

MARCH 2020

Rs.15

# Liberation

CENTRAL ORGAN OF CPI(ML)

## The Countrywide Upsurge Against CAA-NRC-NPR: What We Have Achieved and What Comes Next

SHAHEEN





Fearless

ہم یہاں کے ہیں

ہم یہاں کے ہیں

WE  
BELONG  
HERE

Women, you  
belong Here

SIKHS  
you belong Here

KHAKHS you  
belong Here

DALITS you  
belong Here

MUSLIMS you belong Here. HINDUS you belong Here



New Series Vol. 25 No. 11

MARCH 2020

## CONTENTS

### COMMENTARY

Trump Visit .....	4
Reservations in Promotions .....	5
Population Control .....	6

### COVER FEATURE

The Ongoing Movement: An Assessment.....	7
Kanpur Womens Sit-in .....	13
Campaign Diary: Bihar.....	15

### SPECIAL REPORT

AIPWA National Conference .....	20
---------------------------------	----

REPORTS .....	23
---------------	----

### BOOK EXTRACT

Fearless Freedom .....	27
------------------------	----

### EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Dipankar Bhattacharya

### EDITOR

Arindam Sen

### EDITORIAL BOARD

Kavita Krishnan

V. Shankar

Sanjay Sharma

### COVER IMAGE:

Rohan Chakravarty

### INNER COVER IMAGE:

Shilo Shiv Suleman

Editors' e-mail: liberation@cpiml.org

### MANAGER

Prabhat Kumar

Phone: 7042877713

Website: www.cpiml.net

E-mail: manager.liberation@gmail.com

36 pages including covers

### Annual Subscription Rates

India	Rs. 150
Abroad	US\$ 30

Send M.O. or Bank Draft  
in favour of

LIBERATION PUBLICATIONS

Payable at Delhi to

U-90 SHAKARPUR, DELHI 110 092

# Delhi 2020 Verdict - A Much Needed Blow to the Modi-Shah Regime

After a vicious BJP campaign to conquer Delhi we now have the results of Delhi 2020 Assembly elections, and it is almost a repeat of the 2015 elections. AAP has by and large retained its 2015 vote share of more than 50% even though its seat tally has dropped marginally from 67 to 62. The seats lost by AAP have all gone to the BJP raising its tally to 8. The Congress once again could not open its account and if AAP managed to retain its 2015 vote share it was at the cost of the Congress. Traditional Congress voters among Dalits and Muslims almost en bloc migrated to the AAP while almost an equivalent share of erstwhile AAP voters shifted their allegiance to the BJP.

This is one election where we can perhaps clearly say that the BJP campaign has backfired. The party had begun with the slogan 'Desh Badla, Dilli Badlo' (India has changed, now change Delhi). But as protests against the CAA-NRC-NPR design intensified, the rattled regime thought it could also scare Delhi voters by projecting Shaheen Bagh as Pakistan or a symbol of restoration of the Mughal Empire, and 'shoot the traitors' became its central campaign theme. And as the clamour increased, it became not just rhetoric but a real call to action with armed goons launching violent attacks on students in Jamia and JNU and women protesters at Shaheen Bagh. It dismissed all the AAP claims and promises of cheaper electricity and water and improved education and health care as 'freebies' while unleashing brutal repression on JNU students to inflict a massive fee hike.

The UP CM who instigated the police in his own state to take revenge on the anti-CAA protesters, launching a veritable war on the Muslim community and protesting

activists, accused Kejriwal of feeding biryani to the Shaheen Bagh protesters and asked the voters to bring BJP to power so it could serve bullets to the protesters. Some other campaigners dubbed Kejriwal a terrorist. When the campaign did not seem to evoke the expected response and exit polls predicted a renewed AAP victory in Delhi, sections of the pro-Modi media even termed Delhi voters indifferent to national interests represented by the BJP, if not outright traitors to the national cause, and addicted to 'freebies' offered by the AAP government. And this intense hate was sprayed in the air through a relentless high-decibel campaign spearheaded directly by the so-called Chanakya of the BJP, home minister Amit Shah, who called upon the Delhi voters to press the lotus button with such intensity that it could deliver an electrical shock to the Shaheen Bagh protesters.

The emphatic defeat of the BJP in Delhi marks a defeat for this vicious and intense hate campaign led directly by the Modi-Shah-Yogi triumvirate and their minions. And in a befitting reply to the BJP's vitriolic arrogance, the AAP candidate from the Shaheen Bagh locality won with the second highest victory margin. Nitish Kumar's JDU suffered the humiliation of the biggest defeat as Kumar's claim of his government outpacing Delhi in terms of development fell flat spectacularly. It is true that as a centre-right party, AAP shares considerable common ground with the BJP in terms of economic policies. AAP's notion of nationalism too has a lot in common with the BJP's model of hyper-nationalism, as reflected in its total endorsement of the Modi-Shah Kashmir policy and several such questions. AAP's response to questions of democracy in terms of



opposition to state repression and communal violence and defending rights of workers, women, dalits, minorities and other marginalised communities is also pretty muted and problematic. It is also true that the AAP victory in Delhi has its specific local context and cannot perhaps be replicated in the larger context of Lok Sabha elections and all-India politics. But in spite of all these specificities and limitations, there can be no minimising the enormous significance of the Delhi verdict at this crucial juncture of Indian politics in the face of the unbridled fascist onslaught following Modi's return to power for the second successive term.

It is the task of progressive

democratic forces in Delhi and beyond to build on the huge potential of the Delhi verdict. The outcome has underlined the centrality of basic issues like education, health, electricity and water - issues highlighted by the AAP government - as the foremost concerns of the common people. This agenda should be expanded and pursued vigorously to ensure real gains for the people in terms of attainment of their fundamental rights and fulfilment of their basic needs and aspirations. Coming in the wake of the decisive defeat of the BJP in Jharkhand only a few weeks ago, the verdict also demonstrates the growing anger of the people and vulnerability of the

Modi-Shah regime defying all talks of the regime's electoral invincibility and the disastrous impact and implications of the Sangh-BJP divisive agenda. From Kashmir and Ayodhya to the CAA-NRC-NPR conundrum, the BJP played all its cards in Jharkhand and Delhi and yet got routed quite decisively. This certainly augurs well for the anti-fascist resistance. The breather provided by the people of Delhi must be utilised fully to intensify the ongoing protests against the CAA-NRC-NPR design and to hand down equally decisive defeats to the BJP and its allies in the forthcoming rounds of elections later this year and early next year. □

## Modi and Trump: Two Tyrants Meet in an Extravaganza Wasting Crores! But Does It Benefit India and Indians?

The US President Donald Trump is visiting India on 24th and 25th February. The godi media has already created a spectacle of the Trump visit, as it offers the ruling BJP regime and its □ spokespersons an opportunity to manufacture another diversionary tactic to draw people's attention away from the disaster in Indian economy, skyrocketing unemployment and communal divisiveness across the country. But let us understand the realities beyond the optics of Trump visit:

**Wasting Crores To Create Media Spectacle:** Donald Trump has emphasized again and again that the most important fact of visiting India will be the 7-10 million people welcoming him from the airport to the event (by the way, the population of Ahmadabad is 5.5 million). The tax payers are going to pay a whopping 80-85 crores for this! The poor of Ahmadabad, on the other hand will be subjected to the humiliation and cruelty of being kept hidden by a wall. The Gujarat Model of making the poor invisible will be on full display during Trump's visit to the city.

While Trump cries "America First", for the Modi Government it is "Trump First", not India.

India Made to Buy American

**Weapons, While Preferential Provisions Removed and Tariffs Raised for Indian Exports:**

The least publicized yet the high point of Trump's visit is the arms deal where India is being made to purchase weapons worth 2.6 Billion USD. Thus, while the US is denting our exchequer and pushing its way into the Indian market, Modi govt. shows no spine to fight back the slew of US measures to restrict India's exports and access to US markets. Since becoming President in 2016, Trump has increased tariffs on Indian steel and aluminum products and removed the General System Preference for Indian goods which gave tariff free access to 23 Indian goods in the American market.

**No Diplomatic Advantage- Abject Surrender to US Diktats:** Modi Government gave in to the pressure of the United States and has stopped importing oil from Iran. This move was not only surrender to the United States but also meant serious economic disadvantage on at least two counts- a) we had started paying Iran in Rupees rather than dollars and b) Iranian crude was cheaper to refine as our refineries were already designed to work with oil from Iran.

In sharp contrast to the bluster of Modi, his supporters and the Godi Media, the United States has always used India to leverage its own interests in the region.

**Reality Behind 'Developed' Nation Status to India and False Cheers by the Modi Brigade:** The US government's recent move to categorise India as a developed nation from being a "developing" nation is being touted as a big achievement of the Modi government! A lot of BJP Ministers and supporters have already boasted about this. But what is the reality? By classifying India as a developed nation, the United States is basically denying tariff free access to Indian products in the United States. As a result of this, the cost of Indian goods in American will increase and this will hit our exports.

Let's note that US' re-categorisation of India as a 'developed nation' is based on its own arbitrary criterion that India's share in world trade is more than the threshold of 0.5% set by the US! In contrast, the global criterion followed by the United Nations for defining a 'developed' economy is a per capita annual income of 12,375 USD and India's per capital annual income at 2000 USD is far away from

meeting the global standards of a developed economy.

Clearly, US move of labelling India as 'developed' economy has nothing to do with India's real economic strength and standard of living, but rather it's a move driven by US self-interest to make Indian products less competitive and snatch away India's trade advantages in the US.

Trump Administration's Repeated Moves Against Indians and Reduction in H-1B Visas: The Trump administration has been continuously making it more and more difficult for Indian professionals to work in America. This is clear in the changing regulation for the H-1B Visa which allows highly skilled Indian citizens to work in America. In 2017, Trump framed a policy of Buy

American Hire American which made it harder to hire Indian professionals, as a consequence of this denial rate for H-1B visas rose from 4% in 2015 to 15% in 2018. The share of Indian IT companies in recipients of H-1B fell to 24% in 2019 compared to 51% in 2016. The rate of rejection for the extension of H-1B visas of those already working in America has increased to 18% in 2019 from 4% in 2016.

The data speaks loudly to the fact that Trump has made it more difficult for Indian citizens to work in America. Indians have also been victims of the wave of hatred and xenophobia that Trump has spurred in the United States but the Modi Govt and its supports have nothing to say on this.

Trump has repeatedly said that he

is not happy with India but Modi is his friend. What does this mean for India and common Indians? Ultimately what unites both the leaders is their fanning of hatred, divisiveness and xenophobia in their respective countries. And look at the irony of it all - those who never tire of proclaiming themselves to be super-nationalists and castigate every other voice as 'anti-nationals', are the ones who bending on their knees in a meek and shocking surrender to the diktats of Trump.

We must expose the sheer wastage of the taxpayers' money during Trump visit just for a media spectacle. We must also reject and resist the timid surrender of the Modi Government to the whims and fancies of Trump administration. □

## SC Verdict on Reservation in Promotions

- Indresh Maikhuri

The verdict pronounced by the Supreme Court on reservation in promotions has raised fresh questions on the stand of the ruling powers as well as the judiciary towards social justice. 'Reservation in promotions is not a fundamental right': these are the much talked about words of the SC verdict which are making headlines. But if we study the verdict, the matter is beyond and above this. The stand adopted in this case by the Central and Uttarakhand BJP governments is an attempt to cover up their deeds with lies. The BJP should state clearly that it does not believe in any principle of social justice; and that whenever it gets an opportunity it will harm, or contribute to harm, social justice.

On 7 February 2020 the Supreme Court, pronouncing its verdict in the case Mukesh Kumar & others Vs. Government of Uttarakhand, ended reservation in promotions. In its verdict the Supreme Court said that claiming reservation in promotions is not a fundamental right. Citing precedents from earlier cases, the Division Bench of Justice L Nageshwara Rao and Justice Hemant Gupta said that Articles 16 (4) and 16 (4) (A) are enabling provisions which give the State government discretionary powers to consider promotion if required. The Supreme Court said that the established law is that the State government cannot

be ordered to give reservation. The Court also said that the State government is not bound to provide reservation in promotions for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes; but the Court added that if the State government does so, it should have sufficient quantitative data to show that reservation is necessary for adequate representation of these sections. Thus, the Supreme Court has put the ball in the State government's court. The Court refused to issue any kind of mandamus in this matter.

A strange aspect of this SC verdict is that it says quantitative data is necessary for giving reservation. However, if the government decides not to give reservation in promotions they do not have to show any quantitative data to prove that there is adequate representation of SC/ST in government services. The Court even goes so far as to say that even if a case of under-representation of SC/ST in public services is brought to its notice, the Court cannot issue a mandamus for giving reservation to SC/ST. This is a redundancy. If a particular section or persons from particular castes do not get adequate representation in government services they will go to the Court and the Court has decided beforehand that it will not issue any mandamus, what options are remaining for obtaining justice? Government reports in Uttarakhand tell us that SC/ST do not have adequate representation in government services. But where can they go to seek justice

if the Supreme Court has already washed its hands of issuing any directive in this matter?

