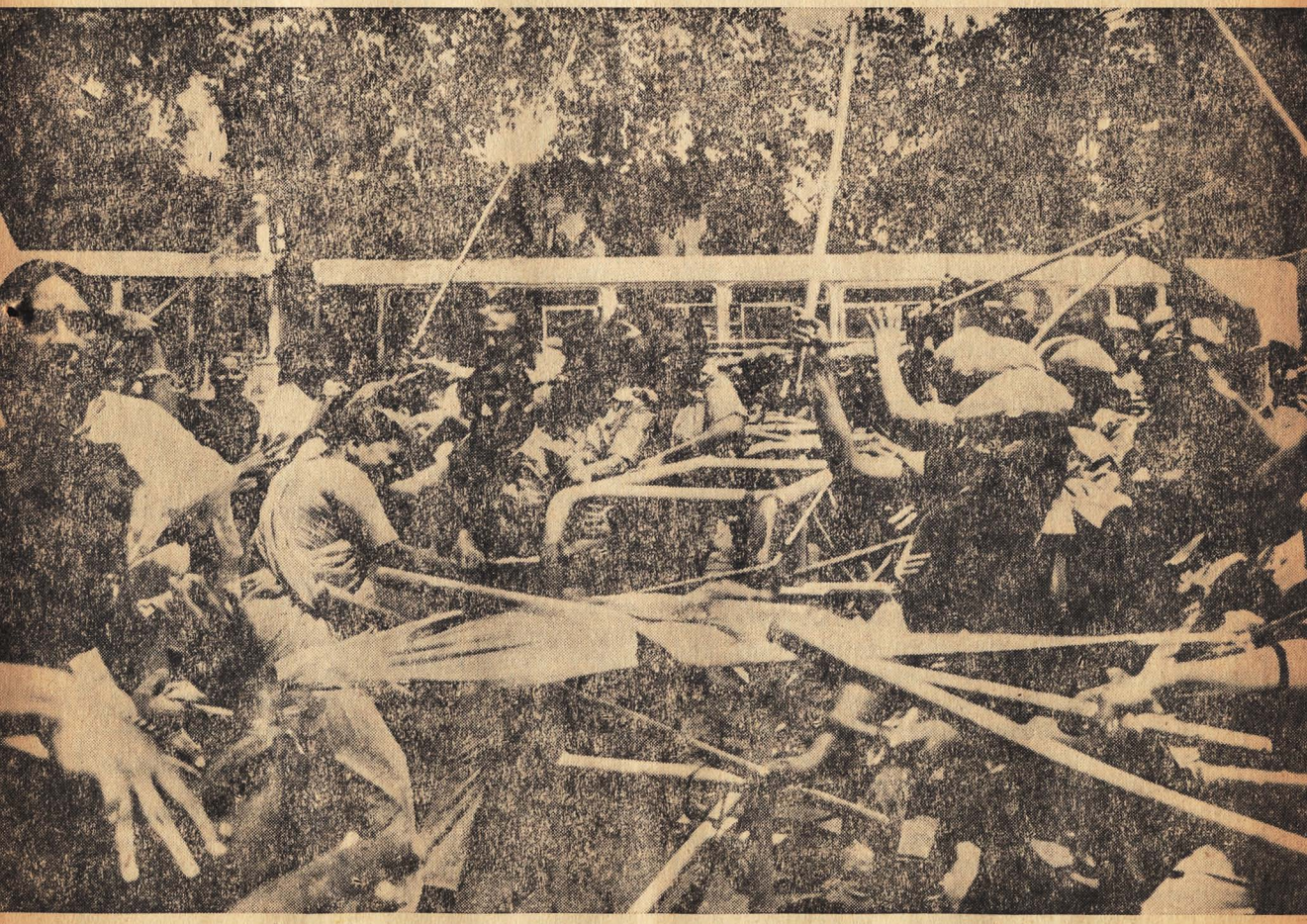
THE VOICE OF THE WORKING WOMAN

Vol. VII No. 5 September 1987 Price Re. 1



Women Demonstrating Against Rising Prices in Delhi on 26th August '87 attacked by Women CRP.
—*Courtesy* : **Times of India**

Sanyukta Mahila Morcha

Demands Resignation of the Rajiv Gandhi Government

THE just anger and terrible resentment among women against skyhigh prices of essential commodities in the market, culminated in breaking down the police cordon at Patel Chowk on 26th of August 1987, while women police looked on helplessly and later resorted to lathicharge on the women with babies and old women. More than 50 women were injured and taken to the hospital. Coms. Brinda Karat, and Indrani Mazumdar were also injured besides many others from AIDWA. The anger of the ordinary women was quite justified when the prices of edible oil, pulses, sugar vegetables etc. have gone up, and many items are not even available at the ration shops. The slogan raised was the "Government which does not provide food and shelter should resign".

Mahangai Virodhi Sanyukta Mahila Morcha consisting of 5 women's organisations was formed in the first week of August. The AIDWA, NFIW, Mahila Dakshata Samithi, YWCA and Joint Action Council along with All India Co-ordination Committee of Working Women (CITU) as well as women's wings of HMS AND HMKP also participated with women workers.

More than 1500 women under the huge banner of M.V.S.M.M. collected at Jantar Mantar Road. Women joined under their own flags and banners. More than 250 women from Delhi J.M.S. participated along with Co-ordination Committee of Working Women. Many women came with rolling pins and thalis, the symbol of resistance. No sooner it reached the Patel Chowk than they were stopped by women police. The cordons of nets and wooden barricades were already put up. Women determined to break through the cordon to submit the memorandum to Mr. Rajiv Gandhi on the demands dashed against the cordon. For a few minutes it appeared that a free fight was going on, women police attacking with their lathis at the demonstrators and women defending against them. Women who were near the cordon got beaten very badly. At last with push and pulls between hundreds of women and the women CRP, the barricades crashed down on the road. The male police took charge then. When AIDWA leaders were complaining earlier to intervene they told us "we can't intervene. They are CRP".

After the scuffle for about fifteen minutes or so, women demonstrators were dragged into waiting buses and taken to the Mandir Marg police station and released at 4 P.M.

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Working Women in India Sends Revolutionary Greetings.

On The Seventieth Anniversary of October Revolution.

Edited and published by Vimal Ranadive on behalf of the All-India Co-ordination Committee of Working Women-(CITU), from 6, Talkatora Road, N. Delhi-110001. Tel : 384071 and printed by her at Progressive Printers, C-52.53, DDA Sheds Industrials Estate, Okhla Phase-I, New Delhi-20

Without them we Would not have Won : Lenin

(Working Women of Russia joined the Movement against Tsarism from the Mid-nineties of the last century. Their struggle became part of the revolutionary movement culminating in the great October Socialist Revolution of 1917).

WOMAN and revolution, revolution and woman these two notions were inseparable in Russia from the middle of the 19th century. The entire revolutionary Russia knew and revered the names of Anna Korvin-Krukovskaya and Yelizaveta Kusheleva, members, of the Russian section of the First International and participants of the 1871 Paris Commune, Sofya Perovskaya, Russia's first woman executed in a political case, Vera Figner, sentenced to death for her involvement in the plan to assassinate Tsar Alemander II, and Vera Zasulich, the first Russian woman propagandist of Marxism.

Blooday Sunday 1905

From the mid-nineties of the last century, working women joined the movement against Tsarism. Their struggle became part of the proletarian revolutionary movement. They participated in mass strikes and demonstrations, Tsarism shot them down together with their husbands, brothers and fathers on the Bloody Sunday of January 9, 1905, they bandaged members of the workers' armed groups during the December 1905 Uprising, and their demonstration against hunger, the war and Tsarism sparked a mass movement which led to the fall of the autocracy in February 1917.

Lenin and the Bolsheviks paid unflagging attention to the women's revolutionary movement. They believed that a proletarian revolution could not win without the participation of women, who constituted half the population of Russia. At the First All Russia Congress of Working Women in November, 1918, Lenin noted: "The experience of all liberation movements has shown that the success of a revolution depends on how much the women take part in it." Therefore, even the First Programme of the Party, adopted at its Second Congress in 1903, demanded full legal and political equality for women, a ban on women's labour in industries harmful for women and the protection of mother and child. It was necessary to increase and develop the class consciousness of working women so that the semi-educated and submissive women proletarians could become courageous class fighters. Lenin said that the chief task of the working women's movement was to "get women to take part in socially productive labour, to liberate them from 'domestic slavery', to free them from their stupefying and humiliating subjugation to the eternal drudgery of the kitchen and the nursery."

"This struggle will be a long one, and it demands a radical reconstruction both of social technique and of morals. But it will end in the complete triumph of communism," Lenin declared.

Women Revolutionaries

There was an entire galaxy of brilliant Russian women Marxist revolutionaries at the beginning of the 20th century: Lenin's sisters Anna and Maria Ulyanov, Inessa Armand, Alexandra Kollontai, Yelena Stasova, Sofya Smidovich, Rozalia Zemlyachka, Maria Andreyeva and many, many others, who have for ever gone down in the history of the Russian revolution. Their courage, steadfastness and selflessness were boundless, neither prison, nor banishments, nor the long years of homesick emigration could break their will for struggle and their loyalty to the cause to which they devoted themselves.

