

on  
ALIGARH RIOT, 5 OCTOBER 1978

by

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&

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"The recent communal disturbances in Aligarh were caused by a series of tension-ridden events which were allowed to develop from June this year, by both the local Janata Party leaders and the City Administration. It reached the tragic climax on October 5, 1978, when Hindu communalists ran berserk against poor Muslims. The Provincial Armed Constabulary of Uttar Pradesh echoed the same Hindu communal sentiments by shooting down and killing innocent and unarmed Muslims."

This is what we gathered from our on-the-spot study in Aligarh on October 21 and 22 and after interviewing a cross section of people in both the affected and unaffected areas, including both biased and unbiased Hindus and Muslims as well as leaders of various political parties ranging from the Congress(I) to the erstwhile Jana Sangh/KSS of the Janata Party.

Even after two weeks of the major events we felt that the situation was still tense. This is because the disturbances of October 5 were not an isolated and spontaneous expression of communal hatred among the common people, but because the causes that led to the riot are still very much there and are likely to be exploited by the vested political interests in the near future.

The immediate cause that sparked off the incidents of October 5 was the death of a Hindu wrestler, Suresh alias Bhorey, from stab wounds. Bhorey's dying statement alleged that the assault has been inflicted by five people. According to Mr. Krishna Kumar 'Navaman', President of the Aligarh Janata Party and erstwhile Jana Sangh leader, Bhorey could identify three of the five assailants all of whom were Muslims. But the statements recorded by us from other political figures and social workers suggest that both sides comprised of mere gangsters and rough-necks drawn from both Hindus and Muslims. About Bhorey, everyone with whom we talked agreed that he was a notorious anti-social element. This is what Mr. Navaman has to say about Bhorey: "Bhorey belonged to

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the Cong(I) and during the emergency his gang of criminals came to be known as the "golden gang." Though this was corroborated by Mr. Iqbal A. Ansari, of the English Department of Aligarh Muslim University and leader of the People's Union for Civil Liberties, Aligarh Unit, he added: "With the advent of the Janata Party, Bhorey changed his loyalties and became a stooge of the Janata, as is common with such under-world elements."

We found Bhorey's death was not a sequel to the fight over a wrestling competition on September 12 at a Mela five miles away from Aligarh as was reported by the Delhi-based national dailies. From talking with a cross-section of the people in Aligarh, we came to the conclusion that Bhorey's death was a result of inter-gang fight. Let us recapitulate the events of October 3 when Bhorey was stabbed.

In Aligarh every proprietor of a cinema hall has to maintain a gang of rough-necks on his payroll to stave off disturbances over the sale of tickets. Bhorey was apparently maintained by the owners of Secma Talkies, where there was a musical function arranged by the local Chemists' Association on October 3 for the purpose of flood relief. During the function Bhorey was assaulted outside the cinema hall by a group of rival toughs. The reason was "rivalry over the area of influence and clientele of the cinema houses", according to Dr. Iqbal Ansari. According to Mr. Kumar Davendra Pal Singh, Vice-President of District Congress(I), "there were Hindu members in the group which stabbed Bhorey whereas Bhorey's group also included Muslim toughs". He added: "anyone having communal feelings is an anti-social element, whether he is a Hindu or a Muslim." The story of this group rivalry between tough gangs, without a tinge of communal feeling was further corroborated by many other people including political figures, academics and the local populace whom we interviewed.

#### Communal Tensions over the Aligarh Muslim University

Before coming to the actual events of the day when Bhorey was declared dead (October 5) and the resulting disturbances, we would like to throw light on some developments that preceded and to which we referred to at the beginning of this report.

Our team found from interviewing various sources that communal tensions had been building up at Aligarh for quite some time over certain issues. One of the main issues was the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) Bill which was before Parliament, and which sought to reiterate the minority character of the institution. In fact, among some of the main figures involved in the communal disturbances of October 5, there are two well-known Hindu academics: Mr. M.D. Gupta, lecturer in the Psychology Department of the AMU, and Mr. Manga Ram, a lecturer in the Hiralal Varasani Degree College. Both are reported to belong to the erstwhile Jana Sangh. These learned academicians are believed to have opposed the

Bill and carried on a campaign since June this year against the proposed 'minority character' of the University. A meeting was held in August this year, said to be presided by Mr. Shiv Hari Sangal, another erstwhile Jana Sangh leader and an important Janata Party member and a lawyer. Speeches were believed to have been delivered at that meeting warning against the passing of the AMU Bill. According to those who attended the meeting, the speakers warned that if the Bill was passed "Aligarh would be made into another Marathwada" — the obvious reference to the anti-Harijan riots sparked off by the upper-caste people of Marathwada region against the naming of the University there after Mr. Ambedkar.

