

18TH FEBRUARY 2010 AT 5 PM AT MUMBAI MARATHI PATRAKAR SANGH, 2ND FLOOR MUMBAI

“They ask me to tell them what Shahid means- Listen: it means “The Beloved” in Persian, “witness” in Arabic” (Agha Shahid Ali)

Shahid Azmi is no more. When he was in his mid-teens he saw his co-religionists slaughtered in the 1992-93 anti-Muslim carnage in Mumbai. He left Mumbai went to Kashmir joined the militants there, but he did not last very long and soon returned home to his family. Soon upon his return to Mumbai, he was falsely implicated and arrested for the attempted assassination of a political leader, prosecuted and convicted and sent to Tihar jail where he spent the remaining of his teenage years. In appeal, Shahid was acquitted by the Supreme Court. When he was in jail he pursued his studies with the active encouragement and assistance of Kiran Bedi. After his release from Tihar he began practising law in Mumbai and took up many criminal cases and raised important legal issues before the Bombay High Court and the Supreme Court. What most distressed him, and which formed a bulk of his professional work, was the way in which the Muslim youth were targeted by the state and falsely implicated in criminal cases, as was he as a boy of 15 years. This was unpalatable to those whom he opposed and fence sitters who would rather have a lawyer defend his practice by calling it his ‘profession’- his bread, butter and jam.

Shahid Azmi was passionate about justice, and used the law courts to seek redress of injustices of any kind. This quest for justice led him to join the Committee for Protection of Democratic Rights (Mumbai) and Indian Association of People's Lawyers, and was an active member. The tragedy of Shahid's death is the tragic loss of possibilities of a life that will now never be.

We invite you to come share your memories of Shahid with us.

COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

INDIAN ASSOCIATION OF PEOPLE'S LAWYERS