

DSF

UNITE AGAINST THE RIGHT-REACTIONARY ONSLAUGHT ON JNU BY THE RSS-BJP-ABVP!

DESIST FROM IRRESPONSIBLE PAMPHLETEERING!

STRENGTHEN JNUSU IN DEFENCE OF JNU!

JNUSU President Kanhaiya Kumar was attacked today evening by unknown elements near the Ad Block during the nationalism class. We condemn such physical assaults and appeal to the student community to remain vigilant and united against communal-facist forces.

10th March 2016

Friends,

Since the 9th February incident, the JNU community has passed through one entire turbulent month of incessant attacks on our university and its democratic culture, and the crisis is yet far from over. The students and teachers along with karmachari friends have risen unitedly, to defend JNU from the orchestrated attack of the RSS-BJP-ABVP and fight back the severe repression unleashed by the Modi government and the Delhi Police.

The JNUSU President was arrested from campus and put behind bars for 22 days. While he has been released on conditional bail, two of our fellow students – Umar and Anirban – continue to remain in judicial custody. While the sedition law itself needs to be repealed, sedition and other charges against JNU students have to be fought in the court in order to secure their release. Within JNU, the High Level Enquiry Committee which had summarily suspended 8 students, continue to operate without adhering to the basic principles of natural justice. This Enquiry Committee in its present form is neither free from external pressure, nor fair in its approach and functioning. This can only lead to further victimisation of the students and crackdown on our democratic rights. In this backdrop, DSF appeals to the entire student community to unitedly stand with the JNUSU in order to strengthen the ongoing movement.

RSS/BJP's Onslaught on JNU and Other Institutions: In November last year, the RSS mouthpiece *Panchjanya* had termed JNU as home to "a huge anti-national block". Earlier, in September 2015 Subramanian Swamy had tweeted "I think JNU needs an Anti Narcotics Bureau campus branch office to raid dorms and arrest Naxals, jihadis and Elis. BSF camp also". These had come alongside similar attacks against other academic institutions like the FTII, Pune and the victimisation of progressive student activists in IIT, Chennai and the University of Hyderabad, which led to the institutional murder of dalit scholar Rohith Vemula. The upsurge of student protests after Rohith Vemula's death had rattled the Modi government. JNU students have also been at the forefront of the struggle against the withdrawal of UGC non-NET fellowship and seeking justice for Rohith. In retaliation, the Sangh Guroh has zeroed in on JNU utilizing the 9th February incident. The physical attack on the JNUSU President, JNU faculty members and media persons in the Patiala House court, shooting at Prof. Vivek Kumar's programme in Gwalior, the intimidation of JNU students and all those who stood with JNU are a result of an orchestrated hate campaign. Frenzy has been whipped up through sections of the mainstream media and social media by using doctored videos and conducting media trial of JNU students. It was a similar attack on the institutional autonomy of the University of Hyderabad by the BJP government at the behest of ABVP which took the life of Rohith Vemula. Repeating the same pattern, HRD Minister Smriti Irani read out the names of the 8 students unjustly suspended in JNU on the floor of parliament, implicating them even before the enquiry report could come out. This combined onslaught of the RSS-BJP against JNU and all other academic institutions needs to be fought unitedly.

ABVP's Sinister Role: With the release of the JNUSU President, a JNUSU Council Meeting could finally be convened on 7th March 2016. 17 Resolutions were passed by the 18 council members present. The DSF is, however, alarmed by the fact that the JNUSU Joint Secretary and most Councillors from the the ABVP, have boycotted the Council meeting. The JNUSU Joint Secretary also issued a Press Release before the scheduled Council Meeting, wherein he called upon the JNUSU President, Vice-President and General Secretary to "resign on moral ground because they maligned the JNU and participated in Anti-national activities" (sic). The ABVP is thereby trying to challenge the legitimacy of the JNUSU itself and running away from all questions and accountability regarding its own mala fide conduct during the entire episode. DSF demands that the role of the ABVP, particularly the JNUSU Joint Secretary, during the 9th February incident and its aftermath be brought under the purview of enquiry, especially with regard to the doctoring of tapes by a particular news channel which was the most vocal in defaming JNU and maligning students.