That feelings ran high among Hindu communalists of Aligarh over the AMU is corroborated by both Hindu as well as Muslim personalities. Mr. Krishna Kumar 'Navaman' said: "In the past, out of the total seats 60 percent were reserved for those who passing out from Aligarh colleges affiliated to AMU who are mainly Muslims; 10 percent for the nominees of the Vice-Chancellor; and the remaining 30 percent left for students outside Aligarh, thus giving a meagre chance for Hindu students. In 1978, however, a change was made to this pattern where the respective proportion is 70 : 20 : 10. At present, in the Commerce class, for example, there are 112 Muslims against 8 Hindus of the total 120 students. As a result, Hindu students wanting to study at the AMU are at a disadvantageous position."

Dr. Irfan Habib of AMU's History Department, who is also a distinguished historian, corroborated this by saying that there was a sort of discrimination against Hindus in the AMU because of the admission policy. "There is certain amount of preference for Muslim students. The Hindu students studying in the convent school were not admitted in AMU even if they got more marks than the Muslims. Hindu parents living at Aligarh, therefore, often forced to send their children outside the town for advanced studies, because of the dearth in seats reserved for non-minority communities", Dr. Habib observed.

According to Mr. Kumer Devendra Pal Singh, the climax of the communal feelings steadily built up by the erstwhile Jana Sangh member and the present RSS reached its height on October 5. He continued: "This was not a communal riot, rather a political frenzy with the Aligarh Muslim University as the background. The communal and right reactionary forces, who were always opposed to the Aligarh Muslim University and who were conspiring since June this year, created the disturbances as a dress-rehearsal for the future. The Jana Sangh elements in the Aligarh Janata Party are out to exploit this incident to serve their main campaign against the AMU bill. These forces are led by Mr. Krishna Kumar Navaman, President of Aligarh Janata Party, and Mr. Shiv Hari Sangal, erstwhile Jana Sangh President, with the active support of Mr. B.D. Gupta and Mr. Manga Ram -- both lecturers in AMU."

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In this connection it would be worthwhile to mention that we came across reports strongly suggesting that both Mr. Gupta and Mr. Manga Ram have been agitating for quite sometime for setting up another university at Aligarh, which should be, according to them "secular" in character. Mr. Navaman was emphatic on the discriminatory character of the AMU. According to him Aligarh city comprises of mostly Hindus (60 percent: 40 percent upper caste and 20 percent lower caste, the rest 40 percent being Muslims), and therefore the present pattern and set up of the university should undergo a vital change.

We would now like to throw light on another cause of communal tension that has been building up. From talks with the Muslim inhabitants of Manak Chowk, the worst affected area of Aligarh during the October 5 riot, we reached to the conclusion that the Hindus have been trying to oust the Muslims from the area for quite some time. There are hardly ten or fifteen Muslim houses in the Hindu dominated area of Manak Chowk. According to Mr. Kumar Davendra Pal Singh, Manak Chowk is a strong RSS belt. Mr. Krishna Kumar Navaman's house is also in the same Mohalla. According to the affected Muslim victims in Manak Chowk area the RSS elements asked them to leave the houses or face serious consequences. Most of the Muslims living there are fruit-sellers, brass band team members and employees in small factories and other mini-industrial establishments. Incidentally, these were the people who were the main targets of attack on October 5 as will be evident from the report of the actual incidents that will be described.

