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A massive Peace March by AIDWA on 8th June '87 at Calcutta.



Clarion Call For Peace By AIDWA

Vimal Ranadive

"MA, Didi, we are grateful to you, we want peace". One poster said in the rally. "War against War", "We demand Peace", No more Hiroshima" No Nagasaki". The slogans thundered in the sky when thousands of women marched in the streets of Calcutta on 9th under the festoon of All India Peace Convention. Contingents of women from 17 States from Punjab to Kerala and Tamilnadu along with their separate banners, marched together under the banner of All India Democratic Women's Association, led by Susheela Gopalan Manjuri Gupta, Kanak Mukherjee, Vimal Ranadive, Laxmi Saigal, Pappa Umanath, Shamali Gupta, Mythily, Illa Bhattacharya, Vibha Goswami and Rajinder Kaur. It took three hours to reach the Esplanade maidan near the Lenin Statue where it terminated. The huge procession of women peace marchers were watched by thousands of onlookers from both sides. The rally was the culmination of the two days' convention held at the University Hall on 7 and 8th of June.

Preparation for the Convention

The preparation for the Peace Convention in Calcutta was going on for more than a month. An appeal signed by more than 200 citizens, amongst whom were writers, film artists, singers, promiment doctors, football players and so on, was distributed in thousands in English, Hindi, Urdu and Bengali. Hundreds of street corner meetings were addressed by the leaders of the Ganatantrik Mahila Samiti, in Calcutta and other nearby districts. Cultural squads, plays, posters were displayed all over the city. All this resulted in bringing out thousands of women in urban and rural areas for the rally. Hundreds of volunteers were present for the arrangement for the delegates coming from outside. A beautiful folder was printed in English with statistics of increasing war budgets which deprive medicines, hospitals, schools for the people, with a beautiful picture on the front cover. Hundreds of such folders were sent for the distribution at the World Congress of Women along with AIDWA delegates.

The open session began with songs on peace and presenting flowers by Kishor Vahini to all the delegates and guests assembled for the inauguration ceremony at 1.30 P.M. For all of us, it was a moving sight when some children with uniforms marched in the hall in the steps along with band and systematically sprayed themselves into the rows of people presenting flowers! This was our future life, which must be protected from the Nuclear and space wars by imperialist countries, USA the main enemy! The slogans went up, "No war, we want peace, No arms, We want food" "Stop war, we want life...." The audience whole heartedly welcomed the children with full of life....

Com. Jyoti Basu, Chief Minister, West Bengal inaugurated the Peace convention. He said it was an honour for the people of Calcutta to hold the peace convention here, the people traditionally being anti-imperialist and peace loving. The struggle for peace against imperialism's mechanisation to start war, is closely connected with the struggle for the rights of the women. Women do fight for

IN THIS ISSUE

Clarion Call For Peace	2-6
Special Session on Working Women—CITU Conference	7-16
Peace Convention in Punjab	17
Effects of Technological Change on Women	19
Sex Discrimination and Nursing Profession	20
Struggle of Isapgul Workers in Gujarat, Without Comments	21
World Congress of Women for Peace	22-23
New Discrimination System in Japan, Shortening of Maternity Leave in Hongkong	24

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their day to day demands, but the message of peace must reach the homes in rural areas, the support to women in Soviet Union who are actively fighting against war preparations must come from our Indian women. He expressed regrets that the enormous advances in science and technology were being used to threaten civilisation, to extinguish human life from the earth. He supported the concrete proposals for reduction of arms and elimination of nuclear stockpiles as proposed by Gorbachov, welcomed all over the world by peace loving people. He further said that there was the great need for accepting the two social systems and for co-existence, not a competition in annihilation of countries belonging to two different systems. Jyoti Basu congratulated the AIDWA for taking up the issue on a big way by holding the All India Peace Convention, the organisation has already become a powerful force in the struggle for women's rights in India".

The Mayor of Calcutta, Kamal Basu greeted the convention and expressed hope that the convention will take up the future programme of action to instil a sense of dedication and prepare the ground for the preservation of peace for the generations to come.

The delegates were welcomed with slogans and clapping when the Consul General of USSR, IVANOV greeted the convention. He said the deliberation in the convention would find a fruitful avenue for developing unity with women struggling for peace in other countries at the World Peace Congress being held at Moscow. He said, to establish peace in the world is not a dream. It can be achieved by the struggle and hoped the convention will show the way to women how to fight for it.

The representative of fighting people of Nicaragua, Mary Arranda was given a tumultous welcome when she addressed the delegates in Spanish and was translated in English by Sisilia Jalia, while greeting the delegates she narrated how the American imperialism is attacking the people of Nicaragua shamelessly. Women in Nicaragua are playing a heroic role in the struggle for their independence in their country. She praised the important role of women in Africa fighting against Apartheid Govt. She greeted the women in Soviet Union and supported the proposals of Soviet leader Gorbachov for peace.

There were many fraternal greetings, amongst whom prominent were from Shri Nara Narayan Gupta, Satya Sadhan Chakraborty, Sadhan Gupta, Gouripada Dutta, Bhavesh Moitra and Indranath Bandhapadhyay, on behalf of their organisations. Messages were received from Com. Saroj Mukherjee, Chairman of the Left Front West Bengal.

A message was received from the woman leader of British Labour Party Ms. Joan Ruddock, who expressed her inability to attend but greeted the Peace convention with the following words. "As you know, women have been in the forefront of the struggle for peace in this country. We believe that the influence of women in international politics is vital if we are to prevent a nuclear catastrophe. Increasingly, we in Europe have become aware of the adverse influence of our Government's nuclear strategies, not only on our own people and our economies but on those of developing nations as well. The maintenance of a war nuclear status by the majority of countries is essential if we are to force the nuclear states to disarm. We believe a new opportunity now exists in east-west relations and that the peace movements of the world should exert the minimum pressures on the super powers to reach agreement.... On behalf of all our British sisters I wish you well in your discussions.... With best wishes and hope for a non-nuclear and peaceful world...." The message roused the fraternal feelings of solidarity with the women in England.

Bani Dasgupta, NFIW and Shikha Maiti from Samajbadi Mahila Samiti greeted the delegates expressing solidarity with the organisation.

Afternoon Session Begins

At 3.30 P.M. on the 7th the Session began with the Introductory speech of Com. Manju Gupta, President of AIDWA. She said the question of disarmament must be seen also in relation to equal rights and development of women in society as a whole. The dream of a highly developed human being in the 21st century cannot be realised in an environment of deprivation, feudal bondage and superstri-

tion. While explaining as to how much money is spent on the war preparation, she said one-third of 650 billion dollars used every year for military needs and of the 15,000 billion dollars that will be spent in the coming decades, at the present growth rate of these expenditure, would be more than enough to ensure financial resources to solve the problems of entire world's economic and social development. Under such serious circumstances, it is necessary that broad based peace movement is organised in our country to oppose such steps by the imperialist countries.

Susheela Gopalan while giving a keynote address said the Peace movement has not yet taken shape in our country amongst women as it should be, except in West Bengal. Women are to be educated and organised on this question. She said that since 1946, the Soviet Union has been striving to eliminate nuclear weapons and end research aimed at the military use of nuclear power. In the last few years it has put forward a series of flexible and far reaching proposals visualising a world free of nuclear weapons by the year 2000. But the U.S. rejection of these proposals has completely exposed the imperialist conspiracy to retain domination over other nations by blocking the road to peace and development and escalating the threat of a nuclear holocaust whilst talking of peace. She then described the bogus theory of two super-powers. She appealed at the end to involve women in thousands in the peace movement.

Mythily Shivraman, Secretary of AIDWA, while submitting the paper on "the threat of Nuclear war and struggle for world peace, with specific reference to the role of women" assured at the outset "the deep commitment to the convention of world peace by AIDWA when the Nuclear holocaust is just nearby. It is a well established fact that United States, the world's biggest arms spender, accouting for 1/3 of global military expenditure is the initiater and pursuer of militarism, she stressed. Then Mythily informed as to how many peace proposals Soviet Union initiated, the latest one at Reykjavik. This showed the irrefutable demonstration of the Soviet determination to prevent a nuclear war. However it was rejected by Reagan for the sake of space War. On the contrary, Soviet Union has responded positively to the call to halt the arms race given by many International forums such as Non-alligned Movement, Stockholm conference on disarmament in Europe. In this context she refered to the Delhi declaration signed during M. Gorbachev's visit to India in Nov. 1986.

