

THE VOICE

OF

THE WORKING WOMAN

Vol VIII No 6

November 1988

Price Re 1



Petrograd, March 1917. Working Women raise banner: "Comrade Workers and Soldiers, Support Our Demands."

Greetings to Soviet Women on 7th November

THE heroic role played by working women in the Russian Revolution was praised highly by Lenin. In fact the Russian revolution was sparked by the celebration on 8th March International Women's Day, with spontaneous strikes, marches through the streets. Thousands of women standing in lines for bread joined them, demanding bread, peace and higher wages. The epic history of two girls with red flags entering into the Cossacks battalions appealing not to fire the common people who were their brothers has been always inspiring! They had to return back with the shouts of "Long live Cossacks". Working women, Lenin said "most oppressed among the oppressed never stand aside from the broad path of the liberation" and so, they are the greatest reserve of the working class. "The fate of the proletarian victory or defeat of the revolution depends upon whether or not the reserve will be for or against the working class."

Once in power, the Bolshevik Party and the Proletarian Govt. moved immediately to end the slavery of women under the feudal regime. Women were given right to vote, marriages and divorces were made easy, the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate children was done away with, child care centres, kitchen communes were established, night work for women, employment of children was prohibited. It granted Maternity leave 8 weeks before and 8 weeks after the child birth.

Lenin looked at the housework of a woman as "drudgery" which keeps woman in bondage even after the revolution. In order to achieve complete emancipation of women, he demanded their participation in productive labour. He said that women were not able to achieve full equal status unless they abolish homework, thrust upon them by the bourgeoisie — land lord rule. A number of women's committees were formed to see that the legislations concerning women are implemented. Lenin said "women workers themselves should see to the development of such institutions (for women) and their activities in this field will lead to a

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complete change from the position they formerly occupied in the Capitalist society.

Lenin while speaking in one of the women's meeting jokingly said "Look at the bourgeoisie. How well they are able to advertise what they require while saying how it is correct." It is very true when we speak about our experience of our Govt. The bourgeois leaders continue to speak about women's development. In perspective plan, 30 per cent reservation for women

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Decisions Taken in the AICCWW at Dhanbad

THE joint meeting of the members of AICCWW and representatives of Anganwadi workers was held on 22.9.88 at Dhanbad at 11 a.m. and continued till 7.30 p.m. in two sessions. Following members were present and participated in the discussion:

1. R. Selvarathi, 2. P. Rajeshwari, 3. L. Umanatheswari, 4. Krishnabai, 5. D. Saraswathi (all Tamilnadu) 6. M.M. Rajamma (Karnataka) 7. M.K. Kamalamma, 8. Girija Potti 9. R. Johnsilete Rose, 10. Dakshyani K. A (all Kerala), 11. Rampukari Devi (Bihar) 12. Madhumita Behera (Orissa) 13. Nilima Maitra, 14. Malina Ghosh 15. Gargi Mukherjee, 16. Shibani Sengupta, 17. Nisha Roy (all West Bengal) 18. Laxmi Saigal (U.P.) 19. Ranjana Nerula and 20. Pramila Pandhe (Delhi) 21. Vimal Ranadive (Centre).

There were a number of activists volunteers from Dhanbad and colliery workers' union who also attended and listened to the deliberations. As the number of women workers increased considerably, a special meeting was held in the afternoon and addressed by Coms. Laxmi Saigal, Rampukari Devi and Vimal Ranadive. The colliery women placed their specific demands where they were discriminated as women.

The members of the AICCWW were from 8 states and others were representing the Anganwadi workers. The report of the secretary was already circulated. She spoke on the major points such as the large participation of women and working women in particular in the 9th December '87 rally and 15th March Bharat Bandh, the great participation of agricultural women in Kisan Morchas in September 1987-88 and a new feature of middle class women employees in LIC, Banks, State and Central Govt, nurses etc joining in the struggle on their demands along with the militant struggles of women workers in the industries under CITU in M.P. Orissa, W. Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, Tamilnadu, Kerala etc. She reported about the Anganwadi women's working conditions, the reports which were received from 14 states describing the horrible conditions they are working in. The workers in Angandadi in Kerala and W. Bengal could

get their conditions somewhat improved because of the struggle and the help of the Left Front Governments. The demand was made by the women to have an all India organisation in the future to improve their working conditions. She also reported about the convention of nurses held in Delhi a few months back when nurses came from 18 states and formed an all India organisation. The secretary reported the good progress of promotion of working women on the higher committees and also a small increase in the membership of trade unions. In the review of the decisions taken at Chandigarh, it was found that in many states they were not able to implement them.

She then spoke about the functioning of the co-ordination committees which was not satisfactory, though the work, struggles etc continue in the states. New committees were formed in Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, M.P., Gujarat etc. Vimal Ranadive then reported about the present position of "Voice of the Working Woman", and the new Hindi "Kam Kaji Mahila" of which the first issue, was out, as per the decision of the CITU working committee at Chandigarh.

While concluding, she placed the future programme before the AICCWW.

During the discussion on the report of the secretary, Com. Gargi Mukherjee, W. Bengal spoke about the women beedi and contract workers. She said they would like to increase the sale of V.W.W. In electronics, Bengal Lamp, Philips etc. they are organising women under CITU. In private hospitals, they are trying to organise nurses. They are trying to explain the importance of left front Govt and what it is doing for the people. It is true that the women in Beedi and contract, are getting less wages than their counterparts. Com. Girija Potti from Kerala submitted a written report from Kerala and explained the various conventions held and committees formed.

Com. Rajamma from Karnataka spoke about the formation of the various committees in Dharwar, Bellur, Chikmagloor and women in different industries attended. Many militant women are launching struggles, with the help

of CITU. 600 women participated in picketting against the Black Bill. In Kisan agitation more than 2000 women were arrested.

Com. Saraswathi, (Tamilnadu) reported about the thousands of signatures taken on the memorandum on maternity benefit curtailment. Telegrams also were sent protesting against it. With regard to anganwadi she said a convention of ICDS women was held in Pondicherry which is under our influence. Tamilnadu committee is thinking to reorganise the coordination committees. Tirunelveli committee was reconstituted, where lakhs of beedi workers are employed. They are not getting wages according to the rules. Then she referred the various conventions of LIC women, where the questions were raised about the creche facilities and working women's hostels. Reserve Bank Employees Association, Tamilnadu constituted a women's sub-committee.

Madhumita Behera from Orissa submitted a written report. She mentioned about the women in Rice Research Centre Institute not being regularised after so many years and struggle was going on. The first Coordination Committee did not function properly due to lack of cadre. New district committees have been formed. Conventions in Toda and other places were held attended by 170-200 women in mining belt. Two other committees also were formed in other areas. There are no creche facilities no maternity benefit and toilet facilities available.

Com. Rampukari Devi from Bihar explained that despite the militant struggles of women in Bihar, as yet no coordination committee was formed. There are 70,000 women as Prasava Sevikas and midwives. No steps were taken to mobilise them. She reported about the strikes led by CITU. She requested to pass a resolution in support of the non-gazetted employees' strike. She reported that she would take 100 copies of Kamkaji Mahila.

Com. Laxmi Saigal from UP explained in the beginning that the Co-ordination Committee was not functioning in U.P after they held the convention. The middle class ladies do come but are not able to form the committees. With regard to Beedi workers she said women complain of not getting the leaves from the employers. The self-employment

scheme is being introduced now. In the mills only contract labourers are employed and women are all out.

Com. Ranjana from Delhi said those women and men who organise trade unions, are thrown out of jobs and it was an attack on the rights of the workers. She gave the example of Gaziabad union where women were turned out when they formed the union. There is a small union in Noida and co-committee is working there. In RBI we took signatures on the creche provision. In commercial centre, women wanted to have creche and toilets for women. With regard to Equal Remuneration Committee in Delhi and Tamilnadu only two meetings were held. The Committees are totally ineffective and they were planning to send a memorandum to pressurise the labour ministry.

Com. B.T. Ranadive was attending the meeting for some time. He said that if the union does not take up the issue, such as creche, let the Co-ordination Committee take it to the concerned authorities, since it was for the legitimate rights of the women.

Discussion on Anganwadi: While introducing the report on Anganwadi, Vimal Ranadive spoke on the present worst conditions of women in Anganwadis and requested the leadership to take it up and organise them under the new organisation. A separate report on Anganwadi women and their conditions was submitted to all the General Council member. Nilima Mitra the General Secretary of West Bengal ICDS association, CITU spoke in detail about the conditions of women in Anganwadi in W. Bengal. She said that an all India federation should be formed because the ICDS is a central govt project. In West Bengal, they are getting their demands due to struggle and the left front Govt. The common demands should be formularised for all the States. She then explained the present situation, as to how many projects were increased, how many women were employed etc. During Congress rule, they were getting only Rs. 150/- and Rs. 50/- for workers and helpers while now they are getting Rs. 325/- and Rs 110/- The promotional avenues also were opened. The graduates become supervisors. While the demands were achieved due to struggles, the political aware-

ness also was inculcated. Now the Congress (I) too want to intervene in this field.

