

Opinion: Kavita Krishnan

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What happened in DU today is not 'ho-hum', 'another clash between Right and Left.' It is the dance of fascist forces on the streets of India's capital city. They attacked (Hyderabad Central University (HCU) and Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) last year. This year it is Delhi University North Campus and Ramjas College being attacked.

ABVP - the storm-troopers of the RSS, protected by the Modi government - attacked students, teachers with hockey sticks, rods, stones, rocks, bricks. They dragged, beat up, molested women. It was an open riot - a riot the Delhi police allowed, willingly, knowingly.

Sucheta whom I spoke to was slapped, hit on three separate occasions. Most students, teachers and journalists present there faced violence at the hands of the ABVP.

And the Delhi Police, instead of arresting the ABVP, refused to file an FIR. And they then lathi-charged the students peacefully seated outside Maurice Nagar police station waiting for an FIR to be lodged.

Students dispersed by the lathi charge were again vulnerable to attacks by the waiting ABVP, which again attacked several students. Police also picked up a large number of students and drove them away in a bus to an unknown location.

But you still have a channel - yes, Times Now - running the story with the hashtag 'RedCarpetToAzaadiBrigade' - carrying bytes of ABVP leaders explaining how Umar Khalid is 'anti-national.'

This is how fascism arrives - not with goose-stepping troops but with cheer-leaders in the media hailing the goons as heroes and branding free speech as anti-national. Rioting in a university is 'nationalist' - because those being beaten up want to listen to, speak to and ask questions of Umar Khalid or Shehla Rashid. This is the 'new normal' sought to be established.

If even well-intentioned print media, portals etc caption this as a 'clash' between 'ABVP and AISA' it is exactly like reporting an organised attack by a rioting mob as a 'clash' between two communities. This was no 'clash' - it was a day-long mob riot mocking democracy and Constitution.

चुनावी फायदा लेने के लिए यूपी में सांप्रदायिक विद्वेष का जहर फैलाती पार्टी और 'छात्र-युवा संगठन' का दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय में हिंसक उपद्रव! - ----- 'रामराज' बबुआ जल्दी जल्दी आई--जनता पर लात-डंडा चलाई--'राम' के भी बंधक बनाई--अपन छोड़ सबको 'कसाब' बताई--हिटलर के भी पीछे छोड़ जाई-- 'रामराज' बबुआ जल्दी जल्दी आई!(प्रिय अग्रज-मित्र दिवंगत गोरख पांडे की मशहूर कविता - -

('समाजवाद बबुआ धीरे-धीरे आई' से प्रेरित होकर)

-Urmillesh Urmil के सौजन्य से।

Surely, those who behave like uncivilized violent mobs, they will be defeated finally in the kaleidoscope of free minds and with the currents of civilized pluralism. Surely, those who spread hate politics will also be defeated by the steadfast rainbows of secularism.

Everything is ephemeral – even very, very dark times. Democracy in India is under strain. Democracy in India has to be reclaimed, like women and youngsters reclaimed the nights in Delhi after the ghastly rape of a paramedic in a bus; like JNU, HCU, FTII and Jadavpur University reclaimed their spaces of intellectual and political resistance and freedom last year, when under siege by the fascists.