

Independence
Democracy
Socialism

Resistance

Students' Federation of India, JNU Unit
A Quarterly Release, March 2016

Study and
Struggle

Re. 1

A lie is supposed to eventually be considered truth if forcefully repeated. The opposite, however, is never true – truth always stands out. What is needed is the courage and the conviction to speak it out loud in the face of lies, slander and the fascist onslaught. It is with this understanding that we bring to you the voice of *Resistance*. Much has been said about the incident that occurred in the JNU campus on February 9, 2016. Different people might have different and even contrasting versions of what exactly transpired that evening, but what is crystal clear by now is that the organized nature of the assault on JNU and the systematic slander campaign run against the university had much more sinister designs at play rather than just a case of 'action and reaction' as the whole world is being made to believe.

For one, all the left and democratic sections have condemned the divisive and communal slogans raised by a section which has strangely not yet been identified by the security apparatus driven by 'nationalist fervour' and a section of the media playing cop, judge and jury – all in one. Any slogan for the destruction and dismemberment of this country cannot be the slogan of anyone who believes in the values of democracy and egalitarianism. Yes, we do want to see a different India where women, minorities, Dalits and Adivasis get their

due rights, and the working people of all communities are truly the authors of their own destiny – as Kanhaiya put it, *Azadi in India, not from it*. Such a stand is not too complex to understand in a country ruled not just by the constitution, but a democratic and rational spirit as well.

Let us face it – JNU has been on the radar of the Sangh Parivar for as long as this institution has been in place. While fascists the world over have been anti-intellectual, an institution fostering an egalitarian spirit and an academics of dissent was always going to be a thorn in the path of forces that perpetuate oppression and exploitation. The attack at present, however, is unprecedented in its scale and viciousness. This time they have left no stone unturned – from using the state machinery to media and creating a frenzy throughout the country in an effort to utterly discredit our University. The #StandWithJNU movement has seen a remarkable show of courage and solidarity from the students, teachers and workers of the campus supported by

every peace and democracy loving human being in the world. It once again proves to the communal-fascist forces how difficult it is to subvert democratic voices using brazen intimidation.

Our objective of this edition newsletter is not only to look at the assault and the fight back in retrospect, but by articulating a clear stand on issues of utmost relevance, we intend to contribute to keeping the movement alive in our discussions and in carrying forward our fight against the political tool of sedition and the farcical enquiry committees of a servile administration. By stating facts and positions on the multiple issues at hand, we seek to generate an informed debate on the movement that can transcend the false binaries of 'nationalist/antinational' etc being created by the RSS-media nexus.

For starters, the conspiracy needs to be unearthed and debunked and their bluff called at the outset. The JNU community has always stood by the position that meetings, discussions and debates of any nature with views however discomfiting to the establishment must be allowed the space within a university, which is a space for critical thinking and dissemination of ideas. This right extends to the ABVP as well, which has organized all sorts of meetings with vitriolic agendas, even as it customarily

(even when he was ineligible) and the 'JNU special' of Panchajanya and the extra media attention given to the campus. One could see the servility of the administration and in particular the malicious intentions of the Registrar come into play in allowing a free run for the police in the campus and giving details of individual students to them even as there were efforts to develop a siege mentality and fear psychosis among students. The Police could enter university and arrest students because of the blanket permission given by the University registrar. He was instrumental in bypassing all the mechanisms to form a high level committee without taking any section of the campus community into confidence. Then the administration unilaterally suspended eight students without any hearing. In an interview to *The Hindu* newspaper on February 14, the Registrar claimed that he saw videos of Kanhaiya and others shouting anti-India slogans and therefore decided to debar them. But then again, many of these videos were found to be doctored. Considering all this, whereby it is clear that the registrar intervened in the matter in the most irresponsible and anti-student manner, it is imperative that this incompetent and partisan official resigns.

Our submission is that all these events have to be seen as part of a concerted effort to target not only JNU but all spaces of critical thinking as all fascists do. The Sangh Parivar agenda of suppressing any dissent to its assault on the campuses has been manifested at its highest here. Surrounded as this regime has been by vociferous student protests against fund cuts and the institutional murder of Rohith Vemula carried out at its minister's behest,

**CREATING
FEAR PSYCHOSIS**

Since February 9th, there has been a vitriolic campaign against JNU, branding it as an 'Anti-national' campus. This targeting is viewed by the student community of JNU as an attack not directed merely against any particular individual or organization, but as a campaign directed against the university community as a whole. The seeds of such a campaign were foreseen by the JNU academic community when the RSS mouthpiece Panchjanya in November 2015 described JNU as a hub of anti-nationals. It was again detectable when rumours started spreading in the media that the communal bigot Subramaniam Swamy could become the Vice Chancellor of the university. This time around, the campaign was in a full throttle mode. Throughout the social media, during the initial days, the RSS orchestrated #shutdownJNU campaign gained massive traction. Grabbing the opportunity with both hands, most heinous comments were raised against JNU by BJP and RSS members. BJP MLA Gyandev Ahuja was the leader of the pack when he claimed that the students of JNU use 3000 condoms everyday and are responsible for half of the rapes in Delhi. BJP spokesperson Chandan Mitra wanted government to use the opportunity to shut down the university. DUSU president from ABVP said that he will enter JNU and shoot down the anti-nationals. Not surprisingly, no action was taken against these individuals by BJP/RSS for these defamatory, inflammatory and most irresponsible statements. They were not even publicly reprimanded or even censored. Such was the apathy and criminal insensitivity which the ruling party and its cronies had for the university.