Turning to the pacific region she mentioned the installation of 3000 nuclear war heads here. In spite of many efforts made to keep the Indian Ocean a nuclear free zone, Diego Garcia, Indian Ocean island is being developed for strike weapons. U.S. frenzy to dominate the world and to reap super profits has created military blocks and mutual hostility, she explained.

While turning to the role of women in the peace movement, she praised the role played by Soviet women and in the developed capitalist countries, by the heroic women in Nicaragua, South Africa where confrontation against imperialism was taking place.

After appealing to the women to assert themselves on the question of Peace as an issue for women, as an urgent concern for mothers who give birth to life, she cited an example of the Hibakusha in Japan (Atomic Bomb surviver) when she said

"We can never escape from fear as long as nuclear weapons exist."

Shymali Gupta, Joint Secretary of AIDWA dealt in her speech the growth of the military industrial complex in the US, and emergence of the United States as the leader of the imperialist camp after World War II. The powerful multinational companies have moved to take over the control on the economic and political life of the newly independent countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, through IMF and World Bank. This led these countries into a debt trap where one must continue fresh borrowing to pay back old debts, leaving these countries helpless victims of imperialism. Nicaragua, States of Africa, Palestine are today bearing the main brunt of these policies. She said, "arming of Pakistan and increased militarisation of the region are meant as an immediate threat to India. Due to all this, resistance is increasing to imperialism. The struggle for peace and end to militarism is the common struggle of all the people in the world, in particular for the third world".

Vimal Ranadive, Vice President of AIDWA spoke on the subject of "women in the movement of peace in India and the world over". She gave a number of instances as to how women in the world are fighting for peace against the war danger. In this context, she cited the example of women's heroic resistance to cruise missiles in Greenham common in England who sat day and night in winter as well as summer. Women in America lay in street before Pentagan Headquarters obstructing the warheads carried by American Soldiers. Although women in India have not gone through the horrible experience of war, yet the present situation in the country is serious in view of arming of Pakistan by USA and expansion of its military base at Diego Garcia. Turning to the peace campaign run by AIDWA during last two to three years, which was however not enough, she brought out the weakness in the movement which has not reached as yet to many urban and rural women. She debunked the theory of two "Super powers" and urged upon the delegates to explain it to the people who were trying to wage war and who were fighting for peace. In this context, she referred to the feminists in our country who are silent on this question. She appealed to the delegates to reach the women in all the corners of our country who are yet to realise the horrible consequences of the Nuclear war.

More than 15 women delegates from different states spoke on the three subjects introduced in the session. K. Aruna and Kamaya (Andhra Pradesh), Sudha Bindu Mitra (Bihar) Nalini Tadeja (Gujarat), Anagha Shinde (M.P), Razia Khatoon (Assam), Sumitra Chopra (Rajasthan), Tapasi (Orissa), Rama Das (Tripura), Sudda (Tamilnadu), Shuba (Haryana), Rajinder Kour (Panjab), Usha Thomare (Maharashtra), Kalindi Deshpandhe (Delhi), Konika Ganguli and Sarla Maheshwari (West Bengal), Harini Kakari (Karnataka) and V. K. Anandan P. K. Shreemati (Kerala) and Gangadivi (U. P.) spoke on different aspects, on the campaign for peace and how to prevent war.

Laxmi Saigal moved the resolution on Peace, which was supported by Pappa Umanath both Vice-President of AIDWA which was adopted unanimously.

Kanak Mukherjee, Vice-President of AIDWA, concluded the Peace convention pinpointing the tasks. She said the convention was a good beginning as India has not done it before. For the first time the AIDWA has commenced such a convention with delegates attending from 17 States. During second world war, women in India came together on a patriotic anti-imperialist platform. During that war, women's movement took a new turn as anti-fascist movement. In April 1941, when the Soviet Union was attacked, the women's committee gave a call to women to defend the Soviet Union and the WIDF was formed in 1945. Being anti-imperialists from its inception it was AIDWA that called for the Peace convention, before the world congress of women is held. When we decided to hold the convention many people, organisations came forward to help with money, Volunteers and so on. On behalf of AIDWA she thanked those organisations.

She further said, in the world, there are two systems, capitalist and socialist. Equality, democracy and emancipation of women are being realised only in socialist countries. This should be explained to the people when we face the danger of Nuclear holocaust. All the scientific and technological advances are not being used for development purposes, but for destruction.

"Today, the most powerful and widest international movement is Peace. What is imperialism doing in South Africa, Nicaragua? They are trying to destroy the national integrity and independence of the newly liberated countries. Without stopping the arms race world can't continue to exist. The first question is to live or die? After that only all other questions come up." Turning to the present situation in India Kanak Mukherjee said, India is in the non-aligned movement. We welcome the joint declaration by Indian and Soviet guests. But we must take it to the people because our Govt is unable to do it. The Congress policies are allowing the imperialists to destabilise the country, communal forces are being encouraged, GNLF is supported by the imperialists, all these issues, we must take to the people. We must see that India remains in the peace camp, in favour of socialist camp.

What are the tasks facing us today? "Only exbitions, cultural programmes, workshops are not enough. All programmes taken up by us must be linked to expose anti-imperialist divisive forces and peace issues, integrated into day to day work. Therefore our main political task is to link the peace movement with all other programmes. The situation is different in different states, we have to take the issue to the widest section of the people. We should have State conventions on peace and war issue. Use more imaginative ways to take the issue while linking to the day to day issue. From the centre we will send the literatures to the States regarding the peace issue. We must put pressure on the Govt to use the Media for propaganda about the war danger, which they are not doing at present.

The role of Sri Lanka and Pakistan is disturbing. These countries do not stand for peace. Our organisation must look beyond the limited sphere of our country, to countries of the sub-continent. In Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, we must arouse the consciousness of women. There are women's organisations there, they do maintain contact with us. Pakistani women are fighting against "burqua". Mobilise women of these countries to pressurise their Govts to settle their demands. We must play a leading role in linking all these women and bringing them into the international peace movement."

Some of the Wellknown Personalities Signed an Appeal for Peace

The following eminent personalities in West Bengal and wellknown all over India signed the appeal extending their co-operation to the peace convention. Dr. B.D. Nagchowdhary and Dr. Ramen Potdar, famous scientist and Vice Chancellers of Calcutta University; Chandrabati Debi and Kanan Debi, great film actresses; Manimalla Roy, reknowned play writer; Mrunal Sen and Utpal Dutta, film Directer and actor; Suchitra Mitra and Manavendra Mukhopadhay, famous singers; Dr. Abirlal Mukharjee, Dr. Bhaskar Roychowdhary, famous physicians; Sailen Manna, Chuni Goswami, great footballers; Dr. Beladutta Gupta Dr. Renuka Roy, social worker.

While concluding her speech, Com. Kanak appealed to the delegates to save our children, our future generation from Nuclear devastation. Alongwith the fight for peace, fight against the social oppression, inequality and emancipation. Let us go with the sense of responsibility from this convention, stronger with our duty for world peace to realise our motto of democracy equality and emancipation.

The session concluded with slogans and singing the popular song, "We shall overcome' by all the delegates standing. The highlight of the session was the puppet show, ,,the Spark of the cherry blossoms" staged by Peoples Puppet Theatre, appreciated by delegates so much.

Statewise Participants In the Convention

Delegates to AIDWA Peace Convention, Calcutta — 7, 8 June, 1987

1.	West Bengal	: 224
2.	Bihar	: 29
3.	Tamilnadu	: 26
4.	Tripura	: 18
5.	Kerala	: 13
6.	Orissa	: 16
7.	Assam	: 21
8.	Punjab	: 9
9.	U.P.	: 9
10.	Andhra Pradesh	: 8
11.	Maharashtra	: 7
12.	Gujarat	: 6
13.	Delhi	: 5
14.	Haryana	: 4
15.	Rajasthan	: 4
16.	Madhya Pradesh	: 4
17.	Karnataka	: 1
		404

Greetings from Mrs Joshkin Ludmilla, Cultural Department of the USSR Consulate General Calcutta to the Peace Convention.

In 1917 during the first days of the trimpuh of Soviet power, when all powers of social injustice were abolished, decrees were issued

(*Contd. on page 16)*

Speech made at the 6th Conference of CITU

By Vimal Ranadive

WHILE placing the report. I am glad that a special session on the problems of working Women and their participation is being discussed in the full session of the conference, thus getting an opportunity to place our views before all the delegates. I am sure this will hasten the progress of the work among the working women to bring them in the mainstream of the common struggle of the working class against the present social system, Congress Rule.