#### The Immediate Causes

We would now like to come to the immediate causes of the October 5 disturbances. As far as we could gather, there were two or three incidents that preceded the assault on Bhorey, on October 5, and his death on October 5. According to Mr. Krishna Kumar Navaman, one Mr. Vishnu Dutt who was the referee at the wrestler's match of September 12, was assaulted by Muslims on September 12. This was followed by the stabbing of a Muslim on September 15, which was corroborated by many including Mr. Navaman. On September 16, one Kacher Mall - a Hindu - was assaulted and died on September 18. There are two different versions regarding his death. While Mr. Navaman thinks that he was a victim of Muslim communalism, other important personalities of Aligarh feel that it was a sequel to a family quarrel. Mr. Navaman gave the statistics of murders before the riot started to establish his argument that the whole incident was a result of Muslim vengeance: "Kacheramal was murdered on 18th September; Suresh/Bhorey on 5 October at 3.30 p.m.; and Rathan Lal and Ganesh Lal at 3.45 the same day. "All these were Hindus, and all others including Muslims, were killed during the riot", Mr. Navaman ascertained. He further added: "About five months back there was a truck incident killing one Muslim at the university area and the Muslim community immediately went on rampage burning two other trucks".

But from our talks with others, we felt that this truck incident five months back was a common and spontaneous reaction as in other cities. The developments that led to the October 5 riot were however of a different nature. From eye-witness accounts, as was corroborated by all political leaders, public figures and social workers, the facts that emerge throw a dismal light on the District Administration of Aligarh in allowing the tragic events to reach its climax which could have been checked with proper action in time. On October 5, Bhorey was declared dead in the District Hospital, situated in the heart of Aligarh, and the District Magistrate, apprehending trouble, posted senior officials including SP (City), AM (City), City Magistrate, and the PAC men at the hospital. But in spite of all these precautions, when Bhorey's death was announced his associates, who had gathered outside the hospital much earlier, "snatched" the dead body from the official custody. From various sources our team came to know that those who "snatched" the dead body consisted of people who were earlier detained by the police but were released under pressure, including ghereo, by the erstwhile Jana Sangh and RSS men led by Mr. Krishna Kumar Navaman. We, therefore, found the whole episode relating to the "snatching" of dead body as mysterious, since such an incident could have happened even in the presence of the armed PAC and other senior officials particularly when there were tensions since September 12. Also, it is common knowledge that the body of anyone killed from assault should be subjected to post-mortem. But in this case, nothing of this sort happened and the body was allowed to be "snatched" away.

Our team was further mystified by the later happenings. While the "snatched" dead body of Bhorey was taken out in an illegal procession along areas which are known to be sensitive for communal riots, the armed PAC and the local police simply kept quite by accompanying the procession. The processionists were thus allowed to carry the body towards Abdul Karim Chowrah and Upar Kot, along the main marketing centre and a Muslim dominated area, instead of proceeding towards the cremation ground which lies in an entirely different direction. It is pertinent to note that the processionists shouted provocative slogans en-route, like "Khoon ka badla khoon" (Blood for blood), and "Ek ke badla das" (ten for one) according to many eye-witnesses. There were differences regarding some slogans. While the Congress (I) claims that the processionists also raised provocative slogans against Muslims, Mr. Navaman alleged that they shouted "Janata Party mardabad".

However, none of our respondents denied the processionists' shouting provocative slogans which is a clear indication of the miserable failure of the Administration in checking the procession from passing through sensitive and riot-prone areas. All of them condemned this inaction on the part of the police, except Mr. Navaman: "The police could not stop the procession carrying the dead body of Bhorey because of the "tremendous militancy" of the participants who were in a "furious mood". He however charged that the processionists were led by Congress (I) and Youth Congress people who were followers of

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Bhorey's golden gang". Mr. 'Navaman' also narrated another instance of communal hatred: "In a mosque in Aligarh east, some pork meat was found some time back. None knows who was responsible for it. Indira Gandhi visited Aligarh, and according to our information all the incidents prior to the riot were hatched by Congress(I) to further Mrs. Gandhi's election chances at Chickmagalur".

As far as our team could build up the sequence of events from the available evidence, the processionists placed the body in the middle of the road leading to Uper Kot. According to some other reports, the processionists had already started looting shops, mainly those owned by Muslims, on their way and had assaulted a few Muslims. In fact some Muslims were assaulted right in the hospital compound in the presence of top officials. We came across some other reports suggesting that the Muslims from the Uper Kot area, situated on a slightly higher level, resorted to brick-battling on the marching-in processionists carrying the dead body.

