

**MUHAMMED ABDURAHIMAN:**  
**Pursuits and Perspectives of a**  
**Nationalist Muslim**

Thesis  
submitted to the University of Calicut  
for the award of the Degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
in History

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## C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that the thesis **MUHAMMED ABDURAHIMAN: Pursuits and Perspectives of a Nationalist Muslim** submitted for the award of the Degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** of the **University of Calicut**, is a record of bonafide research carried out by **Muhammed Poozhikuth** under my supervision. No part of the thesis has been submitted for any degree before.

Farook College,  
17.01.2005

  
Dr. K.T. Mohammed Ali

## DECLARATION

I, Mohammed Poozhikuth, hereby declare that this thesis **MUHAMMED ABDURAHIMAN : Pursuits and Perspectives of a Nationalist Muslim** is a bonafide record of research work undertaken by me, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or other similar title or recognition.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

A.I.C.C.	=	All India Congress Committee
C.D.M.	=	Civil Disobedience Movement
F.N.R.	=	Fortnightly Report
H.F.H.	=	History of Freedom Movement
K.P.C.C.	=	Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee
M.N.N.P.R.	=	Madras Native News Paper Report
M.S.P.	=	Malabar Special Police
N.A.I.	=	National Archives of India
N.M.M.L.	=	Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
R.A.C.	=	Regional Archives Calicut
T.N.A.	=	Tamil Nadu Archives

# **INTRODUCTION**

## INTRODUCTION

The role of great men in history is one of the fascinating questions of historical analysis. To Carlyle, "Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here."<sup>1</sup> Though we outgrow the 'Great Men Theory' of Carlyle, we cannot overlook the role played by 'the event-making men' of Sidney Hook and the 'creative individual' of Toynbee in history. In other words, it is not possible to write history "without recognizing that at least some individuals, at some critical moments, play a decisive role in redirecting the historical wave."<sup>2</sup>

In fact, a theoretical sophistication is not required with regard to the role of leaders in mass movements. However, it would not be out of context to trace how a leadership is related to a mass movement. Bipan Chandra says, "A movement by definition must have a leadership, but it becomes a mass movement only when people join it."<sup>3</sup> According to him, a mass movement is "a dialectical process in which the consciousness and the spontaneous self-activity of the masses are integrated with the ideological, organizational and

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes Hero Worship and the Heroic in History*, (First published in 1841), Reprint, London, 1963, p.1.

<sup>2</sup> Sidney Hook, *The Hero in History A Study in Limitation and Possibility*, Boston, 1959, p.12.

<sup>3</sup> Bipan Chandra, *Indian National Movement-The Long-term Dynamics*, New Delhi, Reprint 1994, p.54.

political direction of the leadership.”<sup>4</sup> Further, there should be a ‘unity between spontaneity and conscious direction’. Thus the success of a mass movement depends on the correct evolution of this dialectical process. Hence a mass movement cannot be studied “either by concentrating on the activities of the leaders or by drawing a dividing line between the masses and their leaders.”<sup>5</sup>

In a politically based mass movement, the role of the leadership is very significant. In the exigencies of political action, men are always looking for some one to save them and a leader becomes a necessity to respond to this political need. People may be discontented and disillusioned due to oppression and suppression. But they may not have the intellectual capacity to understand the complex social realities involved in such actions and they may not be even able to understand their own interests in such a situation. Here a leader becomes a necessity to reflect mass consciousness, to arouse them politically, to educate and guide them. He must also be competent to articulate popular demands and aspirations, to forge an effective organization for mass movement, to prepare the people ideologically and politically for struggles and to create the nation.<sup>6</sup> In short, it is the leader who initiates, organizes and leads a mass movement.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p.55.

Our National Movement, ‘one of the biggest mass movements modern society has ever seen,’<sup>7</sup> was shaped and spearheaded by such leaders who recognized the basic role of the masses in the anti-imperialist struggle and who had immense faith in the potentiality of the people to strive to attain the ultimate goal of independence of the country. These leaders were both ‘event making’ and ‘creative.’ They ‘created’ history and served themselves as beacons to the posterity. Unfortunately, the later generations who have not witnessed the freedom struggle and who have not sacrificed any thing for the freedom of the country do not have any regard for such great leaders. At times, this disregard descends to apathy or even to antipathy. Hence the words of M.G.S. Narayanan are most striking when he wrote, “After all, our ancestors are not enemies who come to threaten us, but our benevolent guides.”<sup>8</sup> It is in this background that the present work, *MUHAMMED ABDURAHIMAN: Pursuits and Perspectives of a Nationalist Muslim*, is presented.

#### **Aims and Significance of the study:**

Muhammed Abdurahiman, generally known as Abdurahiman Sahib, was destined to play a definite role in the struggle for independence during 1920-1945. He was both an active participant and a man at the helm of

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<sup>7</sup> Bipan Chandra, *India's Struggle For Independence 1857-1947*, Twenty-ninth Impression, New Delhi, 2001, p. 13.

<sup>8</sup> Preface to *Autobiography of Chettur Sankaran Nair*, Second Edition, Ottapalam, 1998, p. i.

almost all movements launched by the Indian National Congress in Kerala during the period. The socio-political activities of Abdurahiman, viewed in terms of their impact, constitute a significant chapter in the history of this country. As M.G.S. Narayanan has stated, "The history of freedom struggle in Kerala would remain incomplete without reference to Abdurahiman and the role he played in it."<sup>9</sup> But no serious study has yet been undertaken on the life and activities of this leader. Hence, the present study is an attempt at understanding the many faceted historical role of Abdurahiman in the socio-political life of Kerala during the National Movement stretching from 1920 to 1945. The significance of the study may be summarized as follows.

Firstly, Abdurahiman was responsible for making the Indian National Congress a mass organization in Malabar during the Khilafat Movement. Till the launching of the Khilafat and Non-co-operation Movements, the National Movement had not become a mass movement in Malabar. But at its very outset, the National Movement suffered a great set back when the Khilafat and Non-co-operation Movements turned into the Malabar Rebellion of 1921. When the rebellion was ruthlessly suppressed, Malabar stood numb and it seemed that she would no longer be in the scene of India's freedom struggle. It was at such a critical juncture that Abdurahiman played his crucial role in

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<sup>9</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 21<sup>st</sup> November 1998.

the history of India's freedom struggle and the role he had played, for all reasons, deserves to be recorded in the history of this nation.

Secondly, he was responsible for bringing the Mappila community of Malabar to the forefront of the freedom struggle. It was he who lifted them from the depths of despondency to the heights of hope. He was the person who successfully tried to harness the forces of superstition in the realm of faith, belief and religion. No doubt the boldness of his venture excited a lava of opposition from his own community. But being trained in the ordeals of freedom struggle, nothing could deter him from his mission. The services of such a person should not go unnoticed by the posterity.

Thirdly, in the present political scenario, there is a tendency to treat a man with religious piety as fanatic and an anti-nationalist. The present study is an attempt to verify this concept in the light of the pursuits and perspectives of Abdruahiman who was a pious Muslim and a perfect nationalist at the same time.

Fourthly, Abdurahiman was one of the earliest leaders to recognize the dynamics of religious polarization of Indian population and the danger that it poses to the unity and integrity of the country. The issue is still extant in Indian public life. The present study proposes to examine how correctly Abdurahiman perceived this dangerous trend and how earnestly he tried to check it.

Fifthly, a secularist to the core and a religionist to the crux, Abdurahiman successfully balanced himself between his religious beliefs and nationalist politics. We have scores and scores of Nationalist Muslim leaders, but we have almost none to compare with him in his role to invite the Muslims to the National Movement in the name of the religion of Islam. Therefore, Abdurahiman may rightly be called a 'religious nationalist' rather than a mere Nationalist Muslim. It may not be out of place to have an account of the contributions of such a 'religious nationalist' in the history of the country's struggle for freedom.

Lastly, a full-length academic treatment of the life and activities of Abdurahiman is a serious desideratum in the socio-political history of Kerala. The present study, it is hoped, would fill that void.

In short, the present study may serve as a new lens to see a crucial era in the history of Kerala. It may also shed light on many intricacies involved in understanding the shifting currents of contemporary political and social life of Kerala.

#### **Review of Related Literature:**

There is a considerable out put of literature with regard to the life and works of Abdurahiman. Though he has not left an autobiography or any other notes pertaining to his life and activities, a number of biographical sketches have been published on him. The first in these series is *Muhammed*

*Abdurahiman* written by T. Muhammed Yusuf in 1938.<sup>10</sup> The importance of this work is that it was written and published when the subject was alive. But it is not an exhaustive study of the socio-political activities of the leader. Then comes, *Sher-e-Malabar Muhammed Abdurahiman* written by Kadir Saheb.<sup>11</sup> It touches only some peripheral aspects of his life. In 1946, Theruvath Raman, wrote a monograph, captioned *Kerala Subash*.<sup>12</sup> The monograph traces some personality traits of Abdurahiman and his relation with Subash Chandra Bose. In 1959 V.S. Keraleeyan wrote *Keralathintae Veeraputhran*.<sup>13</sup> The work touches on almost all aspects of the political activities of Abdurahiman. But it is not an exhaustive account of the same. It includes extracts from his speeches and as such it is very informative and useful.

The most important of these biographies is *Ente Koottukaran* written by E. Moidu Maulavi.<sup>14</sup> The author was a close associate and fellow traveller of Abdurahiman in the National Movement and as such the accounts given by him can be considered reliable. It is more than a biography; it is partly a

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<sup>10</sup> T. Muhammed Yusuf, *Muhammed Abdurahiman*, (Mal.), Calicut 1938.

<sup>11</sup> Kadir Saheb, *Sher-e-Malabar Muhammed Abdurahiman*, (Mal.), Kodungallur, 1945.

<sup>12</sup> Theruvath Raman, *Kerala Subash*, Calicut, 1946.

<sup>13</sup> V.S. Keraleeyan, *Keralathintae Veeraputhran*, (Mal.), (The Brave Son of Kerala), Calicut, 1959.

<sup>14</sup> E. Moidu Maulavi, *Ente Koottukaran*, (Mal.), (My Friend), Calicut, 1964.

<sup>15</sup> S.K. Potttekkatt, P.P. Ummer Koya, N.P. Mohamed and K.A. Kodungallore, *Muhammed Abdurahiman a political biography*, (Mal.), Calicut, 1978.

history of the nationalist movement in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It provides valuable information on Abdurahiman and the socio-political condition under which he worked.

The famous literary figure S.K. Pottekkatt and others edited *Muhammed Abdurahiman: a political biography*<sup>15</sup> in 1978. It contains long citations from original sources. So the work is very useful to the historians. But this is not a continuous study on the life and work of the subject. The famous writer and columnist M. Rasheed has also written a biography, *Muhammed Abdurahiman Sahib*.<sup>16</sup>

The aforesaid biographies have certain common limitations. Firstly, they have been written from personal intimacy and knowledge. The purpose of the authors is to present a faithful and untarnished account with emphasis on his political activities. However, the tone of these works is one of praise, but not descending to flattery. They do not have a critical or analytical approach. Secondly, the authors have not made use of archival sources for the study. Thirdly, they are not written using historical methodology. Fourthly, they are mostly hero-centric and not in the right historical perspective. Hence the above biographies, though very useful and informative, do not possess the qualities of a historical work.

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<sup>16</sup> M. Rasheed, *Muhammed Abdurahiman Sahib*, (Mal.) Calicut, 1994.

A number of souvenirs have also been published on the life and works of Abdurahiman from time to time. In 1964, a souvenir was published from Aluva.<sup>17</sup> It contains a number of articles by the nationalist leaders associated with Abdurahiman. In 1978, P.P. Ummer Koya edited and published a souvenir from Calicut.<sup>18</sup> It is mainly in the form of reminiscences of great nationalist leaders on the subject. It also includes photocopies of some original documents related to the jail life of Abdurahiman.

Different aspects of his life and contributions have also been commented upon widely in journals and periodicals. The most important in this category is the *Mathrubhumi Weekly* published on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1945.<sup>19</sup> Besides a number of articles on different facets of his life by leaders and scholars, it contains condolence messages of Gandhiji, Nehru, Azad, Pattel, etc. In 2001 the Kerala State Library Council issued its *Grandha Lokam* journal as a commemorative volume on Abdurahiman.<sup>20</sup>

Every year, in connection with his death anniversary, the national dailies and journals of Kerala publish articles on the life and career of Abdurahiman. His great colleagues, K.P. Kesava Menon (d. 1978), E. Moidu

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<sup>17</sup> Ahamed Unni, (ed.), (Mal.) *Muhammed Abdurahiman Souvenir*, Aluva 1964.

<sup>18</sup> P.P. Ummer Koya, (ed.), (Mal.), *Muhammed Abdurahiman Souvenir*, Calicut 1978.

<sup>19</sup> K.A. Damodara Menon, (ed.), (Mal.), *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, Vol. 38, Calicut 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1945.

<sup>20</sup> Pirappan Kode Murali, (ed.), *Granhalokam*, Vol. 53, (Mal.) Thiruvananthapuram, November 2001.

Maulavi (d. 1995) and E.M.S. Namboodiripad (d. 1998) were regular contributors of articles to these publications.

A number of poems have also been written on Abdurahiman at different times. They have been collected and edited in the form of an anthology by Kathiyalam Aboobacker with a preface by Sukumar Azhikode.<sup>21</sup> Perhaps no leader in Kerala has ever been paid homage to by so many poets as done to Abdurahiman. Famous literary figure N.P. Muhammad has published a historical novel, *Muhammad Abdurahiman Oru Noval* on the role of Abdurahiman in the National Movement.<sup>22</sup> The novel opens with Abdurahiman's return to Calicut in September 1945 after five years in Bellary jail and focuses on the last 77 days of his life. B. R. P. Bhaskar, the columnist of *The Hindu* evaluates the work as a 'fictional biography of Muhammed Abdurahiman, a highly respected freedom fighter, who trod the path of secularism unswervingly until his death in November 1945 at the age of 47.'<sup>23</sup> These literary works are glittering tributes to the personality and character of the leader and they reflect the influence that he had on the society in which he lived and worked.

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<sup>21</sup> Kathiyalam Aboobacker, (ed.), *Abdurahiman Kavithakal: An Anthology of Poems*, (Mal.), Kodungallur 2001.

<sup>22</sup> N.P. Muhammad, *Muhammad Abdurahman Oru Noval*, Kottayam, 2004.

<sup>23</sup> *The Hindu*, dated 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2004.

Various scholars who have undertaken studies on the socio-political movements in Kerala have also provided some important flashes on the life of this leader. The research works, *Malabar Rebellion 1921-1922* by M. Gangadhara Menon,<sup>24</sup> and *Role of Muslims in the National Movement in Malabar, 1921-1947* by N. Padmanabhan<sup>25</sup> contain very useful references to the political life of Abdurahiman. But the research studies do not provide a comprehensive and critical account of the life and career of this leader.

The above review of the related literature shows that there is a lot of literary out put in various forms on the life and activities of Abdurahiman. But they are not written in accordance with the principles of historical method. Firstly, the authors have not gone with the purpose of collecting and collating data from original sources and systematically analyzing them. Secondly, they do not make proper organization and documentation. Thirdly, the works mentioned above throw only some side light on the personality of Abdurahiman. Fourthly, no attempt has so far been made to make a critical assessment of the life and works of Abdurahiman. Hence, the present study is an attempt to bring out a critical analysis of the socio-political activities of Abdurahiman.

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<sup>24</sup> M. Gangadhara Menon, *Malabar Rebellion 1921-1922*, Allahabad 1989.

<sup>25</sup> Padmanabhan. N., *Role of Muslims in the National Movement in Malabar (1921-1947)*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Department of History, University of Calicut, 1993.

### Sources:

Authentic source materials on the socio-political activities of Abdurahiman are extremely meagre. Whatever primary sources are available, are widely scattered in different repositories like the National Archives of India, Delhi, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Delhi, Tamil Nadu Archives, Chennai, State Archives, Trivandrum and Regional Archives Calicut, in the form of archival records, AICC files, MSP files, jail records, Fortnightly Reports, News Paper Reports, etc. The minutes of the Calicut Municipal Council, the proceedings of the Malabar District Board and the debates of the Madras Legislative Assembly have also been utilized as primary sources for the present study. The back volumes of the newspapers like *The Hindu*, *The Bombay Chronicle*, *Al-Ameen*, *the Mathrubhumi* etc have also been used as primary sources. Sources from personal collections of K.K. Mohamed Abdul Kareem of Kondotty, A. P. Ahamed Maulavi of Nellikkuthu, T. Abdul Azeez Maulavi of Mankada and M.P. Abdul Rahiman Kurikkal of Manjeri have been made use of for the study. The minutes and other papers, including the memorials submitted to His Excellency, the Governor, of the Hidayath-ul-Muslimeen Sabah, Manjeri have also been consulted.

The autobiographies of his colleagues and contemporaries like E. Moidu Maulavi, K.P.Kesava Menon, Moyarath Sankaran, E.M.S.

Namboodiripad, A.K. Gopalan and several others shed light on the life of Abdurahiman. The memoirs written by his younger companions like Vaikom Mohamed Basheer, P.P. Ummer Koya, S.K. Pottekkatt, N.P. Mohamad etc. also provide valuable information on Abdurahiman.

Published works, periodicals and journals form the secondary source. The present writer has had interviews with P.P. Ummer Koya, N.P. Mohamad, M. Rasheed, K.K. Mohamed Abdul Kareem, etc. who have made meticulous studies on the life and contributions of Abdurahiman. Thus the tools of oral history have also been used for the study. At times, the present writer had to rely on sources of secondary or tertiary nature. But secondary sources of doubtful value have been scrupulously disregarded.

### **Methodology:**

The present study is an attempt to introduce the life and activities of the subject against the broad background of the socio-economic and political life of Kerala during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But the whole life of the subject is not within the purview of this study. It is basically a problem oriented study focusing on selective issues and analyzing them in varying depths, in totality or in non-totality, so as to make the subject's activities explicable. Besides the political issues, the socio-economic changes have also been subject to examination so as to highlight the reform activities of the subject in these fields. As journalism has served a strong mobilizing force in

his hands, the journalistic career of the subject has also been subjected to investigation and interpretation. Thus what is intended is not to make an anatomy of his life but to present the moral purposefulness of the subject's activities in building a new nation. The framework, thus, designed for the study is one that is suitable to meet the needs of this approach.

Particular care has been taken to highlight his unflinching adherence to patriotism, nationalism and secularism. Attempt has also been made to bring out his uncompromising crusade against political dishonesty and social injustice of the time. His concern for the poor and the down trodden has been discussed at different stages. His undaunted courage and inflexible fortitude amidst the vicissitudes of life have been referred to as object lessons to the posterity.

A systematic collection of all available records from various sources has been made. The data so collected have been organized under suitable framework. Interpretations are based on an appeal to evidence. The subject has been assessed by the values of the time and not by the standards of the present.

Attempt has been made to make the study objective, truthful and credible as far as possible and as far as source materials permit. However, the study is not merely an accurate and unbiased record of his acts and

experiences but also an attempt to bring out the significance of the subject in the broad spectrum of events and to define his historical station.

The present study is an attempt to bring out the historical significance of Abdurahiman's life by placing it in the historical setting of the period. Therefore, it deals largely with the contemporary socio-political developments.

### **Organization of the Study:**

To facilitate spontaneity and continuity, the present study is arranged thematically without overlooking the importance of chronology. Besides an introduction dealing with the historiography of the study, the first chapter provides the socio-political background of the nation as a whole and that of Malabar in particular. Formation of the Indian National Congress in Malabar, establishment of the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee [KPCC], the Khilafat, Non-co-operation and the Tenancy Movements are discussed in this chapter to provide a socio-political setting to place the man in the broad spectrum of the National Movement.

The second chapter has been divided into two sections – preparation and entry into the freedom struggle. The section *Preparation* discusses the early life of Abdurahiman, his family background, education in different institutions, contact with nationalist leaders and his participation in the Nagpur session of the Indian National Congress. The second section of the

chapter deals with the entry of Abdurahiman into the freedom struggle through the Ottappalam Conference of the Indian National Congress and his involvement in the great rebellion of 1921. This section does not give a detailed account of the rebellion but only those aspects of the rebellion, which would make his contributions explicable.

The third chapter is about two major aspects his socio-political activities. First part portrays him as person in charge of the relief and reconstruction works in the face of the opposition of the authorities and the subsequent imprisonment. Second part examines his involvement in the Civil Disobedience Movement and the Salt Satyagraha and consequent arrest and jail life.

The fourth chapter unravels the right-left rift in the Kerala Congress. It also deals with the evolution of the Nationalist Muslim group and its alliance with the Socialists in the Congress. It also analyses the role of Abdurahiman as the President of the KPCC and the Forward Bloc in Kerala, his anti-war propaganda and consequent arrest and long-term imprisonment. The last days of his life is discussed at the end part of the chapter.

The fifth chapter examines the role of Abdurahiman as a parliamentarian and how he made use of the parliamentary platforms, the Calicut Municipal Council, the Malabar District Board and the Madras Legislative Assembly, for the benefit and welfare of the people.

The sixth chapter studies Abdurahiman as a journalist and how he used his newspaper, *Al-Ameen*, as the tongue of the oppressed. It also analyses the role of *Al-Ameen* in spreading the messages of patriotism, nationalism and secularism among the people of Kerala. The extracts given in this chapter are, with some exceptions, chronologically arranged.

The seventh chapter examines how he used the social and religious issues for the rejuvenation of the National Movement from time to time. It discusses his role in the Vaikom Satyagraha, his struggle against the Andaman Scheme, fight for the repeal of the Moplah Outrages Act, his attempt to bring back the exiled Tangals of Mamburam and his struggle for the removal of the Hitchcock memorial. It also evaluates his struggle against religious orthodoxy and superstitions in Islam.

The last chapter is an estimate of his personality, an appraisal and a critical evaluation of his socio-political activities.

The patterns of documentation followed in the study are in the conventional style. The Latin abbreviation *Ibid* [Abbreviation for Latin term *ibidem* meaning 'in the same place'] is used to mention the book just referred to before. The Latin abbreviation *op. cit.* [Abbreviation for Latin term *opere citato* meaning 'the work cited' is used to indicate the work which has already been cited in the same chapter. The Latin word *Loc. cit.* [Abbreviation for Latin term *loco citato* meaning in the place cited] is used if the page is also

the same of the work cited. In addition to the above, 'Note No.' is used when two or more works of the same author is referred to in the same chapter. In such instances the author's name will be accompanied by a footnote number pertaining to the specific book of the same author already referred to in the same chapter.

The terminologies of Malayalam, Arabic, Persian etc. are given in italics. Their corresponding meaning in English has been given in brackets. A separate glossary of such terms has also been given. A 'Select Bibliography' arranged into two broad groups, primary and secondary, is given at the end of the study.

#### **Limitations:**

The present study is circumscribed by certain limitations. Firstly, the paucity of materials posed great obstacle in the way of the study. Though Abdurahiman lived in the limelight of history, a detailed study of his life and activities would require the availability of materials but prospects in this respect do not seem to be bright. His newspaper, *Al-Ameen*, would have served a lot for this study. Unfortunately, only a few copies of the paper are found to be available.

Secondly, though the freedom movement in Kerala threw up a band of leaders whose careers are apt to offer scope for historical investigation and biographical studies and challenging themes for any trained historian, no

serious study has yet been made in this realm. Hence the present investigator could not find such biographies for cross verification.

Thirdly, the question of regional variations of the programmes of the Indian National Congress and their connection with the national background, as a unit, is extremely complicated and needs detailed study. Hence the present study on a national setting finds certain hurdles difficult to overcome in the present stage of historical knowledge.

**CHAPTER I**  
**THE BACKDROP**

## Chapter - 1

### The Backdrop

In 1935 A.K.Pillai, the official historian of the Indian National Congress in Kerala, wrote, "The political history of present day Kerala is chiefly the political history of Malabar."<sup>1</sup> It is true to the historic role of Malabar in the arena of the Indian National Movement compared with two other political units, Cochin and Travancore, of Kerala. Direct British rule<sup>2</sup> over Malabar and the organizational activities of the Indian National Congress<sup>3</sup> helped her to forge ahead in the National Movement. Over and above, the unison of the Tenancy and the Khilafat with the Indian National Congress contributed to the active involvement of Malabar in the National Movement. The following is an attempt to high light the role of these three movements, the Congress, the Tenancy and the Khilafat, in shaping the course of the history of freedom struggle in Malabar.

#### The Indian National Congress:

In 1792 the British seized Malabar from Tipu Sultan of Mysore and annexed it with the Presidency of Bombay.<sup>4</sup> In 1800 it became a district of

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<sup>1</sup> A.K. Pillai, *Cogressum Keralavum* (Mal.), Trichur, 1935, p.374.

<sup>2</sup> Cochin and Travancore were princely states and were not under the direct rule of the British.

<sup>3</sup> Till 1920 the princely states were not under the area of the operation of the Indian National Congress. See A. K. Pillai, op cit., p.378.

<sup>4</sup> C.A. Innes, *Malabar Gazetteer*, (first published in 1908), Trivandrum, 1977, p.72.

the Presidency of Madras.<sup>5</sup> But geographically and linguistically the district of Malabar stood apart from the rest of Madras Presidency and she developed a different history, a history of persistent resistance against the British rule. Initially the resistance was isolated and individualistic. Slowly but steadily it took the shape of an organized mass movement under the Indian National Congress.

In the early years of the Indian National Congress, it was not active in Malabar. The only 'political work' was holding meetings to select delegates to attend the annual sessions of the Congress. In one such meeting held in 1903, twenty-one delegates were elected to attend the eighteenth annual session of the Congress.<sup>6</sup> It was seven years later that the first District Congress Committee of Malabar was formed at Calicut with C. Kunhirama Menon as its secretary.<sup>7</sup> In 1915, the Malabar Home Rule Committee was also organized at Calicut with Manjeri Rama Iyyar and K.P. Kesava Menon president and secretary respectively.<sup>8</sup> In the beginning, the Congress and the

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<sup>5</sup> W. Logan, (ed.), *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Other Papers of Importance to British Affairs in Malabar*, Madras, 1951, p.335.

The district of Malabar was divided into nine taluks: Chirakkal, Kottayam, Kurumbranad, Calicut, Wynad, Ernad, Walluvanad, Ponnani and Palghat. The present Palghat, Malappuram, Wynad, Calicut, Cannanore and Kasargod districts roughly constitute the former district of Malabar

<sup>6</sup> Report of the Proceedings of the Eighteenth Indian National Congress, quoted in K. Gopalankutty, *The National Movement in Malabar, 1930-47*, unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 1985, p.36.

<sup>7</sup> A. K. Pillai, op cit., p.378.

<sup>8</sup> M.G.S. Narayanan,(ed.), *Malabar*, Calicut, 1994, p.464.

Home Rule League committees worked together. The people who enrolled in the Congress and the Home Rule League were mostly the educated middle class Hindus, whereas the educationally and economically backward Mappilas<sup>9</sup> and lower caste Hindus who constituted the majority population of Kerala, kept away from these organizations.

However, with the outbreak of the First World War the political condition in Malabar totally changed. The War brought nothing but sufferings to the people. The miseries of the War turned the people against the British. The district conferences of the Home Rule League and the Indian National Congress contributed vigour and vitality to the anti-British feelings. The first District Conference of the Home Rule League held at Palghat on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> May 1916 passed resolutions demanding self-government for India. The Conference also requested the government to redress the grievances of the tenants.<sup>10</sup> The second District Conference of the Home Rule League was conducted at Calicut on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> April 1917.<sup>11</sup> When Mrs. Annie Besant, the leader of the Home Rule League landed at Calicut to attend the conference, the people gave her a warm reception. On account of the Home Rule League activities Mrs. Besant had become very popular among the

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<sup>9</sup> The word 'Mappilas' here refers to the Muslims of Malabar.

<sup>10</sup> C.K. Kareem, (ed.), *Kerala District Gazetteers, Malappuram*, Trivandrum, 1986, p.141.

<sup>11</sup> A.K. Pillai, op cit., p.394.

people of Malabar. The people had great love and regard for her. When she was arrested on 16<sup>th</sup> June 1917 a storm of protest swept over the district.<sup>12</sup>

Making use of the anti-British feelings, the Congress opposed the War efforts of the district authorities. When the District Collector, Evans convened a meeting at Town Hall, Calicut, for the collection of War fund, K.P. Kesava Menon, secretary of the District Congress Committee, protested and walked out of the meeting.<sup>13</sup> Majority of the audience also accompanied him. It might be the first instance of open defiance to a British Collector. This incident, however, sensitized the people of Kerala and emboldened them to discuss their grievances in open stages.

It was in this background of bickerings and protests that the third Malabar District Conference of the INC was conducted at Tellichery on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1918.<sup>14</sup> The conference passed a resolution requesting the release of all political prisoners from jail immediately. The next district conference was organized at Badagara on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> May 1919.<sup>15</sup> The conference demanded the government to grant franchise to all adult literates.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Perunna, K.N., Nair, *Keralathile Congress Prasthanam*, (Mal.), (The Congress Movement in Kerala), Cochin, 1969, pp. 16-17.

<sup>13</sup> K.P. Kesava Menon, *Kazhinja Kalam*, (Mal.), (The Past Days), Calicut, 1969, pp.51-52.

<sup>14</sup> A.A. Malayali., *Congress Directory*, (Mal.), Palakkad, 1992, p.49.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

When the nature and character of the district conferences is analysed, it is found that the resolutions passed in the conferences were constitutional in nature. It is also found that the people who involved in political activities were mainly from the upper and upper middle classes. Hence, politics was still elitist and did not filter down to or originate from the masses.

### **The Tenancy Movement:**

In Malabar the tenancy question was as old as the landholding system. The upper class Hindu chiefs held the possession rights of the land and the tenant cultivators were denied any permanent right over the land they cultivated. They were subject to arbitrary eviction and illegal forms of rent extraction. It was in this background that the Sultan of Mysore, Hyder Ali, attacked and occupied Malabar in 1766. During Hyder Ali's invasion, the Hindu landlords unwilling to be the vassals of a Muslim ruler and fearing breach of caste rules<sup>17</sup> fled to Travancore either leaving or selling their possession rights to the tenant cultivators constituted mostly by the Mappilas.

Under the Sultans of Mysore, Hyder Ali and his son Tipu, the tenants of Malabar could enjoy the possession right that they never had had under the landlords. Thus for the tenant cultivators, the Mysore rule was a great boon. But their happiness did not last long. In 1792 the army of the English East India Company defeated Tipu and occupied Malabar. Then the landlords,

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<sup>17</sup> A.P. Ibrahim Kunju, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala*, Trivandrum, 1989, p. 80.

who were the allies of the Company in the wars against the Mysore rulers, returned to Malabar and claimed their former possessions with all their rights and privileges. But the tenants were not prepared to surrender the rights they had exercised under Hyder Ali and Tipu. Consequently, the tenants came into conflict with the landlords. In this strife the landlords joined hands with the British. The result was that the grievances of the tenants got aggravated and they were forced to take up arms. When the uprisings became widespread, the government appointed T.L. Strange, the Civil and Session Judge at Tellichery, as Special Commission in 1852. The Commission reported that the outbreaks were mainly due to 'the most decided fanaticism' of the Mappilas.<sup>18</sup> The Commission recommended disarming of the Mappilas, confiscation of the property of the martyrs and deportation of all would be martyrs as measures to check the outbreaks.<sup>19</sup> On the report of T.L. Strange, the government enacted the Mappila Outrages Acts XXII and XXIV in 1854 and Acts XXV and XXX in 1859. However, the punitive measures adopted by the government were not a complete answer to the tenancy question. Hence, riots and revolutions continued unabated.

Finding no alternative, the government appointed William Logan as Special Commissioner. After two years of detailed study Logan submitted an exhaustive report to the government in 1882. He recorded that the tenants

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<sup>18</sup> T.L. Strange, *Commission Report*, dated 25<sup>th</sup> September 1852, p. 411. (TNA)

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* p. 469.

were 'in perpetual fear of eviction by the landlord', 'chronically in debt' and were 'driven to the limits of starvation'.<sup>20</sup> Logan recorded, "The British Courts backed up by Police and Magistrates and troops and big guns made the jenmi's independence complete. The actual cultivators are hopelessly in arrears with their, in many instances, outrageous rents. The cultivator class is rapidly degenerating into a state of insolvent cottierism."<sup>21</sup> Logan also found that the only person interested in the soil was the actual cultivator. Hence he wanted statutory protection to the rights of the cultivators. Thus, according to Logan, agrarian distress was the basic cause of the Mappila outrages. Sharing the views of Logan, Mac Greoir, the District Collector of Malabar in 1880s, stated, "As to the essential nature of Malabar outrages, I am perfectly satisfied that they were agrarian. Fanaticism is merely the instrument through which the terrorism of the landed class is aimed at."<sup>22</sup> But fearing the enmity of the Hindu landlords, the British authorities did not take any concrete steps to protect the rights of the cultivators. On the contrary, as part of the policy of 'divide and rule', the government wanted to keep the Mappila tenants at loggerheads with the Hindu landlords. The authorities found the tenancy

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<sup>20</sup> W. Logan, *Malabar*, Vol. I. Madras, 1951, p. 583.

<sup>21</sup> W. Logan, *Malabar Land Tenures Report*, Vol. I., 1881-82, p. xxii, quoted in Prakash Karat, (ed.), *Social Scientist* (Monthly Journal) New Delhi, September 1973, p.27.

<sup>22</sup> Mac Greoir, *Land Tenures, Memoranda and Official Correspondence*, Madras, 1885, pp.14-15,(TNA). Also see Major Holland, P. Prayon, *Mappilas or Moplahs*, Calcutta, 1904, p.13. (TNA)

issue very conducive for this purpose. In short, it was the political expediency that decided the British land policy in Malabar.

However, the Mappila tenants tried their best to find solutions to their miseries through petitions and memorials. In 1909 the Hidayath-ul-Muslimin Sabha, Manjeri submitted a memorial before the Governor relating the difficulties of the Mappila tenants and appealing for the redressal of their hardships.<sup>23</sup>

In spite of the petitions and memorials, the condition of the tenants remained unchanged. When all the constitutional methods proved in vain, they organized the Malabar Tenancy Association to fight for their demands. Ever since the formation of the Association in 1916, its leaders M.P. Narayana Menon, an advocate from Perintalmanna and Kattilasseri Muhammad Musaliar, a religious leader from Makkaraparamba, raised the tenancy question in all district conferences of the Indian National Congress. The anti-landlord and anti-British character of the movement attracted Mappila tenants all over Malabar to the Tenancy Association. By the close of 1917 the Association had its branches all over Ernad, Walluvanad, Kozhikode, Ponnani, Kurumbrand and Kottayam taluks of Malabar.<sup>24</sup> The

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<sup>23</sup> Copy of the memorial is available at Hidayath-ul-Muslimin Sabha library, Manjeri.

<sup>24</sup> S. Ramachandran, *Kattilasseri Muhammad Musaliyarum Deseeya Prasthanavum* (Mal.), (Kattilasseri Muhammad Musaliyar and the National Movement) Trivandrum, 2003, p.19.

Mappila tenants played an active role in the movement. Commenting on the role of the Mappilas in the movement E.M.S. Namboodiripad wrote, "With all his traditional illiteracy, backward and priest-riddenness, the Moplah peasant is much more a class-conscious peasant than a community conscious Moplah."<sup>25</sup>

### **The Khilafat and the Non-co-operation Movements:**

The religion of Islam envisages collective existence of the Muslim community with the Caliph as its head. Muslims all over the world, irrespective of their political entity, had paid allegiance to the Caliph at all times. The Mappilas of Malabar were also very much concerned with the well being of the Ottoman Caliphate. During the Balkan wars, the Mappilas offered their moral support to the Ottoman Caliph and performed special prayers for the success of the Ottoman arms.<sup>26</sup>

The entry of the Ottoman Caliph in the First World War on the side of Germany and against Britain put the Muslims of India in great dilemma. Being their religious head, their sympathy was with the Ottoman Caliph. But being the British subjects, they had to support Britain and the Allies in the War. In order to guarantee the continued support of the Muslims, the Allies declared that the War was not against the Ottoman Caliphate and whatever

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<sup>25</sup> E.M.S. Namboodiripad, *Selected Writings*, Vol.2, Calcutta 1985, p.171

<sup>26</sup> Judicial Department, G.O. No.2040 (Confidential), Dated: 9<sup>th</sup> December 1912 (TNA)

happened the independence and sovereignty of the Caliphate would be protected.

But when the War ended in the success of the Allies, the Ottoman Caliphate was dismembered and the office of the Caliph was transformed into a 'non-entity.' The Muslims of India considered it a great betrayal and started Khilafat movement for the restoration of the sovereignty of the Caliph. Ali Brothers, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Dr. Ansari, Abul Kalam Azad etc., were the leaders of the Khilafat movement. They submitted memorials before the British Government demanding the restoration of Ottoman Caliphate and the powers and privileges of the Caliph. They also decided to withdraw co-operation given to the government if their demands were not conceded before 1<sup>st</sup> August 1920.<sup>27</sup> Gandhiji offered his full support to the Khilafat issue. Along with Shaukath Ali he conducted countrywide tour propagating non-violence and communal harmony as pre-requisites for the success of the Khilafat and Non-co-operation movements.

Presumably the Khilafat question had become a matter of great concern among the Mappilas of Malabar prior to that of other Muslims elsewhere in India as evinced by the apprehension expressed by the authorities. On 13<sup>th</sup> May 1919 the Governor of Madras wrote to the Viceroy, "Taken as a whole the mind of this community [the Mappila community] is

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<sup>27</sup>Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan 1857-1964*, London, 1967, p.166.

utterly unprepared to receive the conditions of the Treaty of Sevres<sup>28</sup> and would come as a tremendous blow and it becomes therefore of highest importance to do whatever is possible before hand to alleviate the shock and discount its effects.”<sup>29</sup>

The Khilafat question stirred up the Mappilas who had already been at the height of the tenancy agitation. The intelligence department reported, “There were undoubted signs of agitation over the Khilafat and Holy Places’ question among the Muslims of the West Coast. A fanatical respect was exhibited for Ali Brothers, Gandhiji, Tilak, Abdul Bari, Dr. Ansari and Yakub Hassan.”<sup>30</sup>

The concern that had taken shape in the West Coast soon penetrated into the very interior of Malabar.<sup>31</sup> By February 1921, the Khilafat and Non-co-operation movements took a firm root in the district.<sup>32</sup> The tenancy issue acted as a strong catalyst in the process of drawing people, in large numbers, into the Khilafat and Non-co-operation movements. Further, presence of a large number of ordinary people in the district conference at Manjeri and

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<sup>28</sup> It was by the Treaty of Sevres that the Ottoman Empire was dismembered.

<sup>29</sup> Government of Madras, Public Department, D.O.No.1922-I, Dated: 13<sup>th</sup> May 1919 (TNA)

<sup>30</sup> Under Secretary’s Safe File, (Strictly Confidential), Criminal Investigation Department, D.O. No.299, Dated: 5<sup>th</sup> June 1919 (TNA)

<sup>31</sup> Government of Madras, Home (Political) Department, File No.185/1925 (TNA)

<sup>32</sup> Sukhbir Choudhary, *Moplah Uprising (1921-1923)*, Delhi, 1977, p.19.

provincial conference at Ottappalm was indicative of their interest in local, national and international issues.

### **The Manjeri Conference:**

The last district conference of the Congress was held at Manjeri on 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> April 1920.<sup>33</sup> The tenancy and Khilafat issues attracted a large number of Mappilas to the conference, most of whom 'had just come from the plough and the farm.'<sup>34</sup> Further, the very choice of Manjeri as the venue of the conference was an indication of the plan of the Congress 'to extend its influence among the Muslims of Ernad.'<sup>35</sup>

Kasthuri Ranga Iyyangar, the Editor of *The Hindu*, inaugurated the conference. The promoters of the conference were mostly upper and middle class Hindus. The big landlords like Cheriyyettan Raja of Calicut and Elaya Raja of Nilambur were also among the participants of the conference.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> A.K. Pillai, op cit., p.394.

<sup>34</sup> *West Coast Spectator*, Dated: 29<sup>th</sup> April 1921, quoted in C. Gopalan Nair, *The Moplah Rebellion 1921*, Calicut, 1923, p.9.

<sup>35</sup> Conrad Wood, "The Ernad Moplah and the Political Movement in Malabar, 1916-21," T.K. Ravindran, (ed.), *Journal of Kerala Studies*, Vol. II, Trivandrum, June, 1975, p.258.

<sup>36</sup> A.K. Pillai, op cit., pp.401-402.

The conference first took up the Khilafat issue.<sup>37</sup> Komu Menon presented the Khilafat resolution requesting the British Government to accede to the legitimate demands of Indian Muslims on the Khilafat question and called upon all Muslims and Hindus to non-co-operate with the government if the request was not conceded.<sup>38</sup> Mrs. Besant suggested an amendment in the resolution avoiding 'non-co-operation with the government.' K. Madhavan Nair opposed the amendment. When put to vote, the amendment was rejected and the original resolution was passed with loud and prolonged applause; shouts of *Bande Mataram* and *Hindu-Musliman ki Jai*.<sup>39</sup>

The second resolution was on the Montague-Chelmsford Report. K.P. Raman Menon presented the resolution stating that India was mature enough "for full-fledged responsible self-government" and that as the Montague-Chelmsford Report had not recognized the just demand for self-government,

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<sup>37</sup> A leaflet entitled "Manjeri Sammelanvum Khilafathinte Innathe Avasthayum" (Mal.) (The Manjeri Conference and the Present Plight of the Khilafat) had been distributed among the Khilafat workers prior to the conference. The leaflet said, "Among the problems that agitates the world, the Khilafat is one of the most important. This is a question which vitally affects every Mussalman and at the coming Manjeri conference the Khilafat will be one of the important items taken for consideration." Quoted in GRF Tottenham, *The Malabar Rebellion 1921-1922*, Madras, 1922, p.2.

<sup>38</sup> *History of Freedom Movement*, Part I p.10. (TNA). Also see A.K. Pillai, op. cit., p.405

<sup>39</sup> *The Hindu*, Dated: 1<sup>st</sup> May 1920. Also see, K. Madhavan Nair, *Malabar Kalapam*, (Mal.), (The Malabar Rebellion), Calicut, 1971, p.49.

it was “unsatisfactory and disappointing to the Indians”.<sup>40</sup> Mrs. Besant argued against the resolution and demanded the deletion of the words ‘unsatisfactory and disappointing’. But K.P. Kesava Menon rebutted her arguments and the original resolution was carried with a large majority.<sup>41</sup>

The third resolution was regarding the tenancy question. K.P. Raman Menon presented the resolution demanding legislation ‘defining relation between landlord and tenant and safeguarding tenants’ interests’.<sup>42</sup> The landlords strongly opposed the resolution and stated that the passing of this resolution would drive the *jenmis* out of the district conferences and public life generally.<sup>43</sup> Some of the landlords, who attended the conference, submitted a note to the president recording their strong protest against passing the resolution.<sup>44</sup> K.C. Sreeveerarayan Raja, Sankaran Namboodiri and K.T. Chandran Nambiar were among the signatories.<sup>45</sup> In spite of the opposition of the landlords, the tenancy resolution was adopted. Thus with a massive rural

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<sup>40</sup> K.P. Kesava Menon, op cit., p.70. Also see, K.K.N. Kurup, *Adhunika Keralacharithra Gaveshana Prabandagal* (Mal.) (Research Papers on Modern Kerala History), Trivandrum, 1995, p.38.

<sup>41</sup> M. Ali Kunhi, *Malabar Kalapam Oru Patanam*, (Mal.) (The Malabar Rebellion, A Study), Calicut, 1972, p.14.

<sup>42</sup> *The Hindu*, Dated: 1<sup>st</sup> May 1920. Also see A.K. Pillai, op cit., p. 406.

<sup>43</sup> *The Hindu*, Dated: 1<sup>st</sup> May 1920

<sup>44</sup> M. Gangadara Menon, *Malabar Rebellion (1921-1922)*, Allahabad, 1989, p.76

<sup>45</sup> A.K. Pillai, op cit., p.409.

participation, the obstructionist policy of the *jenmis* was defeated and the tenants' case first found a public platform.<sup>46</sup>

The Manjeri conference was thus memorable for several reasons. Firstly, at Manjeri the Muslims of Kerala, particularly the Mappilas of Malabar proved themselves to be at the forefront of the National Movement. It was at Manjeri that Non-co-operation with the government was adopted as a means of agitation when the Central Khilafat Committee and the All India Congress Committee were yet to take a definite stand on Non-co-operation question.

Secondly, until the Manjeri conference, Mrs. Besant was the most influential person in the political life of Kerala. She was also the most loved and respected personality with the Mappilas of Malabar. But her stand against the Khilafat and Non-co-operation alienated her from them. Rejecting Non-co-operation, she wrote, "The British yoke is not so intolerable that it should be broken by revolution."<sup>47</sup> Similarly, she criticized the Khilafat movement as "semi-religious, semi-political movement against the Indian Government which has nothing to do with the grievances of the Muslims in Turkish Homeland."<sup>48</sup> But to the Mappilas, the preservation of the Khilafat

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<sup>46</sup> Conrad Wood, *The Mappila Rebellion and Its Genesis*, New Delhi, 1987, p.132.

<sup>47</sup> Annie Besant, "Is there a way out?" in Vade A.Mecum (ed.), *Gandhian Non-co-operation or Shall India Commit Suicide?* Madras, 1920, p. 21. (TNA Library)

<sup>48</sup> Annie Besant, "The Destroyers" in Vade A. Mecum, (ed.), *Gandhian Non-co-operation or Shall India Commit Suicide?* Madras, 1920, p. 110. (TNA Library)

and the protection of the holy places were sacred duties, duties more sacred than any other. So they rejected Mrs. Besant all together. Thus after the Manjeri conference we find the disappearance of Mrs. Besant from the vanguard of Indian politics.

Thirdly, when the *jenmis* opposed the tenancy reform resolution, it became clear to the people that the interest of the landlords was not different from that of the government. It was also made clear that the landlords and the authorities would stand together to repudiate the rights of the tenants. Further, the tenants, most of whom were Mappilas, now realized that the '*jenmi* (landlord) power was an evil to be curbed and British rule an incubus to be discarded.'<sup>49</sup> Thus the polarization between the tenants and the landlords was crystallized with the Manjeri conference. Resolutions on tenancy reforms had been discussed in every district conference of the Congress but they were not passed due to the opposition of the landlords. Hence, the passing of the resolution at Manjeri was not merely a success over the landlords but a 'declaration of war' against them and their allies, the British.<sup>50</sup>

Fourthly, the conference provided added enthusiasm to the Congress-Khilafat activities. After the conference a large number of Congress-Khilafat committees were set up in different parts of Malabar. The Mappilas, in large

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<sup>49</sup> Conrad Wood, Note 35, p. 248.

<sup>50</sup> E.M.S. Namboodiripad, *Keralam Malayalikalude Mathrubhumi*, (Mal.) (Kerala: The Motherland of the Malayalees), Trivandrum, 1948, p.309.

numbers, came to the forefront of the organizational activities. To them, it was the most awaited opportunity to throw away the yoke of exploitation thrust upon them by the indigenous feudal lords and their colonialist allies. Thus the Congress-Khilafat movement became 'a fine example of an agrarian political movement.'<sup>51</sup>

Above all, the resolutions passed in the conference helped to promote Hindu-Muslim unity and amity in Malabar. Never before had so many Hindus and Muslims united on a common platform to fight for a common cause.

#### **Visit of Gandhiji and Shaukath Ali:**

Following the Manjeri conference Malabar witnessed an unprecedented nationalist awakening. Along with the Congress- Khilafat Committees, Tenants' Associations were also formed in different parts of Malabar. A series of meetings were organized under the auspices of the Khilafat and Tenants' Associations. Collaboration between the activists of the Khilafat and the tenancy movements became so close that there was hardly any way one could distinguish between the two. The audience was the same and the speakers were the same and the two movements were "inextricably merged into one."<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> E.M.S. Namboodiripad, Note 25, p. 179.

<sup>52</sup> Bipan Chandra., et al. , *India's Struggle for Independence*, New Delhi, 2001, p.201.

The district authorities were alarmed by the unprecedented political awakening and the Hindu-Muslim entente and were determined to destroy the movements by all available means. It was at this time that Gandhiji and Shoukath Ali decided to visit Malabar for the propagation of Khilafat-Non-co-operation message. The district authorities feared that the visit of the nationalist leaders would further strengthen the national movement in Malabar. So Gandhiji and Shaukath Ali were most unwelcome to them. The district authorities wrote, "It seemed most undesirable to allow them to travel all about the Presidency, non particularly to Malabar."<sup>53</sup> Of the two, Shoukath Ali was most dangerous to the authorities. The District Collector, E.F. Thomas wrote to the Government of Madras that "Shaukath Ali be prevented from coming to Malabar."<sup>54</sup> The District Collector was given an evasive reply that "the Government of India would have no objection to the taking of special measures such as the extension of the Seditious Meeting Act under the Criminal Procedure Code."<sup>55</sup> Thus the District Collector was not successful in getting the support of the Government of Madras to his scheme of thwarting the entry of the nationalist leaders into Malabar.

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<sup>53</sup> Under Secretary's Safe (Strictly Confidential) File No. 299-42 csi/235 Dated: 12<sup>th</sup> January 1920 (TNA)

<sup>54</sup> Under Secretary's Safe (Strictly Confidential) File No.303 Dated: 14<sup>th</sup> May 1920 (TNA)

<sup>55</sup> Under Secretary's Safe (Strictly Confidential) File No. 303 Vol. V, Dated: 27<sup>th</sup> July 1920 (TNA)

On 18<sup>th</sup> August 1920 Gandhiji and Shaukath Ali reached Calicut. They addressed a public meeting attended by a huge gathering of about twenty thousand people.<sup>56</sup> A large number of Mappilas from Ernad and Walluvanad taluks attended the meeting. Addressing the meeting Gandhiji said, "If the Mussalmans of India offer Non-co-operation to the Government in order to secure justice on the Khilafat, it is the duty of every Hindu to co-operate with their Muslim brethren."<sup>57</sup> Gandhiji also explained that he had adopted Non-co-operation movement to secure justice from the British for the Punjab wrongs.<sup>58</sup> Further, he appreciated the Khilafat agitation of the Mappilas and said, "The brave God fearing Mappilas were fighting for what they considered as religion and in a manner which they considered as religious."<sup>59</sup>

The speech of Shaukath Ali was more exciting than that of Gandhiji. He said, "If you are strong and capable then it is your bounden duty, so long as there is one Mussalman to breathe, to fight the unjust king, the unjust Government that have proved to be an enemy to your faith and to your God or if you are weak and cannot cope physically with your opponent, then it is

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<sup>56</sup> *West Coast Spectator*, Dated: 20<sup>th</sup> August 1920, quoted in C. Gopalan Nair, *The Moplah Rebellion*, Calicut 1923, p.20.

<sup>57</sup> GRF Tottenham, *The Malabar Rebellion 1921-1922*, Madras, 1922, p.11

<sup>58</sup> C. Gopalan Nair, *The Moplah Rebellion 1921*, Calicut, 1923, Appendix II, p.20.

