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Namibian Women Fight for their Country



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Women and Parliamentary Election 1984

THE large percentage of women's voting in the Parliamentary Elections in 1984 surprised many. According to the press reports, women in urban and rural areas voted in large numbers for the Congress(I). Press observers who visited the polling booths from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, have confirmed the large participation of Muslim and Hindu women who queued up from morning with their children to vote. Some of those who thought that the Sikh women would not come to vote because of the communal riots after the assassination of Smt. Indira Gandhi, were proved to be wrong. The Statesman dated 1-1-85 in its report said, "A quick analysis of the factors leading to the Congress(I) landslide victory in election to the Lok Sabha in U.P. reveals that more than 28 million women voters in the state may well have tilted the balance greatly in favour of the ruling party. The men accounted for 34 million votes. U.P. women accounted 47 per cent voters in U.P." The Economic Times dated 3-1-1985 stated under the heading "Dhanbad-Jharia Coalbelt, women voters play decisive role" that, "the most important part was played by the women voters. They stood solidly by the martyred mother. The percentage of women voters in this area is fortyfive, that helped a lot in getting lead..." etc.

A question is raised by many as to why such a large number of women turned up for voting this time? The situation at the time of the elections and before, it appears, was the main factor for women voting for the Congress(I). The ghastly assassination of Smt. Indira Gandhi shook all the people including women.

The participation of women voters in the present election, more than 50 per cent of the total vote, was bigger than any previous general election.

Smt. Indira Gandhi had a special appeal for a large section of women who voted for Congress(I) in large number. In 1977, however they turned against the Congress(I) because of the forced sterilisation drive during the emergency. But they again returned to the Congress(I) in 1980, especially Harijan women and

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The Chemical Holocaust in Bhopal

THE Chemical holocaust caused by the U.S. multinational, Union Carbide at Bhopal has been recorded as the worst in history. This was the result of the policy of the government of India to woo the multinationals for causing "Industrial Revolution" in India, sacrificing all norms of industrial safety and environment at their feet. A revolution indeed! massacring thousands, permanently maiming tens of thousands, orphaning thousands, widowing thousands and the incapacitated individuals dislocated from the right to normal living in one stroke.

This mass massacre is not an isolated case to be shrugged off as just an "industrial accident". There are reasons to believe that the harrowing taste of Bhopal is a foretaste of the destiny of humanity being shaped by the war mongering imperialists. This is evident from the press reports which said that 50 to 60 chemical arms experts from the USA, West Germany, Britain and Canada arrived at Bhopal under the garb of relief organisations. They were digging up the records of the gas victims. It provided an opportunity for the imperialist countries for evaluating the MIC's potential as an agent for chemical warfare.

The imperialists have virtually turned the chemical industry to a chemical warfare industry. The US imperialists are the worst offenders in this respect. They are utilising the scientists to prepare chemicals, neurotic gases and bacteria capable of killing millions in a more insidious way by spreading mortal epidemics without causing the public shock of a nuclear explosion. While thus amassing chemical weapons to annihilate the entire population of earth, the profit hunger of the multinational chemical and drug companies sow the seeds of death in other forms as well. Over 40,000 untested chemicals are dumped in the Third World by the multinationals, a number of them being banned in their own countries. According to United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) about 22,000 people die every year in the developing countries due to the use of pesticides discarded in the West, India contributing to one third of the cases. The WHO notified a number of agro-chemicals as highly toxic, like DDT, BHC, Methyl Parathion,

Heptachlor, Lindane, etc. These have been banned in USA, UK, and other western countries. But the Government of India permits them to be dumped in India. In 1982 the Industrial Toxicology Research Centre Lucknow had pointed out that a residue of chlorinated pesticides in the placental tissue, cord, blood and plasma of pregnant women resulted in early termination of pregnancy and also accumulated in the body of the foetus.

The drug manufacturing scene is no different. About 45,000 drug formulations are sold in India. But according to WHO and also the Hathi Committee, 80 per cent of the drugs are non-essential. A majority of the rest are banned in the parent countries of the multinationals as they have been found to produce dangerous toxic effects. The glaring example is the Orstrogen-Progeseteron combinations, causing teratogenic effects, i.e., formation of deformed babies. Despite demands from the trade unions the government not to speak of withdrawing the banned drugs from the market, even refused to publish the list of these drugs. The result is that these multinationals not only dictate their terms to the government but also function as a State in themselves.

With all the exercises done at Bhopal, a pertinent question has been raised from different quarters as to "whether it was an accident or a deliberate test of the effects of the chemical agent. The conspiracies of imperialism in India have been open since long from Assam to Punjab leading to the assassination of Indira Gandhi. But still the government of India refuses to point to these imperialist conspiracies headed by the USA. It is afraid to anger the USA and is anxious not to jeopardise the Indo-US relations by the Bhopal episode.

It has to be task of the trade unions and the working class to unite the people and wage a struggle against the policies of the government and expose the role of imperialism. Working women must join this united struggle and raise their voice of protest against the depredations by the multinationals and the policy of the government of India.

Growing Discrimination Against Women Workers in Jaipur

Madhu Sethia

EMPLOYMENT opportunities for women in modern industries have always been very limited in Jaipur, although they have been working in a very large number in some of the traditional handicraft industries such as tie and die, beedi, carpet, garment etc. Except Jaipur Spinning which is also closed now, no other modern industry provided employment to sizeable number of women. In this situation of mass unemployment women were being recruited as a cheap sources of labour and for being less prone to unionisation by some of the small scale factories in the newly developing industrial areas.

In the last two years CITU activities started gaining momentum in these areas and special efforts were made to draw in women workers in trade union activities. In many factories with just four or five workers and all women, unions were formed and they fought for a minimum wage of Rs. 9 per day. Some of these factories were paying just Rs. 4 per day. This was made possible by uniting the entire industrial area and men workers behind these small number of women in each factory. Women emboldened by this display of solidarity and fraternity of workers started taking active interest in the union activities not only within their own factories but even out side. They faced goondas, sat on dharnas, fought with police and walked even 12 k.m. to take part in CITU demonstrations.

This sudden awareness in women workers about their rights frightened the factory owners and a conscious effort is being made to ease out women from employment either on pretext of closure or retrenchment. When the leaders go to negotiate the only condition for reopening is that women workers will not be taken back on work. The argument is when equal wage is to be given then why not men workers. In the Malviya industrial area of Jaipur there is not a single factory which employed women a year to two ago and has not retrenched either all of them or at least some. While many others are threatening to do so.

Quality Food Products and Neptune Pharmaceuticals where 12 women were working, has been closed. Rishab Pharmaceuticals has retrenched all the 8 women whereas men have been retained. Jawa Industries has retrenched 9 out of 12 women workers and Canon and Canon where 22 women are working and recently a union had been formed is also threatening to retrench the women.

This policy of discrimination is also spreading to other industrial areas. Tilak Foundry in Tonk Fatak area is also threatening to retrench all of the 12 women workers.

However, inspite of all this the women workers are determined to fight it out against the owners under the banner of CITU.

Convention of Women Employees and Teachers at Trivandrum

THE capital of Kerala hosted the first ever convention of women employees and teachers of Kerala on November 16, 1984, held under the banner of the Federation of State Employees and Teachers Organisations, an affiliate of the All India State Govt. Employees' Federation. M. Sarada, J. Saraswathy Amma, C. Kamalam, P. Kunjumatha, P.C. Thankamony and Marthakutty were in presidium.

About 700 delegates from the member organisations of FSETO converged at a big hall in Trivandrum, the capital of Kerala and discussed their problems. The convention was inaugurated by Smt. Nirupama Chatterji, Minister of West Bengal. K.V. Devadas, President FSETO presided. Nasimuneesa welcomed the delegates. In the inaugural address Smt. Nirupama Chatterjee described the

pathetic condition of the Indian women. She strongly criticised the discriminatory attitude of the Government at the Centre and the states towards the problems of women. She briefly recounted the various welfare measures implemented by the West Bengal Government on the genuine problems of women. Smt. Meenakshi Thampan, Professor, Christ College, Iringalakkuda and Smt. Suseela Gopalan, also spoke. Smt. Suseela Gopalan The General Secretary of AIDWA while welcoming the declaration of the Government of India to celebrate November 19 as Mothers Day, blamed the Central Government for being negligent all along towards the problems of women in the country. K.V. Rajendran, General Secretary, FSETO analysed the problems of women employees and teachers in Kerala. He brought to the attention of the delegates the need of the hour to stand more united for achieving the demands.

