

ABDULLAH HAROON AND HIS TIMES

by
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The World War I started in 1914 and with it started in India political developments of far reaching consequences. Exactly two weeks after Mrs. Annie Jasant's publishing of 'New India' there was out break of the World War on August 4th. This paper made strides for national movement. Three motions later, on November 5, England declared war against Turkey. Gandhi, who had began his famous Satayarraha Movement against a judgment of South African Supreme Court, which had declared all unregistered marriages illegal on March 14, 1913, arrived at an agreement with South African governor-general Smuts on June 30, 1914. This gave him great popularity both in South Africa and India. Having bid farewell to Africa, he reached Bombay in January 1915 and had meeting with Gokhale, who was to die one month later. Under the latter's mature advice, Gandhi entered in Indian political scene clamoring for political rights, but before so doing he traveled, whole India for 15 months to have a feeling of problems of vast populace of India. It gave him in depth knowledge of problems. The British were put under pressure not only by the Indian politicians, but also by revolutionaries in India as well as abroad. Some Indians residing in USA and Europe formed "The German Union of Friendly India" in September 1914. By middle 1915 this Union was renamed as "Indian Independence Committee" with no non-Indian as members. Mrs. Basant announced formation of Home League on 25th December 1915, with a view to built in India a mighty self governing community.

These German intrigues, terrorist activities and conspiracies in Bengal and the Punjab and constant raids by Hill Tribes on North Western Frontier, resulted into un-easy time for the government and this was further aggravated by deep disaffection and discontent of the Indian Muslims caused by the Turkey-Italian war in 1911 in Tripoli (Libya) and in Balkans and was further aggravated by British in World War-I, fighting against Turkey, wt-rose head was the Caliph of atleast theoretically, head of Islamic Religion. Abdullah Haroon was made Secretary and treasures of 'Halal-e-Ahnar Sindh' Society on 8th October 1911, to raise funds for helping Turks against Italy's invasion, Mulana Mohammad Ali and Shaukat All, two leading members of this anti-British movement who called the Khilafat movement, were entered in 1916 and so was Abul Kalam Azad then a firy Pan Islamist, The World War ended in victory to British and her allies in 1918. Political prisoners in India were released and political activities reached their pitch. The first All India Depressed Conference (untouchables or Sudras) was held on March 23rd and 24th. Rowlatt (Sedition) Committee which was appointed in December 1917, gave its report in April 1918. The Indians were not satisfied with its recommendations as it provided speedy trial of political crimes by special court of High Court Judges, which could meet in camera and take into consideration evidence not admissible under the Indian evidence act and it empowered the executives to arrest the suspected persons, without warrant and keep than in confinement. In the midst of

this political turmoil was major famine in 1918-19 and again in 1920-21, the miseries of which helped political consolidation of dis-satisfied in the whole of India. These were preceded by the great influenza of 1917, which took a considerable toll of life and almost 40% lives in rural Sindh, reducing population in Sindh in 1921 to below 1911 level.

Abdullah was member of the Karachi Municipality from May 1913 to September 1916. Again he became member of this Municipality from 1st May 1921 to 21st August 1934.

On April 6, 1918 there was all India Hartal against Rowlatt Bill. On April 9, Dr. Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal were deported. Next day there was firing at Lahore on processionists, who had organized the Hartal, Due to firing, mob lost control and there was brutal violence and killing of 5 Europeans, looting of banks, cutting of telegraph wires and etc. The government declared Martial Law, prohibiting all meetings and gatherings. A public meeting was summoned in Amirtassar at Jallianwalla Bagh, on which Brigadier General Dyer reacting by armored Cars and troops, fired, killing some 1000 men. Dyer admitted that "his purpose was to strike terror", He could have dispersed the crowd without firing, but it would have been derogatory to his dignity as defender of law and order.

Amidst of this agitation the British Government passed Government of India Act in December 1919 to pacify Indians.