The problems of working women are being discussed widely today in our country by various organisations, CITU taking up the lead to organise them by formation of All India Co-ordination Committee in 1979. During last 7 years the work among the working women has increased, the specific problems of working women such as their retrenchment, discrimination in wages, unequal remuneration, provision of creche have been taken up in different States by the State Co-Ordination Committee, as well as by the women's wings formed under the different Federation and Associations working in the middle class employees. It is true, though we have not been able to bring the complete solutions to the above mentioned problems of working women to our satisfaction, the AICCWW has come to be known to the working women as a Committee for fighting for the cause of working women. Because of the role of CITU, the Central Govt had to pay attention to our Co-Ordination Committees, by writing and replying to our representation made on various question. The report submitted here will show, we have been able to tackle a few problems like creche, maternity benefit, irregular transfers, transport, etc., While highlighting the issue of drastic retrenchment of women workers by the introduction of mechanisation, and unequal wages. The intervention of the AICCWW and CITU compelled the Government to take steps in solving some of the problems to a certain extent.

Women, the first victim of unemployment

It is acknowledged that women workers are the first victims whenever the question of retrenchment arise under capitalism. In India, the number of women employed in the organised sector has not increased much.

The women job seekers on the live register as per the figures increased from 3138000 in 1982 to 50,98000 in 1986, the increase in percentage being 15.9 in 1982 to 16.9 to total number of job seekers on the live-register. On the other hand, the placement of women is very much less as the report points out. The retrenchment is noticeable wherever women constituted in a large number such as Jute and Textile, Mines and Tobacco. Only one instance is enough to show the attitude of the Government towards the question of jobs for women. The Baveja Committee appointed by the Central Government has permitted the Coal Industry to retrench 50,000 women wagon loaders in Mines. Most of the women working here are out. The small Green thresbing plant machine introduced in the Tobacco by Multinational Company I.L.T.D. retrenched thousands of women from Labour intensive industries.

The introduction of mechanisation processes in Coir, Agriculture etc. will affect thousands of women who are traditionally employed in these sector.

As the report has pointed out in detail, the striking feature affecting the employment of women, is the rapid growth of the unorganised sector and homebased industries who have been displaced from the industries due to closures, retrenchments, mechanisation etc. The home based indutries and part time work for women has become a profit making business of the Multinations in the Capitalist world. The percentage of such industries, in India, Malaysia, in South Asia and other places has increased considerably according to the ILO statistics. In amost all the cities in India, one finds small scale homebased work done mostly by women and children spending hours of work to earn just a meagre salary. Important point to be noted here is the com-

plete denial of any legislation and welfare benefit. There is no security of jobs and no employer-employee-relations, the work is given by middlemen and contractors. The report has dealt in detail about this section and their working conditions. The women in Agriculture are a part of his huge unemployment in our Country.

The recent announcements of the Central Government to import the hi-technique computers and so on will affect the middle-class women employees in the offices in thousands who are employed as clerks, typists, stenos, etc. There is no guarantee given by the Government for alternative jobs to those who would be victimised.

The CITU and All India Co-ordination Committee have taken up the question of job security, regularisation of thousands of women working in unskilled jobs. Major section in Construction is of women. Women in Integrated Child Development Schemes (ICDS), called Anganawadis, Balwadis, Women Health employees, have no regular work, their wages are very poor and no statutory legislation applied to them.

Right to work as a Fundamental Right

Under such circumstances, the right to work assumes a great importance for the working women in our country. The CITU has already called upon the State Co-ordination Committees to pay more attention to the women in the unorganised sector and to those who are unemployed while demanding the right to work as a fundamental right to be incorporated in the constitution and in the absence of this the workers should get unemployment relief. The question of jobs for men and women has become very serious and unless drastic measures like generating employment through industrialisation and land reforms in the countryside are taken up by the Government this question will assume serious proportion.

Maternity Benefit as a Right to motherhood

We demanded maternity benefit as a right to motherhood, a social necessity under the present social system where women have to work at home and in the factory or any other place. The role of a mother necessitates her to demand a minimum four months leave and maternity benefit according to her choice. The statistical data provided in the report will speak as to how payment of maternity benefit is avoided under various pleas and how thousands of women in the unorganised sector and women contract workers are deprived of the benefit. The temporary and casual women workers are not covered under the Maternity Benefit Act 1961. The medical Bonus of Rs. 25/- is just a hoax for a mother with a child. If a women employee has a miscarriage, she is denied the maternity leave and payment despite the rules under the Act.

The recent announcement of 4th Pay Commission has restricted the right to Maternity benefit upto two children. The Congress rulers at the centre and the state level have already started implementing, the recommendations as in case of Orissa Govt. This is done in the name of "population Control" and the "objective of a small family". The Commission has not explained whether one year maternity leave as sanctioned is to be paid leave as it is under the socialist government.

The quantum of the maternity benefit is so small, that the recuperation of a mother is not possible with that amount with the existing high level of prices of medicines and essential commodities.

The working women demand, therefore, the right to maternity Benefit as a social necessity, when congress rulers claim "motherhood as a sacred right" in the directive principle, it is the duty of the Government that every woman employee gets the 4 months leave according to her choice and those who are not covered under the Act should be entitled to get the leave and benefit. Unmarried should not be insulted and deprived of benefit under the charge of "moral terpitude" as it was done in case of Bhuj telephone operatar in Gujarat. She won the case in the Supreme Court and got her benefit in the end.

Provision of Creche

A working mother has a right to the provision of creche at the working place. They are entitled to get this under the Factory Act or Mines, and Plantation Act. In the absence of

the creche, a working mother can not concentrate on her work and the children suffer physically and mentally. The figures given in the report, the remarks made by various committees, and journals, show that in almost all the industries, the provision of creche is negligent, the facilities are rare. Secondly, this provision is not yet extended to the women employees in the offices and establishments despite the repeated demands made by the AICCWW. This issue has been left to the whims of the managements to the availability of proper place for the creche, and to the voluntary organisations. One connot understand the policies of the Goverment which has double standard, one for women workers in the industries and the other for women employees, mothers. The difference in the attitudes of the capitalist and Socialists Governments to this question is so obvious here. Working mothers under any Socialist country are looked after very well, leave is granted for 6 months or even more if necessary with full pay, and the children in the creches very well cared for.

The CITU and State Co-ordination Committee have to take this question very seriously and see the implementation of the provision of creche while demanding its extension to the women employees in offices etc.

Wages of women — very poor and unequal

Women workers in general get poor wages. considering the existing high prices in the market it is not possible for the family to live. Women in the organised industries are paid Rs. 8-9 on an average in plantations or in Mines. Over and above that they get unequal wages for "the same nature of work" for men and women. In Construction and Railway under the Public Sector, women get Rs. 2-3 less wages than the men. In Beedi, garment, electronics etc. also, women get the poor wages since they are mainly working in "women preferred industries", as per the Government reports. The working conditions of women in homebased industries are already dealt with in the report highlighting the cruel exploitation of their cheap labour, by paying them just meagre wages, while the middlemen and the employers get huge profits.

Despite the ILO convention on Equal Remuneration and the Equal Remuneration Act passed in 1976, the unequal wage continues in various industries with no proper enforcement machinery to implement the legislations concerning women.

The discrimination in wages, promotion, and in employment continues at various places while the Government expresses helplessness to implement the legislations.

The representation by the CITU and the AICCWW, as well as the intervention by the ILO and other international bodies, perhaps, the Government was now thinking in terms of amendment of the Equal Remuneration Act, to make the Act more stringent.

Training Facilities

Women are generally employed in "women preferred" industries and in unskilled jobs. The Ministry of Labour has announced a number of schemes for training women. Vocational training facilities, colleges, courses, etc. are granted by the schemes. The charts given in the reports along with the chapter in training facilities will convey, what type of training is supposed to be given for women. They are given training mainly for "Hair and Skin Care", garment, Secretarial Practices, Electronics, Dress making" and so on. The training in Engineering industries in skill jobs are preserved for men only. The total number of women and men trained, given in the table will no doubt prove the attitude of the organisers and the congress rulers as to what they would prefer for women, and which skills.

There is no doubt that unless women are trained in skilled jobs, they will not be promoted with high salaries. Because of their not being skilled they were retrenched from Jute and Textile etc. But the argument forwarded by the management to deny these facilities to women are "they do not stick to the jobs" or "after some years they leave the job after their marriage" which is not true. In today's conditions, women would like to stick to the jobs with whatever social burdens they had to go through. The Government in fact is not serious about the employment, training facilities, creche and so on for women.