Nadezhda Krupskaya (1869-1939) holds a special place among them. Lenin's wife, for 30 years she went with him hand in hand, and was his closest friend who helped him in his titanic effort to build the Party and the new state. Up to the October Revolution of 1917 she "...did what truly good deputies now do: relieving Lenin of all the current work and saving his time for "big things," a veteran of the revolution recalled later. After the triumph of the October Revolution Krupskaya devoted herself fully to the weakest and least protected segment of mankind-women and children. The

first steps of Soviet Government in the field of education, in the work of children's homes and in the combating of homelessness were associated with her:

The Working Woman

But that was only after the triumph of the October Revolution. At the start of the century, political education of women proletarians to make them active and conscious fighters for their rights and interests had still been a most crucial issue. The monthly Rabotnitsa (Working Woman), launched in 1914, was successfully tackling these tasks. It was the first Bolshevik mass publication dealing with the problems of the working women's movement. The magazine urged women proletarians to join the front ranks of fighters for the workers' cause, to oppose the war and the bourgeois Provisional Government, and to work for genuine social liberation and socialism.

When in July 1917 Pravda, the Bolshevik newspaper, was banned by the Provisional Government, Rabotnitsa remaind the only press organ of the Party. Its seventh number for 1917 published Lenin's article "Three Crises" which explained the situation in the country and the proletariat's task of carrying out the most decisive revolutionary measures against the bourgeoisie. The issue was printed late at night. When in the morning cadets (armed detachments loyal to the Provisional Government) burst into the printing shop to confiscate it, they found nothing: the women workers had taken all the copies away with them.

Working women Conduct Agitation

In mid-July 1917 there began a deep inner change in the minds of working women, as they became completely disillusioned with the Provisional Government. Working women came to believe in the Bolsheviks more and more, and this found reflection in their speeches at rallies and meetings. They distributed Bolshevik leaflets, conducted agitation and propaganda among soldiers in the barracks, organised working women's strikes and fought against speculation and sabotage by the bourgeoisie. Proletarian women greatly helped the Party in organising the work of its Sixth Congress, held from July 26 (August 8) to August 3 (16),1917. They fixed up the venue, assumed part of Congress-guarding duties, arranged accommodation for the delegates and provided them with food in hungry Petrograd. The Congress elected Alexandra Kollontai, imprisoned by the Provisional Government for her political activities, its honorary chairperson, along with Lenin, who was underground. It also elected them to the Central Committee of the RSDLP (B).

War On War

Working women played a special role in anti-war propaganda in soldiers' barracks, in the queues for food and at meetings and rallies. The bourgeois women's organisation of Countess Panina urged soldiers' wives to make their husbands continue the war. But at their meetings soldiers' wives passed resolutions of solidarity with the proletariat in opposing the bourgeois slogan "War to a victorious end." Anti-war rellies drew thousands of participants. Alexandra Kollontai recollected in her reminiscences that crowds of soldiers' Wives and working women had held meetings till night in city streets under the slogan "War on war". The women demanded an end to the war and the return of their sons and husbands from the front.

The war-produced famine resulted in a working women's shop and storehouse checkup drive against the food hoarders and speculators on a vast scale. During elections to the central city duma of petrograd in August 1917, working women, canvassing for the Bolsheviks, whose candidates included 25 women, penetrated into barracks and held meetings in countryards.

The participation in rallies, in shop and storehouse checkups, in the election campaign of the Bolsheviks and in district municipalities signified an increase in the socio-political activities of working women and was their first experience in the running of the state and management of production and public distribution.

A Resolution Passed at the meeting of Working Women

The growth and strengthening of the political consciousness of the working women of

Russia was reflected in resolutions of many mass meetings held in October 1917. The resolution adopted in a citywide rally held in Mocow on October 15 said: "We, the working women, believe that only a government controlled by the Soviets can get the nation out of its current awful plight by signing a democratic peace and thus saving the revolution. It is therefore necessary that the Soviet of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies should immediately start fulfilling their duty to the revolution by taking all power into their hands."

The armed uprising in Petrograd was carefully planned by the Bolshevik Party. On October 23 the Military Revolutionary Committee — the headquarters of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies for the armed uprising — placed specific combat tasks before Red Square dètachments and revolutionary army units. A special leaflet was put out calling upon working men and women to enlist in the Red Guards.

Women Take to Arms

On the recommendations fo factory committees working women joined the workers' armed detachments, learnt to shoot and prepared for street fighting. This proved that Lenin was right when in September 1916 he had said that proletarian women "will not look on passively as poorly armed or unarmed workers are shot down by the well-armed forces of the bourgeoisie. They will take to arms, as they did in 1871..."

A considerable part of working women participated in the October battles as members of medical detachments. On the night of the 23rd and all through the day of the 24th of October women from Lessner, Parviainen, Erikson and other factories were learning to do the bandaging and to render first aid to the wounded. Women's first-aid detachments also appeared at Skorokhod and Simens-Shukert and at a mill owned by Baranovsky. The first proletarian medical establishment was set up in Smolny during the armed uprising itself.

Working women also guarded Smolny where the headquarters of the uprising was based, saw that order was maintained in the streets, watched the factory gates and provided liaison between factories and district Party committees and Smolny. Specially assigned nurses and women communication workers were on duty throughout industry. As the telephone operators had deserted their post, women from Skorokhod and Simens-Galsh took over. The women from tram depots ensured the delivery of arms and ammunition to the insurgents on the night of uprising. Working women also set up street kitchens and canteens to provide the Red Guards with hot meals. All bourgeois charity groups abandoned work during the uprising in Petrograd, leaving the children's homes and orphanages without resources. Working women succeeded in organising voluntary aid to the children's homes.

After the triumph of the armed uprising, women together with the Red Guards did not leave their combat posts. Counter-revolution had not laid down arms, it was trying to regain power, and, therefore, they were vigilantly defending the revolution and building a new, socialist state. Quite a few got leading jobs in the state and Party machinery.

Madam Kollontai-first Woman Minister

Thus, the famous revolutionary Alexandra Kollontai became the first woman minister in the Soviet Government: People's Commissar for Social Insurance and Security. She was in charge of a cumbarsome mix of services for crippled soldiers and foundling hospitals, institutes for young noble ladies and lepers' colonies, almshouses for old women and orphanages, maternity homes and sanatoria for TB patients.

When by 9 a.m. Kollontai came to work, she would be basieged with scores of the most diverse grievances, right from the entrance to the corriders where mothers with children in their arms homeless orphans, old men and veterans — some armless, some legless or eyeless — formed a crowd. The mothers shouted with tears that their children were starving. "Why are there no orphanages?" "Why is there no milk?" The situation was really tragic. Compounding it all, winter was round the corner. That meant not only hunger, but also cold. ... Quick action was needed.

(Contd. on page 24)

Nurses Demand Houses

THE nurses of All India Institute of Medical Sciences have submitted a memorandum to the Director on the issue of Housing. For the last several years the management has shown callous apathy towards the housing problem of nurses and various other sections of employees in the hospital. There are more than 1000 nurses in the AIIMS. Hardly two or three houses were being allotted to them in an year. For the last two years this has also been completely stopped and no houses allotted. Also no set principles are followed in allotments, the namesake allotments also being made to curry favours on a few favourites and sychophants.

The nurses have also objected to the move by the management to take them out from the category of essential cadre. On account of the essential nature of their services, they were put in the category of essential workers alongwith the doctors and certain categories of technicians. The management has come out against this established norm the world over and has mooted the idea of removing the nursing staff from the essential category, in which if the management is allowed to succeed, the nurses will have to wait for 10-15 years for a single house to be allotted to any nurse in the AIIMS. This move by the management is a tactics to divide and rule, to divide different sections of the employees to cover their criminal apathy, towards building houses for the employees. When AIIMS imported equipments worth crores of rupees, which could not even be put to use, virtually no houses were built to accommodate the increasing staff strength.

Most of the nurses are getting a megre Rs. 450/—as house rent allowance. The prevailing rent in the capital for a two room accommodation is between Rs. 1200 to Rs. 1500. The consumer price index for housing for industrial workers (base 1960) has risen by 199 points from 495 to 693 points in Delhi in the past six months (January-July 1987). Compared to a year earlier, the housing index rose by 285 points, representing an increase of 69.8 per cent. In the two years between July 1985 and July 1987, the index jumped to 317 points, showing a 84.3 per cent rise (E. Times 4.9.87). Under the circumstances the nurses are forced to pay 60-70 per cent of their salary as house rent only, that too in places which are 30-40 kms away from the hospital. Compounding the miseries is the fact that they have to attend the evening and night shifts, ending and beginning at 9.30 PM. Therefore, the problem of housing has become a major issue agitating their minds.

Besides, the AIIMS is the only hospital in Delhi which could not give hostel accommodation to unmarried nurses. Around 60-70 nurses have been denied hostels for the last one year. Even when private hospitals with a 10 bed capacitv could provide this basic facility to the nurses, this premier health institution in the country has got the dubious distinction of denying this right.

Working Women in LIC Demand Creches for their Children

A Convention of all the women employees working under Coimbatore Division of LIC, organised by Insurance Corporation Employees' Union, Coimbatore Division (AIIEA), was held on July 26, 1987 at Vyasa Mandir Kalyana Mandapam, Coimbatore. More than 100 women employees working in various offices of LIC under Coimbatore Division attended the Convention. A presidium consisting of Com. S. Gomathi, Com. Ramathal-Jayaraman, Com. Lakshmi Sundararajan, Com. Kamalam and Com. G. Kamala conducted the proceedings.

