THE VOICE OF

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World Congress of Women 1987

"WE women, in fact the people of the world, received a wonderful New Year present from the Soviet Union, the concept of ridding the world of nuclear weapons by the year 2000...."

"The world's people entered 1986, the UN Year of Peace, with renewed hopes for a thaw in the planet's political climate and progress towards stopping the nuclear arms race and steps towards disarmament."

On behalf of WIDF the President Freda Brown called on women the world over "to ensure that the International Year of Peace strengthens the peace movement and draws more and more women into activity and action against nuclear war, and for a world where there is respect for human life and dignity for all people."

The slogan of the World Congress of Women 1987 is:

"World Congress of Women

Towards the year 2000

without nuclear weapons

for peace, equality, development"

Greetings to Women on 7th November

The Voice of the Working Woman sends its revolutionary greetings to women in Soviet Union on the Occasion of 7th November 1986, a day to be remembered by all and by women in particular, who cherish the goal of Proletarian Revolution through which exploitation of women is banished once for all.

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President CITU Greets the Delegates of AIDWA Conference

"Warmly greet the delegates to your second conference. Wish you success in championing the cause of toiling women."

B.T. Ranadive
President CITU

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Call of the 2nd Conference of AIDWA

- **Fight Communalism**
- **Fight For National Unity**
- **Fight Against war Danger**
- **Fight For Women's Rights**

"THE biggest rally of women that the State has ever seen" this is how all the newspapers in Kerala described the concluding rally and mass meeting on the last day of the 2nd Conference of All India Democratic Women's Association.

A strong 55,000 women's march began in Trivandrum, Kerala at 3 P.M. from the University on 20th of October '86 with All India women's leaders Coms. Manjari Gupta, Susheela Gopalan, Ahilya Rangnekar. Sarojini Balanandan, T. Devi, Vimal Ranadive, J. Saradamma and others in the forefront with a big festoon of AIDWA. It was a most heartening sight to listen to the slogans raised by delegates from West Bengal and Tripura, Tamilnadu and Kerala, Bihar and U.P., Punjab and Rajasthan, M.P. and other states in different languages, on National Integration and for communal harmony for peace and against war, against dowry deaths and molestations of Adivasi and Harijan women. Hundreds of women with babies in arms participated in the procession. The delegates from different states in their own costumes gave added significance, It showed different culture and also oneness. The Punjab delegates danced 'Bhangra' while Bengal delegates sang songs. Even when a major part of the rally reached Ashoka Lata Nagar, the other end had not yet started from Vallayambalam square. The expression of solidarity from the different unions and organisations in support of women's demands increased the enthusiasm of delegates and the people crowding both sides while the long procession continued. For most of the delegates coming from outside Kerala, the sight of marching of the teenage girls with white and red suits in thousands with the band in front was quite interesting. It took nearly three and half hours to reach the meeting place named after Ashoklata.

Inaugural Session

The 2nd Conference of AIDWA was held from 17-20th of October 1986 at Pankaj Nagar with about 800 delegates and observers assembled at Trivandrum. The whole city was decorated with white flags and festoons and gates were erected in every nook and corner to welcome the delegates. The figure of a woman with raised hand with a little red star behind on the flag, a symbol of AIDWA could be seen almost every furlong. The conference began its work with a flag hoisting by the President, Com. Manjari Gupta followed by offering flowers on the martyr's column. A resolution on martyr's was passed after the delegates assembled in the hall.

Com. Gouri Amma, Chairman of the Reception Committee then welcomed the delegates and the fraternal delegates. It was a great honour for the delegates to receive the chinese women's delegation, Madam Guan Minquan and Zhu Liping, the former in charge of the International Wing of the Federation.

Com. EMS Namboodiripad inaugurated the conference with hearty warm greetings to the delegates. Touching upon all the important aspects of the political situation prevailing in the country, he said the problems of women are threefold, problems of women as women and citizens and women as a part of working class. Women are the weaker sections in the society, especially Muslim women suffer tremendously. The same fate is of Adivasi and schedule caste women. He further said that the Muslim women's Act ought to be scrapped and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's recent initiation of a discussion on a 'Voluntary civil code' was just one more instance of a mere exercise in semantics: What is really needed is not discussion on a voluntary civil code but implementation of the existing law to bring the maximum advantage to the majority of women. Com. EMS also pointed out that without the active participation of women the struggle of the working class would not succeed. Criticising the economic policy of the Government, he said that Rajiv Gandhi wants to take people to socialism in 2000 AD while he invites multinationals in our country. Is it for reaching socialism?

He said the concept of women's liberation will not succeed unless and until society is liberated as a whole. The working class, peasantry, women, youth, student and all those who are prepared to fight against all anti-people policies of the Congress rulers have to play a big role with Left democratic movement. Refering to International situation Com. E.M.S. said that USA wants to destory the humanity by starting Chemical and STAR wars while attacking the socialist countries. The fight for peace, therefore, has become one of the important tasks for all including the AIDWA. He concluded his speech with the following words. "The AIDWA has done much during last five years. They will go from this conference with much more confidence to face the future tasks to build greater women's movement." His speech moved all delegates with greater confidence in their strength. The crowded hall with delegates and visitors gave a big ovation to the chinese delegates when they were introduced and presented with at gift by the AIDWA President. Madam Guan Minquan while thanking the AIDWA for the honour said "Gifts are insignificant, but friendship is magnificient, And again a big clapping from the delegates! Then the Presidium was elected with following members.

Manjari Gupta, Kanak Mukherjee, Laxmi Saighal, Vimal Ranadive, Tushita, Rajender Kour, Janaki Amma, Jainba, Sarojini Balanandan. The Steering Committee, Credential and Resolution Committee were formed and the formal proceedings began with the condolence resolution passed on International and national leaders. The beloved leaders of AIDWA, Jyoti Chakrabarty, Pankaj Acharya, Shipra Bhowmik, Ashokalata were remembered with reverence, their contribution to the women's movement was great, no doubt!

Manjari Gupta, the President greeted the delegates by a short but warm speech and the Ist session ended. The 2nd session started with the submitting of the report by the General Secretary Susheela Gopalan.

She began with the situation which existed 5 years back when the AIDWA was formed & the present. The atrocities on women have increased the dowry deaths take place more, price rise has no limit, while the political situation in our country has gone bad to worse with communal riots. She quoted a number of instances as to how our units in different states have faught on all these issues, which reflects in the increase in the membership. In the context of the movement against the Muslim women's Protection Bill, Susheela specifically mentioned the work done by our units in West Bengal, Kerala, Maharashtra and other states. 17th April 1986 All India Demonstration of 2000 Muslim women held in Delhi was a significant step forward in the mobilisation of Muslim women. The Rajiv Gandhi Govt. was totally put in the defensive and could not reply to the deputation in a way the P.M. should have.

She also emphasised the role of AIDWA in a campaign for National Integration, a very important point in the present political situation especially after the assassination of Smt. Indira Gandhi.

The unit in Punjab played a glorious role while facing the serious situation, like attacks and murders on our cadres. They held meetings of both the communities for communal harmony. The Tripura Nari Samithi, despite the attacks on Tribal women and men and facing communal tension went ahead and enrolled 57000 members. A large contingent of Tribal women, amongst whom, one was on presidium, came to attend the conference from far off distance. The role played by W. Bengal Mahila Samithi and Kerala Mahila Federation in restoration of democratic values in formation of Muslim women's Protection Committee was very important. The Delhi unit of JMS faced difficult situation, but despite that they played a significant role in the protection of women's rights.

The AIDWA units in Bengal, Kerala, Tripura played a big role in peace campaign thousands of women participated on Hiroshima Day and Anti-war campaigns, condemning the war policies of Reagan, while supporting the peace proposals.

The report also emphasised the role played by AIDWA in support of the demands of working women, specially the campaign on employment and equal wage. Com. Susheela dealt in detail as to how far we have succeeded in having joint actions with other women's organisations, especially with NFIW. She

said for fighting against dowry, atrocities on women, an anti-dowry committee was formed with a number of All India women's organisations, NFIW and AIDWA had many joint actions together.

The report mentioned specifically the role of Feminists vis-a-vis other women's organisations. Their opposition to politicalisation of women's movement showed the harm done by these groups which are financed by USA, Germany and others.

While mentioning the achievements made by AIDWA during last 5 years which ultimately resulted in its becoming a major organisation in our country, she also brought out some weaknesses in the organisation. Because of our common objective, an all India perspective, we were able to build our units in almost all states, especially in Hindi speaking states. But this has to be reflected in the membership of AIDWA. The recruitment pattern has to be changed, and in this the experience of W.B. has to be taken into consideration, which increased the membership from 5 lakhs in 1982 to more than 10 lakhs!