There are night shifts for women at some places like in fisheries despite the ban on night shifts. Women are suffering due to health hazards due to working in Mines, fisheries and Cashew. There is no protection against these hazards given by the management with the result women workers get lung diseases. The fingers become useless after working for 5 years in fisheries.

Discrimination Against Women All Round

Working Women in Pharmaceutical industries are discharged as soon as the management comes to know they are marked. Many girls continue to work with their maiden name afraid of loosing their job. The significant case of Air hostesses in Air India and Indian Airlines is welknown. The age bar for retirement for them was 40, if she is unmarried while a man steward can continue to work upto 55. The arguments forwarded by the management in the court for early retirement were their 'looks'. They are not able to please the customers after they get elderly. These unashamed arguments of the management were also supported by the late woman Prime Minister and the Parliament members of the Congress party. Only the progressive judgement given by the Supreme Court gave limited justice to the Air hostesses.

What about the Legislations?

The Government itself expresses its inability to enforce their laws concerning women. Then, can anybody expect the laws to be abided by the employers? CITU and AICCWW wrote to the Government and the concerned authorities about the non-implementation of equal Remuneration Act, Retrenchment of women, Discrimination in regularisation of workers, Maternity Benefit and so on. The reply always was "it is a state subject" or "enforcement machinery is weak". AICCWW suggested drastic changes, in the legislations, as well as the association of trade unions, women's organisations and co-ordination committees with the enforcement machinery. But the Government which recognises the "voluntary bodies", is not willing to invite the co-operation of trade unions or AICCWW, which would have surely helped the implementation of the legislations. The trade unions committees of women in Socialist countries are doing a marvellous work in case of working women's conditions, their legislations, difficulties, etc. in factories and other places.

Specific Problems of Working Women

Specific problems of transfer, transport for nurses, night duty for telephone operators, etc. are dealt in the report. A question of transfer of working women at far off placcs dealt by CITU and AICCWW in a few cases resulted in getting some justice to women arbitrarily transferred. Because of our persuing the case, some decisions taken by the Govt. in 1979 on this question of transfer should help the working women. Many women working in offices will benefit from these decision. Because of security reasons, the nurses and telephone operaters do need transport, hostels for working women. The Govt though it promissed that in the course of 7th five year plan, 300 hostels for working women will be built, nothing much has yet been done.

Economic Policies of the Central Government Towards Working Women

Women are entering the Labour market on a large scale, due to the economic conditions existing in our country. But they are the worst sufferers, unable to find even any petty job just to survive from the acute economic crises. Various plans and schemes offered by the Central Govt in the 6th and 7th five year plans, under such circumstances make a mockery of the slogans raised by the Congress rulers for the development of our women in every sphere during the women's Decade. The Planning Commission set up a commission "on employment of women" in 1979, the findings were published in 1985. Before the General election in 1984, a National Committee on women met again with the Union Minister in chair to discuss the "discrimination against women". The Government was fully aware of the 30.70 lakh of women unemployed in 1982. Many were employed as part timers like EDP. The wages were only Rs. 250-300 P.M. without any other benefits. What did the Govt take steps to increase the employment among women, to increase their wages, to abolish the discrimination in wages, etc.?

The Congress rulers have found a new

panacea for the present situation of unemployment, and that is "self-employment" and "part-time jobs". A Committee has recently been formed under the chairmanship of Mrs. Ila Bhatt, to study the question of home based industries and employment. The committee recommended as per the report "to consider the time rate system for employment in all sphere and activities".

If the time rate system is introduced, it will surely help women who are the piece rated workers. But who will believe, the above statements when, unemployment continue to increase day by day, factories are being closed, mechanisation is being introduced?

Then came the 20 point programme on 15th of August 1986. So far the programme goes nothing is wrong. Any Government can announce these welfare steps for women. We have been hearing them since the women's decade and also earlier. Whatever was done with regard to Dowry Amendment Act, it was due to joint pressure of the women's movement.

The attitude of the bourgeois Government could be very well noted by the progressive people when the Muslim women's protection bill was passed to appease the Muslim Fundamentalists. Therefore, with so many promises, 20 point programmes announcements in the women's Decade etc. at Nairobi Conference on the development of women, equality and equal status not much has come out. Perhaps some few women will get employment under the "self employment scheme" a few working women's hostels will come up in a few years time, ICDS schemes in rural areas will come up when a few women will get jobs with Rs. 150-200 as wage. These are the programmes announced by the Welfare Ministry.

The results of these economic policies is seen in women from all classes coming out daily in demonstrations, rallies, Dharnas, hunger strikes and strikes. Working women have become more conscious about their rights, of the right to work and the policies that are responsible for keeping their status low. This also shows that no bourgeois government can grant an equal status for women "howsoever advanced capitalist country" it may be. Working women have to launch struggles for their rights along with their menfolk to wrench them from the Government.

Left Front Governments

In the light of the above performance of the Congress rule the performance of the Left Front Governments, with regard to women's employment, and welfare benefits, equal remuneration is to be noted. The Welfare Ministry in West Bengal could provide jobs to 19,000 women in ICDS Scheme, giving nutrition food for children. Under Congress rule there were only 2 projects, now there are 800. Tripura Left Front Govt. was the first Govt to apply the Equal Remuneration Act. Under Nayanar Govt in Kerala 236 creches were established which were discontinued as soon as the Congress Govt. returned to power. Minimum wages Act was implemented for men and women under these Government.

Participation of women workers in Trade Unions

If we review our work during last 7 years with regard to the participation of women workers in Trade Unions, we have to admit the situation has not changed considerably. Yes, changes are there to a certain extent. CITU unions pay more attention to the problems of working women, Conferences have been organised on their problems under CITU and under their Federations, Co-ordination Committees have been formed, at some states, women's wings have come up in the offices, and composition of the executive committees of unions where women membership is preponderate, is also changing a bit. They are being taken on the committees. But it is also a fact that the centre, the leadership of CITU has to remind repeatedly about this to the states and district committees. Complaints from the State Co-ordination committees towards the CITU continue to come and many times intervention had to be made. That shows the old outlook among the comrades and leaders still persists and this struggle in CITU must continue so that the total movement of the working class can move forward.

In many states, the women's wings and the co-ordination committees have not yet been formed despite the great possibilities of mobilising women workers. Committees formed are

not functioning properly, many comrades as yet do not know the purpose of starting these wings. They think it is an organisation of women employees, and membership is to be done.

In the report submitted, the relevant portions from the State CITU's reports on the working women have been quoted. Many committees have criticised themselves for not paying sufficient attention to the problems and their promotion on the committee. Also some committees have done important work on this question despite the fact the co-ordination committee or women's wings were not functioning. On the whole, much more progress should have been there during so many years.

The State-Co-ordination Committees too are not functioning as they should. There is no discussion among CITU and co-ordination committee as to how the work can be improved.

Membership of Women in Trade Unions

As is mentioned in the report, the membership of women in Trade Unions is very poor except in three states, Kerala, West Bengal and Karnataka. Our comrades in the co-ordination committees too have not paid sufficient attention to this issue, from the centre, AICCWW also not much guidance on this was given. In the chart prepared by our Central office of the membership of the unions the membership of women in 1985 is 1,70,700 out of 15,50,839, i.e. it is above 10 per cent of the total. But major sections consist of 3 States in the main. The other aspect in the table shows, the poor participation of women on the executive bodies, where women constitute a major force. In one of the unions in Kerala, where women's membership is 10,695 in 1985 only one office-bearer is a woman. There are so many instances like this. Women are not yet promoted to higher position. The report had spoken in detail about this weakness in CITU. Our progress towards this is not satisfactory. We have to make serious efforts to enrol women in their unions and bring them on the committees. Conscious efferts have to be made by our women comrades also in this respect since the question of education too to involved.

Women workers and their committees have rightly criticised the Feudal outlook of our comrades. Some leaders have said "women have to look after the children" so they cannot attend the conferences. The number of women delegates will be much less compare to men where the conference is of plantations workers. Women are the major force here. Due to their double work, it is difficult for them to attend also. This difficulty is to be removed by the male comrades, and they must help them to educate, politically.

International Trade Union Movement Takes up the question of Working Women

It was WFTU which organised the first Conference of World Working women in 1979. It pointed out the weaknesses in Trade Union Movement with regard to the problems of working women and appealed them to promote them on the higher committees. In other countries too, these questions are dealt seriously. In the latest issue of World working class movement (WFTU) again WFTU warned about the shortcomings of the trade unions in this field. They have given a call for another conference of working women.

