

THE VOICE
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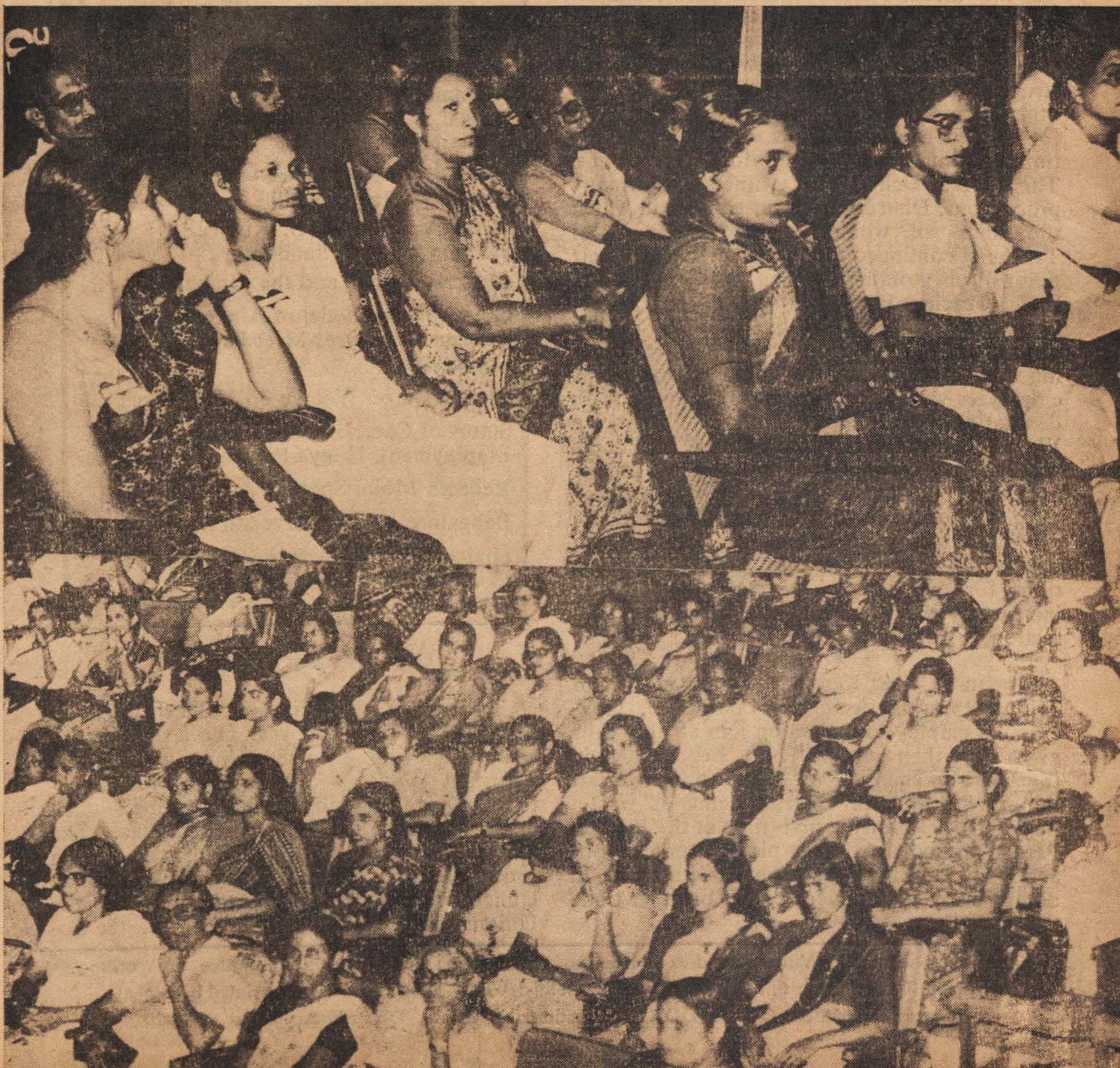
THE WORKING WOMAN

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Joint Convention of working women in NFPTE in Kerala held on 7.4.88 at Calicut



Working Women Launch Struggles on a Big Scale

Vimal Ranadive

LAST year, was an year of struggles for the Working Women, and women in general for their various demands. A new feature to be noted was a great participation of middle class women employees, such as Teachers and Professor, women in LIC and Banks, Doctors and nurses, women under State and Central Government. The reason for launching struggles under their union leadership was the various attacks on their gains, against privatisation and computerisation besides curtailment of Maternity benefit after two children etc. The year last also saw many militant struggles of women workers under CITU and other Central Trade Unions in different states for their economic demands such as regularisation, minimum wages and for employment. The capital, Delhi never witnessed so many processions, Dharnas, demonstrations in which thousands of women participated. Delhi Teachers continued their strike under their unions for months, women teachers taking lead. Teachers in Tamil Nadu courted arrests in thousands. In a state like Punjab, during last 6 months a number of convention of working women in ICDS, of State Government employees were held. A convention and a mass deputation under the leadership of Working Women Co-ordination committee in Punjab was attended by 900 to 1000 women, despite murders by extremists of innocent people taking place. In the state of Bihar, under the leadership of NGOs union thousands of Gramsevikas, Prasavsevikas held dharnas and demonstrations for the demand of regularisation and increase in wages. This is a most exploited section of women.

In states like Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura, working women in Coal, Steel, Government employees and so on join at the calls given by their unions and Federations in thousands. The rally on 10th April in West Bengal for 20 point Charter demands was a huge rally held for the first time at the Brigade Parade ground. At many places, spontaneous actions of working women have taken place, in almost every state under CITU or other trade union.

IN THIS ISSUE

May Day to May Day	2-3
Women Workers in Tamilnadu Discriminated in Toto	4-5
Massive Dharna by Women Employees in Punjab	6
Blatant Discrimination in wages, Greeting to EKSATHE	7
Choose Between your Job and Family Bangalore Example	8
Women in Industry	9-10
Honour of Woman in Danger under Congress Rule	12-13
Gorbachev's Message to Women's Organisations on March 8	14
Mommoth Rally of Women in West Bengal, Bombay Anti-communal Conference of Women	16-17
Needed Creches for our Children	
Condemn Hospital Bill	19
Resist Attack on T.U. Rights, In Memory of Leila Sundarayya	20
Chinese Women and the Unions	21
Govt. follows model of Air India Women Employees Meet Pay Commission	22
Repression on Women on 15th March	23
Status of Chechoslovak Women in Employment, Hitaya Punished	25
Rebecca Moloi Speaks	26
Bangalore JMS Observe 8th March	27
Shahadol JMS Meets the authorities	
Condemn Murder of Dulcie	28

CITU Session Gives Lead

The 6th Conference of CITU held in Bombay in May, last year and a special convention of working women along with it was a turning point to a certain extent for CITU to take lead in mobilising the working women under their own unions or Federations. The reports submitted on this issue at the session showed that while working women were launching struggles, the leadership of the Unions were not taking much interest, the Co-

ordination Committees were not functioning, the feudal tendencies in the leadership persisted. It was therefore necessary to make more efforts to bring these women in the mainstream of the struggle without which the working class movement will not succeed. The after effects of this special session, the importance given by the CITU leadership to the problem ultimately proved fruitful and the CITU State leadership in many states seriously took steps to improve the functioning. Tamilnadu State Committee worked out a plan systematically and held four Conventions of women in LIC after full preparations, under the guidance of their unions. Andhra, Karnataka and Orissa held Conventions and reorganised their Committees. Orissa State Committee held convention of women workers in the Coal belt areas. The women coal loaders there fought a battle against the mechanisation in Coal. This initiative taken in Bombay session also encouraged the working women and their leaders in the states to take up the problems of women workers seriously, despite their double burden at home and at the work place.

Other Trade Unions take up the Issue

Another important point to be noted here is since CITU started taking up the issues of working women and organising them in their unions, other Central organisations too attempted to have their women's wings, though still they may not be serious about it. For the first time all women trade unionists of different trade union organisations attended a meeting at the Government level to discuss self-employment and women in unorganised Industries and their problems. More important point to be noted was, the increasing intervention of the Central Government and Congress Party. The different programmes for women, schemes for women's development, the question of their unionisation and so on were taken up on the platform, and plans were announced. At no time, 8th March International Women's Day was observed by Congress women's sections as this time appearing as if they were the only people who observe the Day. The 7th Five Year's Plan spoke about spending lakhs of rupees for ICDS scheme for women, working women's hostels, self-employment and so on. Already attacks on them in the nature of retrenchment, mechanisation, on maternity benefit were started. They were

penalised for having 3 children and more, promotions were stopped if they have more than 2 children. On the other hand, offers were made for jobs in Anganwadi which pay Rs. 250-300 only. Women were thrown out from organised to unorganised sector. The Congress rulers cannot give jobs to these lakhs of men and women in the present economic crisis, when it goes for modernisation and mechanisation in Railway, P&T, Tobacco, Coal and in other industries and offices. The right to have employment is denied under the constitution. The last year had witnessed tremendous degradation of working women and women in general in every respect, social or economic. No legislation like equal Remuneration helped them.

Class Consciousness to be Raised Higher

If we review our work among working women, in every respect, question should be raised as to how far we were able to unionise them, how far we were able to raise their class consciousness and political awareness so that they can take up the challenge under the present political situation. It is true, we tried to unionise women workers under our influence to a certain extent. Their participation in the unions is increasing no doubt. They are elected on the higher committees, in the Conferences on a larger scale. The political awareness to join the main stream of struggle also is increasing. But we are not yet been able to make the working women participating in their trade unions as their own unions. The loyalty to their unions and the sense of belonging is yet to emerge. The awareness that unless they participate in the trade union activities, the movement cannot go further, is still lacking among women and in CITU. The consistent work by the trade unions and women trade unionists, to make them class conscious, to fight against the capitalist system still remains to be done. The spontaneous actions of working women, their just anger against the system are to be taken up by the trade unions to raise the class consciousness through their unions. In the absence of this, many wrong tendencies are likely to develop, such as separate women's trade unions or demanding reservation for jobs to solve the unemployment question etc, which may divide the working class. The grand participation of working

(Contd. on page 28)

Women Workers in Factories in Tamil Nadu

Discriminated in Toto

The March 1988 issue of Voice of the Working Woman published a note on the functioning of the Advisory Committee under the Equal Remuneration Act, Tamilnadu by Mythili Shivraman, a member of the Committee. In this issue we are publishing, the remarks of the other members of the Committee, such as the Deputy Commissioner of Labour, the Joint Secretary of Labour to the E.R. Advisory Committee and some of the observations of the Committee members on the visits to different factories. Though the facts and observations are made in 1982, it does not change the characteristics of employment, wages, treatment, unequal status of woman workers etc, today. On the contrary, conditions worsened further. The following observations of different members will be helpful to understand the present situation of women workers in the factories in Tamil Nadu. —Editor

Report of the Deputy Commissioner of Labour Coimbatore

The Committee headed by Smt. Mythili Sivaraman visited the following textile Mills along with the Deputy Commissioner of Labour and Assistant Commissioner of Labour (Conciliation)-I Coimbatore in order to have an on the spot study about the working conditions of woman workers in Textiles Industry on 17.10.1981.