Susheela Gopalan called upon the delegates to organise in more strength so that the serious situation in the country can be properly faced by our organisation.

More than 41 delegates from all the States participated in the discussion as per the time allotted to various states, raising various important issues, by giving their own experiences. Resolution on Peace was moved by Kanak Mukherjee, while the resolution on National Integration was moved by Ahilya Rangnekar supported by Jaswant Kour from Punjab. A resolution in support of Left Front Govts was moved by Vimal Ranadive, supported by Ila Bhattacharya. Atrocities on women was moved by Vrinda Karat supported by Niru Patel. The resolution on South Africa was moved by Laxmi Saigal supported by Jagmani from Haryana, Civic Amenities for women was moved by Pappa Umanath supported by Sudha Bindu Mitra, Bihar, rising prices was moved by Usha Darade from Maharashtra, supported by Mary, the resolution on Muslim Women's Bill was moved by Nazimunisa and supported by Maimuna from Delhi. The resolutions also were passed on Nicaragua, child Labour, Media, Family Planning, Working Women, Dowry, Sex determination Test etc.

The daily sessions were preceeded by cultural programmes by various committees. On 18th, there was Seminar on "issues before the women's movement". The participants were Smt. Laxmi Menon, Lalithambika Antharjanam, Bhargavi Thankappan-MLA, Nabeesa Ummal and Mary Roy, besides Kanak Mukherjee and Laxmi Saigal from AIDWA. An exhibition of pictures on the struggles from all the states was shown when men and women were watching keenly appreciating their mass movements on various issues. Women were also watching the film on Muslim Protection Bill.

Jyoti Basu Addresses the Delegates

When Jyoti Basu entered the hall, on the nextday the delegates gave him a rousing welcome. The gathering shouted slogans in different languages. Com. Jyoti Basu, the Chief Minister of West Bengal welcoming the delegates for the successful conference said "People of India and Nepalee origin had fought in the freedom struggle. Geishing cannot separate them."

Jyoti Basu said that the Govt of West Bengal has taken stringent measures against the secessionists. But they have got limitations. The Central Government, instead of fighting the secessionists and anti-national forces are encouraging them for short-term political gains. In West Bengal the disruptive forces bent on dismembering the country has raised their ugly heads as the Gorkha National liberation Front. It is not clear as to from whom they want liberation. Rajiv Gandhi tells that this is a law and order problem. He tells us that there is nothing wrong if Subhash Geishing, the leader of the GNLF approaches the UN and the King of Nepal. They are not doing anything anti-national. This is the outlook of Rajiv Gandhi.

Imperialism is bent upon dismembering India. Every Indian citizen has a duty to be vigilant against these forces.

The Conference decides to Launch Struggles Against Price-rise

The Conference of the All India Democratic Womens Federation decided to launch a

massive struggle along with other like minded organisations for distribution of all essential commodities by the state.

On Sunday, the conference continued its discussions on the general secretary's report. It also passed various resolutions. The resolution on the Demands of working women was moved by Shyamali Gupta, General Secretary of West Bengal Ganatantrik Mahila Samithi.

Speech of a Delegate from Darjeeling

The question of GNLF and the atrocities was put before the delegates squarely by Radhika Sinha, a Nepali Origin delegate from Darjeeling district. She described the tactics of GNLF who are supported by the Congress (I) as harmful for the democratic minded people. They set fire on houses and tried to kill Anand Pathak, M. P., the recognised leader of the plantation workers in Darjeeling.

Nandrani Dal and Chayya Bera spoke about the success of the Left Front Govt and about the Panchayat organisation in 3 tiers, village level, block level and district level. Both of them expressed that due to the help of the Left Front Govt, and Panchayat in particular it was possible to make the women educated and politically conscious.

Mrunalini Dasgupta moved the resolution on the National education policy. She criticised vehemently the present policy of the Rajiv Gandhi which leads the 70 per cent of the people to darkness and upper class 30 per cent people to hi-tech education who will serve the big multinationals and industrialists. Because of this policy the congress Govt has replaced universalisation of elementary education by setting up Navodaya Vidhyalayas in each district of India, approximately 500 in number. She asked what about the existing primary and secondary schools in the country? There is no black board in 70 per cent schools, no school buildings, no drinking water either.

The delegates were quite moved by the narration of Anjali Dev Barma and Manjulika-Bose when they explained as to how the secessionists had killed six leaders of the Democratic women's Aasociation in Tripua.

The delegates from Tripura expressed in their speeches as to how the life of women was in the past, as bonded labourer under the king and now after the Left Front Govt. came to power changed completely. The TNV people are burning the houses of the SC and ST, brutally killing the husbands and sons in front of their wives and mothers. Another striking feature of Tripura was narrated by Ila Bhattacharya when she supported the resolution on the Left Front Governments. She told that the Nari Samithi was in shortage of funds for journey to Trivandrum from Tripura for 43 delegates. But the villagers and workers donated 80,000 rupees for the purpose and assured the delegates that the people in Tripura would do the same thing again if the call from the dias is given.

Rezia Khatoon, a delegate from Assam explained as to how hundred of people were assassinated at different places in Assam. She said despite these secessionists activities our work continues.

An important resolution on women in Agriculture was moved by Com. Swarajyam. Struggle on Coir and Cashew workers also was passed. Resolution on solidarity with women in Pakistan, Iran. Bangladesh in their struggles was moved by the presidium.

Fraternal Greetings from Organisations

Com. E.K. Nayanar, leader of opposition in the Assembly addressed the delegates and congratulated them for the succeseful conconference. Com. Vijay Kumar. the President of DYFI who was helping delegates all the time in the hall, greeted the conference. Comrade Nepal Bhattacharya, M.P, and SFI President spoke a few words appreciating the work of the conference, Representatives from LIC, AIKS greeted the conference. The message of greetings from Cuban women's Federation was received.

On the last day a surprising and delightful visit of small children representing Balsangham with presenting flowers to the members of the presidium and to the delegates created an overwhelming enthusiasm all over. The delegates, wanted to shake hand with the children who rapidly spread themselves in the hall presenting flowers. It was really a senti-

(*Contd. on page 17*)

Greetings to the 2nd Conference of AIDWA from ANDAMAN Women

Nilima

ON behalf of the democratic women of Andaman, I extend my revolutionary greetings to all the delegates coming from different parts of India. I am thankful to Central Executive Committee of AIDWA for giving chance to participate in the conference.

While supporting the report placed by Com. Sushila Gopalan, I want to say something about the condition of women of Andaman and their fight.

You know Andaman is a Union territory and it is detached from the mainland. So it is not possible for Andaman to be influenced by the movement of mainland. But the women of Andaman along with the men struggle in different sphere.

There are many working women in P.W.D., Forest department, Rubber plantation, Match factory, Civil defence and in other departments. There are so many problems. In match factory of Hutbay women labour do not get equal wage to man. They are to take permission for going to toilet.

All over the islands the women labours are to live in a very unhealthy 'Jhupris'. There are no toilets, no water, no medical facilities. They are to live like animals. The job is also not guaranteed. Because the administration does not allow them to continue 240 working days. So they remain temporary staff upto retirement. Most of the women of Andaman and Nicobar Islands are unemployed. Their problems are more acute. They are the victims of superstitions and other feudal system.

They are to do hard work in house and field from dawn to night. They are to collect water from the spring from 2 or 3 km from their houses. Poverty is the nearest companion to them. The democratic women of Andaman are fighting against all these injustices. They are mobilising more and more. They have played a glorious role in the last Parliament election, Municipal election. They organised procession, door to door campaign and were volunteers in polling booths.

The democratic women participated with other mass organisations in the programme of May Day Centenary which was observed all over the islands from 1st May to 7th May.

Before I conclude I invite all the delegates to our island and give us inspiration. I request the AIDWA leadership to come to Andaman within a short period and form our organisation there.

Girija Potti Greets on behalf of Kerala Working Women's Coordination Committee

ON behalf of the Working Women, Kerala State, I extend warm fraternal greetings to the delegates and observance, who have assembled here from different parts of the country for the 2nd National Conference of the AIDWA.

The Conference is taking place when the women of the country face all round attacks on their rights, social status and on living standards. Women along with working class and peasants are groaning under the ever increasing price rise, increasing unemployment and anti-people legislation.

Indian Women have a traditions and they had played a glorious role in freedom struggle. Independent India has witnessed a rise in Women's consciousness and movement,

This can be noted from the various struggle launched by all sections of women on the question of price rise, atrocities against Women including dowry death and rapes, on equal wage, equal rights in marriage-choice, maintenance etc and on the issue of democratic rights.