The mass hysteria created by this defamatory campaign had its most severe implications. Two of JNU's professors, Prof. Badri Narayanan and Prof. Vivek Kumar were physically attacked for the sole reason that they belonged to JNU by the Sangh affiliates, while they were attending seminars outside the university. Violence was unleashed against the students and faculty members of JNU by a group of unruly lawyers led by BJP MLA O P Sharma, when they visited Patiala Court house to attend Kanhaiya's bail plea. Despite SC directive to provide adequate

protection, Kanhaiya was attacked inside the court premises. For the Hidutva brigade, as claimed by many of their spokespersons in media, these were only natural reactions to the so called 'anti-national activities in JNU'. If that was not enough, even the residents of Munirka with whom the students of JNU have always maintained an amicable relationship, rose up against JNU. They entered the campus as a vigilante mob, something which the campus had never experienced before, assembled at the administrative block, raising slogans against the institution, before dispersing themselves.

But this was not everything. The massive attempts to malign the university had an impact on the personal, academic and career front. A student from School of Social Sciences had to leave her job since the work environment became unbearable after the February 9th incident. In a work atmosphere which could not even engage reasonably with the episode, except from a jingoistic nationalistic view, she had no option, but to quit. Paper presentations of some students were cancelled because of their affiliation towards the university. Even JNU alumni had to bear the wrath of this attack when they were asked questions about the incident in job interviews. Nikhil, an alumni from the Centre of Political studies notes how in a recent job interview which he attended, the very fact that he belonged to JNU became a marker against him. The interview ended on this fact alone. Even parents and friends of JNU students began to ask questions. Many of them doubted for a moment, if the decision to join JNU was the correct one. Debates were fought. Most of them understood and stood with the students. Some did not, relationships broke.

There has been some respite in the attack with the release of JNUSU president and with the realisation that many of the tapes circulating in media were doctored. But had this not been the case and if the ruling party and the media houses which were supportive of them had their way in implementing their nefarious designs, the situation would have been even more grave. Futures of many would have been destroyed. Dreams could have been shattered. However, the events did not go in that direction. The university stands, proud and high!

infringes upon the right of others to hold meetings. With respect to the event on February 9, we have major differences of opinion with the organizers with regard to the contents of the event and their understanding of the Kashmir and the Afzal Guru issues. However, the students are being made to feel that by supporting or even allowing or not preventing the meeting to take place, everyone in JNU endorses the understanding with which it was taking place or the slogans raised. Voltaire would turn in his grave. Meetings with such agendas have indeed taken place before and despite the usual ruckus created by the ABVP, we were hitherto able to continue with things as normal.

But suddenly, the interest of Zee News is aroused and the channel is escorted into the campus by none other than the Joint Secretary of the Students Union from the ABVP and does a 'live reporting' of the event. If the ABVP's intention was to get the event cancelled and if it had already approached the administration with a letter demanding the same, why was Zee News invited one hour before the event? As things turned out - to create ruckus, record videos, doctor them and to play them in a loop. The owner of this channel has campaigned for the BJP in the past, it has an obvious pro-BJP bias, its editor has done a stint in Tihar Jail for blackmailing, and had long before been implicated in a fake sting that nearly took the life of an innocent woman. All of a sudden, "nationalist" fervour is aroused by such forces and amplified by others, one of whom has a particular appetite for Soap Opera and Jingoism.

What we see next is the misuse of state machinery, the use of the draconian law of sedition as a political tool, targeting of individual students based on their identity, journalistic ethics going for a toss and organized mob frenzy to systematically defame JNU. All this looked at dispassionately will appear as choreographed steps of a dance performing to the tunes of the RSS. One will see the execution of the script set in motion months back through deliberate rumours of the turncoat Subramanian Swamy becoming the VC of JNU

the RSS is now trying to hit back through an elaborate attack to silence every voice of dissent. The fact also remains that this government has failed miserably on the economic front and all the rosy 'Achche Din' dreams sold by it to the masses have evaporated to be replaced by public anger manifested in electoral defeats of the BJP in Delhi and Bihar. Through stoking communalism and pseudo-nationalist frenzy, it seeks to remain legitimate among its core constituents even as it has nothing to offer to the masses now.

Our fight hence is not merely to save the democratic ethos of JNU, but the secular and democratic spirit in this country at large. Every attempt of character assassination of Umar Khalid's because of his Muslim identity to sexist remarks and "condom counting" by MLAs has to be exposed and defeated.

Such a battle calls for unity of action and steadfast belief in the collective solidarity of the masses against this onslaught. We feel that a concrete manifestation of this unity is to expose the agent provocateur of the regime in the campus - not just the ABVP (which is fast becoming irrelevant in JNU) but the Registrar and the discredited enquiry committee packed with extreme right-wingers. It is time to act and defeat their designs to debar and suspend students without even giving them a fair trial and demand answers from them for letting the police loose in the campus.

The JNUTA deserves special mention who has guided this movement in the face of intimidation by the administration, assaults by thugs wearing black coats in Patiala House, and slander in sections of the media. The support of intellectuals from around the world has been heart-warming and acted as an impetus for us to carry forward our struggles. But as more and more days pass, as our comrades and friends still languish in jail and are charged with a law that is a relic of the colonial times, we need to maintain and strengthen this unity. This newsletter is a small effort to bring forth a clear picture of current context of events, the conspiracy behind it and aftermath that will hopefully take our movement from strength to strength.