Com. R. Krishnamachari, President of Insurance Corporation Employees' Union, explained the objectives of the Convention. Com. Mythili Sivaraman, Convener, Tamil Nadu Co-ordination Committee for Working Women, as the main speaker, explained in detail as to how women workers were being exploited both by the Managements and the Governments. Citing examples from Tamil Nadu, she said that compulsory transfer policy was being utilised even by the Government to victimise women workers forcing separation from their husbands. She ridiculed the statement of a Tamil Nadu minister that such

(*Contd. on page 12*)

Gwalior (M. P.)

3rd August Observed

THE call of NCC to all Trade Union for observing 3rd August had a good response in Gwalior with a large participation of Women Workers. From Foolbagh to Collectorate there were around 60 CITU Women Workers leading the procession. They were holding number of festoons in their hands giving slogans against Govt's anti-labour policies. After crossing four kilometers path at midday, sun showing its hot rays upon the demonstrating workers, they reached at the collectorate. The leaders of CITU, AITUC and BMS placed their demands before the workers and courted arrest afterwards. CITU women workers were enthusiastically shouting slogans against Government's anti-labour policy and against ID Act, and courted arrest with Coms. Parvathi Bai and Sandhya Shaily, leaders of Working Womens Co-ordination committee. The working women who participated in demonstration and arrests are mainly from J.C. Mill and Govt Distillary Workers. There were some women employees from State Govts P. H. E., P.W.D. department also. Janavadi Mahila Samiti also participated in the demonstrations. Com. Gayatri Saroj, State President of JMS, Com. Anagha Shinde, State Secretary of JMS alongwith Jayashri Sharma, Parwati Devi, Usha Raghuwanshi and Mohaniya Bai were present during demonstration and courted arrest. Around twenty five members of Janavadi Mahila Samiti demonstrated with their women workers.

Orissa

Woman Victim of Utter Negligence of Management

SUKUMATI KUJUS, a woman worker was crushed to death in the Orissa Cement Factory Beshik Plant on 4th of August '87 due to negligence of management of the factory. She was working along with others when 30-40 sacks, containing magnecite stones fell down on the workers at 10 AM in the morning when Sukumati and other two women injured seriously. Sukumati was removed to Rourkela Hospital in a serious condition. She unfortunately died on 6th August at 2 PM in the night. All the bones in the chest were broken by such a heavy load of stones fell on her. The anger of the workers was so much, that more than 5000 workers demonstrated and gheroed the management at night at 12 P.M. demanding an immediate inquiry and compensation to the bereieved. The leaders of CITU when arrived were not allowed to proceed to the place. Later, the leaders met the collector and the Rajganpur Municipal authorities and discussed the serious incident in the factory charging the manager as responsible for the incident. Later he agreed to pay Rs. 5000/- and the legal compensation entitled to her. This was the first time the management agreed to pay the compensation. Later in the night at 1 P.M. the workers went in a procession with the body of Sukumati's house, held a condolence meeting. Coms. Vishnu Mahanti, Vanmali Chupal, Bhimsen Saha, Giridhari Patnayak, and others spoke and attacked the management for their negligence.

Karnataka

Co-ordination Committee of Working Woman

AFTER the 6th Conference of CITU where a special session of Working Women was held in Bombay a meeting of Karnataka Working Women's Co-ordination Committee was held at Mysore on 29.7.1987. Coms. M.M. Rajamma, K. Padmavathi, Khursheed Begum, Yamuna, V. Salian and Saroja were present. Com. Madhava, secretary, Karnataka State Committee of CITU who is in charge of working women's Co-ordination Committee attended the meeting and guided the discussion.

According to the decision of CITU State Committee Coms. Rajamma, Padmavathi and Khursheed begum attended a meeting of working women on 26.7.87 at Krishnamrajapuram, Bangalore, arranged by CITU Unions there. 77 members, 76 from 6 factories and one from a Bank attended. A local Co-ordination Committee with Coms. Khursheed Begum and Gowramma as two conveners was constituted. It was also decided that Coms. Rajamma and Padmavathi and Khursheed Begum should visit Dharwar and Hubli on 15th and 16th August to address meetings of Working Women there.

A Charter of Demands Submitted by Child Welfare Council, Union Chandigarh

THE following charter was submitted by the Child Welfare Council Balsivikas Union, Chandigarh to Mrs. Satwant Reddy, Secretary, Finance U.T. Chandigarh by Brahm Puri, President of the Union.

Wages and service conditions of the Balsevikas and Ayas working in the Creches in the U.T. Chandigarh

With due respect we beg to draw your kind attention to the following sub-mission for your favourable and sympathetic consideration.

1. That there are about 65 creaches run and managed by the Indian Council of Child welfare (hereafter called the council) with its Head quarters at Bal Bhavan, Sector 23-A, Chandigarh.

2. The above council prior to reorganisation of the states and creation of U.T. Chandigarh in Nov. 1966 was known in the name and style of Punjab State Council for Child welfare.

3. That the service conditions of the Balsevikas appointed by the said council have been governed by the pay scales with allowances as applicable to Nursery School Teachers. It may be noted that U.T. Govt. employees pay scales and allowances till date are at par with Punjab Govt. employees and are about to be revised at par with Central Govt. employees.

4. That the Balsevikas are entitled to revision of pay scales and Dearness allowance from time to time as are being done in the case other U.T. Employees. Unfortunately the Bal Sevika engaged in the creches situated in the U.T. Chandigarh have not been paid the benefit of D.A. revision as applicable to Punjab Bal sevika since 1981. They therefore continue to suffer wage loss for about seven years while the prices are spiralling sky high with each passing week and month.

5. Similarly the said revision of D.A. has not been made applicable to other staff members working under the aforesaid council.

6. That the Ayas engaged by the Council for the Creches are paid a paltry amount between Rs. 125/- and Rs. 200/-. Their duty hours are from 8.15 A.M. to 5.45 P.M. daily and nature of duties involve looking after the childrn, cleaning and washing of children's cloth. It may be further mentioned that they are also to attend to kitchen for feeding the children. Hence their duties are very ardous. It is regretable that the council does not even pay the minimum wages as fixed by the U.T. Govt. from time to time.

7. That the said council manages the affairs of the creches with the budgetary provision made by the Govt. of U.T. Chandigarh. The accommodations are also provided by the Govt. Besides that the creches change fees from the parents of the Children also.

8. That the conditions of the part time teachers (with tour duties) are worse. Their wages are not raised and thus paid a very meagre salary.

9. That it is most unfortunate that the council inspite of being an organisation managed with the finances provided by the U.T. Govt. on 100 per cent basis have been acting arbitrarily in the matters of wages and other service conditions and continuously been keeping the wages of the employees in certain cases below the poverty line.

10. That the City compensatory allowance has also not been released with effect from the date from which it was made applicable to U.T. Govt. employees.

11. That the wages of the U.T. Govt. Employees are about to be revised on implementing the Central Govt. fourth pay commission report. It is therefore prayed that the CCA and D.A. that fell due from time to

(*Contd. on page 12*)

Women Beedi Workers exploited by Unfair Practices

(The following memorandum was submitted by the Secretary M. Rajangam, Dist. Beedi Workers' Union (CITU), Tenkasi Taluk, Tamilnadu to the Minister of Labour, Govt of India, New Delhi. The Secretary CITU, Com. Ganguly has requested to the Chief Provident Fund Commissioner to have an inquiry into the mattar. —Editor)

Pitiable Working conditions of Beedi Workers — Women workers exploited by illegal and Unfair Labour Practices-Intervention requested.

I bring to your kind attention the following injustice done to the Beedi workers by the tycoons of Beedi Manufacturers for intervention and appropriate actions.

Thousands and thousands and its multiples of Beedi Workers are employed in the Beedi Industry in Tirunelveli District. Labour Laws and Social Legislations are blatantly violated by the big monopolies of Beedi Industry with the connivance of Enforcing Authorities. Most of the legitimate benefits flowing from Social and Benevolent legislations do not reach the workers in view of the illegal activities and malpractices adopted by the manufacturers of Beedi Industry. In Tirunelveli Dist., the Beedi Industry is run and controlled by the following three tycoons only, under various illegal means. Beedi manufacturing is the monopoly of the following three owners : 1. Mangalore Ganesh Beedi Workers, Tirunelveli-5. 2. 30 Number Photo Beedi & Co., Tirunelveli-6, 3. Sadhu Beedi Co., Tirunelveli-5.

Mangalore Ganesh Beedi Works management is engaging nearly one lakh workers in nearby 300 villages. 30 Number Photo Beedi & Co. is engaging nearly 15 thousands workers in about 75 villages. And the Sadhu Beedi Co. is engaging nearly 5000 workers in about 30 villages. I am giving hereunder certain type of exploitations of the Beedi Workers by the money — vested Beedi owners referred to above.

Maintenance of Bogus Registers — Women Workers are named as Men Workers:

Thousands and thousands of women workers are mustered not in their own name but in the name of their brother, father and husband. This illegal action is indiscriminately done by these three managements with utter disregard to Labour Laws. All the registers, muster rolls, payment of wages registers, leave registers, Bonus payment register, pass-books, wage slips etc etc bear the name of the brother, father or husband of the women employees instead of her own name. Consequently, the Beedi managements escape from the Maternity Benefit Act. Being fully aware of their illegal activities, the Central Excise officials, in collusion with the managements, indirectly encourage this as if they are not aware of such illegal activities.