Johnsilete Rose from Kerala submitted a report in which she said our slogan was "allow to give birth to a child." After the struggle they got the maternity benefit and honerarium also was increased. Those who are getting training in Balsevikas should work in Anganwadis, and Balawadi would be posted to pre-primary school, this is our demand accepted by the Govt. Also senior Anganwadi workers should be posted as supervisors. This appointment is done through public service commission. The members of our Anganwadi union are about 12,000.

Madhumati from Orissa also said that union has not yet taken up this problem. BMS has conducted a conference. We have to take it up the question.

Rampukari from Bihar reported about the worst conditions in which women are working there. They want two separate unions, one for supervisors and another for workers helpers. She said that an all India body should come up to take up their problems. These women workers are also working in the houses of officers. The demand is that they should treat them as Govt. servants.

Pramila Pandhe from Delhi said as yet they have not started to organise them. But women in Delhi have gone on strike for their demands. They get from Rs 250/- to Rs 300/- They are under the HMS. When the workers demand more pay, she is told "she was a social worker" and she would get an honorarium. They have to bring the sterilisation cases, otherwise they are not paid wages.

Com Laxmi from UP spoke about the conditions in Kanpur, where AIWC is running some centres. Ranjana added that while we demand better conditions for Anganwadi women, demand for creache for their children also should be forwarded. Com. Rajeshwari reported about the working conditions of Anganwadi in Tamilnadu. A special feature is the 3 wings, namely Anganwadi, midday meals and nutrition meals are put together and worked out. It is called as Chief Ministeral scheme, A worker has to perform the duty of ICDS as well as midday meal. In no other state they

are to give deposit of Rs. 300 to 600 for employment. They have to bring sterilisation cases per month, a quota is given. In other states, maternity is given but in Tamilnadu it is not available. Under the MGR scheme 60,000 widows and deserted women got jobs. But the widows have to face harassment from their supervisors. In 1985 NGO's took lead to organise and had a convention attended by 35,000, a committee was formed, but all the office-bearers were victimised and committee became defunct. Again they are trying. She ended her speech by requesting that an all India organisation should come up. There are 12,000 members.

After the discussion Vimal Ranadive summed up the following: Our demands on the basis of our discussion should be:

1. Employer-employee relation be established.
2. Minimum wages should be Rs. 600 for the worker and Rs. 400/- for the helper.
3. Promotional avenues should be given as per the experience, for the post of supervisors, according to the educational qualification.
4. Rs. 25/- increment after the particular period.
5. The Govt. should pay the rent, for the fuel, and food etc.
6. Transfers should be made near the residence of the workers.
7. Working hours should be 5 for all.
8. Leave, maternity benefit, medical bonus etc be given as per the rules of the central Govt..

It was decided in the meeting that a small committee of one each from W. Bengal, Kerala, T. Nadu, Bihar and Delhi should be formed to finalise the charter.

A suggestion made in the report on Anganwadi to hold the all India convention was then discussed. After discussion, the decision to hold an all India convention of Anganwadi women was taken approximately in the month of

February — 1989 depending upon the political situation existing, and the venue should be decided after consulting the state committees of CITU, and secretariat of CITU.

On the question of Nurses

T.N. Krishnabai herself, a nurse in BHEL in Trichi, said the CITU union had come into existence with her initiative. This year promotion was given but not to women nurses. women nurses have joined AIDWA, 350-400 workers are there. When CITU union approached they did not want to join. Now, after taking up their individual cases, about 30 nurses and all the sanitary workers have come to our union. How to organise the nurses in the Govt. hospitals, mission and private?

Ranjana Narula from Delhi gave the experience of the union formed recently. The association was started in AIIMS with the help of the CCWW, with the members of 25 only. Gradually the membership went upto 80. The management started harassment and we started our signature campaign for the demand for the hostel for nurses. The majority of nurses are with TNA. With regard to private nursing home, the trained nurses are getting Rs. 400-500 only. Working conditions are bad. But they are not yet in a position to form the union.

The discussion ended with the suggestion that the question of nurses organisation and our stand with regard to the new all India nurses organisation should be discussed and finalised in the state secretariat in CITU.

Future Programme of Action

Considering the following months, having many programmes in the States, it was felt that few programmes should be taken up and implemented.

1. All India anganwadi convention to be held in the month of February 1989.

2. Definite programme for creche for one day on the 14th November.

3. Programme for the women in the unorganised sector along with the programme with CITU.

4. Organise the sale of the voice of the working woman and kam kaji mahila.

5. Hostels for the working women.

The meeting of AICCWW and women representatives of Anganwadi, then came to an end with vote of thanks.

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The patient Nursing Officers ratio is quite inadequate and not in conformity with the recommendations of the Indian Nursing Council. For example, the intensive care unit' existing ratio is 1:1. (for one Nursing Officer one patient) In all Army Hospitals having Intensive care units the average ratio now in practice is 1:60 i.e. One Nursing Officer has to look after all the patients. This is because of the acute shortage of the Nursing Officers in the Army Shortage exists in all wards. The result is that the MNS staff is put to undue hardship and patient care beyond the capacity of any human being.

At present around 50 per cent MNS are married. Accommodation for them is highly inadequate. The accommodation is not provided nearby. They face security risks during the odd hours. When they go off duty and having to commute long distance.

The termination on marriage ground is an insult to womanhood. It is against the Convention adopted by ILO and ratified by the Indian Parliament.

The clause of termination on marriage ground is abnoxious and should be removed from the statute. Marriage is a fundamental right of every man or woman which no Army instruction can substitute.

The Secretary of AICCWW, Com. Vimal Ranadive, in a statement issued on 25th October '88, have demanded that the Director General of the Army and the Ministry should immediately intervene in the matter and give justice to the nurses. The statement has criticised the Congress(I) Government which speaks about equality of women but in practice does the reverse.

Thousands of Women Participate in the September Kisan Struggle

Vimal Ranadive

AT the call of the central co-ordination committee of the seven left led mass organisations, which included AIDWA and NFIW, about 20 lakhs men and women courted arrests, for their basic demands such as land reforms, remunerative prices, minimum wages, debt and tax relief, central legislation for agricultural workers, against unemployment, equal remuneration, against atrocities on women and so on. Thousands of peasants and agricultural women, amongst whom were large sections of tribal and adivasi, courted arrest in different states, held dharnas, and also occupied land at many places. The Central Council of CITU held at Dhanbad congratulated the millions of the peasants and agricultural workers for their glorious struggles which resulted in the workers-peasants unity. The significant aspect of the movement was the participation of CITU workers, women, students and youth in the Kisan struggle. The great success of the struggle could be seen in the joint efforts of the left parties and their mass organisations which resulted in the participation of lakhs of people, and achieving a significant unity among all sections on the basis demands of the people.

Women Participate on Large Scale

The participation of women in the struggle was notable in Tamilnadu, Maharashtra, Andhra, Punjab, Tripura, West Bengal and Kerala. In many states the 5th and 6th of September were observed as special "Women's Day" supported by all other people. In Assam, despite flood situation more than 30,000 people courted arrest on 9th September amongst whom 9000 were women. On 14th September, 20,000 peasants, women, trade unions, SFI, Mahila Samiithi leaders offered satyagrah on which police lathi charged in Kokrajhar, Assam.

In Bihar, over two lakhs peasants and workers including large number of women took part in jail bhara andolan from 5-10 September. About 50,000 volunteers of mass

organisations were taken into custody, and nearly 3550 were still in jail at Bhagalpur. In the severe lathi-charge made at various districts 500 were injured among whom 30 were women. In a severe lathi charge made at Khagaria 150 were injured including a dozen of women. Bihar is one of the Congress ruled states, where the number of atrocities on women and Harijans are the largest as per the Government figures. While demanding an adequate relief for the victims of earthquakes, a demand was made to have stern measures against the atrocities on Harijan and Adivasi women who fight for land and minimum wages.

6th September Observed as Women's Day

In Maharashtra 6th September was observed as the day of protest against atrocities on women. On this day, 1000 women demonstrated, held Dharna in Uran in Raigard district in protest against Sati tradition, under the leadership of Com. Shanta Joshi, joint secretary, Kisan Sabha. 450 women in Talasari, Thane, 300 at Ambajogai, and 200 at Mazalgaon courted arrest after demonstrating before the offices. In Nasik district at Umberthana, Surgana Tehsil, 2094 men and 667 women Adivasis courted arrest on the demand of minimum wages and land to the tiller. The men and women obstructed all the business of offices after occupying the place, they were remanded into custody. In Dhulia district, the masses stormed the public health centre of Dhadgaon, where 165 adivasi children died of Cholera 3 months back. In the district of Chandrapur, the Anganwadi women, health visitors, youth and students, Adivasi and Scheduled caste peasants occupied the forest land. In Wardha, Aurangabad and other districts women's Day was observed on 6th. In Satara, 150 strong women contingent led by Anjali Mahabaleshwar marched through the streets of Satara and held Dharna at Collector's office. 35 women were arrested.