Fear of Ideas

How rationality threatens the Sangh

JNU has cherished a culture of debate and discussion ever since its inception. Notwithstanding the political differences that various student organisations and individuals have with the views of the organizers of the 9 February event, the student community at large has come out to defend the right of the students to organize meetings and to express their views. This is an integral part of the democratic culture held high by JNU and its vibrant student politics over the last four and a half decades. The JNU community has kept this culture alive through regular and transparent elections, debates in general body meetings at various levels, lectures, public meetings in mess halls, pamphleteering, posters, cultural performances etc. Differences of opinion are respected and resolved through democratic and peaceful ways. Thus politics in JNU remains a battleground of ideas rather than an arena of battles fought with money and muscle power. In the history of JNU, there has been no major social or political issue that concerns our country which has evaded discussion in at least one of the many fora in the University.

By now it is clear that the events since 9 February 2016 were planned with the intention to destroy and demolish the progressive culture of debate and discussion in our campus. This is clear when we consider the actions of the present central government with regard to FTII, HCU, ICHR and IIT Madras. The government and its extra-parliamentary allies and masters have intervened in all these institutions under various pretexts and through different means with the intention of crushing the students' movement and all spaces of critical thinking. The critiques that institutions such as our own have produced have always stood at odds with the intolerant, majoritarian idea of India peddled by the RSS and its affiliates. It is the Hindutva forces' fear of these critiques which has resulted in the targeting of these institutions. Afzal Guru, "anti-national" slogans etc. are just excuses for the Hindutva forces. Their real targets are our ideas.

But ideas cannot be silenced, as Messrs. Modi and Bhagwat should have realised by now.

In Solidarity with Richa Singh

SFI condemns the harassment meted out to Richa Singh, the first woman president of Allahabad University Students Union, by the university administration in collision with the Sangh Parivar. The administration is trying to cancel her admission by digging up non-existent "anomalies" in her admission. This is despite the fact that she has been a PhD student in the university for more than two years. Not even once was any question raised by the university

administration about her admission in these two years. Her own centre has clarified that all the procedural norms were followed in her admission and that there is absolutely no problem. But notwithstanding all these clarifications, there is a concerted attempt to target and harass Richa Singh. We stand in solidarity with Richa in this hour of need and demand that this pre-planned attack on her by the administration be immediately stopped.

Sedition!

Scrap the Trap

Section 124(A) of Indian Penal Code deals with the question of sedition. This is a colonial law. If this law is taken literally, even slogans amount to sedition. But like many colonial laws, this law was also progressively interpreted by the Indian judiciary in the post independence era, establishing a judicial precedent. This was done by the Supreme Court in Kedar Nath Singh vs State of Bihar verdict (1962), established that the charge of sedition can only be sustained in the instance of incitement to violence in a speech. In another judgement, the Supreme Court in 1995 in the Balwant Singh vs State of Punjab case set aside the charge of sedition in relation to the slogans raised "Khalistan Zindabad, Hindustan Murdabad". The Verdict pointed that mere slogans having no effect on public order in terms of provocation to violence do not constitute sedition.

As far as the slogans raised on 9th of February are concerned, in all the non-doctored videos, there was not even a single instance in which an anti-India slogan was raised by the students of JNU. Some most condemnable and irresponsible slogans were raised by unknown elements. But even these most

objectionable slogans do not amount to sedition since there was no use of violence or even incitement of violence. It is crystal clear that the Sedition Law was used against some JNU students in this instance to intimidate them and to specifically target any form of dissent. Shockingly, the law was used against even political leaders like Rahul Gandhi, Sitaram Yechury and D.Raja for the sole reason that they stood in solidarity with the students of JNU.

In other instances also, this law has been used with the sole motive of checking dissenting voices. One example is when the police arrested eleven poor villagers in Tamil Nadu under sedition law when they were protesting Kudankulam nuclear plant. It is extremely doubtful if these villagers had any intention to disrespect India. The archaic nature of this law is evident from the fact that over the past ten years, the Supreme Court has not sentenced even a single person guilty under the charges of sedition. The time has come for the lawmakers of this country to act firm and scrap this colonial vestige from the Indian Penal Code along with other sections like 377 which decriminalises homosexuality.

Rohith Lives in Us

Diversions Tactics are Futile

Undeclared Emergency

Emergency-style clampdown by JNU administration and Police on printing posters and pamphlets!