<sup>59</sup> Government of Madras,(Confidential Report), *The Non-co-operation and Khilafat Movement in the Madras Presidency*, Madras, 1924, p.42. (TNA)

incumbent for you to go, migrate to another country and leave that unjust tyrant and king.”<sup>60</sup>

However, the appeals of Gandhiji and Shaoukath Ali created a pessimistic thought in the minds of M.P. Narayana Menon and Muhammed Abdurahiman. They met the leaders and expressed their apprehension of the nature of the Mappilas of Ernad and Walluvanad and the inherent danger in exciting them without proper training in non-violence.<sup>61</sup> The effect of the speeches on the Mappila community with tradition of *shahid* and long standing agrarian grievances and with many young men demobilized from the army to lead a poverty stricken life, was very inflammatory.<sup>62</sup>

However, the visit of Gandhiji and Shaoukath Ali proved a great fillip to the nationalist movement in Malabar. The Khilafat and Non-co-operation movements began to gather momentum. Soon the Malabar Khilafat Committee was formed at Calicut. M. Kunhi Koya Thangal was elected the president and T.Hassan Koya and U. Gopala Menon as secretaries.<sup>63</sup> The Malabar Khilafat Committee translated the *Turke Movalat* (Non-co-operation)

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid. , p. 38

<sup>61</sup> M.P.S. Menon, *M.P.Narayana Menon: A Forgotten Pioneer*, Angadippuram, 1992, p.38. Also see, E.M.S. Namboodiripad, *Malabar Kalapam Oru Vilayiruthal*, (Mal), (The Malabar Rebellion: An Estimate) Trivandrum, 1997, p.7

<sup>62</sup> T.J. Nossiter, *Communism in Kerala: A Study in Political Adaptation*, Delhi, 1982, p.69.

<sup>63</sup> A.A. Malayalee, op cit., p.55.

written by Maulana Azad into Malayalam and circulated it among the people.<sup>64</sup>

The Khilafat movement was further strengthened by a volunteer corps constituted mainly by the demobilized Mappila soldiers from the British forces like 77 Mappila Rifles, 2/73 Mappila Infantry and 88 Karnatic Infantry.<sup>65</sup> The Hindu ex-service men were also there among the volunteer trainers. The chief trainer was Valarad Nambeesan, a high caste Hindu chief from Pandikkad, east of Ernad.<sup>66</sup> The labour unions under Manjeri Rama Iyer and M.Rama Krishna Iyer also helped to strengthen the Congress-Khilafat activities.<sup>67</sup>

The press also played a significant role in the propagation of the Congress-Khilafat messages among the people. The *Khilafat Pathrika* published very exciting appeals to the Muslims. In one of such appeals the *Pathrika* called upon the Muslims, "If even a drop of the sacred blood of those veteran ancestors who sacrificed their lives and worked unselfishly for the establishment of Islam, is running in your veins, how can you co-operate

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<sup>64</sup> E. Moidu Maulvi, *Maulaviyude Atmakata* (Mal.) (The Autobiography of Maulavi), Kottayam, 1981, p.5

<sup>65</sup> Mozhikunnath Brahmadathan Nambudiripad, *Khilafat Smaranakal*, (Mal.), (Reminiscence of the Khilafat), Calicut, 1965, p. 1.

<sup>66</sup> *Chandrika* daily, Dated: 1<sup>st</sup> August 1999

<sup>67</sup> Letter dated: 6<sup>th</sup> November 1920, from the District Superintendent of Police to the Government of Madras. (TNA)

with the Government which is now proved beyond doubt to be the bitterest enemy of Islam.”<sup>68</sup>

### **Beginning of Repression:**

The British authorities were alarmed in the progress of the Congress-Khilafat movements. The District Collector, E.F. Thomas, and the District Superintendent of Police, Hitchcock, were impatient to crush it. The Superintendent of Police wrote to the Government of Madras that “time had come to check these activities.”<sup>69</sup> On 5<sup>th</sup> February 1921, the District Magistrate issued orders prohibiting all public meetings in Ernad taluk.<sup>70</sup> He also issued orders to K. Madhavan Nair, U. Gopala Menon and Variyam Kunnath Kunhammad Haji forbidding them from addressing any meeting in the ‘fanatical zone.’<sup>71</sup>

Ignoring the order, the Congress-Khilafat workers resolved to organize two meetings at Tanur and Calicut on 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> February 1921 respectively. Yakub Hassan, the ex-member of the Madras Legislative Council, was invited to address these meetings. The Congress committee at Calicut sent telegrams to the newspapers in Madras announcing the decision

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<sup>68</sup> *Khilafat Pathrika*, Dated: 29<sup>th</sup> December 1920, Madras Native News Paper Reports, December, 1920, p.260 (TNA)

<sup>69</sup> Letter Dated: 6<sup>th</sup> November 1920 quoted in the *History of Freedom Movement*, p.34. (TNA)

<sup>70</sup> C. Gopalan Nair, op cit., p.12

<sup>71</sup> GRF Tottenham, op cit., p.3

of Yakub Hassan to address the meetings in Malabar in defiance of prohibitory orders of the District authorities.<sup>72</sup> It was sufficient provocation to the District Magistrate who had already resolved to suppress the National Movement. When Yakub Hassan arrived at Calicut on 15<sup>th</sup> February as per the schedule, the District Magistrate served orders to him prohibiting him from addressing public meetings. Such orders were also served to U. Gopala Menon, K. Madhavan Nair and Ponmadath Moideen Koya. The leaders refused to obey the order. Hence they were arrested and called upon to give bonds for their good behaviour. As they declined to do so, they were convicted for six months.<sup>73</sup>

The arrest of Yakub Hassan and others sparked off a series of protest meetings all over Madras presidency.<sup>74</sup> On the day following the arrest, a complete *hartal* was observed in Calicut. Shops remained closed; students and teachers kept away from schools and colleges. Most of the lawyers boycotted the court. In the evening a big procession was taken out through the town under Hassan Koya Mulla and T.P. Chathukutty. As the procession reached in front of the Collectorate, the police charged the people with

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<sup>72</sup> Government of Madras, Confidential Report, *The Non-co-operation and Khilafat Movement in the Madras Presidency*, Madras, 1924, p.8. , (TNA)

<sup>73</sup> *Fortnightly Report* for the Second Half of February, 1921 (TNA), Also see K. Madhavan Nair, "Malabarile Mappila Lahala" in *Mathrubhumi* daily, dated: 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1924.

<sup>74</sup> *Fortnightly Report* for the First Half of March 1921(TNA)

batons.<sup>75</sup> Protest meetings were organized at Tanur and Tirurangadi. At Tirurangadi the Khilafat workers, Potta Abubacker, Kallarakkal Ahamed, Potta Kunhahammed and N. Assan Kutty were arrested.<sup>76</sup> *The Hindu* strongly protested against the indiscriminate arrest of ordinary people and warned the authorities that, "No one can pretend that conditions in Malabar are at all sufficiently disturbed to justify the suspension of civil rights."<sup>77</sup>

However, the repressive measures of the government could not dissuade the Mappilas from the Khilafat- Non-co-operation agitation. It only helped to increase their interest in the movement. Perhaps for the first time in their history, a large number of Mappilas from Malabar attended the Majlis-ul-Ulama conference held at Erode in Tamil Nadu on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1921.<sup>78</sup> Maulana Mohammed Ali addressed the meeting and his speech was the declaration of open enmity with the British. He declared, "We will prefer death if the loss of our lives sounds the death-knell of the British raj."<sup>79</sup> This declaration of Mohammed Ali ignited the patriotic feelings of the Mappilas.

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<sup>75</sup> A.A. Malayalee, op cit., p.56

<sup>76</sup> K.K.N. Kurup, *Adhunika Keralam*,(Mal.), (Modern Kerala), Trivandrum, 1995, p.39

<sup>77</sup> *The Hindu*, dated: 17<sup>th</sup> February 1921.

<sup>78</sup> Confidential Report, *The Non-co-operation and Khilafat Movements in the Madras Presidency*, Madras, 1925, p.10

<sup>79</sup> Home (Political) Department, File No.241/Part-IA/192 (TNA)

### The Ottappalam Conference:

The Malabar District conference held at Manjeri had decided to conduct its next session at Ottappalam. Meantime, in the All India Congress session held at Nagpur in December 1920, K. Madhavan Nair presented a motion seeking permission to organize the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee integrating the Congress activities in Malabar, Cochin and Travancore.<sup>80</sup> Muhammed Abdurahiman, who attended the session as a student representative of Jamia Millia Islamia, Aligarh, supported the motion. But Sathya Moorthi and Ranga Swami Ayyangar from Tamil Nadu opposed the proposal. As Gandhiji and Rajagopalachari favoured the motion, it was carried.<sup>81</sup> Thus Muhammed Abdurahiman was fortunate to be one of the architects of the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee even before his entry into the political horizon of Kerala. The Kerala Provincial Congress Committee (K.P.C.C.) was formed with five district committees at Calicut, Tellichery, Palghat, Cochin and Travancore.<sup>82</sup> K.Madhavan Nair was the first secretary of the Provincial Committee. The head quarters of the Committee was at Calicut.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> V. Venugopal, *K. Madhavan Nair*, (Mal.), (Biography of K. Madhavan Nair), Manjeri, 1983, p.10.

<sup>81</sup> K. Madhavan Nair, "Khilafat Prasthanam" (Mal.) (The Khilafat Movement), *Mathrubhumi* daily, dated: 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1924

<sup>82</sup> A.K. Pillai, op cit., p.422.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

The first conference of the KPCC was organized at Ottappalam from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> April 1921.<sup>84</sup> A large number of delegates from Malabar, Cochin and Travancore attended the conference. P. Ramunni Menon, a leading advocate from Ottappalam was the secretary of the reception committee.<sup>85</sup>

T. Prakasam from Madras presided over the opening session of the conference. Besides, the political session, there was tenants' session under K.P. Raman Menon, Khilafat session under Syed Murtaza from Trichinopoly and students' session under George Joseph from Travancore.<sup>86</sup> The conference considered a number of resolutions. The first in this series was related to the tenancy reforms. Supporting the resolution, K.P.Raman Menon said, "If resolutions of that kind were to be passed at a conference of the present kind, the grievances of the tenants would have been half removed."<sup>87</sup> The resolution was unanimously moved.

An *Ulama* conference was organized in the same pavilion of the Provincial conference. The conference passed the following resolutions.

(1) All Muslims of Kerala should set apart for the Khilafat a portion of the *Zakat*.

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<sup>84</sup> K.P. Kesava Menon, Note 13, p.83

<sup>85</sup> K.P. Kesava Menon, *Ottappalm Congressum Policinte Akramangalum*, (Mal.), (The Ottappalam Congress and the Atrocities of the Police), (Pamphlet), Calicut, 1921, p.1.

<sup>86</sup> K.P. Kesava Menon, Note, 13, p.94

<sup>87</sup> *The Hindu*, dated: 28<sup>th</sup> April 1921.

(2) All Muslims of Kerala should resort to non-violent Non-co-operation.

(3) All Muslims of both sexes in Kerala who have attained 21 years of age should become members of the Indian National Congress.<sup>88</sup>

The resolutions passed and the decisions taken in the Ottappalam conference were of great significance in the history of National Movement. The decisions taken at the Manjeri conference a year before were reaffirmed at Ottappalam. At Ottappalam the people also pledged to uphold non-violence and communal harmony.

At the same time the British authorities were determined to undermine the National Movement at any cost. The government directed its servants not to co-operate with the Ottappalam conference. On the same days of Ottappalam conference a parallel conference of the moderates was organized at Calicut with Mrs. Besant in the chair.<sup>89</sup> When the attempts to thwart the conference proved a failure and when people, in thousands, thronged at Ottappalam, the authorities decided to crush it by force. On the last day of the conference, the Malappuram Special Force camped at Ottappalam, assaulted the conference volunteers without any provocation. P. Ramunni Menon, secretary of the reception committee, C. Madhavan Nair, the

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<sup>88</sup> Public Department, G.O.No.49, dated: 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1921 (TNA)

<sup>89</sup> *Fortnightly Report* for the First Half of May 1921 (TNA). Also see GRF Tottenham, op cit., p.5.

volunteer captain and Abdul Hameed Khan, secretary of Khilafat Committee, Madras, were not spared by the police.<sup>90</sup> They were beaten and dragged through the streets. The leaders calmly suffered all the assaults and insults heaped upon them. But the people were moved at the sight of Ramunni Menon being carried to the conference pavilion fatigued and bleeding. People wanted revenge upon the police.<sup>91</sup> For a while they forgot their commitment to non-violence. The leaders found it difficult to pacify them. When Muhammed Abdurahiman suggested a peaceful protest demonstration, it was accepted.<sup>92</sup> The Congress-Khilafat workers formed into a long procession and silently marched through the streets of the city. Thus by a judicious suggestion, Abdurahiman could avert a great tumult.

The police action at Ottappalam was not an isolated incident. Two days before the Ottappalam conference, *the Muslim*, wrote, "The repressive policy of Mr. Thomas in Malabar is now reported to have taken a new form . . . It is now an open secret that the police do seize the Khilafat workers and non-co-operators and to take them inside the police station where they barbarously beat and threaten them."<sup>93</sup> Moyarath Sankaran, an active participant of the

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<sup>90</sup> K.P. Kesava Menon, Note.13, p.84.

<sup>91</sup> K.P.Kesava Menon, Note 85, p.2.

<sup>92</sup> S.K. Pottakkatt, et al., *Muhammed Abdurahiman a political biography*,(Mal.) Calicut, 1978, p.40.

<sup>93</sup> *The Muslim*, dated: 20<sup>th</sup> April 1921, MNNPR April 1921 (TNA)

conference has recorded that the police atrocities at Ottappalam were “a deliberate attempt of the authorities to create rebellion in Malabar.”<sup>94</sup>

The conference appointed a committee under T. Prakasam to inquire into the police atrocities. The committee found that the police outrages at Ottappalam were not accidental but the result of a deliberate plan. The committee found fault with R.H. Hitchcock, the District Superintendent of Police for all high handedness upon the people. Hitchcock, however, declined all charges and blamed the nationalist leaders for their ‘misdeeds’.<sup>95</sup> When the committee published its findings in *the Hindu*, the government proscribed it and filed a suit against the members of the committee and against the editor of the newspaper.<sup>96</sup> Presumably, through the police iniquities, the authorities wanted to make the people apprehensive of the government. Following the Ottappalam incident, “a wholesome fear of authority” prevailed in the district.<sup>97</sup> In short, the Hindu-Muslim fraternity, class-consciousness among the tenants and the interest of the educated in the National Movement – all incensed the British in Malabar.

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<sup>94</sup> Moyarath Sankaran, *Ente Jeevitha Katha*, (Mal.), (My Life Story), Calicut, 1965, p.162.

<sup>95</sup> Judicial Department, G. O. No. 669, dated 26<sup>th</sup> September 1921. (TNA)

<sup>96</sup> Public Department, G.O.No.244, dated 4<sup>th</sup> July 1921 (TNA)

<sup>97</sup> *Fortnightly Report* for the First Half of May 1921 (TNA)

## Heading Towards A Great Political Upsurge:

Since the Ottappalam conference, Malabar witnessed unprecedented progress in Congress-Khilafat activities. The Mappilas gathered together to discuss the ways and means of protecting the name and dignity of their religion. On 25<sup>th</sup> May 1921, the Secretary, Kerala Ulama Conference made an appeal calling upon the Muslims of Kerala “to strive, sacrificing their all, including their lives, to save the Khilafat which is the basis of the Islamic religion.”<sup>98</sup> By 30<sup>th</sup> June 1921 over two hundred Khilafat committees were constituted.<sup>99</sup> Meetings were organized at Khilafat-Congress centers like Manjeri, Malappuram, Tirurangadi, Ponnani, Tanoor, and Kalpakanchery.<sup>100</sup> M.P.Naraya Menon, K.V.Raman Menon, Kattilasserri Muhammed Musaliar, K.P.Kesava Menon, K.Madhavan Nair, etc., addressed the meetings. Everywhere, the leaders exhorted the people not to give up the vow of non-violence under any situation.<sup>101</sup>

When the authorities failed to dissuade the Muslims from the Khilafat-Non-co-operation movements by all other means, they decided to make use of the *Ulama* for the purpose. Accordingly, the government sponsored an

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<sup>98</sup> The appeal captioned “To the Muslims of Kerala” appended in K.N. Panikkar, (ed.) *Peasant Protests and Revolts in Malabar*, Delhi, 1990, pp.310-311.

<sup>99</sup> Rolland E. Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala*, Madras, 1976, p.131.

<sup>100</sup> P.A. Sayd Muhammed, *Kerala Muslim Charitram*, (Mal.), (History of Kerala Muslims), Trichur, 1988, p.224.

<sup>101</sup> K.Madhavan Nair, *Malabar Kalapam*, Calicut, 1971, p.82.

*Ulama* conference at Ponnani on 24<sup>th</sup> July 1921. The two high-ranking Muslim officers, Amu, the Deputy Superintendent of Police and Ammu, the Deputy Collector, coordinated the conference.<sup>102</sup> The conference rejected the Khilafat movement and agreed with the *fatwa*, “*Mahaqul Khalafa ‘Ala Ismil Khilaf*” of Mammad Kutty Muṣliar. The *fatwa* stated that the Khilafat was only a silly issue and to non-cooperate with the government in the name of the Khilafat question was a great sin.<sup>103</sup> The conference also asserted that the Muslims of India had no grievances against the British rule. In spite of the wholehearted support of the government, the conference proved a great failure. Only a few pro-British *Ulama* and some government officials attended it.<sup>104</sup> However, the organizers claimed the meeting a big success.<sup>105</sup>

The Khilafat workers took the anti-Khilafat activities of the pro-British *Ulama* very seriously. On the same day of the pro-British *Ulama* conference, the Muslim leaders like E. Moidu Maulavi, K.M. Maulavi and Ali Musaliar organized a parallel meeting at Ponnani.<sup>106</sup> Abdul Latheef Maulavi, Principal, Latheefiya College, Vellore, inaugurated the meeting. K. Kelappan and

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<sup>102</sup> Home (Political) Department, File No.241/1-17-1921, dated: 4<sup>th</sup> August 1921 (National Archives, Delhi)

<sup>103</sup> Mammad Kutty Muṣliar, et al., *Mahaqul Khalafa ‘Ala Ismil Khilaf* (Arbi-Malayalm), Madras, 1921, pp.4-12. Copy of the *Fatwa* is available at the private library of T. Abdul Aziz Maulavi, Mankada.

<sup>104</sup> Mozhikunnath Brahmadathan Namboodiripad, op cit., p.14

<sup>105</sup> *Fortnightly Report* for the First Half of August 1921 (TNA)

<sup>106</sup> Moidu Maulavi, *Ende Koottukkaran*, Calicut, 1964, p.24

Muhammed Abdurahiman addressed the meeting.<sup>107</sup> A pamphlet captioned “*Daulat-ul-Haq*” (An Invitation to the Truth) written by E. Moidu Maulavi was distributed in the meeting. The pamphlet refuted every point in the “*Mahaq-ul-Khalafa ‘Ala Ismil Khilaf*” by Mammad Kutty Musaliar and others.<sup>108</sup>

However, the government was determined to abort the nationalist meeting at Ponnani. A police force was posted at the entrance of the city to dissuade the people from attending the meeting. The Khilafat leader Ali Musliar from Tirurangadi, questioned the police action and there started a serious skirmish between the police and the Khilafat workers. But the timely intervention of Muhammed Abdurahiman and E.Moidu Maulavi averted a great confrontation.<sup>109</sup> All the leaders who addressed the meeting warned the people against the provocations of the police and exhorted them to stand steadfast to non-violence.

Even after the failure of the Ponnani conference, the pro-British *Ulama* continued their subversive propaganda against the Khilafat movement. K.M. Abdullah Kutty Musliar issued a *fatwa* captioned “*Nadil Masmooi Ila Ma’nal*

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<sup>107</sup> Malabar Heritage Publication, *Ishaq Smaranika*, (Mal.) (Memories on Ishaq), Kannur, 1993, p.49.

<sup>108</sup> The government proscribed the pamphlet and its author E.Moidu Maulavi was arrested and convicted for two years. See S. Ramachandran, op cit., p.42.

<sup>109</sup> E.K. Maulavi, “Malabar Lahala Oru Akshepam” (Mal.) (Malabar Rebellion: An Objection), *Mathrubhumi* daily, dated 12<sup>th</sup> July 1924.

*Khilafa Kama Hiya Al Mashuri.*” The *fatwa* stated that the Khilafat that existed in Turkey was only kingship and the destruction of such a Khilafat would not cause any harm to the Muslims of the world. The *fatwa* also reminded the Muslims of Malabar that non-co-operation with the government was not good to their interest.<sup>110</sup>

The Khilafat leaders retaliated in the same coin. Aminummanakath Pari Kutty Muṣliar, the secretary of Khilafat committee, Tanur translated and published the *Muhimmathul Mu'minin* written by Maulana Azad. The *Muhimmath-ul-Mu'minin* contradicted every argument against Khilafat and Non-co-operation. Quoting the *Qu'ran* and the *Hadith* very profusely, the *Muhimmath* established that the British were the enemies of Islam and a Muslim who co-operated with them was a ‘*fasik*.’ The *Muhimmath* reminded the Muslims that it was the religious duty of every Muslim to fight against the enemies of Islam. If he was not capable of undertaking war, he had to help by person and wealth those who fight against the enemies of Islam. The *fatwa* also asserted that the Ottoman Khilafat was a continuation of the Pious Khilafat and was to exist till the last day and those who opposed the Ottoman Khilafat were the enemies of Islam.<sup>111</sup> The *fatwa* was read and discussed in

<sup>110</sup> K.M. Abdullah Kutty Muṣliar, *Nadil Masmooi Ila Ma'nal Khilafa Kama Hiya Al Mashuri*, (Arabi-Malayalam) Madras, 1921, pp.1-6

<sup>111</sup> Maulana Azad, *Muhimmath-ul-Mu'minin*, (Arabic), Malyalam translation by Aminummanakath Pari Kutty Musliar, Tirurangadi, 1921, pp.1-31

every mosque and it served as a source of inspiration to every Khilafat worker.

By August 1921 the Khilafat and Non-co-operation movements reached such a high pitch that the authorities found it impossible to suppress it easily. Hence the district authorities wrote to the Governor, "It is certainly true that as the result of Khilafat propaganda, the Mappilas are better organized than they used to be and also better informed as to the strength of their position and the difficulty of taking military action against them."<sup>112</sup>

In short the three movements-the Non-co-operation, the Tenancy and the Khilafat- all under a single umbrella of the Indian National Congress prepared the ground for a unique national upsurge in the history of Malabar. The educated and politically conscious middle class Hindus were in the forefront of this movement. The exploited and downtrodden tenants, who had already been on the path of resistance against the landlords and the British, were in the vanguard of the National Movement. When the Indian National Congress incorporated the Tenants' Association into its fold, almost the whole tenant community got actively involved in the struggle for freedom. Then came the poor and illiterate but politically and socially conscious Mappilas. They constituted the most dissatisfied group in Malabar. They were bitter against the British, bitter against landlords and bitter against the

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<sup>112</sup> Home (Political) Department, File No.241/1-17, 1921, Dated 20<sup>th</sup> August 1921. (National Archives, Delhi)

world that gave them nothing but misery. The Mappilas, with the heroic tradition of the Kunjali Marakkars of Kottakkal, had also been in the path of war against the 'colonial masters' and their 'native allies'. Hence, when they were called upon in the name of the Khilafat they could not resist themselves from joining the great struggle. The three movements, that prepared the ground for the great leap, had its own leaders but mostly irregular and part time.<sup>113</sup> Therefore, a strong and consistent leadership, capable of coordinating different movements at work, was the felt need of the hour. It was to such a socio-political scenario that Muhammed Abdurahiman, accidentally from the same pedigree of the Kunjali Marakkars, came to play his historic role in the great struggle for freedom.

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<sup>113</sup> K. Madhavan Nair had not given up his practice as advocate even after becoming the Secretary of the KPCC. The early leaders like K.P. Kesava Menon, U. Gopala Menon, M.P. Narayana Menon, K.P. Gopala Menon, P. Achuthan, A. Karunakara Menon were also practising advocates. It was only in February 1921 that K.P. Kesava Menon gave up his practice and became full time Secretary of the KPCC.(for details see A.K. Pillai, *Congressum Keralavum*, Second Edition, Trivandrum, 1982, pp.48-49.

**CHAPTER II**  
**BIRTH OF A NATIONALIST**

## Chapter – 2

### **Birth of a Nationalist**

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries a new class of men emerged from among the Muslims of India. They belonged to the middle class families and were fortunate to get English education. While most of them joined British service, a few of them were drawn into the vortex of the freedom struggle. Playing a self-sacrificing role in the freedom struggle, this few became the pride of mother India and prestige of the Muslim community. Fazal Hussain from the Punjab, Fazl-ul-Haq from Bengal, the Ali Brothers from Utter Pradesh, Yakub Hassan from Madras and Muhammed Abdurahiman from Kerala were the representatives of this class. They moved with the Indian National Congress in the march for an Indian 'rather than a communal identity'.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Preparation:**

Muhammed Abdurahiman was born in the village of Eriyad, near Azhikode in the historic city of Kodungallur<sup>2</sup> on Thursday, the 13<sup>th</sup> of May

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<sup>1</sup> V.N. Datta and B.E. Cleghorn, (ed.), *A Nationalist Muslim and Indian Politics*, Delhi, 1974, p.1

<sup>2</sup> Kodungallur also known as Craganore was a part of the princely state of Cochin.

1897.<sup>3</sup> He was the eldest son of Panakkaparambhil Abdurahiman of Karukappadath Pannachal family and Kochaisumma of Ayyaril family.<sup>4</sup> Muhammed Abdurahiman belonged to a well to do middle class family and had the proud heraldry of the descendant of Kunjali Marakkars, the great admirals of the Zamorines of Calicut. The original name of Muhammed Abdurahiman was Kunhu Muhammed. Later on the first name Kunhu was given up and the name of his father, Abdurahiman was added with his second name and he came to be known as Muhammed Abdurahiman.<sup>5</sup> His basic education was at his home. At the age of twelve, he was admitted to Class III of Primary School, Azhikode.<sup>6</sup> On completion of primary education, Abdurahiman left the school and joined Government High School Kodungallur. Being a member of an orthodox religious family, his parents were very particular to give him religious education along with modern education. Hence he was admitted to Madrassa Islamiyya, Vaniyambadi in Tamil Nadu. There he got ample opportunities to develop his leadership qualities. He served as the volunteer captain in connection with the South

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<sup>3</sup> The date of birth of Muhammed Abdurahiman given in the admission register of Government Upper Primary School, Azhikode, where he was first admitted in class III, is 1<sup>st</sup> Edavam 1072 Malayalam era. This Malayalam date is equivalent to Thursday, the 13<sup>th</sup> of May 1897. See P.R. Gopala Warrior, *Kristhabdam 1876 Muthal 1956 Vareyulla 81 Varsathe Graha Spudangal*, (Mal.) Kollan, 1957.

<sup>4</sup> M. Rasheed, *Muhammed Abdurahiman Sahib*, (Biography) (Mal.), Calicut, 1994, p.3

<sup>5</sup> He is also known as Muhammed Abdurahiman Sahib. His friends and colleagues called him Abdurahiman Sahib or merely 'Sahib'. In the present study the honorific title 'Sahib' is omitted and the name Abdurahiman is used herein after.

<sup>6</sup> Now it is Government Upper Primary School, Azhikode.

Indian Muslim Educational Conference held at Madrassa Islamiyya, Vaniyambadi. His service as volunteer captain was very much appreciated by all. Akbar Hydari, the Chairman of the Conference particularly congratulated him. It was this appreciation and acknowledgment that awakened the 'leader' in Abdurahiman.

However, some unfortunate turn of events gave an abrupt end to his student life at Vaniyambadi. Professor Khuraishi, the principal of Madrassa Islamiyya, had a special liking for the Malayali students for their studiousness and refined tastes. In turn the latter had great regard for the nationalist aspirations of Professor Khuraishi. The Tamil students, out of jealousy towards the Malayali students, fabricated many stories defaming Professor Khuraishi. Finally, Professor Khuraishi resigned the office of the principal and left the institution. It was beyond the forbearance of the Malayali students. They wanted reappointment of Professor Khuraishi. They organized themselves under Abdurahiman. They conducted demonstrations and protest meetings. When all proved in vain, they left the institution *en bloc*.<sup>7</sup>

Afterwards, Abdurahiman joined the Basal Mission collage, Calicut.<sup>8</sup> While a college student at Calicut, he developed social contacts with the ordinary public. He found them sincere and loving. It was this experience

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<sup>7</sup> M. Rasheed, op cit. , pp. 3-4.

<sup>8</sup> Now known as the Malabar Christian College, Calicut.

that encouraged him to choose Calicut as the center of socio-political activities later on. At the same time he was active in organizing the people of his native place, Kodungallur. At his initiative and leadership, the Cochin Muslim Educational Society was formed at Azhikode.<sup>9</sup> It was the first of such organization among the Muslims of Kerala and served a precursor to many organizations of the like in later times. Under the persuasion of the Society, the Raja of Cochin granted scholarship to Muslim girls students and appointed Arabic teachers in Muslim schools.<sup>10</sup>

On completion of his studies in Basal Mission College, Abdurahiman joined the Mohammadan College, Madras, for the Intermediate Course. Then he joined the Madras Presidency College for B.A. Honours in history. His education at Madras was still another turning point in his life. There he got an opportunity to listen to the great nationalist leaders, Justice Tyabji and Yakub Hasan. Under their influence he became a regular reader of the *Muslim Herald* and the *Muhammadan*. It was at this time that he happened to read the *Mas - 'ala - e - Khilafat - wa - Jazirah - e - 'Arab*, 'a scholarly and illuminating discourse on the concept and history of Khilafat'<sup>11</sup> written by Abul Kalam Azad. The very words of Azad that 'English education given in the colleges are cups filled with poison' stirred the sentiments of Abdurahiman. For a

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<sup>9</sup> S.K. Pottekkatt, et al., *Muhammed Abdurahiman A Political Biography*, Calicut, 1978, p.23.

<sup>10</sup> *The Mathrubhumi Weekly*. dated 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1945, p.12.

<sup>11</sup> K.A. Nizami, *Maulana Azad (A Commemoration Volume)*, Delhi, 1990, p.15.

while his mind swung whether to continue his studies or to give it up. It was at this time that Maulana Shaukath Ali visited Madras. Addressing the students there he told, "If the end and aim of your education is to seek government service, death is preferable to such an education."<sup>12</sup> Then there came the appeal of Gandhiji to boycott educational institutions. It filled the void. Now he had no more hesitation. He bade farewell to the Presidency College in November 1920. With regard to this boycott the Criminal Investigation Department reported, "Two Mussalman students of Madras have withdrawn from the Government Colleges, one Abdurahiman from the Madras Presidency College and the other Mohiuddin from the Madrasa-e-Asam College."<sup>13</sup> The report continued, "It is learnt that this contagion is not likely to spread and cause the ruin of the Musalman youths."<sup>14</sup>

Meanwhile a few national educational institutions came up. The Jamia Millia Islamia was one among them.<sup>15</sup> The great nationalist leaders Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Ali Brothers were among the teachers of the university. When Abdurahiman came out of the Presidency College, Madras,

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<sup>12</sup> *History of Khilafat Movement in Madras Presidency*, p. 276. (TNA)

<sup>13</sup> The Special Branch Criminal Investigation Department, (Strictly Confidential) Letter No. 1302, dated 8<sup>th</sup> November 1920. (TNA)

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> As a part of Non-co-operation Movement, Gandhiji and Shaukath Ali requested Aligarh College authorities not to accept grant in aid from the government. When the college authorities refused, Maulana Muhammed Ali, accompanied by Gandhiji, went to Aligarh and succeeded in persuading a large number of students to leave the college. Soon after they laid the foundation of a national university, Jamia Millia Islamia at Aligarh, later shifted to Delhi. See, Syed Razi Wasit, *Muslim Struggle for Freedom in British India*, Delhi, 1993, pp. 305-306.

he wanted to be one of the students of these great men. So he joined the Jamia Millia Islamia for Hons. Degree. Besides being a student of Azad and Ali Brothers, Abdurahiman was fortunate to have close contact with other nationalist leaders like Dr. M.A. Ansari, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Khwaja Abdul Hameed etc. While at Jamia, Abdurahiman participated the Nagpur session of the INC as a student delegate in December 1920.<sup>16</sup> It was in this session of the Congress that K. Madhavan Nair demanded the formation of the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee consisting of all Malayalam speaking territories. The delegates from Tamil Nadu argued against the demand. But their arguments could not stand before the counter arguments of Abdurahiman. The counter arguments of Abdurahiman were very convincing and the nationalist leaders including Gandhiji and Rajagopalachari supported the motion. Finally the demand was conceded.<sup>17</sup>

After the Nagpur session of the INC, Abdurahiman returned to Aligarh. But there he was not destined to continue his studies. Something more serious was awaiting him. The Congress-Khilafat leaders were in search of an educated Muslim to give leadership to the people of Kerala particularly to the Muslims of Malabar in the freedom struggle. Besides, Abdurahiman himself was convinced of the necessity of the participation of

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<sup>16</sup> E. Moidu Maulavi, "Sahib Ente Ormakalil" (Mal.) (Sahib in My Memory), *The Madhyamam Daily*, dated 20<sup>th</sup> November 1988.

<sup>17</sup> A.A. Malayali, *Swathandriya Samara Senanikal*, (Mal.) (The Freedom Fighters), Palakkad, 1999, p.10.

the Muslims in the struggle. He learnt that history would never forgive his community if it lagged behind others in the struggle for freedom of the motherland. Hence, when his teacher, Maulana Muhammed Ali asked him to start to Malabar immediately, he had no hesitation to accept it. Thus history witnessed the birth of a nationalist, a student of history becoming a creator of history.

### **Entry into the Freedom Struggle:**

Abdurahiman reached Malabar at a time when the first Kerala Provincial Conference was being held at Ottappalam in April 1921. He straightaway went to the conference. There he became a figure of great attraction among the delegates. His long stature, fair complexion, shining eyes, broad forehead, running eye brows and thick moustache distinguished him from others. His Nehruvian dress with a Turkish fur cap gave him a North Indian look. His senior contemporary K.P. Kesava Menon observes, "Tall with thick moustache and enthusiastic conversation, Abdurahiman would impress even in the first sight."<sup>18</sup>

At Ottappalam, when the Congress-Khilafat workers were agitated by the high handedness of the police and when the people insisted on revenge upon the police, Abdurahiman proposed a demonstration to express their

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<sup>18</sup> K.P.Kesava Menon, *Kazhinja Kalam*, (Mal.),(The Past Days). Calicut, 1969, p.80.

protest. His proposition finally prevailed upon them. The Ottappalam conference thus paved the way for the entry of Abdurahiman into the limelight of freedom struggle in Malabar. His bosom friend and life long companion, E. Moidu Maulavi recollects, "It was through the Ottappalam conference that the people of Kerala got the excellent leadership of Abdurahiman."<sup>19</sup>

From Ottappalam Abdurahiman went to Calicut, the nerve centre of socio-political activities in Kerala. Soon after his arrival at Calicut, he was elected the Secretary of Kerala Provincial Khilafat Committee. Kattilasseri Muhammed Musaliar and T.Hassan Koya were the president and treasurer of the Committee respectively.<sup>20</sup> The Committee started its activities forthwith with its office at Calicut. Under the youthful leadership of Abdurahiman, the Khilafat movement advanced quickly. He concentrated his efforts mainly on the formation of Khilafat committees in villages. The organization of the village committees was wonderful. Even the civil and criminal cases were settled through these committees.<sup>21</sup> The Khilafat committee of Tanur, under its secretary, Kunhi Kader, became a model to the whole country.<sup>22</sup> Leaders like K. Madavan Nair, M.P. Narayana Menon, K.P. Kesava Menon,

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<sup>19</sup> E. Moidu Maulavi, "Sahib Ente Ormakalil" (Mal.) (Sahib in My Memories), *The Madhyamam Daily*, dated 20<sup>th</sup> November 1988.

<sup>20</sup> S.K. Pottekkatt, et al., op cit., p.44.

<sup>21</sup> E.Moidu Maulavi., *Ente Koottukaran*, Calicut, 1964, p.14.

<sup>22</sup> K.K.M.A. Kareem, *Variyam Kunnath Kunhamed Haji*, (Mal.), Calicut, 1992, p. 38.

Kattilasserri Muhammed Musaliar, Ponmadath Moideen Koya, E. Moidu Maulavi etc., helped Abdurahiman in the organizational activities. They went round the whole of Malabar and enrolled the people as Congress-Khilafat workers. Both the Hindus and the Muslims joined together by common ties. Hindu leaders were invited to the Mosques to address Muslim congregations. It was said that never before had the Hindus and the Muslims joined together in such a way as during the Khilafat period.

This unprecedented political awakening and communal harmony between the Hindus and the Muslims excited the British authorities. They could never tolerate the idea of Muslims organizing themselves into Khilafat committees.<sup>23</sup> The District Magistrate E.F. Thomas wanted to convince the Presidency Government that the Khilafat was a religious question and any appeal in the name of religion would arouse the Mappila militancy that had been in a dormant state for the last few years. He also feared that such a movement would turn the Mappilas both against the British and the Hindu landlords. Therefore, he wanted to crush the movement at its threshold. He served notices to U. Gopala Menon and K. Madhavan Nair forbidding them from addressing public meetings.<sup>24</sup> He also banned Khilafat meetings in Ernad and Walluvanad taluks under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure

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<sup>23</sup> K.P. Kesava Menon, "Crusading for a cause", *1921 Movement: Reminiscence*, New Delhi, pp.158-162.

<sup>24</sup> K.N. Panikkar, *Against Lord and State Religion and Peasant Uprisings in Malabar 1836-1921*, Delhi, 1989, p. 129.

Code.<sup>25</sup> To him, it was 'most undesirable to allow Ali Brothers to travel in Malabar'.<sup>26</sup> On 26<sup>th</sup> February 1921, four Khilafat workers from Tirurangadi were arrested and convicted for six months.<sup>27</sup> Though the Collector 'forged fetters and manacles to their freedom of passive resistance',<sup>28</sup> the Khilafat-Congress workers stood firm to the vow of non-violence. The repressive measures only helped to strengthen the National Movement. The *Sampad Abhyudaya* published from Mysore wrote, "Tyranny in such cases heightens enthusiasm. The public men of Malabar think that Mr. Thomas deserves thanks for the help he renders in disseminating the movement."<sup>29</sup> However, restrictions on the Congress-Khilafat leaders and ban on Khilafat meetings prevented the organizers from providing the much needed training in non-violence to the people and shaping the movements in the desired direction.

Mr. Thomas wanted to declare the Khilafat movement illegal. Therefore, he requested the Governor in Council for permission to ban the movement. Instead of giving a blank cheque to Mr. Thomas, the Governor appointed A.R. Knapp, Member of the Executive Council, to report on

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<sup>25</sup> Government of Madras, Confidential Report, *The Non-co-operation and the Khilafat Movements in the Madras Presidency*, Madras, 1925, p.40.

<sup>26</sup> Under Secretary's Safe File (Strictly Confidential) No. 42 csi/235 dated: 12<sup>th</sup> January 1920. (TNA)

<sup>27</sup> Pottayil Kunhamed, Pottayil Abu Backer, V.C.Hassan Kutty and Kallarakkal Ahamed were arrested from Tirurangadi. See, Perunna K.N. Nair, *Keralathile Congress Prasthanam*, (Mal.), (Congress Movement in Kerala), Cochin, 1969, p.34

<sup>28</sup> *Sampad Abhyudaya*, dated: 21<sup>st</sup> February 1921, MNNPR February 1921 (TNA)

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

Khilafat activities in Malabar. Knapp reported against the wishes of Mr. Thomas and recorded that the latter was “jumpy, nervous and unrealistic” in his approach to the Khilafat.<sup>30</sup> Further, A.R. Knapp advised the District Collector, Mr. Thomas not to proceed with his scheme of banning the Khilafat. He reminded the Collector that the Khilafat was not a local issue but an all India question about which the Viceroy alone could take a final decision.<sup>31</sup> Presumably, Mr. Thomas was not happy with the report of Knapp.

In the meantime, Yakub Hassan, K. Madhavan Nair, U. Gopala Menon and Moideen Koya were released from jail after six months of imprisonment. A grant reception was accorded to them at Calicut on 17<sup>th</sup> August 1921. A.K. Pillai records, “There has never been such a meeting in which so many Hindus and Muslims attended.”<sup>32</sup> At the end of the meeting, a bonfire was conducted in which flames consumed a large quantity of foreign cloths. Many who came in foreign clothes returned half naked.<sup>33</sup> The enthusiastic participation of the people in the meeting was a clear expression of their desire to act in unison for the freedom of the country.

Seeing the huge gathering at Calicut, Mr. Thomas became irresistibly revengeful. He befriended with the Hindu *Jenmis* with the aim of crushing

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<sup>30</sup> GRF Tottenham, *The Malabar Rebellion 1921-1922*, Madras, 1922, p.32

<sup>31</sup> Mozhikunnzth Brahmadathan Nambudiripad, *Khilafat Smaranakal*, (Mal.), (Reminiscence of the Khilafat), Calicut, 1965, p. 34.

<sup>32</sup> A.K. Pillai, *Congressum Keralavum*, (Mal.), Trichur, 1935, p.345.

<sup>33</sup> *Ishaq Smaranika*, Kannur, 1993, p.63.

the Khilafat-Congress activities in Malabar. Both to the British and to the *Jenmis*, the Mappilas were a community to be revenged upon for their bygone backing to the Sultans of Mysore, Hyder Ali and Tipu, and for their extant mobilization of the peasantry through tenancy and National Movements. They chalked out a nefarious scheme of provoking the Mappilas to revolt thereby to squash the Khilafat and Non-co-operation movements. Pukkottur, a strong centre of Khilafat movement in Malabar, was chosen for the first enactment of the scheme. On 1<sup>st</sup> August 1921, police inspector Mangat Narayana Menon came to Pukkottur with some policemen to arrest Vadakkeveetil Mammad, the secretary of local Khilafat Committee and Tenancy Association, on charge of the theft of a pistol from Nilambur Kovilakam.<sup>34</sup> The Khilafat-Congress activists found it a deliberate attempt to suppress the National Movement and they thwarted the move of Narayana Menon to arrest Mammad. Narayana Menon felt humiliated. He reported that the Mappilas were on the warpath. With this incident, the District Collector, Mr. Thomas became more revengeful on the Mappilas than ever before. He doubled the strength of the police force.<sup>35</sup> He identified Ali

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<sup>34</sup> S. Ramachandran, *Kattilasseri Muhammed Musaliyarum Deseeya Prasthanvum*, (Mal.), (Kattilasseri Muhammed Musaliar and the National Movement.), Trivandrum, 2003, p.44

<sup>35</sup> *The Non-co-operation and the Khilafat Movements in the Madras Presidency*, Note 25, p.13

Musaliar<sup>36</sup>, the leader of Khilafat movement in Tirurangadi as the person behind all the troubles. Mr. Thomas wanted to arrest him. But he knew that such a step would, of course, lead to the resistance of the Mappilas. So he planned to arrest Ali Musaliar secretly. He set out to Tirurangadi under the cover of darkness of the night of 19<sup>th</sup> August 1921.<sup>37</sup>

Just before the departure of Mr. Thomas and the police party from Calicut by rail, Abdurahiman got wind of the foul play. But he did not know the destination of Mr. Thomas and the police party. He presumed that they were going to Pukkottur to arrest Vadakkeveetil Mammad and others. Abdurahiman immediately sent T.V. Muhammed, a Khilafat worker, to Tirurangadi with two letters to be delivered to Ali Musaliar and Thayyil Muhammed Kutty Maulavi, the Khilafat leaders of Tirurangadi.<sup>38</sup> In the letter Abdurahiman requested them to go to Pukkottur right away and to persuade Vadakkeveetil Mammad and others to surrender to the police imbibing the spirit of non-violence.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Ali Musaliar belonged to a family having a long tradition of resistance against the British. He served as the *Qazi* of different mosques in Malabar and Lakshadweep and had a number of followers all over the country. Influenced by Gandhiji and Ali Brothers, he took keen interest in Khilafat movement. For details see K.K.M.A.Kareem, *1921 le Khilafat Lahalayum Ali Musaliyarum*, (Mal.), Tirurangadi, 1985.

<sup>37</sup> GRF Tottenham, op cit., p.38

<sup>38</sup> Muthukoya Thangal, *1921 le Malabar Lahala*, (Mal.), (The Malabar Rebellion of 1921), Tirurangadi, 1990, p. 39.

<sup>39</sup> Abdurahiman's letter to the Secretary, Central Khilafat Committee, Bombay, dated 20<sup>th</sup> September 1921, intercepted by Central Intelligence Department and appended with Under Secretary's Safe, G.O.No.327 dated 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1921 (TNA).

Abdurahiman then went to the Congress office and discussed the matter with K.P. Kesava Menon, the General Secretary of Kerala Provincial Congress Committee.<sup>40</sup> He requested Menon to start to Ernad at once to persuade the people to keep peace. But Menon advised Abdurahiman to wait till morning to find what had happened.<sup>41</sup> But Abdurahiman thought that it would be too late if waited till next morning. So he decided to start immediately to Pukkottur and to do whatever was possible to pacify the people. At about 1.30 a.m. Abdurahiman and his friends E.Moidu Maulavi and A.P. Moideen Koya started to Pukkottur in a bullock cart. By 10.00 a.m. on 20<sup>th</sup> August 1921 they reached Aravankara, three miles to Pukkottur. It was at Aravankara that Abdurahiman learned that the District Collector and his party had gone to Tirurangadi. Further, it was at Aravankara that he came to know of the military raid of Tirurangadi mosque. He found that the people of Aravankara and Pukkottur were quite restless on the high handedness of the police at Tirurangadi. He tried to convince them of the necessity of keeping peace in the face of all sorts of provocations from the side of the police and the authorities.<sup>42</sup> Most of the people were convinced. Moideen Kutty, the secretary of Khilafat Committee, Aravankara, promised him that they would keep peace and be ready to court arrest cheerfully if it was the

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<sup>40</sup> K.P. Kesava Menon, op cit., Note 18, p.95.

<sup>41</sup> K.P.Kesava Menon, op cit., Note 23, pp.158-162.

<sup>42</sup> Under Secretary's Safe, G.O.No.327 dated 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1921 (TNA)

command of the Khilafat committee.<sup>43</sup> Abdurahiman felt happy and wired to Calicut that the trouble in Pukkottur was not serious. (*Deenam Apakatamalla, Aswasamanu*).<sup>44</sup>

By noon, Abdurahiman and his friends reached Pukkottur. There they found a violent mob getting ready to march to Tirurangadi. Just before his arrival, the people of Pukkottur had wrongly been informed that the eastern mosque (Kizhakke Palli) of Tirurangadi had been fired at and many people killed.<sup>45</sup> When Abdurahiman was trying to calm down the people a small group of police force came there on their way from Calicut to Malappuram. For a while, the people gathered there forgot the vow of non-violence and decided to take vengeance on the police force. With great difficulty, Abdurahiman convinced them of the futility of such an attempt. Thus the British force was saved.<sup>46</sup> However, he heard that in the neighbouring village of Podiyadu, the people were taking up arms for resistance. He found it difficult to manage the situation by himself. He wanted to get the help of K. Madhavan Nair and M.P. Narayana Menon who were at Manjeri then, eight miles from Pukkottur. So he rushed to Manjeri to bring them to Pukkottur. By the time he reached Manjeri, Abdurahiman was so fretful that he could tell

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> R.H. Hitchcock, *A History of the Malabar Rebellion 1921*, Madras, 1925, p.51

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. Appendix I, p. 181.

<sup>46</sup> K. Madhavan Nair, *Mathrubhmi* daily, dated 24<sup>th</sup> March 1923.

nothing to Madhavan Nair but these words, "Every thing is upset. We have to go at once to Pukkottur."<sup>47</sup>

By sun set, Abdurahiman with K.Madhavan Nair and M.P.Narayana Menon reached Pukkottur. They tried their best to convince the people of the futility and foolishness of taking up arms against the government and appealed them to keep away from violence. But to their utter distress, they found the people on the path of violence and desperately K.Madhavan Nair said, "If you are planning for death and murder we have no part in it."<sup>48</sup> Abdurahiman was still optimistic of allaying the people and reminded them of the necessity of abiding by the mandates of the Central Khilafat Committee and the Indian National Congress. He warned them strongly against declaration of *jihad* to the government. He said, "It is not time to declare war against the government and if you do so its consequences will be very agonizing. Your wives will be molested. Your mothers and children will be thrown to streets."<sup>49</sup> He added, "I am a Muslim. I too covet martyrdom. But time has not yet come."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> K.Madavan Nair, "Chila Smaranakal: Janab Muhammed Abdurahiman," (Mal.) (Some Reminiscences: Janab Muhammed Abdurahiman), *Mathrubhumi* dated 24<sup>th</sup> March 1923.

<sup>48</sup> A.K. Pillai, op cit., p50.

<sup>49</sup> K. Koyatti Maulavi, *1921- Le Malabar Lahala*, (Mal.), (The Malabar Rebellion of 1921), Tirurangadi, 1953, p. 37.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

Some how the leaders could bring the people to their senses. But when they were about to return, some un-identified persons came to Pukkottur and reported that the Kizhakke Palli (The Eastern Mosque) of Tirurangadi had been demolished by the police and several people had been killed. It was also announced that Ali Musaliar wanted all people of Pukkottur to proceed to Tirurangadi at once. Abdurahiman and Madhavan Nair cautioned the people not to take this report seriously unless convinced otherwise. But the people were not in a mental disposition to verify the truthfulness of the report. The story of the destruction of the mosque was sufficient cause to stir the people. Some of them asked the leaders, "The military has destroyed the Tirurangadi mosque and they are coming near Pukkottur to shoot us down. Are you still advising us to keep peace?"<sup>51</sup> Abdurahiman now perceived that the people were now 'fretting to be on the scene to avenge for firing at the mosque.'<sup>52</sup> Meanwhile, a few prudent people approached the leaders and promised them that they would not violate the vow of non-violence and the mandates of the Khilafat and the Congress. The leaders knew that it was only a lull before the storm. They returned from Pukkottur with a heavy heart.

In the meantime, T.V. Muhammed whom Abdurahiman had sent with letters to Ali Musaliar and Thayyil Muhammed Kutty Maulavi, reached

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<sup>51</sup> C.K. Moosad, *K.Madhavan Nair*, (Mal.) (Biography), Calicut, 1987, p.104.

<sup>52</sup> Public Department, G.O. No. 327, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1921.(TNA)

Tirurangadi at 2.00 a.m. of 20<sup>th</sup> August 1921.<sup>53</sup> He delivered the letters to Ali Musaliar and Thayyil Maulavi. On reading this letter, Ali Musaliar told T.V. Muhammed that they would proceed to Pukkottur early in the morning.<sup>54</sup> T.V. Muhammed spent the night in the eastern mosque. When he got up for morning prayers, he found that the mosque was surrounded by the military. He also found that the military was permitting the people to go to the mosque but those who got in were not allowed to go out. At about 7.30 a.m., E.V. Amu, the Deputy Superintendent of Police and a Muslim constable entered the mosque and searched for weapons and those who were under orders of arrest. But they could see none of them.<sup>55</sup> Yet the people were not allowed to go out side the mosque till 11.00 a.m. Meanwhile, the police ransacked some houses and arrested Pottayil Mohamed Haji, Kozhisseri Mammadu and his son, Moideen Kutty.<sup>56</sup> The police pillaged the Khilafat office and destroyed the Khilafat flag, the charka, signboard and furniture.<sup>57</sup> When the news of the police raid and arrest reached the neighbouring places, a large number of people began to flock to Tirurangadi. A crowd of about 2000 advanced from

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<sup>53</sup> Criminal Investigation Department, File No.1426 dated 20<sup>th</sup> September 1921. (TNA)

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> K. Koyatti Maulavi, op cit., p.22.