#### The Role of the P.A.C.

But whatever the sequence is, the team was convinced of one fact which was corroborated by both the contending parties -- Hindus and Muslims -- as well as the political opponents in Aligarh: "The Provincial Armed Constabulary (P.A.C.) resorted to firing indiscriminately". Although the P.A.C. was ordered to fire in the air to disperse the fighting mob, it was quite evident to the team that they fired deliberately at the Muslim houses. We came across several Muslim houses in the Manak Chowk area bearing bullet marks. When we were inspecting the bullet marks on October 21 (16 days after the firing) we could see the PAC men still posted on the roofs of some high buildings (owned by Hindus) with their rifles aimed at us and the Muslim houses. According to Mr. Iqbal Ansari of AMU, a Hindu gentleman of the area was asked on October 5 by the PAC men to identify the Muslim houses so that they could shoot them from a vantage point.

The story of Mr. Kumar Davendra Pal Singh, CONG(I) leader, was corroborated by many of our respondents: "Bani Israel lane is a market area where in a particular portion only Muslims live. This is about 0.5 km. from Abul Karim Chowrah. No Hindu communalists were there making troubles on October 5, and it was free of provocations. In spite of all these, the trigger-happy P.A.C. men marched into the area and fired on the Muslims. Two persons died: Shamin, clerk, in Abdulla Girls College, who succumbed to his bullet injuries only on 20th October, and the other who came from Meerut in search of job and was staying in Aligarh with a guest."

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According to the evidences we collected, another Muslim was killed in the same area as a result of such deliberate firing. The victim, belonging to Banaras, happened to be inside a Mosque in the locality when a bullet hit him. Incidentally all these three victims were hit by bullets when they were inside their houses or mosque. We also learnt that because of Shamim's murder, the Administration feared that the news might spark off another riot — this time by Muslims — on the pattern that was set off by Bholey's death. But nothing happened.

Mr. Kumar Devendra Pal Singh admitted that the PAC of Uttar Pradesh had traditionally been a ruthless force and notorious for its cruelty. "It merely lived up to its tradition this time", he added. Several of our respondents also claimed that the recruitment to PAC from the Muslim community is restricted to a very great extent. We ourselves could not locate a single Muslim among the large contingent of PAC men roaming in the city.

However, the only praise for the PAC which we heard in Aligarh came from the Janata Party President Mr. Krishna Kumar "Navaman". He felt that if the police and the PAC were not there, the "situation could have taken a turn for the worse for the Hindus". According to him, it was the Muslims who had attacked the Hindus first when they came to Uper Kot with Bholey's dead body. He defended the PAC's firing at the Muslim households on the ground that the Muslims had "fired" at the PAC. He claimed that the Muslims owned "unlicensed guns" and that the district administration had not seized the guns in spite of complaints made about them". On our repeated query, he admitted that he did not know whether any PAC or policemen were injured by Muslim gun shots. He also confirmed our finding that no Hindu house had been burnt down or attacked. We were, however, shown a few burnt shops near the Kotwali police station supposed to be Hindu-owned. But these Hindu shops were flanked by a large number of Muslim shops all of which were burnt. On the other hand, we noticed, at least in two places, isolated Muslim shops looted and burnt while the adjoining Hindu shops left untouched. We did not witness a single such isolated Hindu shop as a target of attack.

#### The Aftermath at Manak Chowk

We visited several houses in Manak Chowk, walked along the narrow lanes and by-lanes and talked to the inhabitants to gather the exact information as to what really happened there on October 5. According to the inhabitants, at least 12 people were killed only in Manak Chowk (against the official figure of 12 as the total number of death). The first house we visited was House Number 304 in Ward No.13, two Muslims were killed here, named Liaquat, aged 35, and Mukhtiar aged 43. They were fruit-vendors. We were shown a long

spear (about 5') with which they were pierced to death and which was left by the assailants. The room in which they were killed, was ransacked. The womenfolk who witnessed the scene are still in a dazed state. The witnesses complained to the police at the Madar Gate Police post which is in charge of this area and situated only a few hundred yards from the scene along with a list of names of the murders. One of them is Satya, son of Aligarh City Janata Party President Mr. Krishna Kuma 'Navaman'. Satya was seen with a gun supervising the murder. But till today, none of those whose names were given to the police has been arrested. While a few have fled, others are still roaming around the area.