The photocopy shops JNU are refusing to print political pamphlets and posters of political organizations and concerned individuals in the campus. When enquired about this issue, it came to our notice that none of the shops have got any formal notification from the administration, rather a verbal portent from the administration to this effect. What is more shocking is that apart from the verbal "rules" of the administration, policemen in civilian clothes have entered campus and are threatening the shop owners with dire consequences if they continue to print matters with political content. The shop owners are scared and despite knowing that it's a loss of business they are reluctant to print our posters. Such ruling class assaults cannot be seen in isolation and should be seen as a part of the larger agenda of the RSS led Sangh brigade to saffronise educational institutions which stand steadfast as the pillars of democracy and curtail spaces for debate and dissent. With the fascist siege of the campus since the 9th February and its aftermath as the backdrop such acts aimed at crushing the progressive student movement in the campus vindicates the SFI's prognosis that the recent spate of attacks have very little to do with curbing "anti-national" activities and has everything to do with rooting out progressive student activism in the campus that stands against commercialization, communalization and privatization of education. But unfortunately for the Sangh and its cohorts, as scared as they may be of our ideas, the students of JNU have always been the biggest hurdles in the path of the Sangh and will continue to intensify our struggle to not only win back our hard earned democratic rights but also advance the entire gamut of these rights. SFI firmly believes that such terror tactics and clamping down on our democratic

spaces and the culture of debate and discussion in which we take pride in is no less than an 'Emergency'. This undeclared emergency has to be fought tooth and nail. The JNU students movement had faced assaults earlier, has fought it and come out victorious. This time too, we shall fight, we shall win. The need of the hour is to wage an united and unrelenting battle against this administration-police ruling class nexus, to protect our fundamental freedoms of speech and expression enshrined in our constitution in article 19(A).

The photocopy shops in JNU are refusing to print political pamphlets and posters of student organizations and individuals in the campus. While enquiring about this issue, we found that none of the shops have got any formal notification from the administration, instead a verbal instruction from the administration to this effect has been sent. What is more shocking is that apart from the verbal "rules" of the administration, policemen in civilian clothes have entered the campus and threatened the shop owners with dire consequences if they continue to print pamphlets with political content. The shop owners are scared and in spite of being aware that it is a loss of business they are reluctant to print our posters. The photocopy shop owners in the surrounding areas (outside the JNU campus) have also been threatened by the police and warned not to print or make photocopies of pamphlets and posters with political content.

Such ruling class assaults cannot be seen in isolation and should be seen as part of the larger agenda of the RSS-led Sangh brigade to saffronise higher educational institutions which stand steadfast as pillars of democracy and to eliminate the role of such institutions as critical spaces of debate and dissent. > continued, Page 4

*"In the dark times
Will there also be singing?
Yes, there will also be singing.
About the dark times."*

Since the ascendancy of the Modi-led BJP government, there has been a double edged onslaught on education. One the one hand, there is the neoliberal onslaught reflected in fund cuts and moves to privatise education. On the other hand, there is the Brahminical, communal-fascist attack which seeks to clampdown on all modern, scientific and rational voices, and which aims to construct a monolithic society based on the ideology of Hindutva. It is in this context that students like RohithVemula were forced to take their lives.

Jawaharlal Nehru University has always been a bastion of critical thought, and has consistently stood as a bulwark of resistance against anti-student, anti-people policies of successive governments. The Occupy UGC movement against the MHRD's decision to discontinue fellowships for research scholars was being waged by the JNUSU along with other progressive organisations. It was the JNUSU along with the Joint Action Committee (JAC) that was spearheading campaigns and protests in the capital in the wake of the institutional murder of RohithVemula, a Dalit research scholar at the University of Hyderabad (UoH). Rohith, along with four other students, were suspended from UoH for screening the documentary *MuzaffarnagarBaaqiHai* and for raising questions regarding the hanging of YakubMemon. The ABVP in UoH had sent letters to the MHRD claiming that "anti-national activities" were taking place in the University and demanding action against such activities. The MHRD under the direct orders of Minister Smriti Irani sent five letters to UoH which pushed the administration to take action against the students. They were expelled from their hostels and later on suspended from the campus. Since then, the students have been protesting against this undemocratic act and even as the protest was on, Rohith hanged himself on January 17.

A positive aspect of our public universities lies in the fact that significant numbers of brilliant students like Rohith who come from deprived and marginalised sections of society are now entering higher education which had hitherto been only accessible to Brahmins and other elite sections. But the tragedy remains that the discrimination that these students face in the world

outside follows them into the university spaces as well.

The institutional murder of Rohith Vemula has been hanging like the sword of Damocles over the BJP government, which has been in the back foot ever since the horrendous way in which the issue was handled by the central government came to light. The February 9 incident in JNU suddenly became a major political tool in the hands of the propaganda machinery of the RSS-BJP, which had been desperately looking for an opportunity to shift public attention away from the Rohith Vemula issue.

By claiming that the events in UoH are not much different from those in JNU, the government is trying to win legitimacy for its ridiculous claim that "anti-national activities" have been occurring in both universities. But the students of both universities have already proven that these are futile attempts. It is crystal clear as far as the students are concerned that the entire episode was the result of a conspiracy, with doctored videos being the basis of the manufactured mass frenzy and vicious propaganda. The students will continue to fight for the ideas which Rohith stood for and will not rest until his unfinished tasks are fulfilled.

Comrades,

SFI stands in solidarity with the students of JNU who have shown utmost courage in standing up to the fascist onslaught unleashed upon the institution. Today higher educational institutions and universities across the country are under assault from the union government coupled with the RSS. In these dark times, protests will be carried out across the country against these nefarious forces. SFI has always been in the forefront and will continue to be in this struggle to fight and defend the democratic rights.