In the business session a member of AICCWW Soni Komath presented the document on "Women and Social Problems". Presenting the document she went deep into the problems with which the women are confronted. K.R. Bhanumathy, moved the charter of demands of women employees and teacher of Kerala. The important demands included in the charter are:

- (1) Reduction of one hour in the working hours.

- (2) Starting of Creches near Government Institutions to take care of the children of employed mothers.
- (3) Special Casual Leave for 15 days and 4 months' maternity leave.
- (4) One month's extra salary during maternity period.
- (5) Appointment of a Commission to probe into the various problems of women and to suggest remedial measures.

Sarojini, T.V. Lalitha Prabha, Faiza, P.K. Balanma, Vasantha Devi and Sreekumari Amma spoke about the charter of demands. The Charter was unanimously adopted by the Convention. The Convention came to a close at 4 P.M.

The Convention was followed by a huge procession of women employees and teachers through the main thoroughfares of the capital. The slogan shouting women in large numbers, a rare spectacle in the city, attracted the people. At Gandhi Maidan a public meeting was held. Smt. Bhargavi Thankappan, MLA, Smt. T. Devi Secretary, Democratic Womens Association Kerala addressed the gathering. Smt. Nirupama Chatterji made the inaugural address.

The Convention was a grand success heralding a mighty united struggle in the immediate coming days.

REPORT FROM DELHI

Hundred Widowed in Arson Demand Govt. Flats

A deputation of about 100 women, widowed in the recent carnage, met the Lt. Governor, Mr. M.M.K. Wali, and presented a memorandum demanding immediate allotment of Government quarters, employment in Government offices and free education to their children. The deputation was led by Janawadi Mahila Samiti, Delhi on November 23, 1984. They also urged the Lt. Governor to immediately set up a cell to monitor the exact number of women widowed, their rehabilitation and to associate women's organisations with it.

The women, who were residing either in gurdwaras or in open spaces at Jehangirpuri,

Sultanpuri and Mangolpuri said since their houses had been destroyed and their kith and kin killed in the riots, they had no place to go. To force them in such a situation to go back where they felt most insecure, was inhuman, they said and urged the Delhi Administration to allot Government quarters to them. They also felt that the compensation of Rs. 10,000 announced by the Government, which many of them were yet to receive, was not adequate, as they had lost the earning members of the family. They, therefore, needed secure Government jobs, depending on their qualifications.

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Iranian Women Continue to Suffer under Khomeini

NOW a days millions of women are living under heavy pressures and most severe restrictions in Iran. The Islamic Republic has always tried to utilise the revolutionary ability and force of women's masses to fortify the base of its power. But inspite of all selfless sacrifices of Iranian women for the cause of revolution, a tormented life, deprivation, discrimination inequality, lawlessness and backwardness have been imposed on them. Iranian women are facing discriminations in all spheres of socio-political, economic and family life.

Family education is being ignored and they are deprived of art and culture. The main policy of the Islamic Regime is to resort to the pseudo-Islamic and reactionary mediaeval thoughts which have deprived our women of contributing to social activities, education and art. The propaganda machinery of the regime is used to humiliate the women and undermine their real position in society.

To enlighten the public opinion of the people of India particularly the progressive and fighting women of this country, we would like to describe some of the crimes and atrocities, committed against women by the murderous regime of Islamic Republic of Iran.

Inequality between women and men has been legalised under the law of CHASAS, by the Islamic Republic. If a Moslem man kills a woman he can be punished only after the family of murdered woman pays the blood money for one person to the murderer's family. In other words, killing of a women is legally unpunishable. According to the present law, a man may be punished only after he kills two women, that too, after being witnessed by two men in the court. In this regard, women's witness is illegal.

A woman has no right to appeal for divorce but a man can divorce his wife even in her absence or even without informing her. After divorce or death of husband, a woman is not permitted to keep her children and family wealth. Only the husband or his family is entitled to take all that.

The polygomy of man without permission of their wives has been legalised and due to this

many families are being separated and ruined every day.

The Islamic Regime has introduced a Bill to remove women from the sphere of production by offering only part-time jobs which deprive the woman of all social activities and confines them only to home works. This so-called Bill has already been implemented by the regime even before getting any sanction of the Parliament.

Those women whose husbands are employed, are not allowed to get a job, during past 5 years innumerable women have been deprived of their jobs under different pretexts including failure to observe the Islamic rules of using the *chador*. The fear of losing their jobs has forced the women not to apply for leave even during pregnancy. There is too much scarcity of kindergartens/creches which poses a serious problem for working women.

The Islamic Regime has prohibited women's education in Engineering, Agriculture, Law, ...

Compulsory *chador* is another tool in the hands of the Islamic Regime for inflicting more pressure and atrocities on the Iranian women. Imposition of Islamic *chador* has forced the women to wear prescribed clothes under the instructions of authorities.

If the hair of a woman is slightly visible she will be manhandled, arrested and even stabbed by the hooligans and Islamic guards.

In Islamic Republic the prostitutes who are the products of the class society are stoned in a barbaric fashion of mediaeval period. The Regime has permitted temporary marriages, which have now become a normal phenomenon.

The Jails of Islamic Republic are full of patriotic and militant women who fought for liberation of their motherland from the yoke of reaction and imperialism. The number of imprisoned women in Iran is unprecedented and has no comparison with any other country or regime. From 13 year old girls to 70 year old women are imprisoned and put under most inhuman and barbaric physical and psychological

cal tortures in the jails. The executioners of Islamic Republic are using different methods of torture, i.e., lashing, removing nails, burning bodies and sexual assault, rape etc. for achieving their dirty aims.

The executioners of regime do not even spare the pregnant women from torture. Some times they do not execute the pregnant women but wait till she has delivered the child and soon after the delivery — which is the most beautiful moment of a mother's life — they execute her.

Sometimes for breaking the spirit of the struggling women they stop milk to their babies. The children living in the jails have been put under the worst possible living conditions and their health is in real danger.

In case of young and under-aged imprisoned girls the authorities by saying that "virgins go to heaven after death, therefore such prisoners should not be allowed to maintain their virginity." That is why the girl prisoners sentenced to death are given the status of concubines for the Islamic guards and torturers. This action is a typical example of inhuman crime of mercenaries of the regime.

Parents and spouses of prisoners are treated in the most insulting and violent manner in front of jail gates.

Today in Iran, there are very few families that have not lost one of their loved ones by the regime. The youths of Iran are either being killed in the war fronts or being executed by the regime or are in the jails.

But the women of our country have not been silent against all these crimes. In spite of the repressive situation Iranian women continue their consistent struggle against lawlessness, inequality and oppression. The people of the world admired the role played by Iranian women during the revolution, and for safeguarding its achievements.

Now Iranian women are struggling for freedom, equal rights, ending Iran-Iraq war, establishing peace in the world and are fighting for more firmly for independence, freedom and social justice.

Therefore, it is the demand of the time that those who stand for Human Rights and Freedom should hear the voice of the Iranian people and raise their voice in all possible ways such as writing letters, sending delegations to the Embassies of the Republic of Iran, and send impartial delegations of medical and legal experts to Iran, so as to expose the repression and barbaric methods being used to suppress the Iranian patriots, particularly Iranian women. We demand the following:

To halt immediately the campaign for imprisonment, execution, physical and psychological torture; To release all democratic and progressive political prisoners from Iranian jails; To allow an international body of lawyers, doctors and journalists and representatives of women organisations to visit Iran and meet the women prisoners; To end the Iran-Iraq war; and To end the oppression of Iranian women and halt the attacks on their true representative, the Democratic Organisation of Iranian Women.

(Democratic Organisation of
Iranian Women in India)

The following letter is sent to The Secretary General United Nations Organisations, on 22nd December 1984 by the AIDWA with a copy to President Iran.