Working women in State and Central Govt Services, teachers, professors, doctors nurses and women in public and private sectors are launching struggle for their specific demands along with their male colleagues under the

(*Continued on page 12*)

Delegates From Chinese Women's Federation Greet AIDWA Conference

FIRST of all, please allow me, on behalf of the All-China Women's Federation and the Chinese women, to extend our heartfelt congratulations to the Second Conference of the All-India Democratic Women's Association.

It is a great honour to my colleague and myself to attend this conference and to get together with the sisters in the All-India Democratic Women's Association. In the name of the All-China Women's Federation and the Chinese women, I wish to renew to you the assurances of our highest consideration to the All-India Democratic Women's Association and its representatives present at this conference, and through you to extend our cordial greetings to our sisters in India. We firmly believe that this conference will surely contribute to the further development of the progressive women's movement in India.

Five years have passed since the first conference of the All-India Democratic Women's Association was convened. During the past five years, we have been following with the greatest enthusiasm the progress of your work, we have noticed AIDWA has been expanding its influence gradually and growing in strength steadily. The slogan of "Democracy, Equality, Freedom" for women put forward by AIDWA has gained great support among the broad masses of Indian women. We appreciate and admire the unremitting efforts the AIDWA has made in protecting the women's basic rights and in improving the women's status, as well as the positive role it has played in maintaining world peace and promoting human progress. May the relations and contacts between out two women's organisations be further strengthened: May the friendship between the women of our two countries be further developed!

Comrades and friends, all of you are very much concerned about the women in China. I would like to take this opportunity to tell you briefly the present conditions of the Chinese women.

China and India are two great countries in Asia. We have similar fates in history, and share the same identities and similarties in many othes aspects. The Chinese women, like the Indian women had a tragic experience in the past. More than half a century ago, when China was still in a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society, the Chinese women were not only oppressed by the "three big mountains", namely imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism which weighed on their backs, but also bound by the feudal ethics of male superiority. They were even more miserable because they were subordinate to men and completely deprived of all rights.

The May 4th Movement, a gigantic patriotic and democratic movement in China, broke out in 1919. It was a nation-wide patriotic mass movement against imperialism and feudalism jointly launched by workers, students, industrialists, businessmen and women, it was also a movement of emancipating the mind unprecedented in Chinese history. The movement put forward the slogans of "equality of men and women" and "emancipation of women", encouraging women to step into society from their households, and opposing the old ethics of male superiority such as the "three obediences" (to father before marriage, to husband after marriage, and to son after the death of husband) and the "four virtues" (morality, proper speech, modest manner and dilligent work) that enslaved and oppressed women. A large number of women shattering the feudal family taboos and resisting the pressure of public opinion, stepped into society with unprecedented courage, and together with their male compatriots fought for women's rights and the struggle against imperialism and feudalism. From then on, the women's movement became a component part of the Chinese people's revolutionary struggle.

The Communist Party of China that was founded in 1921 pointed the orientation of this struggle: "The way out for China lies in the complete overthrow of the three big mountains. Only socialism can save China".

This was also the road to emancipation of Chinese women, a road which linked the women's destiny with China's socialist future and recognised the Chinese women — constituting one half of China's population — to be an indispensable force in the Chinese revolution and construction. From 1921 to 1949, the women's movement in China grew in strength together with the entire revolutionary movement to which it was closely linked.

During the twenty-eight years of the revolutionary struggles, a large group of women revolutionaries and pioneers of the women's movement went deep among the masses to dedicate themselves to their work, spreading the revolutionary truth and the idea of the women's emancipation, leading the masses in overcoming one difficulty after another. Many heroines devoted their lives to the realisation of their lofty ideals. Tens and thousands of women cadres tempered themselves and grew in the struggles. They made historic contributions to the nation-wide victory of the revolution.

After New China was born, the Chinese Communist Party and Government, following the principle that the equality between sexes is not only related to the fundamental interests of women themselves, but also to the questions of whether the wisdom of the whole nation can be completely developed and whether the social productive forces can be fully liberated, made the realisation of equality between men and women a fundamental policy of New China. The Constitution of the People's Republic of China stipulates: 'Women in the People's Republic of China enjoy rights with men in all spheres of life, political, economic, cultural and social, including family life. The state protects the rights and interests of women, applies the principle of equal pay for equal work for men and women alike and trains and select cadres from among women". Since then, the Chinese women have been enjoying on an increasing scale their legitimate rights and interests in their daily life, which are firmly protected by the state. The social status of women has been greatly improved.

In running the state affairs, New China's women have the same right as men to elect and to stand for election, More than 90 per cent of the eligible women citizens went to the polls in the general elections. Many outstanding women have been elected to the organs of state power — the people's congresses — at different levels. At the 6th National People's Congress held in 1983, 632 delegates were women,accounting for 21.2 per cent of the total number of delegates. The average proportion of women delegates in the congresses at different levels is over 20 per cent of the total number of delegates. More than 40 women are now holding positions at the ministerial level under the state council — the highest executive organ, and at the provincial level. They include one woman State Councillor, 3 women ministers and more than 10 vice ministers. On the judicial front, more than 5,600 women are judges, chief judges of tribunals and presidents of people's courts at various levels.

The ranks of women workers and employees have rapidly grown in China. Their number increased from 600,000 in the early days of liberation to more than 42 million at present, and their proportion in the national total jumped from 7.5 per cent right after liberation to 36.8 at present. The fields where they are now working have gone far beyond those for traditional women's jobs in textile and light industries and have expanded to all branches of the national economy. They are now enjoying equal work as the men workers and employees. The number of women scientists and technologists has enormously grown to 2.4 million or one-third of the total number. There are 3.7 million women teachers in schools and colleges and they account for the following proportions in the respective national totals: 39.6 per cent in primary schools, 28.1 per cent in middle schools, 32.6 per cent in agricultural or specialised schools and 26.7 per cent in colleges and universities. Besides, there are 550,000 women kindergarten teachers. The Chinese women also enjoy equal rights with men in education. In 1985, 95.9 per cent of the nation's schools-age children entered the regular schools, and 44.8 per cent of them were girls. Girl students made up 40.2 per cent in the middle schools, 38.6 per cent in Secondary or specialised schools, 30 per cent in colleges and universities. China started to implement the Law on Compulsory Education in July 1986, which will

firmly guarantee the girls to get the 9-year basic education.

At the same time women's position and role in the family affairs have undergone tremendous changes. Women have changed their former subordinate postion and become equal members as men in the family. With the implementation of the Marriage Law and the growing participation of women in social labour in the past 37 years, great change have taken place in women's position and role in the family affairs and in their concepts of seeking after freedom to choose their spouses, good life and happy family.

In the family development and household management, most families have formed a husband-wife core adopting the methods of consulting with each other on an equal footing, respecting the old and loving the young, giving full play to their respective strong points and promoting mutual understanding and accommodation. Relatively speaking, women's power over family finance is increasing and their share of household chores is decreasing. These embody the mutual love, understanding, respect, dedication, unity and help between husband and wife.

There has been an earth-shaking change in our rural women's life. In the past, rural women used to spend most of their time around the cooking stoves, millstones and wells throughout their lives. Nowadays, with the growth of textile and light industries as well as tertiary industry, household chores have been gradually socialised, the burdens of women are being lightened. This helps women save a lot of time, and enables them to take part in the productive labour as men do. The township factories and enterprises numbering more than 6 million all over the nation — a major economic pillar in the country side, have absorbed over 60 million people from the rural surplus force, and more than half of them are women.

While accelerating our economic development, we are still confronted with the heavy task of fighting against ignorance. superstition and backward practices in society that belittle and discriminate against women, Women themselves should also further overcome their psychological defects of dependence and weakness. To achieve these goals, the state and the whole society must continue to implement the policy of equality of both sexes and to protect women's legitimate rights and interests. At the same time, what is more necessary is women's own efforts to protect their rights by constantly improving themselves in the spirit of self-esteem, self-respect and self-confidence.

Dear sisters, both China and India are developing countries confronted with the tasks of developing our respective national economy, improving the people's living standards and raising women's status. The women in our two countries love peace, long for and need urgently a peaceful international environment in order to fulfil our sacred and hard tasks. We are willing to join hands with our sisters in AIDWA and all our Indian sisters to get united and learn from each other. Greater efforts are needed from both of us for maintaining Asian and world peace, for the economic development, for the improvement of women's status, and for the happiness of women and children. When we are marching forward, we are bound to come across difficulties. But we shall surely obtain our goals through our protracted efforts so long as our direction is certain, our course is just and our will is strong.