Comrades,

Women in all capitalist countries are launching struggles for their demands, for equal status and equal wages. They are also fighting for peace, with big mobilisations againt Reagan's efferts to start Star War and Nuclear wars. In our country, we note a tremendous awakening among all sections of women on their problems They are launching big struggle about which many instances have been given in the report. They are fighting for the right to establish their union, despite, the heavy odds, repression, arrests, sexual harassments and so on. During these struggles, they are becoming class conscious, and come to know who are their enemies and who are their friends. Instances have been given how wisely they protect the leadership, while fighting for their unions. Unless these sections are brought into the mainstream of the struggle, the total movement of the working class and democratic movement is bound to remain weak. The success of this movement depends upon how quickly we over come the feudal tendencies in the trade union movement and

bring working women in the mainstream of the struggle against the congress rule.

With the serious attacks on the workers and working women, the responsibility of State Committees of CITU and Co-ordination Committees have increased many fold. The important point to be noted is the increasing struggles of working women. The economic cr.sis, the reactionary policies persued by the Government towards the working women compel all of them to launch struggles. Therefore, CITU and Co-ordination Committees must organise them on their rising problems, mobilise them in their unions and bring them in the forefront of the union. Without this, the task of changing the present exploitative social system will be unreal and total emancipation of women will remain a far cry. I hope, the delegates assembled here will give a thought to this and move ahead with confidence to take up the cause of working women.

Special Session on Working Women

For the first time in the history of trade union movement in our country one full session of CITU Conference was dedicated to the issue "Problems of Working women and their participation in trade unions". The discussion on this question which took place among men and women delegates helped them to understand the weaknesses of the trade union movement. It is to be noted that there were 134 women delegates out of 2446 which is not very good. In 4th Conference held at Kanpur in 1982, there were only 50 women delegates and observers. CITU centre has asked state units to fix some quota for women delegates and hence, the number was a little more this time, but nevertheless, it was less than the quota fixed.

Com. Vimal Ranadive, Secretary, All India Co-ordination Committee of Working women placed the report before the delegates. (the speech is given elsewhere).

In all, 19 total women delegates and one male delegate spoke. Many women delegates raised some important points in their speeches which are given below.

Com. Ramanika Gupta from Bihar said, women can certainly take part in the meetings. But difficulty is, they have to take their small children along with them. When women in Mica mines work, their children sleep under the railway wagons because there are no creches. There is no maternity benefit for agricultural women and not even toilets where they work in coal mines. It is to be noted that where men and women have fought together wages are the same...."

Com. Punnavathy from Andhra said, "After the Kanpur Conference 8 women are taken on the State Committee. There are feudal tendencies in our unions and they are to be fought. The women in agricultural are getting only Rs. 120/- per month. We have not yet gone to this section to organise them. The Co-ordination Committee in Andhra Pradesh is not properly functioning and we must see it functions."

Com. Chandra from Tamilnadu said, "Job security is the main problem for working women. Just because they are women they never get permanent job. Women workers are not getting maternity benefit and some time they had to work facing health hazards. Despite the ban on night shifts, women are asked to work in night shifts without providing them transport. The safety of women workers also is involved in the night work. Beedi women workers are deprived of provident fund. Women activists are victimised and CITU activists are the first among them. In Kanyakumari district, the missionaries are playing disruptive role in the unions. Women workers in Umapumash fought against the unbearable workload."

Com. Gargi from West Bengal said, "We tried our level best to organise women in CITU, and also try to organise unorganised women in CITU. Wherever modernisation is taking place women are the first victims..."

Com. Indumati from Orissa said, "women tribal workers are the most exploited section of the working class. But they are also most militant. There is no proper legislation for working women."

Com. Madhu Sethia from Rajasthan said, "the welfare Bill on working women moved by Com. Susheela Gopalan in Parliament is not being taken up by us. It should be

popularised. We are also not taking pain to involve working women in the organisation If a worker retires or dies, a man is replaced. but if woman dies she is not replaced by a woman. This is discrimination. In Rajasthan, in many small scale factories women are not getting minimum wages..."

Com. T.K. Rangarajan from Tamilnadu said, "it is true, the question of organising working women is not given sufficient attention, we fail to put a woman comrade to organise working women's front. But in many industrial unions in Tamilnadu women office-bearers are now appointed with special attention. We held a special convention of working women in the unorganised industries when 350 delegates from a number of industries were present."

Com. Laxmi Saighal from U.P. said, "the committee formed in Kanpur is not functioning but we are going to reorganise it. At many places, the name of CITU itself rightens the women. We have to take some time to convince them about the cause..."

Com. Shibani Jamatiya from Tripura said, "Since British days, tribal women are fighting against the slavery system. Many women were killed in firing when in struggle. The TUJS in Tripura try to break the unity between Bengali and Tribals. They set fire to our houses. They treat Bengalis as foreigners. But our unity is intact ..."

Com. Seema from Assam, who works in Tea plantation said, "we are deprived of all facilities including the rights which are sanction by legislations. We do not get equal wage, medicines. We do work hard and launch struggles to keep the red flag high. Even police and management were not successful to supress us..."

Com. Ahilya Rangnekar from Maharashtra welcomed the decision of formation of working women co-ordination committee and said, "it proved correct. In Maharashtra out of 65 lakhs agriculture workers, 38 lakhs are women. These women will have to be organised, otherwise some reactionery forces will mislead them. These women get job only for 3-4 months in a year. The Central Government appointed a committee recently to study the self-emloyment among women. The condition of these women is very bad, with no legislation. The number of women in Textiles in Bombay had decreased considerably and it is only 5000 now. The question of transfer for a woman to far off places creats problems for her, besides she gets lower designation. Woman in Anganwadi are paid very little, and after working for 10 years they are still temporary, in Pharmaceutical industry, women were not allowed to marry earlier, on the question of promotion, there is discrimination.

Com, Nazzimunissa from Kerala, while welcoming the step taken by CITU to hold the special session on working women, said the Kerala delegation this time is included 25 woking women because of centre's instructions. At the State level we have to do a lot for working women's participation in trade unions. We have to fight against the feudal tendencies in CITU. In many struggles women participate in large number such as in coir, cashew. All these women must be organised and promoted to higher positions ..."

Com. Rajamma from Karnataka said "with a large number of women we are not yet able to function our co-ordination committee. In Beedi Conference recently held 10,000 women participated in a rally. With a large number of working women in Karnataka, we have to try to function the co-ordination committee with the help of CITU comrades."

Com. Sandhya from Madhya Pradesh said, "we started organising working women under CITU. But it is the view of some comrades that it is the duty of women activists only. Most of the comrades treat women as women. It is necessary to have a woman wholetimer to work on trade union fronts. Next time we come to the CITU session we will build the movement, we promise."

Com. Sumati Rainee from Darjeeling West Bengal said, "Darjeeling district has a glorious history of women's participation in struggles. Today our women are fighting against the divisive forces of Gurkhaland."

Com. Nirupama Chatterjee from West Bengal gave, examples of closed mills in Bengal due to capitalist crisis. Women are denied jobs. They are not given facilities, and proper

legislation. In coal industry, women are being retrenched on a large scale...."

Com. Ranjana from Delhi appreciated holding a special session of the conference on the problems of working women. Delhi CITU has not many unions where women are employed in large number. Some unions are dominated by reactionary leadership. The homebased industries on a wage of Rs. 1-2 are increasing. There is no creche and maternity benefit is curtailed by the Government. There is no unionisation among women workers. We need cadres to work among women...."

Com. Saroja from Andhra Pradesh said, "it is only CITU which is making efforts to mobilise industries women, even in State Govt. industries women are not getting equal remuneration. Major section comes from unorganised sector where conditions of women are very bad. In Vijayawada, in one of the factories, a condition for employment was women should not marry first two years of her employment. In one instance a worker marrying another woman worker the factory owner removed both from services. Six months strike took place under the banner of CITU, AITUC etc. In Hyderabad, there are 20,000 women Beedi workers and we succeeded in getting minimum wages for them. In the recent strike of nurses we played an important role...."

Com. Padmavati from Karnataka congratulated CITU for taking up the case of working women. More than 80 per cent of Beedi workers are women. Main problem of beedi workers is contract system. This system should be banned once for all, and beedi workers should be provided with all the benefits. There are health hazards like TB etc., in working in Beedi. The CITU has taken up the question of working women, and it should continue to guide us."

The whole session was devoted to the question of working women. Com. BTR while summing up the debate said,

"19 women spoke and this itself is a record for CITU. . Only one male comrade from Tamilnadu dared to face the task. The problems faced by women workers are reflected in the speeches of each of the participants. I know, that now you will take the case more seriously. Tomorrow, it will be reflected in the resolution which will be placed before you.