<sup>57</sup> K. Madhavan Nair, "Malabar Lahalayude Arambangal" (Mal.) (The Beginning of the Malabar Rebellion), *Mathrubhumi*, dated 18<sup>th</sup> July 1925.

Tanur to Thirurangadi under the Khilafat secretary, Kunhi Kadar.<sup>58</sup> A police force checked them and opened fire on them without any warning to disperse.<sup>59</sup> Nine were killed in the firing and forty including Kunhi Kadar were arrested.<sup>60</sup> With this incident, the situation in Tirurangadi went out of gear. The people wanted to get the arrested persons freed. When they marched to the police station for the purpose, Ali Musaliar prevented them and he himself and his two close associates, Lava Kutty and Kunhalavi, started to the station. But as the people suspected the safety of Ali Musaliar, they accompanied him in thousands.<sup>61</sup> The District Magistrate, Thomas, unable to bear the sight of Ali Musaliar, one of the most wanted, leading the Mappilas towards him, ordered to open fire.<sup>62</sup> In the fight that followed, Assistant Superintendent of Police, Rowley and Lieutenant, Johnstone were killed.<sup>63</sup> Seventeen Mappilas were also shot dead.<sup>64</sup> The people became restive and wanted to take revenge on the authorities. Instead of dispersing themselves, the people began to converge on Tirurangadi. The District Magistrate found the situation very tense and uncontrollable and managed to

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<sup>58</sup> K. Madhavan Nair, *Malabarkalapam*, Calicut, 1971, p.110

<sup>59</sup> K. Koyatti Maulavi, op cit., p.24.

<sup>60</sup> Home (Political) Department, 1921 File No.241 (NAI)

<sup>61</sup> K.N. Panikkar, op cit., p. 147.

<sup>62</sup> K.M. Maulavi, "Khilafat Anusmarana Kurippukal"(Mal.)(Reminiscences of the Khilafat), Appendix in K.K.M.A. Kareem, *1921-le Khilafat Lahalayum Ali Musaliyarum*, (Mal.)(Ali Musaliar and the Khilafat Rebellion), Tirurangadi, 1988, p.70.

<sup>63</sup> GRF Tottenham, op cit., p.38.

<sup>64</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 18<sup>th</sup> July 1925. Also see K, Koyatti Maulavi, loc cit.

escape to Calicut. Returning to Calicut, the District Magistrate declared Police Act 144 in Ernad and Walluvanad taluks.<sup>65</sup> He also reported that the situation in Ernad and Walluvand had passed beyond the power of the civil authorities.<sup>66</sup> He also applied for extra troops to strengthen the British force at Calicut.<sup>67</sup>

With these unwarranted incidents in Tirurangadi, attempts of the Khilafat leaders to bring peace were totally upset and the authorities proved themselves successful in exciting the people into rebellion. Till the Tirurangadi incident, Ali Musaliar was very particular to observe non-violence. It seemed that he gave up the vow of non-violence when the police fired on the unarmed Mappilas who had come to the station with an appeal to release the Khilafat workers arrested by the Collector.<sup>68</sup> In other words, there was no indication that Ali Musaliar or other Mappila leaders “ever planned to

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<sup>65</sup> Sankaran Moyarath, *Ente Jeevitha Kadha*, (Mal.), (My Life Story), Calicut, 1965, p.156.

On 26<sup>th</sup> August Martial Law was declared in the taluks of Calicut, Ernad, Valluvanad, Ponnani, Kurumbranad and Wynad in the district of Malabar by the Order of the Governor in Council. See, Government of Madras, Home Department, G. O. No. 550, dated 26<sup>th</sup> August 1921.(TNA)

<sup>66</sup> *Fortnightly Report* for the Second Half of August 1921.

<sup>67</sup> Public Department, D.O. 3730-I Dated 20<sup>th</sup> August 1921.(TNA)

<sup>68</sup> C.F. Andrews, “Early Days of the Revolt”, *The Modern Review*, Calcutta, April, 1922, reproduced by M. Gangadaran, in *Bodanam*, Calicut, December, 1996, pp.34-

lead an armed uprising before the British attempted to capture the Khilafat leaders in Tirurangadi.”<sup>69</sup>

In the morning of 21<sup>st</sup> August, Abdurahiman, Moidu Maulavi and Moideen Koya returned to Calicut. K.P. Kesava Menon was impatiently waiting Abdurahiman to know of his mission and to know the situation in Ernad. Abdurahiman met K.P. Kesava Menon and other Congress and Khilafat leaders. In the meantime, the news of police firing at Tirurangadi also reached Calicut. Rather than any thing else, this news agitated the leaders. Immediately, they hired a motorcar and started to Tirurangadi via Kondotty. When they reached Kondotty, they happened to know that a large body of people from Pukkottur had started to Nilambur. The leaders then sensed a greater danger in turning the anti-British movement into an anti-landlord movement. The leaders were aware of the dire consequences of such a turn of events. So they started to Nilambur. But they could not go beyond a few miles from Kondotty. The roads were completely blocked. The leaders found some people engaged in laying trees across the roads. Abdurahiman felt disgusted in the activities of the people. He got out of the car and explained to them the terrible consequences of these unwanted activities. The people listened to his words silently. They looked repentant and did not

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<sup>69</sup> Stephen F. Dale, *Islam and Social Conflict 1498-1922*, Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, p. 184. (TNA)

reply.<sup>70</sup> Unable to go ahead, the leaders returned to Kondotty and thence to Tirurangadi. On their way to Tirurangadi, they met groups of people gathered here and there getting ready for the ordeal to come. The leaders tried to convince the people of the futility of resisting the police force. But the people did not listen to their words. Unable to bear this rebellious mood of the people, Abdurahiman burst out, "Your activities are immoral and anti-Islamic. I am going to recommend to the Central Khilafat Committee to disband your Khilafat Committee."<sup>71</sup> When the leaders reached Tirurangadi, there they saw the remnants of the atrocities perpetrated by the police force on the day before. However, the leaders could not reach the eastern mosque where Ali Musaliar was staying at that time. So they had to be satisfied with a meeting with Karatan Moideen, an influential leader of Tirurangadi.<sup>72</sup> The leaders reached Calicut in the morning of 22<sup>nd</sup> August.<sup>73</sup>

Abdurahiman was still optimistic of bringing about peace in Ernad. He decided to set out to Ernad even risking his life. Before starting to Ernad he telegraphed to Yakub Hassan of Madras of the highly inflammable and volatile condition of Ernad and requested him to come to Malabar immediately. In response to the request of Abdurashiman, Yakub Hassan

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<sup>70</sup> E. Moidu Maulavi, *Moulaviyude Atmakata*, (Mal.), (Autobiography), Kottayam, 1981, p.36.

<sup>71</sup> V.R. Menon, (ed.), *Mathrubhumiye Charithram*, (Mal.) (History of the Mathrubhumi), Calicut, 1998, Vol.3., p.278.

<sup>72</sup> K.M. Maulavi, op cit., pp.93-94.

<sup>73</sup> U.S.S.F. No.327 A., (TNA)

waited up on the Governor with a request to permit him to visit Ernad and Walluvanad. But his request was turned down with a sarcastic remark that 'his influence would more probably be irritating than soothing.'<sup>74</sup>

However, Abdurahiman continued his efforts to restore peace in Ernad and Walluvanad area. Under his influence, Kattilesseri Muhameed Musaliar, the President of Kerala Provincial Khilafat Committee, issued a pamphlet declaring the rebellion anti-Islamic and against the wishes of the nationalist leaders.<sup>75</sup> It was also stated in the leaflet that the attempt of Ali Musaliar to liberate the arrested Khilafat workers from the police custody was against the spirit of Non-co-operation.<sup>76</sup>

Another leaflet signed by the Congress-Khilafat leaders including, Abdurahiman and Kesava Menon, reminded the people that the rebellion was against the ethos of the Khilafat and Non-co-operation. Hence the people were appealed to abstain from all sorts of violence.<sup>77</sup>

Meanwhile, K.P. Kesava Menon managed to obtain permission from the District Magistrate to visit Ernad and Walluvanad taluks. However,

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<sup>74</sup> Home (Political) Department, File No. 241/Ib/KW, Dated 25<sup>th</sup> August 1921. (NAI)

<sup>75</sup> K.M. Maulavi, op cit., p.94

<sup>76</sup> S. Ramachandran, op cit., p.50.

<sup>77</sup> K.M. Maulavi, op cit., p.94.

Menon's request to stop police action in the area was not conceded.<sup>78</sup> Immediately, K.P. Kesava Menon, Abdurahiman and twenty Congress Khilafat workers including a medical team started to Ernad.<sup>79</sup> When they reached Feroke, five miles east of Calicut, a police team intimidated them, ill-treated the leaders and seized the leaflets intended for distribution among the people exhorting not to give up the vow of non-violence. However, the team proceeded towards Tirurangadi. On their way they met many groups of people preparing themselves for *jihad*. The leaders appealed to them earnestly to keep peace even in front of batons and bullets. They also requested those, whom the police wanted, to surrender before the authorities immediately. The people, in general, responded to the call favourably. But those who had committed some offences against the government were determined to resist the authorities because they held that if surrendered, they would be crushed to death.

Following the withdrawal of police force from Tirurangadi after the incident of 20<sup>th</sup> August, the British rule had practically ceased to exist there. Taking advantage of this special situation, Ali Musaliar declared Khilafat *raj* and acted himself as the head of the Khilafat government.<sup>80</sup> It was in such a setting that the Congress-Khilafat leaders reached Tirurangadi. Kesava

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> T.Mohamed Yusuf, *Sreejith Muhammed Abdurahiman*, (Mal.), Calicut, 1938, p.42.

<sup>80</sup> K.N. Pankkar, op cit., p.153.

Menon and Abdurahiman were taken to the Khilafat office where Ali Musaliar welcomed them. Ali Musaliar explained to them what had happened at Tirurangadi on 20<sup>th</sup> August and afterwards. When Ali Musaliar completed his description, Kesava Menon asked him of his future plan. Instead of giving a definite reply to the query, he asked the advice of the leaders. Kesava Menon then requested him to give up the path of violence and told him that it would be better for all the persons concerned to surrender before the authorities.<sup>81</sup> To this request of Kesava Menon, the response of Ali Musaliar seemed rather evasive. Instead of rejecting the request out right, he asked the leaders to meet his 'Minister' Chenimathil Lava Kutty, and 'Commander in Chief' Chittambalan Kunhalvi.<sup>82</sup> Now it seemed to Abdurahiman, who was so far listening silently the discussion between Kesava Menon and Ali Musaliar, that the latter was reluctant to retrace his steps from the path of resistance. Abdurahiman then asked him very frankly why he had violated the vow of non-violence, the basic tenet of the Khilafat and Non-co-operation.<sup>83</sup> To this query, Ali Musaliar turned the table on Abdurahiman and asked him whether it was just to open fire on unarmed people.<sup>84</sup> Abdurahiman could never subscribe to the views of Ali Musaliar and told him

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<sup>81</sup> K.M. Maulavi, op cit., p.96.

<sup>82</sup> Conrad Wood, *The Moplah Rebellion and Its Genesis*, Delhi, 1987, p.200.

<sup>83</sup> E.Moidu Maulavi, Note, 21, p.55.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

that people who believe in violence had no place in the Congress and in the Khilafat.<sup>85</sup>

As a last recourse, the leaders decided to knock at the doors of Lavakutty and Kunhalavi, the lieutenants of Ali Musaliar. The leaders met them and requested them to surrender before the authorities as the only way out to save the country and the people from the impending military *raj* of the British.<sup>86</sup> But they explained to the leaders that they had leaped into the rebellion so deeply that they could no longer retrace their steps.<sup>87</sup> Thus all efforts of the leaders to convince the people of the necessity of keeping peace proved in vain and they returned to Calicut totally disheartened. Soon after their arrival, the District Magistrate served notice to Kesava Menon, Abdurahiman and others directing them not to leave Calicut Municipal limit without prior permission.<sup>88</sup> Even at this locked up condition, the Congress Khilafat leaders invited Gandhiji and Maulana Muhammed Ali to Malabar with the hope that the presence of national leaders would bring peace to the area. Accordingly, Gandhiji and Muhammed Ali started to Malabar. But when Muhammed Ali reached Waltair in Andhra, he was arrested and sent to

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> K.P.Kesava Menon, Note, 18. p.108.

<sup>87</sup> In an interview to K.P. Pillai, K.P. Kesava Menon said, "I met Lavakutti and Kunjalavi and tried to induce them to surrender to the police. They said they would rather die fighting and they believed that nothing would happen to them, a sort of superstitious belief. I thought it was idle to argue with them and we came back." Oral History Transcript, Interview on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1970, NMML, pp.7-8.

<sup>88</sup> *The Bombay Chronicle*, Dated 17<sup>th</sup> September 1921.(Micro-film section, NMML)

Karachi on 14<sup>th</sup> September 1921.<sup>89</sup> The next day Gandhiji reached Madras and announced his intention of visiting Malabar. He said, "It was open to the Government to invite the Ali Brothers and me to enter the disturbed area and give us an opportunity to procure calmness and peace in that disturbed land."<sup>90</sup> Immediately, the authorities issued him orders prohibiting him from entering Malabar.<sup>91</sup> He was also warned that he would be stopped and turned back if he attempted to go to Malabar.<sup>92</sup> When refused permission to go to Malabar, he wrote, "It is my belief that the men on the spot do not want to end the trouble. They certainly do not wish to give non-cooperators the credit for peacefully ending the trouble. They are desirous of showing once more, that it is only the British soldier who can maintain peace in India."<sup>93</sup> Thus Gandhiji was forced to retrace his steps with a heavy heart. However, Gandhiji's concern for the miserable condition of the Mappilas and his inability to visit Malabar is clear from the writings of C.F. Andrews who wrote in the *Young India* that Gandhiji had intention to go to Malabar and to express his sympathy to the Mappilas even by violating the prohibition and by courting arrest. If Gandhiji had been allowed to go to Malabar in the beginning of the rebellion, he would have entered there unassisted and

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<sup>89</sup> Sukhbir Chaudhari, *Moplah Uprising (1921-23)*, Delhi, 1977, p.37.

<sup>90</sup> *The Hindu*, dated 15<sup>th</sup> September 1921.

<sup>91</sup> GRF Tottenham, *op cit.*, p.38.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Publication Division, Delhi, 1966, Vol. 21, p.320.

unarmed and such a senseless violence could have been avoided.<sup>94</sup> Meanwhile, T. Prakasam and T.V. Venkata Rama lyar, the Congress leaders from Madras visited the disturbed area and reported in unequivocal terms, “Neither Congress nor Khilafat propaganda was at the bottom of the disturbance and that if the country is to be calm and peace to be permanently restored, it is necessary to prevent provocative actions on the part of the police and to restrain indiscriminate arrests of Congress and Khilafat workers.”<sup>95</sup>

Even after the withdrawal of the leaders from Ernad, local leaders like Kunhi Koya Thangal, President of the Khilafat committee, Malappuram, tried to dissuade the people of Pukkottur from attacking a relieving column moving from Calicut to Malappuram, where the Joint Magistrate had been isolated. When the people insisted for battle, Kunhi Koya Thangal declared them ‘Kafirs’ and ordered them to part with their Khilafat uniform.<sup>96</sup>

Meanwhile, the revolt took an uncontrollably violent turn. Between 20<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> August the Mappilas confronted the British force with force. On 26<sup>th</sup> August Pukkottur witnessed one of the bloodiest confrontations in the history of Malabar. In five hours fighting, more than four hundred Mappilas

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<sup>94</sup> Quoted in the *Mathrubhumi* dated 5<sup>th</sup> April 1923.

<sup>95</sup> *The Hindu*, dated 10<sup>th</sup> September 1921

<sup>96</sup> U.S.S.F. No. 360, Dated 5<sup>th</sup> November 1922. (TNA).

fell dead.<sup>97</sup> However, the first wave of rioting came to a halt with the surrender of Ali Musaliar on 30<sup>th</sup> August.<sup>98</sup>

The arrest of Ali Musaliar, however, did not bring the revolt to an end. Instead, it worsened the condition and the whole of south Malabar was thrown into the crucible of riots and revolutions. For about four months, the rebels successfully resisted the onslaught of the British force. But when the Gurka and Chinken Chin regiments of the British army started indiscriminate murder, the rebels could no longer resist and receded to the forests and continued guerrilla fighting.<sup>99</sup> Further, the authorities resorted to all sorts of brutalities to suppress the rebellion. The bloodiest of these was perpetrated on the prisoners sent in a railway luggage van from Tirur to Coimbatore. Of one hundred prisoners so sent, fifty-six died of suffocation before the train reached Podannur.<sup>100</sup> However, the guerrilla fighting went on up to the end of January 1922 till the last of the rebel leader was arrested and prosecuted.

#### **Effects of the Rebellion on the National Movement:**

The effects of the Malabar rebellion were the most terrific on the National Movement. The rebellion seriously weakened the Khilafat and Non-

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<sup>97</sup> Home (Political) Department, File No. 241/IB/KW, Dated 29<sup>th</sup> August 1921. (NAI). Also see, T.G. Rutherford, (ed.) *Madras District Gazetteers Statistical Appendix for Malabar District*, Madras, 1933, p.iv.

<sup>98</sup> K. Madhavan Nair, Note No. 58, p. 183.

<sup>99</sup> Saumyendranath Tagore, *Peasant Revolt in Malabr 1921*, Bombay, 1937, p.20.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.* p. 21.

co-operation movements all over India. It was in the midst of the controversy over the causes and course of the rebellion that Gandhiji suspended the Non-co-operation movement on 5<sup>th</sup> February 1922.<sup>101</sup>

The Muslim loyalists propagated that the Congress-Khilafat leaders cheated the Muslims at the critical juncture of their life and death struggle and threw them into the jaws of the British killers. It seems that such propagation was made with an evil intention of alienating the Mappilas from the National Movement. In fact, the Congress-Khilafat leaders, K.P. Kesava Menon, Abdurahiman and others had done all that was possible to check the rebellion. They had made a number of peace missions to Ernad and Walluvanad even at the risk of their lives. Even after the Tirurangadi incident of 20<sup>th</sup> August, the people in general were attentive to the peace messages of the leaders. But it was the British policy of provoking the people to rebellion and the government's fault of forbidding the responsible leaders including Gandhiji from entering Malabar that precipitated the rebellion and caused it to develop beyond control.

The most unfortunate development of the rebellion was that towards its close it took a communal tinge when the Mappilas began to suspect their Hindu brothers as having helped the British. So the basically anti-colonial and anti-feudalistic struggle came to be interpreted as a communal riot with

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<sup>101</sup> Mushirul Hasan, (ed.), *Communal and Pan Islamic Trends in Colonial India*, Delhi, 1985, p.33.

damaging effect on the National Movement. The Hindu loyalists projected the untoward incidents towards the Hindus and depicted it as a communal rebellion.<sup>102</sup> Besides, any attempt to give a matter of fact account of the rebellion was deliberately torpedoed by the loyalists<sup>103</sup> and the government.<sup>104</sup> Similarly, the government intercepted the eyewitness account of the rebellion prepared by Abdurahiman and sent to the Secretary, All India Khilafat

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<sup>102</sup> The book, *The Moplah Rebellion, 1921*, written by Diwan Bahadur C. Gopalan Nair, (Calicut, 1923) contains several references to the cruelties of the Mappilas towards Hindus and the historical accuracy of such references are still to be verified. But to the two participant historians, K.Madhavan Nair and Brahmadathan Namboodiripad, the Malabar rebellion was the most significant anti-British revolt ever occurred in India. For details see *Malabar Kalapam* (Calicut, 1971) written by K.Madhavan Nair and *Khilafat Smaranakal* (Calicut, 1965) by Brahmadathan Namboodiripad.

<sup>103</sup> When the Congress appointed an enquiry committee to investigate into the causes and course of the rebellion, the loyalists came against it. But the Congress justified the appointment of the committee saying, "We cannot understand the nervousness on the part of these people to keep the unfortunate happenings in Malabar a sealed book for ever. We can only explain it an ugly uneasiness of some guilty persons anxious to keep their misdeeds and cruelties from the light of the world and the judgment of an impartial public." See, History of Freedom Movement, (HFM), File No.57, (TNA)

<sup>104</sup> The government also had tried its best to spoil the effort of the congress to bring a matter of account of the rebellion. The Secretary to the Government of India wrote to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, "If there are indications that activities of the Committee are likely to lead to recrudescence of trouble, the Government of India trust that the local Government will not hesitate to take action under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code or other appropriate provisions of the law." See, Home (Political) Department, File No. D/8784 dated 9<sup>th</sup> December 1922. (TNA)

Further the government warned the President of the Committee of the serious consequences that might ensue if the committee holds its sitting in the Ernad taluk with the direct or indirect result of encouraging the Mappilas to further violence. See *Fortnightly Report* For the Second Half of October 1922. (TNA).

Committee Bombay.<sup>105</sup> In short, the government and the loyalists succeeded in misinterpreting the rebellion as a communal revolt. They also succeeded in finding fault with the Muslims for the rebellion. The British authorities accomplished their most wicked aims of depicting the Muslims as the dead enemies of the Hindus. They were also successful in misleading the Hindus that the existence of the British rule in India was essential for their safety and security. Thus, the British succeeded in drifting the Hindus and Muslim apart from each other and together from the National Movement. In the communal hatred, Kerala lost something most valuable and precious and something unique to Malabar i.e. the sense of tolerance and harmony, a tradition as old as Kerala history. Abdurahiman had foreseen such a bitter consequence and had warned his Muslim brothers against the Machiavellian politics of the British. Unfortunately, the Muslims who were still in the clutches of ignorance and orthodoxy could not understand him. More regrettably to him, the Mappilas identified the Congress with the Hindus and kept themselves away from the main stream of the National Movement.

In this context, the theory of Bipan Chandra appears to be very meaningful when he says, "Communal form is given to the social conflict not by the participants but by the observer, the official, the journalist, the politician and in the end the historian, all of whom provide a *post facto*

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<sup>105</sup> U.S.S.F. No.327 dated 8<sup>th</sup> November 1921. (TNA)

communal explanation for the conflict because of their own conscious or unconscious communal outlook.”<sup>106</sup> Bipan Chandra substantiates his theory citing the very example of the Malabar rebellion. He says, “Many a writer sees the 1921 Mappila agrarian uprising in Malabar as anti-Hindu but the Deccan riots of 1870’s as anti-money lender and not as anti-Marvadi.”<sup>107</sup>

However, the great rebellion had some positive effects. The rebellion made the authorities realize the necessity of land reforms in the country. In the midst of the rebellion, N. Subramanya Iyyar wrote in *the Hindu*, “The Moplah trouble is at the bottom of agrarian trouble. The bulk of the moplabs are tenants under *jenmis*. Their relations are far from pleasant. To the *jenmis*, tenant is an ungrateful nuisance. Unless their mutual relationship is made pleasant, a repetition of the present trouble may come at any time even though the last Khilafat worker has been interred and the last no-co-operator cremated.”<sup>108</sup> In 1927, the government constituted a Tenancy Committee for reforming the tenancy system in Malabar. In 1939, another Tenancy Committee was set up including Abdurahiman and E.M.S. Namboodiripad as members.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Bipan Chandra, *Communalism in Modern India*, Delhi, 1984, p.56.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> *The Hindu*, dated 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1921.

<sup>109</sup> C.K. Kareem, “The Agrarian Relations of Kerala”, *Journal of Kerala Studies*, Trivandrum, December 1977, p.591.

Though the Khilafat agitation came to an abrupt close, it produced stalwarts like Abdurahiman and Moidu Maulavi in Kerala politics along with Ansari, Ajmal Khan, Azad, Asaf Ali, A. M. Khwaja, T. A. K. Sherwani etc. in national politics. They were identified as 'Nationalist Muslims' as opposed to the anti-Congress group led by the Ali Brothers.<sup>110</sup> They were committed to Indian nationalism and adhered to the principle of secularism. Above all, they were unflinching supporters of the Indian National Congress. Even when they disagreed with the policies and programmes of the Congress and even when they differed with Gandhiji on so many issues, they never shifted their loyalties. When almost all of their co-religionists left the Congress following the great rebellion, Abdurahiman and Moidu Maulavi stood steadfast with the organization. To them, the Congress was their life breath and the love of motherland was part of their religious faith. Hence to leave the Congress would be equivalent to commit political suicide and to oppose it would be an unpardonable crime against the motherland.

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<sup>110</sup> AzizAhmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan 1857-1964*, London, 1967, p.99.

**CHAPTER III**  
**IN THE VORTEX OF FREEDOM**  
**STRUGGLE**

## Chapter – 3

### **In the Vortex of Freedom Struggle**

The rebellion of 1921 was cruelly suppressed. The people of Ernad and Walluvanad were left numb and gloomy. Almost every Muslim house was left with out any adult male member. They were either killed or imprisoned or deported. A few male members who had survived the debacle escaped to distant places for fear of arrest and prosecution. The only human beings left behind were the widows, orphans, the sick and the disabled. The plight of these unfortunate victims was most distressing and sufficient to melt even a heart of stone.

The Muslims, in general, thought that it was the Indian National Congress that precipitated all the calamities over them. They held that after having persuaded them to join the Khilafat movement, the Congress left them in the lurch.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the Hindus believed that it was the Congress support for the Khilafat cause that led to the disastrous events of 1921. Thus on the one hand, the Hindus and the Muslims found fault with each other and on the other together they held the Congress and the Congress-Khilafat workers responsible for all the untoward incidents.

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<sup>1</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 21<sup>st</sup> July 1922

When Gandhiji also washed his hands off the responsibility of the rebellion,<sup>2</sup> the local Congress-Khilafat leaders became accountable for all the mishaps of 1921 and they cut a sorry figure before the public. The very words of K.P. Kesava Menon stand witness to the pathetic plight of a political worker in those days. He says, "They were hated by the authorities, looked on with suspicion by the Muslims and disliked by others."<sup>3</sup> It was in such a background that Abdurahiman came to the forefront and took up the historic responsibility of guiding the people through the path shown by Congress with proper perspective and determination. His mission was to rebuild a destroyed society, to make it stand on its own feet and to integrate it into something worthy to exist. Thus the history of Kerala witnessed the rare spectacle of a Khilafatist turning into a vigorous political activist.

When the rebellion was over the most crucial question was the rehabilitation of the people of the riot-affected area. But the government was still unsympathetic to the Mappila women and children, the most unfortunate victims of the rebellion. They were shut up in their villages by the Martial Law. When the government took every step to rehabilitate the Hindus with the help of voluntary organizations, the Mappila women and children were

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<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji said, "Mappilas are of fiery temperament and are said to be easily excitable. They are arranged and resort to violence in a matter of seconds. They have been responsible for many murders. Many years ago, a special Act was also passed to subdue them." See, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhiji*, Vol. 22. Publication Division, Delhi, 1966, pp.47-48

<sup>3</sup> K.P.S. Menon,(ed.), *Kesava Menon 90*, Calicut, 1977, p.38.

left to ruin themselves. When the government established refugee camps for the Hindus at Calicut and brought them to the camps under the supervision of officials, the authorities established police pickets in all important roads and railway stations ~~of~~ to prevent the Mappilas from escaping from the riot-affected area. The very statement “To give assistance and relief to Mappila women and children meant to help the rebels”<sup>4</sup> of Devadar of Servants of India Society who was engaged in relief activities in Malabar with the support of the government, provides evidence for the ulterior motive of the government and pro-government relief agencies. Further, the Arya Samajists who participated in the relief work were busy with the propagation of “horrors of Moplah atrocities”<sup>5</sup> among the Hindus in and outside the country.

The Congress leaders, K.P. Kesava Menon and K. Madhavan Nair organized relief camps at Calicut. But they too could not help the Mappilas held up in the rebel areas. Some times it seemed that they “were more concerned with the welfare of the Hindus than of the people as a whole”<sup>6</sup> and Abdurahiman had to make complaint that “the Congress workers seem to do relief activities exclusively for Hindus.”<sup>7</sup> Even in the midst of the rebellion, the rebel leader, Variam Kunnath Kunhammed Haji had made complaint

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<sup>4</sup> Keezhedath Vasudevan Nair, *Jeevitha Katha-Vaidya Ratnam P.S.Varrier*, (Mal.), Kottakkal, 1989, p.134.

<sup>5</sup> Saumyendranath Tagore, *Peasants Revolts in Malabar 1921*, Bombay, 1937, p.23.

<sup>6</sup> K.N. Panikkar, *Against Lord and State Religion and Peasant Uprisings in Malabar 1836-1921*, Delhi, 1989, p.189.

<sup>7</sup> Public Department (Confidential), G.O.No.327, Dated 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1921.(TNA)

against the inhuman attitude of the authorities towards the Mappila women and children. In Abdurahiman's letter to the Editor of the Hindu, he wrote, "Innocent women and children of Islam who had nothing to do with the riot, are not permitted to leave the place."<sup>8</sup>

Now it appeared to Abdurahiman that this denial of redressal to Muslim women and children was a part of the British policy of complete elimination of the Mappila community.<sup>9</sup> The sorrowful condition of the Muslim widows and orphans was wretchedly unhappy. Unfortunately, the authorities did not show an iota of kindness towards these wretched survivors of the police atrocities. Abdurahiman could no longer bear this injustice. He wanted to go to Ernad and Walluvanad, but he had been ordered by the District Magistrate not to leave the Calicut Municipal limit.<sup>10</sup> Though his legs were shackled, his hands were not fettered. So he wrote to the District Magistrate requesting him "to instruct the police not to obstruct the Muslim women and children leaving the area seeking relief" and also to permit him "to send a few persons to fetch the sufferers."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *The Hindu*, dated 18<sup>th</sup> October 1921

<sup>9</sup> Abdurahiman's Letter to the Secretary, Central Khilafat Committee, Bombay, U.S.S.F No. 410-I, Dated 24<sup>th</sup> October 1921.

<sup>10</sup> Abdurhiman's letter to Yakub Hasan, dated 25<sup>th</sup> September 1921, Strictly Confidential, No. 1560, C.S.F. 40-I, dated 6<sup>th</sup> October 1921, (TNA)

<sup>11</sup> Letter written by Abdurahiman to the District Magistrate, dated 13<sup>th</sup> October 1921. This letter was ordered to be 'lodged' on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1921. File D. Dis. No. 1612/27 Vol. II, dated 6<sup>th</sup> June 1928. (Regional Archives, Calicut)

Abdurahiman, some how, managed to secure permission to visit the Martial Law area. There the plight of riot victims was heart rending. The fear struck women and children had been hiding themselves in the caves of wild animals to save themselves from the heartless soldiers. Abdurahiman had to track through the hills and forests to bring them out to the relief camps. His friend A.M. Kadir writes, "Giving up food and drinks, Abdurahiman tracked for many days through mountains, hills and forests, which were inaccessible even to the Gurkas."<sup>12</sup>

Abdurahiman established a relief camp at Kallai in Calicut. When the number of Mappila women and children in the camp increased day by day, the District Magistrate, Thomas, was irritated and began to put every kind of obstacle before the relief activities of Abdurahiman. A relief fund sent to Abdurahiman by Yakub Hasan was not delivered to him.<sup>13</sup> When the obstructionist policy of the authorities became intolerable, Abdurahiman wrote to the District Magistrate, "Thousands of lives have been sacrificed for the honour of Islam and have gone to jail leaving behind widows and orphans at the mercy of the police, the military and the Hindus . . . Mappila women

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<sup>12</sup> A.M. Kadir, *Sher-e-Malabar Muhammed Abdurahiman*, Kodungallur, 1945, p.10.

<sup>13</sup> Abdurahiman in his letter to Yakub Hasan wrote, "I doubt the honesty of the Government in Malabar for Rs.1000/= sent to me on the 5<sup>th</sup> instant by TMO has not yet been delivered to me, perhaps to put the Khilafat workers under an economic blockade." quoted in M. Gangadhara Menon, *Malabar Rebellion [1921-1922]*, Allahabad, 1989, p.500

and children are also human beings and they deserve sympathy.”<sup>14</sup> He also wrote that the Khilafat workers must be permitted, in the name of humanity, to send foodstuffs to the areas affected by the rebellion. He sent this letter to the District Magistrate in the hands of Kunhamu, the Secretary of District Khilafat Committee. But the District Magistrate refused to accept the letter. So Abdurahiman sent the letter by registered post. When the letter was not replied to, Abdurahiman published it in the national newspapers.<sup>15</sup> Following the publication of the letter, many individuals and organizations came forward to help the riot victims. Abdurahiman’s friend and colleague, A. Muhammed, records, “Food, clothing and medical aids began to flow to Malabar. Abdurahiman was called to Delhi where he could meet the Ali Brothers, Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr. Ansari and could secure an advance of one lakh of rupees from the All India Khilafat Committee for his relief activities in Malabar.”<sup>16</sup>

However, Abdurahiman was not allowed to continue his relief activities. The publication of his letter in the national newspapers infuriated the District Magistrate. The latter publicly denied the receipt of the letter and held Abdurahiman responsible for creating disappointment and misunderstanding among the Mappilas against the government. Finally, on

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<sup>14</sup> *Fortnightly Report* for the Second Half of October 1921 (TNA)

<sup>15</sup> S. K. Pottakkatt, et al., *Muhammed Abdurahiman, a political biography*, (Mal.) Calicut, 1978, p.117.

<sup>16</sup> A. Muhammed, *Swathanthrya Samara Smaranakal*, (Mal.), Calicut, 1981, p.79.

22<sup>nd</sup> October 1921 Abdurahiman was arrested and sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment on the charge of 'disseminating false information' against the government.<sup>17</sup> Gladly, Abdurahiman accepted the verdict on behalf of the poor and helpless Mappila women and children. On receiving the news of his arrest his mother Aysumma telegraphed to the Khilafat office, Calicut, "Inform my son that his family is glad of his sufferings for the cause of religion and country."<sup>18</sup> He was sent to Alipuram jail of Bellari and after some time taken to the Madras central jail.<sup>19</sup>

Thus the District Magistrate, Mr. Thomas, was successful in taking revenge up on Abdurahiman. But Abdurahiman's letter continued to haunt him. Mr. Thomas had to give an explanation to the Government of India on the issue. He wrote to C.W. Gwynne, the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, "I am directed to say that, so far this Government are aware, there is no foundation whatever for the allegation that Mappila women and children were not permitted to obtain relief from the Calicut Khilafat Committee."<sup>20</sup> However, Mr. Thomas could no longer suppress the facts. Soon after the loyalist Mappilas also began to demand the appointment of a committee to investigate into the condition of the Mappila women and

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<sup>17</sup> *The Bombay Chronicle*, dated 1<sup>st</sup> November 1921.(Micro-film section, NMML)

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 17<sup>th</sup> March 1923.

<sup>20</sup> Home (Political) Department, file No. 674/1922, D.O. No. 4595 dated 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1922. [NAI]

children of the riot affected area. Accordingly, a committee consisting of Khan Bahadur Kalladi Moidutti Sahib of Mannarghat, Khazi Muttu Koya Thangal of Malappuram, Abbas Ali and Koyassan Koya Haji of Calicut was appointed to investigate into the financial condition of Mappila women and children of Ernad and Walluvanad taluks.<sup>21</sup> The Committee reported that there were 70,000 women and children in great distress and were in need of immediate and urgent relief.<sup>22</sup> However, the report of the loyalist also could not open the eyes of the British authorities.

Now the national journals, *the Muslim Sahakari*, *the Kerala Chandrika* and *the Muslim* took up the role left incomplete by Abdurahiman. *The Muslim* wrote, "The wretchedness in Malabar is increasing day by day at a terrific rate. Two figures to be seen in Malabar evincing enthusiasm and joy, one the *Kalan* (the god of death) and the other the hard hearted authorities. The Mappila men and women, young and old, are immersed in a sea of sorrow. They present a true picture of helplessness and misery. One look at them will melt even a stone..."<sup>23</sup> The condition of the Mappila prisoners in local jails was far worse. At Manjeri sub jail 30 Mappila prisoners died with

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<sup>21</sup> Public Department, (Confidential), G.O. No. 278 dated 28<sup>th</sup> March 1922 [TNA]

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> *The Muslim*, dated 28<sup>th</sup> September 1922. *The Muslim Sahakari*, dated 14<sup>th</sup> September 1922 and the *Kerala Chandrika*, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1922 also published similar report. MNNPR, October 1922. pp. 1271-1272 [TNA]

in 25 days.<sup>24</sup> Criticizing the inhuman police policy of Mr. Hitchcock, Mr. Knapp wrote to the Inspector General of Police, "Mr. Hitchcock has closed his eyes to every thing except the police aspect of the matter and ignore the very grave consequences which would follow on any thing approaching a repetition of the 'Train Tragedy' in the shape of large mortality among the Moplah prisoners."<sup>25</sup>

Abdurahiman's life in jail constituted another glorious chapter of struggle against the authorities. The iron bars of jail or the batons of wardens could not silence him nor could it make him subservient to the British authorities. He questioned the cruel treatment of the jail authorities towards the convicted prisoners. He complained to the Chief Warden, Mr. Disilva, against his subordinates for their barbarous treatment towards the prisoners. Abdurahiman warned him that the prisoners who had come to the jail so far were Congressmen arrested from their homes. But the prisoners convicted for participating in the rebellion would come to the jail soon. If the wardens continue their brutalities towards them, the latter would, of course, retaliate in the same coin and the condition in the jail would go out of control. The warning of Abdurahiman proved effective and the wardens responsible were transferred.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Under Secretary's Safe, No. 364, Dated 6<sup>th</sup> September 1922.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> S.K. Pottekkat, et al., op cit., p. 124.

The transfer of wardens, however, did not save the prisoners of Alipuram jail. The food and water supplied to them were quite unhygienic and highly polluted. Every day prisoners died of dehydration. Abdurahiman requested the authorities to give uncontaminated food and water to the prisoners. When the authorities turned a deaf ear to his request, Abdurahiman organized his fellow prisoners and started a hunger strike. National dailies gave good coverage to the strike. Finally, the jail authorities had to come to terms with Abdurahiman. The prisoners thus got good food and unpolluted water.<sup>27</sup>

It was at this time that Mr. A.R. Knapp, the Special Commissioner to investigate into the Malabar rebellion visited the Alipur<sup>am</sup> jail. Abdurahiman was brought before Mr. Knapp to give an eyewitness account of the rebellion. In the course of his discourse with Mr. Knapp, Abdurahiman frankly stated that the government was solely responsible for the rebellion. Hearing this comment, Mr. Knapp became angry and shouted to him, "You should have the same fate of Kunhi Kader."<sup>28</sup> It is a pity that it did not happen." Abdurahiman retaliated in the same coin, "Sir, how lucky would I have been if I had the same fate as Kunhi Kader. I believe that sacrificing one's life for the liberation of one's country is a holy act. I am sorry that it did not come to

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid. p.127.

<sup>28</sup> Kunhi Kader was the Secretary of Khilafat Committee, Tanur. Early in the beginning of the rebellion, he was arrested and hanged to death for waging war against the King.

pass.”<sup>29</sup> The jail authorities took the comments of Abdurahiman as arrogance and total negation of jail discipline and got him transferred to the Central Prison, Madras.<sup>30</sup>

There also he continued his struggle for justice and for the natural rights of the prisoners. He demanded decent behaviour towards the prisoners. He also demanded full trousers to the Muslim prisoners to perform the *Namaz*.<sup>31</sup> He issued an ultimatum to the authorities that the demands should be fulfilled within a week. When the jail authorities ignored his demands, he launched a hunger strike. The news of the strike agitated the people of Malabar. When the days rolled on, people became anxious of his health. The *Mathrubhumi* took up the issue and soon it became a matter of great concern among the public. K.P. Kesava Menon, the Secretary of Provincial Congress Committee (KPCC) requested Chakkara Chettiyar, the Secretary of the Madras Congress Committee to find an amicable solution to the issue in consultation with Abdurahiman. But the authorities were adamant and were not ready to permit Chakkara Chettiyar to visit Abdurahiman in the jail.<sup>32</sup> Every day the *Mathrubhumi* published report on the declining health of Abdurahiman. On 17<sup>th</sup> March the *Mathrubhumi* published a write up with the

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<sup>29</sup> E.Moidu Maulavi, “A Kalpadukal Pinturuka” (Mal.), (Follow the Footsteps), *Abdurahiman Memorial Souvenir*, Calicut, 1978, p.15

<sup>30</sup> Pottekkatt, et al., op cit., p.127.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. p. 128

<sup>32</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 17<sup>th</sup> March 1923.

caption "Janab Muhammed Abdurahiman" describing the tortures that Abdurahiman was undergoing in the jail and the anxiety of his kith and kin in his present physical condition.<sup>33</sup> On 20<sup>th</sup> March, a protest meeting was held at Calicut beach. The meeting passed a resolution recalling the courage and sacrifices of Abdurahiman and wished him all success in his present hunger strike.<sup>34</sup> Abdurahiman's brother, Kunhi Komu and a member of the Madras Legislative Council, Sadullah Pashah visited him in the jail and tried to dissuade him from the hunger strike.<sup>35</sup> But Abdurahiman was determined in his objective. Finally, the jail authorities succumbed before the resolution of Abdurahiman and accepted his demands unconditionally. Thus ended his twenty-three days long hunger strike in complete success.<sup>36</sup>

On the expiry of his term, Abdurahiman was released from the jail on 9<sup>th</sup> August 1923. On 11<sup>th</sup> August, he reached Calicut. On the same day a warm welcome was accorded to him. K.P. Kesava Menon, K. Kelappan, K. Madhavan Nair and several others paid homage to his self-sacrificing service to the motherland.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> S.K. Pottekkat, et al., op cit., p. 129.

<sup>35</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1923

<sup>36</sup> P.C. Sukumaran Nair, (ed.), *History of the Mathrubhumi*, Vol.3, Calicut, 1998, p. 279.

<sup>37</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 14<sup>th</sup> August 1923.

By this time, two years had elapsed after the great rebellion of 1921. The first noteworthy political development in Malabar after the great rebellion was the Khilafat conference held at Tellichery on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> May 1923. Yakub Hasan and Bi Amman, the mother of the Ali Brothers addressed the Tellichery conference.<sup>38</sup> In the same month of May a conference of the Indian National Congress was conducted at Palghat. Sarojini Naidu presided over the conference.<sup>39</sup> The leaders who addressed both the conferences emphasized the need of religious harmony. However, only a few Muslims from south Malabar attended either conference.<sup>40</sup> In spite of these activities, the socio-political condition of Malabar was still not better. Still the authorities looked upon the leaders with suspicion. When Yakub Hasan tried to visit Ernad, he was checked at Pulikkal by the orders of the District Collector, Mr. J.A. Thorne.<sup>41</sup>

The withdrawal of Muslims from the National Movement was found to be more painful to Abdurahiman than any thing else. He found that it was the inaction and indifference of the Congress in assuaging the wounded feelings of the Muslims that led to such a condition in Malabar. Further, the lack of tact and diplomacy on the part of the local Congress leaders also contributed

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<sup>38</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 5<sup>th</sup> May 1923. Also see the *Fortnightly Report* for the First Half of May 1923 [TNA]

<sup>39</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 8<sup>th</sup> May 1923. Also see, K.P.Kesava Menon, "Crusading for a cause", *1921-Movement: Reminiscence*, New Delhi, 1971, pp.162-63.

<sup>40</sup> *Fortnightly Report* for the First Half of May 1923. [TNA]

<sup>41</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 5<sup>th</sup> May 1923



in precipitating such a state of affair. The Congress leaders, instead of sympathizing with the Mappilas in their utter distress, brought various charges against them.<sup>42</sup>

Thus when Abdurahiman was out of jail, the political atmosphere of Malabar was still vitiated by communal poison and political inactivity. Further, he found that the wound created by the rebellion was still bleeding. So instead of taking up political activities immediately, Abdurahiman started his public life with the philanthropic works which he had left incomplete. He found it the best way to get rid of the misunderstanding among the Muslims towards the Congress. Inspired by the constructive programmes of Gandhiji, Abdurahiman approached the District Collector to give him permission to introduce *Charkas* among the families who had no men folk to earn their livelihood. But the Collector suspected the motive behind the programmes of Abdurahiman. So he gave him permission on two conditions, (1) it was not to be used, in any way at all, for propaganda purpose or as a political symbol and (2) its introduction should not create any misconception as to its nature and purpose.<sup>43</sup> Further, the District Collector strictly directed the Superintendent of Police to have careful watch on these 'Khilafat relief workers' and to report on their activities regularly. The Collector also wrote

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<sup>42</sup> M. Abdul Azeez. *Rise of Muslims in Kerala Politics*, unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1989, p.51

<sup>43</sup> Malabar Special Police,(MSP) File No. R.O.C. CI/6371/24 Dated 29<sup>th</sup> August 1924. (Regional Archives, Calicut)

to the Superintendent, "If I found that, from any cause, it led to political ferment, I should not hesitate to use my powers to eradicate it."<sup>44</sup> However, Abdurahiman could establish a number of *Khadi* and mat weaving centres at different places in Ernad and Walluvanad taluks and thereby he could soothe the pains of people to a great extent.

Then he took to political activities in Malabar. But he found that his Muslim brothers were still under the hard grip of anti-nationalist *Khan Bahadurs* and the reactionary *Ulama*. How to bring them back was the greatest riddle before him. He knew that the Muslims could not be brought back as long as there existed the misunderstanding that the Congress left them to the mercy of the British at a time when they were badly in need of its help. Abdurahiman had no alternative but to revive the Khilafat movement though it had lost its significance in international arena with the abolition of the Khilafat in Turkey by Mustafa Kemal Pashah. Abdurahiman feared that the decline of the Khilafat movement would be detrimental to the public life of the Muslims for years to come. So soon after his release from the jail Abdurhiman convened a general body meeting of the Kerala Provincial Khilafat Committee. The Committee elected Hasan Koya Mulla and Abdurahiman the President and Secretary respectively.<sup>45</sup> However, the regeneration of the Khilafat Movement did not go unopposed. When the pro-

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1924

government papers like the *Mithavathi* and the *Reformer* came against the Khilafat Committee the *Mathrubhumi* took up the cause of the Khilafat. Defending the Khilafat Committee the *Mathrubhumi* wrote, "It is known to the *Mitavathi* and the *Reformer* that the chief objective of the Khilafat Committee is the rehabilitation of the Muslim community. If the Muslim leaders have no right to work for the welfare of the Muslim community, whether the *Mitavati* and the *Reformer* and their most revered government officials shall do it."<sup>46</sup>

In the meantime, Abdurahiman participated in the annual meeting of the Indian National Congress held at Kokkanada in Tamil Nadu in December 1923. In the meeting, he presented a resolution requesting the AICC to appoint an enquiry committee on the Malabar rebellion. Maulana Muhammed Ali who was in the chair feared that a discussion on the resolution would create more smoke than light in the conference. So he persuaded Abdurahiman not to press the resolution but promised him that a benign consideration would be given to the issue. Hence the resolution was withdrawn.<sup>47</sup> When the Khilafat meeting was held in the same venue, Abdurahiman insisted on the appointment of a relief committee. This request

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<sup>46</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 26<sup>th</sup> February 1925.

<sup>47</sup> S.K. Pottakkatt, et al., op cit., p.132

was immediately conceded and a relief committee was constituted with Maulana Muhammed Ali as the Chairman.<sup>48</sup>

Abdurahiman now found that the revitalization of the Khilafat movement alone was not sufficient to bring the Muslims back to the National Movement. Further he found that mistrust and tension between the Hindus and Muslims was growing fast. He also knew that the Congress alone could fight forcibly and effectively against the elements that were busy with injecting communal poison into the minds of common people. Unfortunately, the condition of the Congress in Malabar was miserably pitiable. For several years no Provincial conference of the Congress was organized anywhere in Kerala. The Congress leaders were still haunted by the dreadful memory of the rebellion. Even Gandhiji was forced to ask, “whether the people of Kerala were in such a sleep as not to hear the message of the Congress.”<sup>49</sup> So as to shake off the political lethargy and to reactivate the Congress, Abdurahiman busied himself in convening the Provincial Conference. Finally, the Third Provincial Conference of the Indian National Congress was held at Calicut on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> April 1927.<sup>50</sup> Addressing the conference K. Madhavan Nair shared his anxiety with regard to the future of political activities in Kerala. He said, “If a Mappila put on Khadi, it was the easiest way for him to be

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> *The Young India*, quoted in *History of Freedom Movement* –103, p.37. [TNA]

<sup>50</sup> A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala and Freedom Struggle*, Kottayam, 1997, p. 77

brought before the court for waging war against the King! Many of those who had sincerely attempted to check the rebellion have been imprisoned on charge of conspiring with the rebels! On account of all these, people were afraid to come out openly to do any national work.”<sup>51</sup>

### **The Civil Disobedience Movement and the Salt Satyagraha:**

The Provincial Conference of the Congress held at Calicut helped the people of Malabar to look ahead again. The lethargy that had gripped the district began to vanish. The process of political reawakening got accelerated when the political atmosphere of India was charged with the feeling of resentment against the Simon Commission. The exclusion of Indians from the Commission caused wide spread protest in the country. Almost all parties, political and social, enthusiastically participated in the protest. Abdurahiman found it a golden opportunity to draw the Muslims of Malabar again into the vortex of the National Movement along with their Hindu brethren. He travelled through the length and breadth of Malabar preaching against the Simon Commission and spreading the messages of the Congress. He was elected as one of the three members of the committee constituted for implementing the boycott of the Commission.<sup>52</sup> On 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1928, a meeting was organized at Calicut Town Hall with the aim of presenting the

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<sup>51</sup> V.S. Keraleeyan, *Keralathintae Veeraputhran*, (Mal.)(Biography), (First Published in December 1945) Alwaye, 1998, p. 98. Also see, *History of Freedom Movement*, Part II p.41, [TNA]

<sup>52</sup> M. Rasheed, *Muhammed Abdurahman Sahib*, (Mal.), Calicut, 1994, p.53.