Muhammad Ali and Shaukat Ali visited Karachi in 1919 in connection with 2nd Khilafat Conference, and were Abdullah Haroon's guests. He was President of Sindh Khilafat Committee from 1919 to 1924, He attended Khilafat Conference at Larkana in 1920, In 1920 in the Session of All India Khilafat Conference at Bombay, he seconded Maulana Shaukat Ali's resolution, for collection of Rs.30 lacs forwards expenses of delegation to visit Europe and to get support for Khilafat Movement,

In 1919 he presided over 7th Sindh Provincial Congress Conference at Karachi. In which he stated that:

- (a) The role of All India Congress in the struggle for independence was praise worthy and Hindus and Muslims must unite to work for independence.
- (b) Motageau - Chelmsford Reforms do not meet aspirations of people.
- (c) National week may be organized in protest against Jallianwalla massacre.

On June 22, 1920, he along with other nine Sindhi Muslims signed a memorandum addressed to the Governor General to do justice to Turkey in the Armistice.

1920 saw another major famine and also formation and holding of the first meeting of All India Trade Union Congress. Hither to political scene was dominated by Hindus with

Muslims usually as camp followers, but in 1920 situation started changing with formation of Aligarh Muslim University which was established four years after establishment of Benares Hindu University.

Muslim League branch in Sindh was established by Ghulam Muhammad Bhurgari in 1918. Muslim League and Congress party of Sindh held their annual sessions at the same place simultaneously and passed similar resolution. Abdullah Haroon, who joined it in 1918 was elected the president of the province at Muslim League in 1920.

He also established and published Sindhi news paper Alwahid in 1920. He encouraged Din Muhammed Wafai to publish in 1921 "Tawhid" a monthly journal which started crusade against Syedism, Pirism and Mulla-ism and continued for next 30 years.

On the international scene the British and their major war Ally, France had during the World War succeeded in raising mass rebellions in Turkish occupied Arab lands i.e., Arabian Peninsula and northern Africa and the end of war saw many independent Arab States, invariably taken over by Kings of influential fudals. Turkey's possessions in Europe too were lost to independent Balkan-States for Turkey the war had yet not ended as British were still fighting on their territories. Russians after 1917 Revolution had also usurped certain territories. Thus Caliphats in fact stood dissolved. The lost territories were not restorable, however much, any World Powers could. Although the British Prime Minister, Lloyds George publicly declared on January that "Allies were not fighting to deprive Turkey of its rich and renowned lands of Asia Minor and Thraca, which were predominately Turkish race" and although his views were endorsed by president Wilson in his message to U.S. Congress, but under Amistice which concluded war, the Turkish Empire in Asia and Africa passed under control of England and France under dis-guise of Mandates. The Caliph or Sultan was placed under complete control of a High Commission appointed by Allied powers, who really ruled in his name. The Indian Muslims feeling the treatment of Turkey, as great betrayal on the part of British and Allies, agitated through-out the year 1919, without any effect, but early in the year 1920 they started a vigorous agitation to bring pressure upon the British to change her policy towards Turkey.

Abdullah Haroon came in lime light of the Indian political scene at this stage of 1919-1920. Gandhi gave full support to Khilafat movement. The leading Khilafat workers as well as Congressmen assembled at Amristar and decided to organize the Khilafat movement under guidance of Gandhi. For the first time in a manifesto issued on March 10, Gandhi gave definite elaboration of his doctrine of nonviolence and Non-co-operation, which played an important part leading towards independence in 1947. Although the claim of Sultan of Turkey as a 'Supreme Religious Authority' of Muslim World had no practical significance outside Turkey and Muslims of India had never before in history given him such homage, but the issue was played up well, by leading Muslim Ullama of the sub-continent. Muslims of India gave full support to the cause and it became quite apparent that it would be easy to march than under religious banner rather than national, secular social and economical

programmes. Gandhi, who was criticised by his friends and had justified his alliance with the Khilafat movement in the name of Hindu-Muslim unity, had failed to realize that Pan-Islamic idea, which inspired the Khilafat movement cut the very roots of Indian Nationality theory. It is this failure of his part that led to division of India. Most of Ullma participants in the movement too did not realize that the very movement was going to be basis of Muslims as a separate nation. Had Khilafat movement not been started in 1920 by Gandhi's co-operation, India would not have been partitioned in 1947.