5000 Women Court Arrest in Punjab

Despite the present serious situation in

Punjab more than 7,500 men, women, and youth courted arrest. A day for women was observed on 12th September. On this day 5000 women offered satyagrah at 11 districts together with men, numbering in hundreds. The slogan of Hindu-Sikh unity and against separatist forces was raised all over Punjab.

AIKS, CITU, AIDWA, SFI, Paralyse Traffic in Madurai, Red Flag Planted in the Field

In Madurai district in Tamilnadu about 2000 peasants and agricultural workers, including 300 women assembled and under the leadership of various leaders, including Com. Janakiammal AIDWA, a veteran woman leader picketed the offices on 12th September.

A 5000 strong procession of workers, women, students reached the collectors office, where police stopped them and arrested. The whole traffic was paralysed for two hours. In Neyveli, peasants, workers and many women with babies in arms entered the fields of one big industrialist owning 250 acres of land and planted the red flags and squatted. In Niligeri, Adivasi men and women picketed collectorate offices. In Cuddalore, an exclusively women's battalion of 296 led by Com. Shahajadi and other leaders of AIDWA courted arrest. In Tanjore districts in 3 days, 10,000 women volunteers were arrested on 12th Sept. In Madras, workers from factories, youth, women and students took out a procession to the secretariat expressing solidarity with peasant struggle. The procession was led by CITU, SFI, AIDWA and other mass organisations. The AIDWA held meetings and made propaganda by making squads in support of the struggle.

Terror Tactics in Tripura Defeated

It was a red letter day in Tripura when over 80,000 people courted arrest on 12th Sept. Government Employees marched together to 25 offices of 800 districts collectorates, despite the terror tactics let loose by the Congress-TUJ Govt. A significant feature of the movement was large participation of tribal women and men. The Congress rulers did not even spare Com. Nripen Chakrabarty and he had to be hospitalised, while leading satyagraha.

Massive Participation of Women in Kerala

In Kerala more than 8 lakhs offered Satyagraha, a considerable section courting arrest

were from women agricultural and other sections. On the last day on 15th Sept. the Central Govt. offices were picketted and at many places, entries were made illegally to hold surplus land. In all the campaigns in Kerala agricultural women are always in the forefront of the struggles, AIDWA participating in support.

In West Bengal between 7-12 Sept. more than 10,000 villages were covered by meetings and demonstrations with a large participation of women. On the 13th massive mobilisation of peasants was held in collaboration with organisations of AIDWA, SFI and DYFI in more than 100 blocks. A huge women's demonstration took place for the 5 point charter of demands on 14th culminating in the Bengal Bandh.

Women in Andhra Come Forward to Join

In the last Kisan Andolan in Andhra, thousands of agricultural women courted arrests. This September 1988 movement too women in Andhra played a significant role on the 6th and 9th while picketing at 415 mandals in 12 districts. Out of the total 2,00,000 satyagrahis arrested 30,000 were women!

200 Women Court Arrest in Haryana

In Sirsa, Haryana, about 200 women courted arrests on 14th September along with 4,200 agricultural workers. In M.P. also women participated in a joint struggle. Himachal Pradesh, a small state, but even there in Kangra district out of total participation of 1,200 in courting arrest, as well as Rail Roko in Palampur Tehsil on 10.9.88 125 men and women participated.

In Karnataka, in all the programmes, the women's participation was in considerable number. There were joint actions of CITU, SFI and women's organisation. In Bellary dist the peasants occupied nearly 2000 acres of land by uprooting the plants that were in the land and started cultivating these.

In Orissa 1,00,000 people took part in Rasta Roko, and dharna was organised near the assembly. In Fatehpur in UP 1954 out of which 41 were women who were arrested. The struggle was very militant in all the districts in
(Contd. on page 11)

Bangalore LIC Convention Adopt Declaration on Working Women's Demands

A convention of the women employees working in LIC and GIC was organised under the banner of ICEU, Bangalore division and the KSGIEA on Sunday, the 18th September 1988 at the NGO's Hall, Cubbon park, Bangalore.

The Convention was held in accordance with the decision taken by the AIIEA in its 13th General Conference held at Jaipur. The motive behind holding of such conventions was to involve the women employees in a greater measure in the day-to-day activities of the organisation and thus equip them with the necessary ideological background and social awareness to play an increasingly active role in the broad spectrum of democratic and trade union movement of the country.

It is a fact well worth remembering that in the past whenever the organisation has given calls for militant action, our women comrades have played their assigned role more than adequately. However, due to the changed political, socio-economic scenario, it has become vital that the women comrades should identify more and more with the organisational activities.

The convention of the women employees of LIC & GIC was thus convened to provide them with a platform to ventilate their feelings about the problems that they face not only as the employees in the insurance industry but also as a conscious part of the working class. More than sixty comrades attended the convention. As a matter of fact the organising of the convention was taken up as a challenging task by the women comrades themselves who spared no efforts in making the convention a glorious success.

The splendid efforts of the women comrades did not go in vain. In a spectacular, sombre and festive atmosphere the convention was inaugurated by Com. Harini Kekkeri, C.E.C. Member, AIDWA. Com. R. Govindarajan, Jt. Secretary AIIEA and Com. S. Rajappa, Gen. Secretary SZIEF were present in the convention.

After a brief introduction by the General Secretary of ICEU, the presidium consisting of Coms. Vijayamurthy (GIC) and R. Sumana (LIC) conducted the deliberations.

In her inaugural speech, Com. Harini dwelt upon the problems faced by women employees in various fields at length. While it was indeed a welcome sign that the women comrades working in LIC and GIC were organising themselves in conventions in order to discuss their problems, the growing atrocities and barbarities on the women belonging to under privileged sections of the society should also be taken note of.

Com. R. Govindarajan in his address narrated as to how inequalities were being practised in various spheres and how every law was loaded against the women in this country.

Com. S. Rajappa, in his brief speech made a reference to the role played by the women employees in the struggles launched by the AIIEA. He also referred to the role of women in the Socialist countries where they were treated as equal partners in progress and played a very important role in the building of a just and equitable society, free from exploitation.

Com. R. Sumana presented the declaration which called upon the women employees to be active and equal partners in struggles and in launching militant battles to preserve, protect and procure democratic rights for themselves. The declaration also called upon the managements of LIC and GIC to provide certain basic facilities to the women.

There was lively debate thereafter. Com. Prathiba (CE's office), Com. Shyamala Bai (614 Branch), Com. Rajamani Kumar (Civil station East) Com. Vellambal (Civil Station) Com. Ishrath Begum (Jeevan Prakash) and Com. Nagarathnama (Madhugiri) participated in the deliberations. They specifically touched upon the problems faced by the women employees and lack of even basic facilities like a rest
(Contd. on page 11)

Working Women in Orissa Organise

Madhumita Behera

THE coordination Committee of working women met on 17th October, discussed the various matters. The Committee has protested in a press note against Sati system and non-implementation of labour laws in respect of working women. The meeting also decided to increase the circulation of "Voice of Working Women" at different place in English and Hindi.

The Co-ordination Committee of Working Women in Orissa organised two separate conventions in mining belt, one on 26th June, 1988 at Roxi in Sundargarh district. The convenor coordination committee Com. Madhumita Behera conducted the convention at both places. Com. Malati Nayak the convenor Working Women Committee of Keonjhar mining belt workers union (CITU) presided over the convention at Kundurunala which was attended by one hundred seventy four tribal working women of different mines. Sixteen women participated on the discussion and spoke about their problems. A committee of twenty one members constituted to meet every month and decided steps about organisation.

The Convention at Roxi was attended by more than two hundred tribal working women of mines, which was presided over by Com. Marsa Samad. About fifteen lady comrades spoke about their problems. Two separate committees one for Roxi loading side and another for Toda Camp was constituted.

On 5.1.88 at about 9 p.m. several anti-social elements engaged by the local INTUC leaders, attacked the hutting of Smt. Susama Parida because she organised contract labour of Nalco smelting plant. Talcher was to form a new union under CITU and agitate on workers demands. Smt Parida was severely beaten in her hutting while she was taking her night meal. Initially the local police tried to keep mum on the issue but because of workers agitation they had to arrest the anti-social element. The NALCO management, contractors and INTUC leaders including local police were very much behind this attack. The arrest of anti-social element was simply an eye wash.