It is noteworthy that the JNUSU Joint Secretary from the ABVP had unilaterally called for a Council meeting during the period when the JNUSU President was in jail, in complete violation of all constitutional norms. The ABVP seems to believe that by filing false cases against the JNUSU office-bearers through their political bosses, they can stage a coup d'état within the JNUSU council. **DSF condemns this despicable conspiracy by the ABVP to subvert the JNUSU Constitution. If the ABVP persists with such anti-constitutional activities, we will be forced to initiate impeachment proceedings against the JNUSU Joint Secretary, as per the provisions of the JNUSU Constitution.**

Partisan Role of the JNU Administration: The JNU administration has been acting in a completely partisan manner during the entire episode. The entry of police into JNU campus and the arrest of the JNUSU President and other students could not have happened without the complicity of the administration. The summary suspension of 8 students for the 9th February incident has also exposed its partisan role. The JNU administration has shown no inclination of inquiring into the role played by the ABVP in the 9th February incident, identifying the people responsible for calling media and promoting the doctored videos. **The Registrar of JNU has made false depositions to frame the JNUSU President and leaked the enquiry proceedings to the media to create a hostile environment for the students. DSF supports the demand made by the JNUTA and the JNUSU that the Registrar should step down immediately to restore the credibility of the administration within the university community.**

Irresponsible Pamphleteering: DSF is also pained by an unsigned pamphlet issued in the name of "Collective" yesterday, which goes against the norms and practices of JNU's student politics, where public positions are taken with due responsibility. Unsigned and undated pamphlets have also been issued by certain other organisations. We appeal to all concerned to desist from such irresponsible practices, which will only erode the democratic culture built over several generations.

Displaying a completely sectarian and blinkered outlook, the pamphlet issued by the "Collective" has chosen to attack the JNUSU for passing the following resolution in the meeting held on 7th March: "The JNUSU reiterates its condemnation of the destructive and divisive slogans that were allegedly raised on the 9th of February. Such slogans do not represent the democratic ethos of JNU and are detrimental in the united struggle against communal fascist forces." The "Collective" has chosen to overlook another JNUSU Resolution which mandates the JNUSU to "explore all possible means to get the sedition law scrapped from the IPC as this draconian colonial law has no place in a democratic society".

The DSF not only supports these JNUSU Resolutions but also reiterates that we are unequivocally opposed to secessionist terrorism in Kashmir. While opposing capital punishment in principle, we do not consider Afzal Guru – who was convicted in the terrorist attack on parliament - as a "martyr". It is terrorism on the one hand and state repression on the other that has created a vicious cycle of violence in Kashmir. Both forms of violence are inimical to a peaceful and just solution to the Kashmir problem.

In another pamphlet the DSU has also pursued its sectarian agenda by proclaiming that the "Azadi" slogan is borrowed from Kashmir. The DSU has indirectly criticised the JNUSU President for raising the Azadi slogan decontextualized from its history...reduced to the rhetoric of reform, that is, azadi within." The DSU needs to remember that no one has a patent on the slogan or the concept of "Azadi". The same "Azadi" slogan was raised spontaneously by thousands of students during the anti-gang rape movement of 2012, which was spearheaded by the JNUSU, demanding freedom for women from violence and injustice. The freedom struggle, old IPTA songs and the women's movement are all replete with "Azadi" slogans. Slogans like "Azadi" or "Inquilab Hindabad" have universal appeal and cannot be narrowly interpreted or appropriated.

DSF expresses concern over the attempts being made by certain sections to hijack the struggle to protect the freedom to debate and discuss different views within JNU, in order to impose the political agenda of the 9th February programme upon the wider JNU community. The ongoing movement needs to be insulated from such divisive agendas.

Need to Forge Principled Unity: DSF believes that the ongoing movement in JNU needs to be strengthened against the onslaught of the RSS-BJP-ABVP and the JNU Administration, which is dancing to the tunes of the BJP government abrogating all accountability to the JNU community. The fight against all charges of sedition must continue in a united manner. The suspension of 8 students must be revoked to have a free and fair enquiry into all aspects of the 9th February incident, including the role of the JNUSU Joint Secretary and the ABVP. Most importantly, the JNUSU – which is the vital instrument for the student community – needs to be strengthened in order to fight for the above objectives. DSF appeals to the JNUSU office-bearers to consider convening a UGBM at an early and appropriate date to facilitate debate and discussion within the student community and forge broad based unity on a principled basis.

Sd/-

Sonam Goyal
President, DSF

Sd/-

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Secretary, DSF