1. Lakshmi Mills Company Limited, Pappanaickenpalayam, Coimbatore.

2. Gopalakrishna Mills Limited, Ganapathy Coimbatore.

3. Somasundara Mills (National Textile Corporation) Coimbatore.

During their visits in the Mills the managements expressed that because of the provisions contained in the Factories Act, 1948, the women workers could not be employed during the night shifts and as such the employment opportunity to this sections of workers are not adequate. The "Committee did not concur

with the views expressed by the managements in their inability to provide employment opportunity to women workers when there are bright chances open to them in engaging women workers. However, I am of opinion that if the cleaning gang work is exclusively reserved for such workers like that of reeling section there are ample opportunity to provide work to women workers as at present.

Notes on the Visits to Factories

IN compliance of the decision of the Advisory Committee constituted under the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 at its 5th meeting held at Madras on 17.1.1982, a visit was arranged for the members of the Committee to Erode and Tiruppur area to study the working conditions and employment opportunities of Women workers in Ginning, Oil and Banian factories in those areas. The following members of the Committee visited Erode on 26.8.1982.

1. Smt. Andai Rawth, 2. Smt. Rajammal Samraj, 3. Smt Mythili Sivaraman, 4. Smt. Velammaiyar, and 5. Thiru D. Thangadurai.

The following industrial establishments were visited by these members.

1. A.B.S. Oil Mills Erode. 2. Sri Kama-dhenu Oil Mills, Erode. 3. Alayamani Wax Printing Works, Erode. 4. J.V.R. Screen Printing, Erode. 5. Sri Ranga Vilas Ginning Factory, Perundurai, 6. Thirumurupan Ginning Factory Perundura. 7. R.S. Manoharan Powerloom Factory, Erode. 8. Crystal Carments, Tiruppur. 9. Fancy Knitting Gompany, Tiruppur. 10. Lakshmana Rice Mills, Tiruppur. 11. Tiruppur Cooperative Sales Society, Ginning Factory, Tiruppur. 12. Ganapathy Ginning Factory. Tiruppur.

Defects noticed by the members while visiting Oil Mills, Ginning Factories and Powerloom factories in Erode and Perundurai area are as follows:

1. There are vast difference in wages paid to men and women workers. 2. Even though the women workers are employed in the jobs requiring heavy strain and skill, the wages paid to them are very low. 3. The employment opportunity for women in oil mills was not appreciable. 4. In wax printing works also, the wages paid to the women workers do not commensurate with their actual work which involves much strain. 5. In Ginning factories, most of the women workers were employed on temporary basis. 6. There is scope for making more number of women workers permanent. 7. The difference in wages between men and women should be minimised taking note of the strain in which the women workers are attended to the different processes in Ginning factories. 8. Protective equipments are not given to the workers who are working near the ginning machine. 9. The provisions of the Factories Act with specific reference to employment of women during night, payment of overtime wages and provision of Festival holidays under the Tamilnadu Industrial Establishment (National and Festival Holidays) Act are not being implemented for the workers of Ginning factories. 10. Stringent action should be taken against the managements who violated these provisions and denied the privileges to the women worker. 11. There is a specific mention about such violations in Ganapathy Ginning Factory which is running under the control of Cotton Corporation of India. 12. The women workers were also denied of the benefits under the Maternity Benefit Act on the plea that they were not permanent workers.

About 1,500 Banian factories are functioning in Tripur area and out of which only 350 factories come under the purview of the Factories Act. Out of 15,000 workers, 5,000 are women workers and 400 are children. Most of the factories do not provide any statutory benefits to the workers in their industrial establishments.

The workers are employed on piece-rates basis and major part of the working these Banian factories are attended to by young women workers. Banian factories are run as different units with below ten workers with a view to keep them outside the purview of the Factories Act and by this practice and workers, particularly women workers, in these establish-

ments are denied of statutory benefits under various labour legislations.

It has been suggested that action to be taken that the provisions of various labour enactments are strictly implementing in these establishments. The provisions of the Minimum Wage Act should be implemented in Banian Factories and it should be ensured that women workers are getting their due remuneration under this legislation.

As piece-rate workers in these factories particularly women are denied of various benefits under the different labour enactments, it would be better to fix monthly rate of minimum rates of wages for them so as to make them eligible for getting the other statutory benefits.

The Government should come forward to run Banian factories in Tirpur exclusively for women with a view to enhance the employment opportunities for women workers. These factories will run either by Governmental agency or through cooperative venture.

This report will be placed in the Committee for discussion.

Equal Remuneration Act and its Applicability to Textile Industry in Tamil Nadu

THE object of the social legislation namely, The Equal Remuneration Act is to provide for the payment of equal remuneration to men and women workers and for the prevention of discrimination on the ground of sex against women in the matter of employment. Whatever might have been the condition of labour in regard to women workers in other industries or in other establishments, insofar as textile industry particularly the Tamil Nadu textile industry as such is concerned, the women workers have been treated almost on par with the men workers in the matter of payment of wages to them even before this piece of legislation was enacted in 1976. We all know that our Indian

(Continued on page 24)

Massive Dharna by Women Employees in Punjab

Surinder Kaur

WOMEN employees of Punjab Government observed March 8, the International Day for women by holding an impressive State level day long Dharna at Chandigarh in front of the office of Punjab Pay Commission. Call for this action was given by Istri Mulazam Co-ordination Committee which is a representative body of women employees working in State Government Offices, Schools and other institutions. More than 1000 women participated in this action. They came from all the Districts in the state hiring special vehicles. The day long Dharna was organised to focus the attention of the authorities towards the special problems of the women employees and also to press for the political solution of the Punjab tangle which is deteriorating day by day.

Through a resolution passed in Dharna, the institution of SATI was strongly, condemned and the Government was urged to deal strictly with the perpetrators of this inhuman custom. Through another resolution the Central Government was urged to settle the Punjab problem on the basis of National consensus. It was also demanded through a resolution that the principle of "Equal Wage for Equal work" be fully implemented in the State and the Anganwadi workers and helpers, RDA Craft teachers, Health guides, trained dais working under Red Cross and women employees working under Bhartiya Gramin Mahila Samiti be given full pay scales according to their duties and qualification. The services of these categories of employees be regularised and be given all facilities on the pattern of other regular staff.

In the end a Memorandum was handed over to the Chairman of Pay Commission demanding therein six months unconditional maternity leave, Casual leave for the women employees at the double rate, one hour's exemption of duty, Creche facilities at the places of work, transfer facility for couples residential accommodation for those who perform night duty etc.

Several leaders of women's movement including Mrs. Surinder Kaur, President Istri

Mulazam Co-ordination Committee (IMCC), Mrs. Surinderjit Kaur, General Secretary, Mrs. Talwinder Kaur, Vice-President, Mrs. Jagjit Kaur (Gurdaspur), Mrs. Manjit Kaur (Roper) Mrs. Balbir Kaur (Chandigarh), Mrs. Mohinder Kaur, General Secretary, R.D.A. Crafts Teachers Union Punjab, Mrs. Chander Kanta (Ludhiana), Mrs. Rajwant Kaur & Mrs. Gurahinder Kaur, Anganwadi workers addressed the Dharna. All these speakers explained the special problems of the women employees. They also criticised the Government for its cold and callous attitude towards the demands of the IMCC. The speakers also raised the question of communal harmony in the State and strongly condemned the nefarious anti-national activities of the imperialist inspired terrorists. Mr. Trilochan Singh Rana, President, Punjab Sub. Services Federation and Mr. Harkanwal Singh, General Secretary, Government Teachers Union, Punjab also addressed the Dharna and gave their fraternal greetings for this successful show of strength by the women employees.

Anganwadi Employees Union, Punjab Decides To Intensify Organisational Activities

THE Anganwadi Employees Union, Punjab held a meeting at Jullundur on 27th March 1988 under the Presidentship of Mrs. Surinder Kaur, President, IMCC. Fourteen representative from eight Districts participated in the meeting. The meeting reviewed the activities of the Organisation since its founding convention on February 14, 1988. It expressed its complete satisfaction at the signature campaign started in support of the demand charter of the Union and decided to submit the mass memorandum to the Secretary to Punjab Government, Social Welfare Department, on April 11, 1988.

The meeting also decided to meet the
(Contd on page 8)

Blatant Discrimination in Wages in Modi's Company

[The following letter was sent to the union Labour Minister on April 27, 1988. As yet no reply was received by us -- Ed.]

Dear Sir,

I would like to bring to your notice some of the facts about the non-implementation of Equal Remuneration Act in the concern of All India Bombay Tyres International Ltd (Firestone Tyre and Rubber Co. of India Pvt Ltd). The case has been forwarded to me by the Employees Federation General Secretary, Mr A.D. Shastry a few days back.

On 31.5.84, 10 lady employees working for many years as steno-secretaries were issued letters of transfers from Bombay to Delhi. The ladies refused to go to Delhi under the instructions from the union. After protracted litigation, 2 lady employees succeeded in securing compensation amounting to Rs. 4.5 lakhs in 1986 when the disputes were pending in labour court. The remaining employees were transferred to Malad West in 1984. In the absence of toilets, drinking water etc, the ladies refused to go there. Ultimately, all the employees have been transferred back to Bombay from 9.1.88 ending the illegal lock out effected from Oct/Nov. 1986.

The treatment given to women employees in such a well known and flourishing concern as 'Modis' is inhuman. Eleven ladies who are doing identical work of steno-secretaries are denied equal wages and benefits, the difference in wages of men and women stenos being about Rs. 696/- (Men steno gets a total of Rs. 2977.66 and a women steno is paid only Rs. 2280.75, who are doing identical work).

The Industrial Court gave a finding that the provisions of Equal Remuneration Act 1976 have been violated by the Modi's thus refusing relief granted under the above Act to the 11 ladies, who are designated as "Confidential Steno Secretaries".