The NALCO management and the contractor M/s Bhasion associates had to enter into tripartite settlements with the labour leaders led by CITU on 8.1.88. In the present social and economic situation of our state, the question of employment for men and women is assuming great importance. With the introduction mechanisation process, women workers are sure to be affected, because the axe of retrenchment falls first on the women workers.

The creche for the small children is a basic and urgent need for workers. In the absence of it, it is difficult for women to concentrate on their work where they are employed. In mines area a large number of women workers are working. But creche facility is almost nil. They are not properly maintained. No mother would like to keep their babies in those creches.

The problem of transport is very acute for all working women, unless special arrangements are made for transport for working women by the companies employers and Govt, the situation will be very difficult in future.

The GIC union during their last state conference on 5.6.88 had conducted half a day convention of working women. 26 out of 30 employees had attended that convention. This convention has encouraged our GIC union and created confidence among the women employees. We hope to organise a State level meet in presence of All India leaders in future.

Japanese Air Hostesses Refuse to Bow down to Air India

Com. M K Pandhe, Secretary CITU has written to Civil Aviation Workers' Union, Tokyo praising the role of the Japanese air hostesses on the common demands of Indian air-hostesses.

"Perhaps you are aware that the management of Air India has imposed a humiliating condition on the Indian air-hostesses that they should appear for the Superannuation Medical Examination after attaining the age of 35 years

every year till the age of 45 years after which they are compulsorily retired.

"The male flight pursers are allowed to work upto the age of 58 years. The Indian air hostesses are fighting against this sex discrimination and the trade union movement has supported their demand.

"We are happy to note that the air hostesses in Japan have resolutely opposed this humiliating conditions and the trade union movement is fully supporting their struggle.

"In case of European air hostesses, the air India management has terminated the services

of 5 air hostesses due to their opposition to appear for the superannuation medical examination.

"The firmness shown by the Japanese air hostesses is helping immensely the struggle of the Indian air hostesses against the sex discrimination.

"Under these circumstances it would be helpful if we have better co-ordination in the matter so that the erroneous stand taken by air India is defeated by united movement.

Assuring you our best co-operation."

Grand Convention of Anganwadi Women in Chandrapur-Demand Better Conditions

A convention of Anganwadi women was held in Chandrapur, Maharashtra on 15th of August 1988, attended by 500 women. The women workers in Anganwadi get Rs 225 to 275 or less, in all the states and the helpers only Rs 110. They work for more than 8 hours with no benefit or allowances of any kind. Majority of women are destitutes and widows, with nobody to look after. The convention was inaugurated by Prof. Anita Hudda. The women spoke on their problems courageously in the convention. Com. Lata Bhise, AIDWA was the chief guest. While giving instances of various problems, she appealed for united action, to organise to achieve their demands. Shobha Lipte and Meenaxi Chitawar, Malugare and many others spoke on their difficulties on keeping a number of registers. Sindhu Magre said, there are many women amongst us who are widows, and our wages are just miserable. Shashikala Meshram explained as to how the supervisors harass them. Mrs. Dahiwalkar demanded leave in summer season. Triveni Dongre, Chabutai, Anusya Madurkar, Sushama, Sarola and many others gave their own experiences while working at the centres.

A number of fraternal organisations congratulated for forming the organisation of Anganwadi women and expressed hope it would fight to improve the conditions of women.

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UP. The gherao of Bindki tehsil was for 3 days by 600 men and women. In Kanpur too

32 women were arrested along with CITU, DYFI, SFI.

Peasant Agricultural Workers' Unity with Other Sections

The large participation of women with all other sections under their mass organisations shows the increase political consciousness for the demands made by the central co-ordination committee, such as land reforms. It is also a fact that for the first time such a direct action on the issues of land and wage supported by so many mass organisations of left, was taken on an all India scale involving all sections of the society. The utter failure of the Congress rulers to pay any attention to such demands, and the intervention of the left mass organisations has brought out thousands of men and women to demand once again the resignation of the Congress Govt at the Centre who has no right to rule any more. It cannot fulfil the most urgent demands of the common people in rural or urban areas.

(from page 9)

room. These comrades were of the opinion that the women employees should play an increasingly active role in the day-to-day functioning of the union. The sentiments of the assembled was nicely summed up by a delegate who thundered "Working women of the world unite, we have nothing to lose but our bondage". The declaration was unanimously adopted.

The convention came to an end with the presidential remarks by Com. Vijaymurthy and vote of thanks by Com Saumana.

The First Railway Working Women's Convention at Trichur (S.R.)

"WE are proud that it is only the CITU which is uniting and organising the working women taking up their problems and waging struggles in this country. The Dakshin Railway Employees Union, a CITU union has for the first time come forward to mobilise the working women on the Southern Railway," observed Com. R. Umanath, the Vice-President of the union and General Secretary of Tamil Nadu State Unit of the CITU while addressing a convention of Railway Working Women held at Trichur (Southern Railway) on 18.9.1988.

He added: "Never before in the history of the Railway Trade Union Movement that such a convention of the Railway Working women has held in the Indian Railways. This is the first convention of its kind. Even the recognised federations had never held a conference of railway women employees. We, an unrecognised union are holding it. We take pride in it and so it is an important day for all of us to always remember. Why is it that no major central unions pay attention to the problems, peculiar to the working women, come forward to organise them on those demands and wage struggles? The attitude of the present day average worker is the reason for it. Of course, all are workers inside the factory. But in their homes outside a worker is influenced by the thought of himself being a Hindu, a non-Hindu or upper caste, lower caste or husband or wife. A wife though an earning member is not treated as such; but as wife. In stove explosions only the daughter-in-law dies but not the mother-in-law. That is the difference we could see in the attitude of a worker in a developed country. It is only the machines which the workers in our country are operating are modern. Their attitude has not become modern. But for us we have one thing to be proud of. That is that it is only the CITU organisation which is organising the women workers taking up their problems and waging struggles and as part of it the DREU has organised the women workers into this convention

for the first time. Why does the CITU do this? CITU is doing it prompted by its class interest. Only when the women employees are organised could the CITU attain the status of a full-fledged organisation. It won't attain this status if a section of its class is left out. What is the meaning of the slogan "Workers of the world unite"? It is definitely not "male workers of the world unite." Women workers have problems which are not there for male workers. One such problem is job security. In retrenchments the first victim is women workers. Take the example of Trichur. Here 52 female casual labourers were retrenched. They had 5 years service in the railway. There were male casual labourers having lesser number of years of service and they were not retrenched. What do the rules of Rajiv Gandhi say? In retrenchment last come first go i.e. junior most should be removed. Here it is not so. In the same manner women employees are not included in the empanelment list. In coal industry those opting for voluntary retirement are allowed the benefit of job to a ward and that job opportunity too may not be for the female ward and there is yet another problem peculiar to woman workers. No maternity leave after two children. This is a punishment for them. Cruelty towards women is against national interest is what the Central Government say as their policy. But the same Central Government doesn't punish a male worker for being responsible for giving birth to more than two children. In cases of abortions women workers are not allowed maternity leave. The late MGR gained fame as being a leader of the women community and widows were given job opportunity in road transport undertakings. A widow who got such an appointment was removed, from service after 4 years on the reason that she was remarried and that she lost the status of a widow! That means if she wants to remain in service she should be a widow till death. Some of us may also feel an element of justification in it under the notion that, why a remarriage when she has a job? But one thing we should not forget. The source of attraction for a marriage

towards that woman is her job. However the CITU took up her case and got her back the job.

Few Women on the Committees

"Hence the CITU declares that it is not enough, women workers are unionised. They must be associated with the formulation of union's policies and elevated to its executive posts. In earlier years even the CITU had the same weakness of neglecting female workers. For instance in the year 1979 we found that, of the 136 unions affiliated to the CITU, the women members were at the rate of 8 per 100 and the total number of office bearers was only 34. In Durgapur Steel Factory CITU union, of the 15,000 members only 200 were women members. In West Bengal our CITU unions were very strong and yet of the 220 General Council members only 2 were ladies. In Beedi industry not even a single lady was there in the 15 member executive committee. In Kerala also in 1979 we found such a situation having existed. In Cashew industries of Quilon our membership was 11,800 of whom 10,000 were women workers. Yet only one female was there in the executive committee. In coir workers union of Calicut while there were 1,200 women workers and 125 male workers, not even a single female worker was there in the executive. Some of our comrades may say that these female workers do not attend committees despite being called. Why do they fail to come? Because we use to hold committee meetings between 6 & 9 in the evenings which is an inconvenient period for them and so they do not come. We must also take note of the fact that the female workers are not only workers but also in-charge of the family. So while fixing committee meeting the convenience of female workers should be born-in-mind.