Vikram Singh

General Secretary,
Students' Federation of India

A lot of discussion and debate ever since the incidents of 9 February 2016 have been focused on the issues of nation and nationalism. The RSS-BJP-ABVP ran a massive campaign painting JNU as a centre of “anti-national activities”. Now, as we have asserted time and again, the Sangh Parivar talking about nation and nationalism is an absurdity in itself, like the devil preaching the scriptures. The RSS was not part of the anti-colonial struggle of the Indian people against British rule. Nathuram Godse, the assassin of Mahatma Gandhi, was an RSS man. V D Savarkar, the prominent Hindu Mahasabha leader and Sangh ideologue who had repeatedly apologized to the British to get himself released from the Cellular Jail in Port Blair, was an active participant in the conspiracy to murder Gandhi. Savarkar was an accused in the case, and was acquitted only because the approver, Digambar Badge's evidence lacked independent corroboration; a common flaw in conspiracy cases. But the Judge Atma Charan accepted Badge as a truthful witness. Later, the Kapur Commission (set up in 1965) which examined evidence that was not provided in the court, especially the testimony of two of Savarkar's close aides, concluded that Savarkar was guilty. Had the two aides testified in court, Savarkar would have been convicted.

The RSS's ideal of India is enshrined in the notorious motto “Hindi-Hindu-Hindusthan”. It refuses to accept the equality of all the different nationalities that constitute and comprise India, and which fought together in the freedom struggle against colonial rule. The RSS seeks to impose a monolithic, communal idea of the nation, which is evident, for instance, in the writings of M.S. Golwalkar, the Hindutva ideologue and the second Sarsanghchalak of the RSS. He wrote in his work *We or Our Nationhood Defined*:

“The foreign races (non-Hindu people) in Hindusthan must either adopt Hindu culture and language, must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but those of the glorification of the Hindu race and culture, i.e., of the Hindu nation and must lose their separate existence to merge in the Hindu race, or may stay in the country, wholly subordinated to the Hindu Nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment - not even citizen's rights.”

In other words, the minorities in this country would have no place in the RSS's concept of India. The Hindutva forces' notion of India is exclusionary not just to non-Hindus, but even to those within the “Hindu fold”, as the vast majority of them do not enjoy the same socio-economic rights or cultural freedom. By avoiding any move that will further the cause of the annihilation of caste, the Sangh Parivar seeks to ensure the continuing support of the reactionary, casteist sections of society. The untouchability still prevalent in Gujarat and the criminal silence of the Sangh Parivar in this regard expose their agenda of sustaining Brahminical supremacy. It is instructive here to note Babasaheb Ambedkar's stark observation that as a caste-ridden society, India is still a nation in the making: “How can people divided into several thousands of castes be a nation? In India there are castes... The castes are anti-national.”

The students of JNU, however, have always opposed the Sangh Parivar's bigoted ideology and held up the equality of all people, belonging to all religions, communities, ethnicities, languages and nationalities. They have stood up to oppose the RSS ideology which treats women as second class citizens and as “being fit only for domestic chores”. Precisely because of our determined opposition to the chauvinistic project of the RSS, the Hindutva forces have made JNU a target.

Nation, Nationalism and Nationalities

Will the secession of any part of India strengthen the movement of the working people, or will it play into the hands of imperialism? Take the case of Kashmir for instance – such a landlocked and not particularly resource-rich entity is bound to become a client of imperialism in case of secession. It will provide US imperialism a

base to unleash its machinations against all neighbouring countries. In today's circumstances, secession of any part from India will not be into some socialist haven but into the ambit of imperialism. This has grave implications for the working people of the seceding nationality. They will go out of the pale of the pan-Indian movement, thereby weakening both themselves and the general movement of the Indian workers and toilers. The different nationalities of our country cannot liberate themselves in isolation from each other.

As for Kashmir, there should be demilitarisation, and the people in the valley should be free from the oppressive security structures and controls. The draconian Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) should be repealed. The excesses and human rights violations by the security forces have to be investigated and the guilty brought to book. Urgent steps have to be taken to revive the economy of Jammu and Kashmir. The genuine grievances of the people of Jammu should be addressed, and the dignified return of Kashmiri Pandits to the valley must be taken up as part of the restoration of peace and normalcy. There should be internal dialogue, which should proceed on the basis that maximum autonomy should be given. The Indo-Pakistan dialogue also should advance, and more confidence building measures can be taken to further encourage people to people movement and contacts across the LoC as the dialogue moves forward.

Government policies and the uneven development that is inherent to capitalism have nurtured and increased inequalities between different states. The inexorable law of uneven capitalist development is bound to assert even more viciously in circumstances marked by the retreat of the State from economic activities. This will lead to growing demands for justice among different nationalities. Their genuine demands must be championed while steering clear of any form of nationality chauvinism and secessionist trends, in the true spirit of Indian unity and proletarian internationalism. Fraternal/sororal bonds of class and national solidarity must be forged among different nationalities and linguistic States.

The emancipation of people belonging to all nationalities in India and the success of their struggle against all traces of national inequality rests with the unity and united struggle of the working people of India. The SFI, whose 23 comrades have been martyred at the hands of separatist elements in the country during the 1980s and the 1990s, stands resolutely in defence of this cause.

Collective Demands

Registrar Must GO!

Central figure in the conspiracy against JNU

Not only is the RSS's idea of India utterly communal, casteist and patriarchal, in essence and practice the India that it promotes is that of the Adanis and the Ambanis and other big corporates. The workers, peasants, petty produces, Dalits, Adivasis and women belonging to all communities lie outside this ruling class idea of India. The economic policies of the RSS-led Modi government benefit only the ruling classes led by the big corporates, who ultimately form a tiny section of our population. To paraphrase what Marx and Engels wrote in the *Communist Manifesto*, the working people of India, consisting of the workers, peasants, Dalits, Adivasis, women and other toiling sections, must constitute themselves the nation (though not in the bourgeois sense of the word) in order to resolutely oppose and defeat the RSS and its communal-fascist vision of what India ought to be.