In the adjoining house, No.303, the owner Sarvari Begum who was a witness to the scene told the team that the body of one victim who was killed by the spear was cut into two and flung into the burning pyre. According to her the RSS elements tried to take possession of the Muslim premises in the locality about two weeks back asking them to vacate the houses or face dire consequences. An amount of Rs. 2,000 kept by her and meant for Haj pilgrimage was also looted. The police, after more than 5 hours of inactivity, came and merely took down the report. Even though the culprits were identified by the local people they were not arrested. Sarvari Begum's house was completely ransacked and we saw the broken boxes and other belongings lying all around as scattered. Pointing to her burnt house, she showed us the next tall Hindu buildings from where petrol was poured down followed by cotton fire-balls.

The next house we visited was No.245 in the same ward. Three people were killed here : Sileman, son of Abdul Rahman, Arif and an unknown rickshawpuller who did not belong to the area but happened to be present in the locality and was caught up in the communal frenzy. The rickshawpuller's death was the ghastliest. He was first hanged from a noose and then stabbed. We saw the noose which is still there as a grim reminder of the tragedy. He was then taken down and burnt on a hand pulled vendor's push cart. All this was done in the presence of the terrified local people. According to Dr. Irfan Habib of AMU, the rickshaw puller was a resident of Sohrawad, near Dohpur, Aligarh and he left word with his father before leaving the house that he was going to Laxmi Cinema to pick up customers during the first show. We also saw the charred remains of the cart, where we could still make out burnt bones and remains of bangles which the vendor used to sell. Harif, the occupant of the house, said that the house was attacked by known RSS elements like Beku, Kesar Dev, Suresh, Radha Charan, Tilloo, and Uma. The house was completely burnt down, leaving no roof and only the charred walls now remain.



The next house was No.246. Here a newly married Muslim, called Salim, aged 19, was shot dead by a notorious roughneck of the area called Bahadur and his accomplice, Laxmi. Both are still at large.

Thus, almost every Muslim house in Manak Chowk carried a tale of tragedy - - either killings, or loot, or arson. The carnage started from 5.30 p.m. on October 5, hours after curfew was imposed, and lasted until midnight. In spite of repeated requests to the nearby police station, no help came. Added to the assault by the Hindu communalists, was the indiscriminate firing by the PAC. "It was a miracle how we survived", said a small boy from Mr. Manzur Ahmad's house describing the showering of bullets and showing us the marks on the walls.

Many inhabitants of the locality, including the large number of victims, complained that among the prominent personalities who led the attack were Mr. Krishna Kumar 'Navaman's son and Mr. B.D. Gupta of the AMU Psychology Department. They pointed out the high buildings of the Hindus from where the latter were alleged to have thrown petrol bombs on the low-level Muslim homes. Many such homes were reduced to cinders.

From available reports, we could make out that the concentration of attack on Manak Chowk had nothing to do with the main procession carrying Bhoroy's deadbody. The attack was pre-planned and was a part of the threatened plan to oust the few Muslim houses that remained in the pre-dominately Hindu area (referred to earlier). Neighbouring Hindu houses, which surround the few Muslim settlements, became the main arsenals for the Hindus who from the rooftops pelted prickbats, petrol bombs and other ammunition on the Muslim houses. According to some reports, the Muslims resisted for quite some time, but they finally had to give way.

When Mr. Krishna Kumar 'Navaman's attention was drawn to the ghastly incidents of Manak Chowk, the aftermath of which we witnessed, he said that the Hindus who were trying to escape the PAC firing by fleeing through Manak Chowk were attacked by the Muslims, and they, therefore, retaliated by "burning a few houses". He added: "When the trouble started at Manak Chowk, I informed the police. The trouble started at 5.00 p.m., but the policemen reached there only at 12.00 p.m. The Muslims in my area have confirmed that I am innocent and that it is I who protected them. This they have done in writing." But the Cong.(I) leader, Mr. Kumar Davendra Pal Singh, rejected this claim: "It is false. Anyone can manipulate to get this done. Even I can do that being a Hindu, from the Muslim community, or even from members of RSS."