"In Socialist Vietnam Working Women are there in T U leadership at the rate of 20 per 100, and in GDR 51 per 100. Why can't we also follow it up there. For us to become possible to do it we must take up the problems of women workers and consciously promote them to the position of leadership. Male workers should raise their united voice against atrocities towards women-in whatever form it comes and also against dowry deaths. In such a manner we must consciously try to bring a change in the attitude."

"This convention is an important event in

our union's history. I extend my revolutionary greetings to the working women assembled here." Com. Umanath concluded.

About 200 women workers participated in the convention Com. Eliamma presided. Comrades P. V. Ramadass (Gen. Secretary) R. G. Pillai (Vice President) spoke. Leaders representing CITU, Democratic Women's Federation, Working Women's Co-ordination Committee, KGTA, Part time contingency Employees Union, LIC Employees Union, NGO union, and other Fraternal Organisations greeted the convention. The women workers took out a procession which culminated in a public meeting in the Trichur Railway Station premises. Prof. Ushakumari presided over the public meeting which was addressed by Coms. Umanath, Ramadass and Ramakrishnan (CITU).

Following is the Charter of demands adopted at the convention:

1. Withdraw the T. U. Act and I. D. Act Amendment Bill.

2. Withdraw the Anti-Defamation Bill.

3. Withdraw the ban on recruitment and fill up all the vacancies.

4. Re-instate in service the trade union leaders. (R.G. Pillai and Kartha)

5. Re-engage the 52 construction women workers of Trichur and the 40 women workers of Shoranur removed in 1987.

6. Don't depute a woman worker during nights at places of work requiring the attendance of a single individual.

7. Increase the maternity leave period from 3 months to 6 months.

8. Provide Housing facilities near-by the work place.

9. Provide Transport facilities to the women workers working in Sherthalai.

10. No heavy manual labour to be given to female workers.

11. Creche to be provided at places where more than 30 female workers are working.

In another resolution the convention condemned the attack on Com. Nripen Chakravarthy in Tripura.

Kerala Co-ordination Committee

A. Nazimunnisa

KERALA State Coordination Committee met on 6th March and decided (1) to hold District Committee meetings (2) to participate in the joint actions of women's organisations on March 8 (3) to campaign among women workers, on the demands raised by Central Trade Unions and federations in connection with Bharat Bandh on March 15.

District Committee meetings were held in Trivandrum, Quilon, Kottayam and Ernakulam. Co-opting new cadres from various sectors the committees were expanded or reorganised. Women's problems were taken up by Dist. Committees. In Trivandrum City 41 teachers working in four prominent private schools were terminated from service for the reason that they have formed unions or raised demands for better wages or service conditions. Majority of them are women. These teachers are still continuing strike and sathyagraha with the support of CITU, service organisations and coordination committee.

As has been reported earlier, once we were able to end the strike of the women workers in Maternity hospital (G.G. Hospital, Trivandrum). But the management violated the provisions of the agreement and workers were again forced for a strike. The striking workers had to face every odd, but they have got every support from us. After one month's strike, the management came to an agreement granting increment, leave, weekly off etc.

Co-Committees Formed in Conventions

In Malappuram a working women convention was held on 13th August. 60 women, NGOs teachers, university employees, Anganwadi teachers, tailoring workers and transport employees participated in the convention. A dist. coordination committee was elected. Another convention, which was attended by 200 women from various sectors was held in Kasaragode district and a committee was formed. Separate women's sessions were held in the annual conference of middle class workers.

In the annual conference of Govt Teachers Association, a large number of women delegates attended, separate session of women, discussed their problems and a sub committee was elected. A separate women's session was convened on 7th May in the joint conference of P&T unions in Kerala, at Calicut. Women delegates participated in the discussion and a women's committee was formed. On August 4th a joint conference of women working in different central Govt offices in Trivandrum was held. 180 women employees attended and a memorandum demanding creche, maternity benefits hostel and conveyance facilities was accepted.

The CITU led KSRTC Employees Association is the only recognised union in transport corporation. In the State conference of association held at Trivandrum, 84 women delegates participated. The special session of women workers elected an 18 member Women's Committee.

In Electricity, the CITU led association held their conference from 22nd to 24th April at Kottayam. 58 women workers attended the conference as full time delegates. Another 50-60 women delegates from nearby districts travelled by train or bus on these three days to attend the conference. In a separate women's session, the delegates who have recently joined our union from the AITUC and INTUC said that the conference was a new experience to them. They also participated in the general discussion. Including 3 office bearers 15 women were elected to the State Committee. In the division level committees also women were elected as office bearers or committee members. In Trivandrum Vydyudhi Bhavan (Chief office) where about half of the workers are women 5 office bearers, including the president are women workers.

In Water Authority, in 2 districts women sub-committees are functioning, Artisans women committees are functioning in many districts. LIC employees union held its conference and women sub-committee was elected.

Need to work amongst Unorganised Women

The participation of women, especially the middle class workers in their union activities is increasing. Most of our women are either agricultural workers or working in the traditional industries like coir, cashew etc. We could not take their problems. There are large number of women in the unorganised sectors, who are not with us. They have so many problems. They have to be organised and their problems have to be taken up. Such work could not be done in spite of all these conventions and committees.

The State level sub-committee of working women, which includes the leaders of CITU and other organisations met on August 16th and 18th. Com. Suseela Gopalan, Com. Ravindranath and other trade union leaders and women comrades discussed and decided to form such sub-committees in districts also so that it can help the district committees for more coordinated work.

On 31st August State Coordination Committee met at Ernakulam and planned the following:

1. The anti-worker policy of the Government should be explained among women workers and their participation should be brought to the agitations against bills. In the trade union convention organised by NCC at Trivandrum on 7th September 50 women workers attended. No women from other trade union centres participated.

2. Almost all women conferences demanded creche, maternity benefits hostel and conveyance facilities, minimum wages etc. A memorandum is to be given to the LDF Government.

3. Subscription to the voice of the working women should be increased. We are trying to translate the important articles and publish them in the magazine of trade unions. We support and help the activities of AIDWA in our State. In actions against Sati, price rise etc, working women also joined.

Working women in Ernakulam district worked for conducting a successful state conference of AIDWA on 12th and 13th July.

AIDWA has taken initiative to organise Anganwadi workers and helping its activities. We feel that such a relation is necessary to the total women's movement.

In the all India and State conferences of different organisations held in Kerala, working women gave their warm support to the delegates as reception committee.

(from page 2)

in legislatures, by nominations, promise for creche for middle class employees when women workers in industries are left without it despite the legislation, advertise about pure drinking water in villages when hundreds die of cholera in the absence of it, speak about equal wage which is given on paper. How correct Lenin was when he said repeatedly that however advanced capitalist country may be, they will not be able to give equal status to women. Because, where private property and land relations on class basis are preserved, woman's position remains of double slavery. Lenin's teachings are guide to us.

The women in South Africa, Latin America and in the capitalist countries are fighting heroically against Apartheid system, and for their emancipation, taking inspiration from Russian Revolution. The great participation of women in the peace movement all over the world against the conspiracies of American imperialism to unleash war shows the strength of the common men and women throwing challenge to imperialism and their stooges.

On the occasion of the 71st Russian revolution, we send our revolutionary greetings to our sisters while expressing our firm solidarity with them.

Read

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In BHEL Trichi: The Discriminated are Discriminated

THE following letter was submitted to the Director/Personnel BHEL by their union, Trichi demanding the same amount for the Chappals for their women employees there available for their other units elsewhere: Editor.

"We would like to submit the following few lines for your kind notice and favourable action please.

You are aware that in the Joint Committee itself an issue was raised regarding the insufficiency of uniform set for female employees. Our Union have sent a letter in this regard on 23-12-87 and also submitted a memorandum (received from the female employees of BHEL, Tiruchy Unit) to Chairman at the Joint Committee on 12-2-88. Com. M.K. Pandhe. The issue was also discussed at the Joint committee at Tiruchy on 27-6-88 and with the Director/Personnel on 6-7-9-88 at New Delhi personally. The Management has assured to settle the above issue amicably.

Now we are giving the real facts of issuance of chappals to female employees at BHEL, Tiruchy. The Management has done injustice to the female employees.

1st Issue: During 1985-86, the management had issued a pair of chappal (for 2 years period), to the female employees to the cost of Rs. 53/- and it was worn out within 3/4 months period. But the other units of BHEL, management allowed their female employees to select their own choice in the prominent shops with the restriction of shoe cost i.e. Rs. 130/- Because of wrong approach of Trichy Management the great injustice was done to the female employees of our Unit. We have protested this in various forums.

