and take up their respective problems.