This is nothing but a failure to implement provisions of the Equal Remuneration Act 1976 by the Bombay Tyres International Ltd. While the Govt is asking the State Govts and public sector employers to implement the Equal Remuneration Act, the 'Modis' are treating their women-employees on unequal terms and violating the principles of the Act.

I would request you to go through the developments in this concern and give justice to the women employees suffering unnecessarily because of the adamant attitude of the management. I hope you will do the needful. A line of acknowledgement from your office will be appreciated.

Thanking you,

Sincerely yours,
Mrs Vimala Ranadive
Secretary

Greetings to EKSATHE

It is really heartening to learn that our Bengali Magazine EKSATHE has completed twenty years. It is no doubt, the tremendous efforts, sustained work of those comrades working on EKSATHE, it could come out regularly every month. One remembers the historic words of Kakababu who told us that time, that if you start a magazine you must bring it in time. And the Editorial Board did bring it in time so that women should read it and make use of the material for the cause of women.

EKSATHE is a different type of magazine. Those others publish material in their journals for their own interest, for the higher class of woman sacrificing the cause of ordinary women. EKSATHE works and publish articles, information and so on, for the sole purpose that women in our country should march forward to Socialism as early as possible. It shows the way how to proceed, what programmes to take up. The role of EKSATHE in giving the ideology of the Left for women in urban and rural areas has no doubt played a significant role in all the elections, specially, the recent Panchayat elections where the CPI(M) and Left Front came victorious.

While greeting the EKSATHE for completing 20 years, I also send my greetings to the editorial board and the staff who work for it with tremendous zeal, and especially to Com. Kanakdi.

I wish the EKSATHE many more years of life and brilliant future.

Vimala Ranadive
Editor
Voice of the Working Woman

"Choose Between Your Job & Family"

SINCE 1968 October Corporation Bank Management is taking drastic measures on its employees in general and particularly on its employees of Bangalore branches. In October 1986 the management resorted to compulsory transfers of employees working in Bangalore, who have completed more than five years of service at Bangalore. Among the 37 orders 10-15 were ladies, that too married and with 2-3 children.

Immediately after sensing the move of the management Bangalore unit of "Corporation Bank Employees Union" affiliated to AIBEA contacted their leadership at Mangalore (where the bank has its administrative office) and Bombay (where the union has its central office) for guidance. (Please note that there is no BEFI unit in Corporation Bank anywhere in Karnataka). But the leadership of CBEU did not react in the manner in which they should move.

Left with no other alternative Bangalore unit declared an undeclared war against the ill advised move. At this stage, leadership at Mangalore and Bombay warned Bangalore unit and advised them not to provoke the management telling that the matter was not so serious.

In August '87 compulsory transfers became a reality. 18 employees including 8 ladies were issued with transfer orders. They were directed to go to places 200 to 250 kms away from the city leaving their children and family. When ladies pleaded with the management that they were settled in the city having their children at different stages of education, management retorted with the reply "choose between your job and family". The so called leadership of the recognised union CBEU in order to cover their sell out called upon the employees at Bangalore to go on a day's strike on 12th August 87 and those employees were told not to accept the relieving orders and assured them that they would discuss the matter with the Chairman of the Bank. But since the sell out was long established, on the

same evening the employees were advised to accept the transfer orders and get themselves relieved. And the management was so tactfull that it has issued 18 relieving orders and for other 19 employees who have received transfers orders earlier and approached the management through some other way, for them it has issued a letter telling that 'considering your personal request for cancellation of your transfer orders we keep your transfer orders in suspense for the time being'.

And again in Sept/Oct 87 more number of employees were given letters to opt for their place of choice to go out of Bangalore and the reason given by them was that some of the employees have applied for transfers to Bangalore; including married ladies. Since there is no vacancies at Bangalore transfer of employees from Bangalore to outside places had to be done. Since the management wants to consider those cases of employees including married ladies sympathetically, this move is inevitable. Nothing could be done to stall the transfers.

In the month of December 87 AIBEA unit conference was held. The Bangalore unit delegates were vociferous in their demand to see that compulsory transfer should be stopped forthwith. Finally the leadership conceded to their demand they also confessed that they did not take the issue seriously earlier.

Subsequently sporadic strike actions took place against the mass transfers and a dispute in this regard was raised in RLC/ALC. Now the status quo has been ordered till the dispute is resolved. This is where the matter stands now.

(from page 6)

Director of the department on the very day to press for the acceptance of immediate demands such as transfer facilities, promotion on seniority basis, supply of adequate, regular and complete material in the Anganwadis, leave facilities etc.

The meeting also decided to raise organisation in all the 43 blocks in the State by the end of April and to make Coordination Committee in all the Districts.

Women in Industry

(LABOUR Bureau of Ministry of Labour, Govt of India has recently published a book on "Socio-Economic conditions of women workers in many industries like leaf tobacco, Zarda, Brick Kiln, stone crushers, electric and miniature lamps, radio and television sets and fountain pens and ball pens. etc. The sample surveys made here point out the percentage of employment of women to total, their working conditions. In this article we are producing the main conclusions drawn from the sample survey, and the working conditions, they are employed in the factories).

Main Conclusions: Scope, object and coverage

The field data in respect of 138 factories pertaining to as many as 12 minor industry groups and comprising about 16.0 per cent of the total number of factories featuring in the sampling frame were covered for the factory-level questionnaire. However, for the purpose of presentation and analysis of data, these 12 minor group industries have been grouped into eight broad categories viz "Preparation of Raw Leaf Tobacco (Stemming, Redrying and other connected operations), Manufacture of Zarda and Cigarettes", 'Manufacture of Fire Bricks (Brick Kilns)', 'Manufacture of Tiles', 'Stone Dressing and Stone Crushing', 'Manufacture of ordinary Electric Lamps and Miniature Lamps', 'Manufacture of Radio and Television Sets' and 'Manufacture of Fountain Pens and Ball pens'. The proportion of factories covered for the Factory level Questionnaire varied between 9.2 per cent for 'Manufacture of Tiles to 80.0 per cent for the 'Manufacture of Radio and Television Sets'. About 3.5 per cent of the total women employed in the sampled factories were interviewed for canvassing the worker-level questionnaire. The main findings are given in the ensuing paragraphs.

Characteristics of Women's Employment

1. The industries covered during the present study account for nearly one sixth of the total women employment in the factories sector. Most of the women workers were employed in unskilled occupations.

2. Among the industries covered, the indu-

stry group 'Manufacture of Raw Leaf Tobacco employed the largest number of women workers accounting for nearly one-eighth of the total women employment in the factories sector. A special feature of this industry was the preponderance of women workers who constituted as high as 88 per cent of the total employment in the sampled Raw Leaf Tobacco factories and an overwhelming majority (91.6 per cent) of them were engaged as 'Graders/Strippers'. No male worker was engaged as Grader/Stripper, Table Checker or as Maistry. The other occupations in which women were 'Maistry', 'Table Checker' and 'Redrying Machine Worker'.

3. In the sampled Zarda and Cigarettes factories, women workers constituted nearly 37 per cent of the total employment and as high as 89.6 per cent of them were engaged as 'General Mazdoor'. About 5 per cent of the total women workers were also engaged as 'Packers'. The employment in both these occupations was shared almost equally by men and women workers.

4. The workers employed in Brick Kilns were mostly the migrant labour brought from other areas either within or outside, the state. As the migration of these workers is generally on a family basis, this provides an opportunity to women to work in brick kilns along with their male members and they constituted as high as 44 per cent of the total employment in the sampled brick kilns. Nearly 94 per cent of the total women workers in the sampled factories were engaged as 'Helpers to Brick Moulders' and 'General Mazdoor/Loaders/Unloaders'. Women workers were not employed in operations like earth digging, transportation of mud and preparation of mud mixture for moulding which were generally carried out only by male workers.

5. In tile factories, women's share in total employment was 29 per cent and about 62 per cent of them were employed as 'carriers/head/loaders/wagon loaders. Some women workers were also engaged as 'Trimmers/Finishers/Sorters', 'Press helpers, slab cutters/polishers and mud mixers.

6. The women employment was also appreciable in stone factories where they constituted about 46 per cent of the total employment. About 65 per cent of the women workers were engaged as 'labourers (about 62 per cent of the total employment in this occupation consisted of females). About 27 per cent of the women workers were also employed as 'stone crushers' and 'Metal makers/breakers'. The other occupations in which they were employed were clearer, sorter and supervisor and these occupations taken together accounted for nearly 8 per cent of the total women employment in the sampled stone factories.

7. In the sampled electric and miniature lamps factories, the women formed about 25 per cent of the total employment. About 37 per cent of the women workers were engaged as assemblers. The remainder were employed in jobs like machine operator, checking, packing, general workers/helpers, capping, filament mounting, soldering/sealing/inserting, etc. These occupations taken together accounted for 40.5 per cent of the total women employment in the sampled factories.

8. About 30 per cent of the total employment in the sampled radio and television factories consisted of females. A staggering 69 per cent of the women workers were employed as wire girls/component assemblers/tape deck assemblers. The other occupations in which they were employed were final tester/checker/quality inspector, senior technician/assistant technician, space marking transformer winding, helper, and supervisor. These occupations taken together engaged nearly 19 per cent of the total women workers in the sampled factories.

9. In pen factories also the proportion of women employment was observed to be considerably high. The women formed about 53 per cent of the total employment in the sampled factories. They were mainly engaged in assembling small pen parts and were categorised either as assemblers or helpers who together accounted for nearly 59 per cent of the total women employment in the sampled factories. Women were also engaged in small numbers in jobs like moulding, packing/checking/counting, die-making, drilling/buffing and operator together accounting for about 9 per cent of the total women workers.

10. The percentage of women employed in skilled jobs or holding professional, technical, administrative, executive, managerial and supervisory jobs was far less than that of the corresponding men workers. No woman worker was employed in skilled jobs in the sampled brick kilns and raw leaf tobacco, tiles and stone factories while in Zarda and cigarettes factories barely 0.3 per cent were employed in skilled jobs. As against this, the proportion of the corresponding men workers varied between 2 and 24 per cent. In lamps and pen factories also, the proportion of women engaged in skilled occupations was barely 3.7 per cent and 0.3 per cent, respectively as against much higher percentages of 21.9 and 9.7 respectively of the corresponding men workers. However, in the sampled radio and television factories 15.5 per cent of the total women were holding skilled jobs and another 45.4 per cent were engaged in semi-skilled jobs as against the corresponding percentages of 24.9 and 18.4 respectively for men workers.