Congress programme of the boycott before the public. Addressing the meeting, Abdurahiman said, "During the Non-co-operation movement, the Hindus and Muslims stood together under Gandhiji. So they could make the British government shake with fear. But, unfortunately for us, the British could divide us and they could destroy the unity that existed among us through their mischievous deeds. But this time no body can divide us and no body can destroy our unity."<sup>53</sup> The speech was so inspiring that the people who had never been adherents to any political movement began to take great enthusiasm about the boycott agitation. This new awakening caused great anxiety to the authorities who were eager to show the world that ever since the 'Moplah rebellion', political activities had ceased to exist in Malabar. Thus making use of the loyalist Mappilas, the British started anti-boycott propaganda.<sup>54</sup> In the meeting held at Calicut on 29<sup>th</sup> January, Abdurahiman severely criticized the false propaganda of the Muslim loyalists. He said, "Some are trying to mislead you advocating co-operation with the government. But you must think of what you are going to gain by such co-operation. What have you obtained from the British other than the gallows and dungeons? Four thousand of our brothers are still in jail; Muslim women are being sent to the Andamans; and special forces are deployed every where

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<sup>53</sup> S.K. Pottekkatt, op cit., pp.200-01

<sup>54</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 29<sup>th</sup> January 1928

in Ernad ... Hence I appeal to my Muslim brothers to join with other communities and make the boycott a great success.”<sup>55</sup>

In an editorial to *Al-Ameen* Abdurahiman brought out the true nature of British rule in India and the role of the Congress in the National Movement.<sup>56</sup> The editorial concluded thus, “Indian national leaders have decided to boycott the Simon Commission and to observe *hartal* on 3<sup>rd</sup> February. The whole of India has got ready for that day. I believe that Malabar, especially the Muslims, will not lag behind others in this all India struggle.”<sup>57</sup>

The speeches and writings of leaders were powerful enough to wake up the people of the whole of Malabar. On 3<sup>rd</sup> February, the day of landing of Simon in Bombay, a complete *hartal* was observed in the whole of Malabar. Every important village and town witnessed demonstrations and protest meetings with placards and banners bearing ‘Simon go back.’<sup>58</sup>

In the evening of 3<sup>rd</sup> February, a great procession started from the premises of the KPCC office. K. Madhavan Nair, U. Gopala Menon, Manjeri Rama Iyyar, Hasan Koya Mulla and Abdurahiman were in the forefront of the procession. The procession first moved to the Calicut Municipal office. There

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<sup>55</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 31<sup>st</sup> January 1928

<sup>56</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1928, quoted in *E. Moidu Maulavi, Ente Koottukaran*, Calicut, 1964, pp.144-147.

<sup>57</sup> E.Moidu Maulavi, *Ente Koottukaran*, Calicut, 1964, p.146

<sup>58</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 5<sup>th</sup> February 1928. Also see, *History of Freedom Movement*, Part II, p.44 [TNA]

they hoisted a black flag.<sup>59</sup> Then the procession moved to the beach where a protest meeting was held. Addressing the meeting, Abdurahiman said, "The loyalists tell you that British rule is necessary for the uplift of the downtrodden. It is not at all true. We see that the lower classes are in better condition in the neighbouring princely states of Cochin and Travancore than they are in Malabar. As such every one needs 'Swaraj' and we, the Hindus and the Muslims, the upper class and the lower class, should work together for the independence of the motherland."<sup>60</sup>

The boycott agitation thus helped to bring about a new political awakening in India in general and in Malabar in particular. It was in this background that Gandhiji started the second phase of the Civil Disobedience Movement. But it did not have its immediate reverberations in Kerala. The bitter experiences of the Non-co-operation and the Khilafat were still haunting the thoughts of the Congress leaders here. They were afraid of another rebellion. Therefore, the question whether to begin the Civil Disobedience Movement in Malabar remained undecided for sometime.<sup>61</sup> However, the leaders like K. Kelappan could not withhold themselves from the Civil Disobedience Movement. But they thought of omitting south Malabar, the riot prone area, from the area of Civil Disobedience Movement and not to

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<sup>59</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 5<sup>th</sup> February 1928

<sup>60</sup> *Mathrubhumi* dated 7<sup>th</sup> February 1928

<sup>61</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 6<sup>th</sup> February 1928. Also see, E.M.S. Namboodiripad, *Selected Writings*, Calcutta, 1985, Vol.2. p. 187.

involve the Muslims in the movement as far as possible. Further, the loyalist Muslims of Malabar, supported by the authorities, also wanted to keep away the Muslims from the Civil Disobedience Movement. Besides, the refusal of the national Muslim leaders, Maulana Muhammed Ali and Muhammed Ali Jinnah, to co-operate with Civil Disobedience Movement<sup>62</sup> strengthened the stance of the loyalist Muslims. But in this issue, Abdurahiman totally disagreed with the Congress leadership, his own teacher Maulana Muhammed Ali and his bosom friend E. Moidu Maulavi.<sup>63</sup> To him, the very idea of excluding South Malabar and the Mappilas from CDM appeared be an affront to the Muslim community.<sup>64</sup>

However, the uncertainty in launching the Civil Disobedience Movement continued till K. Kelappan declared that Kerala was not behind the rest of India on her march towards freedom.<sup>65</sup> He also expressed his intention of starting *satyagraha* in Payyannur in north Kerala.<sup>66</sup> Accordingly, the youth from all over Kerala assembled at Calicut and marched to Payyannur, the venue of the *satyagraha*, on 13<sup>th</sup> April.<sup>67</sup> Among the *satyagrahis*, there was

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<sup>62</sup> Moin Shakir, *Khilafat To Partition A Survey of Major Political Trends Among Indian Muslims During 1919-1947*, Delhi, 1970, p. 332.

<sup>63</sup> E. Moidu Maulavi, *Moulaviyude Atmakatha*, (Mal.), (Autobiography of Maulavi), Kottayam, 1981, p. 156

<sup>64</sup> C.H. Kunjhappa, *Smaranakal Mathram*, (Mal.), Trichur, 1981, p. 160.

<sup>65</sup> A.K. Pillai, *Congressum Keralavum*, (Mal.), Trichur, 1935, p. 523

<sup>66</sup> V.R. Menon, (ed) *Mathrubhumiye Charithram*, Vol. I., (History of The Mathrubhumi), Calicut, 1998, p. 227.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

only one Muslim.<sup>68</sup> However, the Muslim youths of Chokli gave a warm welcome to the *satyagrahis* and presented a purse to the *jatha* captain, K.Kelappan.<sup>69</sup>

This enthusiasm of the Muslim youth of north Malabar opened the eyes of Moidu Maulavi, Hasan Koya Mulla, C.V. Abdulla Koya and others who were so far opposing the involvement of Muslims in the Civil Disobedience Movement. Now they joined with Abdurahiman and started propaganda campaign in south Malabar. They organized a warm reception at Calicut to T.R. Krishna Swami and the Satyagraha Volunteers who were on their route from Palghat to Payannur. Moidu Maulavi gave a purse to T.R. Krishna Swami.<sup>70</sup>

The active involvement of the Mappilas under the nationalist Muslim leaders in the Civil Disobedience Movement again caused restlessness to the authorities. They secured the 'service' of some 'prominent' Muslims to oppose the Congress leaders and the movement.<sup>71</sup> Abdurahiman felt it a great shame for the Muslim community. He took it a challenge. Using his tongue and pen, he conducted a ceaseless crusade against all forces that tried to oppose the CDM in the name of Islam. In a write up captioned "*Kerala*

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<sup>68</sup> M.G.S Narayanan, (ed.), *Malabar*, (Mal.), Calicut, 1994, p. 482.

<sup>69</sup> Moyarath Sankaran, *Ente Jeevitha Kadha*, (Mal.), (My Life Story), Calicut, 1965, p.242

<sup>70</sup> E. Moidu Maulavi, op cit., Note No. 63, p. 157

<sup>71</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 5<sup>th</sup> May 1930

*Muslimeegalum Civil Niyamalankanavum*” (The Muslims of Kerala and the Civil Disobedience Movement) published in *Al-Ameen* and *the Mathrubhumi*, Abdurahiman exhorted the Muslims to join the CDM and to strengthen the INC.<sup>72</sup>

In a meeting held at Calicut beach on 28<sup>th</sup> April 1930, Abdurahiman called on the Muslims, who could put up calmly with the tortures of police, to join him in the satyagraha struggle.<sup>73</sup> On 30<sup>th</sup> April, he again wrote in the *Mathrubhumi*, “Maulana Muhammed Ali and a handful of people are trying to dissuade the Muslims from joining the Civil Disobedience Movement. They argue that when India becomes independent there will be a rule of the Hindu majority and under such a rule the Muslims will be stamped out. The great political stalwarts, Maulana Azad, Dr. Ansari, and others have disproved their arguments and are fully engaged in the Civil Disobedience Movement . . . Those who oppose the CDM have no love of the community and no love of the country.”<sup>74</sup>

As a result of the activities of Abdurahiman and his friends, the number of Muslims participating in the CDM increased day by day. Simultaneously, the pro-British elements intensified their hooliganism toward the leaders and Congress workers. When they tried to hoot him down,

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<sup>72</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 27<sup>th</sup> April 1930.

<sup>73</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 29<sup>th</sup> April 1930

<sup>74</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 30<sup>th</sup> April 1930

Abdurahiman told them, "I am happy to receive slashes of my innocent Muslim brothers on my cheeks. But I earnestly appeal to them not to disrupt the Congress meetings and satyagraha activities."<sup>75</sup>

Every day, *Al-Ameen* and the *Mathrubhumi* appeared with passionate appeals and forceful warning from the mighty pen of Abdurahiman. He wrote, "Nothing in this world can dissuade us from this satyagraha strike. No doubt, we will go ahead until we attain our goal. We are fighting unarmed against the British King who has a mighty military force sufficient to eliminate us. Then what is the use of a few Mappilas fighting against us?"<sup>76</sup>

Meanwhile, Abdurahiman led a batch of satyagraha volunteers to Payyannur. Addressing a public meeting there he said, "Gandhiji has started the Civil Disobedience Movement to emancipate India from the repressive rule of the British. The Muslims of Kerala cannot keep away from it. . . I fear that if the Muslims of Kerala do not join it, the future historians will brand them as 'cowards'. So as to save the honour of the Muslim community, we join the movement."<sup>77</sup>

However, Abdurahiman found that the Payyannur satyagraha had failed to rouse the enthusiasm of the people properly. So he thought of making Calicut another venue of satyagraha. It was at this time that Gandhiji

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<sup>75</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1930

<sup>76</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 6<sup>th</sup> May 1930

<sup>77</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 7<sup>th</sup> May 1930

was arrested and a *hartal* was observed in Calicut on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1930. The *hartal* was complete. At 5 p.m. on the day, a procession was started to the beach from the premises of *Al-Ameen* press. A public meeting was held at the beach. Thousands of people attended it. Addressing the meeting, Abdurahiman said, "On 12<sup>th</sup> May Abdurahiman and his colleagues will break the salt law at Calicut beach."<sup>78</sup> He added, "Calicut beach was the venue where our predecessors had sacrificed their lives for the country and attained the much coveted martyrdom. It will be a great honour to us if we too can sacrifice our lives there."<sup>79</sup>

The declaration of Abdurahiman echoed through Kerala. The Congress leaders received it with a shock, as they were still apprehensive of the future of such a venture. They tried to dissuade him from this adventurous leap. Instead of withdrawing himself from the decision, Abdurahiman strengthened the agitation through demonstrations, public meetings, inspiring speeches and stirring articles.

Finally came the appointed day. In early morning at about 5.30 a.m. about forty volunteers gathered at the premises of *Al-Ameen* press. Reciting *Bande Mataram* and shouting 'Bharath Matha Ki Jai' and 'Gandhiji Ki Jai' the volunteers marched to the beach under their beloved leaders,

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<sup>78</sup> S.K. Pottakkatt, op cit., p. 215.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

Abdurahiman, K. Kelappan, P. Krishna Pillai and others.<sup>80</sup> By the time the satyagrahis reached the beach, thousands of people had already gathered there to stand witness to a great historic event. An armed force under the District Superintendent of Police, Mr. Buckley and the Deputy Superintendent of Police Mr. Amu had taken their position. First the satyagrahis hoisted the flag, while about six volunteers carried water from the sea and others prepared the hearth. When they started to make salt, the Superintendent of Police came forward and announced, "It is an unlawful assembly, so must disperse."<sup>81</sup> The satyagrahis ignored the order and continued the making of salt. Then the police started charging the volunteers brutally. Almost all but Abdurahiman and P.Krishna Pillai were beaten down. Holding up the pot (used for preparing salt), Abdurahiman stood like a stone statue amidst the police force and Krishna Pillai upheld the flag without being ready to surrender to the police. Policemen rounded them up and charged them severely. Still they could not bow Abdurahiman down. Some policemen then squeezed his neck with their batons while others continued charging on him. The pot in his hands was broken into pieces but still was trying to hold up its pieces and still shouting '*Bharath Matha ki Jai*' and '*Gandhiji ki Jai*'. Meanwhile, his head and face were severely wounded, blood oozed profusely and his milky white Khader shirt turned red. Finally he was crushed down by

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<sup>80</sup> Moyarath Sankaran, op cit., pp. 250-51

<sup>81</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 13<sup>th</sup> May 1930

the brutal police force. Not satisfied with these brutalities Mr. E.V. Amu forced Abdurahiman's head to the mud.<sup>82</sup> Thousands of people watching the scene could not bear it. They rushed to the scene to check the police. Unable to resist the popular fury, the police immediately left the place with the arrested leaders.<sup>83</sup>

Abdurahiman, Kelappan, Krishna Pillai, Krishna Swami Iyyer, R.V. Sharma and Madhavanar were brought before the Divisional Officer, Mr. Saldana, who sentenced them for nine months rigorous imprisonment under the Indian Penal Code 145 for illegal assembly and for violation of the Madras Salt Tax Act 74 C.F.<sup>84</sup> The District Magistrate, Mr. E.C. Wood seemed happy in dealing severely with the *sathyagrahis*. He wrote, "The offenders received more severe sentences than had been given hitherto."<sup>85</sup> On 13<sup>th</sup> May the special correspondent of the *Mathrubhumi* met Abdurhamian at West Hill railway station when he was being carried to Cannanore central jail and reported that he appeared to be very happy in discharging his duties towards the motherland.<sup>86</sup> *Al-Ameen* congratulated the leaders who gladly subjected themselves to the atrocities of the police and courted jail life for the

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<sup>82</sup> Antalal, "Swathadriya Samaram, Chila Chitrangal", (Mal.), (Freedom Struggle, Some Pictures), *Janapatham*, Trivandrum, August, 1997, p.95.

<sup>83</sup> V.S. Keraleeyan, op cit., pp.148-151.

<sup>84</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 13th May 1930

<sup>85</sup> The District Magistrate's Account, The Civil Disobedience Movement, 1930-31, Madras, 1931, p.141.(TNA)

<sup>86</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 14<sup>th</sup> May 1930

emancipation of the motherland.<sup>87</sup> *Al-Ameen* also asserted that if the people and volunteers follow the vow of non-violence strictly, it would, of course, lead the present struggle to complete success.<sup>88</sup> In an editorial captioned, “An Appeal to Kerala Muslims” *Al-Ameen* reminded the Muslims, “Janab Abdurahiman Sahib has gladly suffered all tortures of the police and has courted jail life to save the fair name of the Kerala Muslims and that it is the duty of the Muslims of Kerala to make his efforts successful.”<sup>89</sup>

The day following the police atrocities at Calicut beach, the whole of Kerala witnessed an unprecedented wave of protest. Demonstrations and protests meetings were conducted in every important village and town in Malabar. The enthusiasm of the people in the Civil Disobedience Movement reached its heights. To quote the words of K.P. Kesava Menon, “The Civil Disobedience Movement had flashed through out Malabar like an electric current. It lit a bright flame in the hearts of the youths.”<sup>90</sup> People from all walks of life began to engage themselves in the freedom struggle. The youths formed ‘*Yuvak Sangh*’, students constituted ‘*Kerala Vidyarthi Sangh*’ and

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<sup>87</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 14<sup>th</sup> May 1930

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 15<sup>th</sup> May 1930

<sup>90</sup> K.P., Kesava Menon, “Janab Muhammed Abdurahiman”, *The Mathrubhumi Weekly*, Dated 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 1952, p.8.

children organized ‘*Bala Bharath Sangh*’.<sup>91</sup> In short the whole of Kerala witnessed a new nationalist awakening.

People from different quarters congratulated Abdurahiman for his great sacrifice. K. Madhavan Nair stated, “The courage of Sri. Kelappan, the fortitude of Krishna Swami and the patriotism of Abdurahiman Sahib awakened the slumbering Kerala. The reverberations of *satyagraha* echoed from Kasargod to Kanyakumari.”<sup>92</sup> The fifth annual meeting of All Kerala Muslim *Yuvajana Sangha* held at Ernakulam passed a resolution congratulating Abdurahiman for his sacrifices to the country and the community.<sup>93</sup> Thus the sacrifices of Abdurahiman proved fruitful. Hundreds of Muslim youths enrolled themselves as *satyagrahis*.

As usual, the new nationalist awakening particularly the awakening among the Muslims agitated the British authorities and the loyalists. They found Abdurahiman responsible for it and made him the target of their attack. They were not satisfied with breaking his head or putting him behind the bars. They wanted to demolish his saintly image from the minds of the Muslim youths. They allied themselves with the orthodox *Ulama* and got *fatwa*

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<sup>91</sup> K. Damodaran and C. Narayanan Pillai, *Keralathile Swathantrya Samaram*, (Mal.) (Freedom Struggle in Kerala), (First Published in 1957), Trivandrum, 1997, p.36.

<sup>92</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1930

<sup>93</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 29<sup>th</sup> May 1930

branding him 'Kafir' (Infidel).<sup>94</sup> The *Mathrubhumi* and *Al-Ameen* came to the defence of Abdurahiman who was still in jail. Criticizing the *fatwa* and the unholy alliance between Muslim aristocracy and the *Ulama*, the *Mathrubhumi* wrote, "Abdurahiman is one of the few Muslims capable of sacrificing any thing for the liberation of the motherland . . . Oh! Muslim brothers do you know how shameful it is to trouble him with baseless allegations and infidelity . . . If you are not capable of helping the freedom struggle, better not to disturb it. It is better not to insult the Muslim community."<sup>95</sup>

On completion of his term, Abdurahiman was released from prison on 20<sup>th</sup> December 1930.<sup>96</sup> People everywhere in Kerala received him as a great hero. The fifth All Kerala Political Conference held at Badagara in May 1931 passed a resolution congratulating Abdurahiman and Moidu Maulavi for the great services they rendered in reawakening the Muslims of Malabar and for bringing them into the main stream of national movement.<sup>97</sup> Presenting the resolution, Kozhipurath Madhava Menon said, "In the beginning [of the CDM], due to the opposition from the pro-British elements, even a great leader like Kelappan was not able to address a public meeting on the sea shore of Calicut. But the entry of Abdurahiman and Moidu Maulavi into the

<sup>94</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 15<sup>th</sup> May 1930

<sup>95</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 15<sup>th</sup> May 1930

<sup>96</sup> S.K. Pottakkatt, et al., op cit., p. 226

<sup>97</sup> A.K. Pillai, op cit., p.537.

struggle turned the tide of events and made the movement a great success.”<sup>98</sup>

In his humility Abdurahiman voted against the resolution. However, the resolution was carried.

Paradoxically, in the same conference Abdurahiman had to counter the argument of M.P. Govinda Menon that the Mappilas of Ernad and Walluvanad were against the INC. Abdurahiman asserted that the majority of the Mappilas were with the Congress. At the same time he contented that as in the case of any other community, there might be a few Mappilas who did not subscribe to the views of the INC.<sup>99</sup> Attesting the contention of Abdurahiman, Sen Gupta, the Chairman of conference, stated that out of 60,000 people arrested in connection with the CDM 12,000 were Muslims.<sup>100</sup>

Besides the salt satyagraha Abdurahiman took active role in the propagation of swadeshi, boycott of foreign clothes, picketing of liquor shops etc. He exhorted the Muslims to engage themselves in the manufacture of swadeshi goods for the uplift of the country. He requested them not to dishonour Islam by wearing foreign clothes during religious festivals and implored them to prove before the world that the Muslims of Kerala were not behind others in the National Movement.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 6<sup>th</sup> May 1931. Also see V.S. Keraleeyan, op cit., p. 144

<sup>99</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 5<sup>th</sup> May 1931

<sup>100</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 6<sup>th</sup> May 1931

<sup>101</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 8<sup>th</sup> January 1931. MNNPR January to March 1931, [TNA]

However, the withdrawal of the CDM<sup>102</sup> not only created disappointment among the Congressmen but also made the Congress disorganized. Like any other ordinary Congressmen Abdurahiman also felt quite disappointed in the withdrawal of the Movement and became very restive in the absence of political activities. But he never conveyed his disappointment to the followings. Instead he described the withdrawal of the CDM only as lull before the storm. He wrote, "In any case there are indications to show that the moon is about to rise in the agitated political sky of India and the rising moon amidst the dark clouds will loudly proclaim the end of British regime in India."<sup>103</sup>

Abdurahiman never remained idle. He wanted to keep alive the nationalistic enthusiasm generated by the CDM. He chalked out his own methods to serve the purpose. He organized a flag-day meeting at Calicut Town Hall on 30<sup>th</sup> August 1931. Addressing the meeting, he said, "Recently a sluggishness has caught the Congress in Kerala. Hoisting and saluting the flag alone will not bring freedom to India . . . We are not to be lethargic. We are to get ready for the next struggle."<sup>104</sup> Similarly, he moved a resolution in the KPCC meeting held at Gurveyur on 5<sup>th</sup> September 1931 to observe Mappila Day on the 19<sup>th</sup> of every month to commemorate the Wagon Tragedy

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<sup>102</sup> The Civil Disobedience Movement was withdrawn in accordance with the Gandhi-Irwin Agreement signed on 5<sup>th</sup> March 1931.

<sup>103</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 17<sup>th</sup> July 1931. MNNPR May to August 1931 p.998. [TNA]

<sup>104</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 1<sup>st</sup> September 1931

of 1921 and thereby to boost the nationalistic morale of the people.<sup>105</sup> The decision of the KPCC, however, excited the authorities and reported that the KPCC had decided to agitate for the release of Mappila rebellion prisoners and advantage was taken of the anniversary of the Mappila train tragedy on September 19<sup>th</sup> to hold meetings in furtherance of this object.<sup>106</sup>

In short, the Civil Disobedience Movement and the subsequent political activities helped to bring the people of Malabar back into the freedom struggle. The above discussion testifies that Abdurahiman was mainly responsible for this reawakening particularly among the Mappilas who had been hostile to the Congress and the National Movement ever since the rebellion of 1921. Through the CDM, he gave them a new leadership and a new political consciousness free from the influence of religious dogmatism. He invited the Muslims to the Congress and the National Movement in the name of Islam. Thus he could create immense political consciousness among them. Finally, he made them far ahead of their Hindu brethren in the Congress in demanding complete independence.

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<sup>105</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 8<sup>th</sup> September 1931

<sup>106</sup> *Fortnightly Report* (Confidential) for the Second Half of September 1931 [TNA]

**CHAPTER IV**  
**DIFFERENCES WITHIN**  
**CONSENSUS**

## Chapter – 4

### Differences within Consensus

Prior to the Malabar rebellion, the activities of the Congress had greatly helped to strengthen the bond of communal harmony in Kerala. The Hindus and the Muslims worked together in strengthening the Congress and the National Movement. But the rebellion seriously damaged the Hindu-Muslim relation. The rebellion also impaired the unity in the Congress and the Hindus and the Muslims in the organization began to part their ways. The publication of the two newspapers, the *Mathrubhumi* (in 1923) and *Al-Ameen* (in 1924) accelerated the polarization in the Congress, though their founders had no such intention. Further, the temporary withdrawal of the early political stalwarts like K.P. Kesava Menon and K. Madhavan Nair from the political scene and the life imprisonment of M.P. Narayana Menon, the strongest exponent of Hindu-Muslim unity in Malabar, widened the gulf between the Hindus and the Muslims in the Congress. Gradually two distinct groups, one centring round K.Kelappan and the *Mathrubhumi* and the other on Abdurahiman and *Al-Ameen* took shape. In the beginning of this political polarization, the differences between the two were not so intense and there were instances in which the two groups co-operated with each other. For instance, in the boycott of the Simon Commission, both the groups worked together and the boycott proved a great success. However, the co-operation

lasted only up to the close of the second phase of the Civil Disobedience Movement.

It was at this time that the national leaders with socialist bent of mind began to suspect the feasibility of the Gandhian programmes. The leaders like Jayaprakash Narayan, Acharya Narendranath, M.N. Roy, Ram Manohar Lohya etc. disagreed with the Gandhian programmes. They formed the Congress Socialist Party. In Kerala the leaders like E.M.S. Namboodiripad, P.Krishna Pillai, P.Narayanan Nair, K.A. Keraleeyan, K.P.R. Gopalan, A.K. Gopalan etc. shared the socialist views. However, the socialists constituted only a minority in Kerala Congress.

Soon after the withdrawal of the Civil Disobedience Movement, differences cropped up in Kerala Congress. The socialists and the nationalist Muslims in the Congress turned up with their grievances against the leadership. The socialists who wanted to strengthen their 'mass base' through trade union movements formed the left wing in the Congress.<sup>1</sup> E.M.S. Namboodiripad and P. Krishna Pillai led the socialist group. The Muslims who wanted special programmes to bring back the Mappila populace to the National Movement through the Congress constituted the nationalist Muslim group. Abdurahiman and Moidu Maulavi were the leaders of the nationalist

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<sup>1</sup> A.Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala and Freedom Struggle*, Kottayam, 1977, p.86

Muslims.<sup>2</sup> The Congressmen with unflinching faith in Gandhian ideology constituted the right wing.<sup>3</sup> K. Kelappan also known as Kerala Gandhi was the supremo of the right wing.

As most of the Muslims of Malabar were peasants and workers of low earnings, the nationalist Muslims were in favour of organizing them on trade union line. They found two advantages in it. Firstly, it would improve their living condition. Secondly, it would strengthen the Congress and the National Movement at large. In the Golden Jubilee meeting of the Congress held at Calicut, Abdurahiman said, "As the working class people have not yet organized into a movement in India, they could not have influenced the Congress so far. But now things are changing. The workers and the Congress are being bound firmly. This unity would further India's struggle for freedom."<sup>4</sup> When the rightists disagreed with such aspirations of the nationalist Muslims, the latter weaned themselves away from the former.

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<sup>2</sup> The nationalist Muslim group was also known as Al-Ameen group as most of its leaders were related to the newspaper, Al-Ameen, published from Calicut.

<sup>3</sup> The rightists were also known as 'Gandhi Sanga'. The leftists and the nationalist Muslim group called the rightists as 'Chalappuram Gang' as most of its leaders were settled at Chalappuram area of Calicut Municipality.

<sup>4</sup> S.K. Pottekkatt, et al., *Muhammed Abdurahiman, a political biography*, (Mal.), Calicut, 1978, p.532

Simultaneously, the nationalist Muslims came closer to the socialists and made common cause with them.<sup>5</sup>

When the nationalist Muslims and the socialists joined hands, the rightists became a minority in Kerala Congress. Consequently they also lost their control over the KPCC. But the right wing Congress leaders were not ready to succumb before the majority socialists and the nationalist Muslims. Making use of the good will of Gandhiji and other national leaders the rightists tried to assert their power over the left wing. All such attempts created a lot of fuss and friction in Kerala Congress for about a decade. Sometimes, the tussle between the rightists and leftists degraded from ideological to personal level and even to defamation of the leaders.

However, the difference in the Congress remained a hush-hush affair until it was publicly revealed in connection with the election to the Calicut Municipal Council. When the nationalist Muslims wanted Abdurahiman to contest in the election, the right wing wanted to evade him. When the nationalist Muslims exerted pressure on behalf of him, the right wing that dominated Municipal Congress Committee, allowed him a seat where the chance of his success was very remote.<sup>6</sup> The rightists were sure of his defeat. So they made a bogus assurance that Abdurahiman would be chosen the

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<sup>5</sup> E.M.S. Namboodiripad, "Nhan Ariyunna Abdurahiman" (Mal.), (Abdurahiman: Whom I Know), *Mathrubhumi*, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1993. Also see, A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Concise Political History of Modern Kerala*, Trivandrum 1987, p.60.

<sup>6</sup> S.K. Pottekkatt, et al., op cit., p.255

Chairman of the municipality if got elected to the Council and if the Congress got majority. In spite of all these deceitful activities, the nationalist Muslims worked hard for the success of the Congress candidates. In all his election campaigns, Abdurahiman emphasized the need of electing the Congress candidates and of strengthening the Congress in the struggle against the British.<sup>7</sup> His words bore fruits. Abdurahiman got elected to the Municipal Council and the Congress got majority in the Council. The rightists felt disappointed in the election of Abdurahiman. In accordance with the pre-election understanding with the rightists, Abdurahiman offered himself as a candidate to the office of the Chairman of the Council. But the rightists conveniently ignored the promise and supported the independent candidate, M. Karunakaran against Abdurahiman.<sup>8</sup> When the nationalist Muslims and their newspaper, *Al-Ameen* came to the defense of Abdurahiman, the *Mathrubhumi* took the side of the rightists. Arguments for and against Abdurhiman filled the columns of these newspapers. One of the rightist leaders criticized Abdurahiman a 'power monger'.<sup>9</sup> Abdurahiman refuted all criticisms against him. He wrote, "A day may come and the truth will be revealed to all."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 19<sup>th</sup> October 1931.

<sup>8</sup> V.S. Keraleeyan, *Keralathintae Veeraputhran*, (Mal.), (The Brave Son of Kerala), Calicut, 1959, p.155

<sup>9</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 21<sup>st</sup> December 1931

<sup>10</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1931

He found that during election the people were more attentive to political issues. Hence it was a good opportunity for him to educate the people of the ethos of nationalism and the true spirit of secularism in a multi-religious society like India. He also found it an opportunity to present the sufferings of the people under the British yoke and to activate them in the anti-British struggle. Hence, he never missed such an opportunity. He either put himself as a candidate or he placed his friends as candidates and undertook devastating election campaigns sweeping away the unfounded myths and human gods from the political arena.

However, the rightists were not convinced of the explanations of Abdurahiman and the nationalist Muslims. Finally, the independent candidate, M. Karunakaran, got elected as the Chairman of the Municipal Council in which the Congress had a clear majority. Thus the Congress lost the office of the Chairman because of the internal strife in the organization. Further, the election issue widened the gulf between the rightists and the nationalist Muslims.

For about six months after the Municipal election Abdurahiman was busy with the development of *Al-Ameen*. During this period he visited Colombo, Madras, Delhi and Bombay seeking financial help from the friends and well-wishers of *Al-Ameen*. During this visit he met Gandhiji and Patel

and he apprised them the agony he experienced from the right wing in connection with the Calicut Municipal election.<sup>11</sup>

In June 1932 Abdurahiman returned to Calicut after his north Indian journey and the Hajj pilgrimage. Then he resumed political activities with added enthusiasm. Soon he took to the battlefield of election. Ignoring the seasoned opposition from the rightists, he contested to the District Board from Tirur and got elected in 1932.<sup>12</sup>

In 1934 he contested in the election to the Central Legislative Assembly. Sathar Sett, a known supporter of the Muslim League and close associate of Mohammed Ali Jinnah was the rival candidate. Again the right-left in-fight in the Congress cropped up. In spite of Sathar Sett's affiliation to the League, the right wing supported him against Abdurahiman.<sup>13</sup> As usual, the nationalist Muslims and the left wing worked hard for Abdurahiman. But it was of no avail before powerful lobbying of his rival candidate. Finally, Abdurahiman was defeated for a narrow margin of 322 votes.<sup>14</sup>

The defeat of Abdurahiman had far reaching consequences on Kerala politics. Firstly, the defeat deepened the gulf that separated the right wing

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<sup>11</sup> S.K. Pottekkatt, et al., op cit., p. 263

<sup>12</sup> E.Moidu Maulavi, *Ende Koottuakaran*, Calicut, 1964, p.192.

<sup>13</sup> S.K. Pottekkatt, et al., op cit., p.314

<sup>14</sup> Sathar Sett scored 1960 votes against 1638 votes by Abdurahiman. See S.K. Pottekkatt, et al., op cit., p.321.

from the left wing. Secondly, it weakened the position of the nationalist Muslims. Thirdly, it provided an easy access to the Muslim League into the Kerala politics. In other words, the greatest beneficiaries of the defeat of Abdurhiman were the Muslim Leaguers who had so far been kept away from Kerala politics by the active presence of the nationalist Muslims.

However, the infighting in the Congress continued unabated. Each public election, whether to local bodies or to the Provincial or Central Legislative Assemblies, intensified the tussle in the organization. It seemed that the right wing had adopted it as a policy to oppose Abdurahiman and those who appeared to be his co-travellers. In the District Board election of 1936, the right wing suggested Palat Kunhi Koya as the official candidate of the Congress from Kondotty constituency. Accordingly, Kunhi Koya submitted his nomination to the electoral authorities. But when it was known that he was a well-wisher of Abdurahiman, the rightists put up Azhakath Kunhunni Nair, the manager of Kondotty Thangal, a known pro-British, as rival candidate. Abdurahiman lodged a complaint with the Congress High Command against this shameless political opportunism. It was of no use. Kunhunni Nair got elected with the support of the Kondotty Thangal.<sup>15</sup>

Opposition of the rightists did not dissuade Abdurhiman from contesting in the election. Elections provided him opportunity to stir up the

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<sup>15</sup> S.K. Pottekkatt, et al., op cit., pp. 319-320

people against colonial powers and to draw them into the vortex of freedom struggle. In 1937 he contested in the election to the Madras Legislative Assembly from the dual-member constituency of Malappuram. Two Muslim landlords, Kalladi Unni Kammu and Kizhisseri Chekku were the rival Muslim League candidates. They were determined to vanquish Abdurahiman at any cost. They started with the totally disproved and out of date propaganda that the Congress deceived the Muslim community during the rebellion of 1921. When the oft repeated propaganda proved ineffective, they brought Maulana Shaukath Ali to Malabar to canvass votes for "the Muslim League in preference to the Congress Muslim candidates."<sup>16</sup> But Shaukath Ali too failed to rouse the Muslims against the Congress and against Abdurahiman. Then the League used the trump card. They obtained a 'fatwa' from a known religious scholar, Pang Ahmed Kutty Musaliar, declaring Abdurahiman a 'Kafir'.<sup>17</sup> The nationalist Muslims pooh-poohed the *fatwa* and continued their fight against the communal politics of the Muslim League. In this struggle the nationalist Muslims were not without the support of the progressive religious leaders. P.M.S.A. Pookoya Thangal of Panakkad gave his wholehearted support to them.<sup>18</sup> Abdurahiman waged a neck-to-neck battle with the rival candidates. Meetings and demonstrations literally aroused the

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<sup>16</sup> *Fortnightly Report* for the First Half of February 1937 (TNA)

<sup>17</sup> K. Ussan, *Samarathinte Jananam*, (Mal.), (Birth of the Struggle), Kondotty, 1998, p.10

<sup>18</sup> T.S. Savan Kutty, *Seethi Sahib*, (Mal.), Trivandrum, 1992, p.149.

people of the riot-prone area. E.M.S. Namboodiripad observes, "It was for the first occasion since 1921 when meetings were organized in the dangerous area."<sup>19</sup> Thus after a hot contest Abdurahiman was elected with 2800 votes against 1200 votes of his immediate rival candidate.<sup>20</sup>

Abdurahiman's election was in recognition of his great services to the country and the community. Regarding his success in the election his colleague, E.M.S. Namboodiripad writes, "The heart of the Moplah peasant beats right; he is still the militant fighter that he had always been; he will not leave the Congress although the Congress leaders left him sixteen years ago."<sup>21</sup> Further, through this election, the Mappilas of South Malabar once again proved that they were still in consensus with the Indian National Congress and not in agreement with the communal politics of the Muslim League. Any way, the election of Abdurahiman to the Legislative Assembly was indigestible to the rightists.

Nevertheless, the success of Abdurahiman fired the enthusiasm of the nationalist Muslims. They wanted him to be in the cabinet. The nationalist Muslim leaders, Kattilasserri Muhammed Musaliar, K.V. Noorudheen and M. Muhammed met the Congress Assembly Party leader, Rajagopalachari at Madras and requested him to include Abdurahiman in the ministry as the

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<sup>19</sup> E.M.S. Namboodiripad, *Selected Writings*, Vol.2., Calcutta, 1985, p.193.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. p.194.

representative of the Malabar district.<sup>22</sup> The Tamil Nadu Congress leader, Kamaraj was also in support of the demand of the nationalist Muslims.<sup>23</sup> But Abdurahiman was least interested in power politics. When he came to know of the mission of his colleague to Madras, he reprimanded them and reminded them that neither he nor the Congress was after power.<sup>24</sup> In spite of his opposition, the nationalist Muslims continued their demand to get him included in the Congress ministry of Rajagopalachari. The Muslim Merchant Association, Bhatkal, the Muslim Progressive Union, Tirur, the *Muslim Jama't*, Calicut, the *Congress Pracharana Samithi*, Parappil Calicut, the Congress Committee, Baliyapatam, etc. demanded the AICC to include Abdurahiman in the Rajaji ministry.<sup>25</sup> But, as usual, the right wing came out with their objections against Abdurahiman. They pointed out that the Members from Malabar would not support him.<sup>26</sup> Finally, the decision of the right wing prevailed upon and their nominee, Kongattil Raman Menon was included in Rajaji's cabinet as the representative of Malabar. However Rajaji was remorseful of not including Abdurahiman in his cabinet.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> M, Ahamed Kutty Moopan, "Moonnu Anubavangal" (Mal.) (Three Experiences), *Muhammed Abdurahiman Souvenir*, Calicut, 1978, p.79.

<sup>23</sup> T.N. Ramaswamy, "Nirbayanaya Netavu" (Mal.) (The Fearless Leader), *Muhammed Abdurahiman Souvenir*, Calicut, 1978, p.89.

<sup>24</sup> M, Ahamed Kutty Moopan, loc cit.

<sup>25</sup> A. I. C. C. Papers, Pl.3 (11) 1937, NMML, Delhi.

<sup>26</sup> All except one MLA from Malabar were rightists.

<sup>27</sup> In connection with the unveiling of Abdurahiman's photograph at Calicut Town Hall in 1946 Rajaji expressed his grief and sorrow in not including him in the cabinet. For details see, Aboobacker, Kathiyalam (ed.), *Abdurahiman Kavithakal*, (Mal.) Kodungallur, 2001, p.36.

### **At the Apex of the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee:**

Every defeat of the right wing in the public election weakened its hold over the organization. Simultaneously, the nationalist Muslims strengthened their position in the party. They allied with the socialists and played a crucial role in the organizational history of Kerala Congress. The rightists criticized the alliance and described it as 'Mecca-Moscow Pact'. But undaunted by the criticisms of the right wing, the socialists and the nationalist Muslims went ahead with the programme of strengthening the mass base of the Congress with the avowed objective of getting control over the local committees and subsequently over the Provincial Committee (KPCC). Accordingly, a Muslim Contact Committee was formed with Abdurahiman as the Chairman and E.M.S. Namboodiripad, Kattilasseril Muhammed Musaliar and E. Moidu Maulavi as members.<sup>28</sup> The stated objective of the committee was the propagation of the Congress principles among the Muslims. Inadvertently, it was against the interests of the Muslim League, the rightists and the British authorities in Malabar. Successful working of the committee created great havoc to them. Their anxiety was clear from the *Fortnightly Report* which runs as "In Malabar district E. Moidu Maulavi, a Mappila who carries some weight with younger men, is working hard to secure Mappila adherents to the

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<sup>28</sup> *Fortnightly Report* for the First Half of July 1937 [D.O. No. P4-2, dated 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1937. (TNA)]

Congress Party, but it seems likely on the whole that the Mappilas will adhere to the Muslim League.”<sup>29</sup>

The League wanted to obstruct the working of the committee by any means. They instituted an anti-Congress move. They procured a *fatwa* declaring the Congress anti-Islamic and urging the Muslims not to join it.<sup>30</sup> But the Muslim Contact Committee under Abdurahiman was not susceptible to the threats of the communal politics of the Muslim League and the reactionary *Ulama*. In the teeth of stiff opposition from the League, the committee worked more vigorously than before. Abdurahiman brought Yusuf Mehar Ali, the firebrand of the nationalist Muslims, from Bombay. The British authorities and their co-travellers were incensed. The District Magistrate declared Mehar Ali’s speeches highly inflammatory and prohibited him from entering south Malabar and addressing meetings under section 144 CPC. Mehar Ali defied the prohibitory order and addressed a public meeting at Calicut on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1937. Immediately, he was arrested and was sentenced to six months imprisonment.<sup>31</sup>

The spirited activities of the Muslim Contact Committee helped to strengthen the hold of the Congress over the Muslims of South Malabar. A

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<sup>29</sup> *Fortnightly Report* for the Second Half of May 1937 [D.O. No. P 4-9 Dated 19<sup>th</sup> May 1937] (TNA)

<sup>30</sup> *Fortnightly Report* for the First Half of July 1937 (TNA)

<sup>31</sup> *Fortnightly Report* For the First Half of July 1937 [D.O. No. P4-2 Dated 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1937] (TNA)

large number of Muslims got themselves enrolled in the Congress. Through these new members, the Nationalist Muslim group and the socialists secured an upper hand in the local committees of the party. It was in this context that Abdurahiman contested in the election to the KPCC and was elected with the highest number of 1178 votes.<sup>32</sup> Then he competed to the office of the President of the KPCC. The socialists supported his candidature. Thus on 14<sup>th</sup> January 1938 the Nationalist Muslim leader Abdurahiman and the socialist leader E.M.S. Namboodiripad were elected the President and Secretary of the KPCC respectively.<sup>33</sup> The success of the 'Mecca-Moscow Pact' was a severe blow to the haughtiness of the right wing. The rightists totally severed their relation with the KPCC. But the new KPCC wanted rapprochement with the rightists and invited them to chalk out an action plan to the Kerala Congress. But the invitation was turned down.<sup>34</sup> Thus it was made clear that the rightists' policy was not of co-operation but of obstruction and separatism. They organized Gandhi *Sanghas* with the stated purpose of propagating Gandhian ideals. The Gandhi *Sanghas* worked parallel to the *Karshaka Sanghas* of the socialists and disagreements between the two was not uncommon.

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<sup>32</sup> S.K. Pottekkatt, et al., op cit., p.441

<sup>33</sup> *Fortnightly Report* for the First Half of February 1938 (D.O. No. P4-2 dated 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1938) (TNA). The report says, "On the other hand, in Malabar, there was an alliance between the Muslims and the socialists resulting in a Muslim being elected as the President of the KPCC."

<sup>34</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 8<sup>th</sup> May 1940

Under the new leadership, the KPCC became very active. Local committees were formed all over Kerala. There were about 500 such committees.<sup>35</sup> These committees worked very effectively and systematically. They organized political conferences from village to provincial level. Abdurahiman participated in the conferences without fail. The 9<sup>th</sup> Provincial Political Conference held at Calicut on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1938 took up several measures to activate the organization. The conference resolved to enroll one lakh new members in the Congress. It was also resolved to organize weekly study classes under the primary committees with the aim of explaining to the people events of political importance. Besides, the conference decided to establish public grievance redressal cells attached to the primary committees. Every primary committee was to organize a volunteer corps of a minimum of ten members. Thus a corps of about 3000 volunteers was formed under Sardar Chadroth Kuhni Raman Nair.<sup>36</sup> Volunteer training camps were organized at Thikkodi, Poryam, Calicut and Chavakkad. A summer school was organized for volunteers at Mankada-Pallippuram.<sup>37</sup> Thus under the new leadership of Abdurahiman and E.M.S. Namboodiripad, Kerala Congress became a well-knit organization with a cadre set up. The KPCC also formed

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<sup>35</sup> E.M.S. Namboodiripad, *Keralam Malayalikalude Mathrubhumi*, (Mal.)(First Published in 1948), Trichur, 1964, pp.348-49

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

committee consisting of the members of the District Board and the Municipal Councils to discuss and find out solution to the longstanding grievances of the people related to the local boards. These new measures went a long way in rejuvenating the Kerala Congress and soon began to yield its fruits. In the election of the Municipal Council held in 1938, most of the Congress candidates were elected unopposed.<sup>38</sup>

In recognition of their invaluable service to the party, both Abdurahiman and E.M.S. Namboodiripad were elected the President and Secretary of the KPCC respectively for the second time on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1939.<sup>39</sup> Abdurahiman secured 82 votes against 19 votes of the right wing candidate, M.P. Govinda Menon.<sup>40</sup> It was during the second tenure of Abdurahiman's Presidency that the 10<sup>th</sup> All Kerala Political Conference was conducted at Bakkualm in Kannur on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1939.<sup>41</sup> About four lakhs of people attended the conference.<sup>42</sup> The success of the conference proved the organizational skill of Abdurahiman.

He openly disagreed with Gandhiji that India was not yet ready for the final struggle with the British. Dissenting with the opinion of Gandhiji, he said, "Gandhiji was an optimist in 1920s; but he became a pessimist in 1930s

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<sup>38</sup> S.K. Pottekkatt, et al., op cit., p.444

<sup>39</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 31<sup>st</sup> January 1939.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 13<sup>th</sup> May 1939

<sup>42</sup> S.K. Pottekkatt, et al., op cit., p.462

and will be disillusioned in the near future with regard to the success of India's freedom struggle."<sup>43</sup> Whether the remark of Abdurahiman is true or not, it is a true reflection of his own political career. In 1920s he was a strict Gandhian when the latter was an optimist of India's independence. In 1930s, he travelled with the Socialists when Gandhiji was a pessimist of the immediate attainment of freedom. When Gandhiji became disillusioned of the country's liberty, Abdurahiman became a rebel against Gandhian politics and joined with Subash Chandra Bose in 1940s.

Analyzing the general lethargy of Muslims in the freedom struggle he stated, "Basically the Muslims are not against the National Movement. But being poor and illiterate they are being exploited by the selfish pro-British Muslim aristocracy and their fellow-travellers, the orthodox *Ulama*. Together they want to keep the ordinary Muslims in ignorance forever."<sup>44</sup> Challenging the Muslim League propaganda that Islam was in danger he said, "In India Islam is most secure. If ever Islam has any danger at all, it is due to the poverty and ignorance of the Muslims."<sup>45</sup> On 15<sup>th</sup> May 1939 a conference of the Nationalist Muslims was held in the same pavilion of the Political Conference. Addressing the Nationalist Muslims Abdurahiman said, "Islam is a religion of freedom and that can be practised properly only in a country

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<sup>43</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 16<sup>th</sup> May 1939

<sup>44</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 16<sup>th</sup> May 1939

<sup>45</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 16<sup>th</sup> May 1939

which is free and independent. Therefore, the Muslims are to work hard and to make more sacrifices than their Hindu brethren for the freedom of the country.”<sup>46</sup> Animated by the leader, the Nationalist Muslim Conference appealed to the Muslims to join the Congress and to accelerate the struggle for independence.<sup>47</sup> In short the observations made by Abdurahiman stand witness to his political sagacity and analytical ability.

### **The Secret Circular Issue:**

Despite all conciliatory efforts of Abdurahiman, the right wing remained adamant in opposing him and the ‘Mecca-Moscow Pact’. The right wing was always after the lapses of the left wing. Each of such pitfalls was a tool to them to put down the left wing. The ‘secret circular’ was such an omission from the side of Abdurahiman and the KPCC, that the rightists took full advantage of it.

Ever since the rebellion of 1921, the nationalist Muslims entertained a number of grievances against the right wing. One such serious grievance was that the right wing dominated Civic Board, rejected the applications of Muslim candidates to the District Board election of 1937.<sup>48</sup> Abdurahiman brought the matter before the attention of the AICC with a strong request to

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<sup>46</sup> *Mathrubhumi* dated 17<sup>th</sup> May 1939

<sup>47</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 17<sup>th</sup> May 1939

<sup>48</sup> *The Hindu*, dated 9<sup>th</sup> May 1937. Also see, AICC Papers P-12 NMML, New Delhi.

appoint a commission to inquire into the issue.<sup>49</sup> In the first instance, the AICC Secretary agreed with Abdurahiman and promised him to make an enquiry into the issue. But presumably due to the interference of the rightist leaders, the AICC conveniently forgot the promise. Abdurahiman became agitated and strongly protested against it.<sup>50</sup> Then the AICC replied that the charges leveled against the Civic Board were 'indefinite' and 'vague'.<sup>51</sup> There upon Abdulla Sait, a close friend of Jawaharlal Nehru from Mangalore interceded on behalf of the nationalist Muslims. He requested Nehru either to come to Malabar or to send some members of the Working Committee of the AICC to make an impartial enquiry into the irregularities of the Civic Board and the right wing dominated KPCC.<sup>52</sup> Instead of taking the complaint seriously, the AICC made a farce of it. The AICC appointed K. Raman Menon, one of the leaders of the right wing and the Secretary of the KPCC against whom Abdurahiman had registered his complaint, to make an enquiry on the complaint. Raman Menon not only denied all charges against the Civic

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<sup>49</sup> Abdurahiman wrote, "If things are left to drift I am afraid people like me will be in a very bad plight. So I beseech you to look into the matters and mend them urgently or I am afraid that a situation may arise that I will not be able to face the Muslim public." See AICC Papers, p-12/1937, NMML.

<sup>50</sup> Abdurahiman wrote to the General Secretary of AICC, "It is against all cannons of justice and fair play and against both the letter and spirit of your own note of the 7<sup>th</sup> May in which you had promised me to write soon after hearing from the KPCC and assured me that enquiries would be made. Where is this promise and what about your assurance?" See Letter from Abdurahiman dated 19<sup>th</sup> May 1937, AICC Papers P-12/1937, NMML.

<sup>51</sup> AICC Papers p-12/1937, NMML.

<sup>52</sup> Letter from Abdulla Sait to Nehru dated 4<sup>th</sup> August 1937. AICC Papers, p-12/1937, NMML.

Board but also dared to record that “Abdurahiman has never been a Congressman and comes to the Congress for the purpose of election.”<sup>53</sup> The plaintiff was turned into defendant. The ulterior aim of the rightists was thus made crystal clear. The Nationalist Muslims became dam sure that their grievances would never be redressed under the right wing leadership of the Congress.

Meanwhile, in 1937 the right wing got majority in the election to the District Board and its leader K. Kelappan became the President of the Board. It was at this time that the Nationalist Muslims and the socialist groups got control over the KPCC. Consequently, the right-left tussle in the Congress took a serious turn and generated a lot of smoke rather than light in the history of Kerala Congress. When the District Board imposed fee on the students studying in the Board schools, the KPCC protested and requested the Board to withdraw the decision. But the Board President justified the decision and declined the request of the KPCC. Then one of the members of the KPCC, K. Unneen Maulavi, formed the Progressive Students’ Union and threatened to conduct indefinite hunger strike before the District Board Council. Finally, the Board was forced to cancel the fee imposed upon the students studying in the Board schools.<sup>54</sup> However, by this incident the reputation of the Board

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<sup>53</sup> AICC Papers, p-12/2017, NMML..

<sup>54</sup> K. Hussan, op cit., p.18.

and its President was seriously damaged and became revengeful on the KPCC.

Similarly, some of the decisions of the Board seemed to be against the interests of the Muslims. The Board's decision against the establishment of separate schools for Muslims was seriously objected to. K. Kelappan, the President of the Board, defended the decision stating that separate schools for Muslims were opposed to Hindu-Muslim unity.<sup>55</sup> The KPCC pointed out the necessity of having Muslim schools and requested to withdraw the decision. But it was turned down.<sup>56</sup> However, the most painful thing to the Muslims was the Board's decision to discontinue the practice of beginning the classes of the Muslim schools by reciting the *Fatiha*, the first chapter in the Quran.<sup>57</sup>

Further, in the capacity of being the President of the KPCC, Abdurahiman used to receive complaints from among the Congressmen against the working of the District Board and particularly of its President K. Kelappan. Abdurahiman ignored them as the creations of some intolerant minds. When the number of complaints against the Board President increased by leaps and bounds, in consultation with the KPCC, Abdurahiman issued a secret circular to the secretaries of the local committees of the Congress "to

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<sup>55</sup> *Fortnightly Report* for the Second Half of June 1937, (TNA).