When questioned at the national level on this matter, the Central and Uttarakhand State BJP governments chose to answer with a mixture of half-truths and lies. Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Thavar Chand Gehlot in Parliament and Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat in Dehradun said that it was the Congress government that took the decision to end reservation in promotions in 2012. The question is, if the BJP does not consider this decision proper, why did it not overturn the decision? If the decision by the Congress was against SC/ST employees, what stopped the BJP from changing this decision?

The fact is that the same Vijay Bahuguna who took this decision in 2012 as the then Congress Chief Minister is now in the BJP and most of his Ministers are currently Ministers in the present BJP government in Uttarakhand. The question also applies to Harish Rawat, the Congress leader who became Chief Minister after Bahuguna: if he thought this decision was wrong, why did he not change it? Chief Minister Trivendra Rawat and the BJP cannot escape by saying it was a decision taken by the Congress government. Arguing for the Uttarakhand government in this case in the Supreme Court, advocates PS Narasimha and Mukul Rohtagi asserted that the State

government has decided not to give reservation. This is double-speak and shows a two-faced character: to say in the Court that the government does not want to give reservation; and to say in public that the decision not to give reservation is not the decision of our government but the decision of the previous government!

The governments are not just ending reservations; they are actually ending government jobs. Government jobs will be available to the General Category as well as to the Reserved Category only as long as government

jobs exist. About 56,000 posts are lying vacant in Uttarakhand. If there is a need to fight for something, it is the need to fight for appointments to these vacant posts as per eligibility and through a transparent process; otherwise, the government will gradually declare these posts 'dead' and the attention of the people will be diverted into feeling a false sense of caste superiority and fighting acrimoniously against reservation.

Recent SC order on reservations in promotions exposes the anti-reservation

face of the government and the BJP. It is highly condemnable that the Uttarakhand BJP government submitted to the SC that Uttarakhand gov. is not in favour of giving reservations in promotions. The SC's calling reservations not a fundamental right will in turn weaken the very fundamental premise of social justice and equality as envisioned in the Constitution.

We stand for reservation in promotions at all levels and demands from the Modi government to pass a legislation in current session of Parliament to ensure the same. □

## Population Control Is Anti Women, It Is Not Reproductive Justice

- Kavita Krishnan

A Constitution Amendment Bill introducing coercive population control measures was tabled in the Rajya Sabha on 7 February 2020. This is a Constitution Amendment Bill restricting constitutionally guaranteed rights to citizens with more than two children. It is a draconian population control move.

Note: Population Control is not about making safe birth control available to women so that they can make their own reproductive decisions. It is about allowing the State to treat women's bodies as baby producing machines, shame and punish women for giving birth, and even unleash mass violence in the form of mass sterilisation.

In his Independence Day speech in 2019, Prime Minister Modi announced a 'population control' campaign projecting small families as 'patriotic'. Like the Beti Bachao and Swachh Bharat campaigns, this campaign, too, is ostensibly aimed at 'nudging' people to modify their social behaviour.

In his speech, Modi called for a campaign against what he called 'uncontrolled population growth'. The campaign, he said, would focus on projecting parents with small families as responsible and patriotic. He said, 'Before a child arrives in our family, we should think—have I

prepared myself to fulfil the needs of the child? Or will I leave it dependent on society?' This rhetoric shifts responsibility for the care (education, health, food and shelter) of children from the State and government to the parents. Deprivation is framed as parental neglect and irresponsibility. The ideology of 'population control' has always implied that it is poor families and poor nations that are expected to reproduce less. The fact is that population is not responsible for poverty. Wealth is not innocent of poverty. Poverty is produced by a system that exploits the poor to reward the rich. Poverty of nations is linked to a violent history of colonialism, where these nations were plundered and impoverished.

For long, the 'population control' policy of the Government of India, backed by international funding agencies, has resulted in extreme violence towards poor women in India. Between 2009 and 2012, fifteen women died every month due to botched sterilization operations in similar camps. The 'population control' campaign is now likely to boost violence on women's bodies, and shame poor women for bearing 'too many children'.

Quite apart from the tendency of 'population control' campaigns to inflict humiliation and violence on women, these campaigns are

also likely to have a communal subtext. In Gujarat 2002, Modi had infamously called the relief camps for the pogrom-affected Muslims 'baby-producing factories'. On 11 July 2019, just a month before his Independence Day speech as PM, his Cabinet minister Giriraj Singh addressed a rally in Delhi on World Population Day, demanding a Population Control Law.

At that rally, a song played from the dais, 'Jansankhya visphot se apni azaadi ko khatra hai/Hamko gaddaron ki badhti aabaadi se khatra hai' (Our independence is in danger from population explosion/ We are in danger from the rising population of traitors). Singh made a speech calling for a law to prevent the decline in the population of Hindus and curb the growth of the Muslim population. Participants in the rally branded Muslims as unpatriotic and irresponsible for bearing too many children even if they were poor and worked as cobblers or at repairing bicycle punctures.

The 'love jihad' bogey is integrally tied to the myth that Muslims marry Hindu women to increase the population of Muslims.

Modi's 'population control' campaign is likely to be another pretext to brand Muslims as unpatriotic and encourage discrimination and violence against them. □

## The Countrywide Upsurge against CAA-NRC-NPR:

# What We Have Achieved and What Comes Next

Arindam Sen

## Movement against CAA-NRC-NPR: a Brief Timeline

### Stage I: Agitation spreads from North-East to JMU and AMU

#### 4 December

The moment the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill is cleared by the Union Cabinet for introduction in the Parliament, Assam and Tripura explodes in massive militant protests.

In Dispur, several thousands of women and men break down police barricades to protest in front of the Assam Legislative Assembly.

#### 8 December

AASU members ransack AGP office in Dibrugarh for supporting CAB in Parliament.

#### 11 December

PM Debbarma, from the Tripura royal family, leads a several thousands strong rally in Agartala.

#### 12 December

CAB becomes an Act. Demonstrations start in North-Eastern states. Curfews, arrests, lathi charges, internet shutdowns, even army deployment, are taken recourse to in many places.

Dipanjali Das and Sam Stafford among four killed in police firing in Guwahati. Many including Akhil Gogoi taken into preventive custody.



Shaheen Bagh, Delhi

#### PART I

With Mercury dipping to record lows, winter 2019-20 was more atrocious than usual. The political atmosphere too was quite depressing, what with the passage of CAB even in the Rajya Sabha thanks to help from the BJP's loyal opposition and the apex court visibly reluctant to discharge its constitutional responsibility of blocking a patently unconstitutional legislation. It appeared that, setbacks in certain state-level elections notwithstanding, at the national level the BJP was destined to be successful in pushing through the diabolical CAA-NRC-NPR project by selling it as a pro-Hindu measure.

Suddenly there was a change in the situation. A dramatic change, a game-changer to boot.

### Springtime in a Cruel Winter

What happened is this. With the incumbent government, the Parliament and the judiciary -- and the political class generally -- repeatedly failing the people on a whole host of issues, the latest being the question of citizenship, the citizens themselves now intervened directly and decisively. Led by the student community, they took the matter in their own hands.

The State of Assam, with its very special concerns on the citizenship issue, was the first to explode in protests, immediately followed by



## 14-15 December

Protestor Ishwar Nayak and Abdul Alim killed in police firing at a protest in Guwahati.

## 15 December

Huge protest against CAA at the Jantar Mantar in New Delhi.

Police enters the premises of Jamia Milia University by force and without permission soon after violence erupted outside the campus during protests, on the pretext of nabbing the perpetrators of violence. They even break into the library and

mercilessly beat up students everywhere.

Protests held outside AMU; security forces launch brutal attack inside the campus with chants of 'Jai Shree Ram'. More than 60 students including president of students' union grievously injured.

Sit-in protest begins at Shaheen Bagh, barely two kilometers away from Jamia campus to express solidarity with students and demanding withdrawal of CAA.

The PM forced to cancel his 15-16 December meeting with Japanese Premier at Guwahati fearing massive demonstration.

## Stage II: JNU and One, Two, Three, Many Shaheen Baghs

## 16 December

Hunger strike jointly organised by the ruling LDF and UDF in Thiruvananthapuram.

Students and teachers of IIM Ahmedabad detained by police for peaceful protest.

Students of Osmania, Hyderabad and MANU universities assemble in powerful protest in the capital of Telangana and by 23 December the agitation spreads to smaller towns in the state.

## 17 December

Violent clashes in Delhi's Seelampur area. A number of protesters and officers injured, a police station set on fire.

A dawn-to-dusk shutdown observed in Kerala.

## 18 December

The apex court refuses to stay implementation of CAA.

Statement condemning brutalisation of students at JMU and AMU signed by signatories from more than 1,100 academic institutions across the world, including all IITs, JNU, DU, the ISI, the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research etc. from India.

## 19 December

Bihar Bandh called by Left parties – marked by the participation of common people across communities

Massive participation in the Ham Bharat Ke Log protest gatherings across India

Over 700 students from Punjab university together with others from

other states in the Northeast. The fact that these were BJP/NDA-ruled states did not help, neither did large-scale repression. Before the crisis could be partially managed with sops like Inner Line Permits, people in the national capital and the rest of India were up in arms. There was no Gandhi, no Bhagat Singh, no CM, no JP, not even someone like Anna Hazare to call them to action. The Youth of India rose on its own, "like lions after slumber, in unvanquishable number", and blazed a new trail. The battered minority community, particularly their women, turned around and supplied the crucial muscle to the movement. Other sections of people saluted the vanguards and happily followed their lead. Artists, poets, singers, actors, authors, social scientists and who not – broke the suffocating silence thrust upon them and joined the agitation spontaneously and in their own creative ways, making it broader in sweep and more colourful, meaningful and impressive. They were worried and angry no doubt, but at the same time happy to have come out of their small closets – home, workplace, or whatever – and march with, mix with and shout their lungs out with a largely unknown heterogeneous crowd representing the pluralist cultural mosaic that is India. For the young and the old, for women and men, for Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and others, it was a liberating experience: a rediscovery of India, the Idea of India. Many if not most of them were hitting the streets for the first time, and they were visibly excited. Overall, the cold was still biting but it felt like the gloomy winter was gone, yielding



Punjab Kisan Union farmers at Shaheen Bagh Punjab Ki



adjoining districts stage a spirited protest in Chandigarh.

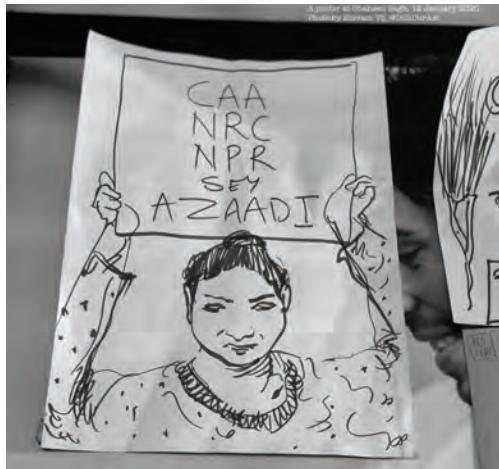
Three protesters (2 in Mangalore and 1 in Lucknow) killed in police firing.

Prohibitory orders imposed on public gatherings in BJP-ruled states such as Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and large parts of Delhi. In spirited denial, several prestigious institutes in Kozhikode including IIM protest on 19-20 December.

Tens of thousands of people protested in Hyderabad, Patna, Chandigarh, Mumbai and other cities, including 'no protest areas' like Bengaluru and Delhi's Red Fort. In Bengaluru, historian Ramchandra Guha along with several other professors arrested, even as the IIM organises a novel 'shoe satyagraha'. To avoid arrest outside the campus, students and teachers display their footwear and placards outside the main gate and demonstrate inside near the gate.

In Mangaluru, two persons die in police firing. The police later forces its way into the hospital where other victims were being treated.

Thousands of protesters gather at Moulali in Kolkata and an estimated twenty thousand at the iconic August Kranti Maidan in Mumbai organised by "Hum Bharat ke Log".



## 20 December

7 protesters (one each in Meerut, Sambhal, Muzaffarnagar, Kanpur and Firozabad and 2 in Bijnor) killed in separate incidents of police firing in UP.

Bhim Army Chief Chandrashekhar Azad conducts a protest march at the Jama Masjid in Delhi.

## 21 December

Approximately 1.5 km long Protest march in Kolkata.

### Bihar Bandh called by RJD.

18-year-old protester Amir Hanzla beaten to death in Patna by Hindutva extremists.

## 24 December

German student at IIT Madras deported by the Indian authorities for participating in the anti- CAA protests.