Implementation of Provident Fund Act

The implementation of Social Legislation, The Employees' Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1952 has a history of illegality and Unfair Labour Practices. On behalf of Mangalore Ganesh Beedi Management, Murug Home Industries—the main Contractor, used to deduct PF contribution from about 66 thousand workers, out of the total work force of one lakh workers. The pitiable thing in the administration of P.F. ACT is that the PF Account is maintained in the name of brother, husband or father of the working women and not in the name of the women employees. Consequently on this malpractice, whenever the so-called brother, husband or father died, the women employees are denied employment by the manager. Added to this, the so-called death benefit is shared by all the legal heirs of the deceased person while the woman employee gets almost nothing or meagre amount as her share. The Regional Provident Fund Commissioner, Madurai and the concerned PF Inspectors at Tirunelveli all were represented on this unfair labour practices. They are in collusion with the management and do nothing in this connection.

These types of illegal activities are also done by the other Beedi Manufacturers. 'Dhamodara', the benami owner and contractor of 30 Number Photo Beedi Co., refused to deduct PF contribution on the plea that their company is new one. Everybody knows that the 30 Number Photo Beedi Co., has 50 years existence both in Karnataka and in Tamilnadu. It is really surprising how the PF Authorities, knowing fully well of the benami character, fail to insist PF deduction.

Moreover, the PF slips are not at all given to the workers for the last 8 years. It is not known whether the PF money is remitted to the PF Authorities or swindled by the management. Many representations to the RPF Commissioner & PF Inspector did not yield any result. Thus the interest of the Beedi Workers is at stake in the hands of Banami contractors and Provident Fund Authorities.

Role of Labour Department in Enforcing the Labour Acts to Beedi Workers

The Government has appointed an Inspector of Labour with District level jurisdiction and Deputy Inspector and Asst. Inspector of Labour at Taluk level as Enforcing Officers under the provisions of Beedi and Cigar Employees Act 1966. Though these officials of labour Department are well aware of the malpractices of Beedi employers i.e., 'women being converted to men' in the registers, they hesitate to or do not take any action to stop this malpractices for obvious reasons. Many representations to these Labour Department Officials did not awake them to stop this malpractices of Beedi Employers. Thus the Enforcement Officials, entrusted with the duty of Enforcement are in collusion with the Beedi-Owners.

Illegal Contract Labour System

The Mangalore Ganesh Beedi Management indirectly employed nearly the lakh women labourers through the main contractor' "Muruga Home Industries". The Muruga Home Industries enages nearly 300 sub-constractors to get the finished product of Beedi. Since the women workers are sub-divided by various contractors (300 in number), the Maternity Benefits and benefits flowing from Beedi & Cigar Employees Act are denied to them. Should be nearly one lakh workers employed by various contractors be treated as workers of Mangalore Ganesh Beedi, the Beedi workers will be entitled to various benefits of Social Legislations. All the Beedi Workers are doing work of perennial nature throughout the year. The intermediary called 'contractors' and 'sub-contractors' are all unwarranted and are engaged with the sole purpose of depriving the legal benefit available to the workers. All the contractors & sub-contractors engaged by the Mangalore Ganesh Beedi Works are illegal.

Many representations have been made to abolish this illegal and unethical Contract Labour System existing in the Beedi Industry to the Labour Department of Government of Tamilnadu. The Labour Department is unconcerned with this issue for obvious reasons.

These are the highly illegal activities of the Beedi Owners. Most of the Work-force in the Beedi Industry, being women especially of younger women, their social status prohibit them from organising for struggles and also of their fear mentality. If at all some women are organised and holding the banner of the union against the injustice of Beedi Owners, they are dismissed or many times threatened for their livelihood. Thus the women labourers are deprived of their legal rights like Maternity Benefit, Bonus etc etc. The Supreme Court has already intervened in Mangalore Ganesh Beedi Works & other Vs-Union of India (1974-I-LLJ-367) and disapproved the contractors as intermediary between the workmen and the Beedi Employer.

The Executive of Wing of the 'State Apparatus' is in complete collusion with the money vested employers who are exploiting the poor women workers in Beedi Industry. Allowing such illegalities or malpractices is against the spirit of our Coustitution aiming to achieve Socialism.

It is therefore prayed that this Honourable Authority may be pleased to intervene in this very sorry state of affairs and undo the malpractices/illegalities resorted to by the Beedi Manufacturers referred to above.

I trust, this representation will receive the due consideration which it deems fit and render justice.

I request you to let me know the action taken on this representation.

Magnificient Strike of University and College Teachers

NINA RAO

THERE are many opinions regarding the teachers being on strike, all over the country. Yet nobody other than Teacher organisations spoken about the New Education Policy and now it seeks to undermine the broad base of our education system as well as its democratic structure.

In April, when University and College teachers decided to call off the Examination Boycott, in the interest of their students, they gave the Government ample time and warning, with AIFUCTO giving a call for a nation-wide indefinite strike from August 4th. This was not an adventurist action, since the whole of 1986 had been a preparation for what was expected of the Mehrotra Committee set up by the U.G.C. as a parallel to the 4th Pay Commission. The Government delayed, as far as possible, making public the recommendations of the Committee, since teachers organisations all over India has already voiced their opposition to the elitist character of the NEP and its anti-teacher plant.

Over the years, the educational system was becoming increasingly unwieldly and inefficient, as the demand for education increased but financing of educational facilities remained well below world standards and stagnated, as working conditions deteriorated, teachers began to organise and became a united and democratic force in higher education. It was the considered opinion of academics of this generation that the best talent in the country was not being attracted to the Universities because of poor research facilities, poor salaries, bad working conditions and no promotional avenues. The Teachers movement from the late 60's concentrated on these issues. In response, government spokesmen, in their bureaucratic manner, treated the viewpoint of the teachers with contempt and began to raise the bogies of evaluation assessment and merit, since they claimed that teachers don't work and must be made accountable. In this way, the Government has consistently adopted an anti-teacher stand, and the Delhi University merit promotion scheme was also worked out by the High Court which ruled in favour of the teachers!

Since the NEP, it has been evident that (a) the Government policy can not neutralise the price-rise (b) is not directed towards re-inforcing university autonomy and standards (c) and is aimed at creating islands of privatisation (assumed to enforce better standards in education) to cater to the need for a limited member of professionals to manage the imported technology areas that are supposed to speed us on to modernisation. The Mehrotra Committee, on the other hand seeks to divide the unifed teachers movement through a proliferation of grades (up from 3 to 9) and to increase the disparities between Central and State Universities, where in some cases, even the 1973 recommendations have not been implemented.

Turning a deaf ear to the just demands of the teaching community, the Government adoped the NEP via its brute majority on Parliament, and ignored the positive aspects of the Mehrotra Committee and issued orders on June 17th for the implementation of its new Scheme, in appropriately titled pay revision. In the face of this stubborn and intransigent attitude teachers had no-option but to resort to struggle.

From August 4th, Universities and Colleges have not functioned normally. Women College and University teachers have been in the forefront, participating in all the mass actions. It is mainly in the Women's Colleges that Staff Meetings are being regularly held twice a week, to discuss issues raised by the strike and the call to intensify the strike has been strongly supported by them. At the Rally on August 19th, women teachers from all over the country participated in large numbers. From Kurukshetra, 36 of the 37 women teachers were present in Delhi. Punjab

also brought a large contingent of women, along with West Bengal and Maharashtra Delhi University women lecturers were of course full of a spirit of militancy and enthusiasm. As was expected, the very next day, the Delhi University Vice-Chancellor and the U.G.C. Chairman, issued letters to college principals to implement the "No work, no pay" principle, by passing the democratic bodies of the University, despite the fact that the Executive Council has only 2 teacher members and the Academic Council is heavily weighted with administrative nominees.

University teachers have rightly condemned such tactics by the Vice-Chancellor, and women teachers have expressed great unity and solidarity with the leadership of the struggle. They can now assess their strength after the experience of the last strike. They also understand that such wage-cuts are illegal. They have maintained close touch with their students, and are volunteering in large numbers in the signature campaign to mobilise public opinion and support as well as the court arrest programmes planned for 31st August 1st and 5th September.

The militancy of the teachers, and particularly women, are an indication of the growing awareness that this indefinite strike is in defence of education and the democratic rights of teachers, not merely their economic gains.
3.9.87

Condemn Forcible Verginity Test for Unmarried Nurses

VIMAL RANADIVE, Secretary, All India Co-ordination Committee of Working Women and Brinda Karat, Joint Secretary, All India Democratic Women's Association have issued the following Joint Statement to the Press:

The reported virginity tests forcibly conducted on unmarried nurses at a Govt. Hospital in Raipur is an example of the utterly barbaric behaviour of the Govt. towards working women. Even though such tests have nothing to do with the service rules of nurses or any other section of working women that matter, the Superintendent of the hospital concerned illegally made the test a condition for employment.

Some time ago when Indian women immigrants to Britain were forced to undergo similar tests at Heathrow Airport and there was a public furore against it, the Govt. of India was forced to lodge a protest with the British Govt. But now the Govt. itself is permitting such tests in its own institutions.

The All India Democratic Women's Association and the All India Co-ordination Committee of Working Women strongly condemn the tests. We demand immediate dismissal from serive of the Superintendent concerned.

(*Continued from page 8*)

time be ordered to be released to the Balsevikas and other staff member and the wages of the Ayas be increased to bring them at par with the attendents in Govt. offices, the wages of the part time teachers (Balsevikas) also be increased with the grant of the DA revision. It is further prayed that while revising wages and other service conditions the implementation of the fourth pay commission report kindly be kept in view and the employees engaged by the council are insured due benefit thereof.

