

Press Release

June 8th 2019

Kis Kis Ko Qaid Karoge... Jan Sabha and Cultural Programme

The completion of a year since the arrest of academics, activists, artists and lawyers; Mahesh Raut, Rona Wilson, Shoma Sen, Sudhir Dhawale and Surendra Gadling, framed for violence caused by right wing elements at Bhima Koregoan on 1 January 2018 was successfully marked by a **Jan Sabha and Cultural Programme held in Jantar Mantar, New Delhi at 11 am on 8 June 2019.**

Organised by the **Campaign Against State Repression** under the banner of ***Kis Kis Ko Qaid Karoge***, the jan sabha and cultural programme drew people from across the country and from all walks of life but notably from the working class and masses. Activists, peasants, students and workers from Haryana, Jharkhand, the National Capital Region, Punjab, Seemandhra, Telengana, West Bengal, etc. came in large numbers to resolutely declare unity in the struggle against state repression deployed to deny them their rights.

The assembly while hearing a host of speakers from anti-displacement movements, arts and academia, cultural organisations, democratic rights organisations, trade unions, student organisations, women's organisations, writers' organisations, etc. was resplendent with cries and calls for the release of all political prisoners, repeal of all draconian laws and an end to all forms of state repression on peoples' movements.

G. Laxman of the Civil Liberties Committee (CLC) – Telangana stated that it clearly visible from the multiple and intensifying attacks on Dalits and minority communities in name of cow protection that the BJP government seeks to implement the *Manu Shashtra* in place of the Constitution of India. **Ravi Kiran Jain of the Peoples' Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL)** said that since parliamentary political parties have reneged their duty to advocate peoples' rights, it falls on the shoulders of mass movements to take up and take forward the struggle. He also stated that draconian laws have no place in society, especially since Article 13 of the Constitution of India exists. **Kasim of Virasam - Revolutionary Writers' Association** explained how Narendra Modi continues to salute the Constitution of India while simultaneously violating it at every opportunity.

Gautam Mody of the New Trade Union Initiative (NTUI) stated that Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 is deployed to repress movements that carry forward peoples' struggles. Highlighting the ban of the Mazdoor Sangharsh Samiti (MSS) and the arrest of the Reliance Energy contract workers, he said that draconian laws are used to attack workers' rights as well as the rights of Adivasis, Dalits, minority communities and women. **Seema Azad of Dastak magazine** said that Government has sent a clear message that attack will intensify. She juxtaposed the dropping of UAPA charges against Sadhvi Pragya Thakur and Aseemanand with the repeated usage of UAPA against those who question Hindutva. **Tapas Chakravarty of Association for Protection of Democratic Rights (APDR)** highlighted the need for rights activists to fight against the repressive state to build a fearless society.

Prof. Chaman Lal of Jawaharlal Nehru University stated that the RSS-BJP combine has revived the use of colonial era laws. Invoking Bhagat Singh, he said the struggles must not aim to merely change the rulers but must fight against all forms of exploitation. **Devendra of the Chaitanya Mahila Samakhya (CMS)** explained the Government's use of draconian laws as stemming from

its fear of peoples' movements. **Independent filmmaker Sanjay Kak** asked for people to take the place of those arrested specifically mentioning Prof. GN Saibaba. Continuing on that line he said, "this struggle is not yesterday's or today's but a long struggle for tomorrow".

Prof. Vikas Gupta of the All India Forum for Right to Education (AIFRTE) placed the maintenance of oppression and the suppression of those who expose criminal elements, within the existing imbalance of power. **Parwez Ahmed of Popular Front of India** said that the PFI was banned for resisting attacks on Dalits and Muslims and reiterated the importance of a unified struggle and pleaded for a *Jail Bharo Andolan*. **Upkar Bawra of Bhim Army** explained how Bhim Army members were targeted under the National Security Act (NSA), after participating the April 2 Bharat Bandh. He went on to say our sacrifices will ensure that our voices remain heard even if the government seeks to curb them.

Kanupriya of the Punjab University Student's Union characterised the state as Hindu Brahmanical-Fascist and asked for a consolidation of forces to defeat it. **Vasantha of Women against Sexual Violence and State Repression (WSS) and the partner of Prof. GN Saibaba**, stated that the true defenders of *Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas* are those falsely placed in jail. **Ajit of the Belsonica Workers Union** said that the thoughts and ideas of those incarcerated are weapons that the ruling classes fear. He also called for unity between intellectuals and workers to fight the capitalist class.

Damodar Turi of Vistapan Virodhi Jan Vikas Andolan exclaimed that only peoples' struggles and not parliamentary methods can stop fascism. **Animesh Das of the Indian Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU)** stated that the attack on labour laws has intensified after the government was returned with a stronger majority. He went on to say in the coming times, only *lathis and dandas* will serve workers against the goondas in powers. **ND Pancholi of the Peoples' Union of Civil Liberties (PUCL)** while condemning draconian laws like UAPA and NSA, historicised the repressive nature of the state.

D Suresh Kumar of the Indian Association of Peoples' Lawyers (IAPL) necessitated political expression for the proper functioning of democracy. **Prof. Manoranjan Mohanty of the Council of Social Development (CSD)** exclaimed this program in Jantar Mantar is an expression of dissent and that resources must be shared to defend democratic rights with conviction. **Sukhwinder Kaur of the Lok Sangram Manch** compared Narendra Modi and Amit Shah to Hitler and Mussolini, stating that fascism has been defeated before and will be defeated again.

Throughout the programme, a variety of cultural organisations reinforced the message sought to be conveyed through artistic performances. These included; Chatra Ekta Manch, Jagrit Sanskritik Manch, Nishant Natya Manch, Praja Kala Mandali, Sangwari, Vihaan Sanskritik Toli, and performances by Shashi Bhushan and poetry reading by Nandita Narain.

Campaign Against State Repression