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Rape Society and State



PEOPLE'S UNION FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES AND DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS
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RAPE, SOCIETY AND STATE

For the past few months ever since there has been a public demand for the reopening of the Mathura case the question of sexual violence is being discussed in high society. But how seriously this matter which touches all women-educated or uneducated, rural or urban-has gripped the conscience of the people in power is an open question. At a recent informal lunch a senior Cabinet Minister is reported to have remarked: "Ye sab bakwas hai. Rape to hazaro saal se ho raha hai, aur aurat to bhogne ki cheez hai" (All this talk is nonsense. Rape has been taking place for thousands of years, and after all woman is a thing to be enjoyed for sexual pleasure) Sunday Aug.24, 1980. The minister is in good company. According to press reports the Home Minister also feels that the whole matter of rape is "irrelevant," while no less a dignitary that the Police Commissioner of Delhi has said that it has been "blown up by the Press." Some time back the ex-Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh while facing angry legislators concerning police rape exonerated the offending policemen by saying that after all "rape is human."

Tradition

It is painful to observe that the attitude towards women embedded in our ancient social culture has not undergone any basic change but has been continuing even in our own times as is evident from the weighty remarks of our cultured gentlemen.

We are often told that in ancient India women enjoyed high status. Names of learned women like Maitreyi and Gargi are placed before us; but they are exceptions rather than the rule. The fact remains that at no stage of her life a woman enjoyed independence-man was her master and exercised his right either to make his wife cohabit with whomsoever he chose to get a son as impotent: Pandu did with his two wives or to gamble her away as Dharamraj Yuddhishtra did to Draupadi or to throw her out of his kingdom as the great lord Rama did to Sita. Even in the Rig-Veda the concept of woman's usefulness centres around her sexuality. After creating man, the great Prajapati "lord of creatures," created woman:

"Come, let me provide him with a firm basis! So he created woman. When he had created her he revered her from below. Therefore one should revere woman below.--He stretched out for himself the stone that projects. With that he impregnated her."

(Brhadaranyak Upanishad, Brahmana IV,ii)

That rape was not merely permitted but encouraged is clear from the verse that follows. Should a woman not yield despite flattery and bribes the man is advised that:

"he should hit her with a stick or with his hand, and overcome her, saying 'with power with glory I take away your glory'. Thus she becomes inglorious."

(ibid, vii)

No stigma was attached to the rapist. Thus the great preceptor of the gods, Brhaspati, suffered no punishment for raping a married pregnant woman--the punishment fell on her child who was born blind.

For the woman however the rules were different. There is the example of Ahalya. For no fault of her own she was placed under a curse by her husband, the sage Gautama, and turned to stone though Gautama knew well that she had been deceived by the god Indra who had taken his shape and had intercourse with her. In fact, the slightest suspicion that a woman had swerved from the path of sexual purity--however unwillingly--could lead to her desertion by her husband and society. The case of Sita is to the point. When she is brought before Rama after the battle is over, Rama says to her:

"May all be well with you. Let it be known that this entire military action which has been successfully completed thanks to the bravery of my friends, was undertaken by me not for your sake. Whatever I did was for the sake of avoiding scandal in every way and for the sake of clearing the name of the reputed dynasty.

As you stand before me with the doubts attached to your character you are as definitely to be avoided by me as light by one who has sore eyes. You have been looked at by Ravana by his vicious eyes and have been molested on his lap. How can I accept you as such and sully my great family?"

(Valmiki Ramayana, Yudha Kand)

This speech of Rama not merely explodes the myth that Lanka was burnt for the honour of a woman but establishes, as does the story of Ahalya, that in a male-dominated society it is the woman who is punished for a crime committed against her.

The Present

This social injustice is still continuing. According to a survey conducted by the Indian Housewives Federation 80% prostitutes came into the profession in the first instance as victims of rape. The rape victim loses her social respectability forever--if single no one is likely to marry her, if married she is likely to be disowned by her family. At times the violation of family izzat is so strongly felt that the rape victim is driven not only to prostitution but sometimes to suicide, or she may even be murdered by her own family members.