<sup>56</sup> AICC Papers, p-12 (Part II), 1938, NMML

<sup>57</sup> K.M. Seethi, "Progress of the Muslim League in Kerala" *Kerala State Muslim League Souvenir*, Calicut, 1957, p.22.

enquire and report on the truthfulness of these charges levelled against the District Board administration.”<sup>58</sup> In the circular it was unambiguously stated, “The object of the circular is to inform the President and to get necessary remedies after the receipt of your report, without any fuse.”<sup>59</sup> Thus none of the Congressmen had suspected the sincerity and honesty behind the circular till M.P. Govinda Menon, one of the strong advocates of the right wing and the Secretary of Walluvanad taluk Congress Committee, decided to make use of it for some ulterior motives. He ascribed that the circular was intended to defame and tarnish the image of the right wing leader K. Kelappan. Abdurahiman totally denied any such ulterior motive behind the circular and asserted that the stated purpose of the circular was to make the administration of the District Board transparent to the public. But the rightists were not ready to listen to him and insisted on their pound of flesh.

The rightists immediately brought the matter before their sympathizers in the AICC. Abdurahiman who had already been alienated from Gandhism and allied with the socialists and the Forward Bloc, was held responsible for the circular. The rightists seemed to have thought that the circular would serve them as a magic wand to drive out the Nationalist Muslims, the Socialists and the Forward Bloc from Kerala politics by a single brandish.

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<sup>58</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, Dated 28<sup>th</sup> June 1938.

<sup>59</sup> AICC Papers, P-12/1938, NMML.

Without considering the stated purpose of the circular and without giving an opportunity to Abdurahiman to explain his stand on the circular, Vallabhai Pattel, the Chairman of the AICC, made an ex-parte verdict on the issue. He adjudged that the circular was 'most mischievous'.<sup>60</sup> Further, Patel ordered Abdurahiman to 'withdraw the circular' and 'express apology' to K. Kelappan.<sup>61</sup> In the capacity of being the Secretary of the KPCC, E.M.S. Namboodiripad took up the responsibility of replying to the letter of Patel. He wrote to Patel that his letter was "couched in terms not only of not consulting the Working Committee, but it was a predatory to order to withdraw the circular and apologize to Mr. Kelappan."<sup>62</sup> So as to overcome the objections raised by E.M.S. Namboodiripad, Patel passed the issue to J.B. Kripalani, Secretary of the Congress Working Committee. Like Pattel, Kripalani was also under the conviction that Abdurahiman and the leftist KPCC were totally wrong in their approach towards the District Board and its President. So without having a second thought on the issue Kripalani wrote to

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<sup>60</sup> AICC Papers, p-12 (Part II)/1938, NMML, Delhi.

<sup>61</sup> AICC Papers, p-12 (Part II)/1938. NMML. Delhi.

In his letter to Abdurahiman, Patel wrote, "If this is really a circular issued by you, as President of the Provincial Congress Committee, I must say that it is a most mischievous one. I must confess that in my long career of public life I have never come across such gross abuse of the high position of the President of the Provincial Congress organization to injure the reputation and career of a fellow worker who has done some service to the province. I would advise you to withdraw the circular and express your apology to the President of the District Local Board, to whom you have done such grave injustice." See, AICC Papers, p-12 (Part II)/1938, NMML.

<sup>62</sup> Letter from E.M.S.Namboodiripad to Vallabhai Pattel, dated 24<sup>th</sup> August 1938. AICC Papers, (Part II), 1938, NMML.

Abdurahiman that the circular was 'highly objectionable' and demanded him to withdraw it immediately.<sup>63</sup>

E.M.S. Namboodiripad presented the letter before the KPCC that met at Kottakkal and moved a motion "submitting to the order of the Secretary of the Working Committee dated 25<sup>th</sup> December 1938, it was decided to withdraw the circular issued by the President."<sup>64</sup> However, Abdurahiman felt ignominious of the order of the Secretary of the Working Committee to withdraw the circular without showing the courtesy to make an enquiry on the charges against the District Board. Protesting against the decision of the Working Committee, Abdurahiman decided to keep away from the office of the President till a definite decision was taken on the charges against the District Board.<sup>65</sup> The KPCC was not in support of the temporary abdication

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<sup>63</sup> AICC Papers, p-12/2843, 1938, NMML.

Kripalani wrote, "The matter of the circular issued by you to your subordinate Congress organizations about Mr. Kelappan was considered by the Working Committee at its meeting at Wardha. It was the opinion of the Committee that your circular was highly objectionable. I have therefore been authorized to ask you to immediately withdraw this circular letter and see that the matter is not pursued any further." Letter from Kripalani to Abdurahiman dated 25<sup>th</sup> December 1938. See AICC Papers, p-12/2843, NMML.

<sup>64</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 4<sup>th</sup> April 1939.

<sup>65</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 4<sup>th</sup> April 1939.

Abdurahiman said, "I have strong protest in the decision of the AICC. I don't know whether the Working Committee would reconsider its decision. However, I would like to present my grievances before the Committee and would like to keep away from the office of the President of the KPCC till I get a definite reply to my representation." See *Mathrubhumi*, dated 4<sup>th</sup> April 1939.

of Abdurahiman. However, the KPCC decided to keep the office of President vacant till it received a just reply from the Working Committee.

Sympathizing with the abdication of Abdurahiman, E.M.S. Namboodiripad wrote, "History could not forget Abdurahiman for the services he rendered in the nationalist awakening among the Muslims of Kerala in the teeth of opposition of the leaders of his own community and of the communal minded nationalist leaders of the Congress."<sup>66</sup> The comment of E.M.S. hit home. K.Kelappan was deeply incensed in the use of 'communal minded nationalist leaders'. He immediately retaliated. On the next day he wrote a write up in the *Mathrubhumi* captioned "*Rajya Drohikal Aranu?*" [Who are the Traitors?]. The write up was not directed against E.M.S. but against Abdurahiman and Al-Ameen. The write up concludes thus, "A leader who occupies responsible post in the Congress can reprove Gandhiji, question his sincerity, can criticize the Congress leaders and institutions, still he can continue as leader!"<sup>67</sup> Thus the tussle in the Congress now slipped from ideological to personal level. Now it seemed that the rightists wanted the political doom of Abdurahiman along with the Nationalist Muslims and the socialist group. At the same time, the left wing wanted the return of Abdurahiman to the leadership of the KPCC. In the political conference of the Congress held at Bakkulam on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1939, P.M. Menon

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<sup>66</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 5<sup>th</sup> April 1939.

<sup>67</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 6<sup>th</sup> April 1939

explained the circumstances that led to the temporary abdication of Abdurahiman and the set backs that the Congress suffered subsequently. Then he moved a resolution requesting him to resume the office of the President of the KPCC. The resolution was passed unanimously and Abdurahiman resumed the office of the President again on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1939.<sup>68</sup> To the rightists the abdication and resumption were all a mere sham.

However, the KPCC was still on the path of conciliation and rapprochement with the rightists and was fully conscious of the adverse effects of the infighting in the party. Hence, E.M.S. Namboodiripad, the Secretary of the KPCC, appealed to the right wing to forgo the differences and to work for the success of the freedom struggle.<sup>69</sup> But the egocentricity and the feeling of infallibility of the group leaders remained a great obstacle before the unity of the groups. The rightists were still at daggers drawn with the Nationalist Muslims and the socialists. When election of the new office bearers of the KPCC was round the corner, the rightists intensified their attack on the left wing. On 4<sup>th</sup> January 1940 they issued a note finding fault with the

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<sup>68</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 14<sup>th</sup> May 1939.

<sup>69</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 24<sup>th</sup> September 1939.

E.M.S. wrote, "In Kerala the group competition is more tense. But at this time we have to forgo our differences. We have to give more importance to the success of freedom struggle than the success of one group over the other." See *Mathrubhumi* dated 24<sup>th</sup> September 1939.

socialists for working against Gandhiji's leadership.<sup>70</sup> The note did not leave Abdurahiman unhurt. He was described as an anti-Gandhian and anti-Congress.<sup>71</sup> The note concluded thus, "So as to try to establish a KPCC which believe in the leadership, non-violence and creative programmes of Gandhiji, the Gandhi Sangā has decided to put a candidate against Abdurahiman in the forthcoming election."<sup>72</sup> Accordingly, K. Kelappan, the right wing supremo, contested against Abdurahiman. But Kelappan was defeated for 20 votes.<sup>73</sup> Thus Abdurahiman became the President of the KPCC for the third time.<sup>74</sup> He was still for rapprochement with the Gandhi Sangh.

During his third tenure, Abdurahiman concentrated his attention in bringing back the Muslims to the fold of the Congress. He feared that any lapse in this effort would strengthen the Muslim League in Kerala and would

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<sup>70</sup> *Fortnightly Report* for the Second Half of January 1940. [D.O. No.P4-I, dated 17<sup>th</sup> January 1940] (TNA)

<sup>71</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 4<sup>th</sup> January 1940.

The note runs, "The Socialists of Kerala and their political friend Forward Bloc President publicly insult the leadership and creative programmes of Gandhiji. At the same time they claim themselves as Congressmen. Being a chief member of the Forward Bloc, the KPCC President has openly violated the orders of the Working Committee of the AICC. But the majority of the KPCC still gives him their support."

<sup>72</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 4<sup>th</sup> January 1940.

<sup>73</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 17<sup>th</sup> February 1940.

Abdurahiman scored 54 votes against 34 votes won by K.Kelappan. See, *Mathrubhumi*, dated 17<sup>th</sup> February 1940.

<sup>74</sup> *Fortnightly Report* for the First Half of March 1940. [D.O. No.P4-4 dated, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1940]. The report says, "The Kerala Provincial Congress Committee has again elected a Socialist Moplah as President."

not only harm the Muslim community but also would weaken the National Movement. So as to strengthen the Congress in South Malabar, the KPCC under Abdurahiman decided to conduct the All Kerala Political Conference at Kottakkal, in Ernad taluk. T. Prakasam from Tamil Nadu inaugurated the Conference. Miyan Iftikaruddeen, the President of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, presided over the function.<sup>75</sup> In the Conference, under the mediation of the national leaders, T. Prakasam and Miyan Iftikaruddeen, a ceasefire was arranged between the right and left wings and both the groups agreed to work in unison to give effect to the programmes of the Congress.<sup>76</sup>

The truce did not last long. Soon there arose a great hue and cry on a supposedly passed resolution. The rightists alleged that the KPCC had adopted a resolution condemning the policies and programmes of Gandhiji. They sent a copy of the alleged resolution to Gandhiji. He did not try to verify the authenticity of the resolution and expressed his resentment in strong terms in a write up published in the Harijan. The *Mathrubhumi* translated and published the write up under the title, "An Advice of Gandhiji to the Majority Leaders of the Kerala Congress."<sup>77</sup> The KPCC Secretary, P. Narayana Nair, totally denied the alleged resolution and made it clear in unequivocal terms

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<sup>75</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 4<sup>th</sup> May 1940.

<sup>76</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 7<sup>th</sup> May 1940

<sup>77</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 4<sup>th</sup> June 1940

that the KPCC had not passed such a resolution.<sup>78</sup> Thus the ulterior objective of the right wing was exposed once again.

However, the All Kerala Political Conference held at Kottakkal proved to be a great leap in the path of the freedom struggle. Almost all speakers of the Conference asserted that Congress alone could lead India to independence and it alone could protect the rights of the Muslims and other minorities in India. They also pointed out that the Muslim League represented only the vested interests of the upper class Muslims and were trying to mislead the poor and illiterate Muslim majority by means of religious slogans.<sup>79</sup> The very presence of a large chunk of Mappila community at Kottakkal Conference was sufficient to convince the Muslim Leaguers that the Muslims of Malabar were still with the Congress.<sup>80</sup> They were also convinced that they would not be able to snatch away the Mappilas of Malabar from the Congress as long as Abdurahiman was at the helm of the organization. Hence they were determined to bring him down from the pedestal by hook or crook.

#### **President of Kerala Forward Bloc:**

All rapprochements with the right wing proved short lived. It was crystal clear that the rightists would never take the Muslims into confidence.

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<sup>78</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 14<sup>th</sup> June 1940

<sup>79</sup> *Fortnightly Report* for the Second Half of May 1940. [D.O. No.P4-9, dated 17<sup>th</sup> May 1940] (TNA)

<sup>80</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 8<sup>th</sup> May 1940

It was known to Abdurahiman that his socialist co-travellers in politics were heading towards the Communist camp. He was sure that the Muslims like him could never be Communists. Thus it seemed to many that Abdurahiman had no alternative but to join with the Muslim League. But he knew that it would be suicidal to the Muslim community and to the country at large. He feared that if this political uncertainty continued indefinitely there would be large-scale secession of Muslims from the Congress. Hence he had to find a safe anchoring for them at the earliest.

It was in this context that Abdurahiman happened to cement his relation with his likeminded national associate, Subash Chandra Bose. At this time Abdurahiman attended the Congress session held at Tripuri in 1939. There he witnessed the tragic fall of Subash, the most out spoken critic of the soft policy of Gandhiji, from the leadership of the Congress. When Subash formed the Forward Bloc, Abdurahiman had no hesitation to court it wholeheartedly. He became a close associate of Subash and member of the Working Committee of the All India Forward Bloc.<sup>81</sup> He was also elected as the President of the Kerala Forward Bloc.<sup>82</sup> Thus he occupied the offices of the President of the KPCC and the President of the Forward Bloc at a time. The right wing Congressmen severely criticized the double role of

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<sup>81</sup> K.P.Kesava Menon, "Janab Muhammed Abdurahiman," *The Mathrubhumi Weekly*, dated 19<sup>th</sup> November 1950, Calicut, p.8

<sup>82</sup> Perunna. K.N. Nair, *Keralathile Congress Prasthanam*, (Mal.) (The Congress Movement in Kerala), Cochin, 1969, p.86

Abdurahiman. However, under his leadership a number of Forward Bloc units were established in Kerala. The members of the Forward Bloc in Kerala were mainly the Nationalist Muslims and the socialists.

The Second World War brought many changes in Kerala politics. When the Indian National Congress adopted the resolution of supporting the War efforts of England, the Forward Bloc opposed it and started mass propaganda against the War. Being a dissident Congressman, Abdurahiman had no hesitation to oppose the AICC resolution of supporting the War efforts. He launched statewide anti-war propaganda under the banners of the Forward Bloc. The propaganda played havoc with the authorities. They found him a threat to the War efforts and wanted to silence him at any cost. Finally, when the government banned the Forward Bloc for its anti-war propaganda and arrested its national leaders, in Kerala, its President Abdurahiman and Secretary, Chandroth Kunhi Raman Menon were arrested under the Defence of India Rule on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1940. Covering the news of the arrest, the *Mathrubhumi* reported that when Abdurahiman forced into the police van, he appealed to the people gathered there “to strengthen the Congress and to strengthen the National Movement.”<sup>83</sup> Both were detained at the Central Jail, Vellore.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 5<sup>th</sup> July 1940.

<sup>84</sup> *Fortnightly Report* for the First Half of July 1940. [D.O. No. P4-12, dated 4<sup>th</sup> July 1940]

The arrest of Abdurahiman and Kunhi Raman Nair sparked off statewide protest. Demonstrations and protest meetings were conducted at different places. The authorities were not ready to spare the protesters also. N. K. Aramukan, the Secretary of Aikya Kerala Seva Samiti, was arrested at Calicut on the charge of addressing the meeting organized in protest against the arrest of Abdurahiman.<sup>85</sup> A special meeting of the Kerala Forward Bloc expressed its strong protest in the arrest of Abdurahiman and his colleagues.<sup>86</sup>

Meanwhile, the rightists prepared a plot to seize the KPCC. Under their persuasion the Congress Working Committee appointed Pattabhi Sitaramayya to Kerala. He convened a meeting of the KPCC at Calicut. The meeting elected the right wing leaders, K.T. Kunhiraman Nambiar and K. Damodaran as the President and Secretary of the KPCC respectively.<sup>87</sup> But the left wing questioned the propriety of the new KPCC. They elected P.K. Moideen Kutty as the new President of the KPCC in the vacancy of Abdurahiman.<sup>88</sup> Thus Kerala witnessed the rare spectacle of two KPCCs at a time. In short, with the arrest of Abdurahiman the split in the Congress became a reality.

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<sup>85</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 16<sup>th</sup> July 1940

<sup>86</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1940.

<sup>87</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1940.

<sup>88</sup> C. Uthama Kurup, (ed.), *Mathrubhumiye Charitram*, (Mal.), (History of the Mathrubhumi), Vol. II. Calicut, 1998, p.466.

The left wing KPCC went ahead with protest meetings and the anti-war campaigns. On 15<sup>th</sup> September 'Protest Day' was observed all over Kerala. At places like Mattannur, Koothuparamba and Tellichery, the protest demonstrations turned violent. There the police opened fire on the demonstrators and two men named Abdurahman and Chattu Kutty were killed.<sup>89</sup> The rightists found fault with the leftists for the mishap and demanded the AICC to disband the KPCC. The demand was granted and the KPCC was dissolved.<sup>90</sup> A three-member working committee, headed by Nand Keolyar, was constituted to look after the activities of the Congress in Kerala.<sup>91</sup>

Inside the jail, the life of Abdurahiman was not tranquil. He was particularly perturbed by the illness of his mother. He wanted to nurse his mother at her sick bed. He requested for two months parole. But the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras was pleased to grant only one week's parole.<sup>92</sup> He had to spend six days for his to and fro journey. Finally, he was left only with a few hours to spend with his beloved mother. Besides, he had to suffer a lot of tortures at the hands of the policeman who escorted him to

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<sup>89</sup> E.M.S. Namboodiripad, Note 35, p.378.

<sup>90</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 14<sup>th</sup> October 1940

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> Public (General) Department, G.O. MS. 2760, P.G. Dated 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1941. [Jail Records, Vellore]

Kodungallur.<sup>93</sup> Back in the jail, he used to receive the sad news of the sinking condition of his mother. Several times he requested the Chief Secretary for parole. At each time the request was turned down for one reason or the other. Finally the worst happened. The great mother breathed her last without being able to see her eldest son. Abdurahiman appealed to the authorities for a fortnight parole to attend the obsequies of his mother.<sup>94</sup> This request was also rejected on the basis of the adverse report from the police authorities of his hometown of Kudungallur. The Kodungallur police reported to the jail authorities at Vellore that his visit would create a tense atmosphere and would give an excuse to the Congress agitators to stage demonstrations etc.<sup>95</sup> The report reveals how dangerous and dreadful he was to the British authorities. They feared him even as a political prisoner.

When the Allies became sure of their victory in the War, the British government in India lessened the severity of prohibition on the civil liberties. Taking advantage of this situation, the people of Kerala jumped into action and began to work for the liberation of Abdurahiman from jail. On 19<sup>th</sup> May 1945, the All Kerala Muslim Majlis met at Calicut and expressed protest against the detention of Abdurahiman without trial for the last five years. The

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<sup>93</sup> Public (General) Department, Endorsement No. 46231-I, dated 24<sup>th</sup> December 1942. (Jail Records, Vellore)

<sup>94</sup> Letter from Abdurahiman to the Chief Secretary, Government of Madras, dated 14<sup>th</sup> September 1942. (Jail records, Vellore)

<sup>95</sup> Public (General) Department Memo No. 4473/52-I, dated 20<sup>th</sup> September 1942. (Jail Records, Vellore)

Majlis also requested for his immediate release. The Majlis resolved to observe 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1945, the fifth anniversary of his arrest, as 'Abdurahiman Day'.<sup>96</sup> Observing a day in the name of person was perhaps the first of that kind in the history of Kerala. The *Mathrubhumi* gave extensive propaganda to the resolution and published editorials citing the cruelties done on him and demanding justice to him.<sup>97</sup>

'Abdurahiman Day' was enthusiastically observed all over Kerala. Demonstrations and protest meetings were conducted at Calicut, Tirur, Ponnani, Kannur, Chavakkad, Neduyiruppu, Manjeri, Trissur, Koyilandi, Tellichery, Feroke, Kodungallur, Baypur, Palakkad, etc.<sup>98</sup> Leaders like Kozhippurath Madhava Menon, Arakkal Raja, Godavarma Raja etc. addressed the meetings.<sup>99</sup> At Bombay the protest meeting was organized under P. Damodaran, Thayat Sankaran, and P. Gopalan.<sup>100</sup> The observance of 'Abddurahiman Day' really alarmed the authorities. They could no longer

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<sup>96</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1945.

<sup>97</sup> One of the editorials runs as, "In 1942 the British authorities arrested thousands of Indians for fear of endangering her war efforts against Japan. But Abdurahiman was arrested two years before the outbreak of the war with Japan. Further, Abdurahiman has been detained without being tried for the last five years. It cannot be justified on any ground. If ever Abdurahiman has committed any breach of law, five years imprisonment that he had already undergone, must be treated as sufficient punishment to him and should be liberated at the earliest." See *Mathrubhumi*, dated 29<sup>th</sup> June 1945.

<sup>98</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, from 12<sup>th</sup> July to 6<sup>th</sup> September 1945.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 8<sup>th</sup> September 1945.

keep their eyes closed towards the issue. At last, after a jail life of five years, Abdurahiman was released on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1945.<sup>101</sup>

### **The Last Seventy-Seven Days:**

On 5<sup>th</sup> September 1945, Abdurahiman reached again at Calicut, the nerve center of his socio-political activities. The people hailed him as a great hero. People representing the KPCC, the Kerala Students' Congress, the *Mathrubhumi*, the Muslim Majlis, the Weavers Sangam, the *Athura Seva Sangam*, the News Paper Workers Union, the Saw Mill Employees Union, etc., accorded him a warm welcome at Calicut railway station.<sup>102</sup> On 7<sup>th</sup> September a grand public reception was organized in his honour at Mudalakkulam Maidan of Calicut city, from where he was arrested five years before for inciting the people against the War efforts of the government. Then he had appealed to the people to give their lifeblood to strengthen the Congress. Now resuming his struggle more vigorously he appealed to the people to be ready to sacrifice their lives for the independence and integrity of the country. But he was very sad and disheartened about the inroads that the League had made in Indian politics during the last five years of his jail life. He said, "If the Muslim majority territories of North West and North East of India become independent as Pakistan, the Muslim minority of Madras has nothing to do with it. Let us try to become independent and let us live with

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<sup>101</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 6<sup>th</sup> September 1945.

<sup>102</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 6<sup>th</sup> September 1945.

our Hindu brothers,”<sup>103</sup> Severely criticizing the Pakistan demand of the Muslim League he said, “Those who raise obstacles before the struggle for independence are traitors.”<sup>104</sup> His speech at Mudalakkulam was full of premonitions of his own life. He said, “In this struggle for independence, leaders may succumb to fate but you should continue the struggle until independence is achieved.”<sup>105</sup> He was impatient to wait further for independence. So he said, “We should get our independence immediately and I have no time to wait for it.”<sup>106</sup>

During the last five years of his jail life many changes had taken place in the political arena of India. With the acceptance of the Quit India Resolution by the Indian National Congress, the gulf between the Congress and the Forward Bloc had been reduced. But India was at a critical turn as far as the communal question was concerned. Supported by the British authorities, the Muslim League was forcefully thrusting its demand for Pakistan and the Congress was about to concede it. In Kerala, most of Abdurahiman’s socialist friends had flocked in the Communist party. But to his great dismay, by the time he was out of jail, most of his Nationalist Muslim colleagues had left the Congress and joined the Muslim League. There were only a few Muslims left behind in the Congress. Hence his task to

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<sup>103</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 8<sup>th</sup> September 1945.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

strengthen the Congress was more difficult than ever before.

More seriously, five years' jail life had sapped his lifeblood and he had become weak and frail. He was badly in need of rest. But he had no time to take rest. He feared that if he lagged behind at this critical juncture of the freedom struggle, it would be the best opportunity to the Muslim League to undermine all his efforts to strengthen the Congress and it would bring nothing but irreparable disgrace to the Muslim community. So he ignored his declining health and continued his life mission of fighting against the British and their agents.

Abdurahiman found that during the period between 1940 and 1945 the Muslim League had made much headway in the political life of Kerala. Using the trump card of communal politics and the attractive bite of separate state for the Muslims, the League had weaned away a big chunk of Mappilas from the Congress. Further, the Congress was still abhorrent to the Muslims for many historical reasons. Hence he had to devise a new stratagem to retrieve the Muslims to the Congress as sympathizers if not as members. He decided to make use of the Muslim Majlis<sup>107</sup> to achieve the purpose. He

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<sup>107</sup> The Muslim Majlis was the first Muslim social organization in Malabar. It was founded on 11<sup>th</sup> August 1931. Among the founders of the Majlis there were people with different political affiliations. People like B. Pokker and K.M. Seethi were the sympathizers of the Muslim League, whereas Abdurahiman and Moidu Maulavi were strong adherents of the Congress. But they worked together under the Majlis. When the Muslim League was formed in Kerala, the pro-Leagueurs left the Majlis and Abdurahiman became free to rejuvenate the organization on his own political line. For details of the organization of the Majlis, see the *Kerala Muslim Majlis Conference Report*, Calicut 1933.

wanted to reorganize the Majlis on the model of the *Khuda-e-Khidmatgar* of Khan Abdul Gafar Khan. The Majlis was dead against the partition of India and stood for an India built on the bedrock of Hindu-Muslim unity. Whenever the League demanded separate state in the name of the Muslim community, the Muslim Majlis challenged it and proved that it was not the united demand of the Muslims. Thus the Muslim Majlis, with its implacable nationalist enthusiasm, under its uncompromising leader, Abdurahiman, became the real adversaries of the League in Kerala. So the League opposed Abdurahiman and the Majlis with all the forces at their disposal.

Devastating all estimations of his rivals, Abdurahiman overran Malabar and like a whirlwind he uprooted the false ethos implanted by the League. He worked as if he had premonition that much time was not left to him to serve his motherland and his community. Every day he addressed a number of public meetings attended by thousands of people. In the midst of his socio-political activities he also found time to attend the Nationalist Muslim Conference at Delhi.<sup>108</sup> He was a special invitee to the AICC meeting held at Bombay in September 1945.<sup>109</sup> At Bombay the *Kerala Samajam* accorded a grand welcome to him. There in the *Kerala Samajam* hall he installed the portrait of his friend and colleague, K.B. Menon.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 14<sup>th</sup> September 1945.

<sup>109</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 25<sup>th</sup> September 1945.

<sup>110</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 25<sup>th</sup> September 1945.

In every meeting he admonished the people against the false propaganda of the Muslim League. Refuting the arguments of the League, he said, "The Muslims of the Punjab and Bengal are not demanding for Pakistan. Only Muhammed Ali Jinnah and a handful of the League leaders demand for Pakistan."<sup>111</sup> He severely criticized the attempt of the League leaders to misinterpret Islam to serve their purpose. He warned the Muslims, "Pakistan demand will only harm the Muslim interest at last. So they should not be swayed by the sentimental slogans and recriminatory cries like 'Pakistan or Kabarstan'."<sup>112</sup>

Everywhere people were very eager to accord him warm welcome. But as he was overwhelmed by organizational activities, he could not attend all such meetings. Finally, the *Mathrubhumi* had to publish a regretting note to the effect "Abdurahiman may kindly be excused for his inability to attend the meetings organized to welcome him."<sup>113</sup> However, Abdurahiman attended as many meetings as possible. The *Mathrubhumi* gave proper coverage to them. Every day the paper reached the hands of readers with newer arguments and appeals from Abdurahiman. Addressing a public meeting at Kannur, Abdurahiman said, "The Quit India Revolution of 1942 has proved that Indians could lead the freedom struggle even without the control or

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<sup>111</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 1<sup>st</sup> November 1945.

<sup>112</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1945.

<sup>113</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 10<sup>th</sup> October 1945.

directions of a leader.” He added, “Now the freedom struggle is at its full swing. We should not be lethargic. The British plan of using the Muslim League to sabotage the struggle will not succeed.”<sup>114</sup>

In a meeting held at Calicut, Abdurahiman argued, “The Muslim League has no right to demand for a separate state for the Muslims and the Congress has no right to allow this demand.” He continued, “Neither Gandhiji nor Jinnah can decide the partition of India. The Hindus and the Muslims of India are one and inseparable.”<sup>115</sup> Abhorring the Muslim League he said, “As a Muslim I feel shame of the Muslim League as it stands an obstacle to the country’s independence. The League is trying to disfigure the face of Islam, a religion which exhorts the believers to sacrifice their lives to the freedom of their country.”<sup>116</sup> Abdurahiman disagreed with Gandhiji in his political perspectives. But to him, “Gandhiji is the symbol of Hindu-Muslim unity and does not represent either the Hindus or the Muslims.”<sup>117</sup> To Abdurahiman, there were only two groups in India- those who fight for freedom and those who try to obstruct it.<sup>118</sup>

Abdurahiman questioned the League propaganda that Islam was in danger in India. He challenged them to cite an instance of threat to Islam

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<sup>114</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 18<sup>th</sup> October 1945.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 24<sup>th</sup> October 1945.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

from the side of the Hindus of India. He said, "If Islam has any threat at all, it is because that the Muslims of India are not living in accordance with the instructions of the Quran."<sup>119</sup> Abdurahiman also exhorted the Hindu leaders of the Congress to be with the Muslims and their problems and to prove the hollowness of the arguments of the League.<sup>120</sup>

The relentless attack of Abdurahiman began to weaken the position of the League in Kerala. They could not withstand him with counter arguments. Now they began to organize protest demonstrations against him. They showed him black flags. They called him an enemy of Islam and branded him a 'Kafir'. Calmly he bore all protests. When the protesters shouted 'go back' to him, he asked them, "Where am I to go? I am born here. I am brought up here. I am to die here. Tell me where I am to go."<sup>121</sup> When protests and shouting proved futile before him, now the Leaguers began to manhandle him.<sup>122</sup> He reminded the Muslim League people, "I am a Muslim. A Muslim will not be cowed down by threat."<sup>123</sup> He also warned them, "There is no place for cowardice in Islam. So you need not try to create a fear complex in Muslim community. You cannot draw true Muslims away from the historic

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<sup>119</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 25<sup>th</sup> October 1945.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>121</sup> P.K. Balakrishnan, "Nhan Kanditillatha Oru Nethavine Patti" (Mal.) (About a leader whom I have not seen), *Muhammed Abdurahiman Souvenir*, Calicut, 1978, p.46.

<sup>122</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 31<sup>st</sup> October 1945.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

struggle for freedom. Freedom is the life breath of Islam.”<sup>124</sup> When all protests proved ineffective, the League people threatened him with death.<sup>125</sup> Undaunted by protests and threats Abdurahiman continued to refute the demands of the League. But when the Leaguers tried to disrupt the Majlis meetings, he made complaint before the local police authorities.<sup>126</sup> When it was found to be of no use, he petitioned to the Inspector General of Police, Madras against the hooligan Leaguers and also against the discrimination of the local police authorities. Finally, the Inspector General of Police had to direct the local police authorities “to give protection to all Muslims irrespective of their political affiliations.”<sup>127</sup>

However, nothing could deter him from his mission. He found that the dawn of freedom was not far off. So he continued his activities more vigorously than ever before. But it seemed to be the last bright flickers of a dying flame. Finally there came the appointed time and place. At 4 p.m. of 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1945 he went to Kodyathur about 40 kilometers north east of Calicut. There he attended big a public meeting. Addressing the meeting he said, “If the people of the Punjab and Bengal want Pakistan, let them have it.

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> M. Rasheed, *Muhammed Abdurahiman Sahib*, (Mal.), Calicut, 1994, p.102.

<sup>126</sup> The District authorities reported to the Madras Government, “In Malabar feelings between the Muslim League and the Muslim Majlis are bitter and there have been already instances of unruly behaviour.” See *Fortnightly Report* for the First Half of November 1945.

<sup>127</sup> Malabar Special Police Files, No. R.C – 1926 dated 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1946. (Regional Archives Calicut)

We the people of south India do not want Pakistan. Let us live together for ever as we lived in the past.”<sup>128</sup>

After the meeting, Abdurahiman and his friends started their return journey to Calicut. They had to walk four kilometers to reach Manasseri where there waited the motorcar arranged for their return journey. When they covered two kilometers and reached a place called Pottasseri, Abdurahiman felt chest pain and within no time he breathed his last.<sup>129</sup> On 24<sup>th</sup> November his dead body was laid to rest at Kannamparampu graveyard, Calicut. The *Mathrubhumi* reported that his funeral was attended by a big gathering like of which the city of Calicut had not witnessed ever before.<sup>130</sup>

Thus died Abdurahiman in harness. Nehru said, “The heroic death of this soldier was in the midst of attempts to perform his duty.”<sup>131</sup> His death came like a bolt from the blue; the National Movement in Kerala felt paralyzed; the Nationalist Muslims stood completely numb. It was an irreparable set back to the Congress and the Nationalist Muslims. Abdurahiman was a secularist to his core and religionist to the crux, perhaps a

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<sup>128</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 25<sup>th</sup> November 1945.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

P.K. Mammoo, who was with Abdurahiman at the time of his death reported, “When we reached at Pottasseri, middle of Kodyathur and Manasseri, the great soul departed. Astonishingly, the gas light we were carrying with us also burned out.” See *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1945, p.8.

<sup>130</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 25<sup>th</sup> November 1945.

<sup>131</sup> *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1945, p.8.

very rare specimen of this kind in Indian politics. His greatest task was to keep the Mappila community with in the fold of the Congress. He was successful in this task except when he was in jail. Just to keep his Muslim brethren in the Congress he had to act as a bulwark of their interest in the Congress. But surprisingly, his Hindu brethren in the Congress mistook it as religious bigotry. It was in consequence of this misunderstanding that there occurred a lot of infighting in the Kerala Congress from 1921 to 1945. It seems that by the time he was out of jail in 1945 the then Congress leadership in Kerala had realized their mistake and welcomed him with his pro-Muslim programmes. Now the Congress and the *Mathrubhumi* offered all help to Abdurahiman and the Muslim Majlis. But it was too late because, firstly, by the time the Muslim League had established its hold over the Muslim masses so strongly that it was almost impossible to retrieve them back to the Congress and secondly, he was only left with seventy seven days in his life. Further, there was not such a towering figure after him to continue the work left behind by him. The Muslim League took full advantage of the situation and became an indomitable political force in Kerala. If the Muslims still remain in the Congress and the left movements even after the domination of the League in Kerala politics, it is one of the greatest heritages of Abdurahiman to the nation. The secularist tradition left by him will never die out. It will ever remain a great memorial to him.

**CHAPTER V**  
**A LEGISLATOR AT WORK**

## Chapter – 5

### A Legislator at Work

To Abdurahiman, the parliamentary bodies, whether the Municipal Councils, the District Boards or the Central or Provincial Legislative Assemblies, were avenues for better expression of his thoughts. The legislative bodies served him as stages to fight for the rights of the people. They also served him as forums to chalk out programmes for the development of the society and the country at large. Further, public elections, the basis of the parliamentary system, were occasions to educate the people of the necessity of freedom and independence and to activate them in the struggle for freedom. Hence he never missed a chance to compete in the election and to get elected to parliamentary bodies.

#### **In the Calicut Municipal Council:**

In 1931, Abdurahiman was elected to the Calicut Municipal Council. But for about a year, he was not attending the Council as he was away from Calicut in connection with raising funds for his newspaper, Al-Ameen. Even then, he used to influence the decisions of Municipal Council to get his nationalist aspirations realized. When he was in Bombay, he persuaded the Council to pass a resolution to the effect of boycotting the petrol and oil of the

British Petroleum Company for the Municipal vehicles.<sup>1</sup>

In 1933, he returned to Calicut and got himself actively involved in the proceedings of the Municipal Council. Since then, every important decision of the Council had an 'Abdurahiman effect'. In the Council debates he was concerned only with the problems of the people. Hence his arguments in the legislative bodies sometimes appeared as those of an opposition member. Further, no problem of the people was left unnoticed by him. When the Municipal Council proposed the abolition of upper primary school for want of sufficient number of students, Abdurahiman objected to the proposal.<sup>2</sup> To him, education was not a business proposition to be reckoned in terms of profit and loss. Finally, the Council had to give up the proposal for the abolition of 'uneconomic' schools.

By nature, Abdurahiman was very hasty. He always wanted quick redressal of the grievances of the people. When the people living in Oyitty Road, Calicut, were exposed to fowl smell from the Municipal drainage, he brought the matter before the attention of the Council and severely criticized the lethargy of the Municipal engineering staff in the execution of public works.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Fortnightly Report* for the First Half of February 1932. [TNA]

<sup>2</sup> Proceedings of the Municipal Council Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> April 1933. *The Malabar District Gazette Supplement*, May 1933, p.1. [Regional Archives Calicut]

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p.3.

Abdurahiman was a friend and benefactor of the teacher community. He was always in the forefront of organizing the teachers on trade union line. He wanted a better salary and living conditions for them. So he demanded parity in the salary of the teachers working in the Municipal schools with those working in the government schools.<sup>4</sup> He also requested the Municipal Chairman to take steps to appoint the teachers in their home stations as far as possible.<sup>5</sup>

He was very vigilant in matters related to public health. When the Common Wealth Trust Limited Company, owned by the British, let out untreated wastewater to the public drainage system, the nearby wells got polluted. Immediately, Abdurahiman brought the matter before the attention of the Council. The Council requested the Company to stop the flow of wastewater to the drainage. When the Company ignored the request, the Council withheld the license of the Company on his suggestion. Finally, the Company had to take steps to stop the letting out of wastewater to the public drainage system.<sup>6</sup>

#### **In the Malabar District Board:**

In 1933, Abdurahiman was elected to the District Board from Tirur

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<sup>4</sup> Proceedings of the Municipal Council Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> July 1934. *The Malabar District Gazette Supplement*, October 1934, p.2. [Regional Archives Calicut].

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Proceedings of the Municipal Council Meeting, *The Malabar District Gazette Supplement*, March, 1933, p.3.

constituency.<sup>7</sup> As a member of the Board, he initiated a number of legislations of far-reaching importance in the history of Kerala. A few citations from the proceedings of the Board might help us to discover the great parliamentarian and farsighted statesman in him.

When the coconut cultivators were thrown into trouble due to the fall in prices, Abdurahiman studied the subject and found that the decline in prices was due to the import of coconut from Ceylon. So he moved a resolution in the District Board requesting the government to protect the coconut cultivators from foreign competition.<sup>8</sup>

Abdurahiman was very practical in his approach to the social and economic problems. He found that unemployment and economic backwardness of the minority communities were mainly responsible for communal polarization and hatred of the backward communities towards economically well off upper communities. He also realized that unless the gap between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' was reduced, the ill feeling between them would become a serious threat to the national unity and

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<sup>7</sup> E. Moidu Maulavi, *Ende Koottukaran*, Calicut, 1964, p.192.

<sup>8</sup> The resolution runs as " In view of the great depression of prices of coconut oil and copra, one of the main products of Malabar upon which large population of the country depends for living and in view of the keen competition set up by the importation of the articles from Ceylon and other foreign countries, this meeting of the Malabar District Board strongly request His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General of India to save the indigenous products from foreign competition by imposing an adequately heavy duty on the imported articles." Proceedings of the District Board Meeting, *The Malabar District Gazette Supplement*, April 1934, p.9. [RAC]

integrity. So he always stood for employment and educational opportunities for the backward minority communities. It was in this context that he put up a resolution in the Board meeting to reserve two-third of all future appointments under the District Board to the un-represented and under-represented communities.<sup>9</sup> The resolution created a lot of hue and cry both within and outside the Board. The upper classes opposed the resolution. Finally, the resolution was withdrawn with permission.

Abdurahiman had played a vital role in the formation of the KPCC. His ultimate objective was the establishment of a separate province for the people of the west coast. Then onwards he was in constant pursuit of the realization of this objective. On 16<sup>th</sup> October 1933, he presented a resolution in the Board requesting the government to take necessary measures for the formation of a separate province in the west coast for the welfare and economic development of the people of the area.<sup>10</sup> The resolution was unanimously accepted.

#### **In the Madras Legislative Assembly:**

In 1937, Abdurahiman was elected to the Madras Legislative Assembly from the constituency of Malappuram.<sup>11</sup> It was with a master plan

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<sup>9</sup> Proceedings of the District Board Meeting, *The Malabar District Gazette Supplement*, June 1933, p.28 [RAC]

<sup>10</sup> Proceedings of the District Board Meeting, *The Malabar District Gazette Supplement*, November 1933, p.13.[RAC]

<sup>11</sup> E.M.S. Namboodiripad, *Selected Writings*, Vol.2., Calcutta, 1985, p.193

for the development of Malabar that he took oath as the Member of Legislative Assembly on 14<sup>th</sup> July 1937.<sup>12</sup> He was very active and enthusiastic in presenting his views on all topics under discussion. He never missed a chance to present the grievances of the people of Malabar before the House and to get them redressed at the earliest. His maiden speech in the House was in Malayalam.<sup>13</sup>

His first discourse in the House was on Agricultural Relief Bill. He was a close friend of cultivators and had first hand experience of the pathetic plight of the tenants. Hence he had something serious to share with other members of the Assembly. He forcefully argued for the tenants and strongly supported the Agricultural Relief Bill. He wanted the bill to be passed and implemented immediately.<sup>14</sup> It was under the pressures of Abdurahiman that

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<sup>12</sup> *Madras Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vols. 1 and 2. Madras, 1937, p.26. [TNA]

<sup>13</sup> He said, "My friends here are anxious that I should say a few words in Malayalam, which they think should not go un-represented. I, therefore, venture to speak, sir, a few words in Malayalam." *Madras Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vols. 1 and 2, Madras, 1937, p.26

<sup>14</sup> He said, "Mr. Speaker, sir, I stand up to support the Bill and I beg leave to assure the House and the Honourable the Premier that the Bill has got utmost support in my constituency which is the most rural in Malabar. . . . If the landlords and the moneylender both of whom in many cases are the same, have been merciful to their tenants, I should say the lot of the tenants, would have been better. Much has been said here against the bill by some Honourable Members. I do not know whether they have been taken into account the lot of tenant today. Each and every one has been admitting that the tenant deserves relief. When and how, is the question? If they want relief to be put off, how long, I want to know. Is the relief to be given after the tenant is ruined and ruined beyond any hope of redemption... So I appeal to the House to expedite the passing of the Bill into law and also to expedite its being brought into operation at the earliest possible moment." See *Madras Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol. V., Madras, March 1938, pp.137-138.

V.V. Giri, the Labour Minister in Rajaji's cabinet, agreed to establish land mortgage banks in Ernad, Walluvnad and Waynad taluks.<sup>15</sup> In the Assembly he also argued for the distribution of wasteland among the unemployed youth.<sup>16</sup>

In connection with the Assembly discussion on power supply in the Presidency, Abdurahiman brought a very feasible proposal for the longstanding demand for the electrification of Calicut city before the House. He demanded power to Calicut and other parts of Malabar from the Pykara power station via Meppadi and Vitiri of Waynad taluk.<sup>17</sup> Arguing for his just demand, he said, "The Pykara station provides power to the district of Madura and even to other districts farther off, but Malabar is denied the benefit, even though it lies very very close to Pykara."<sup>18</sup> He also pointed out that power supply from Pykara would help the development of agriculture and industries and would facilitate the lighting up of villages and towns of Malabar.<sup>19</sup> Further, he proposed two hydroelectric projects for Malabar, at Mannarghat and Vitiri, to meet future demand for power.<sup>20</sup> Though these projects were

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<sup>15</sup> Pirappankode Murali, (ed.), *Granta Lokam Monthly*, Vol. 53. Thiruvananthapuram, November 2001, p.50.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> *Madras Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol. 3., Madras, March 1938, p.163. [TNA]

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> *Madras Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol. 4., Madras, March 1938, p.295.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

not immediately realized, they are now in their implementation stage. It stands witness to the farsightedness of Abdurahiman in the developmental programmes of Malabar.

Abdurahiman requested the minister concerned for the inclusion of Malayalam programmes in the schedule of the Madras radio station along with Tamil and Telegu. But the request was not conceded for want of time.<sup>21</sup>

Here is another instance of Abdurahiman's thoroughness and deep understanding of the demands of Malabar. To him, the roads were the arteries in the body structure of a state without which the development of the state would be stunted. In connection with the annual budget discussion, he brought many a transportation scheme before the attention of the House. He proposed the construction of two bridges over the Korapuzha and Moorat river in north Malabar and one bridge over the Bharathapuzha in south Malabar.<sup>22</sup> He also requested the Government of Madras to persuade the princely states of Cochin and Travancore to construct bridges across the river Periyar at Craganore and Alwaye,<sup>23</sup> These bridges were of vital importance to make the Cochin harbour accessible to the people of Malabar and for cultural and political integration of Kerala.

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<sup>21</sup> *Madras Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol. 2., Madras, March 1938, pp. 108-109.

<sup>22</sup> *Madras Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol. 4., Madras, March 1938, p.297.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

He was also well acquainted with the needs of Ernad. He wanted to have transport facilities connecting Kondotty, Thirurangadi and Vazhakkad, the three developing cities of Ernad. Therefore, he demanded a bridge across Panampuzha and roads connecting these cities.<sup>24</sup> Pointing out the dilapidated condition of the west coast road running from Calicut to Payyannur in north Malabar, he said, "This being second class road it receives only less grants from the government and so it must be converted into a trunk road and the grants enhanced accordingly."<sup>25</sup> Thus Abdurahiman was well aware of the needs of Malabar and he had his own remedies for their fulfilment.

Abdurahiman never cared that he was a member of the ruling Congress party in the House. Mostly, his remarks on the activities of the Congress cabinet were piercing and bitter. He was a troublemaker to the treasury bench. To them, he was a rebel in the Congress and an opposition in the ruling party. He was concerned with the poorest of the poor of Indians and wanted a humanitarian face to all efforts of the government. His assessment of the budget stands witness to his political philosophy. He said, "This budget is meant for the 'haves' than for the 'have-nots'. Thus if the budget is judged in terms of human relations, question may be raised how far the budget promises to improve the economic condition of the country and how far it brings relief to the hungry stomach of the people. If it does not satisfy

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> *Madras Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol. 6, No.11, Madras, March 1938, p.825.

the hunger of the masses, however well balanced it may be and however the surplus may be, all the same, I should say, the budget is not quite sound.”<sup>26</sup>

Abdurahiman was very critical of the activities of the Congress ministers particularly in their relation with Malabar. He wanted the Congress ministers to come down from their ivory towers and to have a closer look on the problems of the ordinary men. He was not hesitant in pinpointing the defaults of ministers, how great they might be. He severely criticized the Hon. Ministers, V.V. Giri and Muniswami, for their ritualistic and ‘ceremonial visits’ to the people concerned to their departments.<sup>27</sup>

Abdurahiman was a Congressman to the core. His criticisms against the Congress government were only corrective ones. In a sitting of the Assembly, one of the Congress Members presented a resolution requesting, “the formation of constituent assembly to frame a constitution for independent India as expressed in the resolution by the Indian National Congress.”<sup>28</sup> But the opposition Members mooted an amendment deleting the words ‘as

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<sup>26</sup> *Madras Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol. 5. No.4., Madras, March 1938, p.292.

<sup>27</sup> He said, “There is a section of labourers in the forest region of our Presidency who are uncared for and unknown to the people who sit here. The Hon. Minister, V.V. Giri was taken round in the car of Mr. Mac Ewen, Collector of Malabar. I do not know how far the Hon. Minister was free to move about among the labourers and to know their grievances. If the reports from the newspapers are to be relied upon, I should think, the Hon. Minister, Mr. Muniswami Pillai also could have had no better chance of knowing the bitter conditions of labourers in plantations. I want the Hon. Ministers of this Congress Government to eschew these ceremonial visits and take to closer study of the real conditions of people in their charge.” *Madras Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol. 4., No.4., Madras, March 1938, p.297.

<sup>28</sup> *Madras Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol.3., No.2., Madras, August 1937, p.67.

expressed in the resolution by the Indian National Congress'. When other Congress Members in the Assembly stood tongue tied, the Congressman in Abdurahiman woke up. He strongly opposed the amendment and said, "The Congress has every right to represent and express the national will."<sup>29</sup>

Abdurahiman was an ardent congressman. He was never skeptical of the capability of the Congress in guiding the country to independence. When some of the Congress leaders suspected whether India had advanced to become independent, he asked them, "If Iraq, Egypt and other countries, whose resources are poor and cannot be compared with the vast resources of India, can be independent, why should not India?"<sup>30</sup>

Abdurahiman had his own stand on all matters that came under discussion of the House. Some times his viewpoints appeared to be absurd and irrelevant. But time has proved that they were very pertinent and relevant even to the present day. Suggesting solution to unemployment among the educated, he opined that the wastelands should be distributed among the unemployed and not to realize any tax from them until the land began to yield some return to them.<sup>31</sup>

He was against all sorts of exploitations, whether individual or collective. He was very much agitated to see the co-operative societies

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

exploiting the poor cultivators. He pointed out, "The co-operative societies established to help the poor peasants are actually exploiting them. They used to collect 12 per cent of interest in normal condition, but if the peasants failed to pay the interest in time, the societies used to charge penalties and the rate of interest went up to 24 per cent."<sup>32</sup>

To him, alcoholism was the mother of all evils. He wanted total prohibition in the country and if that was not possible at least in the provinces ruled by the Congress. He could not agree with those who argue against prohibition on the ground that it would cause loss of revenue to the government. He said, "The loss of revenue when compared to the gain is nothing."<sup>33</sup>

He was an uncompromising crusader against injustice. To him the Mappila Outrages Act passed a century ago was a great injustice done by the British on the Mappila community of Malabar. The Act was a disgrace to the freedom loving Mappila community and a blot on their patriotic history. Abdurahiman had made several attempts to get the Act repealed. But it was of no use. When he was elected to the Legislative Assembly, he continued his struggle in the House. Finally the Congress government repealed the Act in September 1937. When the Act was annulled, Abdurahiman did not hesitate to congratulate the Government including His Excellency the Governor. To

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid. p.296.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. pp. 138-139.

quote his words, "I should first thank His Excellency the Governor and the Prime Minister and all the Members of the Cabinet for having cancelled the Mappila Outrages Act which was an Act most outrageous to humanity and to the self respect of any community."<sup>34</sup>

Similarly, the Malabar Special Police, constituted with the declared purpose of suppressing the Mappila riots, was another stigma on the Mappila community. The M. S. P. was notorious for their cruel treatment towards the Mappilas during the rebellion of 1921. They remained sadistic towards the Mappilas years after the rebellion and continued their harassment unabated. Abdurahiman always wanted to blot it out. When he became Member of Legislative Assembly, he brought the matter before the kind attention of the House and requested the House to abolish the M.S.P. as early as possible.<sup>35</sup> Though the M.S.P. was not abolished, the Congress government tried to give a humanitarian face to it.

Abdurahiman was a staunch advocate of individual freedom and could never tolerate any infringement of personal liberty by any authority, even by the police. When the police searched the house of E.M.S. Namboodiripad without any advance notice nor with any direction from judicial magistrate,

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid. Vol.3., No.8, Madras, September 1937, p.524.

<sup>35</sup> In the Assembly he said, "The people living in the area adjacent to the barracks of these policemen are suffering untold miseries and humiliations. If the will and pleasure of these constables are opposed, they subject the people of the neighbourhood to all sorts of tyranny and oppression. I wish therefore that the Hon. Premier look into the matter and abolish the Malabar Special Police as early as possible by which we can save six lakhs of rupees and use it for better purposes." See Ibid. September 1937, p.526.

