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CPI(ML)'s Fact-finding Team's Report

## **Masouli Riots indicate Communal Violence on Gujarat-Maharashtra Pattern**

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A CPI(ML) fact-finding team comprising of Comrade Akhilendra Pratap, Md. Nihaluddin, General Secretary, PDF, Comrade Kaushal Kishore and Md. Salauddin, visited the riot affected Masauli town and Sahadatganj and Anupganj villages where riots broke out during Dussehra festival on 2 October and met the riot victims on 16 October.

After Mau, the riots in Masouli (Barabanki) pose a big question mark on the safety and security of Muslims in the Mulayam Raj. The most worrisome aspect of the riots is a new trend of attack on Muslim property as well as the attack on the bus-passengers, on the pattern of Gujarat and Maharashtra.

Masouli is a small town in district Barabanki, adjoining Lucknow. Anupganj and Sahadatganj are Muslim-dominated villages in this area. Here, Muslims have earned some prosperity through handloom business and agriculture-horticulture etc. Last year, Durga idols were installed on the outskirts of Anupganj, with an understanding that they would be submerged in the river taking it through the outer part of the village. But RSS-BJP people carried them through the Muslim locality last year. However, it was agreed in the peace committee, comprising representatives from both communities, that this year the idols would be taken through outer areas only but on Dussehra day the miscreants, with a pre-planned strategy, forcibly tried to take the idols through Muslim areas. Tension started mounting. Then the police captured the idols and submerged them in river Kalyani, but the communal elements spread a rumour in neighboring Hindu villages that Muslims were creating trouble. As a result, thousands of rioters attacked the Muslim locality, looted and destroyed their looms, shops, plantations, lands and crops.

As the news reached Masouli town, communally charged mobs attacked Muslims; looted, destroyed, and set on fire their shops, commercial centres and dhabas. At least half a dozen buses were targeted. Muslims were beaten, women molested and one Muslim youth, Abu-Talha, who was returning from Kanpur after Taraavi Namaz, was dragged out of a bus and stabbed to death. The riots started on October 2 and continued for many days. All this was happening within 50 km from the state capital Lucknow, and the Mulayam administration remained a mute spectator all along. People even alleged police involvement in the loots and arson.

The political motivation behind the riots was obvious. The whole area is supposed to be the stronghold of a powerful Samajwadi Party leader Beni Prasad Varma. In the last assembly elections, his son Rakesh Varma (now a minister in Mulayam's Cabinet) had to face a tough challenge from an independent Muslim candidate Mahfooz Kidwai. Rakesh Varma could win by a very narrow margin while Kidwai was a close second. Similarly, Anupganj and Sahadatganj fall under Ramnagar Constituency where the BJP MLA Rajya Laxmi Varma was elected in the last elections. However, with the BJP on a downslide, she too is bound to face tough times in the coming election.

The well-planned communal mobilisation and attack on Muslims were aimed at appeasing the kulaks

and landlords, jealous of Muslim prosperity, as well as at sharpening communal polarization to help Rajya Laxmi Varma, the BJP leader who is Beni Varma's protégé and last, but not the least, teaching Muslims a lesson that they should be prepared to face the consequences if they distanced from the Samajwadi party and treaded an independent political path.

Thus, in view of the coming elections, while Mulayam is busy in political maneuverings with populist gimmicks like Roza-Iftar in Haridwar and mock fighting with the RSS-BJP, Muslims in UP are forced to live under duress. There is a real danger for communal harmony in the state and we may witness many more Maus and Masoulis in UP in the coming days.

Secularism was the last mascot of Mulayam Singh. He had long back thrown away the old Lohiaite baggage of 'socialism' and 'social justice', thanks to the company of his new-found friends, Amar Singhs, Raja Bhaiyas and Ambanis. Chanting the new Mantra of 'development' and boasting that Uttar Pradesh is becoming Uttam Pradesh - on BJPs [India Shining pattern](#) – Mulayam is selling the state, from Dadri to Dala, to corporate houses. The toiling millions are left to die of starvation, suicides, encephalitis, dengue and chikungunya. And thousands have actually died. The insensitive administration has let loose a reign of terror on the agitating farmers, agrarian labourers, Shiksha Mitras etc., as well as on activists of democratic movements. Under the smokescreen of 'secularism', Mulayam has turned UP into a graveyard of democracy. And now the riots of Mau and Masouli, where even the High Court has charged state machinery of shielding the rioters and rapists, have unmasked the true face of Mulayams 'secularism', depriving him of his last political resort.

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