It is therefore hardly surprising that most victims and their families prefer to hush up the crime than to prosecute the offender. Hence rape statistics, while useful, hardly give the full picture of the extent of the crime.

REGISTERED CASES OF RAPE IN INDIA

Major States	1972	1975	1978
*U.P.	577	760	820
*M.P.	433	565	787
West Bengal	285	408	477
Bihar	240	304	345 (1977)
Maharashtra	238	283	360

**All India total	2562	3283	3899
Percentage increase over 1972		28%	52%

Major Cities	1972	1975	1978
Bombay	29	56	58
Delhi	30	52	57
Calcutta	15	21	23
** Total for 8 major cities	110	145	n.a.
Percentage increase over 1972		30%	

* U.P. and M.P. accounted for 41% of the registered cases in 1978.

** For both the totals the average of reported cases in 1975 was 0.6 per lakh of population. In terms of this ratio Nagaland figures are the highest at 1.94, 1.88 and 2.4 for the years '72, '75, '78 respectively.

Source: Bureau of Police Research and Development, New Delhi.

Even if full statistics were available, they would fail to reveal the environment of fear of sexual assault in which women grow up right from childhood--assault not simply from strangers, but from members of the neighbourhood and community or their own family, stepfathers, uncles and the like. Statements issued by state or central officials that the crime rate against women has fallen or only marginally increased therefore give small comfort to women.

Several attempts are made to put the entire blame on the women themselves for their getting molested. It is said that women dress in such a provocative fashion or behave so immodestly that they invite rape. But this is not all. In every rape trial the point the defence wants to make out is that the victim was of loose morals and as such a) cannot be trusted, and b) the rape is of no consequence since she is a prostitute.

How far these allegations hold any truth would become clear if we examine some of the recently reported cases of sexual assault (June-July, 1980, Times of India, Statesman, and other national dailies).

June 21: The Station Officer and SI of PS Kursi, Barabanki were charged with the rape and murder of a Harijan village woman. The police had gone to arrest her husband on a minor charge. On finding he had absconded, they took hold of his wife--she was raped, tortured and after her death on June 18 her body hanged to make it look a case of suicide. The terrified villagers fled their homes and are reported to be returning after the two policemen were suspended.

- June 29: A Gram Sewak on census duty was reported to have made three attempts to rape Adivasi women in Dahana, Maharashtra.
- July 1 : A middleaged housewife charged that a magistrate in Dhunha, Uttar Kashi, had attempted to molest her in a hospital. The magistrate was transferred after angry citizens of the town gheravedd his office.
- July 7: A Bangladesh woman with her four year old child was found lost in the streets of Nimta, Calcutta, and was put under police protection by the residents. Later, three policemen were charged with raping her and have been suspended.

Four gangsters in village Lehlara, Bulandshar, were charged with raping a woman who had protested against their molesting another woman. After the rape they poured kerosene on her and burnt her to death.

- July 9 : Women students returning from Patna by Tinsukhia mail were reported to have been molested by the military occupants in the compartment. Hearing their cries, some people pulled the alarm chain and stopped the train. Mr. Daroga Prasad Rai (Cong-I MLA) said that he had been travelling by the same train and found that the police from the thana where the train had stopped gave no help to the students.
- July 11: A young woman was reported to have been raped in her hut by four forest officials in Kunda village, Raipur. Her father was away in Delhi carrying a petition to the Prime Minister to save his hut which the forest officials had declared was in the reserve area.
- July 13: A gang of five men in Hazaribagh pulled out a young girl from the rickshaw she was going in at night accompanied by her brother-in-law. They assaulted and raped her.
- July 16: A minor girl of the "gadaria" scheduled tribe in Villavdhi village twenty kilometres from Meerut, was raped by an unknown culprit. The police at first refused to register the case.
- July 25: A twelve year old girl in Pauri village, Garhwal, was reported to have been raped by a constable while she was in his house to do domestic work.