The Political Ramifications:

The situation following the October 5 disturbances is further exacerbated by the differences and jockeying for power among the local politicians. To start with, the Aligarh unit of the Janata Party is divided. Of the 29 members, at least 16 are reported to have signed a statement demanding the removal of Mr. Navaman from presidentship. Mr. Navaman suspects that Dr. Pannalal of the erstwhile Congress-C, due to personal rivalry, is trying to oust him. He also alleged that the Congress-I is fomenting communal troubles, and referred in this connection to Mrs. Gandhi's UP visit just before the October 5 incidents. He continued: "Within the Janata Party, the B.L.D. faction has already abused Mr. Morarji Desai and Mr. Jagjivan Ram because of their sons. Now they want to malign the image of the entire Jana Sangh utilising the name of RSS. Dr. Pannalal, who was earlier denied Janata MLA ticket and failed to become the President of Aligarh Janata unit, joined hands with the supporters of Raj Narain to take advantage of this situation to abuse and throw me out of power".

Political observers of Aligarh point out that right from the Central through the State, down to the district level, the Janata High Command is compelled to depend on the former Jana Sangh component of the party as now the BLD faction is trying to bring about the downfall of the present ruling party. The U.P. Chief Minister, Mr. Ram Naresh Yadav, although belonging to the former BLD cannot afford to antagonize the Jana Sangh members on whose support he has to depend to retain his position. He has very reluctantly agreed to the proposed judicial inquiry into the Aligarh happenings, and there is a strong suspicion in Aligarh that Mr. Yadav would not like to take any strong action against the Jana Sangh.

Political observers of Aligarh also see the same mood reflected in the statement made by the Janata Chief, Mr. Chandra Shekhar. Without releasing the full report of the Central Janata three-man team, which was sent to investigate into the Aligarh riots, Mr. Chandra Shekhar was reported to have exonerated the RSS. From what we heard in Aligarh (particularly from those who met the Janata three-man team) there appears to be two versions of the original report submitted by the team to the Central High Command. One version which was supposed to be critical of the RSS has been suppressed, it is alleged.

The Congress (I) leader, Mr. Kumar Devendra Pal Singh fears that if this trend continues, the Jana Sangh might be able to frustrate the work of the proposed judicial inquiry and could also pressurize the government to withdraw the AMU Bill or modify it in favour of the Jana Sangh. It is difficult to deny the upper-hand that the Janata Sangh faction enjoys due to the precarious balance of forces within Janata Party, our team felt.

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### The Judicial Enquiry

A few words on the public reaction to the proposed judicial inquiry could be relevant in this connection. According to Dr. Irfan Habib of the JNU, past experience had shown that such inquiries take a long time and the culprits remain unpunished. Dr. Habib continued: "The previous riot in 1971 lasted for three days. The judicial enquiry commission was a failure. None was prosecuted. The government never published the Mathur Commission Report submitted after three years, though it repeatedly announced that they are considering the recommendations. A girl assaulted during the 1971 riots clearly identified the culprits in the court. Even then they went unpunished. With this experience, the people generally do not have confidence in the present enquiry commission".

Dr. Habib also pointed out that not a single person has been convicted during all these years (six riots, including this one, during the 30 years of independence) on grounds of participating in communal riots. There are obviously loopholes in the law which need to be removed, he asserted.

According to Mr. Kumar Devendra Pal Singh of Congress(I), the success of the judicial inquiry would depend on the local administration. If the latter chose to be biased in favour of Hindu communalism, no cooperation would be forthcoming from them.

Mr. Krishna Kumar Nayaman, however, welcomed the judicial inquiry. He added that he had nothing to fear from the inquiry, and hoped that the real facts would come out. He assured full cooperation to the inquiry.

By and large, it appeared to us that the man in the street in Aligarh is sceptical about the judicial inquiry, primarily because of the futility of similar inquiries made in the past.

### The Local Administration:

There was a widespread feeling that the local administration, including the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police, had failed in tackling the situation both before the riots started and on the day it happened.

What was the role of the Administration? To be fair to them, it will have to be stated that following the disturbances at the wrestling match on September 12, the DM had imposed a mini-curfew during the night in the riot-prone areas of Aligarh. This had been in operation for quite sometime before the October 5 incidents.

Put political pressures on the City Administration were apparently too strong to allow the DM to be more firm against potential communal trouble-makers. This is acknowledged by both Hindu and Muslim leaders. According to Mr. Krishna Kumar 'Navaman' himself, when the DM wanted to arrest all the wrestlers of the town as a precautionary measure on October 4, he vehemently opposed it. Again when the DM arrested five Hindus and two Muslims the same evening on suspicion of communal trouble-makers, Mr. Navaman complained about discrimination against the Hindus.