Dear Sir,

We, the women in India are deeply concerned and shocked to learn about the atrocities on women in Iran and demand your immediate intervention to bring the normalcy in the day-to-day life of the Iranian people. Millions of women in Iran today are living under the grave threats by the Islam regime with the result, thousands of women and children are suffering and tortured in jail without any inquiry in spite of the sacrifices they made in the revolution. Their significant role in throwing the Shah of Iran is still in the mind of the democratic people. The women in Iran have no right to appeal if they have been divorced while men can marry any number of women and live with them. Under the Islamic regime, a bill has been introduced to remove women from the sphere of production by offering them part time jobs, women are deprived from the

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Women Workers in Plantation Industry

AFTER a report on "Socio-Economic Conditions of Women Workers in Plantation" which was published by the Labour Bureau, Simla in 1980, the Government of India, Ministry of Labour and Rehabilitation, has recently published a "Study of the Working and Living Conditions of Plantation Labour in South India, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu in 1984". It has said that the Plantation Labour Act 1951 has not been properly implemented and there was a "need for strengthening the enforcement machinery under the Act so as to ensure that the welfare provisions of the Act are implemented effectively".

The information collected and observations made no doubt gives somewhat factual position of plantations in the South. We would like to deal with some of the aspects concerning women workers here.

Employment

Plantation industry in the South employs a substantial share of women workers who account for more than 55 per cent of the total employment, of 8 lakhs workers in Tea Plantations in the country, 56 per cent are women, the share of women workers in coffee being 46 per cent. In rubber, women account for about 30-35 per cent of the total employment. It is true, when women have been thrown out from Jute, Textile, Tobacco, etc. on a large scale due to various reasons, in plantation industry women are still on a large scale. In case of possible mechanisation in plantation women are bound to be out. With such a large employment of women one would naturally expect better deal for women in plantation. But what is the position?

Equal Wage for Equal Work

The report states: "There is no disparity between the wages of men and women and when the ratified minimum wages of the State Governments prescribe one single rate for adults in all the 32 selected estates, men and women workers were found to be getting the same wages. In fact, women in most of the cases were earning more than their men counterparts by way of incentive rates as women

had a reputation of being better pluckers-pickers..." (page 11).

Though it is true that the difference in wages between men and women workers is now less and equal wage is being implemented in some states like in Kerala, it would not be correct to make a definite statement about equality to wages in men and women workers in plantation industry. Wherever pressure was brought from below by the movement of the trade unions the Equal Remuneration Act 1976 was implemented. It must be noted here that after the trade unions had intervened by way of struggles in West Bengal and Tripura, the employers agreed to pay the equal wage. The pressure from ILO on the complaint made by CITU forced the Central Government to intervene in some states for implementation of the legislation. At the same time it is also true that in Assam, where the trade unions like INTUC work in league with the management, women do get less wages despite the Equal Wage Act. The survey in plantations made by Labour Bureau, Simla in 1980 confirms this by stating that "...However, the differentials in wage rates of men and women are found to be continuing in some of the sampled plantations even at the time of this study ... Even after passing of 1976 Act, such unfair practice continue in plantations..."

The Indian Labour Journal, October 1984, stated that "However, the practical experience in this regard is a little disturbing one. "At certain other places some employers were found using covert means of fixing lower wage rates. For instance, in some plantations in South India, certain jobs were found classified into grades viz Grade I Grade II. Almost all the women workers-except those engaged in plucking and picking operations were engaged in Grade II jobs and thus earned lessor wages than men..."

During seasons of plucking, women do earn more on piece rate basis, that too for 4-5 months. They may be earning more than men because of speedy work they are able to do as is reported in the survey. But what is the average monthly wages the plantation workers get? It is not more than Rs. 300-350, if the

daily wages come to about Rs. 9-10. Comparing the present high prices of essential commodities in the market, Rs. 300-350 is not sufficient sum to purchase essential commodities. Therefore, plantation workers demanded Rs. 500/- as a minimum wage per month.

India ratified the ILO convention No. 100 in 1958. But there was no national law till CITU took up the issue. The Equal Wage Ordinance was enforced in the International Women's year in 1975. The legislation was passed in 1976, the notification to the plantation industry was issued after 1977, since the planters Association raised doubts regarding the exact meaning of the term "same work or work of similiar nature". Even after 10 years the unequal wage continues in plantation where women constitute a majority. It is not only in plantation industry alone but in beedi, construction, agriculture and in many other industries too, the wages are unequal.

Unless, a sustained campaign is taken up by women, and trade unions, the disparity in wages may continue. What is expected from the government but not being done is the strict implementation of the Equal Remuneration Act, by forcing the employers to abide by the rules.

Creches

"The predominant share of women workers in the total workforce makes it obligatory on the part of employers to provide certain facilities to women one of which is an creche for the children of workers". The Plantation Labour Act, Section 12 provides this. Moreover, "there should be enough space for children in the creche, children should be looked after by trained women...the employers are also required to provide fresh or prepared milk for the children...refreshment...clothes for everyone, oil and soap..." The report further states "100 per cent of the household in Karnataka and Kerala and 97 per cent of the households in Tamilnadu confirmed that creche facilities were being provided by the managements. On the adequacy of facilities provided, however, while 71 per cent of the interviewed households in Kerala expressed satisfaction over the adequacy of creche facilities, only 40 per cent of the households in Karnataka and 50 per cent in Tamilnadu felt that facilities in

the creche were adequate...." With regard to the maintenance the report says "creche was quite poor...." In certain cases, even where the management have provided uniforms to children, the creche attendants do not care to use them...the mothers also complained that these creche clothes were being washed once a week...."

Again the Indian Labour Journal October, 1984 has to be quoted here which states. "For instance most of the creches in the Northern and North-Eastern Plantations were found to be not only below the prescribed standard of construction but also were found wanting in sanitation and cleanliness. In almost 88 per cent of the cases, creches were being looked after by untrained staff. In some cases creches existed only in the "form of tents.... With the result "only about 23 per cent of the eligible children were actually attending creches...."

This is the sad commentary made on the provision of creche not only by the Government survey in plantations, but the surveys in Mines, Beedi, Cashewnut, etc. The survey made in 1982, with regard to the extent of utilisation of creches in the sampled plantations, the average no of children attending creche per unit in tea was only 75 while estimated number of children below 6 years in the sampled units having creches was 19,227. The survey commented that this showed only about 23 per cent of the eligible children actually attending creches.

The actual conditions prevailing in the plantation industry with regard to creche are miserable. In most of the North East parts, creche as such do not exist. Whereever they exist they exist on paper, or in a tent, or in a room. One may not even find children there. Milk supply is rare, clothes and cradles do not exist, the trained ayahs are not employed. Compared to North the conditions in South are somewhat better no doubt. But the picture given in present report does not tally with the actual conditions even in plantations in South. In large plantations, creches are found with inadequate necessities prescribed by the rules. But in small estates, there are not many creches so to say. Whereever they are they are just for the namesake. Therefore, women have rightly replied that they do not keep the children in the creche "since they

are not likely to be looked after well". The report says the management in Tamilnadu is considering to pay paise 25 per day for milk, that means they are escaping their own responsibility. It will be good if the social welfare department of the State governments consider running a scheme to train the attendants to improve the running the creches, as the report states. A few women will benefit with the employment also. The point is how far the govt. is serious to work it out.

The provision of creche, at present under the Factory Act, Plantation Labour Act and Mines Act, etc, should be made applicable to all the concerns where a large number of women are employed, such as the women in secretariat, Banks, Insurance and so on. The demand is voiced by working women all over the country and the govt. should seriously consider it.

Medical Facilities

All the government reports agree that the plantations being far away from the cities, in the hills there exist an urgent need for hospitals, medical units, for the workers. This is a gross understatement. There are enough cases in plantations when workers have died due to non-availability of medical help. Children were born in plantations or on the way to the hospital which is far away, with no speedy conveyance to carry the patients. In Karnataka, medical facilities available to workers were less than other states as per the report. Trade unionists interviewed expressed dissatisfaction over the provision, the chief complaint being non-availability of doctors in times of need. They state the doctors are only visiting doctors. "The number of beds provided in hospitals as well as group hospitals are less than the minimum prescribed under the Act... in certain cases, dispensaries did not even have certain essential drugs..." workers complained that "there were no lady doctors at all in the hospitals excepting one state each in Kerala and Tamilnadu, Lady doctors were not found in any other states" etc. Is it not surprising that lady doctors are not found in the hospitals where more than 50 per cent women are employed? According to the rules, larger plantations with 1000 workers or more are required to maintain garden hospitals—primary schools, etc.

As per the report published... "Plantation, areas being what they are, the doctors are not keen to stay in the estates as it would limit their career prospects and not all estates can afford them, very attractive salaries...." This is the situation where more than 10 lakhs workers are employed with their families, far away from the cities. One can not understand, why the doctors can not be paid good salary by the plantation owners, whose profits are huge, and there is no economic crisis in the industry. Many workers have fallen victims to the diseases without any medical help. Lady doctors are not found in almost all the hospitals where majority of women are employed.