Sir Abdullah Haroon at much later stage was to realize it and the movement turned into became camping of Pakistan, without any connection with Khilafat.

In 1921 M.N. Roy was to organize a communist party in India. If Khilafat movement had not started earlier, he probably would have attracted many revolutionary Muslims as well as Ullama, but they were all involved in religious fervor.

On November 17, 1921 Prince of Wales (later King Edward-VIII) landed Bombay on Indian tour. The city alongwith rest of India observed Hartal. Khilafites took leading role everywhere, including Sindh where it was under Abdullah Haroon guidance,

The new reforms under India Act of 1919, which had received the Royal assent on December 1920, came into operation from January 1st 1921. The Legislative Assembly under this act though mostly powerless before the executive brought to light two important elements of political importance:

- i) By rejecting recommendations of any Government report, repealing acts and making positive recommendations to the Government, they stood threat to the British Bureaucratic way of ruling and could ask for reforms and concessions, which otherwise the British were not willing to listen or conceded.
- ii) By making certain subjects as Provincial and also accepting the Indians as members of Governors Executive Council, it was found that majority community at provincial level could get more concessions for their community.

The first factor made British to take tough attitude in granting further concessions and the second factor was to cause differences between two major communities Hindus and Muslims on future constitutional issues, behaviour was clearly seen of Hindus and Muslims of Sindh towards separation of Sindh from Bombay presidency, Prior to these reforms it was Hindus. Who raised voice for separation of Sindh, as they saw it as means of more gain in terms of government jobs and trade against Gujaratis and Marhatas of Bombay Presidency. But now realizing that separation of Sindh from Bombay, would ultimately benefit Muslims on the Indian scene as they will have more representation in N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan new provinces proposed to be created. They also wanted to more provinces to be created in the

Hindu majority areas of the Central and South India on linguistic basis, so that there were more Hindu majority provinces. The Muslims on the contrary wanted :

- a) New provinces to be created in Muslim majority areas like Sindh, Baluchistan and N.W.F.P.
- a) More representation of seats to the Muslim in Hindu majority provinces,

Natural out come was increasing mistrust between two communities, leading to Communal roits,

On the other hand Gandhi who had started his 'Civil Disobedience' movement in collaboration with Khiilafaties in 1920, kept increasing scope of his moment by adding new clauses like, bycott of foreign goods, withdrawal of candidates for election to form Councils, bycott of courts, withdrawal of children from schools, surrender of titles and etc. On February 1st, 1922, he informed Viceroy of his decision to start civil disobedience. The civil diaobsdience was not entirely peaceful. In a village Chauri Chaura, a mob attacked police station, set it to fire and hacked 20 policeman to death. Gandhi was comppled to stop civil disobedience movement. The anti-government feelings were at the pitch and sudden stopping of the movement caused frustration and Hindu Muslim riots. 1923 saw serious communal roits at Multan, Amritsar, Malbar, Agra, Saharanpur, Calcutta and many other places, but yet Gandhi was still in a position to have some hold on Khllafaties, though after reforms in 1919, some Muslims had started thinking in terms of cencus figures i.e., Hindu and Muslims poulation area wise. In 1923-24, the Khilafat movement was to get a crushing blow, not from within India, but from Turkey it-self Kamal Pasha, who showed no concern for the Holy places of Islam (in Arabian Penisula,) finally abolished Caliphate. This chilled the enthusiasm of Khilafat movement and it died a natural death. Only its soul lingered. The Muslims no longer needed Gandhi's Hindu-Muslim united movement.

The ill feelings were clearly indicated by 1500 delegates and thousands of Sikhs Jains, Buddhists Sanatanists and Arya Samajists, attending the Benaras session of Hindu-Mahasaba held in August 1923 presided by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. During this session Hindu Mahasabha was main political organization to fight for interests of Hindus. It is fair to say that the Congressite Hindu present ware indifferent to and even opposed to Mahasabha's attitude towards Muslims.

