**First resolution**

BY MUHAMMAD ALI SIDDlQI 2023-04-28

FOR inexplicable reasons, scholars seem to have completely ignored an important Sindh Muslim League resolution passed in Karachi two years before the historic Lahore resolution was adopted in 1940. The Karachi resolution didn`t call for a separate country for the Muslims of India but it spoke of Hindu and Muslim `nations`. This was for the first time that the word `nations` for Hindus and Muslims of South Asia was officially mentioned by the Muslim League. The neglect by historians is astonishing because the conference was presided over by the Quaid-i-Azam.

What forced the Sindh Muslim League to take a leap over the rest of other ML organisations and come up with what then appeared to be a radical step was the crises Sindh`s Muslims were passing through, basically because in spite of having a Muslim majority the province didn`t have a Muslim League ministry. There were Muslim chief ministers, no doubt, but they chose to work in collusion with Congress parliamentarians or other groups to keep the Muslim League out of power.

Among those who realised the gravity of the situation and the need for reorganising the Muslim League was Haji Sir Abdullah Haroon, who was ably assisted by Bahadur Yar Jang, a brilliant scholar and orator from Hyderabad Deccan, who was greatly valued by Jinnah for his services to the Muslim cause.

Even though Jinnah or any Muslim League leader had till then not officially spoken of Pakistan as the Muslim goal, the word `Pakistan` had wide currency, having been coined by Chaudhri Rahmat Ali in 1933. As Haroon and Bahadur Yar Jang worked ceaselessly for giving a new life to the Sindh Muslim League, two top Congress leaders, Sardar Patel and Abul Kalam Azad, chose to tour Sindh. Even though their mission was about something else, the very fact that top Congress leaders chose to visit Sindh made Haroon and his colleagues realise it was time to act.

On Oct 8, 1938, a meeting of the Sindh Muslim League was held in Karachi presided over by Jinnah, who in his speech dwelt on the political situation in the subcontinent, especially the hostility shown by the Congress party to the idea of a separate country for Muslims.

The conference adopted many resolutions, the most important being number 5.

It said: `This conference considers it absolutely essential in the interest of an abiding peace of [the] vast Indian subcontinent and in the interests of unhampered cultural development, the economic and social betterment and political self-determination of the two nations known asHindus and Muslims to recommend to the All-India Muslim League to review and revise the entire question of what should be the suitable constitution of India.` The resolution was drafted by Abdullah Haroon, Pir Ali Mohammad Rashidi and Abdul Majid.

Two years later the Pakistan resolution was passed, and Haroon was among those who drafted it. Haroon didn`t live to see Pakistan become a reality, for he died on April 27, 1942.

Once the resolution was passed, Haroon went into virtual retirement and appeared quite philosophical about it. Interviewed by Rashdi in the April 30, 1935 issue of Muslim Voice, Haroon gave reasons why he didn`t wish to live any longer.

`God has enabled me,` he said, `to enjoy everything. That is the gift of this world. He has been extremely generous and bounteous towards me. I served at a cycle repairer`s shop when He took pity on me. For a long time, I could not but affordonly pieces of dry bread which constituted my daily meals.

`I have risen from that position a position I have never forgotten in the best days of opulence and abundance.

He has given me wealth, a dutiful and wise wife,many children, a palace to live in, a robust health, and honour, and respect. And, what is more valuable than everything else a sincere feeling for my community. I have held all these pleasures for over 50 years.

What more do I need? What for should I be anxious to live longer? Believe me, mankind would have been forced to take to suicide on an organised basis if the possibility of natural death had not existed. Endless life would have become a tedious experience, a full-fledged calamity.

According to Rashdi he was `full of emotions` and was sincere in what he was saying. A cough, a fresh cigarette lit and the speech went on. `Not knowing what is left of my life, I want to put this [Pakistan] scheme through at all costs and with all speed. I must leave behind something substantial. It is now a matter of almost personal concern where I am concerned.

When Rashdi said he would like to know what exactly he was talking about, Haroon said his goal was Pakistan.  The wnter is Dawn`s Extemal Ombudsman and an author.