In reality, the Central govt. is lenient towards the employers when the question of implementation of any rules for the benefit of the workers comes up. T.B. clinics should be opened as suggested by the report. It is not at all beyond the "means of private managements" as is being said.

Educational Facilities

According to the provision of the Plantation Labour Act there should be a primary school for the children of the employees. But as per the rule the "employer, however, need not provide for a school if there is already one maintained by the State...within a distance of one mile from the place of residence of the workers...." This limit is extended in Kerala for 2 miles, one does not know why. As per the survey many places there are primary schools within the estates, which is not correct. The children in plantations in the hills or tarai, have to walk more than 1 mile or even more for the school, Government or a private. They have to leave early morning, returning late in the evening. A minimum one primary school is a must when already the percentage of literacy among children, especially girls is very very low. The overall level as per the report of illiteracy in the 617 selected households in these states together was 48 per cent. In Karnataka it is the highest at 47 per cent and 60 per cent among female workers there. "A sex-wise break up of children in school indicates that while 91 per cent of the male children in the school going age and attending schools, only 73 per cent of the female children in the age groups 6-16 are attending schools. The present

serious situation in education among girls is accepted by all. Unless special efforts have been made, and a change in their economic conditions for the better, the education of the boys or girls is bound to suffer. Only data collections and committee formation is surely not going to help the workers. The report has admitted "the employment of children in plantations below the age of 14 "not found on records of the planters". How can it be found in the record of planters? It is a well established fact acknowledged by ILO and others, that India stands the highest in employment of children. It is to be found in carpets, beedi, plantations, etc. The employers exploit the child labour on a large scale, by paying low wages, and more hours of work.

Housing

In the case of housing for the plantation workers, even the govt reports had to come out openly against the tactics of the employers, who do not abide by the rules, do not provide the prescribed standard of housing for the workers. The subsidy schemes are a failure, loans are not taken by the employers despite the low interest. The result is workers are living in thatched, substandard house, without provision of water or latrines. The report has rightly commented on the sad plight of housing.

It is surprising that the author of the Report did not understand that when the provision of drinking water does not exist in a number of estates, the suggestion of "automatic chlorination" is a very far cry and nobody will take it seriously. !

It is important to note that the cost of providing extra welfare amenities, like creche, maternity benefits, toilets etc. to women workers formed only 1.2 to 4.4 per cent of the total wage bill. The average annual expenditure per women worker employed worked out to be only Rs. 80.89 which constituted about 2.1 per cent of the total wage bill. In spite of such a small amount spent on the welfare amenities, the employers completely ignore the rules of the Act with the result the women workers have to suffer. The question is what steps does the Government intend to take against these violations?

Implementation of the Plantation Labour Act

The study report itself admitted as to how the rules are flouted in case of housing, medical facilities, primary schools, drinking water, etc. But the point to be noted here is, it is not only due to the visits of the inspectors who can not "give surprise visits", as the report states. It is an acknowledged fact that the inspectors are in league with the managements, do not give proper reports on the basis of which inquiries would be made, and the manager be punished. There is plenty of material published by the government as to the small number of cases launched in the court against the employers for the breach of the rules of the Act. And therefore, the administrative set up for the implementation is not only faulty, but is to be completely overhauled. The enforcement machinery of the government is favourable to the employers and not in favour of the workers.

Economic Status

The study report ends by giving the economics status of the workess, the size of the household and the income. There is no saving in the plantation household, on the contrary indebtedness increases, "seen even for a day to day expenditure". This is true. The workers households consisting of the family with the children bring about Rs. 600—650 when the prices of foodstuffs, medicines, etc. have gone up four to five times.

But though the purpose of the study was limited to the conditions of the plantation industry, one can not deny the sustained increase in production, increase in export; and fabulous profits the employers are making in plantation industry; It is reported that our country is the second highest foreing exchange earning industry, and the tea export earnings in 1984 according to the latest information are Rs. 750 crores! It is only, the women and men workers who suffer most who are deprived of the share of the profits earned on their labour.

Infant Mortality, Ten Times High in India

As per the paper submitted by Prof. M.R. Chakravarti of MACS Research Institute in Pune at the seminar the infant mortality rate in our country is around 129 per thousand live birth. The Seminar was on the subject "exploitation of women and children". Prof. Chakrabarti said more than 50 per cent of infant death occur within the first month of the life. The infant mortality rate in rural areas was 135 per thousand whereas in urban it was 85 per thousand. According to him, the mortality rates were nearly ten times more than those of the developed countries. The children in the villages are at risk for the "infection malnutrition complex" which are ignored completely. As per the study made of 27,000 in Tribal and rural pre-school children under an integrated child development service programme, it was found that 40 per cent of them had moderate to severe protein energy malnutrition. Of these 20 per cent were anemic, 40 per cent had vitamin A deficiency and about 8 per cent were ill at the time of the survey. It was reported that scarcity of safe drinking water was the reason of the high prevalence of infections.

Dr. Chakravarti criticised that this vast problem had not been tackled effectively. The supplementary feeding programmes of the past few decades have "remarkably little success in bringing about lasting changes in the primary health programmes and in the national nutrition ... interventions".

CITU State Committees Requested to Send Names for the AICCWW

The following names for the All India Co-ordination Committee of Working Women (CITU) have been received by the Centre, during and after the Jaipur working Committee meeting held October 1984. Names from other State Committee are awaited.

1. *Delhi*. Ranjana Nirula and Pramila Pandhe 2. *Rajasthan*. Madhu Sethia. 3. *Karnataka* M.M. Rajamma 4. *West Bengal*. P. Gangamma, Nisha Roy, Lila Das, Shibani Sengupta, Arati Dasgupta 5. *Madhya Pradesh*. Sandhya Vaidya, Parbati Bai, 6. *Orissa*. Indumati Nandi, Jogmaya, Day. 7. *Punjab*. Surinder Kour. 8. *Bihar*. Shibani Choudhari, Rampukari Devi.

Indian Federation of Women Lawyers Delhi Unit

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the Federation at its meeting held on 13.11.84 considered the problems of the Victims of recent violence. It noted that amongst various other problems facing the unfortunate victims, they are also in need of Legal Aid and guidance for filing of their claims and registration and pursuance of police complaints. There are also cases reported where claims with insurance companies etc have to be filed.

The Executive committee of the Federation has resolved to render free legal assistance in this respect to the victims and the following member can be contacted by the concerned persons who need help.

1. Mrs. Urmila Kapoor, Advocate,
Office, 62, Lawyers Chambers,
Supreme Court,
New Delhi.
Res: 27/19/, East Patel Nagar,
New Delhi.
Phone Off: 388036
Res. 581094, 569432.

Increase in Suicides Among Women in Gujarat

Gujarat has been witnessing a steady increase in suicide by women.

Official statistics for the past four years show that as many 3,228 women committed suicide for different reasons in the state during the period.

Of them, 1,270 ended their lives by setting fire to themselves, the special inspector general of police (crime), Mr. K.H. Bhaya, today told newsmen here.

Mr. Bhaya said 800 cases were registered in 1981, of which 336 related to women.

In 1982, 878 women committed suicide, compared to 84 men. In 1983, the incidents of suicide increased to 949. Of these 439 were women.

Last year, 601 cases were registered till September, out of which 142 related to women.

A Review of the Book "Women's Emancipation When and How"

THE book "Stree Mukti, Kevha and Kashi" in Marathi written by Smt. Susheela Gokhale Patel is published by Manju Gandhi, a member of the Board, Mahila Andolan Patrika. The book gives a fund of information on the position of women in the ancient period, during the different stages of development of society, and as to how the position changed into inferior status by and by till today, and what were the reasons. The writer also expressed her opinion as to how the unequal and degrading position of a woman at present can be changed. She had given ample examples of the present position of woman under socialism who have achieved their liberation after the revolution, with plenty of statistics. The book will be valuable for women and it should be studied.

Relying on Marx, and Engels, Smt. Susheela Gokhale Patel has taken a short review of the position of a woman under the three stages of the historical development, savagery, barbarism and civilisation and tried to show when the private property relations developed, the position of a woman was lowered, she became a slave and had to depend on the male for everything. This short review was very necessary to remove the wrong understanding held by women that the unequal position of a woman was there all the time and will remain like that in future also.