Video-clips of police ransacking homes, shops and cars and accusing and arresting protesters for taking part in vandalism emerge from various parts of Uttar Pradesh.

1,000-1,200 protesters booked just for organising a candle light march in AMU!

## 28 December

In Meerut, U.P. government demands ₹25,000 each from more than 140 people as penalty for damages allegedly caused during protests.

LGBT Rights activists protests against the CAA and NRC at the Kolkata Pride Parade.

## 31 December

Protests held during New Year's Eve celebrations in Delhi, Hyderabad, Bhubaneswar, Mumbai and Kolkata.

place to a spring festival of masses on the move, pulsating with new life and optimism.

The spontaneous countrywide mass awakening caught the political class unawares. So powerful was the impact that the ever-smart Prime Minister was now at a loss how to save the day. He foolishly tried to deny the very existence of an all India NRC project and the detention centres, making himself a laughing stock.

## Azadi? What Azadi?

'We are already a free nation, so those who always chant 'Azadi' actually demand freedom from Hindustan. They are antinational, they are traitors to the nation.' Thus goes the standard Modi-Shah narrative on the slogan that comes first on every protester's lips. And it is this hateful narrative that the self-styled Rambhakt acted upon when he shouted "yeh lo Azadi" (here is Azadi for you) before shooting at an agitating Jamia student, with intent to kill.

Now, how do the protesters themselves conceive and interpret this word – this magic word?

"Azadi" – with its more advanced form "Bekhauf Azadi" (fearless freedom) and its various extensions like "khap se bhi Azadi, baap se bhi Azadi" (freedom from the oppressive caste panchayats as well as from patriarchal domination) – emerged as a signal tune of women's movement in our country in course of the agitation against Nirbhaya rape and murder in Delhi. Implicit in "Azadi" was a demand for nondiscrimination and gender Justice. Now the

## 1 January

Five-lakh strong anti-CAA rally organised in Kochi.

## 4 January

One lakh protestors attend a "Million March" in Hyderabad.

# Stage III: Intensified Attacks, Robust Resistance

## 5 January

A masked mob of armed AVBP goons attack and vandalize the campus of JNU with full complicity of the VC, the police and the Modi government. Instantaneous protests everywhere, including a huge gathering called "Occupy Gateway" in front of the Gateway of India organised that very night.

## 8 January

All India General Strike called by workers and unions, and a rural India strike called by peasants' organisations – integrating the demands to scrap CAA NPR NRC with the demands to safeguard workers' and peasants' rights.

Thousands of people joined the anti-CAA protests at Dibrugarh, Guwahati and other parts of Assam.

PM Modi, afraid to face the people, forced to cancel his visit to Assam.

## 11-12 January

PM Modi feels the ire of protesting Bengalis during his two-day official visit to W B right from the Kolkata airport. Several protests are organised throughout the state. The PM cannot address any rally and is compelled to move by waterways and by helicopters.

A "Tiranga Rally" against the CAA held in Hyderabad, with thousands of people displaying the national flag.

Thousands of people join the anti CAA protests at Jogeshwari in Mumbai with slogans such as "I Am From Gujarat, My Documents Burned in 2002".

## 14 January

The Kerala government approaches the Supreme court to challenge the CAA under Section 131 of the Constitution. Earlier the Kerala Assembly had passed a resolution against the CAA, followed by Punjab, Rajasthan and WB Assemblies.

5 0 0 0 women staged a sit in protest at

enchancing slogan has resurfaced with larger traction and broader, more radical implications. As protesters on the ground have said on record umpteen times, they demand freedom from poverty and unemployment, corruption and neoliberalism, intolerance and vigilantism, discrimination and divisiveness, tanashahi and hatemongering, and so on.

To put it in another way, Azadi today is a dynamic, expansive idea. As it grips wider and wider sections of people, the latter enrich it with their varied demands and aspirations. What Akhtarista Ansari, one of the Jamia students (an AISA activist) who shielded her fellow student from police batons, told Caravan Magazine (2 February, 2020) gives us a fair idea of what stirs the youth of India today. As she puts it, Azadi is a freedom that includes everything from self-determination in Kashmir, to bodily autonomy for young women in public spaces, to dignity for Dalits, to freedom from racial prejudice for students from the North-East, to equality for the queer community, to self-respect and freedom from police-profiling for young Muslims, to affordable education for all students, and to fair wages for workers. Obviously, also remunerative prices and freedom from debt trap for farmers, proper facilities and a dignified life for differently-abled persons and so on – one could add on endlessly. And this comprehensive freedom can be and has to be achieved, protesters firmly believe, only by inquilab, that is revolt.

Image: Shilo Shiv Suleman



Mansoor Ali park (Roshan Bagh) in Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh.

In Gujarat, people celebrated Makar Sankranti by flying kites with slogans for and against CAA.

## 15 January

More than 200,000 people join the Anti-CAA protests in Mangalore, where hundreds of people came in boats carrying Indian flags. Harsh Mander and former IAS officer Kannan Gopinathan address the protestors.

Women's protests come up at Patna's Sabzibagh, Kolkata's Park Circus, Kanpur's Chaman Ganj, Gaya's Shanti Bagh.

## 17 January

Around 500 women starts a sit in protest at the Clock tower grounds in Lucknow. A vindictive police force tries to disperse them the very next day, but the sit-in continues despite repeated harassments.

19 January

In Berlin, Germany more than 200 people, mainly of Indian origin, join the protest march against CAA, NRC and the attack on JNU.

## 20 January

Massive mobilisations in the pledge-taking rallies all over India organised by Young India Against CAA NPR NRC

## 21 January

More than 300,000 people join an anti-CAA protest rally at Kalaburagi in Karnataka.

More than a hundred women, who had been protesting at Khureji Khas in Delhi since 14 January, released 10,000 gas filled black coloured balloons with the message "No CAA NPR NRC".

## 22 January

Thousands of students from nine universities in North-East India boycott classes and join protest march in the states of Assam, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh.

## 25 January

Massive Human Chain in Bihar, with people joining hands across rural and urban communities to show unity in opposing CAA NPR NRC.

In London, around 2000 people from the Indian diaspora and the Human Rights organisation, conducted a protest march against CAA from the Downing street to the Indian High Commission.

26 January – Republic Day

All across the country people in their thousands hit the street to reclaim the Republic. In Shaheen Bagh, Radhika Vemula, mother of Rohith Vemula, join the Dadi Maas in unfurling the National Flag. Nearly one lakh women and men assemble there in celebration of the 70th anniversary of the Republic Day.

More than 300 eminent personalities in India including Naseeruddin Shah, Javed Jaffrey, and Mira Nair, signed and issued an open statement against the CAA. Protests are held in Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, New York, Washington DC, Chicago, London and many other cities abroad. Six to seven million people participate in a human chain extending from Kasaragod to Kaliyikkavila in Kerala.

## 27 -30 January

Failing to stem the rising tides of protest in newer areas with state repression, and panicked at the frightful prospect defeat at Delhi elections, the Sanghis go

## Inquilab, Mohabbat, Solidarity

One of the many eloquent graffitis out there on the walls of Shaheen Bagh depicts two women close together, one saying "inquilab zindabad" and the other – "mohabbat zindabad". Yes, for the agitators the two slogans or notions are complementary, not contradictory. To rebel against – and to attain freedom from -- injustice, oppression and hate, you need unity and a bond of love with all compatriots, you need proactive fraternity, that is solidarity/camaraderie in struggle.

The present movement has been witness to very many ways of expressing solidarity. In all the sit-in protest sites you can see volunteers and/or street vendors distributing tea, snacks, food packets, drinking water etc. free of cost – in some cases even regular langars arranged usually by Sikh volunteers. A lady from far-off Gangotri, a sacred pilgrimage centre for devout Hindus, comes all the way to Delhi to stand with her sisters in Shaheen Bagh, takes the stage, and is warmly welcomed. A young man from Jabalpur joins the agitators in Shaheen Bagh, wearing only his shorts and covering his body with a big poster. He challenges the Prime Minister to recognise him by his clothes and asked how he withstands the cold wave in Delhi at night, replies: if all these people can spend night after night in this weather, can't I bear with it for a few hours? In many places Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Sikh religious heads have led protest marches hand-in-hand; one can cite a hundred similar instances.



over to direct incitement of mob violence. Union Minister Anurag Thakur incite a captive crowd asking them to fire at 'traitors of the nation'. Two days later, on 31st January, a self-proclaimed 'Ram-Bhakt', whose FB posts revealed links with the RSS, fires at the peacefully protesting students of JMU. The bullet just misses the chest and injures an unarmed protestor.

## 1 February

The communal bullying continues with full state support. A Hindutva fanatic fires bullets in Shaheen Bagh, chanting slogans like "Hindu Rashtra Zindabad" and "Sirf Hinduo ki chalegi" ("Only Hindus will have their way").

## 2-7 February

Responding to a threat of attack on Shaheen Bagh issued by right-wing terrorist group Hindu Sena on 2 February, well-known artists and groups like Kusha Kapila, Ankur Tewari, Shuva Mudgal, Madan Gopal Singh, rock band Adaivta, Rajasthani folk troupe Kutle Khan, new wave band Mumphali and others take up the gauntlet and hurriedly organise a cultural fest at the protest site, from that very day, under the bannere 'Artists against Communalism'. The Hindu Sena calls off the programme.

On 3 February, a massive contingent of Sikh farmers from Mansa, Punjab, under the banner of the Punjab Kisan Union, march into Shaheen Bagh. They stay till 5 February, offering solidarity and protection. Many cook food for everyone at Shaheen Bagh. This gesture sends a powerful message of unity and solidarity in the face of the terrorist threats to Shaheen Bagh.

## 14 February

A sit-in begins at Vannarapettai (Washermanpet) -- renamed as Shaheenpet -- in Chennai following a brutal lathi-charge by the police on peaceful protestors. On 17th February a previously engaged couple ties the knot at the protest site with a copy of the constitution in hand.

## 16 February

Sushant Singh, Nandita Das, Teesta Setalvad and others join in yet another mammoth rally in Azad Maidan, Mumbai. Recital of 'Hum Dekhenge' and slogans like 'Modi se, Shah se azadi' rend the air.

## 19 February

Thousands march to the Secretariat in Chennai in defiance of a High Court Ordering permission for the same. Main demand: the TN Assembly must pass resolution against the CAA.

Supreme Court-appointed mediators Sanjay Hegde and Sadhana Ramachandra visit Shaheen Bagh and start a dialogue with protestors in an effort to try and find an alternative site for protest through consultations. The women of Shaheen Bagh ask, 'If the Government hasn't reached out to us when we are here, will they do so if we move?'

[Note: The timeline is only indicative, not exhaustive. Protests in various forms took place in many other places too, such as Shillong, Margao, Imphal, Dehradun, Haridwar, Nainital, Haldwani, Jabalpur etc. The timeline does not cover the numerous initiatives taken by our party, the more important ones being already reported in party publications.]

In fact camaraderie is writ large on every phase, every episode in the movement. The original Shaheen Bagh was started primarily to express solidarity with the battered students of Jamia, even as hundreds of students from other colleges and universities along with concerned Delhites thronged police headquarters throughout the night, and departed only after securing the release of all the arrested students. Immediately after getting the news of the masked storm-troopers' brutal attack on JNU, students and citizens of Delhi rushed to the site and assembled at police headquarters demanding immediate action, while students of Mumbai launched a protest at the Gateway of India that very night. Next morning the agitation spread throughout the country. Thus expression of solidarity itself becomes a form of struggle, and often invites state repression.

It is this mohabbat, this love and concern for fellow Indians cutting across class, caste, religious and other divides is a great strength of the ongoing struggle against the CAA-NRC-NPR conspiracy. It showcases a surge in people-first patriotism, which is a powerful antidote against communal hate-mongering and virulent majoritarian nationalism. The massive countrywide awakening thus helps revive a great legacy of our freedom movement, and this has the potential of going a long way in healing the wounds of partition. More on this in Part II.

# Kanpur's women-led NRC protest has overturned local power structures: 'They aren't listening to us'

*(Excerpts from story by Shoaib Daniyal in Scroll.in)*

Sitting cross-legged in the crowd, Rafia was diffident. Even when she did speak, other women soon talked over her.

But then she got a tap on the shoulder, indicating that she should go up on stage. A sudden change occurred. Rafia delivered a confident speech on the National Population Register, urging Indians to boycott the exercise. "When the NPR person comes, feed him well, get him hot tea," she said, her eyes twinkling, her voice steady. "And then tell him to go back."

At Kanpur's Chamanganj, Rafia wasn't the only one whose life has been transformed by the Narendra Modi government's new citizenship initiatives. For the past six weeks, women from the city have taken over Mohammed Ali Park to demand that the government roll back the Citizenship Amendment Act, which offers a fast track to citizenship for illegal immigrants from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh – except if they are Muslim.