All India Muslim League which had gone into background since 1920, revived its activities under the chairmanship of Mr. M.A. Jinnah, who being an old Congressite and Nationalist, came up with new programme of the Muslim League asking for Federal Constitution for India, with full autonomy for Provinces and affective representation to minorities in every province.

Sir Abdullah Haroon was elected member of Bombay Legislative Council in 1923 for period of 3 years.

The years 1924 and 1925 witnessed communal riots at Kohat, Delhi, Aligarh, Arvi (CP) and Sholarpur. In 1926-27 they were to repeat at Calcutta, Delhi, Rawalpindi, Allahabad and many other places.

During all this period Haji Abdullah Haroon stood with Khilafat Conference. The conference on January 1920 had sent an address to viceroy of India to allow a deputation to lay before King George V, the question of wardens of Holy place in Jazirat-ul-Arab and integrity of Ottoman Empire. The letter was signed by Gandhi, Pandit Ram Bhaj Dutt and twenty Muslims including Shaukat Ali, Maulana Bari, Abdul Kalam Azad, Abdullah Haroon and others,

After abolishing of Caliphate by Kamal Pasha, Indian Khilafat Committee decided to send delegation to Ankara to wait upon the President of Turkey (Kamal Pasha) on the question of Caliphate (restoration of). The proposed delegation including names of Dr, Ansari, Hakim Ajmal, Syed Suleman Nadvi, Haji Abdullah Haroon, Chaudhri Khaliq-uz-Zaman, Sherwani and Pickthal. The delegation was not able to depart, partly because the Government of India has denied to give passports to an earlier delegation and partly because probably they were sure of fait accompli.

On 18th November, 1926, Abdullah Haroon was elected a member of Central Legislative Assembly to which body he was being elected very time until his death in 1942. In 1928, Muslim League party was established in the Central Assembly. He joined it and took active part in the separation of Sindh from Bombay presidency from 1925 onwards and was made a member of Sindh Financial Inquiry Committee from 1931 to 1935. He also acted as Secretary to this Committee. He was nominated member of this Inquiry Committee for the separation of Sindh from Bombay. The only other Non-European member of that Committee was Mr. M.A. Khuhro, In 1931, he presided over all Indian Muslim Postal and Railway Men's association. He visited interior of Sindh in order to get first hand information on Sindh. During this visit to upper Sindh a resolution was passed appealing to the Governor General to re-adjust the boundaries of the Provinces, so as to make Naseerabad Tehsil of Sibi a part of the Sindh, He supported 14 points of Mr. M.A. Jinnah. In 1932 he was nominated by the Central Government of India to attend Imperial Economic Conference at Ottawa Canada. In 1933 he became Chairman of Haj Committee.

The Khilafat Conference in fact immediately after 'Abolition of Caliphate' had decayed and died, but it continued to meet periodically. Its continued and lingering soul helped some old Khilafatists to win elections held in early 1937 Abdullah Haroon presided over 20th All India Khilafat Conference at Lucknow in February 1927. Abdullah Haroon's printed address was read by Mr. Abdur-Rehman editor Al-Wahid. The address dealt with Pan-

Islamic and Indian activities, urged Hindu Muslim-Unity and asked Hindus to respect Indian Muslims States and Muslims to respect non-Muslim Indian States etc.

On November 8, 1927. The British Prime Minister, announced the Simon Commission, which did not arrive in India until February 3, 1928, when in protest, All India Hartal was observed. The same year saw appointment of Royal Commission on Agriculture, which in itself was a very important body and their voluminous report was basis of Pakistan Agricultural Enquiry Committee (1950), Sindh Agricultural Commission 1955 Pakistan Agricultural Commission 1958 and National Agriculture Commission 1986. Sindh happened to be an important Agricultural province of undivided India and benefitted. Imperial Council of Agricultural Research was set up on its' recommendations. Abdullah Haroon had business involvement in sugar and agricultural produce. Simon Commission failed in its' mission. Its' report was published in June 1930. Gandhi started his Civil disobedience movement in February 1930.