The book has brought out very clearly that unless the socialist system is established in a country no woman will ever be equal to a man in any field. In support of the statement, the writer has quoted the near equal percentage of women with men in Employment, Education, Factories in U.S.S.R. There is a large percentage of women in Soviet Parliament and Soviet Republics, as well.

The Socialist system could achieve these successes because it abolished private property in the means of production, abolished class exploitation and unequal basis of society which also formed the basis of women's inequality. The foundation for equality was thus created. At the same time a conscious struggle had to

be waged by the socialist state, the Communist Party, the mass organisation to implement the new legislations ensuring equality of women.

The author effectively exposes the many evils and disabilities from which Indian women suffer under the present rule. The post-independence constitution which formally assures equality for women has done little to change their status and dowry and other evils continue to pursue them.

The most important chapter in the book, numbering 8th deals with the views, slogans, actions of the feminists. The writer has made it very interesting by giving examples by quoting their own words. The writer has correctly pointed out as to how the demand of wages for home work leads to ridiculous conclusions.

These groups turn a blind eye to the existence of the capitalist and landlord classes and propagate that men and women constitute two antagonistic classes. This of course serves the interest of the capitalist class. In India, some of these groups are financed from abroad and used to disrupt women's movement which are taking the correct path and form a part of the broad democratic movement.

The writer has dealt with the question of peace and war, and another important point of divisive forces creating division in the country. These two questions are very important and women should be roused to fight against the conspiracies of imperialism to launch Nuclear War, to fight the secessionists in our country who try to destroy the unity of our country. Many Women's Organisations can come together on both the issues and efforts should be made accordingly.

It was perhaps necessary to lay great stress on the role of working women in the development of women's movement. The writer has tried to mention this point on page 79-80 as a passing reference, to their problems, the minimum percentage of working women in the
(Contd. on page 24)

(from page 5)

A press release from the Delhi Administration said the Lt. Governor assured the delegation that the full information about the number of women rendered widows during the disturbances was being got ready and would be completed in a few days. He expressed his readiness to consider allotment of DDA tenements to these who could not move back to their localities and said these women would be provided employment in private industries or given special vocational training.

Old women may have to be given pension, he said. He also told the delegation that directorate of education had already instructed all schools to provide books and uniforms to the children of affected families, free of cost.

Political Classes for Women (Com. Pappa Umnath)

We have been conducting classes for our leading DWA workers in all the districts. These classes have been conducted in 14 districts. 2 more districts are to be covered. These classes are handled completely by women comrades. Classes are held for

leading active women workers of DWA for two days divided into four sessions. So far, nearly 1,000 women have attended these classes. The participation of educated women on a large number in these classes is to be noted. Classes are held on the following topics.

1. Indian economy—an introduction, along with current political situation.
2. Engel's origin of family, private property and the State—quoting a few instances from the Indian History.
3. Status of women in Socialist countries—their role in the revolution.
4. Tasks before the women's movement—explaining the participation of women in the reform movements, freedom movement etc, and emphasising the demands we have to achieve etc.

On September 1st, in connection with the struggle of the Madura Coats workers for bonus, a demonstrations by DWA workers led by Com. Janaki Ammal was held in which 200 women participated. It had a terrific impact.

No Advisory Committee Formed in Tamilnadu Yet

THIS has reference to the news item published in Hindu that "judge asks women's organisations to help" wherein a District and Sessions judge of Delhi had requested women's organisations to come forward to help the investigating agencies in probing dowry death cases fully. The judge had attributed acquittal in many dowry death cases to the poor quality of evidence gathered by inexperienced police officers and had wanted women's organisations to help in this regard. There can be no doubt that women's organisations can play useful role in such investigation.

What is shocking, however, is that four years after the Central Government had issued instructions (dated July 22, 1980) to all State Governments to set up District Advisory Committees having fair representation of women for assisting investigation and prevention of crimes against women, the response from the states has been distressingly poor. In the context of increasing incidence of harassment and violence against women, such callousness is deplorable.

The Tamilnadu Government's attitude is no exception to the general tendency of apathy

and no such advisory committee has been formed in the State despite appeals to do so by women's associations.

The Centre's instructions also relate to the level at which police investigation of dowry deaths should be carried on the need to do postmortem investigation etc. Besides the Central circulars urge that legal provisions concerning arresting women, detaining them for interrogation and searching them be adhered to in letter and spirit by the State Police.

Despite such paper exhortations police practices relating to the above mentioned practices to put it very mildly have great deal to be desired. The Centre for its part seems to consider its duty done with circulars issued and replies made to Parliament in the customary vein "implementation of the instructions is being monitored".

The undeterred and rising wave of atrocities against women stands testimony to the extremely lax implementation of the varied paper safeguards against harassment of women within and outside the family and the equally indifferent monitoring of it by the highest authorities of the land.

Discrimination Faced by Women Journalists

WOMEN in all the countries of the world are generally confronted with a discriminatory attitude in varying degrees on grounds of sex in matters of employment opportunities and working conditions, but this is more true of developing countries. India ranks quite low in terms of female work participation. Although women have been able to "invade" almost all professions, a woman journalist has to face heavy odds, but she has proved to be tenacious in staying on in the profession of journalism.

Today, press in India comprises more than 19,000 newspapers and periodicals of which 1,264 are dailies. The Indian print medium can boast of distinction in the world for the fact that it is published in 84 languages.

Women form a microscopic proportion of the total number of journalists in the country. With the concentration of the print medium in urban and semi urban centres, women journalists are also restricted to these areas.

Problems Faced

The first hurdle in the way of a woman aspiring to becoming a full time journalist is the entry into a newspaper. Even if a woman tops the selection test and the interview, she will not be considered. This is the official policy of one of the leading publishing houses in South India. The usual reasons attributed for following such a policy are that women make a "nuisance" or cause "social problems" in the organisation; they cannot do the night shift or late hour reporting; that they do not have mobility so essential for a reporter; that they will quit the job on getting married; if already married then she will invariably go on maternity leave; if a woman already has children, then she cannot devote her complete attention to her job; that she will start demanding, if recruited, such privileges as a separate toilet room; that they are likely to encourage romantic notions in men and thus affect their efficiency...."

A woman who does manage to fight her way into a newspaper, faces other problems in the course of her work. A woman is appointed

as a sub-editor because editing is a desk job. Women reporters are scarce, as reporting is considered "strenuous" "and risky" for women. A woman, if a sub editor, is given unimportant "copy" to edit. She will not be allowed to do night shift even if she volunteers, as she will be at risk of being left alone amidst male colleagues during night. And then, she will have to be dropped home accompanied by an escort perhaps. She cannot stay overnight as is done by the male journalists. In India, very few newspaper organisations provide transport to their staff to be dropped home after the night shift. A woman sub cannot aspire to become the Chief Sub editor because she cannot or will not do night duty. "Why should promotion be linked to night duty?" — ask the few women subs who have put in several years of work at the desk".

The point is, women who want to share equal responsibility with their male colleagues are not allowed to do so and later, are accused of being the "privileged class" in the organisation. This also forms the basis for refusing to recruit women in the organisation".

If a reporter, a woman will be generally assigned to report "cultural beats" — fashion shows, flower shows, women's club meetings and similar events. Women are considered good at interviews also, especially woman dignitaries or luminaries. Invariably, women are not given crime or political "beats" or investigative reporting. A woman journalist reported how she got information and important facts of a promising investigative report and placed them before her editor. The editor appreciated her enterprise and put a male colleague on the job to get the full story"...

Chances of a female chief sub editor or chief reporter or female news editor are as bright as mid-night sun in India", according to a woman reporter. Such cynicism does not seem unjustified. Statistics all over the world indulging developed countries show that women in media are given jobs that are unimportant, clerical, unproductive and noncreative. Jobs and positions that involve responsibility and taking decisions almost invariably go to men.

"About 30 universities in India offer post graduate courses in journalism apart from private institutes which offer diplomas in journalism. An average of 1000 students with women constituting about 15 per cent, pass out of these courses every year. Atleast four heads of journalism departments prefer boys to girls in their courses. Inspite of such attitudes, girls are found in good numbers in journalism courses because they consistently perform better than boys in entrance tests and in the final examinations and leave the authorities no option but to admit them.