According to Mr. Iqbal Ansari, Mr. Navaman's supporters and Hindu communalists gheraoed the Kotwali police station on October 4 demanding the release of Jaipaul -- an associate of Bhorey -- who had been arrested earlier as a precautionary measure.

While people generally admit that the DM is an honest person, they point out that he belongs to the Scheduled Caste, and in a caste-ridden atmosphere that prevails in U.P. is constrained by circumstances. Political pressures from the top often have to be accommodated, as otherwise he might be isolated, and his career ruined by the powerful political leaders. In such circumstances, it was quite possible that the DM more and more succumbed to the pressures of the Hindu communal leaders as the days passed. According to Mr. Iqbal Ansari, the administration was completely paralysed by the RSO.

Such allegations are confirmed by the events of October 5: How was Bhorey's body allowed to be "snatched" by his followers? How did the police and the RAC allow the procession to move into the Muslim areas -- events which have been described earlier.

The abject surrender of the local police to the hoodlums was quite evident to our team when we visited Uper Kot. The shops that were burnt were literally skirting the walls of the very Kotwali police station. The team came across one particular shop -- a cigarette stall owned by one Munne -- situated opposite the Kotwali police station and which was looted on October 6 when the day-and-night curfew was supposed to be on!

As for maintaining law and order after the October 5 incidents, the District Administration has taken a few steps, like seizing Mr. Krishna Kumar Navaman's double-barrel gun. But Mr. Navaman has been provided armed protection in the shape of two RAC jawans who are posted in his house near the Madar Gate. (When we asked for Mr. Navaman on entering his residence, one of the policemen called the people upstairs: "Sahb hai?" We also saw in his office room, while waiting for Mr. Navaman to come, a black plastic envelop lying on the bed with marking: "Yadav Arms Co., Arms Ammunition Dealers, 15/284 Civil Lines, Kanpur, Tel.: 62-724. This was apparently meant for keeping bullet rounds).

The PAC jawans are posted in the Manak Chowk area, along Abdul Karim Chaurah, in Upar Kot and other riot-prone areas. But the role of the PAC on October 5, when they betrayed an unmistakably Hindu communal bias by shooting down innocent Muslims and taking aim at their houses, has eroded the Muslims' confidence in the PAC. Our team felt that the PAC instead of instilling trust among the minority community is creating further tension by its presence. It should be immediately removed from the scene and replaced by more trust-worthy protection forces.

We felt in this connection that a disciplined volunteer force recruited from responsible local people -- both Hindus and Muslims -- could be encouraged as a permanent watch-dog as well as a protection force. We found that in the areas where the disturbances took place there is a general amity among the ordinary Hindus and Muslims. There were reports of Hindu shop-owners saving their Muslim employees and vice-versa. According to Dr. Irfan Habib, the wife of his colleague, a Bengali Hindu, after starving all through the curfew-bound days of October 5, 6 and 7, ran away from her house in the city area along with her three children and took shelter in a Muslim friend's house in the University area when curfew was withdrawn for an hour on 8 October.\*\*\* It was quite evident, that a handful of notorious characters -- known hoodlums and criminals -- were instrumental in perpetrating the carnage of October 5. They could have been isolated and put in protective custody by the administration much earlier. Even now, they are at large.

#### Role of the AMU Students and Teachers

The only redeeming feature in the whole scenario was the role of the management, students and teachers of AMU. They did not allow the communal frenzy to spread to the University campus -- which in the past had always been a hotbed of such frenzy. In spite of the death of one of its employees -- the clerk Shamim from police bullet wounds -- the AMU community showed restraint and succeeded in turning the campus into the only island of sanity in the city. There are cases of people fleeing the curfew-bound city (the curfew was meant to protect the citizens) to take shelter in the AMU campus.

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\*\*\* The curfew was often turned into a smokescreen from behind which the hoodlums operated with impunity (e.g. the ghastly killings at Manak Chowk and the looting of the cigarette stall opposite Kotwali police station). The dusk to dawn curfew which is in operation now puts the poor labourers of the city to the utmost difficulties. Rickshaw pullers who make the maximum earnings during the evening hours are forced to stay home starving.

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