11. The share of women workers in permanent jobs in some industries was very low. Only one out of 407 women workers employed in brick kilns was permanent as against 6.7 per cent of the corresponding men workers. In the sampled Zarda and cigarettes and stone factories also, the proportion of women workers holding a permanent status was barely 18.4 per cent and 11.8 per cent respectively as against much higher percentages of 78.4 and 28.3 of the corresponding men workers. In pen factories also, only 47.4 per cent of women as against 65.0 per cent of men workers were found holding permanent status. The percentage of permanent women workers in the sampled tile factories although being quite high (83.7) was less than that of the corresponding men workers (94.0). In the raw leaf tobacco factories also, about 59 per cent of the women workers as against 63 per cent of the men workers were reported to be permanent. However, in lamps and radio and television factories, the permanent women workers constituted as high as 97.0 and 93.6 per cent, respectively of the total women employment. More than one-fourth of the women workers in Zarda factories and about one-fifth in stone factories were also casual.

12. The rates of accession and separation
(Contd. on page 24)

MAY DAY

*“There will come a time when our
silence will be more powerful than
the voices you strangle today.”*

Last words from the workers who were executed
on the scaffold on 11 November, 1887

Government of West Bengal

Honour of a Woman can't be Saved under Congress(I) Rule

Kanak Mukherjee in Parliament on 16.3.88

SHRIMATI Kanak Mukherjee in Parliament:
Mr Vice Chairman, Sir, it is a matter of extreme shame to the whole nation that a country like India, which claims to be civilized, a country which is championing even the cause of world peace, after for decades of independence, has to discuss in its Parliament our grave concern over the increasing crime against women.

Sir, the recent shocking events of Badhoria village of Deogarh district, the mass rape of four village women by the police, the horrible incident of burning a young girl, Roop Kanwar in Deorala village of Rajasthan in the name of Sati, the horrible incident of three sisters of Kanpur to avoid the unusual pressure of dowry, the rape of tribal women in Kokrajhar and other incidents, how many shall I quote? There are innumerable incidents of rape, bride burning, flesh trade, sale of women, examples of utter degrading situations, social crimes, insult to Indian womanhood, nay to the entire humanity is taking place. All this is taking place under the rule of Congress (I), I must say. Now, our Hon. friends have said, not to connect this women's issue with politics. Very good. But, Sir, we are helpless when police commits atrocities on women, when atrocities are committed on women in the custody of the police, the administration, the police, the Government, the condition of the administration, the socio-economic-political situation, the norms of social values, everything is concerned, how the police is dissociated from the politics and the Government? I do not know, So, I am very sorry for all this. It is not with malice that things are connected with politics. Sir, the Central Government and the Congress (I) Party yesterday shed much tears, crocodile tears, for women. In the last few years we have seen that we have passed legislations and amended some other legislations on dowry, on atrocities on women, the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in women's Act, and so on and so forth. But all these freshly passed laws and

amended laws are on paper only. They are not implemented in actual reality. Why? Because the real condition is absolutely different.

Quoting from Times of India of 11th April Smt. Kanak Mukherjee said:

"Crimes against women have been showing a singular increase over time. This is borne out not only reports in the media but also by the data collected by the Bureau of police Research and Development. From the early seventies up to the mid-eighties, crimes against women, registered under the Indian Penal Code and among them the cases of rape, have more than doubled. Thus in 1985, the available data for 22 states of the country showed that 6,189 cases of kidnapping of women and 802 cases of dowry death were registered. And up to July 1986 in Madhya Pradesh alone, which heads the list for crimes against women, there were 904 cases of rape 2732 cases of molestation, 1621 cases of kidnapping, 280 cases of eve-teasing and 310 cases of dowry death etc.... However, whatever be the social status of the criminal in such cases, the women against whom the crimes are perpetrated are always at the lower end of the socio-economic power balance. These figures have already been given by many Members. Now, it is known that 97 per cent cases of rape are either cancelled or the cases are not even registered in the police station. This is what the study of police research bureau reveals. In 1986, 1319 dowry death cases were registered in the country as against 837 in 1985. In the first six months of 1987, 300 cases of death by burning are reported in Delhi itself. This is the information given to Parliament in August 1987. There is so much of similar information available but I do not want to prolong my speech by giving you these facts, one after another, what is the material background of all this?

What is the Cause? The crimes against women are on the increase. Cases of rape, dowry deteriorating economic condition of the

people, anti-people policies, are connected with the socio-economic conditions of the people. More and more people are becoming unemployed. People are pushed below poverty line. Women are the worst sufferers. Cultural decadence also sets in along with the role played by our media, our radio, television, cinema and the newspapers who depict women as the sex object. We have discussed it many times in the House as to how women are projected through the media. I am happy that friends from both the sides agree with me that projection of women in the media is shameless when they depict woman as a sex object, only to be enjoyed, to be exploited. So that is how our young generation is being taught by the media.

Our young generation are not taught about our cultural principles, our norms, social values etc. and they are not taught to respect their own mothers and sisters. This is the decadent condition of culture where the Congress-I Government has landed us to.

This deteriorating economic and social condition is greatly responsible for this decay in social status of women. I know Government of India formed a committees, status committee, in 1971. They gave a big report. They say that socio-economic condition is inter-related with the status of women in this country.

They are introducing advanced technology which is throwing women out of employment. They are introducing computer which will throw the women out of employment.

A grave situation has arisen. It concerns the entire womanhood of India.

All of you must be concerned about this. There should be no bickering at each other's party. You must take it seriously. Today, the plight, the honour of our women is at stake. But they are indulging in politicising each and every issue. They are trying to hide the crimes of the Government. They are not associating with us when we say that atrocities are being committed on women. But they are not joining their voice against these police custody. Is it not a partisan attitude, is it not partisan politics?

Now, Sir, many Acts are there. The Mini-

mum Wage Act is there. Equal Remuneration Act is there, but women are not being given equal wages. There is heavy retrenchment in coal, in tobacco, in tea, in all the organised sectors. Women are being thrown to the unorganised sectors. And the Government says that the home-made industry will help them. With the introduction of every budget, more and more women are thrown out of employment. In the unorganised sectors, in the small industries, there is no minimum wage system, no system of equal wage. Health hazards are there and there is no safety and security. This is the condition of women.

So the status of women in the country is the lowest, it is a matter of shame. Of course, but we have to admit that these serious cases are taking place in Congress ruled States. I have nothing to be happy over this.

"I am sorry to say all this, but all these incidents are taking place in those States mainly, in Deorala, in Pipra, in Narainpur, in Madhya Pradesh, in U.P., in Bihar, everywhere.

Shri Ram Awadhesh Singh: There are a large number of incidents in West Bengal also.

Shrimati Kanak Mukherjee: Yes anti-social elements are there because Congress(I) people are still there.

Shrimati Kanak Mukherjee: Just what is the record of rape by Bihar cops? (quote Times dated 11.3.1988.)

So the policemen, the custodians of law and order, are mostly involved in such crimes, what to talk of others?

I am concluding, Sir. So the women, in general, getting more and more disillusioned with this rotten, hopeless Government. On 9th December last, lakhs of people came to the Boat Club. They assembled there to raise their voice to demand the resignation of Rajiv Gandhi Government. Women know that under the regime of Rajiv Gandhi Government. Their honour and status cannot be safe. They are fighting, struggling to overthrow this Government and to create a new society where there can be equality between men and women, where women cannot be exploited and where the honour and status of women can be safe. It cannot be under this Government.

Gorbachev's Message to Womens' Organisations

SOVIET leader Com Mikhail Gorbachev in a message in reply to the memorandum submitted by the leading women's organisations in India assured that the people in Soviet Union would always support the cause of peace in the world. The representatives from AIDWA, NFIW, YWCA, AIWC and Mahila Daxata Samithi were requested to come to the Soviet Embassy to receive the message. Com VN Rykov, the Soviet Ambassador to India delivered it on 5th April last in a function arranged by the Soviet Embassy. While delivering the message Com. Rykov said "It is a great honour for us to welcome you at the Soviet Embassy once again and to convey to you and to all activists of the leading women's organisation in India on request of Com. M. Gorbachev his sincere gratitude for the message which you have addressed to him recently.

"The Soviet leadership shares your strive for a world free of nuclear weapons, in which human life would be considered as the supreme value. The USSR shall continue to do everything that would be in its power to promote this cause.

"We appreciate your appeal to ratify the INF Treaty. This appeal has been brought to the notice of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR which is currently considering this issue.

"M.S. Gorbachev sends his heartfelt greetings and best wishes to the leadership and to all representatives of the women's organisations of India which are engaged in working for the noble cause of securing peace on our planet".

About 60 women belonging to these women's organisations went to the embassies of USA and USSR with a memorandum requesting Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan to ratify the INF Treaty as early as possible as a first step towards world peace. On 8th March the International Women's Day, they went to the US Embassy at New Delhi to deliver the memorandum. Despite heavy rains, they were kept outside and were not allowed to go in to meet the officials. Hundreds of male and female police were present. After considerable delay, the US representative came out but did not allow the women to go in. He bluntly said "We do not entertain people inside, whatever you have to give, you hand it over here".

The women, then shouted slogans against the US and condemned the war preparations by Reagan administration, and against the treatment given to women on March 8, International Women's Day.

They went to Soviet Embassy on 9th March to hand over the same memorandum. They were received by the Secretariat of Soviet Embassy and taken inside. Com. Rykov himself was present to receive the delegation. The memorandum signed by all women's organisations was handed over by Vimala Ranadive, Vice President of AIDWA. Com. Rykov spoke a few words informing how much the people of Soviet Union love peace.

He thanked the women's organisations for doing everything possible for keeping peace in India and promised he would certainly send the memorandum to Com Gorbachev. On 5th April, Vimala Ranadive AIDWA, Pramila Loomba of NFIW, Pramila Dandavate President of Mahila Daxata Samithy, Padma Seth, General Secretary of AIWC and Laila from YWCA spoke a few words expressing their happiness on the Soviet initiative in recent years for promoting world peace and disarmament.