(*Contd. from page 6*)

separation would promote "family planning". She condemned the attitude of a private college management in Coimbatore who have issued a circular to its employees suggesting confinement only during summer vacation so that there would not be any necessity of granting maternity leave! She called upon the women employees to take active interest in the trade union activities and to take up leadership in the same.

Twelve women employees took part in the deliberations. Summing up the deliberations Com. N.M. Sundaram, Joint Secretary, All India Insurance Employees' Association assured the participants that the trade union would fully protect their interest and take care of their special problem. He wanted them to take active part in the trade union activities.

Women Demand Drinking Water

Mythily Shivraman

THE date was Tuesday, March 31. The scene was striking. On that oppressively hot day, thousands of women, clad in a simple but colourful uniform-white saree and red blouse-braved the scorching sun even as the tar of the road melted underneath their bare feet, and walked a good four km. from the Central Station to Fort St. George, the seat of the Tamil Nadu Government and the place where the Legislative Assembly meets. The traffic on the through which the procession wound its way stood still. The passers-by stopped in their tracks at the sight of so many thousands of women in uniform, holding placards and waving banners. These were activists and members of the All India Democratic Women's Association. who, responding to the call of the Tamil Nadu unit of the AIDWA, had gathered in Madras for a massive rally and March on the State Legislature to highlight a number of urgent issues facing the people of the State in general and women in particular.

Heading the procession were Papa Umanath, General Secretary of the State AIDWA unit, and Mythily Sivaraman, its Working President.

Besides carrying hundred of placards which conveyed crisply the anger and the demands of the people, the processionists had mounted three large-sized cartoons: one depicted dowry death, with the Government and the police looking away; another was on price rise; the third showed women stopping traffic and saying, "No buses can run without water being brought here first".

Pressing Demands

These women were drawing the attention of the Government to the pressing problems of the people. Drinking water has become extremely scare. The situation is especially serious in the city of Madras where despite the experience of severe water scarcity four years ago, no worthwhile efforts has been made to find a long term solution yet. The AIDWA rally demanded that. as one immediate measure of interim relief, water from Krishna be brought by rail and by military wagons.

The other demands raised by the rally were-justice for slum dwellers; provision of roads, electricity, water, proper drainage system and public toilet facilities for the sub-urban poor of Madras metropolis; off-season employment for women farm workers through State run small industry; strict implementation of the Minimum Wages Act and Equal Remuneration Act; welfare measures for the old, the handicapped and widows; provision of free uniforms, books and notebooks, as well as an allowance for girls from rural households up to the tenth standard, etc.

As these militant women raised powerful slogans throughout their March, hundreds upon hundreds of people stood on both sides of the streets through which the procession went, and watched the procession go by, listening keenly to the slogans, which naturally struck a responsive chord, since they dealt with the very problems that were being encountered daily. They were impressed, too, by the discipline with which these women marched, and the militant dignity with which they carried themselves.

A noteworthy feature of the rally was the support action organised by fraternal mass organisations such as DYFI, CITU and DREU. At several points en route, groups of comrades from these organisations had assembled with their own banners, and raised slogans greeting the rally. It was a fine show of fraternal solidarity.

A delegation of AIDWA leaders presented a memorandum to the Chief Minister.

Women and Work-World Congress of Women

THE Commission was conducted over two and a half days and attended by 400 delegates from 85 countries, representing international, national and regional organizations.

The introductory remarks were by Convener Teresa Marsland of the United Kingdom who indicated that the purpose of the Commission was to review the position of women in the work force worldwide, to learn of the achievements and determine the needs of the future.

The discussions were open and frank and conducted in an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding. 120 speakers from 85 countries allowed the delegates to gain a better understanding of the situation and problems of the many countries of the world.

The overwhelming desire for world peace was strongly evident as was the feeling that an atmosphere of peace, disarmament and world cooperation was required for true advancement in the status of women. Delegates pointed to the close links between the struggle for women's right to work and the struggle for self-determination and national independence, against dictatorial regimes, colonial domination, apartheid, racism and imperialism. They denounced the arms race as a sheer waste of precious resources that could be better used to meet the basic needs of humankind and to overcome many of the social problems that are inhibiting women in their quest for equality of opportunity and economic independence.

Many delegates spoke of laws introduced in their country aimed at abolishing obstacles against the full and equal participation of women in all spheres of society. However time and again delegates said these laws were not being carried out in practice. Women still have many attitudinal barriers to overcome in their fight for equality. These barriers are denying many women the fundamental right to participate in all sectors of the community according to their individual abilities and preference.

Delegates indicates that in the industrialised market economy countries where unemployment has been rising, women's jobs have suffered dramatically and social hardships among women have increased.

This is because many women are still being streamed automatically into traditionally female areas of unemployment. This work is often essential to the operation of the economy but is not always recognised as such. The opportunities for women to gain promotion and higher pay in these traditional areas of employment are greatly restricted and the wages and conditions generally inferior.

Delegates from developing countries indicated that the majority of women live and work in rural areas where their contribution to the economy of the country, through the production of food, is immense. However this work is not properly recognised. They live and work under appalling conditions and in many instances do not receive monatory payment for their labour. Absence of land reforms and proper agricultural development make the burden on rural women more and more intense. The problem of illiteracy and lack of skills continue to compound these problems.

The recognition of the need to overcome massive foreign debt was expressed by women from Latin American countries. They stressed that unless these problems are overcome, women had little chance to achieve their democratic rights. There was a strong commitment from these women to work together and find a common language with their governments to liquidate foreign debts.

Delegates from planned economy countries emphasised the fact that economic equality was one of the most important factors in achieving genuine equality and that women in these countries were given the right of education and training in order to obtain a profession or trade. Their practical measures implemented to establish equality in practice.

Delegates expressed concern that in some countries where maternity leave provisions apply they still encounter considerable prejudice regarding the inter-action between

family and work responsibilities. The loss of training and promotional opportunities during periods of absence from the workforce during child bearing and rearing was a matter of concern to delegates. Other women told of their continuing struggles to have maternity recognised as a social function of society. It was strongly felt by delegate that only by developing a society where men and women share family responsibilities equally and where the work related skills of domestic and parent rights are recognised by society can the prejudices against women be broken down. The delegates questioned why normal life-related responsibilities only come under scrutiny on women's job commitments.

The issue of access to suitable child care was raised by delegates from industrial market economy countries and developing countries. Many women seeking to participate in the workforce simply do not have childcare available to them. In other countries there are inadequate facilities giving women little choice but to use unsatisfactory care.

Delegates frequently gave statistics which showed that women's participation in the labour force continues to increase. Much of this increase releases to part time employment. Some participants considered part time employment as hidden unemployment and underemployment, whilst other speakers defended it as a means of allowing women to participate in productive work. The lack of job security, opportunities for promotion and other social and employment-related benefits concern in regard to part time employment.

The role of women in trade unions was very frequently discussed, as was the need for women to recognise the importance of belonging to and participating in the work of trade unions. Again concern was expressed that women's participation seems to be at the lower levels of trade unionism and little, or in some instances no, encouragement or training is given to women to advance to decision-making roles. Some delegates spoke of pressure from Governments against involvement in unions. The need for greater cooperation between the women's movement and trade unions was stressed in order to achieve unity of strength amongst women.

The fight for equal pay for work of equal value continues in many countries, as it is apparent that traditional stereo-typing rather than work value and content is still being used in the determination of wage and salary level.

Problems faced by outworkers in both developed and developing countries were raised. It was pointed out that most of these workers are women. They encounter major disadvantages in terms and conditions of employment, health and safety, Often they have little choice but to undertake this type of work because of family responsibilities, language or education deficiencies.

The use of high technology for raising profits, in the absence of the guaranteed right of work and lack of training in new skills, is increasing the threat to women's employment as well as creating a range of health problems. The participants emphasised that the potential of high technology for eqnalizing opportunities for women was being perverted.

The ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women is of paramount importance as we work towards the year 2000.

The WIDF has a major role to play in uniting women to campaign for equality and social justice.

Women also have a part to play in their respective countries to campaign for a better life.

Peace is the major factor to our future development and we must ensure as women that we fight to defend peace and create a world of justice, equality and full emancipation.

South Africa will be Free Soon — World Congress of Women

Bibha Ghosh Goswami

2884 delegates from 1005 organisations (international as well as regional) and from 154 countries deliberated in eight commissions, three topic centres, twentyfive workshops and round tables and innumerable bilateral exchanges. There were meetings of solidarity with women of South Africa, women of the Middle East and with women of Central and Latin America.

Here is a short report of the meeting of solidarity with women of South Africa held on June 23, between 21.00 and 24 00 hours in Hotel 'Tourist' Hall No. I.

In the centre of stage there was a photo of Winnie Mandela. On the stage there were Freda Brown, Mrs Adeliade Tambo, Mrs Ali Mugabe and other dignitaries.