I wish the present Conference a complete success!

May the contacts between the All-China Women's Federation and the All-India Demociatic Women's Association continue to develop!

May the friendship between the peoples and women of our two countries last forever!

(*Contd. from page 11*)

employment, as a fundamental right of the citizen. I am glad to inform that Mahila Association representatives are also participating in the Jatha alongwith CITU, DYFI, Farmers Association, LIC, Bank, FSETO, Whenever retrenchment starts, both Capitalists and the Governments attack women first. The AIDWA must take a strong stand and resist the contemplated attacks on jobs. I am sure this conference would seriosly consider the aspect and take appropriate decisions to organise mass movement of women.

On the Report of the General Secretary

Nazimunnisa, Secretary, Co-ordnation Committee Kerala

WHILE participating in the discussions on the Secretary's report, I would like to stress major problems confronting women especially the working women in the Country. One of the major problems, the employers and workers in the country face is the menace of computerisation; automation and modernisation. The Computer offensive has been announced through the budget speech, new economic policy and also in the Seventh Five Year Plan.

The Computer offensive is not only against the workers and employers concerned. It is against our national economy and our entire people. The Govt. wants all financial institutions and production concerns to produce more and more surplus by economising on labour. It wants the capitalists to produce goods for exports at competitive prices which can be done by using labour displacing processes. So the employees and the workers are face to face with the cruel offensive of computerisation. The strange thing in our country is that those who oppose introduction of mechanisation are dubbed as anti-progress, and anti-industrial advance.

The offensive has already been opened in banks, LIC, telephone, railways and income-tax and in our state in Electricity Board. But why we oppose mechanisation? We are not against modernisation and computerisation, but in a country like ours where tremendous rate of unemployment and poverty, prevails these steps may throw us out from the jobs that we have. Not only that. The mechnisation & computerisation are not the result of research scientific development in our country. These are all imported and outdated technology. Like Socialist countries, mechanisation will not provide job gaurantee but will lead to severe unemployment in Financial Coporation, Collectorate and almost in all departments. The Govt is planning to introduce nearly one lakh computers before 1990. This hasty step of computerisation is going to kill the majority of jobs in the servicing sectors. Computers have been introduced in railways has stopped recruiting new people. Railway authorities consider that at least 6 lakh workers are surplus, at present.

The annual intake banking industry used to be nearly 3000. Majority are women. But this number has drastically fallen during the last one year due to the ban on fresh recruitment imposed by the Finance Ministry. Appointments in already sanctioned vacancies have been banned in Banks. Even by a partial implementation of computerisation, more than 50000 employees will be displaced in Banks. It is good that the Bank Employees Federation of India has given a call to fight this menace.

The Central Govt has also put a ban on new recruitment depriving some tens of thousands of young men and women of jobs. The Kerala State Govt has also put a ban on recruitment. In our traditional industries like Coir, Cashew etc retrenchment is taking place because of mechnisation and modernisation. Many women workers lost their jobs because of closure of industries. Thousands of women workers were dismissed from National Tobacco Company.

Comrades

You may be aware of the agitation launched in our State by the DYFI against the ban on recruitment and non-release of unemployment relief started during Nayanar Ministry. DYFI Volunteers courted arrests. Firing and lathi-charge took place in many places while preventing the ministers from participating in the public function. Not only that in connection with this struggle, many of our AIDWA workers were beaten severely by the state police.

Now in our State, four vehicle jathas are touring throughout the state demanding jobs for men and women, unemployment relief and for amendment in the constitution to include

(Contd, on page 10)

Credential Committee Report And the Delegates

THE report of the Credential Committee showed a number of interesting points. The break up of the delegates showed, the largest number of delegates was from West Bengal, numbering 237, followed by Kerala 184, Tamilnadu 72, Andhra Pradesh 51, Tripura 83, Maharashtra 24, Assam 22, Bihar 20, Punjab 15, Delhi 13, U.P. 11, Rajasthan 8, Madhya Pradesh 7, Gujarat 7, Orissa 6, Haryana 6, Karnataka 6, Andaman-Nicobar 1 and Central Office 4, the total being 728, from 18 states.

The youngest delegate, Bheema Tandel was only 18 years old and she was from Maharashtra, while the eldest one, Sadhana Patra from West Bengal was 75 years old. Sadhana is very active in Midnapur district in the women's movement even at this age. 75 per cent of the delegates were under 45 years of age which was encouraging and would surely help to build the future women's movement. Another important point to be noted from the Credential report was the composition of the delegates. Out of 722 delegates who filled up the forms, the delegates from working class were 152 only while from middle class were 497, from peasantry 51 and 17 from Agricultural labour. Kerala and Tamilnadu have a significantly larger proportion of working class delegates than other states. This points out that AIDWA has still to reach a vast section of women in urban and rural areas, and enrol the common women. The number of Teachers and other employees numbered 231 out of 722 delegate. The delegates who attended the conference were in the movement for many years. 249 delegates or 34.5 per cent were in the movement for 11 to 20 years while 16 delegates were in the movement for more than 40 years, Janaki Amma from Tamilnadu was 51 years in the movement. Out of the total delegates of 722, 127 delegates went to jail, for some time or other. But the longest period spent in jail, nearly 10 years was by Ahilya Rangnekar followed by Janaki Amma for 9 years and Sampurnamma Choudhari from Andhra for 9 years.

The Credential Committee report showed that number of delegates were elected representatives of various categories such as Panchayat, Assembly, Corporations. Municipal Commissioners, University senate members School Board members and members of Parliament.

Comparing the composition of the delegates in the last conference, the delegates in this conference were more in the younger group, and very few delegates without formal education as compared to the last conference. It was also found there was larger proportion of middle class delegates this time than the last conference.

The youngest delegate and the oldest one Bhima Tandel and Sadhana Patra were requested to come up on the dias and were welcomed by the delegates by thunderous applause.

The new Committee elected at the Conference

A new Central Executive Committee was elected on the 20th of October numbering 61, with Com. Manjari Gupta as President and Com. Susheela Gopalan as the General Secretary of AIDWA. Kanak Mukherjee, Vimal Ranadive, Laxmi Saighal, Sarojini Balanandan, Illa Bhattacharjee, M. Udayam, Pappa Umanath, Rajender Kour and Tushita Dehutia were elected as Vice-Presidents and Shyamali Gupta, Brinda Karat, Mythily Shivraman as Secretaries and Bibha Ghosh Goswami as Treasurer.

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leadership of their organisations. Working women have waged glorious struggles, braving arrests and police lathi-charges, sudden gheraoing the authorities by lady employees of telephone exchange, nurses participating in dharnas and declaring strikes are the recent advances of Women in the struggle of the trade union movement.

We, working women, get inspiration from the AIDWA, which is the largest and most powerful organisation in the country. We fully understand that AIDWA has been dealing with all current issues of women on the political situation on the Central Govt anti-labour injustice against women in general and Muslim women in particular, against the danger of divisive forces and fighting for peace against US imperialism.

I am sure that the conference would discuss all issues connected with women and take appropriate decision. This discussion and decision will not only help and strengthen the women's movement but also help strengthen and enlarge the democratic movement in our country.

The Seminar on Women and Peace held at Tashkent from October 2—6 1986

THE regional seminar for women's organisations of Asian and Pacific countries on "Women and Development; Women's Contribution to Peace" organised by the Soviet Women's Committee, was attended by Pappa Umanath and Mythily Sivaraman on behalf of the AIDWA and the AICCWW (CITU) respectively at Tashkent.

In Uzbekistan about 33 per cent of the population was non-Uzbek. The earthquake in 1966 had destroyed 30 per cent of the City's buildings. In response to Com. Brezhnev's call to the whole country to respond to the City's calamity, each republic sent a reconstruction team and the City was rebuilt within 2 years time. Today the City has several zones named after the republics.

The transformation of the Uzbek woman from an illiterate and veiled woman into an educated, socially productive and respected citizen of today, was impressive. A excellent documentary film showing many burkha-clad women throwing their veils into a bonfire was shown. It also showed some funeral processions of women activists murdered by fanatics. Statistics concerning women's entry into various fields of production was impressive, although 26 per cent among engineers, 22 per cent among judges and 73 of deputies seems a little low. However, in Andejhan, a subdivision of Ferghana, there were 15 women chairpersons of collective farms. The delegates met women mayors and regional party secretaries. They were told that women's councils played a useful role in assisting the party and trade unions to create favourable conditions to increase women's participation in public life. The day before the seminar the delegates were addressed by the First Secretary of the Uzbek Party and Valentina Tereshkova, the President of the Soviet Women's Committee, who also inaugurated the seminar later. The seminar, held as part of the UN International Year of Peace, was attended by 43 women's organisations of various political orientations from 20 countries of the region, from the UN and its specialised agencies and from the regional and international non-governmental organisations. From the Indian sub continent, all the countries excepting Burma had come.