"One thing before you leave, between you and me. The debate was not as hot as I expected. I think that women got a little cowed down, knowing you, as you are they did not want to provoke you too much. Anyway, the situation is clear now.

Resolution on Working Women

The Sixth Conference of CITU condemns the Government for its failure to take any determined measure for women, to improve their employment position, and to stop discrimination aganist them.

That the worsening economic situation is forcing more and more women to seek for jobs can be seen from the colossal increase in the registered number of women job seekers, which have gone up from 23.45 lakhs at the end of 1980 to 50.98 lakhs at the end of 1986. The claim of the Government to have generated increased employment to women is falsfied by its own data which has revealed that women's employment from 1980-81 to 1984-85 has remained almost static at around 12 per cent to the total employment, taking public and private sectors together.

Apart from their growing unemployment, women are the first victims of retrenchment due to modernisation, computerisation, etc. Discrimination of women continues despite the enactment of the Equal Remuneration Act, which is not being implemented by the employers. Their specific demands are ignored. Maternity benefit is discontinued after the

6th Conference of CITU

The Number of women delegates	:	134 out of 2446
The number of women on the General Council	:	20 out of 376
The number of women members on the working Committee	:	5 out of 107
The number of women office bearers	:	3 out of 26

birth of two children in the name of controlling population. Contract and casual women workers have no legal protection.

The conference warmly greets the working women who are waging valiant struggles to defend their rights and interests. It draws the attention of the unions to the fact that working women constitute an important part of working class and are its most exploited section. But the unions have been neglecting, their case. It expresses concern that while in several states the Co-ordination Committees of Working Women have not been formed at all, even those where it has been formed are not functioning properly. The Conference directs all the State Committees and the unions to form such committees and secure their active participation in union activities at all levels. They must demand for associating the Working Women's Coordination Committees in the committees for enforcement of labour laws and for formulating policies at all levels.

Names of the Women Members in the General Council

1.	S. Punyawathi	: Andhra Pradesh
2.	Ramnika Gupta	: Bihar
3.	Padmavati	: Karnataka
4.	M.M. Rajamma	: Karnataka
5.	A. Nazimuniza	: Kerala
6.	M.K. Kamalamma	: Kerala
7.	P. Rethnamma	: Kerala
8.	Krishnabai	: Tamilnadu
9.	Laxmi Sahgal	: Uttar Pradesh
10.	Arati Dasgupta	: West Bengal
11.	Shibani Sengupta	: -Do-
12.	P. Gangamma	: -Do-
13.	Nisha Roy	: -Do-
14.	Nirupama Chatterjee	: -Do-
15.	Radhika Sinha	: -Do-
16.	Kala Tamang	: -Do-
17.	Jethimaya Raini	: -Do-
18.	Lila Das	: -Do-
19.	Dipali Bose	: -Do-
20.	Gargi Mukherjee	: -Do-

(from page 6)

proclaiming the equality of women's rights with those of men. But it is one thing to make declarations and quite another to put them into effect. The young society exerted considerable efforts to make the equality of women a reality. Today, after completing a trade school, a college or a university, young women receive diplomas and are assigned jobs. Older women also always find work. The law is on their side. The constitution specifies that women have the right to work on a par with them. Equal pay for equal work is also guaranteed by law. Should a manager decide to pay a female employee less than a male employee only because she is a woman, he would simply be taken to court.

State care for children freed any women from doing many household duties and gave them more time for studies, among other things. This had a noticeable effect on their education. Today working women are almost as well educated as men and women employees with special training outnumber the males by almost one third. Women constitute one-third of the deputies to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. They number about 30 among ministers of union republics. At the 27th CPSU Congress Alexander Biryahava was elected Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and this is an important party post. Recently the all-union Central Council of Trade Unions took a decision to make it obligatory for administrators to promote women to jobs in proportion to the percentage of working women in the industry.

Each 5-year plan has a section dealing with the women's working and living conditions. Paid maternity leave till the child is one year old, with the mother's job kept open for her for 18 months, leave to care for such a child, allowances for mothers with many children beginning with the birth of a third child, pensions five year earlier than for men, at 55.

Hero mothers, teachers, airhostress, working in Chemical factories (Poisonous) Balley Dancers, etc. retire even earlier.

The struggle against war is therefore a struggle for the secuirty of the present and future generations. Women can identify with this goal more than anyone else. Aware of the gravity of the threat to peace they join the anti-war movement and swell the ranks of peace marches.

Soviet women are in the front ranks of the peace champions. We extend a hand of friendship to all who oppose the arms race unleashed by the militarists. I appeal to all women sitting in this hall to consolidate their efforts in the struggle for peace, for future of our children.

Women Urged to Fight Communalism

A state level convention of different organisations of women was held on 24th May 1987 at Jalandhar, Punjab to call upon all women of Punjab to work tirelessly not only to fight for their own burning socio-economic problems but also to fight against the forces of fundamentalist, communalism and secessionists.

The convention, the first of its kind was held at Desh Bhagat Yadgar Hall. The convention was presided over by a presidium consisting of Com Rajinder Kaur Chohka General Secretary Punjab Janwadi Istiri Sabha. Mrs Oshima Raikhy President Punjab Istiri Sabha, Mr Gurbinder Kaur Bhar M.L.A. Congress(I), Swarn Sethi President Grameen Mahila Sangh and Miss Rudra General Secretary Y.W.C.A. The hall was fully packed and more than 1000 women from the different parts of the state carrying their babies in their arms and in colourful dress, many of them from rural area, from peasantry and from working class irrespective of religion and creed, took part in this convention.

Speaking on the resolution Com Rajinder Kaur Chohka urged upon the Govt to take effective steps to curb killing of innocent people and other anti-social activities of the terrorists of all shades and not to allow any interference in this regard from any quarter. It was of the view that the Punjab problem being essentially a political one it must be solved at political level as well as at the administrative level. President's rule is no solution at this stage when Barnala Govt was fighting against the terrorists. She stressed upon for the implementation of Rajiv-Longowal accord and to isolate the terrorists. The joint movement should be carried on to arouse the secular and patriotic urges of people to isolate the secessionists and the communalists. She demanded release of innocent Jodhpur detainees and prosecutions of those who encouraged even organised the anti-Sikh riots in Delhi, Kanpur and other parts of the country. She also stressed upon the govt to take effective steps to prevent misuse of religious places for spreading communal hatred and providing shelter to terrorists and criminals. She again warned the govt not to adopt drifting policy and to use the present situation for its vested interest.

She urged upon the govt to implement Rajiv-Longowal accord in letter and spirit without any delay. She called upon all the secular and democratic forces in the state to have a united movement against the Imperialist designs, terrorists and secessionists to foil their dirty game and also to isolate them from the people.

Miss Indu Dhawan S.F.I. leader and younger sister of martyred Com Deepak Dhawan also spoke on the occasion. In emotional voice she said that the US imperialist, Khalistani had killed my brother and many other comrades to quench their thirst for blood but they are still in dark that by killing Com Deepak Dhawan and other comrades the land of Punjab will not become so barren, there are so many other Deepaks who are preparing to fight and face martyadom. We shall stand firm and to carry on the struggle against the terrorists. We all women should unite for the unity and integrity of the country.

Mrs Vimla Dang, P.S.I., Rajinder Bathal C-I, Miss Rudra Y.W.C.A. were among others who also addressed the convention.

In this convention more than 350 women lead by P.J.I.S. participated. Slogans like Hindu-Sikh Unity-Zindabad, Extremists and Secessionists-Murdabad, No-Hindu Raj, No Khalistan-Eq Rahega Hindustan, Istiri Ekta-Zindabad were shouted in the convention.

"Demand Annulment of the Death Sentence Passed Against Tereza Ramashomola, a Fighter for the African Freedom Struggle, by Botha Regime Send Telegrams to UNO".

Susheela Gopalan
General Secretary, AIDWA

Ten Years of Bright Possibilities

A decade ago we assumed office in West Bengal with a massive popular mandate. Thereafter people have renewed their verdict twice in our favour. The Left Front Government has commenced work for the third consecutive term.

All these years our endeavour has been to restore to people their democratic rights and privileges. West Bengal is the vanguard of democracy in India. We are committed to the task of fostering communal harmony, peace and order in the State. We shall uphold this tradition in the vitiated climate of the rest of the country.