What is the INF Treaty

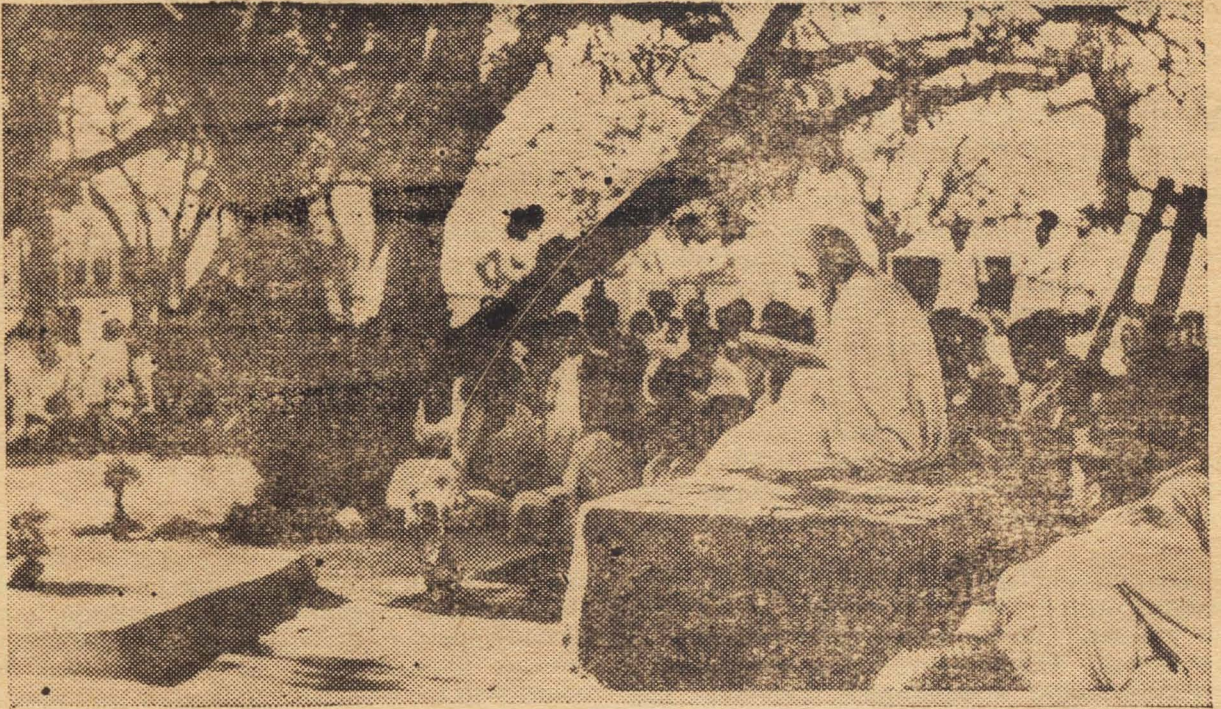
An Encouraging Advance Towards a World without Nuclear Weapons

On 8th December 1987, Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, and Ronald Reagan, President of the USA, signed the Treaty on the elimination of their intermediate-range and shorter ranges missiles in Washington.

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— It is the first agreement on nuclear disarmament, a practical consequence of the realisation that humanity has to be preserved from nuclear extermination.

— It increases the chances of further disarmament measures being adopted and a path being taken that leads away from the arms race and towards disarmament and detente.



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Government of West Bengal

Mammoth Rally of Women in West Bengal

WHILE addressing lakhs of women at the Brigade Parade Ground Com Jyoti Basu the Chief Minister said "If the country is to be saved and problems to be solved, this Government must go and mid-term election must be held. If this is not done, there will be continued attacks on women. We must have movement for the 12 points Charter of Demands, and therefore, the organisation should be strengthened."

A massive rally of women was held by Gantantrik Mahila Samithi (AIDWA) on 10th April. This was the first time such a huge rally was held. Kanak Mukherjee, was in the chair.

Despite the heat thousands and lakhs of women turned up to attend. There was retrenchment among women and atrocities on the increase. They came to demand resignation of Rajiv Gandhi and mid-term election. The propaganda was going since 20th March. A coupon of 50 paise was sold. Women went door to door and collected money. Adivasi, Muslim women too came from various districts. A woman from Bardwan who attended was surprised to see so many women on the ground. Wherever you glance you see mass of women. They came from Purulia, Bankura, Hugali, Midnapur, 24-Parganas, Darjeeling. Processions were coming from all sides.

Jyoti Basu said "in the society where 50 per cent women are there—unless their honour and rights are obtained — our country will not progress further. Our society is based on classes. Price-rise, inflation, unemployment and many problems are there. To watch Sati, thousands were gathered in Rajasthan. Legislation was done but only legislation will not help. Women have to be organised and politicalised".

Processions after processions were coming. Agricultural women, women in Coal, Tribal women, College teachers, Nurses, women in LIC all participated. Songs were being sung on the stage calling women, mothers—sisters to join the procession... Women from Darjeeling

were surrounded by reporters and photographers. Muslim women clad in Burqa from Calcutta came. Volunteer women were in thousands to look after the women attending the meeting. There was a medical Camp, a food camp. Many people wanted to purchase books, a book shop was arranged, through out the night, posters were pasted, festoons were hung upon the stage, a slogan "Rajiv Gandhi Resign" was hanging. A poster of a woman with a child a symbol of AIDWA was seen. Women were listening patiently to the speeches, to go back and tell others what their leaders have said.

In her address, Sushila Gopalan stressed that women's problems must be reviewed in the general background of the conditions and developments in the society. This Government with its ill-conceived policies has driven the country to the brink of destruction, and now is conspiring in various ways to impose an Emergency on our country, for which the 59th Amendment of the Constitution is the first step, hence people have no alternative but to demand its ouster.

Women's problems therefore could not be solved separately from the society, because they are part and parcel of this society, and their problems are closely linked with this bourgeois-landlord dominated society. Take for instance the Kerala coir industry where the so-called modernisation and import policy of the Central Government has rendered four lakh working women jobless.

Congratulating all women coming from different parts of West Bengal, Kanak Mukherjee observed that during the last eleven years the pro-people programme of the Left Front Government had changed the State for the better. The democratic movement had gained momentum and the rights of the people had been extended. This was possible because of continuous struggle by the people, starting from the freedom movement itself.

Shyamali Gupta, General Secretary of the

State Executive Committee, expressed the belief that without a sustained movement of the people, no problem could be solved, and a continuous movement against the anti-people policies of the Rajiv Government must be launched. The AIDWA was continuing with its intensive campaign in all districts of the State on the charter of the demands and they had succeeded in bringing more women into the struggle for restoring their rights.

Manjari Gupta, President of the AIDWA, observed that the new laws enforced by the Central Government were endangering the whole women's community of our country. The Muslim Women Bill hampered the interest of the Muslim women. The new 59th Amendment of the Constitution was the first step towards imposing Emergency in the whole country. The secessionist forces in Punjab, Tripura and Darjeeling were gaining a moral boost from the policies of the Central Government. The Government had failed us in very respect. And it must go.

Rally against Religious Fanaticism in Bombay

INTERNATIONAL Women's Day was observed in Bombay on March 8 by organising a large Women's "Convention Against Religious Fanaticism", in which over 2,000 women from all walks of life participated. Nearly women's organisations from Bombay and Pune had come together to organise this Convention, which assumed added importance against the background of the growing demand of communal and divisive forces, the recent "Riddles" and "Tamas" controversies, and the Deorala "Sati" murder and its glorification. Some of the participating organisation were the Shramik Mahila Sangh (AIDWA), Bharatiya Mahila Federation (NFIW) Shramajivi Mahila Sangh, Samajwadi Mahila Sabha, Republican Mahila Federation, Stree Mukti Sanghatana, and many others.

The Convention adopted three resolutions, the first demanding a separation of religion and politics in every sphere, and especially as regards the various law affecting women; the

second calling upon women to wage a determined struggle against communalism, fundamentalism and all manner of traditional obscurantist beliefs and practices; and the third calling for support to all international struggles in which women are fighting shoulder to shoulder with men for liberation.

After the introductory remarks by Neelam Gorhe, the Convention was inaugurated by Kulsum Parekh, and the Chief Guests were Dr. Aloo Dastur and Nalini Pandit. Among those who addressed the Convention were Ahilya Rangnekar, Mrinal Gore, Pramila Dandavate, Tara Reddy, Chhaya Dahar, Nirmala Sathe, Kamala Bhatia, Shaila Satpute, Vidya Bal, Sharada Sathe, Sushila Patekar, and Sudha Kulkarni, representing the various women's organisations.

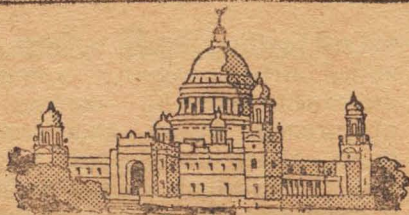
All the speakers traced the adverse impact of religious fanaticism on society in general, and on women's rights in particular, citing instances like the Muslim Women's Act, the Sati murder, and the increased oppression of women in fundamentalist regimes like Iran and Pakistan. They condemned the role of the Congress (I) Central and State Governments in providing encouragement to divisive forces which, some of the speakers stressed, were also being aided and abetted by imperialism. The Convention demanded Shiv Sena Chief Bal Thackeray's recent threat of imposing social boycott of Sikha in Bombay, as retaliation against terrorist attacks in Punjab. The Convention ended amidst resounding slogans of unity against religious fanaticism.

Caste Atrocities

Cases of atrocities on scheduled castes went up to 15,403 in 1986 from 15,373 during the previous year, Mr. Rajendra Kumari Bajpai told the House.

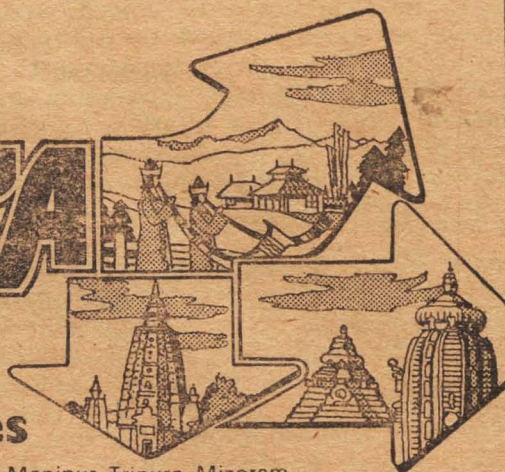
She said the cases of atrocities on scheduled tribes had however come down from 4,055 to 3,945 during the same period.

She said Madhya Pradesh and U.P. reported the largest number of cases of atrocities against scheduled castes with 5,133 and 4,421 and 4,135 and 4,697 in 1985 and 1986 respectively.