Critics such as Rafia fear that the act, used along with the planned National Register of Citizens, will be used to disenfranchise Muslims or even render them stateless. The National Population Register that she mentioned in her speech is the first step in preparing the National Register of Citizens.

Yet, while the NRC is their ultimate target, the unprecedented actions of these Kanpuriya women has already resulted in many other changes along the way. Most remarkably, women have resisted repeated attempts by the local administration to end the protest – even using force to try to do so.

But it's not only politics: this unique protest is ushering in social changes too. Women are organising spontaneously, without the traditional networks of local leaders and religious heads. Social media is being used, both to communicate with other residents locally and to learn from the experiences of protestors in other parts of the country.

The result of this completely new politics is that Kanpur's local Muslim leadership has broken down. Any engagement with the Uttar Pradesh's Bharatiya Janata Party government and its administrative apparatus is enough to completely discredit anyone, no matter how eminent. The cause is so urgent – to save citizenship and the Constitution – that almost anything that stands in the way of the women of Chamanganj is being swept away.

## A sit-in starts

The protests in Kanpur's Mohammed Ali Park started early in January, inspired by Delhi's Shaheen Bagh sit-in. The agitation began on a low-key note, with people gathering in the small park in the evenings.

Within a month, the protest had swelled to become a 24x7 sit-in. Women gave speeches, sang patriotic Bollywood songs and, of course, criticised the Modi government's decision to base Indian citizenship on religion. The main protest area is occupied by women, many of them in face-covering niqabs, sitting below photos of Gandhi, Ambedkar, Azad and a large Indian flag. A banner in Hindi calls the protests an "indefinite satyagraha to oppose the CAA-NRC-NPR by the women of Kanpur".

Men are also present – but in distinctly offstage roles. Young men –

often related to the protesting women – handle minutiae like cleaning the place during the day or setting up the public address system. A larger group of men also hang out at the back of the park, watching the hectic activity at the protest. They are aware that this is not their show, even if they are welcome as spectators.

## Political awareness

Qamar, a 24-year old woman, explained why they had gathered at Chamanganj. "We have been told to do purdah. But we have only come out here to sit in this park to save India's Constitution," she said, as a crowd of women gathered behind her, nodding and agreeing. "We didn't come out to protest the lynchings. Didn't come out when Babri was taken from us [when the Supreme Court in November allowed a temple to be built on the site of mosque demolished by Hindutva supporters in 1992]. But now the manuwadi [casteist] BJP thinks it can throw away the Constitution. We won't let that happen."

This political awareness extends even beyond the NRC. "There is so much crime in Uttar Pradesh," said an exasperated Naz, 44. "Every day we hear a new instance of rape and murder. Why have they left all that and concentrated all their energies on NRC? This is only to distract people from the real issues."

The BJP's attempts to demonise Shaheen Bagh for the Delhi elections are part of the Kanpur protest too. "The prime minister and other people in the government are our ideals," said Qamar. "We want to respect them. But then these very same people are talking of shooting people dead. What do we do?"

She was referring to the chant “Desh ke gaddaron ko, goli maaro saalon ko”, shoot the traitors, that was heard at several Bharatiya Janata Party events in the run-up to the Delhi elections.

While inspired by Shaheen Bagh, the roots of this unique women-led protests go back even further. “Modi has killed every businessman in this area with GST,” or the Goods and Services Tax, argued Sofia, 37. “And with demonetisation he stole every woman’s grocery money. And now he wants to throw us out using NRC. How long will we remain silent?”

## Staring down police bullying

This belligerence is not limited to speeches and media interviews but also visible when they face the Uttar Pradesh police. The Adityanath government has made it clear that the democratic right to protest stands suspended in Uttar Pradesh. It used brutal force against peaceful protesters through December and January.

The women of Chamanganj, however, have gone toe-to-toe with the Kanpur administration – and won.

Several attempts were made by the Kanpur administration to end the protest in January. This mostly involved meeting with local community leaders in Kanpur. At least twice, senior district and police officials came to the park to accept memorandums – a time-tested technique for ending protests.

Except, it didn’t work this time. The women kept on occupying the park.

## Drastic measures

On February 7, the administration used a trump card, coercing two Sheher Qazis – the top Islamic clerics in Kanpur city – to come down to Mohammed Ali Park and issue an appeal that the protest be wound up. “We did it since there was so much pressure from the administration to end the protest,” explained a harried Abdul Quddus Hadi,

the Deobandi Sheher Qazi who was part of the delegation.

This didn’t work. The qazis were criticised as selling out to the administration, and ignored. The women continued the sit-in.

In the end, the Kanpur administration resorted to force, surrounding the park with police in the early hours of February 9. “The police made this into a garrison at 2.30 am,” one woman who was there at the time told Scroll.in. “They mocked us: ‘Dhama degi? Jisko dhama dena hai, police jeep main baitho.’ If anyone wants to protest, protest in the police jeep.

A lathicharge followed, clearing out the park. But it was to be a pyrrhic victory for the government.

## Frying pan to fire

The police action resulted in widespread outrage sweeping through Kanpur, powered by social media messages. “Dusre din, bhar bhar ke auraten e-rikshaw main bath kar ayin. Aur sarko par baith gayin,” an exasperated local leader who was involved in the effort to end the protest told Scroll.in. They came in droves, in e-rickshaws. And sat down on the roads.

Just as the old style of Kanpur politics – of using community leaders to diffuse popular movements – had failed, the standard way of simply using force had backfired too. “We were only protesting peacefully,” said an angry Munni Begum. “How can the police beat women like that? That is why we sat on the roads.”

For two days, the women occupied the congested roads of Chamanganj, arguing with policemen and local leaders. “What is wrong in protesting?” one angry woman argued with a policeman during the street sit-in. “If Gandhi could do it, why not us?”

A solution was found to this impasse: let them back into the same park they had been kicked out of in the first place. The police, which had just ejected them from the park, acquiesced quietly. It was better than having them on the streets.

## Kanpur coup

A vexed Abdul Quddus Hadi, the Sheher Qazi, is clear that he shares the aims of the protesters, but not their means. “Earlier people would listen to the qazis,” he complained to Scroll.in. “But now people are calling us dalals and mukhbirs [agents and informers of the administration]. I cannot understand why they aren’t listening to us.”

He added: “People like us need to leave the field now. Jahan humein izzat milegi, hum wahan jayenge. Zillat aur ruswai ke liye koi kahin nahin jata.” We will go where we get respect. No one enters a place to be insulted.

Quddus’ concern about this own irrelevance is well placed. Not only him, the truculence of the protesters in Mohammed Ali Park has swept away the entire local leadership of the Chamaganj area. Earlier links with which the police would use to control activity seem, at the very least, dormant if not broken.

Even family life seems impacted. To target the protesters, the police went to their houses and pasted notices that complained about “a large number of women” who were violating section 144. “I am newly married and you can imagine the impact this had in my sasural,” Qamar explained. “But everyone knows that this is for a larger cause.”

Said another woman: “Modi thought Muslim women were weak and needed to be saved. But today it is we who are asking him questions and he is hiding his face.”

When this reporter asked for her name, she thought about it. Fear of action from the police still hangs over the park. “Aap bas yeh naam likh dijiye: Bharat ki beti,” she said.

You can put my name down as “India’s daughter”.

All names have been changed to protect protestors from police action, except for that of the qazi. □



# Campaign Diary: Comrade Kavita Krishnan in Bihar

*Manmohan Kumar*

(CPIML Politburo member Comrade Kavita Krishnan toured Bihar from 13 February to 17 February 2020 in preparation for the Vidhan Sabha march on 25 February to demand a resolution to be passed in the Assembly against implementation of NPR in Bihar and against CAA and NRC. Like other CPIML leaders all over Bihar, she addressed small and big meetings explaining the dangers of the CAA NPR NRC in simple, persuasive, and effective language. A report on the highlights of the visit.)

## 13 February

On 13 February she addressed the Jan Ekta Sammelan organized by CPIML at Hajipur, after which she left for Pakdi Barwan in Nawada District of South Bihar where she arrived at 5 pm. At Pakdi Barwan an indefinite dharna on the lines of Shaheen Bagh has been going on since the last 30 days. She was welcomed by AIARLA National Council member Ajit Ji and CPIML supporters. Addressing the meeting at Pakdi Barwan, she explained to the rural people in simple words the dangers of NPR. At 7 pm she left for Nawada, reaching the dharna venue in Bundela Bagh an hour late due to traffic jam in the city. The

dharna here has been ongoing for 60 days. Many people including a large number of girls thronged to the big Maidan to hear Comrade Kavita speak. Congress leader Nadeem Hayat was present at the venue. Kallu Miyan, one of the organizers, welcomed Kavita and introduced her to the gathering present. The entire Maidan is decorated with pictures of Gandhi, Ambedkar and freedom fighters. There are also posters of the Preamble to the Constitution in English, Hindi, and Urdu. In one corner, meals are prepared for those who stay the night.

Explaining NPR and NRC, Kavita asked why NPR should be implemented in Bihar if, as Nitish

Kumar claims, NRC will not be implemented. Why prepare dough with so much atta if they do not intend to make rotis out of this dough? Focusing on CAA, NPR and NRC, she exposed the lies and half-truths told by the BJP/RSS. After she finished speaking, people lined the entire Maidan to escort her to the main road.

On the way to the night halt in Patna Comrade Kavita stopped at the Bihar Sharif dharna at the request of Insaf Manch Nalanda convener Sarfaraz Khan. She explained the links between NPR, NRC and CAA and appealed to the people to join the march to the Vidhan Sabha on 25 February to demand a resolution against NPR-NRC-CAA. After her talk, she answered questions related to this historic movement as well as the imminent Assembly election and said that we want a strong Mahagathbandhan with the participation of the Left against BJP, but first the need of the hour is to tell all Opposition leaders who come to you to go among their mass bases and explain the dangers of this draconian law and to ask all Opposition leaders to become part of this movement.

## 14 February

Comrade Kavita left Patna for Begusarai at 8 in the morning, where she would address a Jan Ekta Sammelan. She arrived an



Kavita Krishnan at Devraj, Champaran

hour late due to traffic jam near Begusarai Township. Upon arrival she was welcomed by CPIML District Secretary Comrade Diwakar, Kisan Mahasabha leader Comrade Baiju, AISA leader Comrade Watan and many others. Comrades who had come for the meeting discussed with her their reports of the preparations for the Vidhan Sabha march. Comrade Kavita gave the suggestion that the remaining time can be utilized for reaching out to the rural poor, explaining to them the dangers of this draconian law, and mobilizing them for the Vidhan Sabha march.

After the meeting at Begusarai she addressed the 'Shaheen Bagh' dharna at Nawab Chowk and stressed the need to put pressure on the Nitish government to pass a resolution in the Assembly against NPR-NRC.

The next stop was Jalkauda village in Khagariya District. The dharna venue here is decorated with pictures of Rani Laxmi Bai, her son strapped to her back, in battle against the British. There are also pictures of Savitri Bai Phule, Ambedkar, Gandhi, Ashfaqulla Khan, Abul Kalam Azad, Hussain Ahmed Madani, and other freedom fighters. Catching the eye immediately is a big picture of the Preamble of the Constitution. Kavita told the people in the villages about

the mobilization for the march to the Assembly on 25 February and the various Jan Ekta Sammelans. She drew the attention of the people to the gigantic poster of Rani Laxmi Bai and pointed out that the Supreme Court has asked the women of Shaheen Bagh why they bring their children to the protest. Would the Honorable Supreme Court put the same question to Rani Laxmi Bai? Comrade Kavita said that the women of Shaheen Bagh are blocking the road and thus preventing the country from falling into a deep and dangerous pit. Explaining the intricacies of NPR-NRC-CAA, she pointed out that 70% of people left out of the Assam NRC are women. Being kept out of NRC will mean snatching away of voting rights as well as the right to own land, house, or any other property. Therefore it is very necessary that the rural poor should be made aware of the dangers of this draconian law; therefore, this fight is every citizen's fight. She appealed to midday meal workers, ASHA workers, sanitation workers and all other people fighting for their rights to join this fight against NPR-NRC-CAA.

The next stop was Marar village where hundreds of women and men were waiting for her. In front of the shamiana is a small corner where there is a swing and other means

of entertainment for children. In another corner there is a small model of a detention center. Explaining NPR-NRC-CAA, Kavita told the people how one Madhumita Mandal was forced to spend years in a detention center because of a case of mistaken identity. She spoke about the Constitution, democracy, and human rights to explain the dangers of NPR. She pointed out the tremendous waste of lakhs of crores of rupees on NRC, a huge and unnecessary expenditure, and appealed to the people to participate in large numbers in the Vidhan Sabha march on 25 February.