Generally, there is no discrimination in salary because the Wage Board scales apply to everyone. But a few women complain that as trainees they were given less stipend than the male trainees and their services regularised much later than those of the men. Though women are thought to be more hard working, efficient, conscientious and sometimes, more knowledgeable than men, the number of women in a newspaper rarely exceeds one or two. Worse still, some papers recruit women only to claim to be modern in their outlook.

Journalism in India has its bright spots. There are at least a dozen women journalists who report on crime, riots, politics and legislature. They report tough assignments and a few of them have been chief reporters also. But it must be remembered that they are based in metropolitan cities such as Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay where male attitudes are more flexible. As a women reporter down south commented, "We are progressing centimetre."

[Excerpts from the article in Mainstream 4th August 1984.

Sex Discrimination Persists in Railway

Women Railway Mazdoors numbering 120 in Vijayawada division have not yet been confirmed despite the fact that majority of them were employed since 1965, while the male counterparts employed later than women have been confirmed recently, in April 1984. This is pure and simple sex discrimination, the South Central Railway Employees Union points out. In a letter to the Chairman Railway Board, the General Secretary writes, "The meeting of the

Union condemns the discriminatory attitude of the Divisional Authorities of Bezvada in not confirming the Mazdoor women casual labourers even though they have put in more service than Mazdoor men and demands immediate confirmations". These women workers were drawing Authorised pay scales since a decade. The screening of the casual men and women was made together before the screening committee. The screening is based on the seniority of the workers, on the number of days they have put in the service. It was surprising therefore, these women were not confirmed after putting up service for so many years. The union says "it is a matter of regret that these women casual labourers were discriminated as many of them are senior to those casual labourers who are now confirmed. This discrimination is based on sex". After demanding an inquiry against this blatant discrimination, the Union has asked the authorities to confirm these women who have also been deprived of the retirement benefits due to lack of confirmation. Will the new Railway Minister take note of this and give justice to these women workers?

Women—Indispensable for China's Construction

Each year about one million young people leave primary and secondary middle schools. Some of them continue their study while many of them have to find work. For some it takes perhaps six months to a year to find a job. In the meantime they have to stay at home and remain dependent on their parents. These people are customarily called "job-waiting youths" in China.

The 1979 national figure for job waiting young people was six million. In recent years, improving national economy has created many new jobs, while the government has adopted flexible but effective policies to mobilize social forces to provide more jobs. As a result of this, the overwhelming majority of job-seeking youths have been satisfactorily placed, and many small and medium cities, as well as emerging industrial cities, such as Zhuzhou, Shashi and Wuxi, have completely solved the unemployment problem.

Percentage of Jobless Young Women

Unemployed young women made up over 60 per cent of the total six million job waiting youths in 1979, and this percentage was even higher in the economically backward regions. This fact drew the attention of the women's federations at all levels, and attracted the concern of the general public. Solutions had been offered by many. Some even suggested that women could go back to the kitchen. This idea has caused a heated debate, which is going on even to this day. But the majority of women are opposed to it, for this would be, as they see it, a serious setback to the rights they have won through long years of struggle under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party.

Women Employees from 1949-1983

Year	Total	Percentage
1949	610,000	7.5%
1979	31.28 million	32.9%
1983	41.90 "	36.9%

Between 1949 and 1983 increased by 68.8 times.

In 1949, the year of Liberation, the number of working women in China registered at 610,000. By 1983, it reached 40 million, and many of them have found jobs in realms traditionally not open to women. This has brought their talents into full play thus making them an indispensable part of China's economic construction.

(From: Women of China Oct. 84)

(from page 21)

1980, with some three million women turning to the polls, 16 women were elected.

Wide preparations are being adopted by the General Federation of Iraqi Women (GFIW) to mobilise women masses to participate in the next session of the National Assembly. The second amendment of the civic status Law No. 21/78 was issued to regulate the wife-husband relationship in a manner that ensure equal rights for both. The followings are some of the amendments issued

to the welfare of women:

- Banning marriage contracts outside courts
- Banning compulsory marriage
- Granting women the right to divorce
- Banning bigamy and polygamy, except with a court approval
- Granting the mother the right to custody of her child until the age of ten which can be extended until the age of 15, after which the child has the right to choose between his parents.
- Granting the daughter the right to full inheritance — after her parent's death — if she has no sisters or brothers.

(Contd. from page 7)

jobs under the pretext of failure to observe the rule of using "chador".

What was the fault of these women who are languishing in jails for years together? They resisted the reactionary measures the Islamic Government promised earlier. And therefore, they are undergoing unprecedented tortures physical and mental. Women prisoners are not allowed to meet their relatives or even lawyers. All these happenings are taking place in the women's decade, which is coming to an end.

We demand, and expect that those who stand for human rights and freedom should listen to the voice of Iranian women and people. It is urgent that we save the thousands of women rotting in jails.

The All India Democratic Women's Association and the All India Co-ordination Committee of Working Women is concerned with the present serious developments under the "Islamic Regime" of Iran and demanded the following to the United Nations Organisation.

1. Release of all the political prisoners including women and children.
2. Attacks on the democratic movement and on the Democratic Organisation of Iranian Women should be stopped.

3. End to Iran-Iraq War.

We hope as a representative of United Nations, you will intervene in the situation.

Namibian Women Fight for Their Country

HGHIMBUASHA FOSY, a leader of women's council (SWC) from Namibia when spoke at Prauge Conference of women in 1981, pointed out that thousands of women and children are dying in Namibia in the struggle against racism, for the independence and freedom of their country. Their homes are being burnt and land devastated, schools closed, children under 16 are called up to serve in occupational army. Namibian women organise protest actions and demonstrations, they are being arrested and have to deliver their children in prison wards. The struggle against apartheid and racism has become indispensable for us".

The situation in Namibia continues the same even after 6 years. Under the leadership of SWAPO Women's Council women are fighting for their liberation since 1950. Record number of people are imprisoned, mass arrests are the order of the day. There are 18 major places of detention camps, military houses, police stations and army military posts in Namibia. Hard labour, solitary confinement, starvation, brutality towards the prisoners is their fate. It is therefore, no surprise, that every person in Namibia today is up in arms to fight the South African white Regime who is actively helped by American Imperialism to continue the present situation. Women here are playing very significant and decisive role in the liberation struggle.

Women March Ahead

The present movement against the South African regime dates back to the last quarter of the last century. The resistance was one of the bloodiest in the annals of the history of colonialism. "The history of this anti-colonial resistance has noted the role and sacrifices made by Namibian women for the independence of their country". This was on 10th December 1959. When the United Nations General Assembly adopted its historic resolution, proclaiming the universal right of men to live in freedom, Namibian women came out in their hundreds and took to the streets at the place "windhosk" in protest against the racist and segregationist policies and practices of the South African Administration in Namibia.

This demonstration was so powerful that the Government forced the entire African population from its previous residential area to a new town "Katura" which was far away from the city. During this episode many women were killed. This day is now being observed as "Namibian women's Day," every year. This was a recognition of the heroic role women played in a common struggle of men and women.

In 1970, thousands of women joined the struggle of liberation under the SWAPO. A specific mention must be made here of the role played by working women, like teachers, nurses, office employees, students etc, who were flogged and tortured in the struggle just because they joined their brethren. The women's movement further risen to the height when hundreds of women enlisted themselves in the guerilla ranks of the Peoples Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) to continue to fight the racist regime. It is a proud record for Namibia and for others that there are women commanders, radio communication operators, military nurses, medical assistants in the battle field, fighters also political commissars. The same risk is involved here for women and men.

In the operational zones, women continue to provide food and information on the movement of the enemy troops to the fighters. And therefore, women are subjected to torture and rape by the racists and sadistic soldiers of the South African Army in Namibia. The work in urban areas is carried by women secretly. Some are captured and imprisoned for years now.

The South African Administration, burn villages, kill the menfolk leaving the women and children homeless. Tens of thousands of women, therefore had to take shelter outside Namibia in the neighbouring countries like Angola, Zambia etc. Here again SWAPO Women's Council had to work hard for these women who have to be taught and put in some productive labour. Vocational training such as, weaving, tailoring, driving or typing is being given to these women so that they can earn their livelihood.