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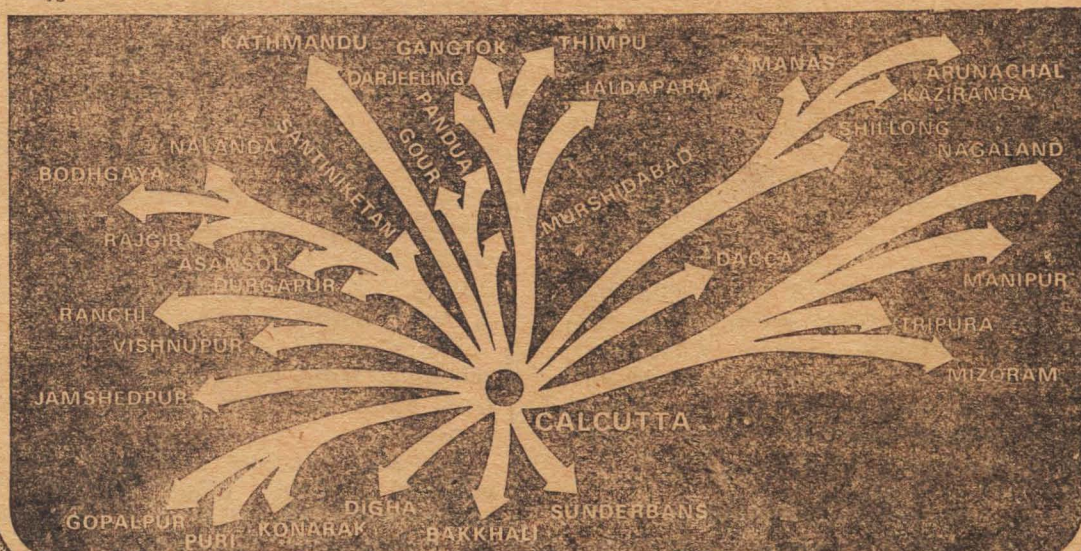
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Needed Creches for our Children

Neeraj, Delhi

A large number of women work in banks and office in Delhi. With the change in the family structure in society, joint families are gradually disintegrating and being replaced by the nuclear family. As a result many working mothers have no one at home to take care of their children when they go to work. In such a situation these mothers are forced to leave their children at private creches which are both expensive and inconveniently located. The quality of care is not always satisfactory and sometimes serious accidents are reported to have taken place at these creches. The children suffer both physically and mentally in the absence of proper care. In such circumstances, working mothers are tense and anxious, and find it difficult to concentrate on their work.

In order to concretely assess the need for creche facilities among women employees a survey was conducted in the Reserve Bank of India, New Delhi, in April 1988 by the Reserve Bank Employees Association. In the survey, in which 100 women replied to a questionnaire, it was found that 26 women with 30 children need a creche facility at the office and 37 women with 37 children wanted a creche near their residence. Besides, many women wanted a Day care facility in the staff colonies so that their school going children could stay there till their parents return from work. Although no men were covered in this survey, many male employees expressed their need for a creche facility since both husband and wife work and they have no proper place to leave their children.

Though women showed a great interest in having a creche facility as soon as possible, some doubts were raised regarding the effect of a creche on the office functioning of women. There are certain norms and discipline which operate when a creche is run at an office. Mothers may visit their children during the lunch hours and nursing mothers may also visit their infants during the two tea breaks. When a child is ill the mother may be permitted to visit during the tea breaks also. So it is clear that rather than having an adverse effect on women's efficiency, the women will be

able to work better, with more concentration, when their children's safety and care is assured. A creche also ensures a decrease in absenteeism of women employees who otherwise have to take leave when they have no place to leave a slightly sick child.

Child care has been considered solely a women's responsibility. When these small children grow up they will be active, productive members of society. It should therefore be the concern of society that the proper development of children takes place. Creche facilities are for the welfare of both mother and child. Child care facilities constitute one of the points of the new 20 point programme announced on 15th August, 1986. The management itself should have extended this facility but we are being forced to raise the demand and struggle for this basic need.

Condemn the Hospital Bill

THE AICCWW condemns the passing of the Hospital and other Institutions Bill 1987 passed in Rajya Sabha on the majority of Congress votes, prohibits strikes and lock-outs in hospital, scientific and educational institutions. The hospital staff, nurses, teachers and other sections are affected by the Bill. The conditions of those affected are miserable and they are made to work on a meager salaries, which in many cases are even below Rs. 100/-. In the private hospitals, their service conditions are worse while they are minting money at the cost of their employees, and patients. It is astounding to note that the workers will have to pay fine and imprisonment for going on strike. This anti-working class bill also negates the verdict given by the Supreme Court. The AICCWW demands: (a) it should be referred to a joint Select Committee (b) delete the clause of imprisonment and fine (c) Separation of hospitals from educational institutions. The AICCWW calls upon all the sections of women affected by the Bill to organise and demonstrate to withdraw the bill immediately.

Resist the Attack on Trade Union Rights

Ranjana Narula, Delhi

IN the past few months employers attacks on workers and especially women, who join trade unions, have intensified. As prices soar to unprecedented heights and lakhs are thrown out of work due to government policies, more and more previously unorganised workers are coming forward to organise themselves into trade unions to fight for their rights, to defend their jobs, to resist the ever increasing exploitation and repression by employers.

Drawing inspiration from the govt's proposed legislation to curb trade union rights employers harass and intimidate workers with impunity, confident that the govt. labour machinery will not act against them.

One of the most blatant cases is that of the Amar Jyoti Charitable Trust in Delhi set up with the ostensible purpose of training and rehabilitating the physically handicapped, destitutes and widows. The Trust runs several departments and a workshop where over 60 workers earn a pittance (from Rs. 250/- onwards) even after working for 5 years. No labour laws are implemented and no facilities give to the workers. When repeated representations to the management brought forth no response, the employees formed a union, and affiliated it to the CITU. The Managing Secy immediately started terrorising and threatening the workers, and in April closed down 2 departments, by which 28 workers including 12 women were thrown out of employment. She tried to coerce them to sign letters of resignation from the union. But this play failed and the workers stood firm. When a deputation of the workers went to meet Rajinder Kuwari Bajpai, Minister of State for Welfare, they were shocked when she told them that they had no right to form a trade union, that they should continue to work as trainees or they could find other work wherever they like, since govt. welfare schemes only cover training and job placement was not its responsibility. She went on to defend the management, saying that the trainees should have been thrown out after 6 months and not kept on for so many years.. So much for the Prime Minister's slogan of Bekari Hatao'.

At the Binatone factory in Sahibabad, a

Vice President of the Union, Darshana Kuwari, and 50 other workers have had their increments stopped because of their trade union activities. At this 'modern' MNC unit where 'ultra modern' TVS are made unmarried women workers to declare that they are unmarried, when they join work and later they are thrown out for supplying false information. In Ravi Industries, the management went to the extent of threatening to sprinkle kerosene and burn 2 women workers if they did not agree

(Contd. on page 26)

In memory of Com. Leila Sundarayya

After a long period of illness Com. Leila Sundarayya died on March 21st in Vijayawada at the age of 78. Leila was born on 15th October 1912, in an educated and modern family. Leila from her young age worked for the party till her death. She was in the non-cooperation movement during the period of 1930-32 and was jailed for 6 months. After her graduation, she worked in a Bank in Bombay maintaining contact with the party, which was banned during the early period of World War II. Here she became acquainted with Com. P. Sundarayya. She became party member in 1942. Both of them got married in 1943. Besides being interested in IPTA activities, Leila was closely connected with many party journals and translated works and articles from Bengali, Marathi in different languages. Leila and her sister Dilshad had a knack of picking up languages quickly, Leila could speak and read, Hindi, Urdu, Telugu, Gujarati, Bengali, besides her own language, Marathi. Com. Leila was working for the party till her death. A very dedicated comrade giving her whole life for the party. Her memories will always remain with us and give us inspiration to work with zeal for the party for which she gave her life.

Chinese Women and the Unions

ONE of the tasks of the Chinese trade unions today is to ensure real equality for women workers in politics, society and the economy. This is, by no means, a simple task, particularly in a country with persistent feudal prejudices that have lasted thousands of years.

According to figures from the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, 82 per cent of women in towns are employed in social production, almost twice the figure of ten years ago. 80 per cent of working women have an average level of general education or vocational training, compared to 70 per cent of men.

The whole country knows the women who are secretaries in the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the trade union federation, the officials in central and provincial departments, and directors of enterprises. The President of the People's Government of the province of Jiangsu, one of the richest in China, with a population of more than 60 million, is a very popular woman in China, a qualified economist and mother of two children.

The development of production forces in this most populated country of the world is happening in an unbalanced manner, and traditional prejudices are still alive and kicking.

A Chinese newspaper recently published figures from a sociological survey comparing Chinese and Japanese working women. Indeed, most of them said that their wage was only to help with the family budget. But only 2 per cent of Japanese women and more than 20 per cent of Chinese women said that independence at work gave them the right to be equal with their husbands and to feel themselves as a full member of society.

In praising the awareness of Chinese women, it should be noted that the law in the People's Republic of China is still not following changes in the social and economic sphere. "Gunzhen Zibao", the Chinese trade unions' newspaper, has often expressed concern that in some enterprises, in their search for profitability, the working day has been arbitrarily extended, forcing even pregnant

women and nursing mothers to work for 12 hours a day. The Chinese trade unions asked the State bodies, therefore, to draw up a single national legislation to include an eight-hour working day throughout the country and specific privileges for women.

A law has also been brought before the Council of State of the People's Republic of China on privileges for pregnant women and nursing mothers: maternity leave should be increased from 56 to 90 days, the job should compulsorily be held for women while they are nursing, they should not work at night nor carry out heavy work.

International Women's Day Observed in Beijing—China

MORE than 1500 Chinese and foreign women gathered in Beijing's Great Hall of the people yesterday to celebrate International Working Women's Day.

Sponsored by the All China Women's Federation, the gathering was held in a festive atmosphere with live performances of songs and dances by amateur bands and child performers.

In a keynote speech, Zhang Guoying, vice president, of the federation, said China's reforms and open policy have tapped women's potential and brought about great changes in their potential and brought about great changes in their political and economic life, their lifestyle and ways of thinking.

Many female entrepreneurs, scientists and professional workers have emerged in the course of the reform, she said.

Official figures show the number of women engaged in social employment has topped 50 million. There are about 300,000 women in senior professional jobs — mostly in teaching, engineering, accounting and medicine, and more than 8 million women in various leading political or government posts.

"Chinese women will continue to raise their competence in the spirit of self-respect, self-confidence and self-improvement and make still greater contributions to building China into a modernised country", Zhang said.