The Session on *Women and Development* began with 2 papers, one read by the Indian Minister and the other by the Monoglian delegate.

The two opening statements on "*Women's Contribution to Peace*" were made by a Soviet delegate and a Japanese delegate who is the cochairperson of the Japanese Council of Atomic Bomb Victims. Both papers were informative and interesting.

The Communique released at the end of the seminar spoke of "aggressive imperialist groups continuing to sustain and kindle conflicts destabilising the situation in the region". The Soviet peace proposals were welcomed and it called for meeting between women of the region on a regular basis. The communique also welcomed the World Congress of Women "Towards 2000 without nuclear weapons; For Peace, Equality and Development" due to take place in Moscow in June 1987.

Communique

On October 2-6, 1986, a regional seminar was held in Tashkent, capital of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic, on the topic "Women and Development, Women's Contribution to the Maintenance of Peace". The seminar, which was held as part of the United Nations International Year of Peace, was attended by women's organisations of Asian and Pacific countries. There were representatives from 43 national women's organisations of various political orientations from 20 countries of the region, from the United Nations and its specialised agencies, and from regional and international non-governmental organisations.

Greetings to the participants in the Seminar

were received from the UNO Secretary General Perez de Guellar. The Seminar was also greeted by I. Ummankhodzhaev, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan, and G. Kadyrev, Chairman of the Uzbek SSR Council of Ministers.

The seminar took place in an atmosphere of mutual understanding, friendship and profound interest.

The participants stressed that problems of equality, development and peace are inseparably interrelated.

They voiced deep concern about the aggravated international situation and the threat of nuclear annihilation looming large over the human race. They underlined that the militarisation and escalation of the military threat in the Asia Pacific region is becoming dangerously fast, along with the stockpiling of first-strike nuclear weapons and the transformation of the Pacific Ocean into an area of military and political confrontation.

They stated that aggressive imperialist groups continue to sustain and kindle conflicts destabilising the situation in the region.

Speakers agreed that the main concern of women's organisations is to contribute to preventing nuclear war, promoting relations of good-neighbourliness and cooperation between countries, and ensuring peace and stability in the region.

The seminar pointed out the great importance of the five Pancha Shila principles and the ten principles of Bandung for achieving security thoughout Asia.

The participants spoke highly of the role of the non-aligned movement and its vigorous efforts to overcome the division of the world in military blocs and to weaken the nuclear menace. They supported the initiatives that have been advanced in recent years by the "New Delhi Six" and noted the importance of proposals made by the socialist countries of the region for ensuring peace and stability.

They especially greeted the Soviet programme for phased reductions of nuclear, chemical and other weapons of mass destruction with a view destroying all their stockpiles, everywhere, by the year 2000.

The participants welcomed the Soviet Union's unilateral moratorium on all nuclear explosions, first announced in August 1985 and now extended until January 1, 1987, and called on the United States and the other nuclear powers to follow the Soviet lead. In this connection they expressed the hope that forthcoming meeting between the Secretary General of the CPSU M.S. Gorbachev and US President R. Reagan (October 11-12, 1986) will bring forward positive results.

They stressed that the arms race, first and formost the nuclear race, devours huge financial and manpower resources and constitutes the main obstacle to the socio-economic development of countries and to improving the position of women and their families. They pointed to the negative consequences of the policies of protectionism, economic pressure and the activities of transnational corporations, resulting in a widening gap between the economic levels of the industrialised and the developing countries.

In this connection the participants in the seminar stressed the importance of holding in 1987 an International Conference on Disarmament and Development in conformity with the decision of the 40th UN General Assembly session.

Speakers at the seminar called for restructuring international economic relations on a just and democratic basis and for establishing a new international economic order guaranteeing equal economic security for all countries.

The participants exchanged their practical experiences in how to integrate women in the process of development. They said that the proclamation of the United Nations International Women's Year, followed by the UN Decade for Women "Equality, Development, Peace, had helped to raise women's awareness and activity, draw the attention of governments and public opinion to problems affecting the status of women, and adopt a series of measures to improve women's position in many countries of the region.

On the other hand speakers stressed that although women's equality is legally proclaimed in most countries of the region, there remain serious obstacles to women's virtual equality in many countries women's rights are not guaranteed in the family and society, and women suffer from hunger, poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, lack of medical assistance, lack of housing and schools. The position of rural women remains hard.

The participants voiced determination to strengthen cooperation for the aim of attaining peace and stability and bringing about development and women's equality, and with vigorous actions to contribute to reaching the objectives of the United Nations International Year of Peace.

They noted the importance of joint actions helping to involve the Asia-Pacific region in the general process to create a comprehensive system to guarantee international security. Convocation of a conference of all Pacific countries to ensure collective security in the Asia-Pacific region could serve these goals.

They pointed out the importance of proposals to set up zones free from nuclear arms, and also zones of peace and stability in Asia.

They expressed determination to carry through the recommendations contained in the Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of the Status of Women up to the Year 2000, approved at the World UN Conference at Nairobi in 1985.

They stressed the need for further exchange of experience and information, and for a continued dialogue.

They noted the importance of expanding and strengthening bilateral and multilateral cooperation between women's organisations of the region on such problems as eliminating illiteracy, guaranteeing professional training, enforcing mother-and-child care, promoting women's participation in public and political affairs, and ensuring education in a spirit of peace.

The participants called for holding meetings between women of the region on a regular basis.

Broad participation of women's organisations in Asian and Pacific countries in the World Congress of Women "Towards 2000 without Nuclear Weapons. For peace, Equality, Development" due to take place in Moscow in June 1987 will serve the aims of strengthening peace and social progress in this region.

Future Programme Adopted by 2nd Conference, AIDWA

1. All India Peace Convention to be held in West Bengal in April 1987. States should organise their State Conventions wherever possible before this.

2. National Integration Month to be observed from 26th December 1986 to 25th January 1987 and 26th January 1987 should be observed as 'National Integrotion Day'. Throughout the month we must organise Padayathras, processions, dharnas, meetings, seminars, and torch light processions.

3. During the next Budget session, 'One-day demonstration' before each State Assembly (In West Bengal and Tripura, the demonstration should be held in front of the respective Raj Bhavans) to press for the demands of Rural women like joint pattas, minimum and equal wages, Welfare amenities, including maternity benefits, etc.

4. In each State, Week against Decadent Culture should be organised.

5. Signature Campaign for release of political prisoners including Nelson Mandela of South Africa and for imposition of sanctions etc. to be continued throughout the month of November. The signatures collected so far will be forwarded to the UN through the A.N.C. as a first instalment.

6. Central class on Organisation and Women's Issues for the weaker states other than West Bengal and Kerala will be held in Delhi in December.

7. Special emphasis on the rural women's problems in Agriculture, Traditional industries.

8. Camapign against New Economic Policy, price rise, atrocities on women, dowry victims, against sex discrimination etc.

9. Campaign against the new proposal for "Voluntary (optional) Common Civil Code" and withdrawal of Muslim Women's Act.

Lady Telephone Operators

HAVE you ever seen girls striding or sprinting their way at odd hours? Have you ever seen them at Bus stops waiting for the first bus in the dark of cold winter? They are not sports women. They are Lady Telephone Operators (L.T.Os.)

Odd Duty Hours

These hapless girls attend duty round-the-clock in three shifts. The first shift commences at 6 a.m. all the year round. They have to take the first Bus from their areas of residence at 5 a.m. So is the fate of those who go off duty in the early hours of the morning. Every month, they have to perform night duty which starts at 8 p.m. and continues till the early hours of the next morning.

Arduous Nature of Work

It may be a fun or pleasure to make a telephone call as you have some personal interest. But not with the Telephone operators who have to make or take calls in pursuit of their profession without any personal interest. And to do it for eight hours continuously strains the nerves and the whole human system. It becomes all the more strenuous and nerve-raking when the callers become rude and use intemperate and abusive language. This has become a rule rather than an exception as the highest authorities in the Department believe that the subscribers are the "Masters" and not customers. Any complaint by them, even on trivial matters, is taken very seriously and the LTOs concerned are hauled up for Disciplinary Action by their boses. Thus, sandwiched between the "Masters", and the "Bosses", an LTO slowly forgets that she is a human being and continues performing her duties like a machine, suppressiug her emotions and human instincts. Such attitude of the authorities breeds episodes like that of Shree P.C. Sethi's armed attack on an LTO in New Delhi. This happens in many places.