The Role of United Nations

In fact the UN withdrew the mandate of South Africa on Namibia in 1966. It was decided that under Resolution 435 of September 1978, the General elections were to be held and a constitution Assembly be formed. But the Reagan administration has refused to carry out its obligations providing for the independence of Namibia as required by article 25 of U.N. charter. It is obstructing under the plea, making a condition that Cuba should withdraw its troops first from Angola. The U.S. General Assembly and Organisation of African Unity have recognised SWAPO as the legitimate representative of the Namibian people and Reagan administration is obliged to negotiate with it as such. But the aggressive policies of Reagan Administration seen in Latin-America and elsewhere also can be noted here. Under the slogan of "constructive engagement" with the Republic of South Africa, it is imposing the Imperialist plan on Namibia and bypassing the U.S. resolution. The argument behind all this is "blacks are not capable of ruling" their own country!

Despite the condemnation by the entire progressive people in the world of the Apartheid system, of South Africa, the African Government is continuing only on the support of the United States. The South Africa has recently joined the group of Nuclear states. One should not be surprised if the experimental ground of the Nuclear war should be the newly liberated countries and the National liberation movements like Namibia.

Reagan is talking about open armed intervention in Nicaragua after the victory of Sandinista Government. The war clouds are gathering in Central America, and elsewhere. The liberation movement in Namibia is strengthening in other countries. The people in Namibia, particularly the peace movement against war need all the support from the democratic people all over the world. The fighting women when interviewed by a few journalists in Namibia about their future, their reply was: We stand firm in the conviction that SWAPO alone offers a solution to the problems of our country. We are waiting for U.N. Supervised and controlled elections under U.N. resolution 435. If this does not come out, freedom

must come through armed struggle! Heroes fall, others emerge from the struggle. Victory will be ours..."

Fight against Racism will Continue Winnie Mandela

Eight years of confinement in the remote South African town of Brandford have not weakened Winnie Mandela's resolve to keep confronting apartheid till its last vestiges are gone. Those Western reporters who were permitted by Pretoria Government to visit Winnie Mandela confirmed that she was firm in her position to fight against racial discrimination in South Africa. Nelson Mandela who was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1964 is kept in the pollsmoor jail near the city of El Cabo under strict observation. Winnie, his wife is allowed to meet him once in a month for 45 minutes under the condition that she should not discuss the politics. The people who met her, report that she condemns the racist minority and the Reagan administration as the most "Immoral" for its policy towards South Africa. Winnie has seen and lived under different types of Governments during last 22 years is now confined to the poor ghettos without electricity and running water. There are no signs that she would be allowed to return to her home in Soweto near Johannesburg. Both have decided that they would accept their release only if they were allowed to live in Soweto. Winnie, as a social medical worker set up the first clinic in this ghetto of 9000 people where she attends 50 patients everyday. She is sure that the chances of a peaceful solution for their country does not exist any more. The white minority Government will never share the power with 24 million Blacks (70 per cent of the total population) in South Africa. The elections came and gone but the fight against Apartheid Government continues with vigour.

Monstrous Crime

VIMALA RANADIVE, Vice President All India Democratic Women's Association has issued the following statement on December 6:

We the women in India are pained and angered to learn the barbarous crime against humanity committed by President Reagan in Brazil where more than 7000 people including women and children died in the test of highly toxic chemicals. According to the eye witnesses, irreparable damage has been done to the men and animals of the region. The Brazilian soil scorched by poisonous chemicals reminds the whole world of what the United States once did in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and later in Vietnam. The women are still suffering with the after affects of the chemical warfare.

On behalf of AIDWA we condemn this monstrous crime committed against the people in Northeast Brazil by American Imperialism, and demand an end to the inhuman experiments, which bring excruciating death to innocent people.

Women Retrenched First at the Introduction of New Technology

Com. Jogendra Sharma, Secretary, Delhi CITU, who attended the ILO Session on "Food and Drinks Industries" held at Geneva on 5-13th December, 1984 spoke on the conditions of the workers including women. Following are the excerpts from his speech.

"The Government of India report claimed that the only difference in the treatment of men and women workers is that the women are not allowed to work during night. I pointed out that the women are the first to be retrenched whenever new technologies are introduced. They do not get equal wages for equal work. The working conditions of women workers of Kerala in the fish processing unit of Gujrat are horrible. They are forced to work overtime for long hours without break and overtime allowance even when their health conditions donot permit. They face sexual harassment and are treated like bonded labour."

Anne Scargill Arrested at the Picket Line in Miners Strike

MRS ANNE SCARGILL, the wife of the miners' leader, pretended to be a canteen worker attempted to join an official picket line was arrested, it was alleged at Mansfield magistrates court yesterday. Inspector Roderick Dean, of Avon and Somerset police, who was in charge of policing pickets at Silverhill colliery in Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire, said that Mrs Scargill was one of a group of 30 women shouting at working miners as they reported for duty at Silverhill in the early morning on May 16.

Mrs Scargill, aged 41, of Worsborough Dale, Barnsley, and three other women, Lyn Hathaway, 28, of Pleasant Avenue, Barnsley, Elizabeth Hollis, 23 and Audrey Moore, 31 both of Sherwood Rise, Nottingham, are charged with obstructing the police and obstructing the highway. Mrs Moore is also charged with assaulting a policeman. All four deny the charges. Mr Dean told the court that he repeatedly urged the women to stop shouting abuse because he was afraid that the working miners, who were shouting back, would hit back physically as well. He said that at one point a woman, whom he later identified as Mrs Scargill, tried to join the picket by pretending she was a worker in the canteen. "When I asked for documentation, she could not provide it. As a result she was requested to leave the colliery entrance". When Mr Dean called for reinforcements the women broke away from the main group in the car parked outside to heckle miners entering the winding room from the perimeter fence 40 yards away. The working miners began to approach the fence, and he arrested the women. Mrs Moore was said to have struck a police constable on the arm. She forced her way out of the police van, knocking helmets off policemen's heads, and had to be handcuffed. Mrs Scargill clung to the fence when she was asked to move, and was then arrested, the court was told.

Asked by Mr David Blundell, counsel for the defendants, whether police were certain that Mrs Scargill was shouting abuse, and was not merely just part of the demonstration, Mr Dean said: "It was the same as the others. I heard her shout".

Labour Protection for Women in Soviet Russia

THERE are special labour protection standards and regulations for women, all designed to prevent harmful consequences to women's health. The law prohibits women from working in unhealthy conditions, but this does not imply that their labour rights are restricted. Since unemployment does not exist in the USSR, one has every opportunity to choose a job suited to one's abilities and strength.

Soviet labour legislation prohibits women from doing arduous or hazardous work or working underground (except in jobs not involving a great deal of physical effort, such as sanitary, food and other services).

Pregnant women and nursing mothers, as well as women with children under one, cannot be employed on night or overtime work, on off days, or be sent out of town on business trips. Women are allowed to do night work only in industries where it is an extreme necessity and it is allowed only as a temporary measure.

Women with children between one and eight cannot be asked to do overtime or go out

of town on business trips unless they agree. After a medical check-up, pregnant women will be transferred to other, lighter work until their maternity leave, and retain their previous average earning.

Nursing mothers and women with children under a year will be given lighter work if they are unable to carry out their normal work, and also draw their previous average pay.

Nursing mothers are allowed nursing intervals of no less than thirty minutes at least every three hours, in addition to the normal lunch and rest periods. Child nursing intervals are considered part of the working time, and paid at the average rate.

Women cannot be refused a job or have their wages lowered because they are pregnant or nursing. Pregnant women, nursing mothers, and women with children under the age of one may not be dismissed on the management's prerogative unless the enterprise, institution or organisation is completely shut down. Even then, the dismissal entails the obligatory provision of another job.

Iraqi Women Under the Patronage of Law

THE recent progress achieved in Iraq in all walks of life has effectively prompted women to get their legitimate rights through their wide contributions to build their country so as to be equal with them.

Through the past fifteen years, women kept competing men in different fields of work.

Many laws and legislations have been enacted by the leadership to ensure women's rights in their society.

The most important laws enacted in the economic field are the Labour Law No. 151/70 and its amendments and Pension and Social Security Law for Workers No. 36/71. Both deal with the conditions of labour, protection of workers, safeguarding of motherhood rights and above all they ensure equality between

men and women in wages, social security, and training opportunities.

The Labour Law limited the working hours for working women to no more than 7 hours per day, granted her the right to feed her baby during the working hours with full salary (Article 82) and the right to enjoy full-paid pregnancy and child birth leave. Besides, nurseries and kindergartens for working women's children were established at work-site. Health care for women and their children was ensured with women's right to retire at the age of 55.