While the RSS and its affiliates like the BJP and the ABVP have been trying to turn India into an intolerant Hindu Rashtra, the left and democratic movement in India, including the SFI, has stood resolutely in opposition to this, holding aloft the flag of secular, anti-imperialist nationalism. The very first line of the SFI Programme (the key document that outlines the vision of the organisation) says: "Students' Federation of India inherits with pride the anti-imperialist, patriotic, secular, democratic, and progressive legacy of the Indian people's struggle for national liberation from the British colonial rule."

India is a multi-national country, and there are two streams of national consciousness in our country - one is the pan-Indian national consciousness and the other is the national consciousness associated with the various nationalities or linguistic-cultural groups that comprise India. The negation of either of these two (the multi-national character of the country on the one hand and the unity of the country on the other) to the exclusion of the other would be a mistake. The common struggle of the people of India against social oppression and economic exploitation will be facilitated by the preservation of Indian unity on the basis of the firm equality and real autonomy of the nationalities that constitute India. The growth of secessionist forces, on the other hand, help the ruling classes to disorganise and disrupt the people's struggle to build an egalitarian country free of all oppression and exploitation.

What about secessionist demands in some parts of the country, some might ask. To argue that under all circumstances the secessionist position should be supported as opposed to the position that favours union is essentially to argue that all multi-national countries are illegitimate, which is clearly an illogical stance to adopt. The overarching question here is whether such demands will serve the interests of the working people or not. Thus in the 1840s Marx supported the Polish and Hungarian national movements while opposing those of the Czechs and the South Slavs. Marx's support to the former was guided not just by the fact that they represented oppressed nationalities. It was also rooted in the fact that the Polish and Hungarian movements were directed against the absolutism of the Russian and Austrian Empires, for political democracy which was of vital interest to the European working class at that time. He opposed the Czech and South Slav movements because this "was at that time equivalent to indirect support to Tsarism, the most dangerous enemy of the revolutionary movement in Europe".

Post-World War II history is replete with instances where secessionist demands in various countries have been used to shore up imperialism. Imperialist support to Katangan secessionism in Congo led to the coup against Patrice Lumumba (the first democratically elected Prime Minister of the country) and his subsequent assassination, resulting in a massive setback to Congo's efforts to embark on an autonomous path of development. The best example from more recent times is the dismantling of Yugoslavia. The secessionist tendencies within Yugoslavia emerged as the direct result of the "market-friendly" policies that were pursued in the country, and its actual break-up was directly encouraged by imperialist powers which played one group in Yugoslavia against the other. The declaration of "independence" by Kosovo in 2008 was the final act in the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Kosovo is today an imperialist protectorate, housing one of the largest overseas military bases (Camp Bondsteel) that the US has built since the Vietnam War.

The officiating registrar, Prof. Bhupinder Zutshi has played the most important role in dealing with the whole episode in utmost irresponsibility and incompetence. First, it is clear that the permission for the event on February 9th, for which the administration had earlier given permission was revoked only once the ABVP approached the registrar. Despite the ABVP claiming that they approached the registrar to cancel the event, the registrar claims that he cancelled the permission for the event based on his own sources.

Does this mean that ABVP, a political organisation in the campus is his source of information? Can such a nexus be allowed in any University? Second and most shamefully, It was the registrar who played an important role along with Vice-Chancellor in giving the Delhi police a blanket permission to enter the campus and arrest students resulting in tarnishing the image of the university.

He played a central role in the formation of a higher level committee, bypassing institutional mechanisms like Proctorial committee, which is supposed to look into the matters of this nature. The committee is exclusive in nature since it does not have a single Dalit faculty and also inadequate representation from the schools like SSS,SIS .SLL& CS. Both the JNUTA and the JNUSU have strongly demanded that the committee be made more democratic and inclusive. Without any form of trial, this higher level committee decided to arbitrarily debar eight students from academic activities .This verdict was given within 24 hours since setting up the committee. The prejudiced manner of the judgement is clear from the fact that it was pronounced without even giving a chance for the students to submit their opinions before the committee.

In an interview to "The Hindu" newspaper on February 14th, the registrar claimed that he saw videos of Kanhaiya and others shouting anti-India slogans and therefore decided to debar them. It has been already established and proven that many of these videos were fabricated and doctored. Therefore, the very basis of debarment is completely faulty. This is one of the many examples in which hasty and partisan conclusions from the registrar resulted in the episode being blown out of proportion. Since he was made the nodal officer from the university to communicate with the parliament, this same narrative became the source for MHRD minister Smriti Irani to justify the acts of government on the university. Even for Delhi police, the same sources are used as the prima facie evidence in the case against Kanhaiya and others.

Ramifications of these acts

It is possible that because of the sustained pressure of the students movement and JNUTA, an inclusive committee could be formed in the future, although not certain. This committee may very well look into the events from an objective view point and could submit a report absolving students from the charges of sedition. But even if such a situation arises, the general public will also have an account of the events in front of them created by the Delhi police. The Delhi police who are acting as loyal lap dogs of RSS are not interested in establishing the facts of the matter. Rather, from the events that have unfolded it is clear that they are merely interested in witch-hunting students and fabricating facts to paint a picture which suits the BJP/RSS. This situation has arisen because of the blanket permission given to the Delhi police to enter campus by this registrar. If only he had acted with some sense, the situation would not have become this grave. For all these acts which has caused irrevocable damage to the university, It has been a longstanding demand of the student community and teachers that the registrar be removed immediately.