Freda Brown, President, W.I.D.F. introduced Madam Tambo to the gathering. The hall was full with delegates, white and coloured. Madam Tambo is the illustrious wife of President Tambo, (President, ANC) and a good friend of Winnie Mandella. She was given the Award of Winnie Mandella by Freda Brown to the delight and hearty applause of the audience. Madam Tambo spoke about Winny Mandella, about how they had been together during their student days at the hostel of the Helping Hand club; how she had introduced Nelson Mandella to Winny; how Winny had tried to send her message to the Congress but unfortunately the messenger could not reach in time. She said the award was for all the fighting women of South Africa. She appealed to everybody to do something to save Tereze Ramashomola — the first woman Pretoria has sentenced to death. She is waiting in the deuth-cell. She (Tambo) asked everyone to send telegrams, collect signatures, pressurise each Govt. to do whatever possible to save Tereza. She said today South Africa is the victim, tomorrow there will be others — the fight against Apartheid is everyone's fight. She said Pretoria knows that it cannot suppress ANC. They therefore jail the leaders and kill the children. School children of 6/8/10 years are arrested, tortured, electric-shocked-killed. Despite UN declaration of 1959 South Africa has not yet got its Motherland. She saluted Namibia of Swapo; Nicaraguan, Afghan, Front-line states', Palestinian sisters; saluted all the women fighting against racism all over the world.

PENDUKENI KAULINGE, who lost both her parents in April 1981 as a result of Balkanisatian, spoke as SWAPO representative. She said under Kuftuza raping of young and elder women is everyday thing. They conceal atrocity under the well-calculated strategy of news black-out and disinformation. She said the Federal Republic of Germany is writing the constitution for the puppet Govt installed in Namibia in 1985. They are trying to make Kalahari desert a nuclear waste dumping ground. She demanded Economic Blocade against the unlawful S.A. regime. She thanked Angola, Congo, Frontline states and thanked W.I.D.F. and all the delegates. There was tumultous applause and somebody began the song which everyone joined in:

SWAPO is determined to free Namibia. Unite, to get your freedom now. Our plan is determined to free Namibia. Unite, unite, to get your freedom now.

Then there was a present from the delegation to Winnie Mandella and Freda Brown appealed for contribution to the African Fund.

Mrs. Ali Mugabe (Zimbabwe) thanked Gorbachov on behalf of the women of Zimbabwe and expressed solidarity. She said if this Congress was to be held in South Africa, all the participants would by now be arrested if not shot. She gave a vivid description of the inhuman torture unleashed on the

(*Contd. on page 17*)

The Gallant Fediaee Sheyda Became Martyr

THE news of the martyrdom of people's Fediaee Comrade Behzades Tehranee, was officially declared in Kar organ of the Central Committee of people's Fedaian (majority). The Gallant woman Fedaien Sheyda Benzadee, was arrested last summer, alongwith her husband and child in Tehran. After the arrest, she was cruelly tortured and killed by the Khomeinie regime executioners. Kar gives a biography of this Martyr comrade, Comrade Sheyda Behzadee, she was a distinguished cader of our organisations, a member of city council and chairman of the women's city, and council of Esfahan. She was born in Esfahan twenty eight years ago, and after finishing her matriculation, she joined the medical college of Esfahan University.

Very soon she turned into one of the active members of the student movement. Soon after that, she became a supporter of our organisation, and used all her Revolutionary might, and will into a concentrated effort of active and efficient work of our organisation.

During the stormy days of the Revolution, she was known as one of the active participants and organiser of the people's movement. She joined our organisation after the Revolution.

Comrade Sheyda, was known well among her fellow comrades, for tolerance. Behind her kind and peace-loving face there lay a passionate spirit for struggle. Sheyda was enthusiastic, humble with characteristic perseverance and an admirable personality. During the revolutionary stages of our organisation she always played a creative and progressive role.

From February 1982 onwards, she was tracked alongwith her fellow comrades. The security men of the Regime knew her well and were intending to arrest her. Under such circumstances, alongwith her duties, she actively participated in a secret nucleus, and helped alongside her husband in creating new possibilities far our organisation.

Comrade Sheyda was arrested last August, alongwith her husband and child in Tehran, and was severely tortured. Now she thought of only one thing, "resistance". Her body has turned into several bruises, as a result of brutal lashing; but she didn't say anything, resulting into the executioners vengence. She lost her life for the sake of the people, after a month of resistance to the executioners.

The epic of her resistance, is an out come of her faith to the aspirations of working class, her love for Socialism, and her awareness of the hard struggle with the enemy.

The situation of women in Iran is not only bad but is getting worse day by day, making their struggle harder. The life and heroic struggle of Sheyda, a dedicated revolutionary wife is a great example for all Fedie women, who are struggling under the constant threat of prosecution and suppression in Iran. Her memory will be ever-lasting and her name will inspire all Fedians who are struggling against oppression and exploitation.

(*Contd. on page 16*)

South African people and said it saddens her to think of the children whom society is feeding prejudice. South Africa is doing just that. It is a cancer and this cancee has to be removed by combined effort. She said they are landlocked and their lifeline of resources through Mozambiqne is often tried to be blocked. She asked with emotion — "Are we to starve to death? Are you going to allow that? Help us — help us fight. We are prepared to suffer more — so that the future is free of sufferings." She said in their country they have not chased the whites away. Nobody can kill an ideal. South Africa's day has come. South Africa will be free and all our suffering sisters and Winnie Mandella will be with us next time. They shall be free they shall be free.

The atmosphere was charged with emotion the hall rocked with slogans — everybody was standing up and singing "We shall overcome" hand in hand. And then Elsey Watson, from Britain, winded up the speeches saying: Please don't think that the British govt represents the British people. We believe your victory is near. Victory will be yours and power to the people".

AIDWA Delegation Visits China

Vimala Ranadive

THE AIDWA was the first women's delegation to visit People's Republic of China from 4th to 14th of August 1987. Madam Quan Minguin, the Director, International Liaison Dept. of All China Women's Federation, Madam Han Xuezhi, Chief, Asia Section Liaison Department, ACMF, Secretary Wang Shang Shu and others were there at the airport to receive us. Madam Quan attended the 2nd Conference of AIDWA held at Trivandrum. We all knew her very well. While we were being introduced to each other in a VIP room, all of us became close friends within minutes. The Asian neighbours, since many years perhaps made us close friends. After fixing the programme for Beijing, Damial, Shangha and Canton we were taken to the hotel.

Within 12 days of our tour, the ACWF made maximum efforts to show us the various aspects of Chinese life, what the PRC was able to achieve during last 35 years after the revolution, in the development of industry and agriculture health and child-welfare, education and cultural field. While watching keenly the tremendous progress China has made despite some of the mistakes like "cultural revolution" — which they tried to explain to us — every member of our delegation could not resist the comparison between India and China which became independent by 1947-49. They showed us many things such as the Great Wall, Mao Tse Tung Musoleum, Worker's Palace and so many things.

Visit to Factories

Our delegation visited many factories where women workers were the major force. A Knitwear factory in Beijing is supposed to be No. 1 factory which was set up in 1952. Actual production began in 1952 with 3000 workers, 53 per cent being women. Out of the production of 12 thousand millions, most of the knitwear is exported to 32 countries including USA, Canada, Australia, Japan and so on. It was reported to us that there are 3 shifts, and women too attend the 3rd shift. When asked whether it was difficult for them, they reported that there was a Kindergarten attached to the factory with 180 children from 1 to 6 years of age with 30 teachers.

Another factory we visited was knives and scissor. It was interesting to watch how men and women perform the delicate work of every part of the knife, nail-cutter and all sort of instruments into one! This factory was set up in 1961 with only 100 workers. Now out of 560 workers, 376 are women. There are 25 working groups, 2 store rooms, creche etc. The items which looks magnificient and all of us purchased something or other — is exported to 46 countries. Production in 1986 was of 5.7 million Yuan with an increase in profit to 1.37 million yuan over the previous year. This factory is run soley on collective ownership basis. All workers are shareholders, property belongs to the workers. Some portion of profit goes to the State.

Many questions were raised from us when we sat for discussion, at various places. Madam-Xoyan Fan, Chairman of Trade Union factory of Knitwear and Madam Chairman of T.U. Committee of Knives Factory Zyin Shan and other members of Party Committees of the factories were also present. The questions were whether there was a piece rate system in the factories and what are the wages, whether there was still discrimination in promotion, on what basis the promotions are made, whether the compensation was paid when the accidents take place and on what basis, and the role of trade union committees and the relation between the Party Committees and Trade Union committees. The question also was raised about the age of retirement and the benefit.

The answers were given patiently and convincing. It was also informed to the members that in our country working conditions are quite different, wages were low and women were discriminated against and retrenched. They heard us and answered every question.

The average salary of the worker for 8 hours is from 80 to 90 yuan. But they can work as piece workers, and earn much more. This they call 'Bonus'. Everywhere we found

this system of bonus. That gives the factory more production for export and domestic use. Productivity has increased considerably. When asked about the maternity benefit, we were told that for one child mother, it is 6 months, and for 2-3 children, women get 56 days. As it was informed to us repeatedly by the leaders the question of population is very serious in the country and the Govt is encouraging one child family policy. Incentives are given to women who have one child. Retirement age for women is 50 to 55 while for men it is 60. After retirement the workers get 70 per cent of wages, free medical aid and other facilities. What happens if any worker gets into accident? The answer was "whose responsibility it was", the worker or the management? If the worker is responsible for the accident "he will not get compensation, but otherwise he will get compensation, free medical aid and leave". Suppose there is no agreement on the questlon "yes, a team of investigation from workers and management will be set up and result will be declared soon" Women members of the Factory committees were present we inquired whether any discrimination of any sort was there? Equal wage question does not arise, most of them were women, supervisors, directors, committee members and so on. Sometimes dispute such as 'maternity benefit' does arise. There is a provision for abortion. After abortion what was her position? There was a dispute like this in the Knitwear factory. The factory committee had to intervene and she got the Maternity benefit and leave. The implementation of legislations is supervised by the Factory committees.