2nd Issue: Meanwhile our Union took up the issue to the Director/Personal vide our letter dt. 23-12-87 and the employees representatives raised this issue in the works committee meeting also on 6-5-88 vide Agenda No. 13. We expected that atleast during the 2nd issue the management would take appropriate action to avoid this discrepancy towards female employees. But to our great disappointment

management have not taken any concrete steps in this regards The Tiruchy Management have not provided the chappals to female employees till date which should have been provided during 1987 itself. The delay is purely due to the management's wrong policy for implementing the scheme compared to other units and long pending procurement delay. In the earlier stage itself we have requested the management for early supply as well as the mode of procurement and cost of chappal, compared to other units. In spite of our repeated discussion in all forums the management has adopted their own decision in this regard. We clearly explained to the Tiruchy Management that no female employee has accepted/satisfied against the Tiruchy Units' own decision of purchasing the *chappals to the value of Rs. 69-95 only.*

We give below the details of chappals supplied to other BHEL Units. The above details will show beyond doubt that Tiruchy Management is adopting discrepancy practice towards female employees of Tiruchy Unit.

S. No.	Units	Cost of pair of chappal for the 2nd issue
1.	ROD, New Delhi	... Rs. 154/-
2.	RODs, Madras	... Rs. 165/-
3.	PPSR, BHEL, Madras	... Rs. 157/-
4.	Bangalore	... Rs. 154-95
5.	Hardwar	... Equivalent to shoe cost.

Hence we request you to allow the female employees of BHEL. Tiruchy to select their own choice to the cost of Rs. 165/- as being done to other units.

We hope that you will pay immediate attention to this problem.

Thanking you.

The following letter was written by the Secretary AICCWW to the Director of Personnel BHEL on the justifiable demand of the nurses in BHEL Hospital.

Shri A. Madhava Rao,
Director of Personnel
Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd.
Hindustan Times Building
Kasturba Gandhi Marg
New Delhi

Sub: Availing of House Building Advance by the Nursing Staff/their spouses-vacation of rent free quarters

Dear Shri Rao,

I would like to draw your attention to the representations made to the Managing Director of BHEL, by the nurses posted at Trichy Hospital and also by their representative trade unions, on the above mentioned subject. I am forwarding once again the latest copy of the representations for ready reference.

The All India Co-ordination Committee of working women is rather surprised to note that BHEL (Trichy) have asked its nursing staff to vacate the quarters allotted to them on the plea of their drawing House Building Advance, in its own regulations the BHEL have made a number of exception with regard to the vacation of quarters by the drawee of BHEL. Workers having built houses beyond 30 k.m. of the plant and those executives who have built houses even in the peripheral areas of BHEL are not asked for the vacation of their allotted houses. But the nurses, who according to all international norms are supposed to enjoy free housing at the vicinity of the hospital and treated as emergency staff are being coerced to vacate the houses and are being charged commercial rent.

We hope that natural justice demands the withdrawal of the said order and the immediate re-imbursement of the additional amount recovered. As such I would request you to issue necessary instructions revoking earlier instruction in this regard. A line of acknowledgement will be welcomes.

Thanking you

November 1988

Problem of Staff Nurses in Trichi Bhel: Discrimination Again

In BHEL, Tiruchy the Induction level for staff nurse is Nurse Gr. II. (The qualification is SSLC/PUC and 3½ years Nursing Diploma). After 6 years timebound promotion is offered to them and next promotion is to Nurse-I. Again the next promotion after 6 years is Sister. The Nurse-II and Nurse-I is non-supervisory Grade whereas from the Sister Grade it is Supervisory cadre. The promotion channel in Supervisory cadre is sister (5 years) to Asst. Matron & Asst. Matron to (5 years) Matron. Once the employee gets the sister promotion i.e. from non-Supervisor cadre to Supervisory cadre, the promotion to Asst. Matron and Matron should be time bound. But the management now introduce the new grade vis., Sr. Sister instead of Asst. Matron.

This has created lot of discontent among the nurses. They think that for male employees, the promotion from C' Man to Asst. Foreman and from Asst. Foreman to Foreman is time bound and automatic whereas the similar promotion is denied to the nurse employees.

As you are aware, the BHEL Management is trying to deny the promotion to Supervisory cadre to all employees. As past of it this promotion is denied to nurse employees also. Narmally the Nurse-I employees after 6 years should be promoted to Sister. But the Management tried to give Sr. Nurse promotion (similar to Sr. Artisan instead of C' Man).

We have negotiated these points with BHEL Management and they say that the corporate office had given such guidelines. We hope the AICCWW will take up the question with the Management and give justice to us.

The Voice of The Working Woman

Mass Demonstration of Working Women before IISCO Management on 26th August at Burnpur

AS per the decision of Working Women Convention held on 29th July '88 about 500 working women demonstrated inside the works before General Manager (works). Out of 500 women about 400 are contractors works and more than 100 regular workers who do not generally come to participate in the demonstration. Com. Kalpana Hembram, Maya Bauri and Snigdha Mukherjee took the lead and placed a memorandum before General Manager (works). The demands were "same status to be given to women workers at par with male, (2) Separate bathroom, latrine, rest room and cloak room and creche etc. (3) Safety appliance are to be supplied. (4) Protection from Anti-social elements who are teeing in the works area. This demonstration was organised by ABK Metal and Engg. workers union (CITU) and united contractors' workers union (CITU). Com. Debesh Bhattacharya, J.N. Debey and J.N. Karchoudy also spoke in the gathering on behalf of CITU. The union has decided to form a permanent committee of working women.

Bank Women Employee with the small kids denied Promotion

Kailas Baveja has been working with New India Assurance Company Karnal Divisional Office for the last 8½ years. She was promoted as senior Assistant in 1985 batch but given chance to work at Rohtak or Hissar. But she did not join duty due to her family problems as her husband was officer in Union Bank of India at Karnal and she has two little kids and cannot leave them alone at Karnal. She has no arrangement of living alone at Rohtak or Hissar. She represented the case to her higher authorities to give her promotion at Karnal on the "Couple case ground." But instead of considering her case sympathetically, her name was deleted from promotion list and 1986 batch vacancies were declared. Her junior, one Mr. Chatha who

was promoted in the same cadre has been given chance to work in Karnal. Thus Kailash lost her promotion as well as seniority. Now, again she has appeared for the promotion interview on 8th July, 1988. This time also the same problem may be created because the higher authorities said that there is no vacancy at Karnal.

The Chief Minister of Haryana, in his speech at Tohana, (Hissar) announced on October 2nd that no employee would be transferred except on administrative ground. Will Kailash get justice on the humanitarian ground and be promoted?

Impressive Dharna of Anganwadi Women in Punjab

Darshan Kaur, Convenor Anganwadi Employees Union, Punjab

About one thousand women employees working in Anganwadis held an impressive rally and dharna in Chandigarh on 21st Sept. 88 at the call of Anganwadi Employees Union, Punjab. The rally was presided over by Darshan Kaur State Convenor. Women employees came from all over the state and were holding play cards showing demands, shouting slogans.

Their demands included regularisation of the services, conversion of honorarium into regular paygrades, pay parity with J.B.T. teachers and class IV employees and Anganwadis workers and helpers respectively, distribution of food articles for pre-school children/students upto the village level, central in full quantity and according to the schedule, building for working centres and requisite furniture, transfer facilities for employees etc.

The rally was addressed among others by Smt. Surinder Kaur President Istri Mulazam Coordination Committee, Mr. Hazar Singh, General Secretary P.S.S.F., Mrs Talwinder Kaur, Mrs Jagit Kaur, Mrs. Surinderjit Kaur, Mrs. Jivan Preet and district convenor of Anganwadi Employees Union, Punjab.

Deputy Director, Social Welfare Department Punjab met the deputation of Anganwadi Employees Union to discuss the demands. Deputy Director assured to Pay arrears of the

(Contd. on page 23)

Maternity Leave for Nurses in AIIMS

[The following reply was given to Shree Motilal Vora Minister of Health and Family Welfare Govt of India to his letter to com. Basudev Acharya M. P. on the issue of Maternity leave for the nurses in AIIMS hospital on 15th of Oct. 88 —Editor]

To
Shri Motilal Vora
Minister of Health & Family Welfare
Government of India,
Nirman Bhavan
NEW DELHI-110011

Dear Sir,

I thank you for endorsing me a copy of your letter No. V. 16020/61 88 ME (PG) dated 26.9.88 addressed to Shri Basudev Acharya M. P. regarding denial of Maternity Benefits by the AIIMS. My letter has been replied after full one year and three months!

I am enclosing a copy of a letter by Mrs. M. Sebastian addressed to you. It appears to me that you have not applied your mind to the facts of the case; even when the issue is denial of a basic right like maternity benefits to women employees of a prestigious institution like the AIIMS, directly under the control of the Central Government. My information is that the AIIMS management still continues to indulge in this illegal denial and already hundreds of women employee have been deprived of their due leave. The malice is slowly spreading to other hospitals in Delhi.