Abdurahman strongly protested against it. He brought the matter before the attention of the Assembly and recorded his remonstrance in strongest terms.<sup>36</sup>

Abdurahman also regretted and deplored the hostile attitude of government officials including the policemen towards the problems of ordinary people even under Congress government.<sup>37</sup> When the police continued its intimidation, Abdurahman convened a protest meeting at the Town Hall Calicut and passed a resolution requesting the government to make a probe into the high handedness of the police.<sup>38</sup>

The Tenancy Acts passed earlier were beneficial only to the *Kanakkars*, the intermediary class between the landlords and the actual cultivators. When the lot of the *Kanakkars* improved, they teamed up with the *Jenmis* in exploiting the *Verupattakkars*.<sup>39</sup> Thus the lot of the actual cultivators [*Verupattakkars*] remained worse than ever. From the great

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<sup>36</sup> He said, "The police is poking its nose into the respectable houses and disturbing persons who are considered most honourable in our land. Mr. Sankaran Namboodiripad is the Organizing Secretary of the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee. If the police suspected that he was in possession of any banned book, they could have asked him about it in writing and Mr. Namboodiripad, the honourable gentle man, would have surrendered the book to the police if he had the possession of the book. I have absolutely no doubt about it." See Madras Legislative Assembly Debates, Vol. 3., No.8, Madras, September 1937, p.526.

<sup>37</sup> He regretted, "We have been telling the people that the Congress is fighting for Swaraj, the Swaraj by which we can change the methods though not the personnel of these departments. It is immaterial to us what the personnel is. It is the mentality and the method that we want to change. I am sorry to see that the police have not changed their methods and their mentality."

<sup>38</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 8<sup>th</sup> November 1938.

<sup>39</sup> E.K.G. Nambiar, (ed.), *Agrarian India Problems and Perspectives*, Calicut University, 1999, p.109.

agrarian revolt of 1921 onwards. Abdurahiman was constantly arguing for the poor cultivators. He was having first hand information of their pitiable life and was determined to improve their lot. Considering his constant request, the Madras Legislative Assembly appointed the Malabar Tenancy Committee under K. Kutty Krishna Menon as the Chairman and A.J. Platt, ICS as the Secretary. The Committee was constituted by nineteen members including, Abdurahiman and E.M.S. Namboodiripad.<sup>40</sup> From the very commencement of its activities Abdurahiman found that the Chairman and the majority members of the Committee were concerned with the protection of the privileges of the landlords rather than the protection of the rights of the cultivators. Abdurahiman and E.M.S. Namboodiripad disagreed with the recommendations of the majority of the Committee and submitted separate dissenting notes.

Disagreeing with the majority decision of favouring the landlords, Abdurahiman wrote, "My colleagues can afford to be generous to their own class, the non-producing *Kanamdar* and allow him to sit tight upon the hard working producer and suck the poor man's blood in the name of some ancient *Karanavan* being born to a *Jenmi* or a few *panams* [coins] having been advanced in olden times by one of the members of the family to a *Jenmi*."<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> *Report of the Malabar Tenancy Committee*, Vol. I., Madras, 1940, p.i.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* Vol. I., Madras, 1940, Dissenting Note of Abdurahiman, p.94.

Abdurahiman strongly argued for the rights of the cultivators. He wrote, "The actual cultivator should have full security that if he plants trees, he will be left free to gather their fruits and that if he reclaims land from the waste, he will be left free to enjoy the fruits of his labour and capital. The rights of *Jenmi* when viewed legalistically may seem immutable. But the right of the producer to enjoy the fruits of his labour is irrefutable."<sup>42</sup>

Abdurahiman was for the abolition of landlordism. But he was pessimistic about the realization of his dream. He said, "I know that it is not going to be realized under this government; nor is this Committee or any such other committee going to consider the real remedy to the extremely bad plight in which the agriculturist is finding himself in or even if forced to consider to recommend any such changes as is envisaged in the above paragraphs."<sup>43</sup>

However, the *Jenmis* were against any change in the existing land tenure system. They exerted pressure on the government not to enforce the recommendations of the Committee. The raging World War was sufficient excuse for the authorities to put off the whole question indefinitely. Writing on the report Prakash Karat observes, "The British authorities postponed the

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

whole question till the War ended. The files of the government reveal that pressure from the *Jenmis* was also instrumental in this postponement.”<sup>44</sup>

However, the dissenting notes of Abdurahiman and two others strengthened the cause of the tenancy in Kerala. It was these notes that loudly proclaimed the necessity of putting an end to landlordism in Kerala and continued to influence all agricultural enactments till the passing of the Land Reform Act of 1970. Still it continues to be a source of inspiration to those who are engaged in the struggle for the rights of the cultivators. Over and above, it serves to be a basic historic document for all future studies on agricultural relations and land tenure system in Kerala.<sup>45</sup>

In short, Abdurahiman proved himself a pioneer for many later legislations of great social and political significance in the history of Kerala. His performance in the House always remained a riddle. His uprightness in criticizing the government won him the title ‘the opposition member in the ruling party’ [*Bharanapakshathe Prathipaksham*].<sup>46</sup> However, no body dared to question his honesty. Instead, the Congress party appreciated his frankness

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<sup>44</sup> Prakash Karat, “Organised Struggle of Malabar Peasantry, 1934-40”, *Social Scientist*, Trivandrum, March 1977, p.9.

<sup>45</sup> K.K.N. Kurup, *Adhunika Keralam*, (Mal.), (Modern Kerala), Trivandrum, 1995, p.90.

<sup>46</sup> S.K. Pottakkatt, et al., *Muhammed Abdurahiman a political biography*, Calicut, 1978, p.526.

in politics and elected him as member of the Executive Committee of Madras Legislative Assembly Congress Party.<sup>47</sup>

Appreciating the opposition role of Abdurahiman, the Speaker once commented, "Honourable Member of the right wing is expected to speak in reply to the observations made by those on the left wing; but the position is exactly topsy-turvy here. The Hon. Member is making an original comment, which has to be replied by the Ministers. He may go on with his speech."<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Mathrubhumi, dated 17<sup>th</sup> May 1939.

<sup>48</sup> *Madras Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol.5., No. 4., Madras, March 1938, p.297.

**CHAPTER VI**  
**THE TONGUE OF THE**  
**OPPRESSED**

## Chapter – 6

### **The Tongue of the Oppressed**

In the early phase of the National Movement in Malabar, the Indian National Congress did not possess a newspaper to present its programmes and policies before the people. Public platforms and religious pulpits constituted the only important means to approach the public. When the Khilafat Movement began to take shape under the umbrella of the Indian National Congress and when people from remote villages also began to involve in it, the necessity of a newspaper was felt more seriously than ever before. When rebellion broke out in 1921, the British authorities banned all political activities in Malabar and prevented the nationalist leaders from visiting the riot-affected areas. Then all communication between the leadership and the ranks was totally cut off, damaging the entire socio-political set-up of Malabar. During the rebellion and the days following, the pro-British and anti-nationalist newspapers appeared with full of cooked up reports with the deliberate intention of wrecking the National Movement. Thus an effective media to counter such a move and to present a matter of fact picture of the rebellion before the people concerned and the world at large necessitated the establishment of a national newspaper in Malayalam.

When the rebellion ended south Malabar was left torn up and bleeding. Then the most serious concern of the nationalist leaders was the rehabilitation of the people of the riot-affected area. Women and children the aged and the sick were the most unfortunate victims of the rebellion. A look at their life was sufficient to melt even the hearts of stone. But the heartrending condition of these human beings was not even known to people living in their immediate neighbourhood. For fear of the displeasure of the authorities, even the pro-nationalist papers were not bold enough to bring it out before the public. It was in such a state of affairs that Abdurahiman published a write up in *The Hindu* and *The Bombay Chronicle* relating the forlorn condition of Mappila women and children of riot-affected area. The write up enraged the authorities. Abdurahiman was arrested and sentenced to two years imprisonment.<sup>1</sup> It was this write-up that motivated the munificent individuals like Maulana Abdul Khadir Khasuri from Punjab and philanthropic organizations like the Bombay Muslim Jamat and the Tabaleegue Jamat to establish refugee camps and orphanages at different places in south Malabar.<sup>2</sup> Thus it helped a lot in the amelioration of the sufferings of the people.

However, during his jail life, Abdurahiman made up his mind to set up a newspaper as a potential instrument to fight against the British imperialism.

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<sup>1</sup> V.S. Keraleeyan, *Keralathintae Veeraputhran*, (Mal.) (The Brave Son of Kerala), Calicut 1959, p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> M. Rasheed, *Muhammed Abdurahiman Sahib*, (Mal.), Calicut, 1994, p. 32.

He also had some avowed objectives behind such a project. To him, a mass medium was essential to boost up national sentiments, to mobilize public opinion and to highlight the social disabilities of the oppressed. Over and above, he had a distinctive mission, the reform and regeneration of the Muslim Community.

On being released from jail, he began to strive for the fulfillment of his long cherished dream. But he knew that it was not an easy task. He had to overcome hurdles after hurdles, the most serious of which was lack of funds. It was a time when both the Hindus and the Muslims of Malabar were in great economic stress. He had to seek the help of his friends in Bombay, Delhi and Madras.<sup>3</sup> They offered their wholehearted support to the venture. Still he could not raise funds sufficient for the purpose. Abdurahiman did not possess a house to mortgage for the purpose. All what he had was a piece of land of less than an acre received as his ancestral property. He sold the same and invested in the project.

Finally, in December 1923, the *Al-Ameen* Company was registered.<sup>4</sup> Still the Company was unable to bring out the newspaper for want of regular

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<sup>3</sup> A. Mohammed, *Swathanthrya Samara Smaranakal*, (Mal.) (Reminiscences of the Freedom Struggle), Calicut, 1981, p.74.

<sup>4</sup> Abdurahiman was the Managing Director. A.K. Kunhi Moyin Haji (Tellichery), T. Hassan Koya Mulla (Calicut), K. Seethi Mohamed Haji (Kodungallur), P.C. Aluppi Keyi (Tellichery), Manappatt Kochu Moideen Haji (Kodungallur), Panapparambil Kunhi Pokker Kutty (Kodungallur) were the Directors of Al-Ameen Company. See S.K. Pottakkatt, et al., *Muhammed Abdurahiman a political biography*, (Mal.), Calicut, 1978, p. 139.

subscribers. All those who could afford to subscribe for a newspaper had already become subscribers of the *Mathrubhumi*. Realizing these difficulties of *Al-Ameen*, the *Mathrubhumi* came to her help and published an appeal to help Abdurahiman in his enterprise.<sup>5</sup> Finally, on 12<sup>th</sup> October 1924, the first issue of *Al-Ameen* came out.<sup>6</sup> It was ten days after its first issue that the Superintendent of Police was pleased to give his 'no objection certificate' to the publication.<sup>7</sup> Welcoming *Al-Ameen*, the *Mathrubhumi* published a write up captioned "*Nhangalude Puthiya Sahajeevi*" [Our New Mate]. The release concluded with a prayer, "Let the God bless *Al-Ameen* with a long life to serve the country and the community."<sup>8</sup>

The life of *Al-Ameen* was full of ups and downs. At first, it was published as a tri-weekly on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday.<sup>9</sup> On 25<sup>th</sup> June 1930 it became a daily. But for want of funds, Abdurahiman had to revert it as tri-weekly.<sup>10</sup> Still it was running in debt. Further, people with vested interests feared *Al-Ameen* for its daredevil policy of attacking evils. They were hell bent on silencing the paper at any cost. Such people purchased

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<sup>5</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 1<sup>st</sup> May 1924.

<sup>6</sup> S.K. Pottakkatt, et al., *Muhammed Abdurahiman a political biography*, (Mal.) Calicut, 1978, p.140.

<sup>7</sup> M.S.P. Files, dated 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1924. [RAC]

<sup>8</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 14<sup>th</sup> October 1924.

<sup>9</sup> M. Rasheed, op cit, p.35.

<sup>10</sup> G. Priyadarsanan, *Kerala Pathrapravarthanam Suvarnadhyayangal*, (Mal.). (The Golden Chapters of Journalism in Kerala), Kottayam, 1999, p. 210.

credits bonds of *Al-Ameen* from its well-wishers and filed suits for failure to pay the amount. When such new creditors insisted for the pound of flesh and secured legal orders for the confiscation of the property of the Company, Abdurahiman had no alternative but to stop its publication in 1932.<sup>11</sup> But those who loved *Al-Ameen* more than any thing else wanted its publication again. Many individuals and organizations came forward with a helping hand. The Malabar Muslim Jamat of Madras at its annual meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1932 requested the Muslims to render all help to *Al-Ameen* for its publication.<sup>12</sup> Thus *Al-Ameen* resumed its publication. In March 1939, when the paper improved its financial condition, Abdurahiman applied for the permission of the government for its conversion from tri-weekly into daily. But the District Magistrate rejected the application on the ground that its editor Abdurahiman was 'unreliable' and that *Al-Ameen* was propagating 'Congress views among the Moplahs'.<sup>13</sup>

(Abdurahiman was not a journalist by profession. But he was fortunate to get the services of great journalists and columnists of the time., The famous journalist Vakkom Abdul Kader and linguist T.K. Raman Menon and a host of others enriched the pages of *Al-Ameen*.<sup>14</sup> The editorials, articles, write ups, press reports, etc. from the pens of these great men were valuable treasures of

<sup>11</sup> S.K. Pottakkatt, et al., op cit., pp. 280-281.

<sup>12</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 29<sup>th</sup> May 1932.

<sup>13</sup> Public Department, File No. 1939/866 dated 25<sup>th</sup> March 1939. [RAC]

<sup>14</sup> S.K. Pottakkatt, et al., op cit., pp.146-147

the country's historical literature. For about one and a half decades they were read and cherished along with the glorious deeds and sacrifices of their authors. What was conspicuous about the writers and articles of *Al-Ameen* was their advocacy of liberty, democracy and anti-imperialistic and anti-fascist stance. It is difficult to summarise all the subjects covered by the newspaper. A flavour of their content may be gathered from the excerpts that follow.

*Al-Ameen* was primarily intended for diffusing nationalism among the people of Kerala. From time to time it took up different issues to infuse patriotic spirit in the minds of the people. The boycott of Simon Commission was one of such early issues that *Al-Ameen* made use of to stimulate people into action. Appealing to the general public to boycott the Commission, *Al-Ameen* wrote, "The task before the freedom loving Indians is not to be frightened by the threats of the British and not to be misled by their petty promises."<sup>15</sup>

*Al-Ameen* was uncompromising in tone and tit for tat in style. Even a cursory examination of back issues of the paper shows that it was a trenchant and forceful critic of the government. When Earl Russell, the Under Secretary to the Government of India, denounced the Declaration of Independence passed by the Indian National Congress as 'foolishness', *Al-*

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<sup>15</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1928

*Ameen* retaliated in the same coin and reminded, "Indians have realized that it is not the good will of persons like Earl Russell but the extreme sacrifices of Indians that is going to set India free."<sup>16</sup>

*Al-Ameen* never hesitated to infuse religious zeal into political enthusiasm. The leaders of the paper quoted *The Quran* and the traditions of the Prophet with stimulating profusion. Thus Abdurahiman brought a new sophistication to the art of mingling political and religious messages and called upon the Muslims in the name of Islam to sacrifice every thing for the cause of the freedom of the motherland. On 6<sup>th</sup> July 1930, *Al-Ameen* published a very memorable article entitled, "*Jihad-ul-Akbar*" [The Great Holy War]. The article began, "If patriotism is an integral part of the religious faith of a Muslim and if Islam is a religion which extols the message of freedom, it is the bounden duty of every true Muslim to sacrifice every thing including life for the freedom and salvation of the motherland."<sup>17</sup>

The paper also used to give illustrations from Islamic history to infuse patriotic spirit in the minds of the Muslims. The paper asserted, "If the Muslims of today are the descendants of illustrious Umar and courageous Khalid, they should follow the path illuminated by them."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 12<sup>th</sup> January 1930, MNNPR, January-February 1930, p.198. [TNA]

<sup>17</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 6<sup>th</sup> July 1930, MNNPR, July-August 1930, p.1040. [TNA]

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

The paper unambiguously asserted that it was incumbent on every Muslim to fight for freedom of the country. To quote the paper, "If there are any among the Muslims who deride this passive resistance, they are guilty of having contravened the order of Islam. They trample under foot the great principles of Islam. They are the enemies of Islam and of India."<sup>19</sup> Thus the article "*Jihad-ul-Akbar*" reflects the pious desire of its editor, Abdurahiman, and probably, there might not be any such passionate appeal inculcating the virtues of patriotism and the spirit of nationalism in the name of a religion in the whole history of the freedom movement in India.

The authorities found the article highly objectionable and exciting. They wanted to silence *Al-Ameen* once for all. But to Abdurahiman, freedom of expression was the life-breath of the press. He could never tolerate any sort of curb on it. When Lord Irwin, the Governor General of India, revived the Press Act through an ordinance, *Al-Ameen* severely criticized it and stated that the ordinance was intended to down grade the newspapers from being public organs to a mere government gazette.<sup>20</sup>

*Al-Ameen* also published articles full of idealistic idioms and satirical

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> *Al-Ameen* wrote, "The revival of the Press Act is an instrument used by Lord Irwin to give a final blow to the spirit of Indian Nationalism and the Satyagraha movement. As a result of this law we cannot say anything about the cruel and heartrending manner in which the Government treat the *Satyagrahis* under their very nose. The Law is intended to reduce the newspaper from public organs to a government gazette." *Al-Ameen*, dated 1<sup>st</sup> May 1930. MNNPR, May-June, 1930, p.810. [TNA]

critiques. Laughing at the imposition of the Police Act 144 over Malabar, the paper published an article captioned "*Pandeeru Pandrandu*" [Twelve into Twelve i.e. 144].<sup>21</sup> The article was more than enough to provoke the authorities who had already been on the look out for an opportunity to smother the paper to death. They served a notice to the paper under the Press Act demanding two thousand rupees as security against any such articles in the future. At this time Abdurahiman was in the central jail at Kannur. When he came to know of the security demand, he wrote to his colleagues not to obey the unjust order.<sup>22</sup> He also sent an article captioned "Government and Newspapers" from the Central Jail to be published in the paper before being strangled by the Press Act. Quoting the words of the Prophet, the article openly denounced the interference of the authorities in the freedom of the press and stated that in Malabar it had become impossible to conduct a newspaper in accordance with the ethics of journalism.<sup>23</sup> Each word of the

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<sup>21</sup> M. Rasheed, op cit., p. 35.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> The article runs, "It is doubtful whether the people and officials here know what position is accorded to newspapers which are the tongue of the people, by civilized governments that desire to govern in accordance with the wishes of the people. Papers that openly speak out truth are short lived. The Prophet said, "speak out truth even though it may cause you trouble". It looks as if it will not be possible at present especially in Malabar to conduct a paper in accordance with the Prophet's holy words, "He who hides the truth in giving expression to opinion is a deaf devil." The *Al-Ameen* has been living till now bearing the gravity of these words of the *Rasul* [The Prophet] well in mind. But it seems some people are attempting to make the *Ameen* like a 'deaf devil'. When the occasion comes compelling the acceptance of such a life, the *Ameen* will only gladly show its neck with courage to the sharp weapon of authority and will not live a moment longer. Our Government thinks that newspapers are sort of creatures dangerous to the country and to the Government. They may have reason for it. No civilized government that desires to govern in accordance to the wishes of the people appears deem it so." *Al-Ameen*, dated 29<sup>th</sup> July 1930. MNNPR, July-August 1930, p.1193. [TNA]

article found to be exasperating to the authorities. Finally, on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1930, *Al-Ameen* was banned.<sup>24</sup> Paying homage to *Al-Ameen*, the *Mathrubhumi* wrote, “The *Al-Ameen* has fought bravely for the all round progress of Islam and the Muslim community.. It is a great loss to the community that *Al-Ameen* has disappeared behind the scene.”<sup>25</sup> It may be for fear of the authorities that the *Mathrubhumi* conveniently forgot to mention that *Al-Ameen* was banned for its strong stand against the Press Ordinance. However, the authorities could not gauge the momentum that *Al-Ameen* had already set in motion with regard to the struggle for freedom.

On the expiry of the Press Ordinance, *Al-Ameen* reappeared on 20<sup>th</sup> November 1930.<sup>26</sup> The editorial of the very first issue published after the ban revealed how bold *Al-Ameen* was in attacking the government and the Press Ordinance. The editorial began, “We who had the good fortune or misfortune to survive on ourselves one of the Ordinance’s sword blows, ‘sympathetically’ dealt by Lord Irwin’s Government. We are glad to be able once again without the shadow of slavery falling on us to carry on our service of the community and service of the country.”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> *Fortnightly Report*, First Half of August 1930. [TNA]

<sup>25</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 13<sup>th</sup> August 1930.

<sup>26</sup> *Fortnightly Report* for Second Half of November 1930 [TNA]

<sup>27</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 20<sup>th</sup> November 1930. MNNPR, November-December 1930. p.1778. [TNA]

On the next day of its reappearance, *Al-Ameen* came out with an exciting and sensational appeal to boycott foreign cloth. The appeal reminded the Muslims of Kerala that Islam did not approve the use of goods manufactured by the enemies of freedom. The appeal stated, "If Kerala welcomes foreign cloth chucked out from other provinces, it will reflect everlasting dishonour on the people and will be an unpardonable sin that we commit against our woeful mother land and that this action calculated to help foreign capitalism, which has sucked India to a dry skeleton, will not be approved even by *Allah*."<sup>28</sup> The appeal was so provoking to the district authorities that it was immediately reported to the Governor, "It is also significant that the deterioration in the tone of the Press since the expiry of the Press Ordinance has been more marked in this district than elsewhere, the *Al-Ameen* being the worst offender."<sup>29</sup> It is evident that *Al-Ameen* could make its voice heard by all and was dreaded by all.

It was clear that the authorities were not prepared to leave *Al-Ameen* on its own way. They were determined to strangle it by hook or by crook. The authorities denied government advertisements to *Al-Ameen*. Though the paper was in the jaws of debtors, it pooh-poohed the government decision and

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<sup>28</sup> The appeal runs, "While Gandhiji and more than seventy thousand brothers and sisters are suffering in jail, our lives will be futile if we do not try to stop the trade in foreign cloth. If Kerala welcomes foreign cloths chucked out from other provinces . . . will not be approved even by Allah. All must be patriotic. If that cannot be, people must at least not to be traitors to the motherland." *Al-Ameen*, dated. 21<sup>st</sup> November 1930. MNNPR, November-December 1930, p.1779 [TNA]

<sup>29</sup> *Fortnightly Reporter* for the First Half of December 1930. [TNA]

stated boldly, "It is rather childish on the part of the Government to resort to such things. Does a mighty Government need all this to defeat us?"<sup>30</sup> Even the judges were not just to *Al-Ameen*. The District Court Judge, J.C. Stuart, directed the *Munsifs* not to give court notices to *Al-Ameen*. The Members of the Madras Legislative Assembly questioned the direction in the House and the Government was forced to withdraw the direction.<sup>31</sup>

*Al-Ameen* was not contented with any thing less than complete independence. Hence, the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was only a truce to the paper. So it wrote "The truce may end in peace or war. The easiest way for success is to pray for everlasting peace keeping ourselves in complete readiness for war."<sup>32</sup> The paper exalted the views of Gandhiji from the outlook of Islam and stated, "Gandhiji is following the excellent model of Islam. Hence by God's grace success is certain."<sup>33</sup>

*Al-Ameen* was committed to oppose oppression of any kind and from any corner. In an article entitled "The Outgoing and Incoming Viceroys" the paper ironically recorded, "Lord Irwin's rule undoubtedly opened a new chapter in the history of India but the question is whether that chapter should

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<sup>30</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 9<sup>th</sup> January 1931, MNNPR, January-March 1931, p.171. [TNA]

<sup>31</sup> *Madras Legislative Assembly Debates*, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1933. Also see *Al-Ameen*, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1933.

<sup>32</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 10<sup>th</sup> March 1931, MNNPR, March-April, 1931, p.387 [TNA]

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

be written in letters of gold or letters of blood.”<sup>34</sup> *Al-Ameen* was not hesitant even to warn His Excellency, the Viceroy in unequivocal terms. In connection with Lord Wellington’s accession to the office of the Viceroy *Al-Ameen* wrote, “If our new captain proposes to steer the ship through the old channels, he has to be reminded that the rocks of national consciousness have now risen to wreck the ship. If Lord Wellington proposes to follow in those footsteps, the new ship is likely to fall into terrible whirlpool.”<sup>35</sup>

*Al-Ameen* was very eloquent and graphic in relating the sacrifices of the freedom fighters. Reporting the brutal police firing at the unarmed political prisoners of Lahore Central Jail, the newspaper wrote, “It could not at first believe the news that these darling children of India were actually executed at Lahore Central Jail. Who can believe that such injustices do not reveal the brutal mentality of the Government? In any case, may the fame of the deceased last for ever causing chapters to be recorded in the future history of India as will be a lesson to the Government and to the people.”<sup>36</sup>

*Al-Ameen* was never tired of glorifying the heroic deeds of the martyrs of freedom. The editorials and reports of the newspaper were not verbose writings but truthful, factual and inspiring. A sample excerpt is given below.

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<sup>34</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 19<sup>th</sup> April 1931, MNNPR, March-April 1931, p.584. [TNA]

<sup>35</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1931, MNNPR, March-April 1931, p. 584 [TNA]

<sup>36</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 25<sup>th</sup> March 1931, MNNPR, March-April 1931, p. 452 [TNA]

“The pen quivers and the heart palpitates when one begins to write any thing about the man hunt that took place at Peshawar. The echo of the terrible noise that came from the cannons that aimed at the array of unarmed warriors of righteousness [*satyagrahis*] still reverberates throughout India. To take the place of those who fell wounded and dead at the shower of shots from the guns of soldiers, *satyagrahis* rushed to the front. In the midst of this shower of shots, a boy appears with a smiling face. Uncovering his tender breast he cries, “Shoot at my breast and kill me”. Alas! That tender boy is shot and he falls at once. How many such heroes died that day in shooting. All shots were received on their breasts and no other part of the body. The heroes sacrificed their lives on the altar of freedom. The memory of their sacrifices generates new life.”<sup>37</sup>

*Al-Ameen* was not to leave a single stone unturned for strengthening the cause of freedom struggle. When Yusuf Mehar Ali, the President of the Bombay Youth League paid a private visit to Calicut, *Al-Ameen* got a message from him and published it under the title, “To the Youths of Kerala”. A few sentences from the message would convince how vigorous it was.

“Oh, the youths of Kerala! Are you preparing yourselves to fight valiantly in the ensuing war? Remember, that is not sufficient merely to have a revolutionary mind. You must have a revolutionary faith also. And that

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<sup>37</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 21<sup>st</sup> April 1931. MNNPR, March-April 1931, p. 541. [TNA]

faith must enable you to meet all obstacles in your way with a smiling face. 'Think dangerously and live dangerously'. This should be the heroic ideal of the youths who have fixity of purpose and are intoxicated with a sense of freedom. Let our next war for freedom be won through the youths of the country.<sup>†38</sup>

*Al-Ameen* not only generated the patriotic spirit but also kept it alive. When the newspaper found that the Round Table Conferences had slackened the enthusiasm of freedom fighters it came out with an article entitled, "The Ensuing Struggle". The article was very vibrant in style and threatening in tone. The article read, "We shall then have, if need be to let Ganges of blood flow, as Gandhiji said in London and in that current even the foundation stone of foreign domination will be swept off."<sup>39</sup>

*Al-Ameen* was always for the unity and integrity of India. It stood firmly against differentiating Indians as 'people of British India' and "people of princely states'. Perhaps *Al-Ameen* was the first of the public media to sense the ulterior purpose behind such separation. When the Indian State Protection Bill was presented in the Central Legislative Assembly with the stated purpose of giving the Indian princes control over the political aspirations of their subjects, *Al-Ameen* vehemently protested against it and

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<sup>38</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 13<sup>th</sup> May 1931, MNNPR, May 1931, p.712. [TNA]

<sup>39</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 8<sup>th</sup> October 1931, MNNPR, September-October 1931, p.1391. [TNA]

pointed out that the bill was actually intended to thwart the growth of national movement in the princely states. Arguing against the bill, the paper stated that political platforms were the only means to ventilate the grievances of people and it would be gross injustice to deny it.<sup>40</sup>

Any happening opposed to nationalism and secularism were severely criticized in the columns of *Al-Ameen* and strongly held that communal polarization would endanger the freedom struggle and always warned the people against the dangers of fanning the flames of communal discord. *Al-Ameen* was at the forefront of settling communal disputes amicably. When there occurred Thiyya-Muslim riot at Edakkad in Kannur, the paper called upon the leaders of the two communities to sit together and to find a cordial solution to their differences. The paper also reminded, "Such riots spring from silly and insignificant causes. India does not gain any thing by such rivalry. It only serves to make India the laughing stock of the whole world."<sup>41</sup>

The editor, Abdurahiman, had an integrated view of the society and hence the fight against injustice was directed not to any particular but all spheres of life. Depicting the poverty of Indians the paper wrote, "You can hear poverty-stricken India weeping loudly. Perhaps you are not listening to it. You must understand very well that the state of India today is like a frog in

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<sup>40</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 13<sup>th</sup> February 1934. MNNPR, January-June 1934, p.220. [TNA]

<sup>41</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 1<sup>st</sup> April 1934. MNNPR, January-June 1934, p.220. [TNA]

the mouth of a snake begging for protection of life and for freedom.”<sup>42</sup> An ordinary reader perhaps could not find better simile than this with regard to the economic and political condition of India.

Some times the paper presented common problems on cause and effect relation. Such presentations, though appeared to be too simple, were easily convincing to ordinary readers. For instance, discussing the unemployment among the educated, the paper stated “The indifference of the authorities towards the educated unemployed is perilous. All the money drawn from the country is frittered away on extravagant salaries paid to the government officials; and these public servants are not prepared even to collect statistics of unemployment.”<sup>43</sup>

*Al-Ameen* was very vigilant of securing the due rights of Mappilas in the appointment to government services. The paper initiated the Kerala Muslim Majlis to wait up on the Inspector General of Police, Madras to recruit the Mappilas to the police force.<sup>44</sup> The Inspector General conceded the demand and ordered the preparation of two separate waiting lists for Hindus and Mappilas so that appointments could be made from these lists alternatively. But when the order proved to be an eyewash, the paper took up

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<sup>42</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 31<sup>st</sup> July 1930. MNNPR July-August, 1930, p. 1192. [TNA]

<sup>43</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1934. MNNPR January-June 1934, p. 220. [TNA]

<sup>44</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 27<sup>th</sup> August 1935. M.S.P. Files, [Regional Archives Calicut]

the issue and pointed out, "All the 20 people recruited for the Malabar Special Police are non-Muslims."<sup>45</sup>

*Al-Ameen* was uncompromising in tone in criticizing exploitations of all sorts. When Indian labourers in foreign countries were being exploited by the Europeans the paper tried to bring it before the attention of the public and the authorities. Expressing its concern on the question, the paper published an article captioned "The Indian Milch Cow". The article read, "Indian labourers are being taken to tropical countries under European control so as to get cheap labour for the economic exploitation of those countries. When, as a result of the efforts of Indian labourers, the countries become habitable and Europeans get acclimatized to them, they are taken to some other wild regions. To the Europeans, Indians are mere milch cows."<sup>46</sup>

*Al-Ameen* was at the vanguard in the fight for the rights of the farmers. The paper strongly protested against the indifference of the Crop Planning Conference held at Simla towards the coconut growers of Kerala and reminded that about fifty lakhs of the people of Kerala depended on coconut cultivation.<sup>47</sup> The paper also pointed out that the Economic Conference held at Ottawa had adversely affected the coconut cultivation in Malabar. The paper reported, "The export from India has not increased as a result of the

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 5<sup>th</sup> July 1934. MNNPR July 1934, p. 380. [TNA]

<sup>47</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 11<sup>th</sup> June 1934, MNNPR June 1934, p. 348. [TNA]

Ottawa Agreement and that the coconut industry in Malabar has greatly suffered.”<sup>48</sup>

*Al-Ameen* also made use of the national movements in other countries, particularly of the Islamic world, to awaken the Indians to the freedom struggle. It was with such an intention that the paper brought up the Palestine problem and every important development related to the issue was discussed in the pages of the paper. It brought out the light and the dark sides of the issue with equal importance. Welcoming the report of the Palestine Enquiry Committee, the paper wrote that the report “will help to bring out timely changes in the future policy of Britain towards Palestine.”<sup>49</sup>

When the Viceroy of India refused to denounce the British policy in Palestine, the paper protested, “The reply given by His Excellency the Viceroy to the memorial submitted by the Indian Muslims, is not very satisfactory to the Muslim world and does not appear to be one that will give room for any hope to those who look with sympathy upon the Palestine question.”<sup>50</sup> The paper was also at the forefront in bringing out the sufferings of the people of Fiji, South Africa, Kenya and other countries under the British rule.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 16<sup>th</sup> August 1934, MNNPR August 1934, p.451. [TNA]

<sup>49</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 24<sup>th</sup> April 1930, MNNPR April-June 1930, p. 648. [TNA]

<sup>50</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 1<sup>st</sup> October 1936, MNNPR July-December 1936, p. 569. [TNA]

<sup>51</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 31<sup>st</sup> July 1930. MNNPR, July-August 1930, p.1192. [TNA]

The services of *Al-Ameen* in the rehabilitation of Mappila community since the great debacle of 1921 and in bringing them back to the forefront of the freedom struggle are ever memorable. It was through the pages of the paper that many sorrowful facts, hitherto unknown to the public, were brought to light. The paper also tried its best to soothe the sufferings of the Mappilas. The paper continued its efforts for decades after the great rebellion. Arguing for the release of Mappila prisoners of the rebellion of 1921, *Al-Ameen* wrote, "There are hundreds of Mappila prisoners without being brought before the court of law or without knowing what the crime they had committed against the state or the society."<sup>52</sup> The paper also pointed out, "Even the special concessions regarding the release allowed to the other prisoners are still denied to the Mappilas."<sup>53</sup> Therefore, the paper appealed to the government to release the Mappila prisoners in the name of justice. When the authorities justified the detention of the Mappila prisoners on the ground that their release would jeopardize the Hindu-Muslim relation in Malabar, *Al-Ameen* wrote, "Communal discord between the Hindus and the Muslims of Malabar is only a memory of the past."<sup>54</sup> Further, the paper initiated a deputation of the Hindus and the Muslims from the riot affected area to wait upon His Excellency the Governor with petitions for the release of Mappila prisoners.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 4<sup>th</sup> January 1931. MNNPR, January-March 1931, p. 104 [TNA]

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

In connection with the visit of His Excellency the Governor to Alipore Camp jail where 1373 Mappila prisoners were serving their terms, *Al-Ameen* wrote, "It will be an act of generosity on the part of His Excellency the Governor if these prisoners were released without further delay."<sup>56</sup> When the authorities turned a deaf ear towards these petitions and prayers, *Al-Ameen* sharpened its words and warned, "People have not prayed for the mercy of the Government but have reminded them of their duty."<sup>57</sup>

*Al-Ameen's* writings on social issues were also marked by sharpness and vigour. It dealt with the issues of social significance as part of the National Movement rather than isolated developments. Colonization of the Andamans by the Mappila prisoners, restoration of the exiled family of Mamburam Tangal, removal of the statue of Hitchcock, etc. were the issues taken up by *Al-Ameen* from time to time to rejuvenate the National Movement.

Abdurahiman was too adventurous an editor. In discharging his duties he was fearless of the consequences. At a time when the Marxist literature was totally banned in India, K. Damodaran, one of early communist theorists from Kerala translated the *Communist Manifesto* into Malayalam and tried to get it printed. But no press in Kerala was dare enough to undertake the work.

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<sup>56</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 19<sup>th</sup> July 1931. MNNPR May-August 1931, p. 980. [TNA]

<sup>57</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 15<sup>th</sup> September 1936. MNNPR July-December 1936, p. 522. [TNA]

But when K. Damodaram approached Abdurahiman for the same, it was gladly accepted. Thus *Al-Ameen* was credited with printing the *Communist Manifesto* for the first time in Malayalam.<sup>58</sup>

The *Mathrubhumi* and *Al-Ameen* were the two well-cherished newspapers among the people of Kerala. Both laboured with nationalist aims. But *Al-Ameen* was more outspoken than the *Mathrubhumi*. Further, in the fight against the authorities, *Al-Ameen* was unconcerned with its future whereas the *Mathrubhumi* was well conscious of the repercussions of open criticisms against the government. Thus on certain critical issues, like the renewal of the Press Act, when *Al-Ameen* made bold attack on the British, the *Mathrubhumi* remained silent and kept away from such outspokenness. *Al-Ameen* criticized this philosophical silence of the *Mathrubhumi* as servitude to the British.<sup>59</sup> No doubt such comments of *Al-Ameen* provoked the *Mathrubhumi* to retaliate in the same coin. When the two papers took rival sides in the tussle between the right and left wings of the Congress, their relations was strained further. However, the bickering between the two always subsided before the national issues. In most of national issues, both the papers shared common feeling. Thus after a few days' quarrels, either of them used to come forward to patch up differences. On one such occasion,

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<sup>58</sup> M.N. Karasseri, "Abdurahiman Sahibinte Orma", (Mal.), (Memory of Abdurahiman Sahib), *Mathrubhumi*, dated 27<sup>th</sup> September 1997.

<sup>59</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 10<sup>th</sup> September 1931.

the *Mathrubhumi* wrote, “*Al-Ameen* and the *Mathrubhumi* have unanimity on almost all matters. Hence we desire to see that it should be continued in the future also.”<sup>60</sup> We cannot find fault either with the *Mathrubhumi* or with *Al-Ameen* for the differences. In fact it was the integrity of the opinion of their editors that precipitated the bickering between the two.

All those who opposed Abdurahiman for his political, social and religious views also opposed *Al-Ameen*. To the Muslim League *Al-Ameen* was a publication to support the Hindus. To the rightist Congressmen, it was merely a Mappila newspaper. Both the orthodox and the progressives among the Muslims opposed the paper. For its progressive religious outlook, the orthodox *Ulema* held it an anti-Islamic one. When the progressives among the Muslims tried to justify interest, *Al-Ameen* opposed them.<sup>61</sup> The progressive Muslim leaders like K.M. Maulavi and K.M. Seethi Sahib came out publicly against *Al-Ameen* and its editor Abdurahiman.<sup>62</sup> Thus they too became the enemies of the paper. As the paper supported the interests of the working class, the rich in the society treated it as their class enemy. Thus for its uprightness, *Al-Ameen* had always to be on the defensive. Above all, the British authorities were out to strangulate the paper. It seemed that the

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<sup>60</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 11<sup>th</sup> September 1931

<sup>61</sup> M. Rasheed, op cit., p. 37.

<sup>62</sup> E. Moidu Maulavi, *Ende Koottukaran, Mohmed Abdurahiman Sahib*, (Mal.) [My Friend, Mohamed Abdurahiman Sahib] Calicut, 1964, p.198.

immature death of *Al-Ameen* was within sight to its editor, Abdurahiman. But he was determined to continue the struggle till the last breath.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, the paper published an article with the title “The Congress and the War” appealing to the people not to co-operate with the war efforts of the authorities.<sup>63</sup> It proved to be a deadly weapon in the hands of the authorities who were always in search of a cause to sentence death punishment to *Al-Ameen*. Immediately, the District Magistrate served memo to the editor demanding either to publish a regretting note on the publication of the article or to stop the publication of the newspaper. *Al-Ameen* preferred to stop publication rather than submitting before the unjust orders of a cruel ruler. Thus *Al-Ameen* was forced to stop its publication on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1939.<sup>64</sup> Regarding the exit of *Al-Ameen*, the district authorities reported to the Governor that “*Al-Ameen*, an extremist Moplah paper, was warned by the District Magistrate for publishing anti-war article and it also has ceased publication.”<sup>65</sup>

At this time, Abdurahiman was conducting countrywide anti-war propaganda tour along with Subash Chandra Bose. When he came to know that his paper had ceased to exist for its anti-war stance, he congratulated his

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<sup>63</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 29<sup>th</sup> September 1939.

<sup>64</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 29<sup>th</sup> September 1939.

<sup>65</sup> *Fortnightly Report* for the First Half of October 1939, D.O. No. P4-18 dated 6<sup>th</sup> October 1939. [TNA]

sub-editor in charge, K.M.K. Kutty for his commitment to truth and his boldness not to bow the head before the threats of the authorities.<sup>66</sup>

The authorities, of course, could silence *Al-Ameen*, but could not extinguish the fire that it had kindled in the minds of the people of Kerala. Hence in a helpless mood, they wrote to the Governor, "Congress socialists, Communists and Forward Bloc supporters are still opposing participation in war and advocating revolution."<sup>67</sup>

When we make a retrospection of the role of *Al-Ameen* in the National Movement, we find that its history was replete with heroic instances of extraordinary bravery and sacrifices. It attacked the immorality of imperialism and presented an attractive picture of how much better independent Indian society would be. Whether editorials or reports in *Al-Ameen*, they were sufficient to capture the attention of the authorities. It was often quoted in the *Fortnightly Reports* of the government. It is evident from this that *Al-Ameen* could make its voice heard by the authorities.

Abdurahiman was a pioneer of political journalism. His editorials and articles were models of frank and fearless criticism. His exposures were aimed at strengthening the freedom struggle, cementing Hindu-Muslim unity, reforming the Muslim community, purifying public life etc. To him,

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<sup>66</sup> K.M.K. Kutty, "Oru Dheera Nethavu" (Mal.) (A Brave Leader), *Muhammed Abdurahiman Souvenir*, Calicut 1978, p.59

<sup>67</sup> *Fortnightly Report* for the First Half of October 1939. [TNA]

journalism was the means to achieve certain greater goals. No doubt he was successful in attaining these goals. Using his pen, he fought for the country; fought for the community and fought for the oppressed. In the fight he was fearless of any consequences and even the threat to the very existence of the paper did not bother him.

The impulse released by *Al-Ameen* was mainly responsible for bringing Malabar back to national struggle after 1921. Besides being a weapon for political agitation and an alternative to violence and revolts, it served as an instrument to maintain the hold of the Indian National Congress on the Muslims at a time when the Muslim League was exerting tremendous pressure to wean them away from the Congress and the freedom struggle. Along with his call for Muslims for their active participation in freedom struggle, *Al-Ameen* wanted to animate them and bring them on par with the Hindus for liberating the country. Hence, its service to the Mappila community was unique and memorable and will continue to be a cherished episode in the histories of the oppressed all over the world.

The intellectual ferment generated by *Al-Ameen* continues to inspire people even today. Scores and scores of people who happened to play many vital roles in the history of Kerala had been brought up under the shade of *Al-Ameen*. No great figure, whether political or social, has passed till date without paying homage to *Al-Ameen* and its editor Abdurahiman. The great

Communist theorist of Kerala and later the Chief Minister of the state, E.M.S. Namboodiripad has openly admitted the influence of *Al-Ameen* in shaping his political views.<sup>68</sup> The great literary figures in Malayalam like Vaikom Muhammed Basheer, S.K. Pottekkatt, K.A.Kodungallur, N.P. Mohamed, M.Rasheed, Theruvath Raman etc. have also acknowledged their indebtedness to *Al-Ameen* in their literary pursuits.<sup>69</sup> Thus *Al-Ameen* served as center around which developed a culture, a culture peculiar to Kerala. In fact, few newspapers in the history of journalism have exercised an influence comparable to that of *Al-Ameen*.

In his capacity as a journalist, Abdurahiman was doing the spadework to shape the mind of Kerala for a total transformation of the society. It was his intention to diffuse such ideas among the Muslims to create an atmosphere conducive to social reform. He aspired for an intellectual revolution as a precondition for social change. Through the pages of *Al-Ameen* he called upon the Muslims in the name of Islam, in the name of divine justice and in the name of human dignity and no Muslim could turn a deaf ear to him.

His role in the attainment of independence was a unique legacy of outspokenness and patriotic fervour. His modus operandi was matchless. Neither did he hesitate to call a spade a spade nor to use the butcher's axe

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<sup>68</sup> E.M.S. Namboodiripad, "Tirinj Nokkumbhol" (Mal.), (When Look Back), *Muhammed Abdurahiman Souvenir*, Calicut 1978, p. 104.

<sup>69</sup> M.N. Karasseri, op cit.

rather than the surgeon's scalpel against the forces of evil. The editorials of *Al-Ameen* were a reflection of his personality, his concerns, his passions and his dreams. The *Fortnightly Reports* about the writings of Al-Ameen throw light on the objectives Abdurahiman had in mind. It was not for any material benefit he started the paper. Nor had he the capital to carry it on. However, it did not prevent him from continuing his journalistic career. Though the paper ceased to exist in 1939 and though he was put in jail, he never gave up his desire of publishing it again. When he was released from jail in 1945, he took up the matter with his friends.<sup>70</sup> But as the Almighty disposed otherwise and as he was destined with only seventy-seven days in the world, he could not realise his desire. Thus disappeared the two meteors, *Al-Ameen* and its great editor, almost simultaneously from the political horizon of Kerala, after a short spell of brilliant luminosity.

The statement of Motilal Barghava that "The Indian press during the freedom struggle had its patriots and martyrs"<sup>71</sup> is particularly true to *Al-Ameen*. The *Ameen* became a martyr for the cause of freedom of the country and disappeared from the scene, but after having written a glorious chapter in the history of the freedom struggle and in the history of Indian journalism.

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<sup>70</sup> P.C. Sukumaran Nair, et al., *Mathrubhumiye Charitram*, (Mal.) (History of the Mathrubhumi) Vol. 3. Calicut 1998, p.282.

<sup>71</sup> Barghava, Motilal, *Role of the Press in the Freedom Movement*, Delhi, 1987, p.10.

CHAPTER VII  
**A SOCIAL ACTIVIST**

## Chapter – 7

### A Social Activist

Abdurahiman had an integrated view of the society. He felt that political changes unaccompanied by social reforms would be a fruitless job. To him, politics was the hub of all social activities. Thus the social activities of Abdurahiman were an extension of his political programmes. As his political actions were directed against imperialism and colonialism, every social activity of Abdurahiman was intended to strengthen the anti-imperialist and anti-colonial struggle. To him, freedom of India was not an end but an instrument for freeing the society enslaved by ignorance and social taboos. His plan of action was to combine the processes of anti-colonial struggle and social unification with the National Movement. Thus his social activities were directed not to any particular sphere but to all walks of life.

As a social activist, what was most agonizing to Abdurahiman was the pathetic plight of his own Muslim community. He found them illiterate, poverty stricken and superstition ridden. He also found them exploited by an unholy alliance of the die-hard reactionary *Ulama*, the self-seeking aristocracy and the communal organizations with anti-national selfish interests. Over and above, the Muslim community was circumscribed by dogmas and conventions imposed by the time.

The Muslims felt proud of keeping themselves different from their Hindu brethren in all aspects of life including hairstyle, way of dressing, food habit and in their social etiquettes. To speak pure Malayalam was looked down upon as the style of the Hindus; to learn English was condemned as the way of learning of the Christians; to start an industry or to accept government employment was the way of a *Kafir* [infidel] and to dress well meant the style of a *Mushrik* [apostate]. The most unfortunate thing was that the orthodox *Ulama* and the self-seeking Muslim aristocracy were always there to defend these false notions of the community. They even justified the offences that the ignorant Muslims committed on their Hindu brothers.<sup>1</sup> Hence Abdurahiman had to wage a relentless battle against the bigotry of the *Ulama* and selfishness of the Muslim aristocracy.

#### **Educational Activities:**

Education, for Abdurahiman, was a potential instrument for national awakening, a process of liberating the individual mind from the clutches of religious orthodoxy, a way to get out of exploitation and a method for economic development. To him, education was the life breath of democracy without which normal life would be impossible. Therefore, he gave as much importance to educational activities as to the political pursuits. Further, it was

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<sup>1</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 9<sup>th</sup> August 1923.

through educational activities that Abdurahiman entered into public life of Kerala.

Abdurahiman started his educational activities when he was an undergraduate student at Basel Mission College, Calicut. But the scene of his activities was at his native place of Kodungallur in the princely state of Cochin. There he established the Muslim Education Society.<sup>2</sup> It was perhaps the first of this type among the Muslims of Kerala. The Society could create educational consciousness among the Muslims of Cochin state. The Society also could draw the attention of the then Diwan of Cochin, Vijaya Raghavachari, to the educational backwardness of the Muslims of the state. As a result of these activities, the Diwan granted special scholarship to the Muslim students and appointed Arabic *Munshis* in government schools.<sup>3</sup>

In 1920, immediately after his entry into the freedom struggle, Abdurahiman established the National Muslim Educational Institution at Valapattanam in north Kerala.<sup>4</sup> It was established on the model of the Jamiya Milliyya Islamiyya of Delhi. As in the case of other national educational institutions, the National Muslim Educational Institution was also intended to those who left the British-controlled schools, responding to the call of

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<sup>2</sup> Theruvath Raman, *Kerala Subhash*, (Mal.), Calicut 1946, p.9

<sup>3</sup> *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1945, p.18.

<sup>4</sup> V.S. Keraleeyan, *Keralathintae Veeraputhran*, (Mal.) [The Brave Son of Kerala], Calicut 1959, p.74.

Gandhiji. But the unfavourable political condition that came about as a result of the rebellion of 1921, the unexpected imprisonment of Abdurahiman and above all the shortage of funds, strangled the institution. It was at this juncture that the nationalist Muslim leader, Abdul Bari from Patna, visited the institution. The very remark of Abdul Bari recorded in the visitor's diary stands witness to the miserable condition of the institution. He wrote, "I would like to request Mr. Yakub Hussan and the Central Khilafat Committee to give special attention to this suffering institution. If the institution ceases to exist it will be a great loss to the country."<sup>5</sup>

Following the rebellion of 1921 one of the most serious questions before Abdurahiman was what to do with the orphaned and destitute children of the riot-affected area. He had no alternative but to knock at the doors of the rich. He invited great philanthropists to Malabar. The efforts of Abdurahiman bore fruits. Maulana Abdul Kader Kasuri, Maulana Mohyeddin Ahammed Kasuri and Maulavi Mohammed Ali showered their munificence upon the unfortunate victims of the rebellion and the J.D.T. Islam Orphanage of Calicut, the first of this type in Kerala, came into existence in 1921.<sup>6</sup> The great rebellion had also adversely affected Muslim religious education. Most of such institutions imparting religious education were on the brink of

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<sup>5</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 10<sup>th</sup> February 1925.

<sup>6</sup> K.T. Mohammed Ali, *The Development of Education Among the Mappilas of Malabar 1800 To 1965*, New Delhi, 1990, pp. 164-65

extinction for want of funds. Abdurahiman prepared a list of such institutions and submitted it to the Central Khilafat Committee for financial assistance.<sup>7</sup>

At a time when the Muslims turned their back to secular education for historical reasons, Abdurahiman took it up as his life mission to propagate the same among them. He found that the Muslims were not in a position to establish schools for their children and the only way out was to attract them to government schools. So he suggested that in government schools religious instructions be imparted to Muslim students along with secular subjects and Maulavis be appointed for the purpose.<sup>8</sup>

He also used the stages of the Muslim Aikya Sanga for the propagation of secular education among the Muslims. In the second annual conference of the Aikya Sangham held at Aluva, he presented a resolution requesting the government to provide religious instructions to the Muslim students in government schools.<sup>9</sup> The voice of Abdurahiman did not go unheard by the authorities. A number of Mappila schools were established in different parts of Malabar. Considering his progressive views on education, Abdurahiman was elected the Chairman of the Education Board of the Muslim Aikya Sangham.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 19<sup>th</sup> August 1924.