We were taken to the shell cutting factory. The designs and cutting of shell is a special skilled job, where women numbered 365 out of total strength of 589. The items produced are so beautiful that about 40 per cent production is exported to over 50 countries. This factory is also collectively owned. It is attached with medical clinic and creche. In the embroidery factory 90 per cent are women, the export is to 32 countries.

An apprenticeship period is for 2 years or months as per the requirement. Women workers in factories are educated upto Junior middle school and if they want, they can continue to go to higher schools in their leisure time. After informing them about unemployment among men and women in our country a question was asked how was their system of employing a person. There is a Labour Bureau (like our employment exchange registration) in Beijing and in all provinces. The name and the particulars are sent to the labour bureau and the appointment is made. At present, party committees seem to be overall of the factories trade union committees and there is consultation between them on issues.

All China Women Federation

The branches of ACWF are also connected with the work in factories. We were told all these women workers are the group members of that Local committee of the ACWF. There is no single member subscriber as it is in our organisation, and no subscription either. There are 70,000 wholetimers working under ACWF! Our comrades looked at each other with astonishment. Yes, this is socialist system. We can't afford to have wholetimers though the work demands, and the possibilities exist. Madam Quon was anxious to know how do we carry our work, how many wholetimers, who pays and so on! Of course we told our position in each state and she could understand.

In every banquet, the leaders of the ACWF warmly greeted us. Madam Kua, wife of Marshal Chu Teh is now the President of ACWF. The Beijing banquet hosted by Lin Liyan, Vice-President of ACWF, member of Standing Committee of PNC. She was also a member of CPC. She welcomed the delegates from AIDWA. Com. Vimal Ranadive while greeting and welcoming their great achievements, explained the position of our organisation, the social, economic, political issues taken with special reference of Peace and War. Punjab situation and the achievements under the Left Front Govt. The visit to the Central office of ACWF and the discussions were very fruitful for our delegation. The present position of women in China, with regard to employment, education, Health, Creche and so many things were explained to us in detail. They said that there still exist feudal tendencies among men and also women. Women are not allowed to go out. Children are not sent to schools in rural areas. Illiteracy though reduced to a certain extent is still

there and ACWF is running classes for adult education with the help of the Govt. The ACWF is running vocational schools. Now, the compulsory education is upto 9 class. There is still dropouts in the rural areas due to backwardness and feudal ideas. The ACWF is fighting against these tendencies. Madam Lin, explained the position of minorities in China, which are a considerable part of population including Muslims and ACWF has set up a women's minority groups to work among them. A conference of minority communities is being held in Sept. 1987. Com. Josephine from Kerala, explained the position of Muslim women in our country and the struggle launched by AIDWA in Parliament and outside. Com. Shyamali explained also why there were no riots in West Bengal and steps taken by the Left Front Govt. Com. Illa explained how the TNV was attacking the common people to split the common struggle of the people. Our delegation had to inform about the position in Punjab, and divisive forces. And how USA is helping. We told them how Com. Rajender Kour, one member of the delegation is threatened for her life. The present serious situation about drought and the united actions of women's organisation was explained by Com. Prabha. The economic policies persuaded by the Congress Govt. on the question of price, employment and so on were explained. Com. Udayam spoke on Telengana Struggle. When we explained them that in 12 States now there are non-Congress Govts. they immediately asked, which other parties are ruling in those States. They would not imagine that Still 'Sati' is being practiced, dowry deaths are on the increase, feudal rule prevails in rural areas. The leaders of ACWF could realise that the same situation prevailed in China before the revolution.

Neighbourhood Committees

The chorus music performance given by old retired people at the Hall of Neighbourhood committee in Shanghai was unique. There are neighbourhood committee the lowest form of the Govt. in every village with primary schools, shops, theatres etc. There are 12 thousand families in this village Yu Yeu under the committee, 900 are retired persons. These families are 20 per cent of the total population. Under this committee, there are 17 residential committees. They are elected by the people.

This was something quite new for all of us. Every retired person, here, can join any work which he or she likes, music, drawing, handiwork, sculpture, read and write and can give back to the society his or her contribution according to their ability. Life was worth living after retiremcnt in China. There is no loneliness in their lives. Childless people can come and enjoy.

Suddenly 16 retired persons aged from 70 to 82 entered the hall. Some were couples. One of them named Fang Pe Spoke as to "how the Govt. and the Party was looking after them. They respect us," 61 years Shimkna Fua a woman told us how she was living a worthy life because she got this opportunity to work here after her retirement. They sang, danced and asked us to join. Nobody could say no. It was a moving sight. The older people, and their happiness—achieved because of the Socialist system. One can not imagine the life these people are living, like us who are languishing idle with nothing to do in their life after their retirement. What a big achievement. Nobody feels their life is worthless after retirement. They did everything for the society and now the society is returning the fruit of their labour. When they requested me to speak I had to tell them what a great thing the Govt. of China has done, Comparing the thousands and lakhs of people who retire in our country and nobody to look after. If relatives are there, well and good. The small amount of pension does not help the retired people. To leave the place of the meeting was difficult for everybody of us. We promised these 12 retired people, we would tell our people about Neighbourhood Committee and what they have achieved.

Ahother memorable event for us was the meeting with 3 Veteran women ravolutionaries in Shanghai who worked uderground for liberation of Shanghai during 1945 and earlier. ACWF arranged this meeting on the boat, river Yangshee for 3 hours. These veteran women Madam Cha, Huang, Wey still active in ACWF, or as journalist or in the Government went through all the tortures during anti-Japanese, and against Kuomingtang fight and lived to see the liberation of their country

and the tremendous progress thereafter. Though they are retired now, they are giving service to their country. The account of their own activities before the liberation was inspiring when they showed us the surroundings. The high tower with a clock still standing was occupied by Japanese then. "The Chinese and the dogs are not allowed". This was the treatment given to the people of China by imperialists! Shanghai being an important port, the enemy wanted to capture. They pointed out, there was a signboard near the park. The revolutionaries worked among the people and workers, to make them politically conscious. The PLA ultimately joined and Shanghai was liberated. Everybody of us felt how modest these veterans are despite their greatness!

Here we were able to visit the historic place of the 1st Conference of Chinese Communist Party held from July 23-30, 1921. Historic Place indeed.

The AIDWA delegation was honoured by giving a banquet by Mr. Jiang Guanyhna, Vice-Minister International Liaison Department of Central Committee of CPC. The discussions and talks were very cordial. The delegation was very happy to meet Madam Kochilin (Kotnis), who spent two days with us at Dalian. The Vice-Chairman of Dalian Municipal Committee of ACWF gave a banquet to our delegation. Dalian was liberated in 1945, before the revolution.

Exchange of Women's Delegations

The Party Conference to be held in Oct. 1987, we were told was going to discuss "the open door policy and Joint ventures", as well as the separation of the party post and Government. We were informed that many women's delegations from Socialist countries in Eastern Europe visited China, Soviet Women's Committes delegation visited China last year and ACWF too visited Soviet Union. The delegation from Poland was in China when we were there. The ACWF is going to visit Bulgaria in this month. On behalf of AIDWA we welcomed these developments. They inquired whether we participated in the World Congress of women in Moscow and I told them that a two member delegation, the General Secretary including did visit.

The frank discussions on many issues in China and India, the friendship developed during our stay, the care, the leaders of ACWF took for our delegation, convinced all of us that, people in India and China wish to build close relations, Party to Party and mass organisations. This was the sentiment between ACWF and AIDWA when we said goodbye to our friends.

Do You Know That

1 p.c. Govt staff involved in bride Burning

The percentage of government employees involved in bride burning cases was 1.3 per cent in 1985 and one per cent in 1986.

Giving this information in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday, the Deputy Minister for Personnel, Mr. B.S. Engti, said during question hour all ministries and departments had been instructed to suspend any government servant arrested in connection with a dowry death case under Section 304-B of the Indian Penal Code.

The suspension would be with inmediate effect after the submission of a police report to the magistrate concerned, irrespective of the fact whether the government servant was arrested or not.

5,00,000 Women Die Yearly of Pregnancy

Some 5,00,000 women die each year from causes related to pregnacy and childbirth and almost 60 per cent of them in South Asia, New World Health Estimates suggested.

While life expectancy in low—income countries, including India and China has climbed to 60 years, maternity death and ill — health still pose grave threats to women's survival and well — being. In China, for instance, 44 women are estimated to die for every 100,000 live births. The situation in India is worse. The world health data for some rural areas in India show an incidence as high as 450 deaths per 100,000 live births, which is about the average for the developing world. The experts admitted that the figures available possibly underplayed the problem since cases which ended in abortions or in which infants did not survive were omitted.

In some sub-saharan African countries, the mortality rate is estimated at more than 1000 per 100,000 live births.

(IE, 30.1.87)

New Style Technology....Old Style Oppression

IN many factories in the Ghaziabad-Sahibabad-NOIDA industrial areas near the capital city, TV's, cassettes, drugs and other consumer items are manufuctured with the latest technology, in accordance with the Government's drive for modernisation. But this much vaunted leap towards the 21st Century exists side by side with the repression and oppression of workers in forms reminiscent of the 19th Century.