Student Politics and Taxpayers money

The sequence of events that unraveled in the JNU campus following the 9th of February, 2016 had definite imprints of a fascist attack on spaces of dissent in the country. But along with it, there is also an urgent need to remember that there was an equally sinister sub-text to it- that of abandoning public expenditure on institutions of higher learning and rooting out progressive student activism from government institutions.

“You are the beneficiary of a subsidized Indian Government Education? Your education is paid for by the Indian taxpayers?”, a quiet “baffled” English TV anchor quizzed a JNU student activist after learning that the students in Indian Governments’ institutions have the guts to question the decision of the Supreme court of India despite living on the subsidy provided by “patriotic” taxpayers like him. This Hindi news anchor (who it is rumored gets his paycheck from Jhandewalan) was not far behind. He indicated that the taxpayers’ money used to subsidize universities should be used to produce and propagate ‘good’ thinking and not to be used for sloganeering in streets and road crossings.

When the JNU saga started to turn sour for the ruling dispensation, some sections of the Indian bourgeoisie latched on to this line of argument of wastage of taxpayers’ money. Mohandas Pai, Chairman of Manipal Global Education, while condemning the slapping of sedition charges on students, concluded his opinion piece this way, “As for JNU, it is time the government asked students to pay the full cost of education; in case students wish to focus on politics and not on their studies, there is no case for taxpayers to subsidise extreme views or an archaic Left.”

What is Mr.Pai suggesting? Is he suggesting that taxpayers’ money can be

only used to subsidize right-wing politics? Or is he suggesting that students in private universities who have to pay hefty fees to avail education are the only ones who have the right to focus on politics? Will he allow student politics to take root in Manipal University which he chairs since the students who study there do not avail government subsidies? Looking at the fallacious arguments of Mr. Pai, one is reminded of Karl Marx who while referring J.S.Mill said, “On the level plain, simple mounds look like hills; and the imbecile flatness of the present bourgeoisie is to be measured by the altitude of its great intellects.” With these kind of arguments from bourgeois ‘intellects’ like Mr.Pai, Karl Marx continues to remain ever relevant and continues to sound ever green.

Are JNU students ‘wasting’ taxpayers’ money?

So much has been made about the subsidy to JNU. A look at the income and expenditure statement of the University is warranted to crush the barrage of lies spread about the subsidies that JNU students avail. The annual budget of JNU is around Rs. 300 Crores which in itself is a tiny proportion of the annual budget on education. Out of this, only Rs. 5.44 Crores are spent on academic programs and the library per year and general charges amount to Rs. 34.99 Crores (which includes recurring expenditure on infrastructure in the campus which are common to all the constituents of the JNU community). The campus collects around Rs. 6.17 Crores from students (as part of tuition fees and hostels alone). Even a cursory look at these statements according to JNU’s annual report, it becomes crystal

clear that the subsidy that JNU students ‘live on’ is not a great deal compared to what the corporate media and the cheerleaders of privatization of education want the world to believe.

Furthermore, it is not the case that JNU has always been a beneficiary of the Indian states’ benevolence. Every year, there are about 700-800 fresh students to the campus who do not get a hostel seat and at least five hunger strikes on this matter failed to move the university administration or the MHRD to spend more on students in the campus. Furthermore, the MCM (Merit cum mean scholarship) the only scholarship funded by the University has seen a paltry increase of Rs.500 to about Rs. 2000 per person since 2006 while there has been a parallel rampant rise in prices of essential commodities. Given such a state of affairs, it is rather counter-intuitive for someone to ask for a reduction in subsidies given to the university just because of the culture of student politics in the campus.

Who are the tax payers of this country?

The likes of Mohandas Pai and his ilk are talking as if they and the class he represents are the only taxpayers of this country. But the truth behind the matter is that we all pay taxes when we consume a whole variety of different commodities. To begin with, the toothpaste and hair-oil we use to the food we consume everything sold to the people of India attracts tax. Therefore, this taxpayers’ money is as much ours as it is theirs. Even we, the students of this country are concerned when the hard earned money of the Indian people are spent for purposes that do not benefit the Indian masses and instead goes on to subsidize the Mallyas and Adanis of

the country. We the students are also taxpayers and therefore we do have the right to question how our money instead of subsidizing our education is spent on enriching the already “super rich” in the country. When we do raise these questions on how the government is spending our money, Mr.Pai and his gang call it “archaic left politics”.

For your information Mr.Pai, the fundamental rights enshrined in the Indian constitution, allow all citizens in India to have amongst other things the right to form associations or unions so long as it is not in contravention of any existing law of the land. Thus, all students in India have the right to form associations and unions, whether or not they receive subsidies to pursue education. Even in the Manipal University that you chair.

Study and Struggle – The way forward!