## 15 February

Comrade Kavita addressed a Press Conference at Khagaria Circuit House in the morning. During the PC, one journalist asked why all Muslims should not go to Pakistan. His next question was equally astounding; he asked if the CPIML Vidhan Sabha march would not polarize society. She replied by asking how he, as a journalist, could even ask such a question. She then explained CAA to the journalist who listened with bowed head. The PC could have continued longer, but there was a Jan Ekta Sammelan at Navgachhia at 12 noon.

On the way to Navgachhia the vehicle crossed the Kosi River and passed through banana orchards. Comrades travelling with Kavita in the car told her about the problems and the uncertainty of crops faced by banana cultivators. The banana farmers talk about the insufficiency of government aid, but they are as yet unaware of the fact that if they are stripped of citizenship they will not have the right to any government aid or benefits. At the Jan Ekta Sammelan in Navgachhia Kavita asked activists

Comrade Meena Tiwari at a village in Muzaffarur





how many have read up about NPR-NRC-CAA. Only three hands went up. She then explained the link between NPR-NRC-CAA and citizens' rights and livelihood issues; she urged the activists to go among the rural people and explain CAA from the perspective of their own issues and rights.

After Navgachhia the next stop was Purnea. Already established at the dharna venue is a statue of Renu Ji. Among the people who came to hear Kavita speak were a large number of school girls. One corner was occupied by Santhal people who were listening with great interest. At the end of the speech, many people wanted to meet Comrade Kavita and girls were eager to click selfies with her.

From Purnea they went to the 'Shaheen Bagh' in Araria. Comrade Kavita met many women here, who told her that they do not have voter cards or ration cards. The dharna venue gradually filled up with hundreds of women and men as well as some citizens' rights activists. Explaining that NPR and NRC are actually one and the same thing, Kavita told the people that after NRC got a bad name the

government is playing the NPR trick where a government official like a Tehsildar can put anyone into the 'Doubtful Citizen' category. After being declared doubtful if the citizen cannot show the required birth documents their voting rights as well as all other rights to welfare schemes will be stripped, their property will be seized, and there is a provision under which they can be sent to a Detention Center. The worst affected by this draconian law will be the working class. Therefore, it is very necessary that we all join in the Vidhan Sabha march on 25 February to put pressure on the Nitish government to pass a resolution against NPR-NRC-CAA. Comrade Kavita was invited to the Shaheen Baghs of Supoul and other places but there was paucity of time and she had to be at the Jan Ekta Sammelan in Dumraon, Buxar District on 16 February. The Araria meeting concluded with the reading of the Preamble to the Constitution.

## 16 February

Travelling overnight from Araria and getting stuck in a traffic jam at Ara, Kavita reached Dumraon

late, at 1 pm. She explained the importance of the Vidhan Sabha march to the activists at the Sammelan and discussed how to make optimum use of time and mobilize workers, farmers, youth, Rasoiyas and other scheme workers. A delegation of teachers met with her and discussed the dismal state of education in Bihar and asked for support and solidarity for the 'equal pay for equal work' strike they are planning.

On the way to the next stop, Sasaram, there was a serious traffic jam at Dawath. The roads are narrow and not fit for heavy traffic. After enquiring about alternate routes to reach Sasaram, they took a kutchra road by the canal and reached the 'Shaheen Bagh' of Sasaram with a delay of two hours. Speaking at the venue, Kavita spoke of the Delhi election result and said that people want governments to spend their hard-earned tax money on roads, education, and health instead of wasting lakhs of crores of rupees on NRC and Detention Centers. She said that hate had lost and Shaheen Bagh had won in the Delhi election. Before leaving, she appealed for large participation in the Vidhan Sabha march on 25 February. Due to lack of time she could not reach the Piro dharna but reached the Shaheen Bagh at Gadhani at 10 pm where she was welcomed by RYA National President Manoj Manzil, CPIML Gadhani Block Secretary Naveen, and others. Even so late at night, hundreds of women and men were waiting eagerly to hear Kavita speak. They included people from all religions and classes. The rural poor were there in large numbers. This 'Shaheen Bagh' is unique in that it is organized by Insaf Manch and CPIML activists.



Women at Jan Ekta Sammelan, Bagaha



## 17 February

Comrade Kavita reached Bagaha in Western Champaran at noon and stopped at the home of a senior CPIML activist where Central Committee member Virendra Gupta and others were waiting for her. After lunch she set off to address the Jan Ekta Sammelan. Tharu women from nearby villages attended the meeting in large numbers. Here also, people from all classes and religions participated in the meeting. Kavita alerted the people to the dangers of NPR-NRC and said that just as the names of many poor are left out of ration lists, Indira Awas lists, and pension lists, their names could well be left out of NRC due to lack of documents or rampant corruption. This government is bent on snatching away citizenship from the very citizens whose votes put them in power. She said that the Vidhan Sabha march on 25

February is a fight to save India's Constitution, democracy, and composite culture.

At 4 pm Kavita left for Devraj village, accompanied by Comrade Virendra Gupta. The indefinite dharna in this village is into its 34th day. Thousands of women and men had gathered to hear her speak at this Shaheen Bagh. She explained how a government official will have the power under NPR/NRC to declare anyone a 'doubtful citizen' and deprive them of the right to vote. The government can also snatch away citizenship from people who demand their rights. The documents required by NRC include proof of date and place of birth and residence of parents and grandparents. She said that 70% of people kept out of NRC in Assam were women of all communities because women's names get changed after marriage and they of all people are least likely to possess

the required documents. A large number of women in our society do not even know their date of birth. Migrant workers were also unable to show the required documents. Modiji says that CAA is meant for giving citizenship to all persecuted people; but our Constitution already has provision for giving citizenship without discrimination. Make no mistake; CAA is just a tool for declaring non-Muslims left out of NRC "refugees", and Muslims left out of NRC "infiltrators". Even then, non-Muslims will be required to show that they entered India from Pakistan, Bangladesh or Afghanistan in order to be declared "refugees"! How can people who were born in India prove that they entered India from one of these 3 countries? Why should Muslims without documents be declared "infiltrators" and non-Muslims "refugees" when both are in fact Indian citizens? This government



Women at Jan Ekta Sammelan in a village in Muzaffarpur

is dividing us into Hindus and Muslims in order to make slaves of all of us. Now is the time to unite in solidarity against this divisive hatred to save our rights, and to join the Vidhan Sabha march in largest possible numbers to put pressure on the Nitish government to pass a resolution against NPR-NRC-CAA.

The next stop was Betiya and the Shaheen Bagh of Rajdevada. The dais here is in the form of the national tricolor. Working women from the minority community as well as rural poor formed a large part of the audience gathered here. Comrade Kavita narrated how Ranveer Sena people captured Karbala land in Kanpahari (sahar) and Nawadih (Tarari) and how they attacked the Karbala Mukti Jagaran March on 10 January 1996. Today with the implementation of this draconian law feudal-communal forces feel that now there is no need to form gang-armies like the Ranveer Sena, because NPR-NRC has been brought to do the job of subjugating and enslaving the poor. Here also she appealed to the people to join the Vidhan Sabha march on 25 February. She narrated how she had tweaked Subhadra Kumari Chauhan's poem to coin the new slogan "Khoob ladi Janaani woh to Shaheen Bagh ki Daadiyan hain, Naaniyan Hain; Jamia-Aligarh-JNU-Betiya ki Ladkiyan Hain". This slogan, modified here and there, was part of all her meetings to appeal to the people to join the Patna march.

At 8 pm Comrade Kavita reached Motihari. Thousands had gathered at the 'Shaheen Bagh' here. She told them about her Party, CPIML, and spoke to them of many things. This was the last meeting of the day. Despite having a very sore throat from so much speaking, she felt invigorated and enthused by talking to the people. She said

that some people are asking why the women of Shaheen Bagh have blocked the road. Even the Supreme Court asked how long the road would remain blocked. She pointed out that actually Shaheen Bagh has closed only one road; it is the Delhi police who have blocked several other roads in order to inconvenience the public. The women of Shaheen Bagh have sighted the gaping dangerous pit ahead; and they are bravely blocking the road so that the country should not fall into that pit! The Supreme Court says women should not bring their children to the protest, but why does the Supreme Court remain silent when women workers across the country are forced to bring their children to work every day? Whether women go to work or to a protest, where can they leave their children safely?

Nowadays children are taught—in schools, in society, at home—to hate others on the basis of religion. Hindu children are taught by their elders, especially the PM and HM on TV, to call Muslim children 'Pakistani'. Young people are pushed into unemployment, fed the opium of communal hate and then encouraged to become terrorists and shoot others. Hindus are in danger because of BJP-RSS; the danger is that their children will walk in the footsteps of Godse and become terrorists. If these children come to 'Shaheen Baghs' they can learn Constitutional values and become detoxified from the hatred being fed to them by BJP-RSS. In Delhi a gang of goons returning from a pro-CAA rally entered Gargi College and attacked and molested the women students. The police did not lift a single lathi to stop these goons and have not arrested a single person. The ABVP goons who attacked and injured students and teachers at JNU have not been

arrested even after a month has passed. The same Delhi police attacked a peaceful protest at Jamia, blinded and injured students and molested women students. This is the truth of BJP's 'Beti Bachao'. Kavita then explained how NPR-NRC-CAA is a package brought to impose dictatorship and enslave the people. She concluded by talking about a favorite author of hers, George Orwell, who was born in Motihari and whose writings have always inspired people to fight against dictatorship. After the meeting, the people enthusiastically took her to view the age-old Urdu Library located nearby. This was the last program for the day.

During the entire 'Yatra', the Gadhani Shaheen Bagh was unusual and unique because it is organized by Insaf Manch and CPIML activists. Also, the number of non-Muslims at this dharna is prominent. Today these Shaheen Baghs have emerged as new places for movements to take shape, where there is creativity in addition to peaceful protest. They have the Constitution, they have books, and they also have pictures and posters of freedom fighters. Muslim women with their own identity are giving secularism a new definition. Children, the elderly, and youth—all come here in the evenings to share their experience. The songs of freedom sung here are echoed in the lanes of villages. Young people have been quite innovative in creating places of protest like these Shaheen Baghs. Each Shaheen Bagh has its own Facebook page to help volunteers and citizens to organize. Shaheen Baghs also have their Whatsapp groups for communication and organization. All of us should take our children to these Shaheen Baghs so that they can be free from religious prejudice and learn from this democracy-enhancing movement. □

# Against Fascism - Women Shall Fight And Win!

## 8th National Conference of AIPWA Held at Udaipur

The streets of Udaipur, Rajasthan were festooned with AIPWA flags, and women's movement posters to welcome the delegates from all over the country to the 8th AIPWA National Conference. All the participants in the Conference had Comrade Srilata Swaminathan very close to their hearts. Comrade Srilata, who had been AIPWA National President, passed away on February 5, 2017. She had always wanted to see an AIPWA National Conference at Rajasthan, which was the state where she had spent most of her life as a communist activist. In tribute to her the Conference was held at Udaipur in her death anniversary week. The main hall of Rajasthan College of Agriculture where the conference took place was named after Comrade Srilata for the occasion while the dais was named after Shaheed Kalibai, the young Adivasi woman killed by police in June 1947 for defending the right of adivasis to attend school defying feudal structures.

The Conference began with a massive procession by women through Udaipur city, during which AIPWA leaders paid their respects to a statue of Dr Ambedkar. Slogans for women's freedom and autonomy, demanding education, employment and health care, justice for victims of gender based violence, and against the draconian CAA NPR NRC were raised by AIPWA members.

AIPWA vice president Professor Bharti S Kumar

unfurled the AIPWA flag outside the conference hall, and everyone kept a minute's silence in memory of martyrs and departed comrades of the women's movement.

The inaugural session began with a rendering of a song 'AIPWA Zindabad', composed by Comrade Srilata for AIPWA's last conference at Patna in 2016, by a team of young women from Rajasthan. The session was chaired by AIPWA President comrade Dr E Rati Rao, and conducted by AIPWA Secretary Kavita Krishnan. AIPWA General Secretary Meena Tiwari welcomed all the guests and participants warmly to Rajasthan, land of the rebellious Meera Bai who left the deeply restricted life of a princess to follow her heart and conscience and become a poet-saint. She spoke of the shared legacy of Fatima Sheikh and Savitri Bai Phule, who together faced and fought Manuvadi reaction to achieve education for girls and women. The same Manuvadis who threw faeces at Savitri and Fatima, are wanting to replace the Constitution with the Manusmriti today, she said. That is why women and girls are at the forefront of the resistance to fascism in India today, because they know they have the most to lose.

PUCL activist Kavita Srivastava, addressing the conference, said that the ongoing struggle was not just for our citizenship to be recognised and respected rather than doubted and challenged. It was also

to assert the fullest rights and entitlements that the State owes every one of us as citizens - dignified employment, free and excellent education and healthcare, and justice and equality for all.

Former AIDWA leader Sumitra Chopra, and NFIW leader Nisha Siddhu from Rajasthan also greeted the conference warmly.