<sup>8</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 9<sup>th</sup> July 1925, MNNPR, July 1925, p. 965. [TNA]

<sup>9</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 17<sup>th</sup> May 1924.

<sup>10</sup> *Kerala Muslim Majlis Conference Report*, Calicut, May 1933 p.4.

Abdurahiman was well aware of the role of teachers in the development of education. But he found that the salary and service conditions of the teachers, particularly of those working in management schools, were very poor. Addressing a meeting of the elementary school teachers at Mokeri, he said, "The condition of teachers, who deserve high status, is very deplorable and the condition of those who are working in the management schools is still more pathetic. . . . The management system will perish only when India gets independence and when every body gets wages sufficient for his living."<sup>11</sup> He did not miss any opportunity to raise his voice for the teachers. When he was a member of the Calicut Municipal Council he presented a motion requesting parity in the salary of teachers working in Municipal and government schools.<sup>12</sup>

As a member of the Malabar District Board, Abdurahiman initiated a number of innovative reforms in the field of education. Some of them are listed below.

Last Saturdays of every month were declared holidays to schools to enable the teachers to attend the academic meetings of teachers' associations.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 10<sup>th</sup> February 1939.

<sup>12</sup> Proceedings of the Calicut Municipal Council, *Malabar District Gazette Supplement*, October 1934, p.2. (Regional Archives Calicut).

<sup>13</sup> Proceedings of the Malabar District Board, *Malabar District Gazette Supplement*, June 1934, p. 21. (RAC)

Vocational training was introduced in the District Board schools and students were trained in the manufacture of stationery articles required for the District Board offices.<sup>14</sup>

Teachers were given travelling allowances if transferred from one school to another without request.<sup>15</sup>

Hindi was introduced as a subject of study in some selected schools on an experimental basis.<sup>16</sup> When the experiment was found successful, it was introduced in other schools under the District Board.

Under the initiative of Abdurahiman the District Board appointed a committee to investigate into the feasibility of establishing model education colony on the lines recommended by Ashuthosh Mukherji of Calcutta University.<sup>17</sup>

He also proposed to earmark Rs.500/= for 1936-37 for each school for imparting religious instruction. But his proposal was not accepted.<sup>18</sup> However,

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<sup>14</sup> Proceedings of the Malabar District Board, *Malabar District Gazette Supplement*, July 1935, pp. 33-34. (RAC)

<sup>15</sup> Proceedings of the Malabar District Board, *Malabar District Gazette Supplement*, October 1934, p.8. (RAC)

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. p.5.

<sup>17</sup> Proceedings of the Malabar District Board, *Malabar District Gazette Supplement*, July 1935, pp. 33-34. (RAC)

<sup>18</sup> Proceedings of the Malabar District Board, *Malabar District Gazette Supplement*, March 1936, p. 52. (RAC)

it was on his proposal that the District Board passed a resolution requesting the government to grant fee concession to poor girl students.<sup>19</sup>

Considering the great services of Abdurahiman in the field of education, the District Board appointed him member of the District Secondary Education Board under section 56 [1] [h] of the Madras Local Board Act.<sup>20</sup> In that capacity, he stood for the propagation of modern education in Malabar.

As in the District Board, in the Legislative Assembly also Abdurahiman argued for the education of the poor. When the Assembly proposed the closing of uneconomic schools in the province, he opposed it and suggested that the people of the locality must be warned sufficiently early of the falling number of students and must be given opportunity to raise the strength before a school was finally wound up.<sup>21</sup> The suggestion was accepted.

In short, most of the proposals that Abdurahiman made in the field of education were very progressive and revolutionary and served as guidelines to later developments. Many of the Muslim educational institutions that now exist in Kerala owe their origin to Abdurahiman and stand as memorials to his educational efforts. He was perhaps the first Muslim leader from Kerala to

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid. p. 35.

<sup>20</sup> Proceedings of the Malabar District Board, *Malabar District Gazette Supplement*, October 1935, p.46.

<sup>21</sup> *Madras Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol. V No.4., Madras, 1938, p.298. [TNA]

realize that lack of modern education had made the Muslims easily susceptible to the fanatical propaganda of the authorities and their yes men. Hence he may rightly be described as the pathfinder of modern education among the Muslims of Kerala.

### **Relief Worker:**

South Malabar, which had not yet recovered from the shock of the rebellion of 1921, was totally damaged by a great flood of 1924. The catastrophe came as a bolt from the blue that broke the back of the people of Malabar. Abdurahiman could not remain indifferent either to the challenges of the authorities or to the challenges of nature. He threw himself into relief activities. He convened a meeting of the Kerala Khilafat Committee at Al-Ameen office on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1924.<sup>22</sup> A relief committee was formed with Abdurahiman as the Convenor and C.V. Abdulla Koya, M. Kasimi, T. Hassan Koya Mulla and P.M. Abdulla Koya as members.<sup>23</sup> The very next day Abdurahiman sent Hassan Koya Mulla to east Ernad with 50 bags of rice. He also sent a special messenger to the Central Khilafat Committee Bombay to present the actual picture of the flood-affected region of Malabar and to make a request for financial assistance.

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<sup>22</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 5<sup>th</sup> August 1924.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

Further he made an appeal through *Al-Ameen* and the *Mathrubhumi* requesting the Khilafat and Congress workers of south Malabar to inform him of the ravages of the flood and the measures so far taken by them to ameliorate the sufferings of the people.<sup>24</sup> The information thus gathered helped him to prepare an effective plan of action to render maximum possible help to the needy. He established relief camps at Karuvarakundu, Vazhakkad, and Tenhipalam in Ernad taluk and at Kodyyathur and Omasserri in Calicut taluk.<sup>25</sup> Meanwhile the effort to get help from the Central Khilafat Committee bore fruits and he received Rs.8000/= from Maulana Shaukath Ali.<sup>26</sup>

However, the damages caused by the flood were beyond all estimations. In the villages of Edavanna, Perakamanna and Othai, out of 2500 houses not less than 1300 were totally destroyed.<sup>27</sup> In these villages where the number of male members was few due to the manhunt of the British during the rebellion of 1921, the women folk were made to work as coolies in the estates mainly owned by the Europeans for a hand to mouth existence. The excess rain threw them out of employment and forced them to take to begging. Abdurahiman established a number of poor homes to rehabilitate these women.<sup>28</sup> Besides, he requested the Khilafat workers to find

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<sup>24</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 8<sup>th</sup> August 1924

<sup>25</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 10<sup>th</sup> August 1924.

<sup>26</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 12<sup>th</sup> August 1924

<sup>27</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 14<sup>th</sup> August 1924

<sup>28</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 16<sup>th</sup> September 1924

for them some jobs so as to enable them to procure their food and clothing for themselves. He also established the Malabar Rehabilitation Committees at different places in south Malabar as a permanent set up to face the natural hazards in future.<sup>29</sup>

Thus, supported by his enthusiastic friends and charitable institutions, Abdurahiman could do a lot to mitigate the sufferings of the people. The measures taken by him stand witness to his organizing ability, leadership quality and above all his dedication and commitment to social responsibilities.

#### **Against Untouchability:**

Even in the wake of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Hindus of Kerala were tied down by rigid caste rules. The upper classes [Savarnas] among the Hindus treated the lower classes [Avarnas] as untouchables. The lower classes were not allowed to enter into temples and were even denied the right to use the public streets passing by the temples. The first mass protest against this social discrimination was staged at Vaikom<sup>30</sup> of Travancore state in connection with the untouchability eradication programmes of the Indian National Congress. On 30<sup>th</sup> March 1924, T.K. Madhavan and K.P. Kesava Menon

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<sup>29</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 11<sup>th</sup> April 1925

<sup>30</sup> Vaikom has a famous Shiva temple. It has four walls along the outer sides from which run roads for processions and other ceremonies. The issue was that outcaste Hindus were not allowed to enter into temple roads although non-Hindus, such as Christians and Muslims were permitted.

started satyagraha in front of the famous Mahadeva temple of Vaikkom.<sup>31</sup> The Travancore government could not bear the satyagraha movement and tried to suppress it by police force.

To Abdurahiman the untouchability eradication programme of the Indian National Congress was not merely a corrective movement of Hinduism but a struggle for social equality. Further he was not a man to put up with repression of the authorities, whether by the British or by the native princes. Hence he could not keep away from the Vaikkom satyagraha. He convened a special meeting of the State Khilafat Committee on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1924.<sup>32</sup> The meeting resolved to send volunteer corps to Vaikkom immediately after the fasting of the month of *Ramzan*.<sup>33</sup>

Immediately after *Ramzan* Abdurahiman set out to Vaikkom. On his way to Vaikkom, he addressed public meetings at several places motivating the people to take part in the satyagraha in large numbers and to make the movement a great success. On 17<sup>th</sup> May 1924 he took part in the satyagraha and courted arrest.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Concise Political History of Modern Kerala*, Madras, 1987, p.11

<sup>32</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 26<sup>th</sup> April 1924.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> S. K. Pottakkatt, et al., *Muhammed Abdurahiman a political biography*, Calicut, 1978, p.181.

The participation and arrest of three non-Hindus, Abdurahiman, George Joseph and Sebastian, sparked off a new issue in the satyagraha movement when Gandhiji said, "The struggle against untouchability is purely a religious matter of the Hindus."<sup>35</sup> He also said that it was an 'error' on the part of Abdurahiman and other non-Hindus to participate in the satyagraha. Gandhiji wrote, "If I could possibly persuade the Christian and Mohammedan sympathizers who had gone to jail as satyagrahis. I will ask them to tell the authorities that they offered satyagraha in error. . ."<sup>36</sup> Gandhij went to the extent of stating, " . . . the sacrifice of Joseph, Sebastian and Abdurahim carries no merit."<sup>37</sup>

But to Abdurahiman, untouchability was not merely a religious issue but a matter of social import. Therefore he held that the religion of the participants in the struggle against untouchability had no relevance at all. If at all a religious issue, it was not different from that of the Khilafat issue in which the Hindus and the Christians participated along with the Muslims. Hence he never considered his participation in the Vaikom satyagraha an 'error' as conceived by Gandhiji. However, the perspective of Gandhiji on the issue made Abdurahiman skeptical of Gandhian ideology.

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<sup>35</sup> *The Bombay Chronicle*, dated 19<sup>th</sup> May 1924. [Micro Film Section NMML]

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. Also see, *Mathrubhumi*, dated 20<sup>th</sup> May 1924.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. Also see, *Mathrubhumi*, dated 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1924.

### The Andaman Scheme:

Those who survived the manhunt of the British worked hard to heal the wounds of 1921. The dedicated and self-sacrificing services of the Khilafat-Congress workers accelerated the retrieval of the Mappilas. The quick resurrection of the Mappilas was not only astounding but also haunting to the British. Now they realized that the Mappilas could no longer be destroyed in their homeland. So they invented a new machination, known as the Andaman Scheme. The scheme was intended to take the Mappilas away from their homeland to alien lands and to decimate them there.

It was not a new scheme altogether and was already there in their arsenal. The Mappila rebels had been transported to Botany Bay in Australia.<sup>38</sup> In 1852, T.L. Strange had recommended the deportation of the Mappilas in certain cases.<sup>39</sup> In pursuance of the report and the Mappila Outrages Acts seven Mappilas from Valluvanad had been deported to the Andaman in 1857-58.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Albrecht Frenz, "Report Regarding The Uprisings of the Mappilas in Gundert's Letters", V.J. Varghese, (ed.), *Anjuru Varshathe Keralam Chila Arivatayalanga*, (Mal.)(Kerala for Five Hundred Years: Some Reminiscences), Kottayam, 1999, p.432.

<sup>39</sup> T. L. Strange, Commission Report, dated 25<sup>th</sup> September 1852, p.454. [TNA]

<sup>40</sup> William Logan, *Malabar*, Vol. I, Madras 1951, p.577.

Immediately after the rebellion of 1921, the Hindu landlords requested the authorities for the deportation of the Mappila 'culprits'.<sup>41</sup> Almost simultaneously the estate owners of the Andaman conspired with the authorities to facilitate the deportation of the Mappila prisoners and their families to the island with the ulterior motive of exploiting them. G.R.F. Tottenham wrote, "I have under correspondence a scheme for employing Mappila deportees in the Middle islands of the Andaman, where forest development work is in progress."<sup>42</sup>

Accordingly, the Government of Madras presented before the Government of India a scheme for the colonization of the Andaman by the Mappila convicts and their families. The Governor in Council wrote that a considerable number of Mappilas who had already been transported to the Andaman might quite safely be placed in the free colony instead of being kept in a closed prison.<sup>43</sup> The letter concluded, "In case where the wife will not go, His Excellency in Council thinks that it would probably be best that the man should remain in transportation in ordinary way."<sup>44</sup> Thus it was explicit that the motive behind the colonization was not the welfare of the Mappila

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<sup>41</sup> Home (Political) Department, File No. 241/Part III-A/1922, p. 9. [TNA]

<sup>42</sup> G.R.F. Tottenham, *The Malabar Rebellion 1921-1922*, Madras 1922, p. 407.

<sup>43</sup> Home Department, File No. 2473 dated 9<sup>th</sup> October 1922. [RAC]

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

convicts, but their ruin. It was estimated that by 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1923 there were 1277 Mappila convicts in the Andaman.<sup>45</sup>

Nevertheless, the colonization scheme was not known to the public until Rama Linga Reddy raised questions in the Madras Legislative Assembly pertaining to the feeling of the Mappilas of Malabar with the scheme and whether it was morally right to send a few Mappila women to a place where a large number of convicts were staying.<sup>46</sup> However, the authorities strongly justified the colonization on the ground of lack of jail accommodation to such a huge number of convicted prisoners.<sup>47</sup> It was through the pages of the *Mathrubhumi* that the scheme was first revealed to the people of Malabar. The *Mathrubhumi* smelt a rat and wrote, "The diplomatic silence of the authorities make us to believe that they were going to rent out the Mappila prisoners to the British estate owners of the Andaman."<sup>48</sup> Soon *Al-Ameen* took up the issue and started a vigorous attack on the scheme. To *Al-Ameen* it was a scheme "to make these uninhabitable islands fit for a white [European] colony at the expense of Mappila lives and Indian money."<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Public (General) Department, G.O. No. 472, dated 25<sup>th</sup> May 1932. [TNA]

<sup>46</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 24<sup>th</sup> March 1923.

<sup>47</sup> F.B. Ivans, (ed.), *The Madras District Gazetteer, Malabar District*, Vol. II, Madras 1933, Appendix p. viii

<sup>48</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 6<sup>th</sup> April 1924.

<sup>49</sup> *Fortnightly Report* for the First Half of August 1924, p.2. [TNA]

The Malabar District Magistrate, J.A. Thorne, was over enthusiastic in the execution of the scheme. He was determined to make the scheme a success. He appointed a Deputy Tahasildar to the Andaman to explain to the Mappila deportees of the benefits of bringing their families to the island.<sup>50</sup> Simultaneously, he appointed M. Kunhi Raman Nair<sup>51</sup> to meet the wives and children of those deported Mappila prisoners and to explain to them the heavenly joys awaiting them in the island. The District Magistrate also sought the co-operation of the Young Men's Christian Association of India, Burma and Ceylon and the Devadar Malabar Reconstruction Trust. But for some unknown reasons, the Secretary of the Devadar Trust declined his support to the scheme. But the Mappila loyalists like Muthu Koya Tangal of Malappuram, Valiya Tangal of Kondotty and Khan Bahadur Kalladi Moidutty of Mannarghat were very eager to co-operate with the authorities.<sup>52</sup>

To Abdurahiman, the colonization scheme was a treacherously planned trap to take away the patriotic and freedom loving Mappilas from their natural habitats to an alien, hostile and uninhabitable land and thereby to destroy them. Along with *Al-Ameen*, he started an unceasing crusade against the scheme. He brought the issue before the attention of the All Party Muslim Conference held at Amirtsar in 1925. In the meeting he moved a resolution

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<sup>50</sup> File No. R. Dis. 1865-23 dated 28<sup>th</sup> November 1924. [RAC]

<sup>51</sup> Law (General) Department, Memorandum No. 2305 C-2, dated 16<sup>th</sup> June 1924 [RAC]

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. Also see *Mathrubhumi*, dated 24<sup>th</sup> March 1923.

demanding the immediate withdrawal of the scheme.<sup>53</sup> On his return journey, he visited several places; met national leaders and informed them of the consequences of the scheme. He also addressed public meetings and mobilized public opinion against the scheme. When he reached Madras, he came to know that the authorities had brought a group of Mappila women to be shipped off to the Andaman. He wanted to dissuade these poor women from going to this earthly hell. In the guise of a newspaper reporter, he entered their camp. But the authorities immediately identified him and got him out.<sup>54</sup>

When the attempt to persuade the women folk to go to the Andaman failed to yield fruits, the authorities brought 25 Mappila deportees from the island to induce their families to accompany them to the island.<sup>55</sup> The *Mathrubhumi* sensed the treacherous objective behind the new strategy and reported, "It is known that as such every month 25 persons will be brought to persuade their families to accompany them to the island."<sup>56</sup> The authorities, however, rejected the report and described it 'misgivings' and 'fictitious'.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> V.S. Keraleeyan, op cit., p.95.

<sup>54</sup> S.K. Pottekkatt, et al. op cit., p. 185.

<sup>55</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 21<sup>st</sup> May 1925.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> *Fortnightly Report* for the Second Half of May 1925 [TNA]

Despite all the opposition from different quarters, the authorities could send 300 Mappila women to the Andaman.<sup>58</sup>

However, Abdurahiman continued his campaign against the scheme. He published an article in *Al-Ameen* captioned "The Mappilas and the Andaman". The article said, "The over enthusiasm displayed by the Government to carry out the scheme, the large amount of money spent for the purpose and the propaganda work done were all suspicious."<sup>59</sup> Abdurahiman welcomed the appointment of Khan Bahadur Usman Khan to make an enquiry on the state of affairs of the Mappila deportees of the Andaman.<sup>60</sup> But he pointed out that the enquiry would not be fruitful as the government did not allow the Commission to have free discourse with the Mappilas there. Therefore, Abdurahiman suggested that some leading Mappilas should be permitted to accompany the Commission to the island.<sup>61</sup>

When the opposition against the colonization scheme became irresistible, the government appointed Sri. Muddiman to the Andaman to make a report on the condition of the Mappila prisoners and their families transplanted to the inland. *Al-Ameen* questioned the credibility of the Muddiman Commission and forewarned that the enquiry would be a 'farce'

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<sup>58</sup> *Fortnightly Report* for the First Half of July 1925 [TNA]

<sup>59</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 12<sup>th</sup> July 1925. MNNPR July 1925, p. 981. [TNA]

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

and described the members of the Commission as 'actors for the Government'.<sup>62</sup>

Abdurahiman pointed out that the appointment of the Muddiman Commission was against the decision of the Madras Legislative Council to appoint a non-official commission including the Mappila Members of the Council.<sup>63</sup> He also pointed out that the government had not given a secretary to the Commission. Nor did the government give clear instruction as to what things the Commission had to report up on.<sup>64</sup> Thus to Abdurahiman, the appointment of the Commission was a ruse "to show that the Government were acting in accordance with public opinion".<sup>65</sup> At the initiative of Abdurahiman, the All India Khilafat Conference held on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1925 also took up the issue and reminded the authorities that the Andaman colonization by the Mappila prisoners and their families was against the report of the Jail Committee.<sup>66</sup>

Unable to resist the sharp criticisms of Abdurahiman and his paper *Al-Ameen*, the authorities were forced to appoint another commission to the Andaman. Mahmud Schamnad [M. L. A.], Syed Murtaza [M. L. A.], Mir Abbas Ali [M. L. C.] and Dr. Mugaseth were the members of the commission.

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<sup>62</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 1<sup>st</sup> November 1925. MNNPR November 1925, p. 1542. [TNA]

<sup>63</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 8<sup>th</sup> December 1925. MNNPR December 1925, p. 1631. [TNA]

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> Sukhbir Choudhary, *Moplah Uprising (1921-23)*, Delhi 1977, p.65.

The Commission was to report on the condition of the Mappila prisoners in the Andaman and the feasibility of continuing the colonization scheme. Of the four members three members, Mahmud Schamnad, Syed Murtaza and Mir Abbas Ali, reported against the colonization scheme.<sup>67</sup> They particularly noted the unhealthy climate, scarcity of the necessities of life including food and medicine, absence of schools and hospitals, organized attack of the aborigines called the Jarawas, difficulties in getting possession of the land and the immoralities that existed among the people particularly for want of sufficient number of women folk.<sup>68</sup> Quoting the very words of the Mappila prisoners, the Committee reported to the Government that the Mappila prisoners “be repatriated to the Indian Jails and the women and children sent back to their respective villages in Malabar.”<sup>69</sup> To them the Indian jails were happy resorts when compared to the earthly hell of the Andaman. No doubt, they preferred incarceration in Indian jails to the ruinous freedom of the Andaman.

Of the four members of the Committee, only Mugaseth favoured the colonization scheme. It served a last straw to the government to go ahead with the scheme. When the government rejected the report of the majority of the members of the Committee and decided arbitrarily to continue the

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<sup>67</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 30<sup>th</sup> November 1926.

<sup>68</sup> Report of the Andaman Deputation, 1925-26, pp. 1-12. [NAI]

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* P. 11.

colonization process, *Al-Ameen* intensified its attack on the government and published a Special Supplement entitled "An appeal to those who prepare to go to the Andaman."<sup>70</sup> The paper earnestly requested the women and children, getting ready to go to the Andaman, not to be deceived by the hollow promises of the authorities. The paper also appealed to them to go through the reports of Mahmud Schamnad, Syed Murtaza and Mir Abbas Ali on the life and condition of the Mappilas who had already been transplanted to the island. The paper also appealed to the people to organize protest meetings at every town and village of Malabar against the scheme. The Supplement also quoted a message from K. Uppi, M.L.C. substantiating the report of Mahmud Schamnad and others.<sup>71</sup>

The efforts of Abdurahiman began to bear fruits. Despite all the concerted efforts of the authorities, the number of Mappila women willing to go to the Andaman dwindled day by day and finally the government was forced to give up the colonization scheme on 19<sup>th</sup> September 1931.<sup>72</sup> However, Abdurahiman and his newspaper always kept up the problems of the Mappila prisoners of the Andaman as a live question in the political arena. The paper found fault with the government for not giving adequate attention

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<sup>70</sup> *Al-Ameen Special Supplement*, (not dated). Copy of the Supplement is available in the Regional Archives, Calicut.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> *Madhyamam*, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1990.

to the health of the prisoners.<sup>73</sup> It was under the initiative of Abdurahiman that the people of Kerala observed the Andaman Day on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1937. On the day, people conducted meetings and passed resolutions protesting against the negative attitude of the government towards the release of the Mappila prisoners of the Andaman.<sup>74</sup>

No doubt, it was the unyielding nature of Abdurahiman that helped him to bring the authorities to their knees and to bring the struggle against the colonization scheme to a successful conclusion. Thus he could save innumerable women and children from the eternal torments of this hell on earth. No wonder, the history of this heroic struggle is still fresh in the memory of the people of this land and it constitutes to be one of the most cherished chapters in the annals of the Mappila Muslims of Malabar.<sup>75</sup>

### **Repealing the Moplah Outrages Act:**

On the basis of the report of T.L. Strange on Mappila outbreaks, Government of Madras enacted the Moplah Outrages Acts in 1854 and

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<sup>73</sup> The paper reported that there was not a sufficient number of medical men in the Andaman to give medical relief and that the Government do not devote adequate attention to the health of the prisoners. See *Al-Ameen*, dated 14<sup>th</sup> September 1933. MNNPR, 1933, p. 481. [TNA]

<sup>74</sup> *Fortnightly Report* for the First Half of September 1937. D.O. No. P-4-16, dated 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1937[TNA]

<sup>75</sup> Still literary works are being written on this struggle. See Kathiyalam Aboobacker, *Abdurahiman Kavithakal*, [An Anthology of Poems on Muhammed Abdurahiman Sahib] Kodungallur 2001 and N.P. Muhammad, *Muhammad Abdurahiman Oru Novel*, [A Historical novel on Muhammad Abdurahiman] Kottayam 2004.

1859. The Acts authorized the District Magistrate to declare martial law in the district, to restrict possession of arms including knives, to impose fine on localities where outrages had occurred, to escheat the property of those who were accused guilty of fanatical risings, to deport suspicious persons etc.<sup>76</sup> In compliance with this Act the authorities established army surveillance over the Mappila centers during the month of *Ramzan*. The authorities also took very cruel measures like imposing mass fine on the people who were suspected of giving protection to the rebels and burning publicly the dead bodies of those Mappila rebels killed in action or hanged to death by court verdict.<sup>77</sup>

Abdurahiman found the Outrages Acts most insulting to the patriotic and self-respecting Mappila community. Thus, from the very beginning of his public life, Abdurahiman worked hard to get the Acts repealed. It was under his persuasion that the Congress members from Malabar tried to move resolutions in the Madras Legislative Assembly for the repeal of the Act in 1921 and in 1928.<sup>78</sup> But the government was determined to preserve the Act. The government justified its retention on the ground that the Acts were entirely precautionary and were not to affect

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<sup>76</sup> Major P. Holland Pryor, *Mappillas or Moplals*, Calcutta 1904, p. 13 [TNA]

<sup>77</sup> *History of Freedom Movement*, p. 4. [TNA]

<sup>78</sup> Public (General) Department, G.O. No. 546, dated 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1935. [TNA]

any one in normal times. But to Abdurahiman the Acts were most bullying and humiliating to the Mappilas.

He never missed an opportunity to oppose the Acts. At the Kerala Muslim Conference held at Kannur (1935), he initiated a resolution requesting the government to repeal the Acts.<sup>79</sup> The Conference also declared that it was “an antiquated and uncivilized procedure and its application to the Mappila community was an outrage on their self respect and religious susceptibilities.”<sup>80</sup> Addressing the budget session of the Assembly (1935), B. Pokker from Malabar appealed to the government to annul the Moplah Outrages Acts that “no government of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, having any regard to the sense of self-respect of the community, will think of retaining the Act in the statute book.”<sup>81</sup> However the appeal was not conceded.

When Abdurahiman was elected to the Legislative Assembly, he took up the issue all the more vigorously. He described the Acts as “most outrageous to the humanity and to the self-respect of any community.”<sup>82</sup> His question, “Who will repeal the Act if it cannot be done by the

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Public (Ordinary) Department, G.O. No. 1168, dated 17<sup>th</sup> July 1935. [TNA]

<sup>82</sup> *Legislative Assembly Debates* Vol. II. No.8. Madras September 1937, p. 524. [TNA]

Congress Ministry?"<sup>83</sup> struck the House. Unable to face further onslaughts from Abdurahiman, the Rajaji Ministry repealed the Act on 14<sup>th</sup> September 1937.<sup>84</sup>

The whole of Malabar received the news with cheerful tears. Everywhere people welcomed Abdurahiman with cheers. The *Mathrubhumi* and *Al-Ameen* showered praises on him. The people of Malabar celebrated the day as a day of deliverance. *Al-Ameen* published a special supplement to celebrate the victory.

#### **The Mamburam Restoration Activities:**

The 19<sup>th</sup> of March 1852<sup>85</sup> was a black day in the history of Malabar. It was on that day that the British treacherously deported Sayyid Fazal Pookoya Tangal of Mamburam, one of the most revered leaders of Malabar, to Arabia on charge of inciting the Mappilas against the government.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Public (Ordinary) Department, G.O. No. 2279, dated 26<sup>th</sup> November 1937. [TNA] The G.O. reads as follows: Under the powers vested in the Government under Act VII of 1869, a notification has been published in the Fort St. George Gazette dated 14<sup>th</sup> September 1937, the Moplah Outrages Act, 1859 (XX of 1859) shall cease to be in force. Signed for Chief Secretary to Government.

<sup>85</sup> C. Gopalan Nair, *Malayalathile Mappilamar*, (Mal.), Mangalore 1917, p.49.

<sup>86</sup> C.A. Innes, *Malabar Gazetteer*, (First Published in 1908), Reprint, Thiruvananthapuram, 1997, p. 79.

Ever since his settlement at Mamburam in 1767 Sayyid Alawi Tangal from Arabia played an important role in creating an anti-British consciousness among the Mappilas.<sup>87</sup> A pamphlet, captioned “Saif-ul-Bathar” said to have been written by Sayyid Alawi Tangal, called up on the people to “fight against the British till end.”<sup>88</sup> Sayyid Alavi’s son and successor Sayyid Fazl Pookoya Tangal was still more ardent in criticizing the cruelties of the landlords towards the poor peasants. He tried to give the Mappilas a sense of unity and solidarity against oppression and exploitation. In his Friday sermons he is said to have preached that it was “not a sin but a merit to kill a *Jenmi* (Landlord) who evicted a cultivator from the land.”<sup>89</sup> Thus the British authorities inferred that Sayyid Fazl was responsible for the Mappila riots occurring in Ernad and Walluvanad taluks. But the authorities did not possess concrete evidence to prosecute him. The District Collector, H.V. Conolloy, reported to the Secretary to the Government of Madras, “As far as direct evidence of his involvement none is forth coming, but there are indirect evidence such as that all perpetrators are his disciples and songs of their exploits are dedicated to

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<sup>87</sup> Stephen Frederic Dale, *The Mappilas of Malabar 1498-1922*, Oxford 1980, p. 113.

<sup>88</sup> C.N. Ahameed Moulavi and K.K. Muhammed Abdulkareem, *Mahathaya Mappila Sahithya Parampariam*, (Mal.), (The Great Literary Legacy of the Mappilas), Calicut 1978, p.178.

<sup>89</sup> C.A. Innes, op cit., p. 445.

Tirurangadi Tangals.”<sup>90</sup> The report of T.L. Strange, who was appointed to enquire into the Mappila riots, was corroborative to the observations of Mr. Conolly.<sup>91</sup> On being questioned by Conolly, Sayyid Fazl asserted that he had done nothing “to deserve the displeasure of the Government.”<sup>92</sup> However, Mr. Conolly was determined to have his pound of flesh. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of February 1852, the Government of Madras ordered the deportation of Sayyid Fazl Pookoya Tangal.<sup>93</sup> But for fear of Mappila protest, Mr. Conolly made effort through some emissaries to persuade the Tangal to leave the district peacefully in the guise of going for a pilgrimage to Mecca. The Tangal was prudent and polite. He did “all that was in his power to avoid popular excitement.”<sup>94</sup> Finally, Sayyid Fazl was deported to Arabia on 19<sup>th</sup> March 1852.<sup>95</sup> Fifty-seven persons including his family members and servants accompanied him to Arabia. Regarding the deportation of Sayyid Fazl, E. Keys recorded, “The fanatical Arab high

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<sup>90</sup> *Moplah Outrages Correspondence*, Vol. I, p. 223. [TNA]

<sup>91</sup> Report of T. L. Strange, Special Commissioner, Malabar, 25<sup>th</sup> September 1852, p. 4560. [TNA]

<sup>92</sup> H.V. Conolly to Secretary, Judicial dated 20<sup>th</sup> March 1852, Madras Judicial Proceedings, No. 216, pp. 1154-55, quoted in Conrad Wood, *The Moplah Rebellion And Its Genesis*, Delhi, 1987, p.49.

<sup>93</sup> *Moplah Outrages Correspondence*, Vol. I., p.266

<sup>94</sup> H.V. Conolly to Secretary, Judicial dated 20<sup>th</sup> March 1852, Madras Judicial Proceedings, No. 216, pp. 1154-55, quoted in Conrad Wood, op cit., p. 49.

<sup>95</sup> *Moplah Outrages Correspondence*, Vol. I. p.360

priest of Tiroovangaudy, Syed Fazl, had to leave the country, never to return.”<sup>96</sup>

However, the deportation of Sayyid Fazl did not calm down the Mappilas. Riots continued unabated. On 11<sup>th</sup> September 1855, District Magistrate, H.V. Conolly, was murdered by some Mappila rebels.<sup>97</sup> Thus it is clear that the Mappilas were not instigated either by the fanatical preaching of Maburam Tangals or by any other Muslim priests. The roots of the riots lay somewhere else.

Sayyid Fazl after reaching Arabia went to Constantinople and tried to come to India with the help of the Ottoman Caliph. But the British authorities were very particular to prevent him from entering into Malabar. Finally without being able to come back to his native place of Malabar, Sayyid Fazl passed away at Constantinople as an expatriate. However, his children were always in pursuit of their return to Malabar and the authorities were always on the look out for not permitting them to enter India.

Though years rolled on, the bitter memory of the treachery that the British committed on Mamburam Tangals remained un-faded in the minds of the people of Malabar. Abdurahiman found it an instrument to

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<sup>96</sup> E.Keys. (ed.), *Manual Administration of the Madras Presidency*, Vol. II., Madras 1885, p. 102. [RAC]

<sup>97</sup> C.A. Innes, op cit., p. 80.

mobilize public opinion against the British and their fellow conspirators, the landlords and the present Mukthiyar [power of attorney] holders of the Mamburam *Maqam* properties. He wanted to refresh the memory of the Tangals and wished to redress the injustice done on Sayyid Fazl and his family. Abdurahiman found that the Mamburam issue would serve him as a double-edged sword, targeting the cancellation of the Moplah Outrages Act, which was the main obstacle before the re-entry of Sayyid Fazl's children in Malabar and to do justice to Sayyid Fazl's family. He also found that the very presence of the Mamburam Tangals in Malabar would be a source of inspiration to the people of the country in their anti-colonial and anti-feudal struggle. So he wished to bring them back to Mamburam as early as possible. Accordingly, Abdurahiman went to Mecca and met Sayyid Ali,<sup>98</sup> the fourth and the only surviving son of Sayyid Fazl Pookoya Tungal. He invited Sayyid Ali Tungal to Malabar and promised him to do every thing needful for his resettlement in Mamburam. Sayyid Ali readily accepted the invitation.

On his return from Mecca, Abdurahiman strengthened his activities to bring the Sayyid family back to Malabar. He convened a public meeting at Town Hall Calicut on 16<sup>th</sup> January 1933.<sup>99</sup> His close associate, E. Moidu Maulavi presided over the meeting. In the meeting, the

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<sup>98</sup> M. Rasheed, *Muhammed Abdurahiman Sahib*, (Mal.), Calicut, 1994, p.76.

<sup>99</sup> S.K. Potteekkatt, et al., op cit., p. 292.

Mamburam Restoration Committee was formed with Koyilandi Valiya Isariyakath Pookoya Tangal as the president.<sup>100</sup> As a strategy, Abdurahiman wished to remain behind the scene as far as possible as his presence in the scene would lead to the immediate suppression of the movement by the authorities. However, the authorities sensed the presence of Abdurahiman in the agitation and reported, "Mohammed Abdurahiman, editor of the *Al-Ameen*, a West Coast journal, is apparently out to make trouble among the Mappillas. He has endeavoured to revive the question of 'Tangalship' of the Mambram mosque by trying to recall the descendants of the old Tangal, exiled 80 years ago."<sup>101</sup> Abdurahiman could make the issue powerful enough to haunt the British authorities in Malabar and the latter were forced to report to the Governor, "The Tangalship of Mamburam Mosque is still the cause of a good deal of subterranean intrigue among the Moplahs of Malabar."<sup>102</sup>

Abdurahiman resorted to every peaceful and constitutional method to realize his goal. A number of booklets and monographs were published on the issue. *Al-Ameen* and the *Mathrubhumi* wrote editorials on the subject and the 'Tangalship' of Mamburam became topic of hot discussion

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<sup>100</sup> Mohammed Abdul Sathar, K.K., *History of Ba-Alawis in Kerala*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Department of History, University of Calicut, 1999, p.215.

<sup>101</sup> *Fortnightly Report* for the First Half of January 1933, Home (Political) Department, File No. 18/1-33. [NAI]

<sup>102</sup> *Fortnightly Report* for the Second Half of March 1933. [TNA]

among the people of Malabar.

Meanwhile, Sayyid Ali secured permission to travel to India, Ceylon and Iraq. Accordingly, on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1934 he started from Cairo. First he visited Ceylon and reached Madras on 10<sup>th</sup> February 1934. From there he started to Malabar by train and reached Parappanagadi on 12<sup>th</sup> February 1934.<sup>103</sup> As scheduled before, Abdurahiman and a few of his very close and trusted friends received Sayyid Ali at Parappanagadi railway station.<sup>104</sup> Sayyid Ali wished to go to Mamburam directly. Abdurahiman suggested him to go to Calicut and to meet the District Collector with a request to permit him to settle down at Mamburam. This proposition of Abdurahiman is indicative of his commitment to constitutionalism and respect towards existing law of the country. But the District Collector turned down Sayyid Ali's request and ordered him to return to Ceylon forthwith.<sup>105</sup>

Abdurahiman had foreseen the response of the District Collector and had made arrangement for Sayyid Ali's journey to French Mahe. Dr. M.K. Menon, a close associate of Abdurahiman, had made necessary arrangement for the accommodation of Sayyid Ali in Mahe, a territory under French occupation. Abdurahiman found that Sayyid Ali's presence

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<sup>103</sup> S.K. Pottakkatt, S.K., op cit., p.295.

<sup>104</sup> For fear of police interruption the arrival of Sayyid Ali was not publicized.

<sup>105</sup> Fortnightly Report for First Half of February 1934. [TNA]

at Mahe would boost the morale of the people of Malabar and would heighten the agitation of the Mamburam Restoration Committee.

However, the District Collector, H.R. Esili, was determined to send Sayyid Ali away from India. He issued arrest warrant to Sayyid Ali and sent the Superintendent of Police, Amu, to Mahe to put the arrest warrant into effect. Abdurahiman came to know of the plan of H.R. Esili through the Sub Collector, Kunhi Rama Menon<sup>106</sup> and took every measure to abort it. Through Dr. M.K. Menon, Abdurahiman made Sayyid Ali to apply for French citizenship. Thus the machinations to arrest Sayyid Ali were wisely averted.

The District Collector felt humiliated. He immediately issued a press communique stating that Sayyid Ali had violated all promises given to him and his stay in Mahe would disturb the law and order situation in Malabar.<sup>107</sup> The communiqué was nothing but a fabricated note intended to deceive the people. *Al-Ameen* and the *Mathrubhumi* countered the communiqué through editorials and articles. The Mayyazhi [Mahe] Muslim Yuvajana Sangam issued a booklet captioned "Mamburam Sayyid Ali and the Government Notification." The booklet denounced all the

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<sup>106</sup> S.K.Pottekkatt, et al., op cit., p. 298.

<sup>107</sup> Press Notification issued by the District Collector, Malabar. Copy of the Notification is traced out from the private collections of K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem.

charges levelled against Sayyid Ali by the District Collector.<sup>108</sup> The booklet sensed a conspiracy between the British authorities and Attakoya, the then Mukthiar [power of attorney] holder of Mamburam *Maqam* and the Vice-President of the Malabar District Board, to get hereditary right over the properties of Sayyid Fazl's family.<sup>109</sup> The revelation of this conspiracy sensitized the people of Malabar. They rose against the British and those who illegally and immorally occupied the properties of Mamburam *Maqam*. The British authorities staggered before the attack of the Mamburam Restoration Committee and its mighty leader, Abdurahiman. Admitting their failure to counter the attack, the district authorities wrote, "A Press Communique explaining the Government's attitude towards Syed Ali has been given wide publicity in Malabar. But Syed Ali's popularity shows no sign of abating."<sup>110</sup>

Now it became a prestige issue to the District Magistrate. He knew that Abdurahiman was behind all these troubles. He summoned Abdurahiman and asked him to apologize for giving leadership to the Mamburam Restoration agitation.<sup>111</sup> When Abdurahiman expressed his unwillingness to repent, the Collector threatened to arrest him. Finally he

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<sup>108</sup> The Secretary, Mayyazhi Muslim Yuvajana Sangam, *Mamburam Sayyid Ali and the Government Notification*, (Mal.), Mayyazhi, 1934. Copy of the booklet is traced from the private collection of Mohamed Ali Musaliar, Nellikkuthu.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid. p.6

<sup>110</sup> *Fortnightly Report* for the Second Half of March 1934. [TNA]

<sup>111</sup> S.K., Pottakkatt, et al., op cit., p.297.

agreed to publish a note of apology as dictated by the Collector. Accordingly, *Al-Ameen* and the *Mathrubhumi* published the regretting note of Abdurahiman but with editorials severely criticizing the Collector for his unsympathetic and inhuman treatment towards Sayyid Ali.<sup>112</sup> The editorials provoked the Collector who immediately issued arrest warrant against him. As he came to know of the warrant in advance, Abdurahiman went underground and appeared before his friend and benefactor, M. Krishnan Nair, the Law Member to the Government of Madras, at Egmore, Madras. Krishnan Nair interceded on behalf of Abdurahiman and the warrant was withdrawn.<sup>113</sup>

Emboldened by the support of people from all walks of life, Abdurahiman continued his struggle unabated. He presented a resolution in the District Board at the teeth of opposition of the Vice President, Attakoya, the very Mukthiar of Mamburam Maqam. The resolution requested the government to declare Sayyid Ali and his family “free to enter Malabar and settle down if they so desire.”<sup>114</sup> When the resolution

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<sup>112</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 20<sup>th</sup> February 1934.

<sup>113</sup> S.K., Pottakkatt, et al. op cit., p.299.

<sup>114</sup> Proceedings of the Malabar District Board, *The Malabar District Gazette*, Supplement, Calicut, 1934, p. 4. The resolution runs, “This Board is of the opinion that the presence of Syed Ali or any other member of the family of Syed Fazl Pookoya of Mampuram, in Malabar, will not endanger in any way the peace of the country and that on the other hand it will give great satisfaction to the entire population of Malabar and thus really be conducive to better peace in Malabar and greater amity among the people, and the Board therefore requests the Government that they may be pleased to declare them free to enter Malabar and settle down, if they so desire.”

was put to vote, there were only three members to oppose it and the resolution was moved with the support of twenty- one members. However, the District Collector refused to accept the resolution.<sup>115</sup>

Meanwhile, Attakoya, the unscrupulous Mukhtiar of Mamburam Maqam supported by the British authorities, started a counter agitation against Sayyid Ali and Abdurahiman. He raised several allegations against Abdurahiman including misappropriation of fund collected in the name of Sayyid Ali. But Sayyid Ali himself refuted all such charges and said, “I appeal to the people who loved my grand father Sayyid Alavi Tangal and my father Sayyid Fazl Pookoya Tangal that don’t believe the utterances of Attakoya who has stolen my properties.”<sup>116</sup>

Sayyid Ali, who was brought up in the noble tradition of the Holy Prophet, could not bear the nefarious scheme of Attakoya. When all peaceful and constitutional methods proved futile, Sayyid Ali decided to return to Egypt. Thus after a stay of about eight months at Mahe, Sayyid Ali, set sail to Egypt on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1934.<sup>117</sup>

However, the Mamburam Restoration agitation did not die out with the departure of Sayyid Ali from Mahe. It continued to agitate the

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<sup>115</sup> Collector’s letter to the District Board, no. 2850, dated 15<sup>th</sup> June 1934. Quoted in *The Malabar District Gazette*, Supplement, Calicut, October 1934, p.24

<sup>116</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1934.

<sup>117</sup> Mohammed Abdul Sathar., K.K., op cit., p.221.

authorities for several years to come. When B. Pokker, raised question on the Mamburam issue in the Madras Legislative Assembly, he was warned 'not to ask question on the Mamburam mosque dispute.'<sup>118</sup> He was also warned for exhibiting a letter from Sayyid Ali in the Assembly.<sup>119</sup> When Abdurahiman was elected to the Legislative Assembly, his first concern was the abrogation of the Moplah Outrages Act and thereby to facilitate the re-entry of Sayyid Ali in Malabar. Though the Outrages Acts were cancelled in 1937, the government waved aside the request to permit Sayyid Fazl's family to come to Malabar on the ground that the question was with in the sphere of the Government of India as Sayyid Fazl's grandson had submitted a memorandum to the Government of India.

When the Assembly evaded the question, Abdurahiman brought the issue before the general public. He appealed to the people to conduct a 'signature campaign.' A week starting from Friday the 5<sup>th</sup> November to Friday the 12<sup>th</sup> November 1937 was celebrated as a week to collect signatures from the people in support of the resettlement of Sayyid Fazal's family at Mamburam.

Abdurahiman requested all voluntary organizations of Malabar to co-operate in this venture. He appealed to them to collect at least four lakhs signatures of people from all walks of life and from all religionists.

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<sup>118</sup> *Fortnightly Report* for the First Half of February 1937. [TNA]

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

He directed them to send the collected signatures either directly to the Government or to the Al-Ameen Press. He also requested the organizations to conduct meetings, to pass resolutions and to send them to the Government persuading them to do justice in the issue.<sup>120</sup>

People from all over Malabar warmly welcomed the appeal of Abdurahiman. They conducted meetings under different organizations; passed resolutions and sent them to the government. On 28<sup>th</sup> November 1937, a monumental memorandum containing lakhs of signatures was submitted to Mr. Yakub Hassan, Minister for Public Works Department, Madras Presidency.<sup>121</sup> But before he could make any concrete advancement on the issue, the Rajaji Ministry resigned in the wake of the Second World War. Before long Abdurahiman was thrown into prison. Thus the Mamburam Restoration movement subsided without being able to realize its ultimate goal.

However, Abdurahiman could keep up the Mamburam issue as a topic of hot discussion in the political arena of Malabar. It served as a strong catharsis and catalyst to the Mappila community in their struggle for freedom. Concomitantly, it proved to be a perennial threat to the imperialist and feudal forces. Though seemingly a sectarian or a local issue of the Mappilas, Abdurahiman through his political sagacity,

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<sup>120</sup> S.K. Pottakkatt, et al., op cit., p.308.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

dynamic leadership and new style of modus operandi, made it a national issue. He could give a non-religious and non-communal colour to the issue. Many Hindu officials and personalities in the British service had even helped him openly. There has been no evidence so far to prove any important Hindu leader opposing the activities of the Mamburam Restoration Committee.

To the Mappilas, the Tangal of Mamburam were their most cherished guides both in their physical and spiritual life. Hence any movement to restore them to their ancestral position was sufficient to mobilize even the poorest and the most illiterate among the Mappila community. Thus it was one of the most successful attempts of Abdurahiman to draw the Mappila community into the vortex of National Movement.

### **Hitchcock Memorial Struggle:**

The Superintendent of Police, Mr. Hitchcock was notorious for his cruelties towards the Mappilas of Malabar. They called him 'the Dyer of Malabar'. Mr. Hitchcock was responsible for organizing many bloodbaths during and after the great rebellion of 1921. On completion of his tenure he set sail to England, but died on the way to England in 1926.

Considering his service in the suppression of the Malabar rebellion of 1921, the district authorities decided to erect a memorial to him. A

Memorial Committee, with M.C. Krishna Varma Raja as the Chairman, was constituted for the purpose.<sup>122</sup> The Committee first decided to erect a marble statue of Mr. Hitchcock at Ottupara Hill. Later the Committee found that at Ottupara Hill, the statue would not be visible to more people. Therefore, the Committee decided to erect the statue at Valluvambram, the bifurcation of the Manjeri-Malappuram cum Madras-Ooty main road.<sup>123</sup> Valluvambram was just five kilometers north west of Pukkottur and ten kilometers west of Manjeri and ten kilometers east of Kondotty. Thus Valluvambram was the nerve center of the Ernad taluk and the signpost of Malabar history. The memorial was erected at the expense of the Public Works Department and maintained by the Malabar Special Police. The police personnel were to give donations for the upkeep of the memorial.<sup>124</sup>

Abdurahiman found the Hitchcock memorial as a calculated insult to the religious sentiments of the Mappilas and national pride of the whole people of Malabar. He called upon the people of Malabar to take it as a

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<sup>122</sup> Malabar Special Police [MSP] File No. 725 dated 1<sup>st</sup> May 1927. [RAC]. R. Lescher was the Honorary Secretary and Treasurer of the Committee. T.M. Appu Nedungadi, Kalladi Moidutty, M.Narayana Menon, W.K.M. Langley and C.G. Tottenham were the members of the Committee.

<sup>123</sup> MAP File No. 725 dated 1<sup>st</sup> May 1927. [RAC]

<sup>124</sup> In a circular captioned "To All Members of the Police Serving in Malabar", the District Superintendent of Police, Malabar, Mr. Martin and the Commandant of Malabar Special Police, Mr. H. D. Latham, appealed to police force to donate to the upkeep of Hitchcock memorial. The rate of donation was fixed as 2 annas (One anna is approximately 6 paise) for a constable, 3 annas for a Head Constable, 8 annas for a Sub-Inspector and Re. 1 for Inspector. MSP Files, not numbered and not dated. [RAC]

challenge and to rally together for the removal of the memorial. A committee was formed with Abdurahiman and T. Mohamed Yusuf as the President and Secretary respectively. Under the initiation of this committee, a delegation consisting of E. Kannan (MLA), V. Ahamed Kutty (Secretary to Ernad Taluk Congress Committee) and M. Kunhammed (Secretary to Malabar Muslim Majlis) waited upon the Chief Minister, Rajagopalachari, with an appeal to issue early orders for the removal of the Hitchcock memorial.<sup>125</sup> The deputation also reminded the Chief Minister of the decision of different organizations to launch satyagraha if their demand was not conceded.<sup>126</sup>

On the request of Abdurahiman, the Ernad Taluk Congress Committee and the Tellichery Taluk Congress Committee passed resolutions appealing to the government for the immediate removal of the memorial.<sup>127</sup> But the approach of the Congress Government under Rajagopalachari appeared to be very lukewarm towards this genuine demand of the people of Malabar. Abdurahiman was impatient to get the memorial removed at the earliest. He moved a resolution in the

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<sup>125</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 9<sup>th</sup> October 1938.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1938.

Satyagraha Committee expressing his disappointment in the inactive policy of the Congress Government towards the memorial issue.<sup>128</sup>

The KPCC, under the Presidency of Abdurhiman, expressed its serious concern over the inertia of the Congress Government on the issue and requested the Chief Minister to make clear of his stand on the issue in the Assembly. The KPCC also requested him to reveal the obstacles, if any, in removing the memorial and to express his support to this just demand of the people of Malabar.<sup>129</sup>

When prayers and beseeches proved futile, Abdurahiman decided to start direct agitation. He convened a public meeting at Mongam, two kilometers west of Valluvambram and explained to the people the brutalities committed by Hitchcock on the people of Malabar. At the end of the meeting, Abdurahiman, A. K. Gopalan and Komukutty Maulavi led a march to Valluvambram.<sup>130</sup> When they reached Valluvambram, police checked the march from entering into the precinct of the memorial.<sup>131</sup> The march was really a clarion call to the people of Malabar.

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<sup>128</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 18<sup>th</sup> November 1938.

<sup>129</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1938.

<sup>130</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, dated 8<sup>th</sup> January 1939.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

Soon the agitation turned into a mass movement and it became irresistible to the government. Finally, the memorial was removed.<sup>132</sup> Thus Abdurahiman could bring the agitation to a successful conclusion. As in the case of other agitations led by him, the Hitchcock Memorial struggle was also aimed to stir up the nationalist sentiments of the people of Malabar and to boost the religious concord between the Hindus and Muslims.

### **Struggle Against Religious Orthodoxy and Conservatism:**

Abdurahiman was, of course, pre-occupied with the political awakening of the Muslims. But he was not unconcerned with the religious reform of the Muslim community. To him, religion and politics were not contradictory but complementary to each other. He himself had drawn his political ethos from the religion. He believed that it was the religion that supplied values to politics and politics without values was baseless. Similarly, he held that only a progressive religion could play its role in making a community modern. To him, Islam was a progressive religion and the Muslims were a politically developed and culturally sophisticated community.

