

Voices Rise for Accountability in Governance, Against Hatred

It was an energizing week end, November 23-24 at Allahabad when over 1,000 activists from different parts of the country, representing mass organisations assembled at Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh to both demand the tabling of the **Prevention of Communal and Targeted Violence (Access to Justice and Reparations) Bill, 2011** in the Winter Session of Parliament and to launch a united and concerted battle against communal and fascist forces. On the Sunday evening at the public meeting to round up the deliberations, representatives of five political parties joined the stage to lend voice and weight to the *Insaaf Sab Ke Liye Campaign*.

Starting now between **November 26-December 20, 2013**, letters/Memorandum will be sent to Rajya Sabha MPs and Lok Sabha MPs from all parties to demand the tabling of the Bill. The Winter Session of Parliament starts from December 5 and ends on 20, 2013. On December 5 and 6, 2013, thousands of SMS and emails will be sent to the elected representatives of both houses of Parliament. A one page Memorandum will also be sent to all MPs, Political Party Office Bearers at National and Regional and State Levels, within and outside the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. Already since October 28, 2013, thousands of post cards have reached Prime Minister Manmohansingh's office making the same demand. December 15-25 2013. An online petition is also on. If Central government does not deliver, then the *Insaaf Sab ke Liye* campaign will put pressure to be put on Parties like CPI(M), CPI to table a Non-Official Bill in the Rajya Sabha. Meetings are also planned at different cities and districts of UP. Already, December 18 and 19 2013 have been chosen for two meetings in Benaras and Lucknow respectively.

December 19 is special also because it is the death anniversary of Ram Prasad Bismil at Gorakhpur jail and Asfaqulla Khan at Faizabad jails.(1927) Both were Revolutionary Poets. Ram Prasad Bismil was an Indian revolutionary who participated in Mainpuri Conspiracy of 1918, and the Kakori conspiracy of 1925, both against British Empire.

On Monday, 19 December 1927, Ashfaqulla Khan is known to have taken two steps at a time, as he walked up to the post. When his chains were released, he reached for the hanging rope and kissed it by saying these words: "My hands are not soiled with the murder of man. The charges framed against me are a bare false. Allah will give me the justice." And at last he recited in Arabic the shahadah. The noose came around his neck and the movement lost one of its shining stars in the sky. He was born at Shahjanpur on October 22, 1900. December 19, 2013 should resonate in Lucknow, Gorakhpur, Faizabad and Shahjanpur this year. The life story and friendship of Bismil and Ashfaqulla is a precious historic legacy.

It was the withdrawal of the non cooperation movement by Gandhi that drew Khan into the Revolutionaries fold. Bismil an Arya Samaji and Asfaq a devout Muslim, both shed the fervor of a free and united India. They sacrificed their

lives on the same day of 19 December 1927 in different jails of Faizabad and Gorakhpur.

UP becomes critical because it is the ground for focus and mobilization of communal forces presently as was witnessed in Muzaffarnagar. All those of the readers of the column who wish to become actively involved in the campaign please write in at teestateesta@gmail.com.

Other ideas flowed to energise a short Term Campaign Suggestions Against Communalism and Communal Violence. January 26-30 2014 will be observed as Equality, Non-Discrimination Week. Commemorate the 65th Anniversary of the Killing of Gandhi to expose the Ideology that Killed a symbol of communal harmony. This Ideology is alive, powerful and pernicious today. The Opportunity will be used to focus on

- Bringing Alive Manifold Facets of the Indian National Movement that fought united against the forces of communalism and colonialism
- Distributing Literature on the Ideology and Political Vision of the Extreme Rightwing forces that were responsible for the Murder of Gandhi
- Bringing this in Creative Forms to Youth and the Young

Other important dates in the calendar are December 25, 2013 The Day of the Mahad Satyagraha when the Manusmriti as a symbol of caste oppression was burnt under the leadership of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar in 1925.

January 3, 2014 The Birth Anniversary of Savitribai Phule. Savitribai Jyotirao Phule was a social reformer, who, along with her husband, Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, played an important role in improving women's rights in India during the British Rule. Born on January 3, 1831, died on March 10, 1897, Savitribai was the first female teacher of the first women's school in India in 1852 with girls from all communities including Mali, Chamar, Muslim. Her first teacher was Fatima Shaikh. When husband and mentor Jyotirao Phule and she were ostracized by their community for their robust anti-caste and struggle, Usman Shaikh was the first to give them shelter. Here is a tailor made story of communal harmony and solidarity.

February 3, 2014. Birsa Munda was a great tribal leader and a folk hero, belonging to the Munda Adivasi who was behind the movement that rose in the tribal belt of Jharkhand during the British Raj, in the late 19th century making him an important figure in the history of the Indian independence movement. Birsa Munda is named with great respect as one of the freedom fighters in the Indian struggle for independence against British colonialism. His achievements in the freedom struggle become even greater considering he accomplished this before his 25th year. Birsa's devotion to his people was such that he was almost revered as God by his followers. By the time he was in his 20s, his activities in the tribal areas of Jharkhand state had already begun to worry the British establishment to a considerable extent. He was finally caught by the British on 3 February 1900 when he was only 25 years old. He died soon afterwards in mysterious circumstances on 9 June 1900 in Ranchi Jail. His birth anniversary which falls on November 15 is the foundation day of Jharkhand State and also celebrated by Jharkhandi people and official function takes place at his Samadhi Sthal, at Kokar Ranchi, the capital of Jharkhand.

Abul Kalam Muhiyuddin Ahmed Azad was an Indian scholar and a senior political leader of the Indian independence movement. His fiery leadership of India's Muslims is epitomized in the historic speech made by him from the steps of the Jama Masjid in Delhi after independence, and partition. Following India's independence, he became the first Minister of Education in the Indian government. Born on November 11, 1888, his death Anniversary can be Observed on February 22, 1958

"Full eleven centuries have passed by since then. Islam has now as great a claim on the soil of India as Hinduism. If Hinduism has been the religion of the people here for several thousands of years Islam also has been their religion for a thousand years. Just as a Hindu can say with pride that he is an Indian and follows Hinduism, so also we can say with equal pride that we are Indians and follow Islam. I shall enlarge this orbit still further. The Indian Christian is equally entitled to say with pride that he is an Indian and is following a religion of India, namely Christianity."
(From the Presidential Address - Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, I.N.C. Session, 1940, Ramgarh)

March 2013 for Chandrashekhar Azad and Bhagat Singh and April to remember doyens like Jyotiba Phule, Pandita Ramabhai and Babasaheb. For Phule born on April 11, 1827 the struggle against the oppression of caste was critically linked to a society of egalitarianism and non-discrimination in the name of faith. But for the wisdom and clarity of constitutional expert and mass leader Babasaheb born on April 14, India would not have had a constitution that was so unequivocal on equality and non discrimination. April brings us memories of one more historical figure, a woman, Pandita Ramabai born on April 23, 1858. Ramabai was an Indian social reformer, a champion for the emancipation of women, and a pioneer in education.

Fervour and creativity will make this campaign live and vibrant.
Join us and help save the Indian republic.

Teesta Setalvad

Ends