AMU law student Sumayyah spoke of the resistance offered by AMU students in the face of vicious repression. Later, Jamia Millia Islamia students Akhtarista Ansari and Chanda Yadav, two of the four women whose actions defending a male student from police batons inspired the whole country, also addressed the conference about the ongoing movement in Jamia in the face of all odds.

Kavita Krishnan reminded the gathering that 70% of those left out of the Assam NRC were women - as a result of being undocumented. The consequences of having to prove citizenship on the basis of documents is most dangerous for women, she said.

One of the guests at the Conference, Kannada writer and theatre artist Du Saraswathi, spoke eloquently about the lives and struggles of Dalit and working class women. She told two stories from the life of the Buddha with relevance to our times today.

The chief guest at the inaugural session, journalist Rana Ayyub,



shared stories from her own life to discuss the discrimination that girl children face, as well as the indelible scars that communal violence inflicts on the lives of Muslims in India. She spoke of the investigative story she did at the age of 26, exposing the gang rape and cold blooded murder of Kauser Bi, wife of fake encounter victim Sohrabuddin, which resulted in Amit Shah, then Gujarat Home Minister, being jailed on charges of murder. She saluted the struggles of the women of the Shaheen Baghs all over India, who are fighting a life and death battle for India's democracy and survival.

Rajasthan comrades gave the guests mementos as a token of appreciation. AIPWA VP and Rajasthan Secretary Sudha Choudhary gave thanks to all the guests and participants who made the inaugural session a success.

The AIPWA Conference also felicitated veteran AIPWA and CPIML activist Comrade Meera, who spoke about her conviction that the present battle against fascism could only be won by a truly revolutionary struggle for social and political transformation.

On the night of the 8th February a cultural event took place where the Rajasthani Terah Taali troupe performed the traditional music and dance of Rajasthan. Du Saraswathi then performed her much acclaimed Santimmi Ramayana, which tells the story of Ramayana and Sita from the perspective of a Dalit woman worker. Hers was a heart warming performance which gave many subtle twists to the familiar tale of the epic Ramayana, including deploring the wars men inflict on the world, and celebrating a feminist friendship

between Sita and Shoorpanakha.

Comrades Rati Rao, Bharti S Kumar, Krishna Adhikari, Shashi Yadav, Pratima Engheepi, Indrani Dutta, Suvarna Talekar, and Geeta Kumari presided over the delegate session. Comrade Meena Tiwari presented the work report for the past three years, and the plans to meet the challenges and assaults we face today.

Delegates from Assam, Karbi Anglong, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and other states participated in the delegate session and discussed the document.

Cultural team from Patna, Chorus, presented an effective skit exposing the agenda of the CAA NPR NRC.

The delegates elected a 117-member National Council and a 41-member National Executive, and re-elected Comrade Meena as General Secretary and Comrade Rati Rao as President. The conference resolved to conduct an awareness campaign from 25 February to 2 March highlighting the dangers of the CAA NPR NRC and asserting the mutual harmony and solidarity of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and people of every community and faith.

## **Resolutions passed at AIPWA 8th National Conference**

1.This Conference resolves that AIPWA committees will work to strengthen the Shaheen Bagh movements being held at various places across the country. Our units will also make full efforts

to go amongst poor women of the country, make them aware of the dangers of NPR-NRC-CAA and motivate them to join the movement.

2.This Conference resolves to intensify the fight against the repression unleashed on anti-CAA-NRC-NPR protesters. At a school in Bidar, Karnataka school children and their mothers (who are domestic workers) have been charged with sedition for staging an anti-CAA-NRC-NPR play. Similarly, sedition charges have also been slapped against a transgender person in Mumbai and a student in Mysore, Karnataka for slogans and placards. We demand that sedition charges against all such persons should be withdrawn immediately.

3.This Conference demands that State governments should immediately issue notifications to formally stop the process of NPR. NPR is nothing but NRC; and a Tehsildar can list anyone as a 'doubtful citizen' under NPR and snatch away their voting rights. Of course, there is a clear danger in this to Muslims. But there is also a huge scope for corruption here. Dalits and the poor have put their lives at stake and faced terrible feudal oppression to fight and secure their right to vote. Today that right is again in danger due to NPR-NRC-CAA. Of the 19 lakh persons left out of the NRC in Assam, 70% are women. After NPR-NRC will snatch away the citizenship of crores of people, CAA claims that it will save non-Muslims by making Hindu-Muslim discrimination among those whose citizenship has been taken away. But this claim is a lie. We will not get trapped in this lie. We shall fight together to stop

NPR-NRC and scrap CAA, and we shall win.

4.This Conference supports the 'Dilli Chalo' call given by Young India for 3 March against CAA-NRC-NPR. Instead of wasting lakhs of crores of rupees on NPR-NRC and detention camps, we demand affordable and quality education and health services for all.

5.This Conference expresses solidarity with our sisters in Kashmir, and demands that the lockdown on Kashmir should be lifted and Kashmiri people should be given the right to participate in any decision about their future.

6.This Conference resolves that AIPWA units will run awareness campaigns against CAA-NRC-NPR from 25 February to 2 March and will organize programs for friendship and harmony among Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and all communities.

7.This Conference expresses concern over the recent anti-woman and anti-Constitution attitude of the Courts. The attitude of the Supreme Court has also been indifferent on issues like bail to rape-accused Chinmayanand, the Bihar Shelter Home incident, human rights violations in Kashmir, CAA-NPR-NRC, and attacks on Jamia and JNU.

### **SASG Solidarity message to AIPWA conference**

We in South Asia Solidarity Group would like to send our warmest wishes and our solidarity to the All India Progressive Women's Association at this 8th National Conference in Rajasthan. The struggles you are waging against fascism and patriarchy in India are a great

source of inspiration to us here in Britain.

From the movement confronting violence against women, rape culture, feudal and casteist oppression to the mass protests by women at Shaheen Bagh in Delhi (and the many Shaheen Baghs springing up all over India) against the highly discriminatory CAA and the fascistic NRC and NPR, your powerful collective struggles continuously strengthen our resistance here in the UK.

Under the British state's racist immigration laws, Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) women have experienced brutal state violence. They are held like criminals and have faced sexual abuse and violence in detention centres. Others, like Sarah Reed, have faced police brutality and been forced into suicide by institutional violence under the Mental Health Act.

The current right-wing Conservative government under Prime Minister Boris Johnson (who is famous for saying that Muslim women wearing burkas look like letterboxes and Black people are 'Piccaninnies'- a racist term) has eroded health, education and housing services and imposed a so-called 'hostile environment' policy which is scapegoating 'migrants'. It has led to a huge increase in racist attacks on Muslim communities, with Muslim women being especially targeted. This right-wing state with its anti-women policies has also all but destroyed the refuges for women fleeing domestic violence built up over the years by Black and Asian feminists. As a result it is impossibly difficult for women to escape violence as there is no where safe for them to go.

In many cases they are forced to return to violent situations where they are sexually and economically exploited.

At the same time Hindutva forces are actively working with the British state to prevent outlawing of caste discrimination in employment, education and public services and suppress progressive voices in academia and work places.

As we send you our warmest solidarity greetings, we also fondly remember Comrade Srilata - her laughter, her fearlessness and her spirit of resistance. We wish you every success for your national conference and look forward to devising new ways to strengthen our links and building a collective feminist force of resistance against fascism and racism.

Lal Salaam!

- Sarbjit Johal, South Asia Solidarity Group, London, UK

### **Support Faculty Members of Mohanlal Sukhadia University And AIPWA Leaders Against Witch-hunt by ABVP For Recently Concluded AIPWA National Conference at Udaipur**

(AIPWA Statement)

ABVP has submitted a letter to the VC of Mohanlal Sukhadia University, Udaipur, demanding sedition charges etc against AIPWA Vice President and professor of the University's Philosophy Department, Sudha Choudhary as well as other faculty members for hosting the AIPWA National Conference in the city.

The AIPWA National Conference was held successfully in Udaipur on 8-9 February. It was attended by noted journalist Rana Ayyub, theatre artist Du Saraswathi, women students of Jamia Millia Islamia, AMU, and JNU, as well as AIPWA delegates from all over the country. The Conference held a march against the CAA, NPR and NRC, pointing out that 70% of those left out of the Assam NRC for being undocumented, are women. The Conference resolved to fight the CAA, NPR and NRC tooth and nail, and to mobilise sustained support for the Shaheen Baghs all over India. At the Conference, the Chorus team from Patna presented a very effective skit exposing the anti Constitutional and anti poor, anti women agenda and workings of the CAA NPR NRC.

The ABVP has claimed that the AIPWA is 'anti Constitutional' and seditious because it raised anti CAA slogans. This is especially ironical given that the right to protest and agitate against governments and even against unjust laws is recognised and protected by India's Constitution. It is in fact the sedition law, the CAA, as well as the NPR and NRC that are anti Constitution, because they seek to punish dissent.

This is not the first time Comrade Sudha Choudhary has been targeted by ABVP. 5 years ago she had invited a retired academic from DU to present a paper at a seminar on religion. The academic in question was critical of the Left and also of Western scholars writing about Hindu religion. Comrade Sudha invited him although

he disagreed with her politics. But ABVP demanded action against both Comrade Sudha and the visiting academic. They circulated a video clip of the visiting professor citing works of the Western scholars he was critiquing, to claim that he was "abusing Hindu gods". This would be laughable and absurd except that the police did actually file a case against the professor. In the ABVP and Sangh scheme of things, scholarship itself (including actually reading and citing books to critique them) is taboo, as is dissent.

We call for solidarity with Comrade Sudha Choudhary and AIPWA, as well as all the other faculty members of the the University who are the targets of the ABVP witch-hunt. □

## Rise In Rage Against Sexual Assault By A Mob Against Students At Gargi College And By Delhi Police Against Jamia Millia Islamia Students

*(AIPWA Statement)*

The ruling BJP says "Beti Bachao" (Protect Daughters), but on its watch, its own supporters and the police force it controls have a free hand to repeatedly assault and molest women students in college and University campuses in India's capital city.

A pro CAA rally chanting the Sanghi war-cry of Jai Shri Ram turned into a mob that invaded the Gargi College campus and sexually assaulted women students en masse. Women who complained were told by the college principal that if they felt

unsafe they should have stayed home.

The police stationed close to the college did nothing to crack down on the violent political mob. Four days have passed and the police has made no arrests.

The same Delhi Police has once again unleashed brutal and illegal violence on the students of Jamia Millia Islamia who were holding a peaceful anti CAA march. There are disturbing reports of police personnel inflicting sexual violence on women's private parts, and allegedly using some unknown and illegal gas that caused large numbers of students

to lose consciousness and suffer from pain in the abdomen.

The Delhi Police is directly answerable to Home Minister Amit Shah. Why did this police force allow a pro CAA, pro BJP mob to invade a women's college and molest women? Just last month, why did the Delhi Police allow an ABVP mob to run amok inside JNU, injuring several students and faculty members, and inflicting murderous violence on a woman faculty member, women students, as well as Muslim, Dalit and transgender students? Why did the same Delhi Police, so inactive in the face of organised



sexual assault and mob violence, invade the Jamia campus not long ago on the pretext of a burnt bus, fire bullets illegally, and blind a student studying inside the library? Why did the same Delhi Police watch casually as a terrorist fired bullets at Jamia students while raising pro CAA and communal slogans? Why did the same Delhi Police use an illegal gas against a peaceful protest by Jamia students, and inflict sexual violence on women students of Jamia?

The questions pile up - and the answer is inescapable. The Home Minister Amit Shah is complicit in the repeated violent attacks by Sanghi mobs as well as Delhi Police on students.

BJP leaders like Subramanian Swamy, Dilip Ghosh and Gyandev Ahuja have all repeatedly used sexualised, slut-shaming slurs ("free sex", "3000 condoms" etc) against women students. Such statements send the message to their supporters inciting sexual violence against women students and young women. The mob sexual violence at Gargi College is a direct result of the climate of hate created by BJP leaders against women students all over India.

Women and queer persons are at the forefront of the resistance to fascism in India today. No wonder they also face the brunt of the violence by the fascists. But they shall fight, and they shall win!

### **CPIML condemns slapping of NSA on Dr Kafeel**

The CPIML Uttar Pradesh unit has strongly condemned the slapping of National Security Act on Dr Kafeel just at the moment when he was to have been

released after being arrested and incarcerated in Mathura Jail for speaking against CAA at a program organized at Aligarh by the students of AMU in December 2019.

In a statement issued on 14 February the Party said that freedom of expression is being killed under the Yogi government. First, STF was slapped on Dr Kafeel merely for making a speech protesting against CAA and he was arrested and imprisoned; when the Court ordered his release, the National Security Act (NSA) was slapped on him to prevent his release. This is a blatant misuse of the draconian NSA and sheer injustice against Dr Kafeel. This is an indicator of the Yogi government's politics of hate and repression. If this law is to be used against people for dissenting with the government, NSA should be removed from the rule books.