With people's cooperation we are now implementing our basic programme. We are trying our best to do away with the disparity of the village economy. Surplus land is being distributed among the landless. The rights of the rural poor are being safeguarded. The Panchayat Bodies have emerged as so many symbols of popular enterprise in the rural areas.

Against deprivation and discrimination we are striving for the improvement of the industrial climate of the State. We shall continue our efforts relentlessly to revive sick industries, to increase small and medium units and to set up big industries. Meanwhile power situation has also improved.

In the field of education, normalcy has been restored. In the fields of sports and culture, as well as in other spheres, we are taking new steps towards progress. In the overall crisis currently facing the nation, the Left Front Government is determined to carve out a new course of action based on an alternate policy. And for all our endeavours we need people's active cooperation.

Government of West Bengal

ICA 3168/87

The Effects of Technological Change on Women

REMINISCENT of the ancient Roamn god Janus with two opposite faces technological change has developed a double image but many woman workers tend to be exposed primarily to the darker side. Often they are the first to feel any adverse effects of changing technology and are affected more than men.

The Story unfolds with spectacular growth of the service sector which has become the main employment creator. Concurently, women have been entering the labour market in increasing numbers. They have embraced the service sector jobs not out of choice but mostly out of necessity.

This marriage of convenience has produced "feminisation" of the service sector in the OECD countries where women today comprise two-thirds of all employees.

Female bastions in the service sector, clerical and secretarial-appear to be particularly vulnerable to technological innovation. In offices this results from the growing use of word processors, facsimile equipment electronic mailing and filing systems, and telecommunications, linking machines with one another. In banking and commerce it is the use of electronic funds transfer automated teller machines, sophisticated cash registers and point of sales terminals. In the postal services optical character recognition devices and automated telephone exchanges are increasingly influencing employment potential and its quality.

Every where it is the less-skilled and routine tasks that are mainly at risk-which are performed usually by women. Some estimates show that female employees account for around 70 to 80 per cent of the job reduction in the retail trade in certain European countries. A West German Trade Union survey suggests that approximately 70 per cent of the women in commerce will be affected by technological change as against 30 per cent of the men.

To be sure, micro-electronics also leads to the creation of new employment opportunities. But many women still lack the appropriate technical background the requisite skills and training to adjust to the higher level jobs the new technology offers. Studies suggest that a predominantly male elite hold the highly skilled "thinking" or "planning" posts, while women are found in deskilled and repetitive jobs—with all that his means for pay, status and career prospects.

Efforts should be made by both employers and trade unions to bring women out of traditional occupational ghettos and to avoid creating new ones. One possible approach lies in expanding the task-specific training of today to allow a greater degree of flexibility and computer literacy.

Another possibility, which has trade union support is to monitor carefully the impact of micro-electronics on women to help mitigate the risk of sex segregation in computer-related jobs and to enable female employees to gain equal access to new jobs as well as career development.

But greater progress will require higher levels of unionisation of women and their more active participation in the decision-making levels of the unions. Otherwise, the majority of women in lower skilled jobs may never see the new technologies brighter face.

ILO Information 2nd May 1987

(*Contd. from page 23*)

gates from Swapo Sang a song — "Swapo is determined to free Namibia, Unite, Unite to get your freedom now, we are determined to free, Namibia, Unite, unite to get your freedom now.

All the participants joined in and sang the Swapo song.

A massive rally was held from Gorky Park to Moscova river. It was a grand spectacle. Women from all over the world in all their colourful clothes, singing songes. Thousands of Moscovites collected here to greet the delegates. The rally gave the impression of several rivers joining together into a big sea.

The concluding session was addressed by the Zimbabwe President, Mugabe, Zoya Pukova, Freda Brown, Marget Alva.

Sex Discrimination and Nursing Profession

Dr. Kanwal Raj Goriyan

NOWHERE else in the history of India there exists such a discrimination on the basis of sex as it is existing in the Nursing profession, the so called noblest profession where Florence Nightingale had been the symbol of ailing humanity. At the work place, she is under subjection and pressure threats of the administrative personal, doctors, pharmaciticals, and anti-social elements.

Our aim here is not to go into the historical reasons of the present bias against Nursing profession but to pinpoint the most glaring bias which is also existing even today against this profession.

When a Nursing student is admitted in the Nursing Course she is to furnish a certificate that she is unmarried. She is supposed to remain unmarried for 3-5 years during the completion of this course.

This condition is given on the plea that they should not bear children during the course and it will interfere with their studies.

I do not think that anywhere in India this type of bar is there for admissions to such courses. Moreover, wherever the institutions for male Nursing course are there this bar does not exist. This amounts to a clear cut sex-discrimination in free India after 39 years of independence and so much hue and cry for equal rights to womanhood in India.

The general impression of the study conducted at the time of admission reveals that:

(1) Many well intended and genuine candidates are not able to apply for this profession because of this bar.

(2) There are many girls who are not pulling on well with their marriages, they want to be independent earnings hands by joining this profession. But the in-laws harass them by not giving a legal divorce without which they cannot join the course.

(3) Even if some of the candidates join by furnishing certificates from Sarpanches, etc. that they have separated themselves from their husbands, they are under continuous threat from them that this fact will be exposed to the authorities if they do not bow down to their wishes.

(4) Some of the girls are engaged before they are admitted, and a span of 3-5 years long wait for marriage brings in social and psychological tension in them. Many times when their would be husbands come to meet them, they have to tell lies about their relationship before the authorities and fellow colleagues.

(5) Under the prevailing conditions, a girl at the age of 17, in a free atmosphere with so many tensions, in her mind, is bound to develop deviations for which only she is held responsible and looked down upon.

(6) Continuously throughout the 3-5 years training Course, she is not allowed to marry and bear the children. This is a clear case of basic fundamental right of a woman that of maternity, being denied.

To Fight for right of equality for women, the struggle is a long drawn one and the nurses also will have to become the part of the broader movement which is struggling for the equal rights for women and also for the change of this exisiing system in which is the basic cause of this injustice.

Various nurses' organisations will have to raise the consciousness of the nurses to fight out against this discrimination taking the support of the public also.

This discrimination should also be faught constitutionally in the court of law by various organisations of nurses or the women's organisations which are fighting for the cause of emancipation of women in the country.

(*Ecerpts from The Nursing Journal*)

Struggle of Isapgul Workers in Gujarat

Niruben Patel

MEHSANA Dist. and Northern part of Banaskantha, of Gujarat States, are the areas of Isapgul produce. But Siddhpur Taluka has the monopoly of factories of Isapgul. There are 35 factories as such, and 2000 workers. 90 per cent of this finished Isapgul is exported to America, West Europe and Australia. Govt. gets crores of rupees as foreign exchange.

There is a monopoly of four families, who control the price. Farmers were paid very low prices for their produces, workers were given low wages, and produce is being sold at very high. So the factory owners earn crores of rupees. It is said that each owner gets at least 1 crore of rupees as a profit every year.

Male worker gets Rs. 11/- and a woman worker Rs. 9/- as daily wages. Woman worker has to work harder than man. Sometimes she has to stay in night-shift, but gets only single pay. No maternity leave is paid. Identity card is not given to the worker. Bonus is paid, but first thumb impression is taken, and sum is being written afterwards. In order to avoid the advantages of the gratuity and other benefits every five year the partners and owners are change, the factory remains the same.

Since the formation of CITU union workers won the case of pay which is now Rs. 14/- for man and woman, it is equal. In two factories, as CITU union demanded more pay, the owners declared illegal lock-out, from 11th August. Since then struggle of workers is going on, staging relay fast of 24 hours at the factory gate. Women sitting at fast are most militant workers. They faced repression by police and owners, and hold high the red flag. Vice-President of AIDWA Captain Laxmiben visited these fast camps along with CITU Gujarat President and General Secretary Subodh Mehta and Harikrishan Shah and General Secretary of Gujarat AIDWA.

Without Comments

Police Stop Tribal Girl's Auctioning

Bhopal, June 27: A young tribal woman was publicly auctioned at Mhow, near Indore, yesterday and biddings had gone upto Rs. 3,000 when the police intervened.

The "crime" of the 21-year old Bhil woman, Savitri, was that she had left her husband and married another tribal, Govind. Both were hauled up before the community's panchayat and scores of Bhils had gathered in the open near the army mess at Mhow where 11 panches heard Savitri's "case".

As soon as the "hearing" began, the first thing the panches ordered was to tie Savitri and Govind with ropes and had them upside down on a nearby tree for over three hours during which they heard her "case". The panches found Savitri "guilty" and ordered her public auction and the money from it to be paid to her former husband as "damages".