Section 43 (2) of the C. C. S. (Leave) Rules 1972 says that maternity leave may also be granted in case of miscarriage, including abortion, subject to the condition that:-

(a) the leave does not exceed six weeks and (b) the application for the leave is supported by a medical certificate as laid down in Rule 18 or Rule 19 as the case may be.

You will agree that period of 6 weeks leave is the bare minimum required by a woman to recover from a miscarriage. That was why it was incorporated in the Maternity Benefits Act and ILO Convention No. 103. The Maternity Benefit Act strictly prohibits employment of women before six weeks after a miscarriage, whereas the C. C. S. Rules throws them to

the mercy of a doctor's certificate. The hospital managements are insisting on a recommendation regarding the number of days leave from their own doctors (in the case of Mrs. M. Sebastian the AIIMS had asked for it in writing) whereas the management has given strict instructions to the doctors not to issue recommendations for the full period as per the CCS Rules and to keep it to the minimum, however serious the case may be. I had referred to the Health Ministry the cases of 8 nurses who were given leave ranging from 1-2 weeks instead of 6 weeks. Even in cases when the doctors certify 6 weeks leave, the management has refused to grant the leave and has demanded that they get it reduced. In the case of Mrs. M. Sebastian also the doctor had certified 42 days leave, but she was forced to reduce it since the management refused to grant the leave and demanded that she gets a recommendation for a shorter period. Also the women employees should be permitted to get the medical certificate from any registered medical practitioner. Even though this is permitted in the CCS Rules the hospital managements are not ready to accept certificates other than from their own doctors. Thus it becomes impossible for the women to get the full leave. Since the provisions of the CCS Rules runs ultra vires of the Maternity Benefits Act with regard to the benefits of working women. We demand its immediate repeal and amendment. The Health Ministry should give clear cut instructions to the Hospitals under its control in this regard. Also in the case of Mrs. M. Sebastian, since she has the documentary proof that 6 weeks leave was recommended, she should be given the full leave.

I hope, the above explanation with regard to the CCS rules will explain the reality of the situation, and the nurses under the Government Hospital will get justice from the Government.

I hope, you will reply to my letter without any delay.

Yours Sincerely,
MRS. (VIMALA RANADIVE)
SECRETARY

Nurses in the Army Hospital Thrown Out After Marriage

MS. SAVITA SINGH, a nurse in the Army hospital in Allahabad, a gold medalist in the Diploma Nursing course was dismissed as she got married on April 27, 1988. Ms. S. Geeta, and many others serving in the Army hospitals in Delhi, Pune, Bombay etc were asked to leave now, on the ground of 'marriage clause'. There were no complaints about them or any explanation was sought for. The question can be raised as to why suddenly the DG has woken up and applying the clause now. Many male and female nurses were there, had married lives. Why only women nurses are made target of dismissal?

By virtue of section 9 of Military Nursing Service Ordinance 1943, the Indian Army Act is equally applicable to Military Nursing Officers as other commissioning officers. It is quite strange that a different yardstick is applied on Military Nursing Officers. No commissioned officer in the Indian Army or in the Army Medical Corps including the lady Doctors have been subjected to this clause "termination on marriage ground and low ACR Profile".

Married Nursing Officers are victims of capricious actions of unmarried superiors of their own profession. The genesis of this discrimination and ill-treatment found its expression on the letter of Director General (DG) of Medical Services on March 6, 1987. The order states "Nursing is a profession where single minded devotion to Patient care is absolutely essential and marriage with its commitments is clearly a handicap". The man who propagates this theory forgets that it is equally applicable to lady doctors and other male doctors in the Army.

Retention of Nursing Officers for two years even after the marriage was introduced in the year 1968 due to the shortage in the Nursing Cadre. DG Medical Services is now of the opinion that "shortages have now been brought down appreciably to manageable limits. The existing policy has been reviewed and it has been decided to be more selective in future about retaining these officers".

To marry is a fundamental right of an individual. If Departmental heads are going to make rules which ultra-vires the constitution, it will be a dangerous trend which has to be nipped in the bud.

Married Nursing Officers have been subjected to all kinds of humiliation. They have not been allowed for various posts basic professional and specialist courses. They have been forced to make contributions for the maintenance of the Mess. In addition to that they have been ordered to attend parties in the mess even in odd hours and make contribution for such parties compulsory. An order has issued recently that all married Nursing Officers getting either 5 or less ACR marks will be treated as low profile.

This is a blatant example of discrimination as this theory is not made applicable to unmarried Nursing Officers and their services are not terminated on low ACR profile.

Army order 121/78 stipulates that before an adverse entry is made or initiated against an officer, the officer should be warned in writing of all her short-comings which are intended to be reflected in the adverse report and she should be given a reasonable opportunity to improve her performance. No Nursing Officer has been afforded this opportunity or any single officer has been served with any explanatory note or any enquiry has been ordered against them before their termination from service. Even the transfers are not free from discrimination. Though there are orders from the Ministry of Home Department of personnel that as both the husband and wife should be adjusted in a station of their choice as far as possible it has never been adhered to. On the contrary spinsters are given preference to a place. Nursing Officers have to perform 30 days continuous night duty. Night duty starts from 7.30 PM to 7.30 AM and it continues for thirty days without having any monetary compensation and compensated only with a 3 days off.

(Contd. on page 6)

Central Government Women Employees Present Charter of Demands to Heads of Offices

T. Radhamany, Trivandrum

ON the 6th of October, 1988 the women employees of the Central Government offices of Trivandrum District in Kerala presented, under the auspices of the Women's Sub Committee of the District Unit of the Confederation of Central Government Employees and Workers, a Charter of Demands containing 20 points. The programme was good success in offices like Accountant General Office, Post & Telegraphs, Indian Space Research Organisation, Census Directorate, Income Tax Office, Postal Accounts Office, Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute of Medical Science and Technology, Regional Research Laboratory etc. In AG's Office, more than 200 women participated in the rally and demonstration before the Accountant General's Chamber. Com. Girija Bai, Chair person and Com. T. Radhamony, Convener led the demonstration. Com. Y. Pappen, President, Confederation of Central Government Employees and Workers Kerala State Committee, addressed the gathering. In census, more than 30 women employees marched to the Chamber of the Director of Census Operations under the leadership of Com. C. Sarada, Jt. Convener of Women's Sub Committee. Women employees of P & T demonstrated before the offices of the Post Master General, Kerala Circle and General Manager of Telephones, Kerala Circle. Com. K. Leelamma, Jt. Convener, Women Sub Committee and Sudha P. Thankachy led the demonstration. Com. P. Balakrishnan, General Secretary of Kerala State Unit of the Confederation addressed.

The Charter contains the following demands:-

1. Appointment of Women's Commission with statutory powers.
2. Start nurseries and mother-child care centres attached to each institution.
3. Provide funds in the Budget Estimate for giving jobs exclusively for women.
4. Provide hostel facilities.
5. Allow spouses to work at same station.
6. Provide primary facilities and rest-room in all institutions.
7. Grant adequate facilities for journey and rest for women having tour-duty.
8. Grant higher rates of DA as given in tariff hotels to women

- who get accommodation in YWCA while on tour.
9. Start creches attached to each institution.
10. Withdraw restrictions imposed by the Fourth Central Pay Commission on granting maternity leave. Increase maternity leave to six months.
11. Grant one months pay as special allowance for postnatal treatment and nursing.
12. Exempt pregnant and breast feeding women from night duty and give light duties to them.
13. Grant one hour reduction in duty hours to breast-feeding mothers.
14. Provide special security arrangements for women who work in situation hazardous to health.
15. Reject the recommendation of Fourth Pay Commission restricting maternity leave for mothers having not more than two children.
16. Provide canteen and consumer store facilities for supplying eatables and essential provisions with reasonable prices.
17. Provide two sets of uniforms of good quality every year to all uniformed women employees.
18. Increase journey facilities for women employees. Provide special commutation facilities during high time. Appoint women guards in Bus Stations and Railway Station. Provide more ladies compartments in trains.
19. Strengthen public distribution system. Provide mobile shops for distribution of essential articles at work-spots.
20. Start bus services connecting major offices to facilitate CG employees.

This Charter had been accepted by a Convention of Women Organised by the Confederation of Central Government Employees and Workers on 4th August 1988. The Convention which discussed at great length the problems affecting women employees was inaugurated by Com. Suseela Gopalan, veteran leader of the fighting women of India. The Convention elected a sub committee with Com. B. Girija Bai, AG's Office (Chair person) Com. K. Leelamma and Com. N.P. Ponnanna (Vice-Presidents), T. Radhamony, AG's Office (Convener), Com. Sarada (Census) and Com. Subalekshmy, (ISRO) (Jt. Conveners).

The Convention and the mass deputation programme have generated wide enthusiasm among the working women.