Demanding immediate withdrawal of NSA against Dr Kafil and his release, the CPIML said that the Allahabad High Court should take suo motu notice of this malicious and uncalled-for action by the Yogi government.

### **Release Chauri Chaura Padyatris without Delay**

The CPIML Uttar Pradesh unit has strongly condemned the arrest and imprisonment by the Ghazipur police of 10 Gandhian youths on 11 February as repressive. The 10 young people were on their way from Chauri Chaura (Gorakhpur) to Rajghat (Delhi) on a Satyagraha Padyatra against hate, violence, and CAA-NRC.

The CPIML supports the hunger strike by the Satyagrahis inside Ghazipur Jail to demand release

and protest against the harsh bail conditions. In a statement issued on 14 February the Party said that this action against peaceful Padyatris shows the desperation and frustration of the Yogi government. Questioning government policies and spreading messages of peace and harmony have become a crime in the eyes of the BJP government. Instead of answering the questions of the people and respecting the people's aspirations the Modi-Yogi governments are committing dictatorial actions to crush people's Constitutional rights. Anti-CAA protests and peaceful dharnas by women are being repressed in similar fashion across the State of Uttar Pradesh.

The CPIML statement said that 10 enthusiastic students and social activists including a woman journalist started their Padyatra from Gorakhpur and passed through Azamgarh and Mau without disturbing the peace in any way in all these 3 Districts. Thus, it is ridiculous that the Ghazipur administration cites 'fear of disturbing the peace' as the reason behind their arrests. To top it all, the harsh conditions set by the Ghazipur Sadar SDM for their bail such as Rs 2.5 lakh bail-bond for each person and a Gazetted Officer as guarantor are objectionable and abuse of official powers. Clearly, such bail conditions are impossible for these social activists to fulfill; therefore, they have been forced to sit on a hunger strike inside jail.

The CPIML demands the unconditional and immediate release of these Padyatris and appealed to democratic forces to unite against the BJP government's attacks on citizens' rights. □

# Sanitation Workers' Struggle in Bihar Against Outsourcing

The Bihar Rajya Sthaniya Nikay Karmachari Mahasangh (AICCTU) is agitating and striking against the decision by the Nitish Kumar government to put sanitation workers under outsourcing. The Nitish government wants to make sanitation workers slaves of private contractors. They are depriving the workers of the right to regular work. The Urban Development and Housing Department of the Nitish-BJP government has declared all 143 Group D posts (including sanitation workers) of the Municipal bodies 'dead', thus ending all permanent posts and outsourcing sanitation work to agencies and private companies and enabling organized legal loot through privatization and NGO-ization.

In addition, even the daily sanitation workers currently working will have to work under private agencies. More than

30,000 sanitation workers across Bihar went on strike against this draconian decision to save their livelihoods and basic rights. Every citizen of Bihar knows that private agencies and companies loot about Rs 10,000 per month through each sanitation worker.

Tomorrow this very government will put these sanitation workers in detention camps on the grounds of being unable to prove citizenship under NRC-NPR. The biggest hit from these draconian laws will be taken by workers, dalits, and weaker sections. With regard to reservations in promotions for SC/ST the Supreme Court has said that this is not a fundamental right. This verdict is a violation of the rights of these communities. Reservation in promotions should continue to remain.

Supporting the sanitation workers, the CPIML demanded revocation of

Order No. 2503 (dated 03-05-18) and Order No. 1435 (dated 05-03-19) and all other orders and decisions related to sanitation workers issued by the Urban Development and Housing Ministry of the anti-worker Nitish government which is depriving the rights of sanitation workers from better wages and regular appointment to regular jobs; create lakhs of posts for sanitation and other workers in all Municipal Corporations, Councils and Nagar Panchayats across Bihar in accordance with population ratio; Nitish Kumar should take away from BJP control Ministries which are directly related to people's welfare and which have been under BJP control for the past 15 years.

CPIML observed 11 February 2020 cross Bihar as Protest day on this issue. □

## Preparations on for Vidhan Sabha March on 25 February

The indefinite dharnas against CAA/ NRC/NPR on the lines of Shaheen Bagh in Delhi started at Harun Nagar and Sabji Bagh in Patna and have now spread across Bihar. The dharna at Shanti Bagh in Gaya is much talked about. Indefinite dharnas are on at about 30 places including Beguserai, Darbhanga, Katihar, Arwal, Jehanabad, Siwan, Gopalganj, Muzaffarpur, Saharasa, Bhagalpur and Western Champaran. In capital Patna, dharnas are on at Harun Nagar, Sabji Bagh, Lal Bagh, Ishapur, Samanpura, Raja Bazaar, Diga, Khagaul and Patna City. Braving the biting cold, women are leading these dharnas on the lines of Shaheen Bagh. Students, youth, and artist groups are joining them in support and solidarity. Leaders and activists from CPIML, Insaf Manch, AISA, RYA,

AIPWA, AIARLA, Kisan Mahasabha, AICCTU, Hirawal and Chorus are playing an important role in this movement.

On 21 January CPIML General Secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya addressed the indefinite dharnas going on in Patna. He took part in the Save Constitution rally organized in Patna City which was attended by tens of thousands of people. Yogendra Yadav also participated in the rally, as did CPIML State Secretary Kunal, CC member Saroj Chaube, Patna City Secretary Abhyuday, Naseem Ansari and other leaders. On the same day at 7 pm Comrade Dipankar addressed the ongoing dharna at Lal Bagh near Patna University in a program organized by AISA, Insaf Manch and Bhim Army. Comrade Dipankar said that this draconian law affects not only

minorities but also the poor, dalits and weaker sections. He also addressed the ongoing dharnas at Phulwarisharif and Sabji Bagh. In the evening he visited Gaya and addressed the dharna at Shanti Bagh.

On 31 January the CPIML General Secretary addressed the Jan Ekta Sammelan (People's Unity Conference) in Patna. He said that Nitish Kumar should stop his double-speak and take the initiative to pass a resolution against these draconian laws. He called upon the people to make the Vidhan Sabha march on 25 February a historic success. He further said that RSS and BJP are spreading the propaganda that these protests are only by Muslims; they are also spreading the lie that Hindus have nothing to fear. But 56,000 migrant workers from Bihar have been stripped of citizenship in the

Assam NRC. A countrywide NRC will strip crores of people, mostly poor and weaker sections, of citizenship. The Jan Ekta conference was also addressed by social activist Arshad Ajmal.

On 1 February Comrade Dipankar addressed a dharna organized at Jehanabad and a meeting at Masaurhi. On 2 February he participated in ongoing dharna protests at Samastipur and

Beguserai, accompanied by PB member Dhirendra Jha and senior leader Comrade Rajaram. On 3 February he addressed meetings at Arwal, Paliganj and Sigodi, accompanied by senior leader Amar, State Standing Committee member Mahanand, Anwar Hussain and other leaders. On 4 February he visited Bhojpur and addressed meetings at Piro and Ara along with MLA Sudama Prasad, Manoj

Manzil, Raju Yadav and senior Party leaders. On 5 February he visited Siwan and Ara, accompanied by State Secretary Kunal and PB member Dhirendra Jha. A historic rally was organized at Siwan. On the same day he also addressed a meeting at Gopalganj. On 6 February a meeting was organized at Daudnagar which saw a large participation of dalits and poor along with minorities. □

## Left Parties Report on Police Brutality in Bilriyaganj (Azamgarh)

Left Parties visited Bilriyaganj in Azamgarh on 9 February 2020 where the police unleashed brutal atrocities on women on the night of 4-5 February. The team spoke to the injured, their families, residents living near the site of the brutality, and eyewitnesses and recorded their statements. The fact-finding team included CPIML State Standing Committee member Om Prakash Singh and advocates Sadchidanand Rai, Anil Kumar Rai, Birbal and Moti Yadav (CPI).

Speaking on behalf of the team, Om Prakash Singh said that some women were speaking at the anti-CAA dharna in Jauhar Ali Park on the night of 4-5 February; others were lying down and some were reading Namaz. Suddenly

around 3.30 am the police came and attacked them. Eyewitnesses told the team that no slogans were being chanted at that time. Stones were also thrown by the police, and not by the protesters. Many people got hit by rubber bullets. Apart from the women admitted in hospital, there are many other women who are also injured but did not go to hospital out of fear. Actions like refusing to do a medical examination of the seriously injured, throwing minor children into jail, announcing a 'reward' for the capture of people whose name does not even occur in the FIR show that the entire Bilriyaganj incident is a result of the unholy nexus comprising the Yogi government, RSS/BJP and the state

administration and the government's declared policy of 'revenge'. The team condemns this anti-democracy, brutal and repressive action and opposes it unequivocally. They said that a series of protests would be organized on the following issues: immediate release of arrested and falsely charged innocent persons; high level enquiry into the incident and punishment for the guilty police and administrative officials; stop repression and brutality on protests; protect the right to dissent and protest. Left Party leaders appealed to the people to participate in the dharna protest to be held at Azamgarh on 20 February against the brutalities and repression unleashed by the police in Bilriyaganj. □

## False Cases slapped on Party Leaders in Pilibhit

During an anti-CAA-NRC protest in Pilibhit on 13 February 2020 cases were registered by the police against more than 100 unknown persons and 33 named persons including CPIML Central Committee member Krishna Adhikari, Congress District President Harpreet Singh Chabba, and Kisan Mazdoor Union leader Yousuf Malik. The police have also arrested 6 persons.

Among the arrested persons are Atul Valmiki (Bhim Army), Pankaj Nagvanshi (Bahujan Kranti Morcha), Imtiaz, Babar, Tasleem Raja and Zubair.

The police have registered cases against all of the above under IPC

Sections 147, 188, 332, 333, 302, 506 and the 7th Criminal Law Amendment Act. The police have alleged that the meeting and the protest were held without permission and that one person from the police was beaten up.

CPIML District Secretary Debashish has said that the police allegations are false. He said that the meeting and the protest were totally peaceful and the City Magistrate himself came to the spot and accepted the memorandum. The cases were registered a day after the meeting had taken place. He stated that there was no misbehavior of any sort with any

police personnel. This case has been slapped and arrests are being made with the objective of repressing and crushing peaceful protest.

More than one thousand people had participated in this anti-CAA protest organized at Sher Mohammed Mohalla in Pilibhit. This protest was organized by a citizens' group and people from various parties had been invited. When Congress District President Harpreet Singh Chabba arrived with other Congress workers to participate in the meeting, they were stopped by the police from entering the venue. □

Credit: Ita Mehrotra



# Fearless Freedom

(We share two excerpts from Liberation editor Kavita Krishnan's new book *Fearless Freedom*, published this month by Penguin Random House India).

## An Alternate Politics of Parenting

Whether it is 'Bharat Mata' or 'Gau Mata' (Mother Cow), it seems as though 'mothering', in Indian politics today, is a pretext for violence and hate. In particular, parenting a daughter, in our dominant political discourse, amounts to "protecting" her from exercising her own autonomy, in particular, from loving someone from a prohibited community or gender. And parenting a son, in the same discourse, amounts to training him to hate the people of other communities or countries. Are there other ways in which the love and pain of parenthood figure in Indian politics?

In 1997, when student leader Chandrashekhar (who was a close friend and comrade of mine) was killed at the behest of the criminal don and RJD MP Shahabuddin, his mother Kaushalya Devi had led a sustained movement demanding justice. Since 2016, Radhika Vemula has led a struggle to demand justice for her son - Ambedkarite student activist Rohith, who took his own life following persecution by the authorities at Hyderabad University, under pressure from Central Government Ministers and Sangh leaders. The Prime Minister, in a vain attempt to quiet the rage that followed Rohith's death, said that Rohith was "Maa Bharti Ka Laal" (a beloved son of Mother

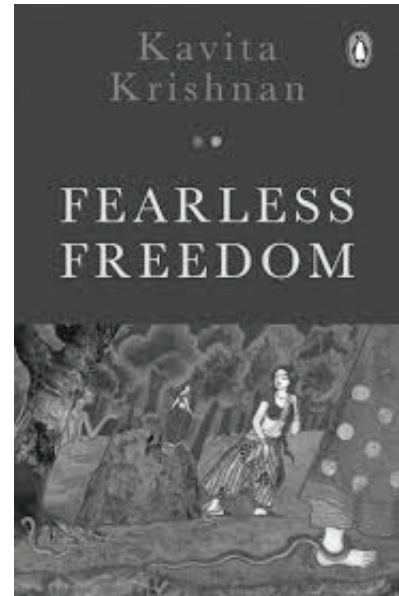
India) - even as the BJP kept slandering Maa Radhika and her son! Fathima Nafees, the mother of JNU student Najeeb (who vanished from the JNU campus following a thrashing by a group of ABVP cadres) is also leading an agitation to find her son.