Govt. Follows Model of Air India

A women candidate who has been selected for appointment in the office of the Accountant General (Addit)-I, Tamil Nadu reported for joining service. She is pregnant of week standing. The Office Administration turned her away saying that she cannot join duty now. Even her representation dt. 3.2.88 enclosing a copy of the Govt. reference on the subject and requesting them to allow her to join duty has not been honoured. The matter has to be taken up with the CAG's Administration for allowing her to join duty. This kind of ill treatment towards women deserves our strongest condemnation.

A copy of the Government's reference is published below for guidance of the members:

Letter No 14034/4/84-Estt(D) dt. 13.2.1985 of the Govt of India, Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms:

The undersigned is directed to refer to this Department's Office Memorandum No 14034/5/75-Estt(D) dated 19th of July, 1976 (copy enclosed) on the above subject and to state that the present practice of declaring women candidates found to be pregnant of 12 weeks standing as temporarily unfit and their appointment being held in abeyance until the confinement is over, has been under examination of this Department. It has now been decided in consultation with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare etc., that it shall no longer be necessary to declare a women candidate as 'Temporarily Unfit' if she is found to be pregnant during medical examination before appointment against posts which do not prescribe any elaborate training i.e., they can be appointed straightaway on the job. However, where pregnant women are to be appointed against posts carrying hazardous nature of duties e.g., in police organisations etc., and they have to complete a period of training as a condition of service, the existing instructions laid down in this Departments O.M. dated 19th July, 1976 will continue to apply.

Women Employees Meet Punjab Pay Commission

AT the invitation of 3rd Punjab Pay Commission seven member deputation of Istri Mulazam Co-ordination Committee of Punjab consisting of Mrs. Surinder Kaur President, Mrs. Surinderjit Kaur, General Secretary, Talwinder Kaur; Vice-President, Mrs. Bimla Devi, Treasurer, Mrs. Manjit Kaur, Convener, District Ropar, Mrs. Dayal Kaur and Mrs. Kulwinder Kaur, Anganwadi worker, had a meeting with the Chairman and member of the Pay Commission at Chandigarh on 30th March, 1988. The deputation put forth the specified demands of Women employees and demanded the necessary recommendations be made for making provision for :

— Unconditional six months maternity leave,

— Casual leave at double rate for women employees

— Creche facilities in those offices, institutions and complex where more than thirty women employees are working.

— One hour's exemption from duty for women employees

— Construction of working women's hostels at all the Divisional headquarters.

— Residential accommodation at the places of work for those employees who has to work in night shifts.

— Provision of separate toilets and rest rooms for women employees in all offices and other institutions.

— Regular grades and other facilities for Anganwadi workers, Helpers, RDA, Crafts teachers etc.

The members of the commission discussed these demands thoroughly and promised to make the necessary recommendations in their final reports. The Istri Mulazam Co-ordination Committee had organised a massive Dharna to press for these demands on March 8, 1988 and made Statewide mobilisation in support of these demands.

Repression on Women on March 15th Bundh

COM. Kanak Mukherjee's speech in Parliament on 16.3.88... "Sir, I want to draw your kind attention to a matter of public importance. Yesterday, the 15th March, on the day of Bharat Bandh your Government, the Government of India enjoyed undeclared emergency powers and unleashed repression ruthlessly on the people all over India. About 2 lakh people were arrested yesterday and atleast 10 people were killed. The arrested included ex-Chief Minister's like Nripen Chakravarty of Tripura and Nandini Satpathy of Orissa. I want your special attention to be drawn to the 6 brutal attack on the Women workers at various places in Delhi.

"In Connaught Place near the Plaza Cinema, about 100 women workers were arrested. Women leaders like Ms. Brinda Karat, Secretary, Janwadi Mahila Samiti, were beaten up. The arrested women were taken to the police station by male police. There was no female police. They were beaten there. Ms. Brinda's arm got fractured at two places. The women who were beaten and got wounded included the wife of an Hon. Members of this House, Mrs. Betty Baby, wife of Mr. M.A. Baby, Mrs. Ruksana Chowdhary, wife of Mr. Saifuddin Chowdhary, Lok Sabha M.P. and Mrs. Maimuma Mullah, wife of Hannan Mullah M.P. They were severely beaten and their legs have been fractured. Sir, here is a picture published in the *Indian Express* today. This shows how the women workers are beaten by the police.

This picture reminds me of Dandi March. You are observing Dandi March. What the Britishers did to Indian satyagrahis led by Mahatma Gandhi during the Dandi March, you are doing the same thing today on the peaceful workers here.

"Sir, It is the fundamental right of the people to strike for their legitimate demands. By this type of ruthless repression, you have attacked the fundamental rights of the people to strike to focus attention on their genuine demands. This time their most important demand was resignation of Rajiv Gandhi Government for its total failure on all fronts. You have shown scant respect, the modesty and honour of women here.

"Sir, I urge upon the Government to hold a proper enquiry into this matter. The Home Minister must come out with a statement in Parliament and the Government should take proper steps to punish severely the culprits who manhandled and behaved brutally with these women workers. Sir, I draw your kind attention to this and hope entire House will support my demand. I hope, Sir, you will convey the feelings of the House to the Government and ask the Home Minister to come forward with a statement in the Parliament."

Dowry Death Cases Set a Record

A record number of 1,319 dowry death cases were reported in 1986 as against 837 in the previous year from various States.

According to information furnished by Minister of State for Home P. Chidambaram in reply to a question by Mrs. Bijoya Chakravarty in the Rajya Sabha today, no such case was reported from the north-east — Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura, Sikkim—Orissa and Jammu and Kashmir.

The States which recorded a downward trend in this period were: Gujarat (10 in 1985 and nine in 1986), Haryana (99 and 47), Kerala (55 and 4), Maharashtra (136 and 107) and West Bengal (88 and 58).

The three other southern States had "higher number of dowry deaths in 1986 than in the previous year. It rose from 13 to 79 in Andhra Pradesh, 35 to 54 in Karnataka and 12 to 38 in Tamilnadu.

However, Uttar Pradesh has reported the highest number of such cases: 461 in 1986 and 323 in 1985.

The figures from other states were: Assam (one in 1985 and nine in 1986), Bihar (16 and 62), Madhya Pradesh (nil and 200), Punjab (32 and 40) and Rajasthan (29 and 48).

Union Territories had 64 dowry deaths in 1986, all of them from Delhi. There were 33 such cases in the Capital in 1985. Chandigarh reported two cases in 1985, but none in 1986.

Constitution also does not discriminate between the sex perhaps this was because both men and women are to be treated as equals. This spirit is recognised and implemented by the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976.

In the whole of textile industry in Tamil Nadu, there are about 12,000 women workers employed and out of them, more than 8,6000 women workers are employed by textile mills in Coimbatore District alone. They are generally being provided with employment opportunities in reeling and cone winding departments. They are entitled to receive the same wage as is being paid to the men workers as they are doing the same or similar work as that of the men workers. The statistics gathered would also show that the women workers particularly in these two departments in textile mills are giving better performance than men workers achieved even more than the prescribed rate of efficiency under the norms agreed.

It is particularly to be observed that in the matter of recruitment of women workers, there is a tendency among the employers to engage them for work only in cone winding and reeling departments. They are not considered for other departments such as Blow Room, Carding, Preparatory and Spinning. This selective approach on the part of the employers is due to an apprehension in their mind that the women workers, if employed in the departments where they are not now employed, there is a danger that the women workers are apt to get involved in accidents because of the customary style of their attire (going about always with bulky, long and bushy sarees) with likelihood of exposing the loose ends of the sarees getting caught in the machines.

Therefore, the employment potential for women workers in respect of the textile industry in Tamil Nadu is available in a great measure only in reeling cone winding department. A women worker is easily earning about Rs. 800/- per mensem in the cone winding and over Rs. 700/- per mensem in the reeling department as is being earned by a male worker.

were generally much higher among women than among the corresponding men workers.

13. There was not any significant difference between the rates of absenteeism for men and women employed in stone, lamps, radio and television and pen factories. However, in the case of brick kilns and raw leaf tobacco and tiles factories, the absenteeism rates for women worked out to be higher than those of men workers. The absenteeism among women employed in Zarda and cigarettes factories was much less than among the corresponding men workers.

14. Employers were of the opinion that in most of the occupations in which both men and women workers were employed, women were either as efficient as their male counterparts or were in some cases even more efficient than the corresponding men workers. In only a few jobs like machine operating in Zarda and electric lamps factories, stone breaking and crushing in stone factories and final checking in radio and television factories women employees were reported to be less efficient than their male counterparts.

15. The prospects of women graduating from unskilled to semi-skilled, skilled and supervisory jobs were found existent in only a few factories covered under the study. About 122 women workers in raw leaf tobacco, radio and television and electric and miniature lamps factories were promoted to next higher grades during the reference year.

16. The study revealed that in most of the cases the additional financial obligations on account of the protective legislative provisions did not have any adverse effect on women's employers were not feeling any burden of the small additional expenditure which they were incurring on their women employees in providing separate statutory facilities for them. However, a few employers were found to be biased towards the employment of women and were not prepared to treat them at par with men. Some employers did not allow the women employment in their factories to exceed 30 so that they did not have to provide creche facility. Some employers discouraged the employment of married females as they considered unmarried women more suitable for jobs.

Status of Czechoslovak Women in Employment

CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S working population totals 7.5 million people, of whom 3.5 million are women. The employment rate of women ranges between 80 to 90 per cent in different age groups as most women return to work after their maternity leave.

Women with secondary education form the majority among employed women. Most women work in the food, textile, clothing and footwear industries, in health and social care, in shops and public catering, culture and education, banking, telecommunications and services. This predominance of women in some jobs causes problems, for instance at schools in educating boys, and generally women are more often absent from work due to their illnesses or care for ill children.

Considerable attention is paid to the working conditions of women. They are not allowed to do hard work posing risks and mostly also night work. Organizations are obliged to meet women's demands in adjusting their working hours. Nevertheless, there are problems at enterprises with a high number of women, in assembly-line production and shift work. That is why the number of women making use of the advantage of reduced working hours is low in Czechoslovakia, 8-9 per cent, compared with other countries.

Women in lower age groups account for the majority of secondary school graduates while boys are trained more often than girls for qualified workers' occupations. This results in an increased number of marriages in which the husband and wife have equal education or the husband has a lower education. On the other hand, women more often accept jobs below their qualification which enable them to take better care of their families.