As can be seen from this short list of about a month the victims are tribals, Harijans, college students, housewives and minor girls. Most of them are rural poor women. It would be ridiculous to suggest that any of the victims had invited rape by dressing immodestly or by being women of loose morals. We wish to add here that even if the victim were a prostitute it would not in the least justify or condone the crime committed against her.

It is often said that rape is committed by mentally unbalanced persons and by anti-social elements. While there have been instances of rape committed by such individuals, it is frightening to notice from the above list that the persons who are reported to have assaulted women include a gramsevak, forest officials, policemen, army personnel, and even a magistrate. Could these men in any accepted sense of the word be put in the category of the mentally sick or sex-starved goondas? These are men holding responsible public office and abusing the very power, authority and trust vested in them to violate women and minors. These few random cases show how government officials were involved in committing crimes on women and yet most went unpunished. Those who are interested in what has been going on inside the high walls of a prison know how many women convicts and sometimes under-trials are raped by jail warders with full knowledge of the authorities. This is custodial rape. Has there been any instance where a jail warder has been punished?

Apart from these instances, there are recently reported cases of molestation which nurses have undergone in rural areas. One should have thought the state would be particularly vigilant regarding the safety of these young nurses most of whom come from Kerala to serve in north India. Then there are state-run institutions--homes for destitute women, orphanages, remand homes for delinquent adolescents. What goes on in some of these places seldom comes to light, but it is known that girls in such institutions are often subjected to sexual exploitation. Thus one cannot help wondering if the state is at all concerned with the protection of women.

The State

Even after 33 years of independence, six Parliaments, two changes of government, five Prime Ministers--all declaring their faith in democratic principles, any movement that asserts the political and social rights of the people is crushed. While analysing instances of state violence one is struck by a sinister pattern that runs through all the incidents given below--it is merciless crushing of any protest and mass rape is one of the forms of repression that is frequently resorted to.

Take for instance Bailadilla, Singbhum, Chaibasa, the Santhal Parganas, Nagaland, Mizoram, all spread out in the distant parts of India:

On 5th April, 1978, police fired at agitating workers and set ablaze their hutments, at the iron ore mines in Bailadilla. The workers were protesting against illegal retrenchment because there had been no shrinkage in the demand for iron ores. A number of women were raped, one of them by seven policemen. *Homi Daji's "Massacre at Bailadilla"*

In Singbhum, Chaibasa and Santhal Parganas, Bihar, a number of instances have come to light where Adivasi women have been the victims of rape at the hands of the landlords and the CRP. The Adivasis have been for years struggling to reclaim the land that traditionally belong to them but which over a period of years has been appropriated by landlords and moneylenders

of neighbouring regions. Each attempt by the Adivasis to reclaim their land has been followed by savage reprisals in which the landlords and the police burn, plunder and rape. *Feminist Network.*

Atrocities by the Indian Army, in the forcibly occupied territories of Nagaland and Mizoram have become a systematic practice to suppress their struggle for freedom. Reports testify to widespread torture, killings and rape (see statistics above) by the Indian forces. Victims of police bestiality range from young girls of 10 and 11 to pregnant women to grandmothers. *Neville Maxwell Repression in Nagaland.*

Thus be they workers striking for their right to employment in Madhya Pradesh or tribals struggling to reclaim their land in Bihar, or people fighting unceasingly to preserve their freedom for the last three decades in the northeast--rape becomes a principal weapon used against women. And here it is a weapon in the hands of the state, i.e., the police, the CRP and the army.

And what has been done about this?

Of course the well-known method. In the case of Bailadilla the then Janata government after some delay set up a judicial enquiry involving over six lakhs of rupees. More than two years have passed since then and the report is yet to see the light of day.

Singbhum, Chaibasa and the Santhal Parganas were not even as fortunate as Bailadilla to have an enquiry commission. Even when reports were submitted by various fact-finding organisations and questions raised in the State Assembly the administration totally denied the veracity of the facts.

