

Fight the Design of Communalization of Universities by Communal Forces

For the last four or five years, the students and youth are increasingly coming to the forefront of many struggles. They are protesting against the cutbacks in education budgets, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, caste oppression, anti-worker policies, land acquisition, corruption etc. One university after another has been in the news as battle grounds. With the BJP coming to power at the centre and with its communal drive, the students started to protest against communal violence, attempts to control food habits, moral policing of youth by forcing dress code etc.

At Acharya Nagarjuna university, AP, the death of a woman student as a result of harassment unleashed widespread student protest that exposed the decadent culture being propagated by the ruling classes among the students and youth. Jadhavpur university students protested against sexual harassment and bureaucracy of the management. The Delhi university teachers and students agitated against the changes in curricula. Delhi students organized support to the strike by Maruti workers. Allahabad university students union's first woman president, Richa Singh, is organizing struggles against gender discrimination in the campus.. The students of IIT, Madras agitated against the attempts by the management to curb the activities of Ambedkar Study Circle being conducted by the dalit students. The death of Rohit Vemula and the arrest of Kanhaiya Kumar, President of JNU students union led to widespread protest of students around the country. The suicide of three women students of Naturopathy in Tamil Nadu, resulting from the harassment by the college management for the delay in payment of fees by the government has led to protests from the students and public. These are some of the student's protests which show that the students are seething with discontentment and anger and are taking up struggles for justice.

These students who were victims and/or leading the protests have come from the poor and middle classes and discriminated sections. The protests they organized represents their democratic aspirations. Not only they are struggling for their rights, but also they are standing in support of the oppressed classes and sections of the people and their democratic aspirations and demands.

On the other side the ruling classes responded with heavy hand to crush the growing student protests. The campuses are being turned into police camps. And new rules are being imposed to curtail the democratic space and atmosphere available in the campuses. With the BJP ascending to the power, communal forces are being unleashed to rampage the harmonic life prevailing in the campus. On a flimsy or innocuous complaint made by the student's wing of BJP that managements of the universities are being forced to take action by the central government. The events at to University of Hyderabad and JNU clearly showed that on a flimsy complaint by ABVP, the central government moved swiftly to pressurize the VCs to take action on the students and the communalise the issue to polarize the students on communal and caste lines. When the ABVP alleged irregularities in hostel funds, the central government stopped funds to the Punjab University despite the VC instituting an enquiry committee and submitting all the records. Yet payment of wages to all the staff was stopped. When the screening of the documentary *Muzaffarpur baki hai* in the campus was violently disrupted by the communal forces, it has not invited any action from the government. This clearly shows that the communal forces are being abetted by the government and they are using fascist methods.

Religious fundamentalism is always regressive. It wants to take back the society to the medieval period and an impediment to the progress of human society. It has its roots in feudalism and landlord class is its mainstay. The big bourgeoisie, true to its comprador and bureaucratic nature, is aligning with the landlord class. It is utilizing the religious fundamentalism to crush the democratic aspirations of the people. The ruling classes and their political representatives, BJP and Congress, are using every method to use religious fundamentalism to divide the people on communal lines.

Thus the ideology of landlord class and the ideology of comprador bourgeoisie are getting expressed in the form of communal fascism, sometimes openly and unabashedly and on other times disguisedly and softly.

The neoliberal capitalist economic policies, as dictated by the imperialist powers, are being assiduously implemented by the Indian ruling classes for nearly three decades. These policies have devastated the livelihoods and lives of the all sections of people. Nearly three lakh peasants have committed suicides. Every year millions of rural poor are being condemned to the wretched life in the slums of cities. Youth are being haunted by the monster of unemployment. The pent up anger and discontentment is getting expressed in various forms ranging from protests to militant struggles. The growing awareness and militancy among the students is one of them which the ruling elite considers as a threat to its policy of tailoring the education, particularly higher education, to the exploitative interests of finance capital. Thus they have unleashed the communal forces to rampage the campuses.

It is imperative on the part of the progressive forces to stand by the side of students in their struggle for the realization of their democratic demands and their fight against the communal fascist forces. The progressive forces has to help the students in forging the unity among them and advance towards establishing communal free and democratic atmosphere in the campus.