Ever since the controversy in JNU erupted, one thing is very clear. Neo-liberal “educationists” like Mr. Pai have piggy backed on the RSS’s vicious campaign against JNU. While the latter calls the culture of student politics of JNU as “anti-national” and “jihadist”, the former calls this culture as ‘wasteful’ of taxpayers’ money. Both of them want to undermine the Indian system of higher education and open up the floodgates for the privatization of education. This unholy alliance has to be fought resolutely to usher in a progressive and scientific educational system in the country. A student politics that is left and democratic in character is the only means of resistance that can resolutely safeguard the interests of the students in the face of these unprecedented attacks.

March 23

Voices in Resistance

**Bhagat Singh,
Sukhdev, Rajguru
Martyrdom Day**

Any man who stands for progress has to criticize, disbelieve and challenge every item of the old faith. Item by item he has to reason out every nook and corner of the prevailing faith. If after considerable reasoning one is led to believe in any theory or philosophy, his faith is welcomed. His reasoning can be mistaken, wrong, misled and sometimes fallacious. But he is liable to correction because reason is the guiding star of his life. But mere faith and blind faith is dangerous: it dulls the brain, and makes a man reactionary."

- Why I am an atheist? (1930)

Three of our greatest freedom fighters who were hanged under the sedition law. Is it not ironical, that while we pay tribute to them year after year, we continue to allow the existence of the archaic and colonial law which was used to hang them?

Undeclared Emergency
from Page 2

With the fascist siege of the campus since 9 February and its aftermath as the backdrop, such acts aimed at crushing the progressive student movement in the campus prove yet again that the recent spate of attacks have nothing to do with curbing so-called "anti-national" activities, and has everything to do with rooting out progressive student activism which firmly opposes commercialization, communalization and privatization of education. But unfortunately for the Sangh Parivar, the students of JNU have always remained big hurdles in the realization of the communal-fascist agenda, and will continue to intensify their struggle to not only win back our hard-earned

Sitaram Yechury

"JNU has been used as a launchpad to unleash an insurrection against the constitution. It may not be a large scale attack on democratic rights like what happened during Emergency but I can foresee that coming. We face a much bigger attack. In the bail order the judge has given in Kanhaiya's case, there are certain serious doubts over what is happening also in the judiciary. But I am not saying this is Emergency yet"

Nitish Kumar

"The central government is taking action against JNU students on the direction of RSS-affiliated students organisation ABVP. It is dangerous and should be opposed. Those who stand and speak in favour of the BJP are nationalists and those who oppose the BJP are termed anti-national. The BJP should not try to impose its ideology on the country."

Mayawati

"Can the NDA leaders clarify what kind of nationalism is this. This was another instance of the BJP led NDA government to malign an eminent institute for political benefits. All this is drawing a dangerous trend. BJP government is notoriously known to misuse TADA. But now it seems it has found a new ammunition to muzzle people by slapping charges of being 'anti-national.'"

democratic rights but also to advance the entire gamut of those rights.

We firmly believe that such terror tactics and the clamping down on our democratic spaces and on the culture of debate and discussion in which we take pride in is nothing but a pointer towards an 'Undeclared Emergency' which has to be fought tooth and nail. The JNU students movement has faced assaults before, has fought them and come out victorious. This time too, we shall fight, and we shall win. The need of the hour is to wage a united and unrelenting battle against the administration-police nexus steered by the ruling classes in order to protect our fundamental right of freedom of speech and expression enshrined in our constitution (Article 19(A)).

Rahul Gandhi

"A youngster expressed himself and the government says he is an anti-national. The most antinational people are those who are suppressing the voice of this institution."

Romila Thapar

"Today efforts are being made to obfuscate the existing definition of nationalism. The nationalism draws on reliable history and not just on anyone's fantasy about the past. Critical enquiry as we all know is essential to the advancing of knowledge, it is expected of the university to critically enquire into what public may claim this knowledge to be."

Noam Chomsky

"Many of us remain very concerned about the crisis in JNU, which was apparently created and precipitated by the government and university administration with no credible evidence of any seditious activities on campus. Why did you allow the police on campus when it is clear that this was not legally required?"

Soni Sori

"My face today is the face of the fight in Bastar, the condition is the same. I was also jailed in a fake case of being associated with Naxalites. We tribals, adivasis also want *azadi*, we want *azadi* from the government oppression, from the way we are targeted by the state. We cannot sleep peacefully at night inside our houses. There is always this fear that we will be picked up by the CRPF men and framed as naxals."

Admiral Ramdas

"There are no boundaries for the freedom of speech, in campus or outside. This is due to the beauty of that holy book, the Constitution. Booking random students for sedition is ridiculous. There is no room for any such law in a democratic country. 17th century concept of nationalism which was practiced in Europe is being imposed in 21st century India".

P Sainath

"This criminalisation of dissent and curbing of voice have now come to the elite circle, whereas it has already been there for over two

decades in different states. An innocent common man who has never, ever been to any police station, one day finds himself being slapped with several criminal charges. We appeal to the judiciary of this country to re-examine the sedition law, as its misuse is widespread and there have been no convictions under this draconian law since 1960s. This means that this law exists only as a tool of intimidation and a weapon in the hands of the government to silence dissenting voices."

Ravish Kumar

"Will we in the name of nationalism let our independence be hijacked by thugs like these? What if one day these people lynch those kids in the name of saving our culture? Or what if those kids kill themselves out of that embarrassment?"

Richa Singh. AUSU President

"JNU is a hope for us. You are fighting our fight. We need to to keep the student solidarity alive to fight saffronisation of campuses."

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