In the case of Nagaland and Mizoram the government is silent and the little that has come out involving molestation of women has, to our eternal shame, gone beyond the conscience of most Indians.

We turn our attention now to the movement which goes by the name of the Naxalite movement. It is well-known how it has been and is being crushed. Apart from killing outright workers and leaders in so-called encounters, those who are arrested are subjected to inhuman torture in police custody and inside jails. Added to the "normal" tortures, third degree methods of sexual torture and rape are inflicted on women Naxalite prisoners. A report compiled by the Akhil Banga Mahila Samiti describes some of the methods used, not merely to extort information but to create an atmosphere of terror that would break the resistance of other dissidents. At the Lal Bazar police station in Calcutta, they were stripped, thrashed, burned on all parts of their bodies. Women have been subjected to continuous raping by hardened criminals on the specific orders of the police.

Amnesty International Report quoted in "India Today" April 1977.

Even when the state is not directly involved through its officials in committing sexual violence, it almost always gives its blessings where feudal institutions, religious trusts, rich landlords, prosperous mine owners and contractors come into the picture. The notorious case of the Mahant of Bodhgaya, the largest landowner in the area, bears telling. The landless labour and their wives are virtual bonded slaves to the Mahant. It is an unwritten law in his empire that at night the women

must be available to his men. The pair of chappals left at the door of the hut is a warning to the husband that he must not enter; if he does he will meet his death. All the big officers of the state are aware of this yet nobody dares to stop it. Because the Mahant's money is needed for the next election.

But sometimes a spark is lit. Even illiterate peasant women wake up--as they did in Kodurpaka village of Karimnagar district in Andhra Pradesh. The landlord of the Village owns 200 acres and is a member of the Lions Club. A peasant movement has been growing in the district in the past few years against illegal landholdings, bribes and fines extracted by the landlords, against the vetti system of compulsory labour for the landlord, and for higher wages. The women are giving full support to the movement. And more, they have formed a Ryotu Mahila Sangham in Kodurpaka, "to make our lives worth living, to protect ourselves from rape and insult." The landlord let loose his goondas, seven of whom dragged a leading activist of the Sangham, 50 year old Rajavva, and raped her till she was unconscious. The police intially even refused to register the case. The Sub-Inspector told her eldest son who went to lodge a complaint: "Do you know what rape means? Your father owes the landlord Rs.3000/- you are making up a false case to evade the debt." Finally the case was registered, the police came and made enquiries but no action was taken. Many of the women activists have had to flee the village. The landlord however need fear nothing for the whole taluk has been declared a "disturbed area" since 1978 and police camps for the protection of landlords have been set up in various villages.

The complicity of the state in the use of rape as a weapon against democratic movements by tribals, peasants, workers, or political dissidents can be seen from the nature of the response to protest against such rapes. Most often no action is taken at all, or an enquiry commission is set up which produces no result. Witnesses are known to have been harassed or intimidated into silence. Worse, the state can flout the findings of its own commission as in the case of the Justice Mukhtar Commission of Enquiry which was set up, following public uproar, to investigate into the case of Rameeza Bee in 1978. The Commission indicted the policemen who had raped her in the thana but the Andhra Pradesh government let the police go scot-free. The state appears more anxious to protect the "morale" of its police and military and para-military forces than to protect women and to ensure them justice.

Law

Let us look at another arm of the state--the law and its implementation. The law on rape has in its essentials remained unchanged for a hundred and twenty years. It was the Mathura case which first opened a public debate on the legal and other questions pertaining to rape, leading to protests, Parliament debates, the institution of the Law Commission to investigate the Indian Penal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code, the Indian Evidence Act, and to the new Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 1980, which has yet to be passed.