Brick-Kiln Women in Pakistan Fight Against Ruthless Exploitation

ON February 11-th day in which the police brutally attacked women demonstrators in 1983-hundreds of women from different background marched together to commemorate that day and also to protest against their continued subordinated position in society. Noticeably heading the march were women workers and their menfolk from the brick-kilns. Their employers intimidated them and warned them not to join the march but they were out on the streets with their babies and their men calling for better protection for women and against brutality towards women.

It is estimated that there are some 121,000 brick-kiln workers of which nearly half are women. Officially these women do not exist, yet there is hardly any brick-kiln that you do not get women working. The status of these women are defined as that of "unpaid family helpers." They constitute the invisible workforce in many parts of Pakistan.

The brick-kiln owner normally only register one male members of each family. This means that less workers are registered and thus less labour laws would apply. The wage earned by one family is shown by one man's wage. The denial of women workers existence allows owners to escape from provision of maternity benefits and following labour regulations on nightwork, overtime work etc.

The average family earns about Rs. 666 (US \$ 35) per month for a daily 10-11 hours work. The norms and system of work is as such that the family is bound to the owner for life. The worker and his family are continuously caught in a vicious cycle of loan debt to one owner. The worker becomes a virtual slave due to indebtedness. Furthermore, the appalling conditions of work — long hours, no day off, no benefits, maltreatment, sexual abuse have become a way of life for these workers. Those who try to escape, if caught, are ruthlessly beaten up and abused.

In the past few months, brick kiln workers have taken up their cases by reporting to the

police the brutalities of the owners. In the case, an 18-year old girl and her mother were stripped naked and beaten after failing to complete the day's target of 2,500 bricks due to their father's illness. In another case, the worker's wife was raped and sold to another brick-owner to repay back the debts of the worker.

(Source: Justice and Peace Newsletter, Pakistan, April '88 issue)

Support the Struggle of NGE's in Bihar

The following resolution was passed in the meeting of the AICCWW held on 22nd September 1988.

This meeting of the All India Co-ordination Committee of Working Women (CITU) held at Dhanbad on 22.9.88 condemns the totally callous attitude of the Bihar Government towards the genuine demands of the Bihar NGEs.

It is shocking that whereas a settlement was reached between the Bihar Government and the NGEs in February 1987, wherein these demands were conceded and an assurance was given that they would be implemented by August 1987, that settlement has not been implemented to date. After repeated representation to the Government evoked no response, the NGEs were forced to go on strike from 6th September '88 after giving due notice of this.

We warmly greet the courageous NGE's and salute their valiant struggle. We pledge solidarity with the NGEs in their just and legitimate struggle and demand that the Bihar Government immediately start a dialogue with the NGEs in order to implement the long standing agreement with no further delay.

Cong (I) Mahila Wing's Demand Undemocratic

AHILYA Rangnekar, Working President, and Susheela Gopalan, General Secretary, of the All India Democratic Women's Association, issued the following statement on October 4.

The AIDWA strongly opposes the demand voiced by the All India Mahila Congress President, Ms. Jayanti Patnaik, for "30 per cent nomination for women from the Parliament to village panchayat level." This will mean that in the name of women's political participation 30 per cent seats in elected bodies will be filled by the Government (read ruling party) nominees, thus ensuring not only a block support for the ruling party but also a subversion of the democratic process. The dismal position of women thus becomes an instrument to increase the percentage of nominated seats so as to enable the ruling party to secure a majority in elected bodies. In view of the increasing isolation of the Congress from the people as reflected in recent by-elections, the dangerous implications of this demand from the Congress' Mahila wing cannot be underestimated.

In fact, it appears that the demand is part of a well orchestrated campaign. The National Perspective Plan for women commenting on the low level of women's political participation, had recommended this, although it had suggested that this could be done either through nominations or through election to reserved seats. The joint all-India convention of over 35 women's organisations recently held in the capital, had outright rejected the concept of 30 per cent nominations as an affront to the democratic process. On the other hand, the convention had recommended 30 per cent reservation of seats up to the district level for women to be filled through the process of elections, so as to ensure grass-root participation of women in decision making, elected bodies as also in the planning committees set up by these bodies.

The cynical move of the ruling party to utilise a dismal reality they have themselves created, to shore up their rule, must be thwarted. The AIDWA Calls upon all women's organisations and also appeals to all political parties to oppose this move.

AIDWA Condemns Massacre in Tripura

The following statement was issued by Smt. Vimal Ranadive Vice President of AIDWA to the press on 17.10.88 on the massacre of Tripura CPM.

"The AIDWA strongly condemns the dastardly killings of 16 CPI (M) workers, including Com. Sridam Paul a member of Autonomous District Council, at Birchandramanu in the Belonia sub-division of Tripura by the Congress antisocials. There were women and children who were killed as per the report, Com. Brijmohan Jamatia MLA was narrowly escaped.

"After usurping power from the left front under the paramilitary control through fake elections under the Central Government the Congress (I)-TUI rule has unleashed semi-fascist terror in the state. Hundreds of killings, kidnapping, looting of the houses, desolation of democratic institutions and attack on trade unions rights continue unabated in Tripura.

"Some months back tribal women in Ujan Maidan were raped and molested which was denied unashamedly by Chief Minister. Here in Belonia the supporters of the CPI (M) wanted to open their office when the pre-planned attack was let loose on the CPI-(M) supporters. This is an attack on the democratic rights of the people.

"The AIDWA demands immediate resignation of the Tripura Government, and appeals to all its units to condemn this dastardly act by sending telegrams, passing resolutions to the Prime Minister."

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maternity leave, period of training, additional Charge allowance within week and a certificate to this respect will have to be furnished by respective C.D.P.O's Rs. 25/- P.M. in addition to honorarium will be paid to those who has completed five years of service and these workers will be eligible to apply for the post of supervisors, for transfer facilities. It was decided to right to the Govt of India for necessary approval.

Union decided to observe demands day for a fortnight at block level w.e.f. October 15,

A Song of Freedom will ring out one day in Chile

THE dictator Pinochet was voted out in Chile after 15 years by the common people recently. Thousands of people were put in jail, tortured to death under his regime. The Secretariat of the WIDF had an opportunity to meet some of the women whose husbands or near relatives are still languishing in jail. Elena Adrian tells the story of her husband's torture here:

"My husband was arrested on September 29, 1980, for alleged participation in armed actions against the dictatorship. No one has been able to prove anything, but they have asked for the death penalty. We have four children. Rodrigo is 14, Noemi is 12, Julio is 8 and Pablo is 7 years old. Life is very hard for them. Rodrigo and Noemi know the truth, we have spoken with them, and they respect their father very much because they know he risked his life to defend his ideals. We haven't told the two younger children. It was very sad when they were playing with some other children from the neighbourhood one day and they told them that their father would be coming home after work. Pablo, my youngest boy, said work, what work? Dad always live in jail. All dads are there. He had invented this situation to explain the absence of his father."

"In the first five months of his detention my husband was tortured almost to death. I was expecting my youngest son. They took me to the torture chamber. I saw him strapped to a cot, almost unconscious. They took my husband's hand and pressed it against my swollen stomach, shouting, 'If you don't tell the truth we'll kill your wife and your kids'. I was beaten, humiliated, harassed. This is the life they have made us lead in this nightmare that has gone on much too long."

Neither woman shed a tear. Perhaps they have already suffered and went too much. They are not weeping now, they are fighting. They are demanding that the lives of their dear ones be saved, demanding their release and the release of all the detainees. They are demanding a new life for this country that has been suffering, yet struggling for so many years.

The meeting of the WIDF Secretariat with

the visiting delegation ended in an unusual manner: the song "Venceremos" rang out, a song of struggle that is now sung in all languages on all continents.

The people of Chile, the Chilean women have not put aside their guitars during the years of terror. They have always had their song, which one day will ring out as a song of freedom.

Majority of poor in US are women

Two out of three poor adults in the US are women and one out of four children below six years lives below the poverty line, Dr. Nancy Tuana, associate professor of history, arts and humanities, University of Texas, disclosed at a seminar on contemporary women's issues recently.

Referring to the feminisation of poverty, Dr Tuana reeled off statistic to portray a grim picture of women's conditions in the US. Thirty-nine per cent of families headed by women with young children lives below the poverty line and the number was much higher for blacks and minorities, she stated.

One reason for this was that in the US, a woman was given custody of the children in 90 per cent of the divorces. In 49 per cent of such cases, no child support was awarded and less than half of those granted support had any chance of receiving the full amount, Dr. Tuana remarked.

She traced the misconceptions and stereotypes about women two millenia back to Xenophon and Aristotle who believed that women were no more than misbegotten men, and drew clear distinctions between work and politics on the one hand and private life and family on the other.

In the middle ages, there was Thomas Aquinas, Christian philosopher and priest, who concluded that a woman's only role was to bear and rear children. The women's role of procreation was used to stop here from taking on a public role.

—Times of India 10.10.88