The nature of duty also involves presence at the point of duty all the time, as the complaints relating to non-attendance to a subscriber are treated as 'Desertion from Duty' and stringent punishments awarded. The Administration always have the upper hand and the last word too for awarding heavy punishment in such cases.

Defective Equipment

In most of the cases, the equipment, on which the LTOs work, is defective. The local faults in the equipment can be rectified easily by the technical staff but that concerns only the Special Services which are local in nature. But in the case of Trunk Services, which operate on the local equipment as well as long-distances circuits, the staff at so many other stations is responsible for removing the faults. This causes inordinate delay sometimes. The subscribers do not realise this and abuse or attack the person dealing with them which is invariably the LTO.

Defective Command Structure

There are two distinct types of work in Trunk Exchanges. One is the traffic of Trunk Calls (operative) and other maintenance of equipment and circuits (engineering). The LTOs are responsible for the traffic portion but they do not have the command structure of their own. After about 30 years of feminisation of the Trunk Exchanges in our country, the LTOs have been allowed to rise only upto the level of Lower Supervisory Posts. The Higher Supervisory Posts are still manned by Officers belonging to the other Wing Viz; Engneering who are invariably males. This causes serious cadre rivalaries and exploitation of the LTOs. The efficiency becomes a casualty as the tug-of-war between the two different wings takes the shape of class struggle between the exploiter and the exploited.

High Standard & Lack of Job Evaluation

The idea of feminisation was conceived some 30 year ago on account of the distinctly higher frequency of the female voice as compared to males. It is not only the voice which is considered. The merit in studies is the primary consideration. Those having less than 60 per cent marks are advised not to apply. The percentage of marks for successful candidates has never been less than 66 per cent at any recritment. This apart, candidates should have Geography as a compulsory subject and well up in English. In most of the cases, the Candidates are graduates as they get bonus marks for higher qualifications. However, the authorities have failed so far to take

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mental moment when hundreds of children with red roses entered in the midst of slogans "Balsangham Zindabad". The reception committee was very thoughtful to arrange a creche for the small children of delegates and many took advantage of the provision.

Another incident took place when M. Udayam, treasurer of AIDWA garlanded Susheela Gopalan with the notes of 10 Rs. in 5000 rupees! Susheela's face completely was hidden under the 'load' of garland of notes, the affiliation fee from Andhra Pradesh AIDWA! Pappa Umanath and Mythily Shivraman visited Tashkent for the seminar in October the accounts were reported to the delegates by Myihily.

The reply to the debate on the report of the General Secretary was given by Susheela accepting a few amendments. Susheela while replying raised a few points for consideration of the delegates. She said present developments in the rural areas where the present land relations are to be broken without which the condition of rural women would not improve are to be discussed and approach to be made. The AIDWA has to consistently wage an ideological struggle against casteism and against the policies of the Congress rulers, For this a bulletin in Hindi and English is necessary. To expand our work more cadres are to be trained at the central and lastly, the continuous process of enrolling membership has to be taken up. With these suggestions and amendments. the report was unanimously adopted by the delegates, The future programme was placed by Ahilya Rangnekar and was also adopted. A panel for the new committee was put forward by the General Secretary and unanimously aacepted by the delegates in the midst of slogans of "AIDWA Zindabad".

The public meeting which began at 7 P.M. was addressed by Susheela Gopalan, EMS Nambudiripad. Jyoti Basu, Ahilya Rangnekar, Laxmi, Vimal Ranadive, K.R. Gouri Amma, Sarojini Balanandan and presided over by Manjari Gupta followed by culrural programme. The cheque of Rs. 10,000 was presented by the AIDWA to Left Front Govt. West Bengal for flood Relief and relief for Refugees from Darjeeling and Rs. 5000 given to Tripur Left Front for victims of TNV attacks.

Thus, the 2nd Conference with 16 lakhs membership of AIDWA came to an end with an unprecedented success for the Reception Committee, for the delegates from various states and for the people of Kerala who took tremendous efforts to make the conference a success. The call given by theAIDWA was a call to be an active partner in the struggle of the Indian masses while fighting for women's emancipation. The conference, which had in its midst, the delegates like Swarajam, the Telangana heroine, the fearless delegates from Bengal fighting against the semifascist terror of Congress (I) and became martyrs, the delegates from Kerala, the land of Kayyar. Punnapra Vayalar and also militant tribals from Tripura. called upon women to fight unitedly against the mounting attacks on women, against discrimination and against the total exploitation of women by the bourgeois landlord rule.

337 SC, ST persons murdered in 6 months

As many as 337 persons belonging to the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe were murdered and another 492 of such women raped in different part of the country in the first six months of this year ending June, the Rajya Sabha was informed today.

The Minister of State for Welfare, Dr. Rajendra Kumari Bajpai, told Kanak Mukherjee that the total number of cases of crimes against Scheduled Castes and Tribes in the six months of this year was 9,347.

The number of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes murdered in 1985 was 646 and the total number of rapes last year was 936.

HEALTH IS WEALTH

Progressive Measures on Health Care

Modern trend of medical treatment lay more stress on prevention than cure. The act of healing is made easier if the source of ailment and nature of infection are identified for taking preventive measures.

Keeping this in view, the policy, being followed by Health and Family welfare department of the Left Front Government, during its 9 years' rule, to maintain public health and ensure effective prevention of the diseases, met with unprecedented success. On the basis of recommendations, made by the committee of experts, the department was re-oriented right from the primary level and the urban-based Health Schemes were revamped to be mostly rural-based.

The infrastucture of the rural health services is spread over 4 stages—Sub-centre, subsidiary Health Centre, Primary Health Centre and Rural Hospital. All the stages have been revitalised with addition of beds, trained men, accessories for treatment. In comparison with 1976, State Health Service in 1985 bears definite mark of progress in diverse fields. Per capita expenditure on health has been enhanced from Rs, 15.90 to Rs. 37.07. Hospitals (excluding Health Centres) were also increased from 342 nos. to 409 nos. Trained Personnel being 41,232 heads in 1985, was never before in State Health Service in 1976. In addition to these, 78 mobile dispensaries have been reaching in the far-flung village. A floating Health Centre with modern amenities in a launch is operating in Sunderban area.

A 'Task-Force' has been formed with the eminent medical scientists to keep the Health-workers, abreast with the latest information and technique of treating and preventing any epidemic. Regular training of the doctors, working in villages and towns, has been included as a part of the health scheme. An all-out effort to improve the medical service for mothers and children are being undertaken and through this, the Family Welfare Scheme is being maintained. There has been a steady downfall of the number of death of expectant mothers and new born babies. The idea of having the benefit of a 'Small Family' is becoming popular.

The Left Front Government is pledged to cater Health Service to the general mass by allowing it to become wide-spread.

GOVT. OF WEST BENGAL

EVE'S

The Bihar Medical and Public Health Employees Launch Struggle for their Demands

THE dilly dally attitude of the Bihar Govt. towards the foundamental demands of the 70,000 health employees and 70,000 rural trained health workers has caused serious discontent among the employees. To press the fulfilment of their demands a widespread agitation of dharnes and demonstrations took place on 6th Sept. 1986. From 28-30 Oct. demonstrations and dharnas were held at all district headquarter in Bihar.

The employees are determined to continue their agitation till their demands are met. In Nov. they will launch a statewide indefinite strike and jail bharo andolan.

The various directions and orders of the central government which include most of the demands have not been compiled with by the state govt. The immediate problems and demands of the health employees are:

1. **Danger Allowances:** The constant exposure to dangerous diseases in the course of their services to the patients, mostly abandened by their families and outcasted by their villages causes grave problems, to the employees and their families. This entitles them to a danger allowance and although this has been accepted in principle in 1973, it has not yet been put into practice.

2. **Overtime allowance:** Unlike other govt. employees health employees have no fixed working hours and work upto 8 hrs. overtime Employees in small hospitals and dispensaries work 24 hours fitting their other activities such as research into their busy schedule. During epidemics and other contingencies, they work day and night yet they are not granted any allowances over their normal wages for a 6 hour day for working extra hours. This results in gross exploitation of the employees for which the responsibility rests solely with the govt. The recommendations of the 3rd pay scale revision committee that no employee should be made to work overtime, more employees should be recruited, and if required to work overtime, employees should be granted overtime allowance, have not been implemented.

3. **Food allowance:** In 1973, the govt. health dept. granted a food allowance to the nurses but in 1981, it restricted the allowance only to resident staff nurses excluding L.H.B., A.N.M. trained midwife and midwife etc. included in the definition of 'nurse' in the Nurses Registration Act. The association demands that the allowance of Rs. 100 be granted to all members of the nurses category.