The Mathura case is by now familiar to the public; we need to mention only the questions it has highlighted:

- 1) Custodial rape: Mathura was raped by two policemen within the thana itself.
- 2) infringement of law protecting women:- she was illegally detained at night despite the provision in Section 160(i) of the CrPC (1973) that women shall not be required to assist investigation as witnesses "at places other than the place in which they reside."
- 3) question of consent and past sexual experience: the Supreme Court reversed the judgement of the High Court and acquitted the two policemen on the grounds that a) there was no physical injury on Mathura and no evidence of resistance; b) she was not a virgin at the time of the incident; c) she was not put under fear of death or hurt and therefore must have consented to sexual intercourse.
- 4) lengthy court trials: the case has been in the courts for seven years.
- 5) status of women's of organisations: the Supreme Court dismissed petitions made by women's organisations for a re-opening of the case and a review of the Supreme Court judgement stating that they had no locus standi.

It should be noted that the Rameeza case had also evoked some of these questions: illegal detention at night, rape by policemen in the thana, and attempting to invoke the sexual "morals" of the victim to protect the offenders. The recommendations of the Law Commission (LC) and the new Bill have to be seen in this context. (For text of existing laws, the LC recommendations & the new Bill see "Rape and the Law" and "Rape: Proposed Charges in the Law" both published by the Lawyers Collective, Bombay).

Concerning the question of sexual morals and past history of the victim the LC takes a sympathetic approach and clearly states that in cases of rape, "evidence of the character of the prosecutrix or her previous sexual experience with any person other than the accused shall not be relevant on the issue of such consent or the quality of consent." The government however has not accepted this crucial recommendation. The motive is clear--shielding the rapist. So women can continue to be crucified for their past sexual history.

Both the LC and the new Bill place special emphasis on custodial rape: police officers, public servants, the superintendent or manager of a jail, persons of the management and staff of hospitals, remand homes, children's and women's institutions, who take advantage of their official position to seduce a woman are liable to punishment upto five years and a fine. In case of rape, they will be subject to severer penalties. They will be awarded life imprisonment and a fine and not the punishment for ordinary rape criminals which is a minimum of seven years, or ten or life imprisonment and fine. In stating the objectives of the Bill, the Home Minister emphasised the provision, which is currently producing great controversy, that in the case of custodial rape, "once it is proved that sexual intercourse has taken place, the onus should be on the accused to prove that the sexual intercourse was with the consent of the woman" (August, 11, 1980).

The bill also seeks to remove the glare of publicity attendant on rape by imposing restrictions on the press in giving the identity of the victim and by stipulating that rape trials should be held in camera. The LC also proposed that women police officers, or persons "authorised by the organisations interested in the welfare of women and recognised in this behalf by the State by notification" should interrogate women. The Bill does not incorporate these suggestions. In case of marital rape, no significant change is proposed except that a woman separated from her husband under judicial decree, shall not be deemed a wife in case of rape.

Our viewpoint:

1. We strongly urge the inclusion of the LC's proposed amendment to the Evidence Act concerning the sexual history of the rape victim.
2. We support the amendment in the new Bill placing the onus of proving innocence on the accused in the case of custodial rape and for enhanced punishment for such offenders.
3. We feel that fixing a minimum punishment of seven years will prove useless and may, in fact, prevent the conviction of a rapist. What is more important is that the rapist is convicted, even if it be with a shorter sentence.
4. We totally oppose all attempts to curb the press in reporting on rape. Despite "good intentions" it is the government not the victim who will gain maximum advantage from press censorship. We oppose in camera trials for the same reason.
5. We suggest that in the case of marital rape, the Bill should be extended to cover all women separated from their husbands.