The professional orientation of girls and women has been continuously directed towards humanitarian and economic branches. Girls studying at universities form 43 per cent of all students but at technical colleges only 25.3 per cent.

The number of women in managerial economic posts has been increasing but this share is low taking into consideration the reached level of their education.

According to a poll of Czechoslovakian Union of Women, some women are not interested in these posts due to their other duties.

Hitaya Punished for Daring to be Different

THE story of 26 year old civil rights activist Hitaya from Tamil Nadu, as reported in this paper recently, illustrates only too well the risks which people, who dare to go against the tide, have to run. Hitaya's crime in the eyes of the local Jamaat in Colachel village in Kanyakumari district, was that she was speaking out for women's rights. She encouraged Muslim women like herself to participate in civil rights activities and had recently taken 22 young women with her to a conference initiated by the organisation of which she was one of the leading members. The local religious body interpreted this act as an attempt by Hitaya to convert these women to Hinduism and without giving her a hearing, excommunicated her and her family. Her appeals to the local civil authorities against this outrage fell on deaf ears and she has now been forced to petition the Governor of Tamil Nadu.

Although Hitaya is an exceptionally brave and determined woman, her's is by no mean an unusual story. Men and women of all communities have had to face ostracism from the conservative elements in their communities whenever they have raised questions which threaten the power of the dominant groups. Women who have dared to question traditions which have subjected them for centuries and which have been protected by religious sanction, are particularly open to such attacks. Yet change in women's status is only possible if more persons like Hitaya work amongst women of their own communities and raise their consciousness on these issues. Their efforts need to be supported by all enlightened elements which should unambiguously condemn incidents like the excommunication at Colachel, and which must bring pressure upon the administration wherever it remains shockingly inactive, as in the present case.

(Indian Express Dt. 12.4.88)

Working Conditions in South Africa

"THE worst job at a factory is being a hand filler. You stand all day lifting a lever up and down; Filling bottles with shampoo, hand and body lotions. At the end of the day your arms and legs are very sore and swollen. If you label the bottles, your eyes hurt. "So says Rebecca Moloi, who works at a chemical factory in Pretoria with 100 other women and many more men. They work as wrappers, labellers, and tube fillers. I have been a union member for four years. We have meetings at the factory during lunch time. After work it is not possible to hold union meetings. "Things are better since we joined the union. They do not fire us. We get more money too. Two women are shopstewards.

"We would like to attend more courses to know more but it is difficult for us to sleep away from home. There is no one to look after the babies and keep the house. Too much housework-cooking, cleaning, washing, ironing — and our husband's are jealous". Many women at the factory, she says, are single mothers. "Our children have to stay with grannies during the day. The children who go to school, go into the house of their own after school." At work you worry if things at home are okay. Too many things go in the townships. The SADF and police also hurt our people. Girls are not safe. We need places for our children to go to after school. The children should stay there until we knock off from work every day's Rebecca Moloi believes all women should join unions to fight for their rights as workers, as women, as mothers and as wives. Our Federation says; Child care is a right, not a privilege.

Women's Rights Federation's Programme

In many parts of the world, including South Africa, women — and working women especially — are still discriminated against. We in CUSA/AZACTU have committed ourselves to fight this discrimination on the shop-floor, in the courts and in corridors of powers,

We have committed ourselves to a programme of action which will seek to :

- * fight discrimination in the workplace and in society in general;
- * bargain for a living wage and reducing hours;
- * seek adequate maternity leave, and child care conditions;
- * creche nursery facilities and after-school facilities;
- * establish adequate school and vocational facilities;
- * encourage full health education and services;
- * fight for full participation in workplace management; and continue to defend trade union and human rights.

We wish to join hands with women in the East and the West and the North and the South and reaffirm our dedication to break the barriers of economic, political and social exploitation. to break the shackles of imperialism.

We recognise that the best democratic way to do so is through the trade union movements, nationally and internationally.

We salute those women who have fought on behalf of their sisters. Some have become martyrs and are now part of the heritage of liberation and are glowing examples to us all.

Let us continue the march together to agitate and educate to strive for justice and peace, for reconciliation and freedom everywhere.

(Contd. from page 20)

to leave the union. The women were rescued by the other workers.

These cases were brought to the notice of the District Magistrate Ghaziabad when a deputation from the Co-ordination Committee of working Women met him on 28th April. He has promised to take necessary action after making enquiries. If he does not do so a big demonstration of working women will be held and an agitation started, to compel the Administration to act against the errant employers and to restore to the workers their trade union and other rights.

AIDWA Bangalore Unit Observes International Women's Day

MARCH 8th observed as international women's day at Banaglore. While welcoming the gathering Com. Vimala, Convenor of the Bangalore unit of AIDWA gave a brief introduction about the importance of March 8th in the back ground of the plight of women in India. A fervent appeal was made to the gathering to organise women in the district to combat social evils like dowry, Sati system and fight against muslim women Act.

Dr. Smt. Anupama Niranjana, a physician and a progressive thinker and writer spoke on the subject "Women and Science". At the outset the doctor appreciated the scientific temperament of the organisers of the meeting. Contribution of science in elevating the status of women in society is immense. She stressed the importance of science in community development. Also for social and economic development, science has played a prominent role. She recollected her visits to USSR and Poland and informed the gathering about the high standard of living of women in those countries. She cohorted that women should evince more interest in science, When in those countries women are being treated equally, the situation is quite opposite in India. She said women can efficiently make use of science for world peace. Organisers were requested to educate rural women of the importance of science,

Gods or Ghosts have no role to play in the incidence of diseases. On the other hand there are scientific reasons for all these, infact there is a necessity of educated women knowing about science.

Amniosynthesis should be strongly protested, Women rather than men are being forced to undergo family planning operations. Harmful medicines, imported from US are in use. Strong recentment against all those is the need of the hour. Discrimination against fair sex is prevailing in almost all families in our country and this trend should be reversed through movement. Concluding the speech Smt. Anupana Niranjana wished that scientific temperment would like precedence to superstition.

Smt. R Poornima, said that observing international women's day helped think about women's right, duties and to lead to responsible life. Tendency to look at things suspiciously and to worry about false prestiges are abundant in middle class families. On the other hand the most oppressed weaker section exhibit unity and determination and they know the importance of struggles. Today, only one hundredth of women folk have right to property. This issue itself is enough for us to observe March 8th as women's day. Despite weakness in women movement in India, it has been possible for the movement at national level force the powers that be to enact laws against sathi, amnio-synthesis, dowry etc. women's organisation were successful in awakening the Government from its deep succumberance tendency towards women.

Along with local problems womens organisations would take up the issues as environmental pollution and burning problems of civilised world. More attention should be given to the unorganised sectors. Women organisation should think about lakhs of women workers and should struggle along with trade unions for emancipation and then only a wind of change will blow over the country. Total change of the prevailing social, political, economic and cultural system only will fundamentally change the living of women in our country. Smt. Poornima very clearly laid down the task before women.

Com. Susheelamma a senior member of D.W.A. Bangalore unit spoke about the atrocities being committed on women. She traced from the epics like Ramayana and Mahabarata, the depiction of women subservient to the domination of men. Sporadic protest though were visible then, did not result in marked change in the plight of women. Now the time has come for women to organise themselves and fight for a new social order. Com. Shantakumari who presided over the function stressed the importance of the day and appealed to the members present to work unitedly for the upliftment of women.

The gathering unanimously passed a resolution to support March 15 Bharat Bandh.

JMS Shahadol Demands

ON April 16, a Janwadi Mahilla Samiti delegation Shahadol met the Manager General of the Sohagpur colliery in Shahadol district, Madhya Pradesh, and submitted to him a memorandum demanding redressal of a number of local problems facing the workers.

In several localities in the area like Amrandandi, Gitagram Colony, Cheap House No. 3 and Indiranagar (Amlai), non-potable drinking water is being supplied, while some other localities lack even that. The memorandum has demanded a solution to this problem.

Another big problem facing the workers is price-rise. In the shopping complex constructed by the management, items of everyday use

are being sold at exorbitant rates. The management must have to arrange supply of essential items at cheap prices through co-operatives.

The memorandum has also demanded a pucca road from Amlai to Gitagram Colony and repair of the road in the Officers Colony.

Last year, repair and whitewashing of the houses was not sanctioned on the plea of resource crunch. In the current budget year this task must be undertaken. All the colonies must also have proper sanitation and permanent sweepers. Another demand relates to appointment of lady doctors, proper medical arrangements in the dispensaries and ban on use of outdated medicines.

(from page 2)

women and women in general at the Boat Club on 9th December, 1987 and their participation in the states on 15th March Bundh has proved their important role in the common struggle of the people, raising the slogan "Resignation of Rajiv Gandhi and mid-term poll". This slogan must become one of the major demands coming from all sections of working women. This is the task of CITU and our Co-ordination Committee.

CITU Must Take Lead

The political situation in our country is developing fast and the struggles of various sections of the people including women are being launched daily. The challenges by communal forces and the effect of the deep economic crisis on the working class and on the people are serious, women becoming the first victims. The 9th December Rally and the 15th March Bundh was great success because these challenges were being taken up by the mass organisations and Left parties unitedly. Considering the importance of the participation of working women and women in general in the common struggle to defeat the Congress rule, the CITU and the Co-ordination Committees have to move fast enough to take up the challenge. The responsibility lies more on the advanced movement in West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura which should be taken as guide to other weaker states where yet no committee exists. But working women are launching struggles for their demands. The CITU must assure them on this May Day that it will organise

them in their common class organisation the CITU, on their problems to defeat the Congress rule which deprives them from getting employment, minimum wage and other benefits. Working women too will realise that, unless they join the mainstream of the struggle, their unequal position will remain unchanged. On this May Day working women should pledge they would fight for their demands and join the common struggle to defeat the Rajiv Gandhi Government.

Condemn the Murder of Dulcie September

Vimal Ranadive, Secretary, All India Co-ordination Committee of Working Women and Vice-President of AIDWA has issued the following statement to the press on 2.4.88. On the murder of Dulcie September :

"We strongly condemn the atrocious and barbarous fatal attack on the anti-apartheid African National Congress (ANC) representative in France, Ms Dulcie September by an unknown gunman at her Paris residence. The apartheid Govt. supported by USA does not even allow the legal activities to be continued in other countries while continuous attacks on the black people, executions of innocent people including women are taking place. No repression, however severe, will stop the revolutionary movement of the people against Botha Government till it is thrown out. Ms Dulcie September has become one of the martyrs in the struggle against the injustice".