The outcome to Gandhi's civil disobedience was Viceroy Irwin's meeting with him and announcement of the Round Table Conference in London, the first Session of which, was inaugurated by George V. A Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed on March 5, 1931. On December, 1st 1931, Ramsay MacDonald announced his decision to constitute Sindh a separate province and N.W.F.P. as Governor's Province.

Sukkur Barrage was opened on January 1932 and its' economic repercussions were felt within next two years. After 1934 large number of Muslim students from rural areas turned up to towns, for education. In pre-Barrage days out of every five years crops, two would be below the annual average, two about the average and only one above the average. It was not separation of Sindh from Bombay Presidency that brought awakening in Sindh. It was Sukkur Barrage, followed by Kotri and Guddu Barrages.

Sindh was separated from Bombay Presidency on April 1, 1935, after long turbulent political discussion at all India level. In the Round Table Conference in 1931 and Financial Enquiry Committee on Sindh, the details of which have been published many times. Abdullah Haroon played most active role in separation of Sindh.

In 1936 he was appointed as a member of Provincial Agriculture Research Committee.

Since Sindh was made separate Province in 1936 and elections were expected take place at the end of that year, Sindh united party was formed on the lines of Sir Fazal Hussain of the Punjab's Unionist Party. Initially he was its leader and later on vacated this seat for Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto and become its Deputy Leader. After the defeat of Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto in the provincial election in 1937, the latter was sent to Bombay as Sindh's member representative on the Bombay-Sindh Public Service Commission and Abdullah Haroon became the President of Sindh United Party, which supported Allah Bux Soomro to become Premier Minister of Sindh. Difference arose between Allah Bux and other members on the

sliding scale of Land Revenue, Sir A. Haroon alongwith G. M. Syed, Ali Muhammad Rashidi, Sheikh A. Majeed, M.A. Khuhro and others joined Muslim League, under Leadership of Quaid-e-Azam.

Incidentally Sindh United Party was established with the purpose of the Hindu Muslim Unity, but no Hindu applied for the tickets in the 1936-37 Provincial Elections. They chose to contest as independent or Congress candidates, when elections were over they enblock joined Sir Ghulaa Hussain Hydiyatullah'a Provincial Muslim Political Party in exchange for speakership and one out of two minister-ship of his cabinet,

Haji Abdullah Haroon developed difference with Allah Bur Soomro, the Chief Minister of Sindh on the question of Rates of Land Revenue which had been increased, under advice of British officials working in Sindh and justifiably with the purpose of balancing the budget. This was done without consulting the party whose leader was Abdullah Haroon. Hindu Congress members first supported Haji Abdullah Haroon, but at the last moment voted with the government. In further negotiation they agreed to join hands with Abdullah Haroon but in the end Allah Bux Soomro succeeded in inviting Sardar Patel and Abdul Kalam Azad who appealed the Congressits members to vote with the Government of Allah Bux Soomro the Chief Minister. This disillusioned Abdullah Haroon, who also had been active in Muslim League, Some of the new Muslim Leaguers pursuded Abdullah Haroon to launch Masjid Manzalgah Movamant. This Mosque since 1939 had been concerted into Military camp was claimed by Muslims. Hindus wars opposing simply because it happan to exist in Hindu majority residential and commercial area. This movement equally gainad ground throughout Sindh but there were roits at Sukkur, in which numbar of people from both Communities were killed and property damaged and enquiry commission under judge Watson sat up at Sukkur, The movement was meant by Sindh Leagures to help Muslim League to become a popular party among the masses of Sindh. It succeeded in doing a and henceafter Muslims and Hindus ware never to meet on a common platform in Sindh. It must be said to the credit of all time secular leader 'Quide-Azam that he had threatened Sindh League leaders to throw them cut of the Muslim League if they ever started such a movement. Inspite of these threats Abdullah Haroon, G. M. Syed and M.A. Khuro defied the order (Personal Communication by M. A. Khuro to the writer and the statement confirmed by G,M, Syed). The movement swept over the Province and League gained extreme popularity, Quid-e-Azam too failed to take action against Sindh Leaguers,