Though progressive legislation as recommended by the LC and incorporated in part by the new Bill is no doubt welcome, it must be viewed with cautious optimism. Less than three weeks after the LC placed its report in the Parliament, the deputy Superintendent of Police, the main accused in the Narainpur mass rape case, was reported to have been reinstated. At that time Mrs. Gandhi, the Prime Minister, had visited the village and ordered that the strictest action be taken against the police. Agitation was launched for the dismissal of the then Lok Dal ministry which under this pressure transferred the entire police personnel from this area. Following the installation of the Cong-I, the deputy SP was reinstated, reportedly because he was a relative of Mr. Dharma Vir, MP and President of PCC(I). More recently, no action was taken against the police in the Baghat outrage, and when pressure inside and outside Parliament mounted, the police was only transferred, not suspended. Also the history of past legislations, such as severe anti-dowry laws enacted during the Emergency in several states, or changes in the Married Women's Property Rights, or Section 160(i) of the CrPC, show that legislation for the rights of women while absolutely necessary, is not likely to be implemented. In addition, it should be noted that like other criminal cases, rape trials may run the course of as many as ten years. Continuous public pressure will be necessary for the speedy implementation of the law and for quick disposal of individual cases.

Protest Movements Against Rape

Crimes against women have from time to time evoked spontaneous protest movements from local residents against the apathy or the direct involvement of the authorities in the crime. A three day long agitation rocked the city of Hyderabad in January 1978, following the rape in police custody of a young woman, Rameeza Bee, who was later charged under the prostitution laws. It was this public anger which forced the state government, as mentioned earlier, to appoint the Mukhtaar Commission. Reports of other similar protests frequently come to light. Despite their intensity of feeling, the protests are isolated, shortlived and hampered by lack of organisational support, and become, consequently, easy targets for police repression. Such was the case of a mass demonstration outside a police station in Patna, in October 1978, where the agitators voicing their anger at the rape of Harijan girls by the police, were brutally lathi-charged and dispersed, with case of arson registered against a number of them.

The last few years, however, have witnessed the rise of small women's organisations in some cities and a few rural pockets attempting to develop a continued struggle for the right of women to life and dignity. The issues taken up by these groups range from physical harassment to dowry deaths, from employment issues to rape. Protests against the Supreme Court judgement on the Mathura rape case saw the first attempt by the various groups to break out of their isolation and build a joint campaign against rape. March 8, International Women's Day, saw simultaneous protests--in Ahmedabad, Bombay, Pune, Delhi, Hyderabad, Bangalore and some rural parts of Maharashtra, demanding specific and long overdue changes in the existing rape laws and the punishment of offenders. A notable feature of these protests was the use of the cultural medium by a number of groups, notably in Delhi and Bombay--street corner plays, poems and songs--to awaken public sympathy and awareness about the problem. The climate of pressure created by this concerted agitation forced the Maharashtra government into filing a petition for a review of the case, though only after the women's groups had already done so. It is further significant that many of the recommendations of the LC and the new Bill derive their substance from the demands made by the women's groups during their agitation.

The nascent women's movement has created the conditions where women's issues have now found their way to the media, Parliament and to the minds of many people who till recently perceived crimes against women as isolated, personal issues about which little could or need be done. And opportunists as they have all along been, politicians of different hues have been stirred to action. The recent furore in Parliament and public protests over the Baghat atrocities reflect this climate on the one hand and on the other have made it imperative for the state authorities to take some steps, however minimal, in the direction of punishing such crimes. For instance, police officials have been suspended in some recent cases which occurred in Moradabad, Agra, Nandini mines, Bareilly, after the Baghat agitation.

Though even such minimal government action is a welcome development, it should not blind us to the traditional social attitudes of the state towards victims of rape or to the political factors which often motivate the government in power to abstain from taking necessary action or to even reinstate the guilty officials. How deepseated are these attitudes towards women becomes evident from the following cases reported as recently as the first week of October: in Maharashtra, a 12 year old Adivasi girl was raped by the Cong-I President of Ghoti city, (Nasik) and in the state of U.P. a minor Harijan girl was raped in Lakhimpur Kheri district, her right breast was cut off and her eyes seriously injured. It is said that the police is shielding the "influential culprits" and the father of the girl has been threatened with dire consequences if he registers the case.