4. **Inequalities:** After the recommendations of the 4th Pay Scale revision committee have implemented, inequalities have been found in wages and allowances of the 71 sub-groups of the health employees. At the instance of the association a committee was appointed for the removal of these inequalities whose recommendations have not been followed by the Bihar govt. The Association demands that the govt. immediately implement these recommendations and also remove other existing inequities.

5. **End to persecution** of employees on the basis of family welfare. Targets the Health dept has directed that employees not completing family welfare targets should be punished by various means which extends to termination of services. However the employees were not employed for any targets but to convince the people to adopt the family welfare programmes. They were not authorised to use any force to complete any targets. On the other hand the government is adopting authoritarian and arm twisting tactics to intimidate the employees instead of evaluating the real problems faced in implementing the family welfare programmes.

6. Problems of rural trained midwives who have been deprived by the Bihar govt. of the benefit of monthly allowance, of Rs. 50 and supply of medicines and instruments on yearly-basis as well as the Rs. 3 maternity case, organised under the banner of the association, about 70,000 rural trained midwives demand full government employee status and till this is not done a monthly allowance of Rs. 100 be paid.

Muslim Fundamentalists Oppose Burial of Mrs. Mumtaj

PROF, Mumtaj Rahimture, acting Chairman of Satyashodhak Mandal, and an ardent fighter for the cause of Muslim women, died in an accident in Kolhapur on 3rd of October. It was really astounding that the Muslim Moulavis refused to bury her as per the religious rights. This once again shows how hard the Satyashodhak Mandal has to fight in support of the rights of Muslim women. The next day after her death the funeral procession was taken out. When it reached the place, they found that the doors were closed. They were bluntly told that Mrs. Rahimture was opposed to Shariat and the principles of Islam, so the Moulavi's do not take her as "Muslim" and so no burial will be allowed here. Some elderly people tried to negotiate, but in vain. This arguments and negotiations continued for 2 hours with the dead body of the professor lying in the street. Ultimately the police had to intervene. The relegious leaders then permitted her burial but did not allow the performance of the religious ceremony! Not only that, but also the employees were forbidden to dig the ditch for burial! The permission for burial was granted only when the husband, father and the son of Mrs. Rahimatpure gave an assurance in writing that they do not oppose Shariat! It is now understood that the father has told the religious leaders that "my dangther was not against 'Islam, but she was only against the way divorce is granted. And a she was buriel in the end. Whatever may be the reason given, it is obvious that strong pressure was brought on the family of Mrs. Rahimatpure to give this undertaking in writing. It is also likely that the police pressurised the family.

Such experiences were brought to the notice of the police in case of 'Bohara' community also. Even after a number of complaints were made to the police, the police did not intervene when the 'Kabarsthans (Burial grounds) of these progressive reformers were purposely demolished. The present policies of the Congress rulers are very clear from the recent bill on the Muslim women now passed into an Act. This serious incident once again shows how difficult is the task for those who are fighting for the cause of Muslim women. This challenge is to be taken up by all women's organisations.

Pak Women March Against Pak Fundamentalists

Four hundred women marched to the Pakistani parliament on Sunday to protest at the proposals to extend the powers of Islamic Sharia courts. About 80 fundamentalists-men and teenage boys from local mosques held a counter-demonstration but the two groups were kept apart by large contingents of police. The Women's Action Forum (WAF) said groups had come from Karachi, Lahore and other parts of the country for the protest, the first women's march allowed to parliament. A WAF spokesman told reporters that a bill to amend the constitution due to be debated by the lower-house on September 28, and a further Sharia bill threatened women's rights. They would give the Islamic courts new powers to handle divorce, inheritance and child custody cases. WAF committee member, Ms Tahira Abdullah told marchers that the bill represented the point of view of 'a particular', obscurantist minority group'.

'Muslim women in Pakistan have suffered a serious loss of status through legislation enforced over the past few years in the name of Islam, she said. "Widening the jurisdiction of the Sharia court will further damage the legal and social position of women."

A cleric in the counter-demonstration, Mr. Mumtaz al-Haq, dismissed the women as unrepresentative and said the two bills should be passed at once to make Pakistan a proper Muslim country. Islam has not been implemented in the country for the past 40 years (since independence from Britain), he said.

Several women deputies from both government and opposition benches came out to express support for the WAF demonstration. The Justice Minister, Mr. Iqbel Ahmed Khan, also spoke to the leaders, and assured them that he would protect their rights in accordance with the laws of the Quaran.

Resolution On Peace

THE Second Conference of AIDWA strongly condemns the deliberate sabotage by US President Reagan of the recent talks between him and Soviet President Comrade Garbachov. The announcement of the mini-summit had been widely welcomed and given rise to the world wide hope of a genuine effort towards the disarmament. Whereas the Soviet leader consistent with the country's genuine and sincere efforts to reach agreement on nuclear arms reductions made historic peace proposals, in total contrast, Reagan insisted on continuing the imperialistic plans of Star Wars. The US imperialist attitude at the talks sharply exposed before the whole world that the threat of nuclear war emanates solely from US imperialism and its allies while the Soviet Union emerged from the talks as the Champions of peace. This also exposes the total bankrupcy of the theory of equaling the two super powers. This Conference warmly and whole heartedly greets the tremendous efforts made by the Soviet Union and its leader Gorbochov on this crucial issue facing mankind and pledges its full support to the proposals.

This Conference also welcomes the announcement made by the Peoples Republic of China that their country will never be the first to use nuclear weapons.

This Conference calls upon women to come forward to join the peace movement, raise their voice in condemning the US war preparations and support the peace movement all over the world. The conference express its total solidarity with women struggling for peace throughout the world. The Women peace marchers in Greenham Common, England in FRG and France and other countries of Europe and the United States itself have been in the forefront to oppose the missiles and installation of nuclear warheads in Europe. The women are aware that no development is possible in any field, no progress of any country is possible if war is unleashed. In most of the wars launched by the imperialists, women and the children are the worst sufferers, as could be seen for instance in the tremendous sacrifices which had to be made by Soviet women during the anti-facist war.

The Conference calls upon all women to raise their voice against the conspiracies of war preparations by US and launch a campaign on the peace proposals made by Gorbachov, educate our women in urban and rural areas about the effects of war danger. It is notworthy that the non-alignment policy persued by the Government of India is an important factor in strengthening the world balance in favour of peace and does facilite our task to fight against the war mongering plans of US Imperialism. However, it is essential to educate the mass of women of this policy is at present the danger lies precisely in the act that it is more or less dependent on the Government's will. This is underlined by the danger of the recent new defence policy thrust on the Government of India which envisages buying modern defence technology from the US which means accepting intolerable conditions which will certainly undermine the present foreign policy.

This Conference appeals to all other women's organisations to come together to fight for peace and save the world from a nuclear holacaust. It pledges to intensify its struggle on this issue.

The Resolution On Working Women

The condition of working women is worsening day by day. In Independent India, unemployment is also an ever increasing problem and now after 37 years of indepedence nearly 5-6 crores remain unemployed. A great majority amongst them are women. About 86,000, factories are closed, many industries have become sick. Moreover the Govt has stopped recruitment in Railways and postal departments. The policy of mechanisation persists, resulting in retrenchment on a large scale when women are the first victims.

Against this background a resolution placed by Shymali Gupta and supported by Punyavati was adopted unanimously. One of the major demands on which a campaign has to be launched was to fight for employment as a fundamental right to be incorporated in the constitution.

"Mama Help". Never Make Hibakusha Again

I am an atomic bomb survivor (Hibakusha) from Hiroshima.

On August 6, 1945, forty-one years ago, an A-bomb was dropped on Hiroshima by the U.S.A. The bomb, containing only 1 kilogram of uranium but equal in power to 13,000 tons of TNT, fell on Hiroshima with a bomb blast faster than sound and with heat rays exceeding 2,000 degrees, centigrade on the ground within a radius of 600 meters. In an instant it blew down buildings, houses and people in Hiroshima, destroying everything.

That day I was working in the city, as ordered by the Government-I was about 1.5 kilometers from the blast center. The instant, the A-bomb exploded, my clothes caught fire and in a moment I found myself under a fallen house. Thinking of my two children at home, I made frantic efforts to crawl out. When I came into the open, I found the whole Hiroshima street gone.

On the ground, numberless people had fallen, groaning or crying for water, without anyone to help them. The neighbourhood was so full of agonizing cries, it was hell on earth.