Thousands of girls and young women work in the most deplorable conditions in these factories, where protective legislation for women is violated with impunity, where working women are subjected to harassment, humiliation and threats by the managements, where their fundamental right to form a trade union of their choice is suppressed, while the Labour authorities turn a deaf ear and blind eye to these malpractices of the employers and managements.

In the Binatone factory (a company with units in the U.K., S. Korea etc.) married women are not employed- One woman worker who married was forced to write an apology and is being pressurised to resign. If the women protest against injustice they are forced to stand, or their seats are changed in punishment, in the manner of authoritarian schools. Visits to the toilet are noted and in no case allowed after 4.30 pm. The so-called creche is a shed, with a thatched roof and no water or toilet facility and no children are allowed there. Recently the contractor at this factory threatened to bury alive some sweepers who demanded their rights but no action was taken against him. Now that the workers have formed a CITU union, the management is trying to break it and set up a joint committee of management and workers. However, in spite of all this, hundreds of women from this factory joined a huge workers rally in Ghaziabad on 13th August and raised the red flag of CITU at their factory gate on the 3rd. September!

The owner of the Super Cassettes factory does not believe in issuing an appointment letter to any of his employees but he does believe in taking their signatures on blank sheets of paper. Even two workers are not allowed to eat lunch together and lunchtimes are staggered. A system for card-punching for visits to the toilet was resisted by the girls after a meeting with the Coordination Committee of working women and the management has been forced to stop this practice. It is shocking that the owner and his staff made it a habit to enter the ladies toilets when they are in use, and to abuse the women workers when they objected, threatening them with retrenchment.

The 30 women employees of the Towers and Transformers factory gave a fitting reply to the management which hired goondas in the guise of security men. When one of the goondas mis-behaved with a women employee and another proposed marriage to her in mockery, the women gave them a thorough thrashing with their chappals because the management refused to take any action against them. Later, some of the goondas threatened the union leaders with pistols and the women gheraoed the manager for 6 hours until he agreed to throw out the goondas. There has been a lock-out in this factory since 17th July but all the workers, including the women are standing firm.

These hundreds of women have come forward to fight militantly against the barbaric behaviour of employers who think that they can curb their rights just because they are women. All the management efforts to break the unions in these factories have failed, and in fact, more and more workers in other factories, are coming under the CITU banner.

Victory of Women Under COSATU

NUMSA and other metal unions have recently won a big victory on the Industrial Council. All women workers in the metal industry have 6 months maternity leave at about 50 per cent of normal wages.

Maternity rights for women workers have been won at over 30 CWIU factories in the Transvaal and sex discrimination has been ended on the SASOL plants and mines — where many women got wage increases from R200 to R470 per month.

CCAWUSA is now beginning extensive negotiations for paternity rights which will ensure that men and women workers play an equal role in family life.

Spotlight on Working Women in GDR

FOREIGNERS often wonder whether typical, underpaid women's jobs still exist in the GDR. The answer is quite simply 'no'. Women are entitled by law to the same wages as men and, indeed, they receive equal pay for equal work in all cases. In addition, they are not inferior to men as regard qualifications since they enjoy equal opportunities in the field of basic and further training Furthermore, a whole chapter of the GDR's Labour Code contains the specific rights accorded to working women and mothers. They are designed to make it easier for them to reconcile their responsibilities in professional life with their duties as mothers. By the way, over 90 per cent of the GDR's female population is either in employment or undergoing training.

Since slightly more than 50 per cent of the FDGB membership, i.e., 4.9 million, are women it is quite natural and logical that the trade unions make special efforts to cater for their interests. In the women's support plan at EAB it is stated. "To promote women in employment is the prime task of all managers and trade union branches". The plan provides a number of favourable conditions for the female workforce that allow them to harmonize all their tasks and duties at enterprise level with those they have to fulfil at home, including child care. Individual contracts are, for instance, concluded for women intending to undergo further training, particularly for those taking up study courses at institutions of higher education. Mothers in full employment may have their children accommodated temporarily in a special ward run by the EAB if they suffer from minor illnesses. It should also be noted that single mothers and large families enjoy preferential treatment in the allocation of creche and kindergarten places, courses of preventive spa and sanatorium treatment and places in holiday homes. Marianne Zaft, an active trade union member presiding over the holiday commission attached to the EAB trade union branch committee, has made it her primary concern to ensure that families with three or more children are given trade union package holidays as often as possible, at least once every two years. Further relief is provided for many mothers and families in July and August during the summer vacations when 600 children spend a three-week holiday in the camp organised by the EAB works.

Universally binding legal norms have been laid down specifically for working mothers. For instance, expectant and nursing mothers do not have to work overtime or night shifts. Mothers are granted maternity leave with full pay and paid leave up to the first birthday of their baby with the rights guaranteed them in their employment contract being retained.

The trade unions have shown particularly great commitment in ensuring basic and advanced training for women. 81.5 per cent of all employed women in the GDR have completed some vocational training. 12.4 per cent of all supervisors, 61.8 per cent of all technical school and 38.2 per cent of all university and college graduates are women. These high education standards make it possible for women to master science and technology just as well as their male counterparts.

Women Commuters Win Their Demand

THE Delhi Coordination Committee of Working Women, along with some LIC employees met the Divisional Railway Manager and compelled him to call a meeting of the commuters associations in order to reconsider a change in timings. We also contacted these associations and the local M.P. At our insistence, the DRM had a survey conducted in these trains to ascertain the commuters difficulties, and finally, from the 13th April 1987, the train timings were changed from 6.25 pm to 5.45 pm (New Delhi station) as per our demand. By this change the commuters benefit to the tune of 40 minutes of time saved, which they can now spend with their families. Both the women and men commuters acknowledge that this change was possible only because of the 4 month long struggle and efforts of the Coordination Committee and the LIC women commuters who took the initiative in this matter. Plans are now a foot for a further struggle to realise the remaining demands!

(*Contd. from page 2*)

in the afternoon at the Magistrates order.

On 27th in Parliament, the Minister of State Mr. Chidambaran refused to confirm the lathi-charge made on women despite the insistance of opposition leaders. Not only that, the funniest part of his statement was 30 women police were injured while only one woman demonstrator got injury. This statement was challenged by all, including Geeta Mukherjee, Shaifuddin Chaudhary, Somnath Chatterjee, Madhu Dandavate and many others. The members wanted to put a question, demanding whether people did not have the right even to protest against the price spiral. The State Home Minister did not answer satisfactorily. It was strange that despite the lathicharge on women and the reports in the press, the Home Minister, the Deputy Chairman, Pratibha Patil and others did not care to respond to the leaders. The opposition then walked out in protest. The Sanyukta Morcha condemned the attitude of the Home Minister in a statement the nextday.

The Committee met the Civil Supplies Minister Mr. H.K.L. Bhagat next day. They submitted the demands and discussed with him in detail as to how the Govt. should deal with the price rise. But Mr. Bhagat would not budge an inch from his arguments. A minor demand of the proper distribution system and vigilance committees with women's representations too were not accepted, nor the meeting between the Delhi Administration and women's organisations. It appeared from his talks that a total chaos in the distribution system exists added with the serious flood and drought situation all over India. The Govt is not able to cope up with and is still callous in its approach.

In a memorandum, submitted to Shri Rajiv Gandhi, the Mahila Morcha demanded among other things, (1) purchase foodgrains directly from the peasants giving them remunerative prices and elimination of middlemen, (2) strengthen the public distribution system by ensuring a regular supply of ration, (3) stop raising the prices of rationed commodities (4) and vigilance committees with the Associations of women's organisations. The delegation consisted of Vimal Ranadive and Brinda Karat (AIDWA) Vimala Faruqui, Pramila Loomba (NFIW), Premila Dandvate (Mahila Dakshata Samithi), Joytsna Chatterjee and Asha Ramesh (Joint Women's Council), Indira Saxena, (Hind Mrzdoor Sabha) Pramila Pandhe (AICCWW) and Jaya (HMKP).

(*Contd. from page 5*)

Mother And Child Protection — Government Duty

On December 31, 1917, a Kollontai-signed decree on organising a mother-and-child protection department was published. It called for the setting up of a collegium to devise and implement urgent steps to "protect motherhood as the social function of woman and to protect childhood as a direct responsibility of the state." The decree for the first time in history proclaimed that mother-and-child protection is not a private matter, not philanthropy but a governmental duty.

One year later the Commissariat of Social Insurance and Security passed a decree on mother-and-child protection, signed by Alexandra Kollontai. In the conditions of dislocation caused by the World War and Civil War with the primacy of upholding Soviet power against the interventionists who were attacking from all sides, a nationwide effort to set up creches and foundling hospitals was launched, and search was started for premises, the required equipment and food. The mansions of fleeing White Guards were occupied and converted into children's homes. Every project was a do-it-yourself job: Subbotniks were organised, the people cleaned up, washed and repaired the premises and sewed clothes for the children from everything that lay close by, even from silk curtains removed from the windows of nobleman's mansions.

"Those were the passionate and decisive months of our revolution," Kollontai recalled. "We were hungry, rarely got a full night's sleep, but we worked passionately, we hastened to build the new life. We felt that everything we did today was by all means necessary today, even if it in the rough, for tomorrow would be too late, tomorrow we'd face new challenges".

Three years after the October Revolution Lenin, assessing the courage, heroism and devotion of Russian women to the revolutionary cause said: "Without them we wouldn't have won. Or would hardly have won. This is my opinion."