The role of a militant women's movement to impart leadership to the struggle for equal rights is a vital one. While such a movement exists in an embryonic form in India today, it is divided in approach to the problem by divergent ideologies. The efforts of various groups to build a co-ordinated campaign since the Mathura case are no doubt a significant turning point, but it also now becomes necessary to take a critical look at some of the demands made during the agitation.

For instance, the growing demand for an increased recruitment of women police needs to be reconsidered in the light of various report of atrocities committed by women police, such the Nandini mines incident of when demonstrators from J.N.U. were brutally beaten up though the major section of the police force present consisted of women. There have also been demands for more women judges and for women officials where the problems that women face are concerned. While women as judges or on commissions of enquiry related to crimes against women may tend to have a more sympathetic attitude toward victims of their own sex, they will in general cannot help having the same political and social attitudes as men coming from the same socio-economic educational and professional backgrounds. And certainly, they also like their male counterparts, will be hindered by the limitations of the legal structure and the socio-political role of the police in our country. For the relationship between police and prisoner, judge and petitioner, is a deeper socio-political relationship transcending, by and large the sex of the individual concerned.

Again it should be noted that the demand for in camera trials originated from the women's agitation and has been incorporated in the new Bill. We had already stated our objections to this proposal, but wish to add that while the concern for protecting women from the social stigma which attaches itself to victims of rape is understandable, note must be taken of the negative implications of this proposal. There has been a sharp reaction from members of the press who rightly feel that the publicity provided by the media is an important contributory factor in building up public awareness on the issue. Since the majority of rape cases occur in the rural areas, where the media is unable to reach, publicity or lack of it would be irrelevant. In such situations, moreover, in camera

trials would be meaningless as knowledge of the incident would already have spread in the community. The aim of the women's movement is precisely to erase the traditional stigma attached to the victim of rape and to provide her with a sense of social solidarity.

Minor disagreements apart, we wish to affirm that the protest movements is playing a valuable role and is, in fact, the only weapon the people have to fight the menace of rape. A strengthening of the movement is all the more necessary in view of the continuing incidents of sexual violence.. This booklet, we hope, will help in advancing the cause of the protest movement.

THE DELHI STATE PEOPLE'S UNION FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES AND DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS CAME INTO EXISTENCE DURING THE EMERGENCY. A SMALL ORGANIZATION WITH LIMITED RESOURCES, ITS ACTIVITIES TOO FLUCTUATED WITH THE TYRANNY AND THE TURBULENCE OF THE LAST THREE YEARS.

THOUGH A DELHI-BASED ORGANIZATION, IT ALSO HELPED TO STRENGTHEN THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT OUTSIDE DELHI. WHEREVER IT COULD, IT TRIED TO INVESTIGATE INTO CASES OF ASSAULTS ON DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS, WHETHER IT INVOLVED MUSLIMS IN ALIGARH, PEASANTS OF ANDHRA PRADESH, TRIBALS OF BIHAR, WORKERS OF FARIDABAD, FISHERMEN OF GOA OR STUDENTS OF DELHI OR INDIAN IMMIGRANTS ABROAD. HOWEVER SMALL ITS ATTEMPTS HAVE BEEN, IT HAS TRIED TO SAFEGUARD THE DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE AND PROTESTED AGAINST THE ARBITRARY ACTIONS OF THE AUTHORITIES, IRRESPECTIVE OF THE PARTY IN POWER.

Other Publications

"DISSENTING VOICES" - A COLLECTION OF POEMS BY INDIAN WRITERS WHICH SHOWS THAT THE POETIC CONSCIENCE OF INDIA IS NOT SILENT AT THE TIME OF CRISIS - AUGUST 1977. "REPRESSION IN SINGBHUM" - REPORT OF THE FACT FINDING COMMITTEE OF PUCL DELHI IN BIHAR. MARCH 1979.

"REPRESSION IN SINGBHUM" - REPORT OF THE FACT FINDING COMMITTEE OF PUCL DELHI IN BIHAR. MARCH 1979.

"SIX PARLIAMENTS AND DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS. INDIA 1947-79". DECEMBER 1979.