That same day, some 9,000, 12 year-old schoolboys were also engaged in work in the city, under the national mobilization law. In the instant of the A-bomb explosion, most of them were charred to death. Those who narrowly escaped being killed were left naked, their clothes burnt off. With their blistered skin peeling, they tottered about in the sea of fire, and plunged into the river. When they looked up from the water, they had already lost their sight. Embracing each other by the shoulder, red and stripped of skin, they were

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(*from page 16*)

note of these facts to make a proper job evaluation.

Poor Pay Scales

All these merits are of no consequence when it comes to granting them a higher scale of pay. They get the same scale as any other Class III Cadre viz. Rs. 260-480. After many years of struggle, they have now been made eligible for promotion to supervisory cadre after a service of 16 years by accepting 5 per cent extra work in Lower Cadre and 20 per cent in Supervisory Cadre.

Exploitation Accentuated

The Telecom. Department has resorted to another method of exploitation. They recruit casual LTOs who are paid very low wages and are not made regular for decades. Although all of them are now trained and are redesignated as Reserve Trained-Pool (RTP) and also allowed to perform duties like regular LTOs, they are still paid wages as if they are casual Employees. The reasons are obvious. Their wages are low. They are not eligible for any holidays, casual and regular leave, maternity leave, medical facilities, LTC, bonus, pension, over-time Allowance, incentive, House Rent Allowance or even paid weekly off. More importantly, they have no right of representation or democratic right to defend themselves if thrown out of job. Imagine the exploitation that can be perpetrated and perpetuated against such defenceless workers.

Administration Oblivious of their Problems

The LTOs are the backbone of the Telecom. Department. Most of the revenue is earned by the Department through the hard labour put in by them. However, the facilities provided to them are negligible. They have to make their own arrangements to reach the exchanges and return to their residences. The very nature of their duty and the fact that it is insecure for them to travel alone at night, demands that they should be provided Departmental Quarters near the place of work. But the rate of satisfaction in this respect is less than 1 per cent. Even so, their nature of duty is not considered for this purpose and they are allotted Staff Quarters in far-off colonies.

The nature of duty also demands that there should be proper facilities like creches for their children and dormitories for them. These facilities do exist on paper but in actual practice these are non-existant.

These problems will continue to exist till the LTOs organise themselves and launch struggles.

washed away toward the sea, crying "Mama, help!" The bodies washed toward the sea in the seven rivers through the city, turning the river surfaces dark, have never been recovered.

Even if the cry, "Mama, help!" had reached their mothers, who could have helped them in that "hell"? The hell, in which you could not save even your own children, that is A-bombing.

People who survived the bombing, and those who entered the city to search for relatives or help victims were also struck down by radiation and died after losing their hair and bleeding.

Three days later, on August 9, another A-bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. The two A-bombs completely destroyed the two cities, massacering the people without discrimination. The number of those killed has so far been found to be at least 300,000 people. Hiroshima and Nagasaki were the first hells of nuclear war experienced by humankind.

Some 400,000 people who survived the atomic bombings are still cursed with the horros of A-Bombs and suffer from the after-effects of radioactivity. Those A-bombs have continued to destroy the health, living, and feelings of hibakusha even until now.

A-bombings allows us neither to live nor die as human beings. A-bombs are weapons of sheer madness, basically intended for total destruction. They are absolute evils which we human beings must never allow to exist.

After the end of 2nd war, the U.S. occupation forces and the Japanese government tried to conceal the real condition of Hiroshima and Nagasaki from the public by suppressing all reports on the damage of these two cities caused by the A-bombs. This caused delay in relief works for victims and prevented the effects of nucler war being made known to the world as well as formation of international opinion for the banning of nuclear weapons.

It is said that now in the whole world there are some 50,000 nuclear warheads, one million times as destructive as the A-bomb dropped on Hiroshima. In addition, the plan for SDI is proceeding, aiming to extend nuclear war into space. We hibakusha cannot hear of this without shuddering.

We do not want anyone to go again through the pain of nuclear war which we were made to suffer. "Never make hibakusha again" — this is our hibakusha's heart-felt desire. This is our wish to which we are determined to devote our lives. For that purpose, we must prevent nuclear war and eliminate nuclear weapons entirely.

Japan formerly invaded our neighboring Asian countries and did them serious harm. We consider it our first duty not to commit the same kind of crime again.

We hibakusha demand that our government make clear the responsibility for the war and enact a national compensation law for atomic bomb sufferers. If we were to regard the sacrifices of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as inevitable, it would be tantamount to tolerating nuclear war.

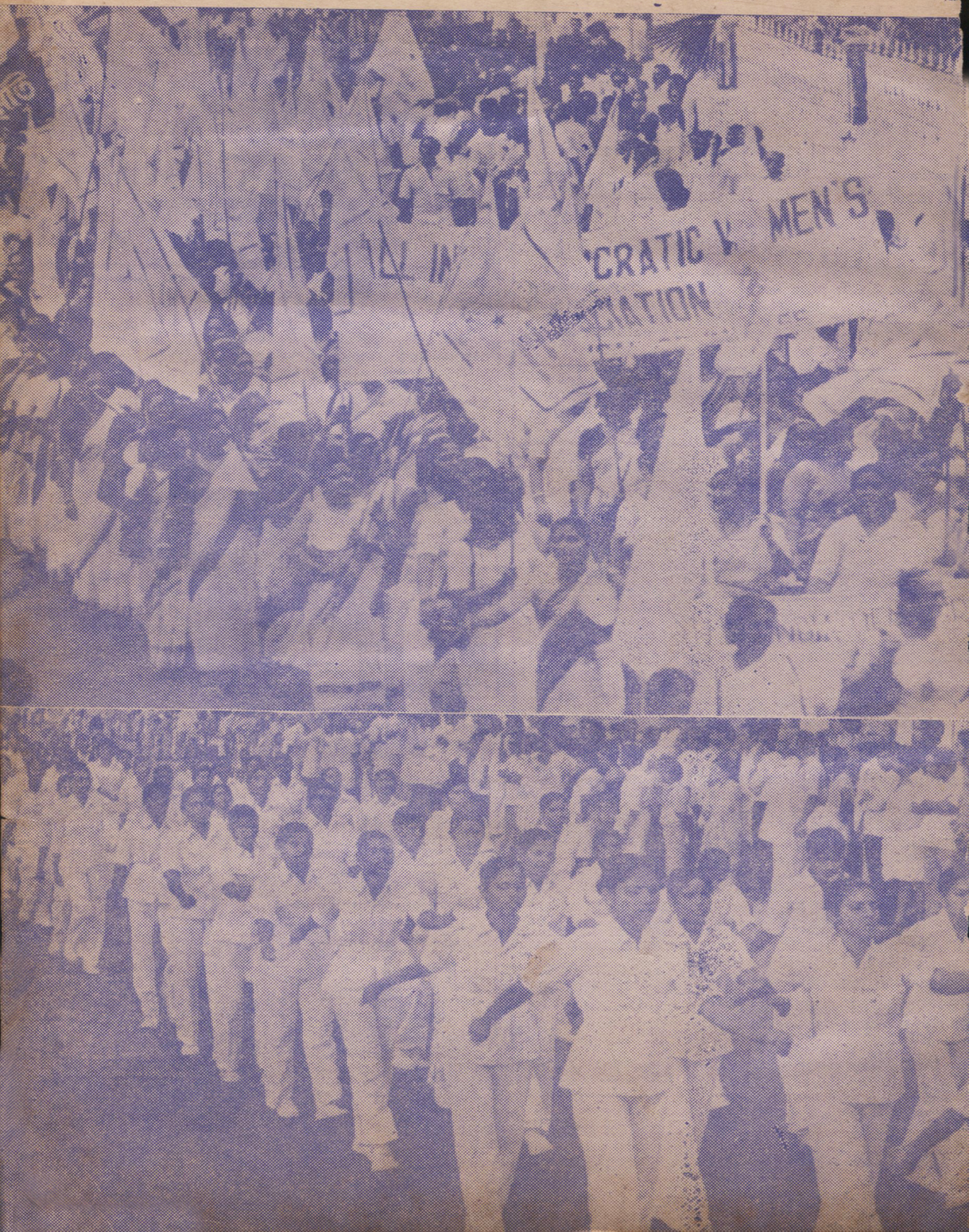
The enactment of a national compensation law for the atomic bomb suffered will mean an announcement of the nation's determination "never to make atomic victims again" with the nation compensating for atomic bomb damage. It will also be a promise to the world that Japan shall never again do harm to other nations.

We can never allow our country to be an A-bomb victim again or to deal a nuclear blow to other people.

Japanese women have been widening the range of their movements for the protection of peace and life, with the slogans.

"Mothers who give birth to life also wish to nurture and protect life."

Let us join hands so as to make "no more Hibakusha".


CRATIC
MEN'S