Political rights are also granted through the National Assembly law No. 55/80 which stipulated that each Iraqi, male or female, has the right to vote and be elected. Following the Parliamentary elections, held on 20th June, (Contd. on page 17)

Women in Peace March

No First Use Say Women in America

THE League of Women Voters, one of the oldest, largest and bestknown women's organisations in the United States, has renounced the first use of nuclear weapons. The national board has urged the US to prohibit also chemical biological and radiological weapons, curtail proliferation of weapons to other nations and in outer space, and to work to reduce international tensions.

Japanese Women against Cruise

The Japanese Women's Council at its recently-concluded twelfth Congress has called on the women of Japan to unite in the struggle against the threat of a nuclear war, for the preservation of peace. The organisation has a membership of over 180,000. Representatives of women's organisations accounted for almost one-third of those participating in the mass actions, in May against cruise missiles being deployed in the Far East.

Women Meet on Peace in Berlin

A peace Week of European Women took place in Berlin (GDR) from 1 to 7 of July on the initiative of the National Executive of the Women's Democratic Federation of Germany (DFD). Taking part were representatives of 33 national organisations and movements from 23 countries in Europe as well as the United States and Canada. The conference was greeted by Leticia Shahani, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and Secretary-General of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women. She was joined by Freda Brown, President of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF). Peace Week brought together women of different political opinions and world outlooks for an exchange of views, on the struggle for peace and to discuss experiences and results in implementing the UN Declaration on the participation of Women in Promoting International Peace and Cooperation.

Hiroshima Day-August 6

August 6, Hiroshima Day, was marked this year as in the past by tens of thousands of actions around the world, only this time, there was an ever greater sense of urgency, to ban all weapons of mass destruction. The WPC issued a statement which called for "launching evermore united and massive actions for the prevention of nuclear war-a war which would mean millions of Hiroshimas involving the entire planet-a nuclear cataclysm which would likely bring the annihilation of all mankind".

The statement continued: "A renewed and even more unified upsurge of actions by the World's peoples can stop the onward rush towards nuclear war through such measures as an immediate nuclear weapon freeze. There will be no surviving and no rebuilding if nuclear weapons are ever used today. The gigantic nuclear arsenals of our time contain weapons hundred of times more powerful than the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

"Yet, despite the fact that it was the United State that dropped those bombs, the Reagan administration refuses to pledge not to be the first to use nuclear weapons today. It continues to plan for waging a "Limited", 'protracted' nuclear war and to strive for superiority by building and deploying first strike missiles, which can reach their targets in six minutes, and to develop space weapons, all the while making it increasingly more difficult to stop the momentum of this relentless nuclear arms build up, all the while moving rapidly towards the point of no return.

"The Reagan administration refuses the demands being made by the vast majority of peoples and governments, including the United nations, for a freeze of nuclear weapons, for a total test ban, for a ban on space weapons and for meaningful negotiations to quickly reduce and eliminate nuclear arms.

"More than ever, millions are dying today because of the great wastage of resources connected with the trillions of dollars being spent for military purposes.

"Policies of interventionism in many parts of the world, besides from bringing untold death and suffering to the peoples of these regions, also involves the peril of igniting a nuclear war.

"Hiroshima Day is a time to realize that the sacred human right to life and peace is being violated daily and that if there is a nuclear war it will not be possible to judge those who violated that right — to judge the war criminals responsible for the annihilation of humanity.

"August 6, 1984 marks a point when the greatest ever actions by the broadest and strongest ever united front can and must be mounted and can succeed in staying the hands of those who play with the fate of our world—the fate of our children—the fate of all humanity".

ILO Study on Women in the Third World

The ILO study published recently has given the information on the economic and social changes on women in the Third World countries, specially on abandoned wives, widows, divorcees and single mothers who are struggling against "overwhelming odds to bring up Children and earn a living for the family". In Africa, three in every ten households fall below the poverty line. In low status and earnings from rural jobs available to men often motivates them to emigrate in search of better paid jobs leaving women behind to look after themselves and children. In Africa again the number of single mothers is significant, since the menfolk have gone in search of jobs abroad. The study pointed out that unless the land is given to women, and all the obstacles like lack of access to innovations in the agricultural methods, bias against women's new productive and managerial roles, are removed, women will not be helped. The study therefore, "urges a redirection of development thinking in favour of the many millions of women and calls for new approaches to help alleviate their plight". The rural women should be not only as "subsistence cultivators, but as economic beings and wage

earners who are in need of employment and income generation opportunities".

Bill for Equality of Employment for Men and Women in Japan

At the meeting of the Study Committee on Problems of Women and Young People (Women's Employment Group) which was held on the 20th February, 1984, a tentative draft was proposed by the chairperson, and two other public members concerning the Equal Employment Law for Men and Women. According to the draft, in order to secure equality in employment opportunities for men and women, (i) concerning the recruiting and employment of women it will become obligatory for the management of firms to endeavour to end discrimination regarding the dismissal, retirement age, education and training, promotion, assignment and so on, such discrimination will be prohibited though no penalty is provided for violation. (ii) regarding work outside the normal working hours, work on holidays and late night work, restrictions on this work by women, which are established under current Labour Standards Law to protect women workers, would be ended in principle, with the exception of a few categories such as expectant and nursing women, and for work in certain industries such as mining, manufacturing, construction, etc. The Ministry of Labour wants to complete a draft of the law and present it to the Diet. However, as a criticism of the above provisions has surfaced from both labour and management sides, many vicissitudes are likely and this may prevent the quick proposal of such legislation!

Women Medical Workers in Baku Appeal to Stop the Arms Race

Over one Million Soviet medical workers put their signatures under the Physicians Appeal to stop the Arms Race. The Soviet delegation to the 4th Congress of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War has delivered signatures to the Congress.

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women from the oppressed communities. With her assassination, the sympathy wave shook all sections of women and a much bigger number, now voted for the Congress(I).

Thus sympathy together with the appeal for national unity and stability made by the Congress(I), went home and like the men voters women also voted for the Congress(I). Women also were not prepared to accept the claims of oppositional parties to form an alternative Government. The women also failed to understand that the Congress(I) policies were responsible for the growing disintegration of the country.

The ruling party used all the means at its disposal to sway the women's role. The T.V., radio, cinema all were used to ensure the success of the Congress(I). In West Bengal, the Cinema theatres were showing the funeral of Smt. Gandhi almost every day. The Door-darshan was also used for the same purpose. The opposition parties have rightly complained against its partisan use of the Government media.

The non-Left political parties should draw proper lessons from the big swing, of women voters. These parties generally neglect women in their political campaigns and do not pay special attention to the women's problems.

The Highest Number of Women in Parliament '84

The number of women elected to Parliament this time is the highest, numbering 41, the major part comes from the Congress(I). The women members of parliament who voiced and fought for the demands of women like Susheela Gopalan, Pramila Dandavate though defeated are sure to continue working for the downtrodden community, as they always did. Among those who have been elected from the opposition parties are Vibha Ghosh (CPM.) Geeta Mukherjee, (CPI,) and 4 Telugu Desam Party. Vibha Goswami was elected for the 3rd time.

The trade unions, parties like the CPI(M) and other Left parties were able to largely retain their women following, but the bourgeois opposition parties lost it. The voting also shows the necessity for the Left parties, trade unions and mass organisations to redouble their activity among women.

It also shows that women's organisations have a difficult task facing them. But the present situation is not going to continue for long. After all there are not going to be any basic changes in the Congress(I) Government policy. The same problems of high prices, and poverty, of atrocities against women, of inequality etc. are bound to crop up and women are bound to react to this. All women's Organisations, should help the process of disillusionment by giving expression to the women's suffering. The urge for national unity felt by women is a genuine urge. The Women's Organisations must come before the women as crusaders for the national unity, fighters against communal and secessionist disruptors and defenders of country's integrity.

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industries and the unequal remuneration etc. The militant role played by textile women in Bombay, women workers in Mines in West Bengal, Beedi women in Karnataka, Coir women in Kerala requires mention in any book dealing with the women's movement.

The author seems to be in favour of reservation of jobs for women as part of the struggle for women's equality. It is the experience of recent times that short cut measures to deal with the basic problem lead to undesirable result and divide the common democratic movement.

The author stresses the need for broad based unity. This is very necessary to develop and deepen the women's movement. It is a welcome development that greater co-ordination is seen among women's organisations on questions like price-rise, dowry and atrocities against women.

There is no doubt that those who will read the book will get a lot of information and enlightenment in spite of some debatable statements and conclusions contained in it.