The police arrived just in time. They sent both Savitri and Govind, who were uncounscious, to hospital and the panchas to police custody.

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World Congress of Women for Peace

Susheela Gopalan
General Secretary, AIDWA

THE World Congress of Women held in Moscow from June 23 is a landmark in the history of peace movement. The Kremlin Palace (on the banks of Moscova river) which has, in the past, witnessed many historic Conferences was the venue of this Congress.

The Indian delegation's first contingent of 50 members arrived in Moscow on 21 June. A steam of delegates from far and wide, from all parts of the world, began to pour in and swelled to 2,384. They came from 154 countries, from 78 national and international organisations. The flow continued to the second and even the third day and on the last day, Zoya Pukova, the Chairperson of the Reception Committee and also of the Soviet Women's Committee announced that 2,884 delegates participated in the Congress, representing 1,005 organisations, besides M.Ps and Cabinet Ministers, 35 UN agencies. There were grandmothers organisations, religious organisations, WREE (Women for racial and economic equality.) After the Nairobi UN Women's meet held in 1984 to review the progress achieved during the Women's Decade this was the first international meet to discuss "the problem of no nuclear weapons by the year 2,000, for equality, development and peace".

About 200 delegates representing peace groups in the USA participated in the Congress. Women came from Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Lebanon, Israel, South and North Korea, Japan, Honduras, Nicargua, S. Africa, representing different regions. They came from Angola, Namibia, Congo, FRG, GDR, from developing and developed capitalist countries, from all socialist countries with the sole aim of establishing peace for the future development of women of the world. Two women, Fasi Junisen and Obe Housen travelled 6,520 kms in a "peace bus". Peace groups representing factory women workers from Sweden, Netherlands, W. Germany participated in the Congress.

A relay bus journey within US consisting of 120 women also came to the Congress. The delegates came from socialist and capitalist countries, from the non-aligned countries and from countries which were at war with each other. They all spoke in one voice — for the establishment of peace.

M. Gorbachev Address the Delegates

The General Secretary of the CPSU, Com Mikhail Gorbachev received a tumultuous ovations as he rose to address the opening session of the Congress. He said, "Your aspirations, hopes and cares are akin to ours. The goals of the Congress to save life on the planet and to render it more just is the prime task of the world policy". The world wide problems of dwindling energy resources, hunger and poverty, ecological problems, disease were all bound up with the task of eliminating the threat of nuclear war, he said. "There are no roads to human progress outside the movement for a nuclear weapon-free, non-violent world", Gorbachov emphasised.

The war danger would be forestalled by "extending a hand to one another across the inevitable ideological, economic and political fences that separate states" and women, above all, perceived the priority that preserving peace has over everything else. Women were the most "selfless, self-sacrificing and mass defender" of peace, Gorbachev stated. Anti-war actions by women's groups and women's movements had become an inalienable part of the political scene today.

The status of women was an indicator of how human rights are respected in a state. Citing the progress made by the women in the Soviet Union, Gorbachov said that they have a crucial role in the changes taking place in the Soviet Union. A nation-wide network of women's Councils have been set up under the auspices of the Soviet Women's Committee.

Today, in the age of electronics, and "green revolutions" and space flights with its unlimited opportunities to feed, clothe and teach billions of human being are being turned against mankind by imperialism.

"Disarmament for development, confidence and co-operation are the "three whale to ride

into the future. There is no other option," Gorbacheve stressed. Freda Brown, the Chairperson of the Congress greeted the delegates, and the women all over Soviet Union. She called for nuclear disarmament for peace and development.

Children as Peacemaker

Children from many countries, including India, spoke on the need for peace. They said "we want your Congress to succeed, we want to live, to look forward to the future. Protect our planet for it is beautiful". About 500 Soviet Children greeted the delegates with flowers. Then the delegates, the children, Com Gorbachov all stood up, holding hands and sang the song "Protect our planet for us" The whole Congress delegates were moved to tears, and a 45 minutes recess was declared after it.

The Session Begins

The Congress was divided into several commissions.

- Peace and Disarmament
- Problems of Development and Women.
- Women and Mass Media
- Women, Children and Family
- Women and Work
- Role And Co-operation of NGOs
- Women in the struggle for national independence, self-determination.

Com. Susheela Gopalan participated in the first commission while Bibha Ghosh in the commission of "Women And work".

The Congress felt that the goals and strategies adopted at the Nairobi Conference could not be followed without peace, without the ban of nuclear weapons. In this context, Com Gorbachov's peace proposals were very important and there was a need to build up a mass movement in support of it.

There were many discussion centres, and also a Trade Union Round Table. Except in the socialist countries, working women's problems were neglected by the trade unions. Employment was declining and only part-time employment was increasing. There was an unanimous call to the WFTU to call a World Working Women's Conference.

There was one centre which discussed issues concerning countries, having regional conflicts.

Women from Iran, Iraq, Labanon, Israel, USA all called for peace. A delegate from Iran gave the horrible experience of young girls, 9-10 year old who were forcibly sent to work camps and who were being sexually absued by Iranian soldiers, disabled in the war. Delegates from US (200 in all) said that Reagan expressed concern for the poor of the world but was not concerned with poverty in the USA, itself. 60 per cent of the population in Los Angels depended on the war industry. Peace groups in the US were growing.

There were 53 dialogue groups and one group called, the Bridge. One group discussed the issue of Peace For Jobs. Women from Honduras, in exile in Nicaragua said that there were 15 US military bases in Honduras, a small country. In the evenings solidarity meeting, were held on South Africa, Latin Americas PLO.

A delegate from one of the African countries, Pependu said, "National security has another face, a better face, most probably a women's face. We want to break down the war system". Martinez (Mexico) and Aruna Asaf Ali (India) also addressed the Congress.

Solidarity Meeting

In the Solidarity Group on South Africa, Mrs Tambo was given the Winnie Mandela award. Winnie had not been allowed to come or even to send a message. Winnie Mandela was presented a crystal glass. Adelede Tambo said that an ANC woman activist, Tereza Ramashomola, had been sentenced to death, the first woman facing death sentence. She appealed to the delegates to conduct a wide campaign against this to send telegramms, pressurise governments to appeal against the sentence. She said "we are fighting. Please help us" Now, the racist South Africa regime was attacking children, the future of the country.

Mrs Mugabe (Zimbabwe) expressed her solidarity with the women of South Africa and thanked Com Gorbachev. She called for economic sanctions against South Africa. She said "South Africa's day has come, South Africa will be free. We will all be together. Winnie will be with us. They shall be free".

Raisa Tomaso (Congo) also spoke. Dele-

(*Contd. on page 19*)

New Discrimination System Against Women Employees in Japan

A new system called 'The Personnel Career Track System' has been introduced in recent years by many large companies in Japan.

It has become prevalent in banks, insurance and financial institutions, and is presently extending to construction and manufacturing industries.

Uhder the new system, employees are required to choose a career track, among the executive track, clerical track, and the technical track. At first glance, it seems that such career channelling is based on the choice and ability of the employees themselves. Yet in reality, it has become a new system to discriminate against the women employees.

In many cases, women are expected to choose the clerical track where promotion is limited to chief of a clerical unit. Sometimes managers declare in morning assembly that all women are to take the clerical track. Sometimes the manager may walk around the women workers desks, asking them casually, you will all agree to take the clerical tracks, won't you? If a woman decides to take the executive track, she is summoned repeatedly and asked if she could collect tens of millions of yen as bank deposits. On the other hand, men can easily choose executive track by saying to the manager, I trust you to look after my interests.

(Women Labour in Japan)

Protest Against the Shortening of Maternity Leave—Hong Kong

TO the dismay of labour groups and women's groups in Hong Kong, the labour department followed the suggestions of the employers' groups in proposing a regressive change in the existing maternity legislation — that the 6 weeks of paid maternity leave after confinment can be flexibly shortened to not less than 4 weeks under mutual consent of the employers and employees.

Labour groups and women's groups strongly opposed this change for its disregard of women's health after confinment. They also feared that women might be forced to accept shortened maternity leave under the existing unequal relation between the employers and employees. It was further indicated by a recent survey that pregnant women workers faced severe economic pressure because of extra expenditure and reduced income during pregnancy. Therefore a campaign was launched to urge the government to raise the maternity allowance from two-thirds to full pay, instead of flexibly shortening the maternity leave.

Owing to pressure from these groups and the united opposition of the employees' representatives, the proposal to shorten the maternity leave was dropped on March 3 during a tripartite meeting between the labour department, the employees and employees' representatives. However, there was no increase in the maternity allowance.