In 1940 Abdullah Haroon was taken up as a member of Central Working Committee of Muslim League and same year he was made Chairman of Foreign Affairs Committee of All India Muslia League. He devoted balance of his days of life in organiring Muslim League in Sindh,

Beginning of Pakistan movement started in 1933, when Chaudry Rahmat Ali, a student in London issued a 4 page leaflet headed "No or Never". The pamphlet attracted no serious

notice and when delegates of All India Muslim Conference and Muslim League appeared before Joint Select Committee of Parliament in 1933 in London, their Chairman was asked whether there is scheme of federation of Provinces under the name of Pakistan, their reply was "it is only a student's scheme and we have considered it chimerical and impracticable". Chaudhry Rehmat Ali issued another pamphlet in July 1935. It was also ignored, but Haji Abdullah Haroon seems to have picked up the threads after having had bitter experience with Hindus, so in the session of All India Muslim League held in Karachi in 1939, he proposed a Federation of Muslim majority States and even a resolution was passed which with some modifications was presented as Pakistan resolution at Lahore in 1940. This resolution No.5 of 1938 was proposed by Shaikh Abdul Majid Sindhi and seconded by Haji Abdullah Haroon. Thus it became clear that Haji Abdullah Haroon played a most important role in promoting Pakistan Resolution of 1940 of the Sindh Muslim leader who lived up to 1980, each one viewed this resolution as basis of or form of confederation

On November 1939, Germany invaded Poland. Congress Ministries resigned between October 27, November 15, 1939, Qaid-e-Azam observed December 22, as a day of deliverance from Congress Ministries. Pakistan Resolution and general body of Muslim League in its session at Lahore adopted this famous the Pakistan Resolution. Some authorities think 23rd March should have been the Pakistan Day.

Every important declaration of Viceroy of India of the British policy came on August 10, 1940, which briefly stated.

- 1) The expansion of the Governor General's Council and the establishment of Advisory war Council should no longer be postponed.
- 2) The minorities were assured that the Government would not agree to any system of Government, whose authority is directly denied by large powerful elements in India's national life. Nor could they be parties to the coercion of such elements into submission of such government.
- 3) After the war the representative Indian Body should be set up to frame the new constitution.

The statement sought to conciliate both the Muslim League and Congress. The guarantee asked by former was given in clause (2) and the Congress demand for Constituent Assembly was virtually conceded in clause (3). Like most compromises, it failed to satisfy any party. The Congress took exception to clause (2) for there is no doubt that it gave Qaid-e-Azam the powers to veto a constitutional advance. Similarly the Muslim League would not be favourable to clause (3) for, in any democratic procedure the number would count in the long run and the Muslim, could not hope to let any thing like equality with the Hindus, which Muslims demanded as a Separate nation.

The Congress working committee rejected this offer of the Viceroy but on August 31, 1940, Muslim League Working Committee well-accepted the offer as it proposed to divide India. Muslim League from now onwards separated the British war efforts and Congress opposed. Subash Chandra Bose, a prominent Congress leader secretly left Calcutta on January 17, 1941 and arrived in Berlin on March 28. On December 7, 1941 Japanese attacked American Navy at Pearl Harbour and next day England declared war against Japan. In the beginning of 1942, Rangoon the capital of Burma was occupied by Japanese and simultaneously started the Hur trouble in Sindh. Singapore fell to Japanese on February 15, 1942 and Indonesia was surrendered by Dutch to Japan in March 1942. Amidst these losses to British and Allies, Churchill announced Cripps Mission to India on March 11, 1942. Twelve days later, Cripps was already in Delhi talking to the Indian leaders. Working Committee of the Congress rejected Cripps proposals on April 2, 1942.

Allah Bux the Chief Minister of Sindh advised Karachites to make arrangement for their security in the interior Sindh, against any possible bombing by Germans, then in Egypt. While Karachi was gradually being vacated, Abdullah Haroon died on April 27, 1942,

It is unfortunate that a man who was responsible for prototype Pakistan Resolution of 1938 could not live to see his thoughts take a material shape on August 14, 1947. Since he essentially was secular, the later developments in Pakistan would have shocked him beyond repairs.