Chanderpati of Haryana has been fighting for justice for her son Manoj who was killed along with his wife Babli in Haryana (by Babli's family members) for marrying within the same gotra. The abduction and 'honour' killing of her son Nitish Katara in 2002 turned Neelam Katara into a tireless campaigner against caste-patriarchal crimes against love.

These mothers offer us a politics which restores the humanity and the pain to motherhood. In contrast to the rhetoric about 'Maa Bharti', these women, with the unbearable pain at the loss of their child, restore to the image of the mother, the love, labour and loss of mothering.

## Satya Rani and Shahjahan: Mothers Who Became Sisters in Struggle

In 1979, Satya Rani Chadha's daughter Shashi Bala, married for less than a year, was one of the thousands of young brides who died of 'kitchen stoves bursting' after their parents failed to meet the ever-increasing demands from the husband and in-laws



for dowry. Satya Rani knew her daughter had not committed suicide - because Shashi Bala's husband had been threatening to kill his wife if she failed to meet their demands for dowry. In the same year, a woman worker, Shahjahan Apa also lost her daughter Noorjahan to a dowry killing.

In the massive anti-dowry protests that hit the streets of Delhi in the 1980s, Satya Rani and Shahjahan met - and three years after the deaths of their daughters, they together set up the feminist organisation Shakti Shalini to help women facing domestic violence. As Shahjahan Apa put it, they "resolved to use the death of (their) daughter as the impetus to fight for the rights of others."

Shahjahan Apa later said, "In our society, the men get a free servant when they marry, but I believe that men and women are partners in marriage and stand on equal footing. Today our own government betrays us. The police betray us. ...

But each day I board the bus that will bring me to our office so that I can meet with the women who have nowhere else to turn. There is a saying in Hindi: 'Meri shakti, meri beti,' which means, 'My strength is my daughter.'"

Our mainstream political discourse full of shrill slogans about 'saving' daughters and worshipping mothers. Yet, in a country where daughters are considered undesirable and dispensable, how come we hear so little about these two mothers who turned the love for and loss of their daughters into strength offered to other women in need?

## A Father's Search For His Son

On March 1 1976, during the Emergency, a young student at the REC Calicut (today known as NIT Calicut) in Kerala named Rajan was picked up by the police and taken to a detention camp. He then 'disappeared.' His father, a retired Hindi teacher Professor TV Eachara Varier, began a futile hunt for his son. Ministers, Chief Ministers, all knew the truth but none would admit it to him. His stubborn struggle eventually unearthed the truth: Rajan had died in police custody following brutal torture.

Rajan had been arrested as a "Naxalite" - with no evidence linking him to any crime. His story became synonymous with the Emergency and its attack on civil liberties and human rights. He had been subjected to a particularly brutal form of torture known as uruttal (rolling) in which a heavy wooden log would be

rolled over their thighs; and then kicked in the stomach by a police officer with heavy boots.

Professor Eachara Varier wrote a book about his experience of searching for his son. He described the way in which Rajan's mother (who became insane) never stopped expecting her son to return. He ended the book with an account of a visit to the Kakkayam detention camp where his son was tortured and killed. His final words leave the reader with a question and a challenge: "I still have no answer to the question of whether or not I feel vengeance. But I leave a question to the world: why are you making my innocent child stand in the rain even after his death?"

I don't close the door. Let the rain lash inside and drench me. Let at least my invisible son know that his father never shut the door."

Rajan's father wrote, "I should not leave the new generation to that wooden bench and the rolling." Those words should shame and haunt us today because brutal torture - including the 'uruttal' torture - continues in our police stations. These forms of torture were not an "excess" of the Emergency - they are part of casual, everyday, routine policing in India. For the poor, for the Dalits, adivasis and minorities, every day is an 'Emergency', irrespective of who is in power.

In 2018, again in Kerala, 67-year-old single-mother Prabhavathi Amma succeeded in winning a conviction of the policemen who performed the same brutal rolling torture

on her son Udayakumar, a scrap collector 13 years ago. Udayakumar had been picked up by the police on charges of petty theft - and killed under custodial torture. Prabhavathi said their family was so poor that they never had the money to get a photograph taken of Udayakumar: the only picture she has of her son is of his dead body. When a Special CBI Court convicted the police officers for her son's custodial killing, Prabhavathi said exactly what Eachara Varier had said decades ago: "I should do this for my son, so that no other mother will have to go through what I went through."

These fathers and mothers lost everything when their sons were taken, tortured and killed - they struggled so that others should be spared the same fate. Our callous tolerance of custodial torture, as a society, lets down these parents. It is even more obscene that such custodial torture is rationalised as "national security" and "protecting the Motherland," and the voices arguing in favour of the principles of human rights and civil liberties are vilified as "anti-national."

## Towards Fearless Freedom

"You write in order to change the world, knowing perfectly well that you probably can't, but also knowing that literature is indispensable to the world... The world changes according to the way people see it, and if you alter, even but a millimeter the way people look at reality, then you can change it." - James Baldwin

Kal ka geet liye honthon par, aaj ladaai jaari hai (With tomorrow's song on our lips, we fight today's battles) - Maheshwar

In December 2012 and January 2013, the anti-rape movement that swept Delhi heard bold cries demanding 'Fearless Freedom' - and also demanding 'naari mukti, sabki mukti' (freedom for women, freedom for all).

Women (and indeed all of us - women, LGBTQIA persons, men) can be fully free only when humanity is free - and that, as I see it, will need us to throw off the yoke of the entire oppressive, exploitative structure. It will, in other words, need a revolution, a complete change of the the way human beings stand in relation to each other and to nature.

What's the point of imagining a revolutionised world free of all hierarchies, it isn't going to be a reality in our lifetime, I am often asked.

Revolutionary goals are like a compass on a long march - it may take very long to reach the destination, and the destination may not be in sight, but a compass makes sure we march in the right direction and do not lose our way.

If you're putting together a thousand-piece jigsaw puzzle, you can do it only with the full picture clear in your head. Without the full picture, you can't connect the little pieces to each other.

We need to keep tomorrow's song on our lips in today's battles - and that's what gives meaning and direction to today's battles. We need to hope and work for the day that all women and all

of humanity shall be free, and all hierarchies shall be history - and it's then that we are able to see today's struggles whole, rather than piecemeal and disconnected from each other.

Revolutionary goals aren't empty dreams made up of nice ideas. Revolutionary dreams are anchored firmly in the earth - and humans working together can make those dreams come to life on this earth. With that revolutionary destination firmly in our sights, we are able to recognise how each of the less distant goals we seek for ourselves, cannot be achieved without a struggle for women's autonomy at their core.

'Autonomy' isn't about mere 'choice' made by an individual - it isn't like choosing between various brands at a supermarket. 'Autonomy' in a feminist sense is necessarily autonomy - to whatever extent possible - from social and economic structures, and it is never autonomy for oneself, to hurt the rights and liberties of other women, other oppressed people.

I have in mind Prachi Trivedi, one of the protagonists of the 2012 documentary film by Nisha Pahuja, 'The World Before Her'. Prachi is a young woman, a trainer at a Durga Vahini camp, in which young girls from rural India are taught to wield weapons and hate Muslims. Prachi's father, a VHP leader, once burnt her foot, to punish her for lying - but Prachi says it's okay for him to do that, since he allowed her to live, rather than be killed at birth like so many other baby girls in India. Prachi is not conventionally

feminine, and she is not interested in getting married: but she accepts that her father will take that decision for her. The thrill that women in the Durga Vahini camp get from wielding weapons, raising slogans, and learning martial arts moves is all circumscribed by an ideology that tells them women must be subservient to men; that women's purpose is to give birth; and that women are required to be step out of domestic roles and be battle-ready only to 'save' the country from Muslims - i.e to inflict violence on minorities. This is not feminist autonomy. A young woman who joins the Durga Vahini experiences, briefly, what may feel like a taste of liberty - but she's "allowed" that autonomy by a patriarchal father and a fascist organisation only in so much as she can hate and inflict violence on Muslim minorities.

The same film also follows young women who are participants in a Miss India beauty pageant. Does the world of the beauty pageant offer autonomy? The young women's bodies are subjected to Botox and to humiliating tests (such as when all their faces are covered to allow judges to judge the beauty of their legs alone). The pageant encourages every woman to compete fiercely with other women - each is out for her own. And yet the pageant not only disallows mutual solidarity, it also erases individuality: so much so that a contestant's own mother is unable to recognise her daughter in the line-up of contestants who all look the same!

Both the Durga Vahini camp and the beauty pageant boot



camp offer young women what can pass for 'empowerment.' But both demand a measure of self-hate: the Vahini wants women to internalise and become agents of a brutal patriarchy, while the Miss India pageant wants women to internalise the notion that "beauty" requires their bodies to be subjected to all sorts of "corrections", indignities and humiliations. In addition, of course, the Vahini camp requires young girls and women to learn to hate Muslim men and women, and trains them to attack the autonomy of other Hindu women who may love or marry a Muslim!

To wrest autonomy from oppressive and exploitative structures calls for collective struggles, for drawing strength from each other, not in competition with each other. That's why a feminist quest for autonomy can't be about a few individual women "breaking the glass ceiling" in competition with a handful of other men and women. A recently published *Feminism for the 99%: A Manifesto* asserts, "we have no interest in breaking the glass ceiling, while leaving the majority of women to clean up the shards."

In Indian traditions of art, we have the wonderful image of the 'Abhisarika' - the woman who braves all sorts of dangers to venture out into the stormy night, through forests full of snakes, to meet her lover. Comparing the women who came out with candles and torches to march against rape in Delhi in December 2012 to the Abhisarika, Shuddhabrata Sengupta wrote that the Abhisarika was always

seen as a source of light: "Her desire is a flame that lights up everything around her. In the folk songs of Punjab, she can be a firefly, a restless, wandering jugni. And women, together, out on the streets, out to claim each hour, each watch of the night, can light up an entire forest of a city with their flickering, blazing fire."

We need women to be Abhisarikas today: with their desires - for lovers, yes, but also for the simple pleasure of a walk on the street or a cup of a chai at a street corner, for reading and research, for adventure, for andolans, for revolution - to light up everything around them. And when many women become Abhisarikas, the streets and the dark nights will be much safer. Imagine a woman alone on the street at night - and we imagine danger; but imagine a street full of women going about their own business and pleasure, and to women, such a street immediately seems safe!

These Abhisarikas can change the ways in which we imagine and shape our relationships, our society, our families, our movements. Instead of worrying about proving they are a "good" (obedient) rather than "bad" (disobedient) daughter, sister, or partner/spouse, they can instead find ways of feeling comfortable and confident in their autonomous skin without feeling the need to seek "permission" and validation for that autonomy. Older women can be Abhisarikas too - they can respect their own autonomy, and also that of younger women and girls in their own households.

If you're a mother or a parent, you may ask, "It's all very well to speak of "fearless freedom", but of course my daughter is going to feel fear in a world where sexual violence is so rampant. Well, yes - but you do have it in your power as a parent to free your daughter of the fear that speaking up about sexual harassment or violence will mean having her parents curtail her education. That in itself would be a huge step towards giving your daughter the gift of fearless freedom. Likewise you could free your child (of any gender) of the fear that coming out to their parents as lesbian or gay or trans could lose them the love and acceptance of their parents.

We can, in fact must, put women's autonomy at the centre of our struggles against fascism, against capitalism, against Brahmanism, against patriarchy and against heteronormativity. We can unlearn the habit deeply ingrained even in women of dividing ourselves up into "good" and "bad" women. At home, at work, in our communities and neighbourhoods, we can find ways to enable ourselves and other women to organise, to campaign, to find support and solidarity, and to fight.

Will this book change the world? Perhaps not. But if it can even alter by a millimetre how you and we look at women's autonomy and autonomous women - if we can begin to admire and cherish women's *bekhauf azaadi*, their *veera sutantiram*, their fearless freedom - perhaps we can change the world! □



Posting Date : 27-28 of every month  
Published on 26th of every month

R.N.I. No. 55777/93  
P. R. No. DL(E)—11/5156/2018-20  
Posting at New Delhi G.P.O.



## Republic Day at Shaheen Bagh Delhi

### EDITORIAL OFFICE

CHARU BHAWAN, U-90, SHAKARPUR, DELHI - 110 092 PH.: 91-11-22521067

email : [liberation@cpiml.org](mailto:liberation@cpiml.org) ; website : [www.cpiml.net](http://www.cpiml.net)

facebook & twitter : @cpimlliberation ; YouTube : OfficialCPIML

Printed and published by Dipankar Bhattacharya for the Central Committee, CPIML from  
Charu Bhawan, U-90, Shakarpur, Delhi - 110 092 and

Printed at Divya Offset, B-1422, New Ashok Nagar, Delhi - 110 096

EDITOR : Arindam Sen