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<sup>132</sup> The memorial is now believed to be under the custody of the Malabar Special Police, Malappuram.

Unfortunately, the Muslims of Malabar were in the grip of orthodoxy and conservatism. Abdurahiman found that the orthodox *Ulama* and the selfish Muslim aristocracy were the bastions of religious conservatism. Together they exploited the poor and ignorant Muslims religiously, economically and politically. Besides, the Malabar Muslims were in the clutches of several social evils. Jealousy, hostility, hypocrisy, hatred had all destroyed its moral fibre and had sapped its vitality. To him, the only a way out was to strive to help the Muslim masses to rise above the thick veils of religious orthodoxy.

To Abdurahiman, the Quran was the bulwark against all religious orthodoxy. He reminded the Muslims that it was the Quran that had made the ignorant and illiterate Arabs the torchbearers of knowledge and had made them the rightful owners of the world civilization.<sup>133</sup> He also reminded that without a proper understanding of the Quran, the Muslims could no longer be the real heirs of Islamic heritage. He told, "It is due to our ignorance of the Quran that we are being easily misled by the orthodox *Ulama* and the selfish seeking Muslim aristocracy."<sup>134</sup> So he exhorted the Muslims to learn the Quran.

The Muslims of Malabar were ignorant of the Quran. They knew only to recite the Quran without being able to understand its meaning.

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<sup>133</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 28<sup>th</sup> August 1928.

<sup>134</sup> *Al-Ameen Special Supplement*, 1929, p. 15.

The *Ulama*, with vested interests, had wrongly convinced the ordinary people that they ought not know the meaning of the Quran. They also had tried to convince the people that it was against the spirit of the religion to translate the Quran into Malayalam.<sup>135</sup> Thus Abdurahiman came into conflict with the *Ulama* on the issue of the translation of the Quran.

It was in this context that he undertook the task of translating the Quran into Malayalam. For the purpose he constituted a committee of religious scholars under P.K. Moosa Maulavi and P. Mohamed Moideen.<sup>136</sup> But the orthodox *Ulama* were determined to oppose the project. They argued that the Quran should not be in any alphabet other than Arabic.<sup>137</sup> However, Abdurahiman went ahead with the translation project of the Holy Book. He approached the Nizam of Hyderabad with a request for financial assistance in this venture. The Nizam readily accepted his request and offered financial assistance. But the orthodox leaders exerted pressure upon the Nizam not to co-operate with Abdurahiman. Finally, the financial assistance promised by the Nizam

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<sup>135</sup> Mappila Education Commission Report records, "Mappila opinion agreed that it is contrary to religion to translate the Koran into Malayalam." Law (Education) Department, G.O. No. 376 dated 9<sup>th</sup> March 1923. [MSP File] [RAC]

<sup>136</sup> S.K.Pttekkatt, et al., op cit., p. 274.

<sup>137</sup> M. Rasheed, "Abdurahiman Enna Matha Maulikavathi", (Mal.) (Abdurahiman, 'A Religious Fundamentalist'), *Prabodhanam Weekly*, Calicut 30<sup>th</sup> November 1996, p.7.

was withdrawn.<sup>138</sup> Abdurahiman was not disappointed. He could bring out a part of the Holy Scripture in Malayalam. But a complete translation of the Quran remained an unfulfilled desire until it was done by one of his disciples, C.N. Ahamed Maulavi in 1952.

Though progressive in his religious outlook, Abdurahiman was never ready to budge an inch from the instructions of the Quran. In spite of being an active participant in the public meetings of the Muslim Aikya Sangam, he opposed its leaders, K.M. Seethi, one of the founders of the Muslim League in Kerala and K.M. Maulavi, one of the early leaders of the Mujahid Movement in the province, when they justified banking interest and established a banking institution at Ernakulam.<sup>139</sup> Supporting the banking interest, K.M. Maulavi wrote a book entitled the *Risalath Fil Bank*. Abdurahiman countered the arguments of K.M. Maulavi through a series of articles captioned, "*Heelath-ur-Riba*".<sup>140</sup> Finally, surrendering before the arguments of Abdurahiman, the Aikya Sangam wound up its banking institution.

Abdurahiman was always at the forefront of attacking anti-Islamic customs and traditions among the Muslims. He found the *Marumakkathayam* [Matriarchy] as an anti-Islamic tradition among the

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<sup>138</sup> S.K. Pottekkatt, et al., op cit., p. 274

<sup>139</sup> E.Moidu Maulavi, *Ende Koottukaran*, (Mal.), Calicut 1964, p. 199.

<sup>140</sup> M. Rasheed, "Abdurahiman, A Religious Fundamentalist", op. cit., p. 7.

Muslims. So he opposed it strongly. When Schamnad introduced a bill in the Madras Legislative Assembly, regulating the *Marumakkathayam* among the Muslims of north Malabar, Abdurahiman supported the bill and said, "No body who belongs to the fold of Islam can object in the least to doing away with this system, for the reasons that whoever follows the *Marumakkathayam* law and refuses to accept the Islamic law of inheritance, refuses to accept the Holy Quran in toto."<sup>141</sup> Abdurahiman also opposed the rituals and ceremonies like *Kodikuthu Nercha* [Celebrating the death anniversary of saintly people with procession carrying flags to their tombs], *Chondanakudam* [Ceremony of carrying pots with sandal paste to mosque in connection with *Nerchas*] *Kathukuthu Kalyanam* [Celebration organized in connection with the first wearing of ear rings] etc.

He used all media available to spread his social concepts among ordinary people. He established a dramatic group at Kuttichira, Calicut.<sup>142</sup> To him the films of Charlie Chaplin were of great social value. So he never missed a chance to see Chaplin films and also advised his friends to

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<sup>141</sup> *Madras Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol. VI, Nos. 1 to 15, Madras 25<sup>th</sup> March 1938, p. 1157. [TNA]

<sup>142</sup> M.P. Mujeeburahman, "Malayali Maranna Sahib" (Mal.), *Madhyamam*, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1999.

do so.<sup>143</sup> These were really great adventures in a society where enactment was irreligious and seeing film blasphemous.

Abdurahiman was also a relentless crusader against drinking. As a Muslim and as a Congressman, he opposed this social evil and used both religious and political platforms to fight against drinking. As a member of the Calicut Municipal Council and later as a member of the Malabar District Board, he initiated a number of measures for the introduction of prohibition in the district. He criticized the government policy of selling “liquor to the people in large quantities and to increase the revenue and not to discourage drinking.”<sup>144</sup> In the Madras Legislative Assembly also, he argued for prohibition strongly. He said, “The Government might be confronted with by the loss of revenue. The Government has to tide over the difficulty by other means. The loss of revenue when compared to the gain is nothing.”<sup>145</sup>

Thus the approach of Abdurahiman towards social or religious questions was not of dogmatic but of rationalistic in nature. He could never reconcile himself with superstitions. He always wanted to move out of the prevailing customs. No doubt, it led him to the vast field of

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> *Al-Ameen*, dated 19<sup>th</sup> July 1925. MNNPR July 1925, p. 980. [TNA]

<sup>145</sup> *Madras Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol. III, No. 2, Madras 15<sup>th</sup> September 1937. [TNA]

humanism. The reforms he envisaged were intended to change the very way of living of all people, particularly of the Muslims. He found that the Muslim society was at the crossroads. So he utilized all his energy to turn it in the right direction. His rivals, whether the *Ulama* or people with vested interests, were afraid of him because he could floor them in any arguments. He was broad and liberal in his religious and social outlook and tremendously far in advance of his age. What he envisaged and what he realized still reverberates in the social life of the people of Kerala.

# **AN ASSESSMENT**

## **An Assessment**

The foregoing study is a bare sketch of the life and work of Abdurahiman whose life is characterized by patriotism, nationalism, secularism and humanitarianism with some distinguishing features that set him apart from his contemporaries and from his predecessors and successors. His life was dedicated to the country, devoted to the Indian National Congress and committed to the Mappila community. He was described as the first Nationalist Muslim leader from Kerala who played a significant role in the local and national politics during the freedom struggle. But he was not the first Muslim to enter into the freedom struggle. Muslim leaders like Ponmadath Moideen Koya, Kattilasseri Mohamed Musliar, E. Moidu Maulavi and T. Hassan Koya Mulla had made their appearance in the National Movement before Abdurahiman. But they had not come to the leadership of the National Movement and had not become an active mobilizing force in the struggle for independence till the arrival of Abdurahiman on the scene. The advent of Abdurahiman gave a new fillip and a new enthusiasm to them. They worked with him and together they wrote a new chapter in the history of Kerala.

A study of his early career reveals that he was a boy of extra ordinary organizational ability. His own teacher Maulana Muhammed Ali was the first

to recognize this ability of Abdurahiman and to ask him to set out to Malabar to take the leadership of the Khilafat Movement in the province. Thus at the very young age of 23, Abdurahiman became the Secretary of Kerala Provincial Committee in 1921. But his very first experience was quite unpleasant. He had to express his concern to Gandhiji and Shoukath Ali of the bitter consequences of taking the Mappilas into the freedom struggle without giving them proper training. Abdurahiman and M.P. Narayana Menon were the only nationalist leaders who could foresee the nefarious plan of the colonial powers of inciting the people into rebellion and crushing the nationalist awakening at its threshold. Using prohibitory orders and Police Acts, the authorities successfully prevented the leaders from training the people in non-violence. So they could easily provoke the Mappilas and could drag them into the whirlpool of rebellion. They could also set them at loggerheads with their Hindu brethren. Even in such a critical situation Abdurahiman was one of the few who dared to go to the riot zone. He dared to tell the rebellious people of the futilities of resorting to violence against the government. But he sadly realized that no body except the religious leadership could bring the Mappilas back to their senses. Unfortunately, the religious leadership was found to be more emotional than rational in their approach to the issue. So to his utter dismay, Abdurahiman had to admit that he could not bring the Mappilas back to the track of non-violence as the latter

had turned the Khilafat to a religious and sentimental issue. Thus Abdurahiman had to be a helpless spectator to the great bloodbath of 1921.

At the end of the rebellion, all wanted a scapegoat. The authorities, the Muslim religious leadership and the Hindu brethren found fault with the Khilafat-Congress leadership. Being the Secretary of the Kerala Provincial Khilafat Committee, Abdurahiman had to suffer too much mud slinging from all quarters, both from friends and foes. He suffered them all with patience. Neither did he find fault with his co-religionists, nor with the religious leadership for their miscalculated confrontation with the authorities. In stead, he made them feel proud of their heroic tradition; diverted their energy in the desired direction and enabled them to write many golden chapters in the history of freedom struggle of the country.

When the war machines of the colonial powers ploughed through south Malabar and thousands of widows and orphans were left as good as dead, Abdurahiman was the only leader ready to go to the area and to undertake relief activities. But the British authorities did not allow him to go ahead with his philanthropic activities. They shackled his legs serving him orders not to leave Calicut municipal area. Then he wrote in *the Hindu* and *the Bombay Chronicle* about the atrocities of the authorities towards the Mappila women and children. Immediately, he was arrested on charge of 'disseminating false information' and was sentenced for two years rigorous imprisonment.

Happily he accepted the verdict and went to prison on behalf of the helpless victims of the Malabar rebellion.

When he came out of jail in 1923, South Malabar was still bleeding and writhing in pain. The entire social fabric was damaged. Both the Hindus and the Muslims blamed the Congress for all their sufferings. They drifted away from the National Movement. Further, the Hindus and the Muslims stood at daggers drawn at each other. It seemed to many that the good old days of Hindu-Muslim brotherhood would never be reinstated in this land. The economic life of the province was also totally ruined. Hence the most crucial issues before Abdurahiman were how to rehabilitate the unfortunate victims of the rebellion; how to mend the socio-political fabrics and how to reconstruct the economic life to provide at least a hand to mouth existence to the poor people of the area. Abdurahiman launched a multi-dimensional programme. He established refugee camps at different places in Ernad and Walluvanad taluks. The Khadi weaving and mat weaving centers established by him helped the people to save themselves from the death of starvation. He could revitalize the National Movement through the Khilafat Conferences organized at Palghat, Tellichery and Calicut.

But still the national leaders of the Congress were afraid of making Malabar the venue of the Civil Disobedience Movement. For a while, Abdurahiman too hesitated to join the CDM. But soon he realized that it

would be a historical mistake if he kept apart from the CDM and if the CDM was not organized in Malabar. He found that if it were not possible to make Malabar the venue of the CDM, then it would never be possible. Hence the question before him was to start the CDM now or never. He also realized that it would be an indelible blot on the Muslim community, if Malabar were avoided from the CDM on account of the rebellion of 1921. So he resolved that it should not happen what so ever. Brushing aside the warning of the national leaders, he made Calicut beach the venue of the salt satyagraha and wrote a new chapter in the history of the freedom struggle. The way he organized the salt satyagraha is a fine example of his leadership qualities and adherence to the party discipline. His sacrificial role in the salt satyagraha is still fresh in the memories of the people of Malabar. Poems and novels are still being written glorifying that historic event. If Abdurahiman had not mobilized the Mappilas to make sacrifices for the cause of freedom the CDM would not have gathered so much momentum as it actually did.

When he was out of jail in December 1930 he found that the National Movement was in a state of inactivity. Further, the Gandhi-Irwin Pact signed in March 1931 and subsequent withdrawal of the CDM paralyzed political activity in Malabar. Abdurahiman could not put up with this sluggishness because to him passivity meant ruin of what he had created on the road to freedom. So he chalked out his own programme to activate the National Movement in Malabar. He initiated observance of 'Mappila Day' on the 19<sup>th</sup>

of every month. Demonstrations and public meetings were conducted in connection with the Day. Monthly observance of a day was, of course, unusual affair, but it served the purpose of Abdurahiman and he could keep Malabar vibrant in the freedom struggle.

When public election was introduced to parliamentary bodies, he found it an opportunity for educating the masses in democracy and nationalism. He also took it a chance to make people aware of exploitation and tyranny of the colonial powers and their beneficiaries. Further, parliamentary bodies served him as platforms to fight for the rights of the people and to wage war against the imperialist designs. Therefore, he never missed opportunities to compete in the elections or to become member of such councils. He competed in the elections to the Municipal Councils, District Boards, Provincial Legislative Assemblies and the Central Legislative Assembly with the same zeal and enthusiasm. Unfortunately, some of his colleagues mistook it as his 'parliamentary infatuation'. So they almost always raised hurdles before him and though he faltered at times, he could overcome them.

The same forces that stood against him in the public elections were at work in the organizational pursuits too. The organizational activities of Abdurahiman centered round the Muslims. He wanted to bring the whole Muslim population in to the fold of the Indian National Congress. So he desired some special consideration to the Muslims in the Congress. But the

hardhearted leadership of Kerala Congress was against any such commiseration to any group. But the Socialists in the Congress, who later became the Communists, were considerate to the demands of Abdurahiman. They supported him in public and organizational elections. So he got through the elections to the Madras Legislative Assembly and to the office of the President of the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee. But these offices were not a bed of roses to him. On one side the right wing in the Congress was determined to sabotage his activities; on the other side, the Muslim League was busy with weaning away the Muslims from the Congress. Abdurahiman could successfully deal with these forces as long as he had the support of the Socialists. When the Socialists turned Communists, owing to his political and religious commitment he could no longer be a fellow-traveller with them. He had to bid them farewell and had to move along with his Nationalist Muslim colleagues.

Actually, Abdurahiman was not a leftist or a socialist. He was a radical among the rightists or a leftist among the rightists. But the rightists under K. Kelappan could not tolerate his radical views. The differences between Abdurahiman and Kelappan were more or less similar to the differences between Gandhiji and Subash in national politics. No wonder that their contemporaries called them 'Kerala Subash' and 'Kerala Gandhi' respectfully. It is true that Abdurahiman did not subscribe his political aspirations to Gandhiji or Nehru. In national politics he was always with

Subash and it was this affiliation with Subash that made Abdurahiman the founder President of the Forward Bloc in Kerala.

Though several decades have passed, circumstances have altered and leaders have changed, still the cleavage that occurred in the very foundation of the Congress in 1930s continues to exist. The conflict between Abdurahiman and K. Kelappan has long been a topic of heated discussion and still discussions are on but generating more heat than light. Still it is difficult to make a dispassionate verdict on the issue.

When the Forward Bloc was banned for its anti-war propaganda, Abdurahiman was arrested under DIR on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1940. The arrest of Abdurahiman proved a turning point in the political history of Kerala. The disappearance of that masterly hand from the scene helped the vested interests of both the right wing Congress and the Muslim League, who had allied themselves against Abdurahiman on several occasions. Making use of his absence, the rightists seized the KPCC. The Muslim Leaguers got an opportunity for a free play among the Muslims. Though the Muslims of Malabar had nothing to do with the Pakistan demand of the League, they were being attracted to the new slogan '*Pakistan or Kabarstan*'. A good majority of Abdurahiman's friends and associates also left the Congress to join the League.

When Abdurahiman was released from jail in 1945, he found himself a lone traveller in Kerala politics. To him the most painful experience was the alienation of the Muslims from the Indian National Congress. He found fault both with the Congress and the Muslims themselves for the alienation. According to him, it was the negligence and disregard of the Kerala Congress leaders to concede the just demands of the Muslims that caused their rupture from the organization. On the other hand he strongly found fault with his co-religionists for not taking the Congress into confidence as the defender of their interests. Though too late the Congress leadership realized their folly and offered Abdurahiman whole hearted support in his mission of bringing the Muslims back to the fold of the organization and to the path of the freedom struggle. But he was not fortunate enough to bring his efforts to a successful conclusion before which he gave himself up to the immutable destiny on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1945. With his death, the Kerala Congress was left without a bulwark to keep the Muslims in its fold and what happened afterwards constitutes part of the present day history of Kerala.

Abdurahiman's role as a parliamentarian, journalist and social activist comes complementary and contributory to his political pursuits. To him, parliamentary bodies were forums for the realization of his visions. He was instrumental for many legislations of far reaching consequences in the history of Kerala. The tenancy legislation made by the Government of Kerala in 1970 was a continuation of the proposals that Abdurahiman had submitted

before the Madras Legislative Assembly in 1940. Repealing of the Moplah Outrages Act and cancellation of the notorious Andaman Scheme, all stand witness to his achievements as a parliamentarian. His criticism against the Congress Ministry won him the title 'the opposition in the ruling party'. He felt proud of being called so because he knew that such a title was ascribed to him for his struggle for the rights of the marginalized and the men on the streets.

Abdurahiman was one of the few Congress leaders to rouse the people by the power of written and printed words. He used his pen as a potential instrument to fight against the exploitation of the colonial and feudal powers on the one side and against the orthodoxy of the religious priesthood on the other. Thus as a writer, he played an important role in preparing the ground for a total transformation of Kerala society particularly of the Mappilas.

To him, journalism was not occupational but national and patriotic. He used *Al-Ameen* as an effective instrument to infuse ideas of nationalism, patriotism and secularism. Naturally, its editorials were found to be highly inflammatory to the authorities. Twice he had to stop its publication to keep up the freedom of the press. But before its final surrender to the swords of censorship and to the orders of the government, it had created what was known as 'patriotic journalism' in Malayalam language. No wonder, *Al-Ameen* still bears a martyr's halo. The very name '*Al-Ameen*' still reminds

the people of Kerala of the glorious journalistic tradition of Abdurahiman and will ever be used as a synonym of spirited journalism. To him journalism was a '*jihad*' [Holy War] and undoubtedly he was successful in his journalistic mission.

The reform activities of Abdurahiman were mainly directed against social evils. He was the only Muslim leader to participate and court arrest in Vikom Satyagraha conducted for permission to use the temple road by lower caste Hindus. To Gandhiji, Vikom Satyagraha was a subject related exclusively to Hinduism. So he asked Abdurahiman to apologize to the authorities for participating in the satyagraha. But Abdurahiman declined the request politely because he found that untouchability was a crime not merely against the Hindu community but against the whole humanity.

As an educationist his activities were intended to prepare the ground for national awakening and social transformation. It was with this objective that he established a national school at Valarpattam on the model of the Jamiya Milliya Islamiya. But his active involvement in political struggle and the consequent jail life adversely affected the smooth running of the institution. Finally it ceased to exist.

The Muslim leaders, who had great admiration towards the novel educational visions of Abdurahiman, appointed him the Chairman of the Educational Board of the Kerala Muslim Aikya Sangam. But for want of time

he had to relinquish the office half way. However, as a Member of the Malabar District Board and Member of the Madras Legislative Assembly, he got an opportunity to translate some of his educational ideas into reality. Thanks to his efforts the salary and service conditions of the teachers were improved. The Government Mappila Schools, which have played a tremendous role in the educational advancement of the Muslims of Malabar, owed a lot to his service.

The struggle that Abdurahiman launched on local issues were with two distinct objectives, to strengthen the National Movement and to awaken the Mappila community into action. He was the first to smell a rat behind the nefarious schemes of the colonial powers and their yes men. His heroic struggle against the Andaman scheme constitutes a glorious chapter in the history of the freedom struggle in Kerala. Similarly, his struggle for the removal of the Hitchcock Memorial from Valluvambaram still reverberates in the memory of the people of Malabar. In both these cases the authorities had to surrender before him.

Abdurahiman was never disappointed for want of issues to stir up the people and to keep them active in the freedom struggle. If there were apparently no such issues, he would unearth some from the debris of history. The Mamburam restoration movement was one of such successful attempts of Abdurahiman to mobilize the people against the colonial powers. He could

keep the issue alive for several years and could keep the authorities on the horns of dilemma posing a great threat to them.

When his writings are analyzed, it is found that he strongly believed in a nationalism based on the co-existence of different religions. To him all concepts of majority and minority were the deliberate creations of the imperial powers. He held that the best way to keep India united is that the majority should always have a broad outlook and minority should have faith in the good sense of the majority. He never agreed with the fear of the Muslims that their interests were not safe in India because they were a minority. He always appealed to his Muslim brothers that they should give up the fear complexes injected into their minds by the British and their pets, the Muslim League, in a very subtle way.

As a nationalist, his role was to make nationalists out of the young and old of the Mappila community. He used religion to enlist his co-religionists into the National Movement. He never faced any conflict between his religious demands and national obligations. His religious beliefs and his commitments to nationalism were complementary to each other. He also held that Islam is a religion that could be practised in full only in a free and independent country. However, his nationalist views were always above the thick veils of religious orthodoxy.

Abdurahiman is the best example to show that a staunch Muslim could also be a strong secularist. He became the most distressed when the socio-political atmosphere of Malabar was vitiated by the virus of communalism in 1920s. He had a firm and specific line of thinking for the preservation of communal harmony in a multi-religious country like India. His conviction was that all the communities should develop and should find proper place in a single framework in which the rights and interests of all are safe and secure. He also warned that any imbalance in it would upset the entire socio-political equilibrium.

When the Muslims lagged behind their Hindu brethren in socio-economic life for historical reasons, Abdurahiman argued for a fair deal to the former. Unfortunately, a few of his colleagues mistook it as Muslim communalism. But most of the Hindus had no such misgiving about him. The votes he secured in the elections in the constituencies where the Muslims were only a small minority and the respect and regard he received from the Hindus and the Christians stand witness to the acceptance of his secularist perspectives. In fact, he was an apostle of national unity and religious harmony. The religious concord that exists in Kerala today is to a large extent the legacy of the secularist activities of Abdurahiman. No doubt, the harmonious relation among various religionists will continue to exist as long as the memories of his glorious deeds remain fresh in the minds of the people of the land.

It was with the wholehearted support of his Hindu brethren that he successfully opposed the communal politics of the Muslim League. He was dead against separatism and the sectarian nationalism of the Muslim League. He even disagreed with Gandhiji for his policy of appeasing Mr. Jinnah. He held that it was this policy of rapprochement on the part of Gandhiji that led Jinnah to put forward his claim on Pakistan more and more forcefully. For holding such a view, Abdurahiman was severely criticized and was branded as an anti-Congress man. But it is totally unjustifiable. No doubt, he always held Gandhiji in high esteem but he firmly believed that the Congress was above Gandhiji. Perhaps he may be the only Congressman who dared to hold such a view.

When the Congress also moved in the direction of accepting the Pakistan demand of the Muslim League, Abdurahiman felt totally disappointed. He said, "We don't want Pakistan, if the Muslims of Punjab and Bengal wanted it, let them have." How much agonizing and distressing are these words? No student of history can analyze the source of the pathos and anguish that lie behind it. Finally, India was divided. Fortunately, he did not live to see it. What benefit did the division bring to the Muslims? Were the problems of the Muslims solved? The answer is negative. That is what Abdurahiman and his Nationalist Muslim colleagues had prophesied.

Though he was a nationalist to the core, he did not accept non-violence as a creed. But he held that in the circumstances then prevailing in the country, non-violence was the most effective weapon against the alien rule. He never held non-violence as a substitute for cowardice. In other words, he was not a non-violent satyagrahi but a non-violent revolutionary. The words, deeds and thoughts of Abdurahiman breathed the spirit of revolution. Hence no wonder that he travelled with the Socialists and worked with Subash Chandra Bose and cherished with the non-violence of Gandhiji.

Abdurahiman was a good organizer. He contributed his mite to build the Congress on a solid foundation. It was due to his determined effort and firm call that the Mappilas of Malabar wholeheartedly participated in the freedom struggle. But as in other fields, in organizational level also his role was full of controversies. His public life was invested with practical quality which was relatively lacking in many of his contemporaries. This unusual quality landed him in difficult situations wherein his own judgment was diametrically opposed to the prevailing mode of thinking. But at all time, he maintained a moral uprightness and steadfastness to hold on to his own convictions, unmindful of the heavy risk to his popularity or influence. This sturdy integrity of character was to make him unique all through his career.

Abdurahiman was always concerned with the backwardness of the Muslim community. He found them lagging far behind their Hindu brethren.

He wanted to raise them socially, politically and in so many other ways. But he did not desire any thing for them at the expense of the Hindus. He wanted both to thrive. However, when he demanded a fair deal to the Muslims, some of his Hindu colleagues suspected him as a communalist. Actually Abdurahiman was not a communalist. He might be called 'communalistic' in the sense that he worked incessantly and indefatigably for the progress of Mappila community and its elevation to a position equal to that of other communities. As an advocate of the general progress of the whole society, he was above communalism. In fact he was a 'communitarian'.

When his Hindu brothers in the right wing Congress criticized him as communalist, his own co-religionists called him an enemy of Islam for his secular and nationalist ideals. The orthodox *Ulama* issued '*fatwa*' declaring him a '*Kafir*' [Heretic] and the rich among the Muslims competed with each other in getting these *fatwas* printed and distributed among the people. Despite these criticisms he stood rock firm to his principles. He might have been called a '*Kafir*' [Heretic], '*Murtadd*' [Apostate] or a '*Mushrik*' [Atheist], but his efforts were for the benefit and welfare of the Muslim community.

Abdurahiman was deeply pious and uncompromising in his faith. He considered faith in God a sine qua non for human existence. His faith in God had also shaped his personality. His fearlessness was to a great extent due to his firm belief in God. Once he said, "I do not fear man since I fear God."

He held that faith in God is the only key by which man can solve the riddles in life.

He was sick of superstitions. He was against all baseless traditions, unwanted rituals and false pretensions of religiosity. He found that the ignorance of the *Quran* had made the Muslims superstitious and subservient to the *Ulama*. So he tried to translate the *Quran* into Malayalam. But because of the bitter opposition of the orthodox, he had to leave it half way.

However, his piety, his faith and his devotion won him so many followers from among the Muslims and non-Muslims. They loved him more than they loved the Congress. It was believed that he could have formed a united nationalist Muslim front against the Muslim League in Kerala. But his arrest in 1940 and his death soon after his release, made the Nationalist Muslims leaderless. So they retreated further and further from the political scene. However, the way Abdurahiman dealt with the issues of the Muslims still influence their life in a hundred ways.

The personality traits of Abdurahiman are also worth mentioning. His body was tall, well built and sturdy. He always practised simplicity. He was endowed with a strong will power and stern resoluteness to serve the people. He had strong likes and dislikes. He talked and acted frankly. He appreciated the good and detested the bad. He was never after name and fame. He never allowed flattery. He had an eye on wisdom and knowledge. He was never

after wealth or power. He was straightforward and free from corruption. He was more a practical man than an idealist. He was not excited in success and never dismayed in defeat. He never felt malice and always forgot and forgave the wrongs done to him. Sometimes he appeared very hot tempered. But he never hesitated to beg pardon if his behaviour had wounded any body. Political rivalry did not prevent him from loving others. In his personal life he was inspired by a high sense of morality and humanity. At the prime of his youth he became a widower and remained so till his death. His love for Taj Mahal may be a reflection of that unfulfilled conjugal love.

It may be possible to sketch his life and activities. But it is not possible to portray and gauge the respect and admiration that the people of Kerala have had and still have for him. Even today, six decades after his death, there is something living and vibrant about him. Though years have receded, his stature as a freedom fighter has not diminished nor has his image as a social reformer faded. All the greatness was not thrust upon him. He earned it by hard work. He had to struggle at every inch. Obstacles, in galore, stood in his way. He had to perform a colossal job almost single-handed. When we consider the smallness of his means, the largeness of his purpose and the astounding results of his efforts, we have to admit his greatness. It may be in this context that the famous historian of Kerala, A. Sreedhara Menon

remarked, "Kerala has produced only one historic figure, that was Muhammed Abdurahiman."<sup>1</sup>

It is really regretful that even today, half a century after independence of the country, we have to worry that our nationalism, our secularism and our solidarity are all at stake. The questions like suspicion and distrust between major communities, conflict over religious issues and institutions, growing sense of insecurities among the minorities and communal disharmony continue to haunt our national and social life. Unfortunately, we are groping in darkness to tackle these issues. Here lies the relevance of the present study. We cannot get solution for these issues from the law books but from the life and activities of great nationalists, secularists and humanitarians like Abdurahiman. He did not live long but he lived much, and the short but eventful life had inspired his generation and it is sufficient to inspire the generations to come. His visions, whether social or political, have penetrated time and space. His legacy is ours, whether we agree with every thing he stood for or not. What we are today, we owe in great measure to this man. It is this quality which makes the life sketch of Abdurahiman not a mere story of an individual but the history of a significant period in the history of modern Kerala.

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<sup>1</sup> *Malayala Manorama*, Sunday Supplement, dated, 29<sup>th</sup> June 1997. p.1.



MUHAMMED ABDURAHIMAN

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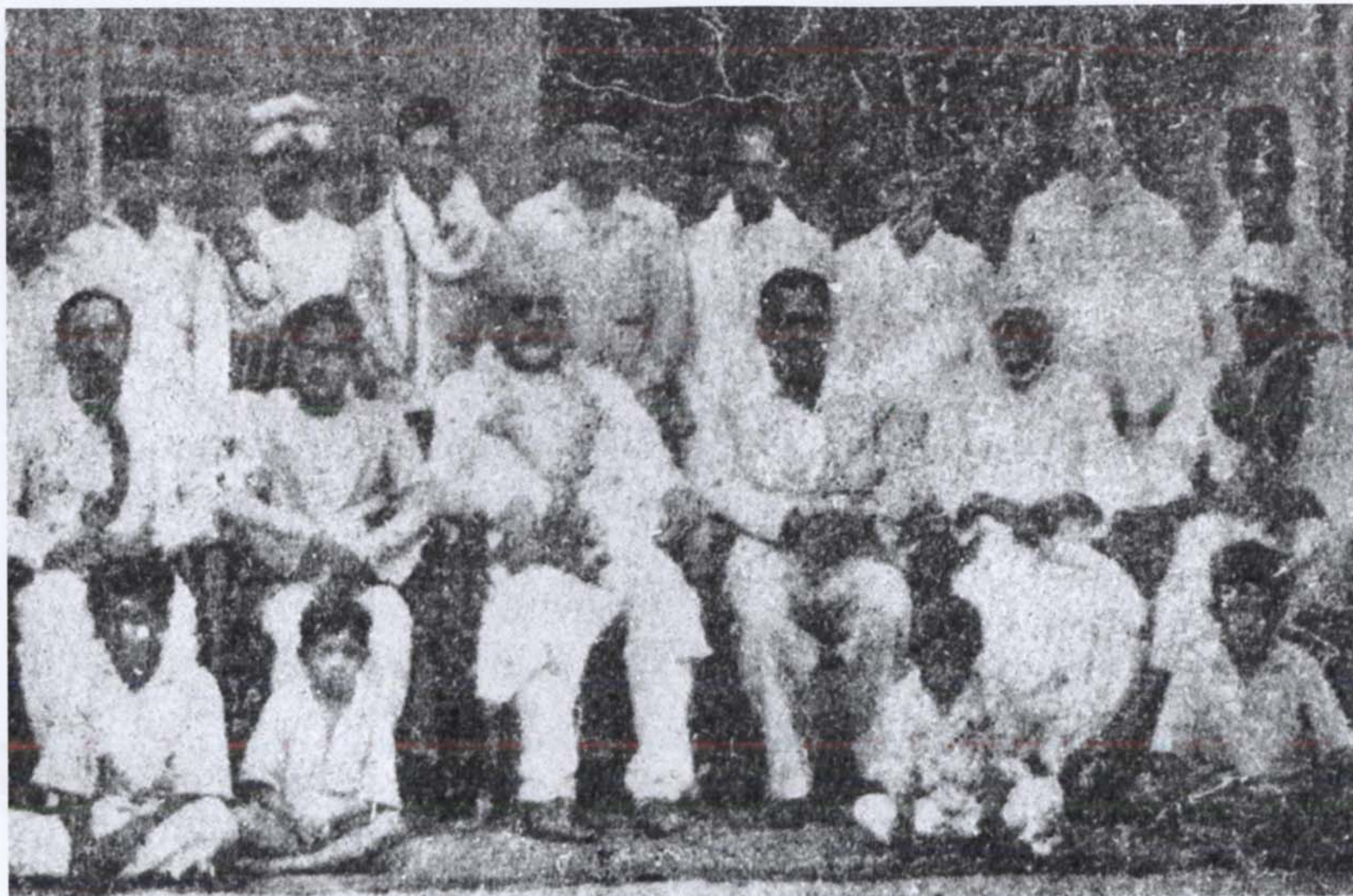


ABDURAHIMAN WITH JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

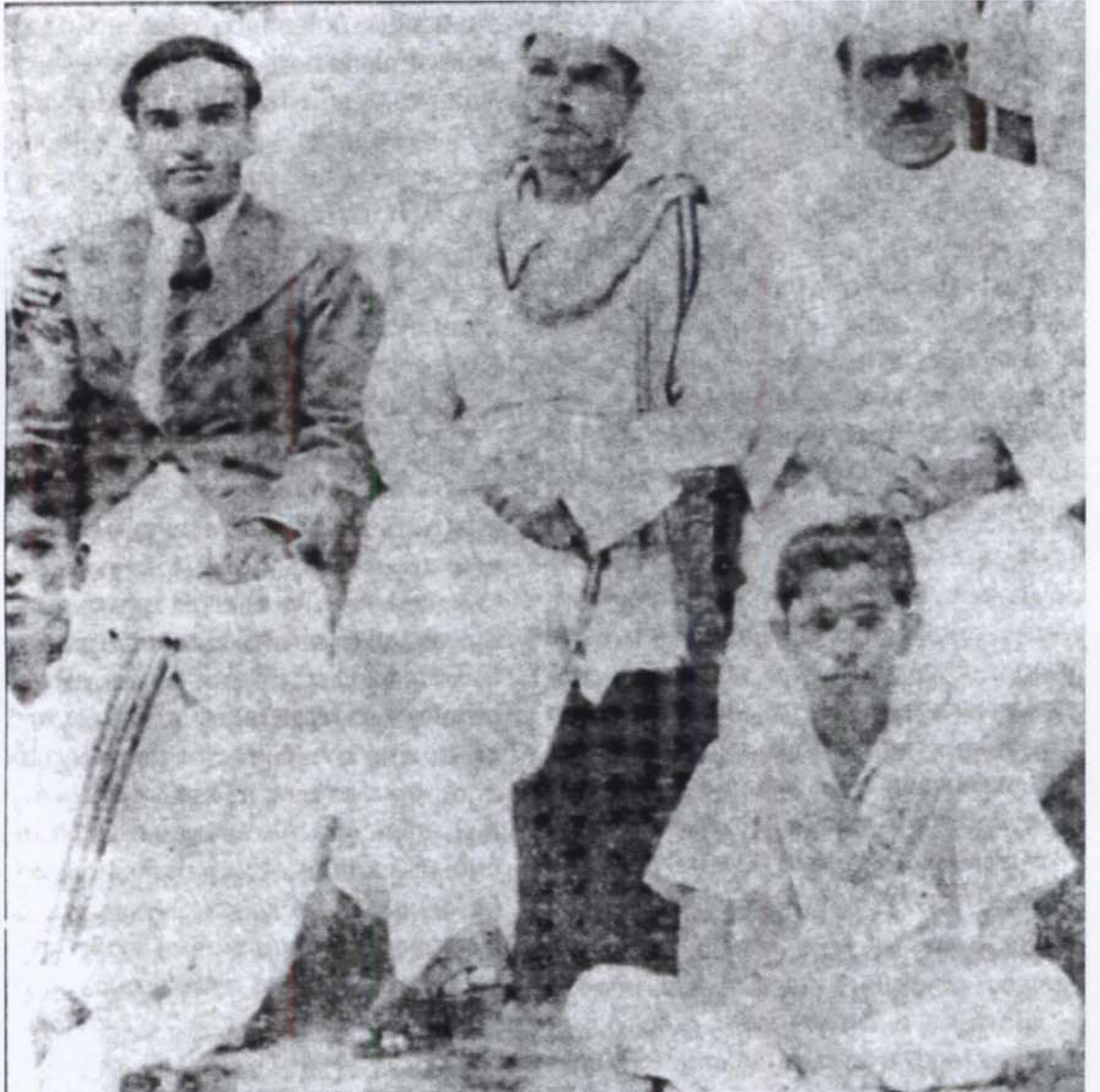
26-2



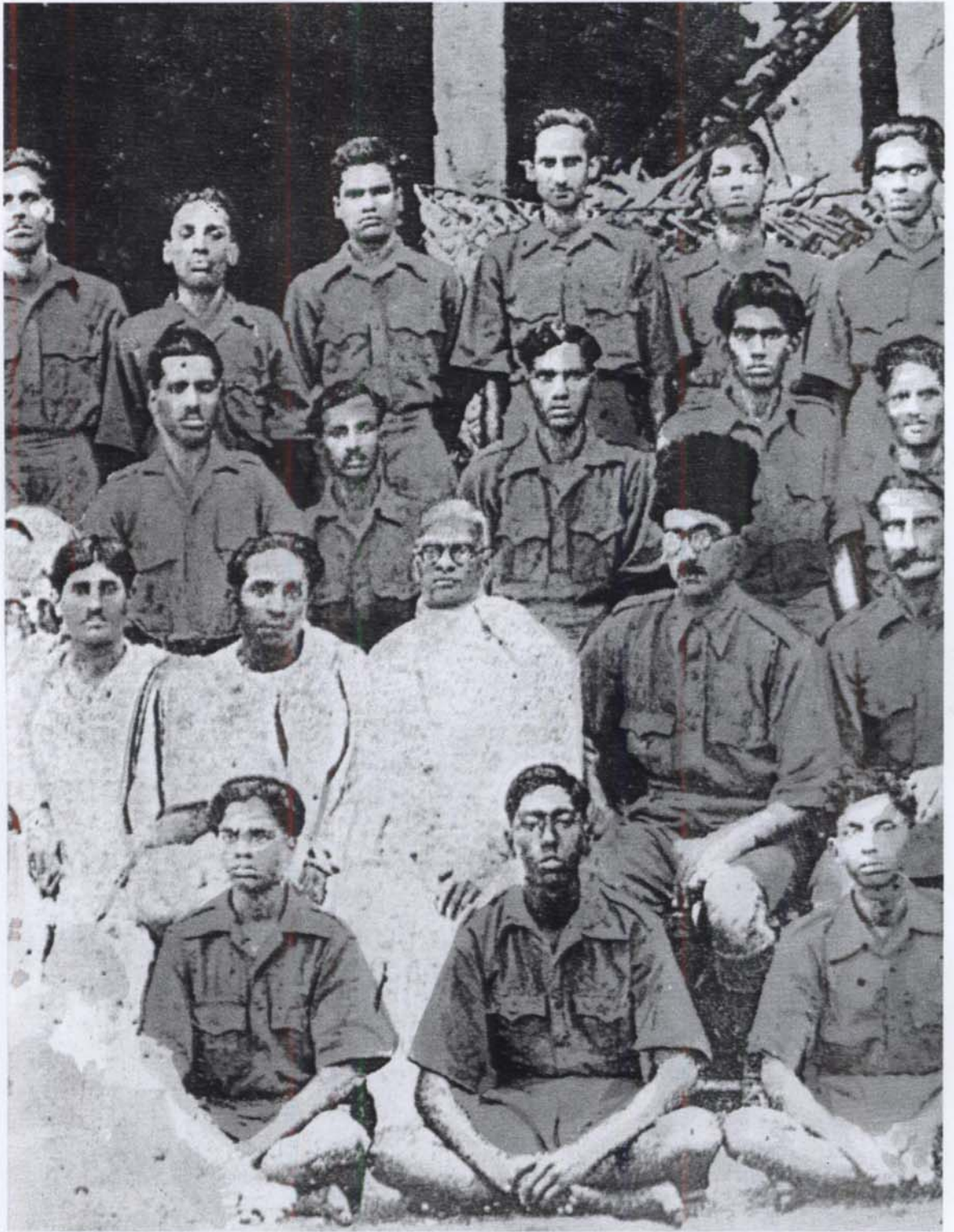
K.F. NARIMAN, J.M. SEN GUPTA, T. PRAKASHAM AND MUHAMMED ABDURAHIMAN  
WITH CONGRESS VOLUNTEERS AT BADAKARA CONFERENCE IN 1933



MUHAMMED RAHIMAN AND YAKUB HASAN WHEN RECEIVED AT CALICUT IN 1921

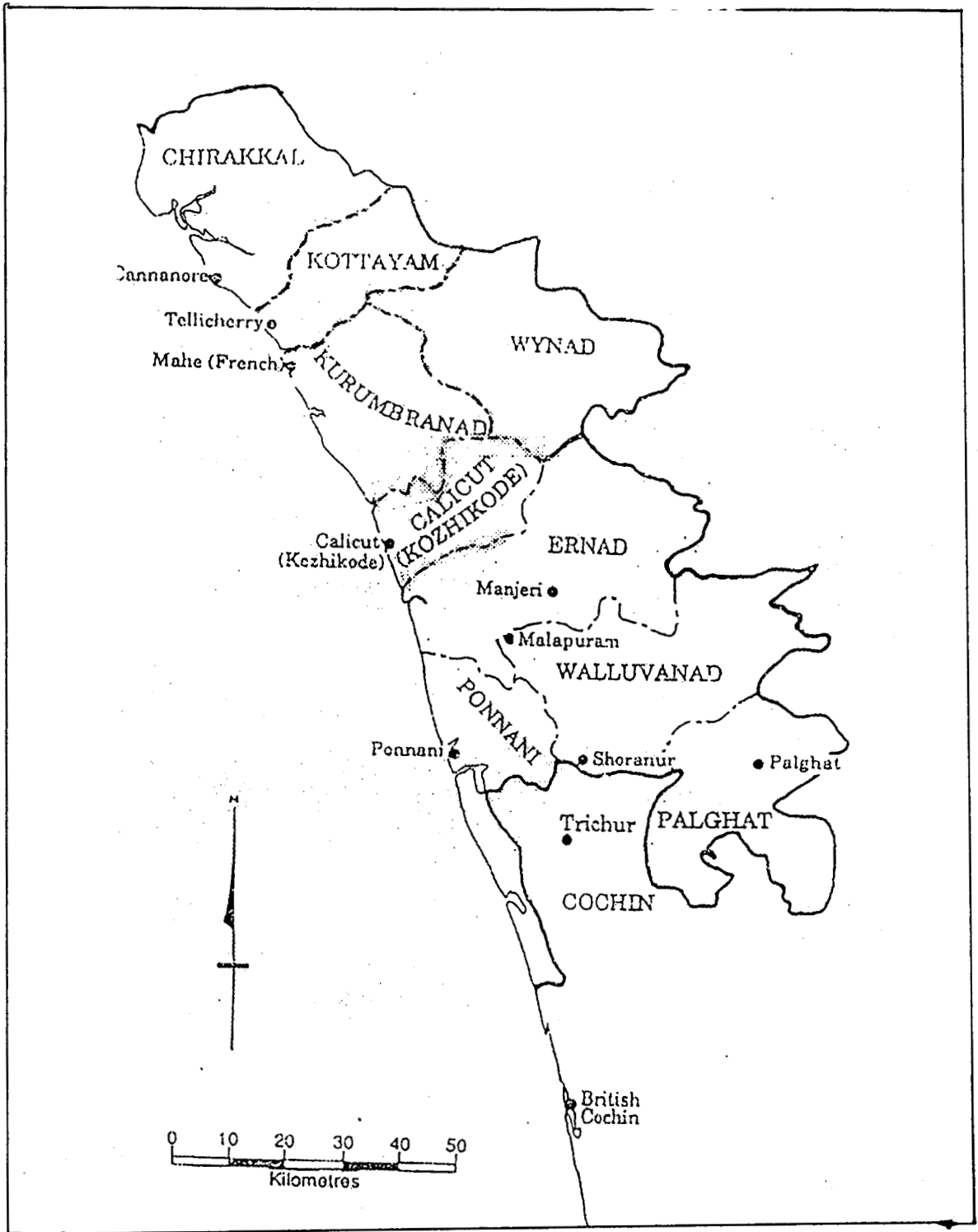


ABDURAHIMAN WITH R.SANKAR



MUHAMMED ABDURAHIMAN WITH VOLUNTEER CAPTAIN.  
SARDAR CHANDROTH KUNHIRAMAN NAIR.

0.52/E



Map Malabar District in 1930s

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**GLOSSARY**

# GLOSSARY

- Al-Ameen (Arabic) – The truthful; the loyal; title of Prophet  
Muhammed
- Amsom (Malayalam) – Smallest revenue administrative division
- Fasik – Scoundrel.
- Fatwa (Ara.) – Legal decision of a recognized Muslim  
jurist or scholar
- Hadith (Ara.) – Sayings or traditions of the Prophet.
- Hajj (Ara.) – Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca
- Jatha (Mal.) – A procession on feet.
- Jenmi (Mal.) – landlord who possessed absolute  
ownership in the land during British  
period.
- Jihad (Ara.) – Holy war
- Kafir (Ara.) – Infidel.
- Kanakkar – Kanamdar (Mal.) – one who hold land on kanam tenure
- Kanam (Mal.) – Land tenure based on mortgage or lease
- Khilafath (Ara.) – Rule led by Khalifa or Caliph; in India  
the movement to restore this office
- Kodikuth (Mal.) – A ritualistic observance at the grave of a  
holy man

- Kovilakam (Mal.) – Palace.
- Maqam (Ara.) – Tomb
- Marumakkathayam (Mal.) – Matrilineal system of inheritance practised in Kerala by certain groups among the Muslims and the Hindus.
- Maulavi- Moulavi (Ara.) – A title of respect for a Muslim religious teacher; now also a degree
- Melcharth (Mal.) – Over lease
- Mukthiar (Persian) – Power of attorney
- Mulla (Ara.-Mal.) – Islamic teacher in Madrassa (Muslim religious schools in Malabar)
- Musaliar (Ara.- Mal.) – Muslim religious priest
- Nercha (Mal.) – Rituals and celebration conducted at the tomb of a saint
- Namaz (Persian) – Prayer performed by the Muslims
- Pattakudiyan (Mal.) – One who is a tenant-at-will
- Pattam (Mal.) – Rent
- Polichezuttu (Mal.) – Renewal of tenancy right
- Qazi (Ara.) – Religious or judicial head
- Rabi-ul-Awwal (Ara.) – Third month in the Hijrah Calendar; the month in which Prophet Muhammed was born.

- Ramzan (Ara.) – Nineth month in the Hijrah Calendar
- Sayyid (Ara.) – Descendant of Prophet Muhammed
- Shahid (Ara.) – Martyr.
- Taluk (Persian) – A revenue sub-division of a district
- Tangal – Thangal – Honorific title among Mappilas on person claiming descent from Prophet Muhammed and respected as such
- Thiyyas (Mal.) – A caste group belonging to the backward category
- Ulama (Ara.) – The learned doctors of Islamic theology; plural form of the term '*Alim*.'
- Verumpattam (Mal.) – Ordinary lease for a year; tenancy-at-will
- Zakat (Ara.) – The legal alms from the property of a Muslim.

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# **APPENDICES**

Table I  
**Composition of Population of Malabar District, 1921**

Taluk	Hindus	Mappilas
Calicut	1,96,435	88,393
Chirakkal	25,498	87,337
Ernad	1,63,328	2,37,402
Kottayam	1,75,048	55,146
Kurumbranad	2,59,799	96,463
Palghat	3,15,432	47,946
Ponnani	2,81,155	2,29,016
Walluvanad	2,59,979	1,33,919
Wayanad	67,845	14,252

Source: Census Report, Madras Presidency, 1921, p.350.

Table II

Table showing the number of Mappilas in Port Blair in 1924

Names of Villages	No. of Mappila Houses	No. of Cases in which families have been brought	No. of cases in which applications for families have been made
Muslim Busti	39	2	26
Herbertabad	29	5	20
Forbhang	22	--	2
Hashinatabad	25	--	2
Hobbeyapore	6	3	--
Rangochan	4	--	--

} Purely  
Mappila  
Villages

Source: Report of M. Kunhiraman Nayar, Special Officer for Andamans, Port Blair submitted to the Secretary to Government, Law Department, dt. 18<sup>th</sup> April 1924 (Regional Archives, Calicut).



loan. Ere this letter I hope you might have sent me the required money. For a time until Martial Law regime, we fear that nothing can we get from Sub Comdtees.

The enlistment of members had already began, but has now been stopped on account of the disturbances.

Please send me the Khilafat receipts as I had required and given a list in an earlier letter.

I have not yet received the price list of books sent to me by Railway parcel which I have already taken delivery of.

My quarterly budget, an approximate estimate is being sent in a separate cover.

Did you receive my telegraphic message concerning the Malabar outbreak? Please send me a reply.

*J. B. ...*  
*12.9.25*

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

No. 1426 C

S.F. 410.

From the Special Branch, Criminal Investigation Department.

Dated 20th September 1921.

Chief Secretary—

T(2) [The following is a copy of a letter from Mohamed Abdur Rehman, Provincial Khilafat Committee, Calicut to the Secretary, Central Khilafat Committee, Bombay.]

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[The following is an account of the unhappy event in Malabar:-

T(2) The original tragedy can be traced to the unfortunate feelings which existed in Coonad and Valluwanad Taluks between the Ghemis, mostly Hindus, and tenants, mostly Muslims. Government almost always siding the Ghemis against the tenants could now easily complicate the question with the Khilafat movement; and thus we see in the case of Nilamboor and their tenants. Mr. Thomas and his police officers show an unusual energy on oppressing the Muslims of Pookatur and the neighbourhood with the aid of Nilambur Zemindars and some Avigusli.]

On the 19th August at about 8 p.m. I came to know that Messrs. Thomas, Hitchcock, and Amoo with a posse of Reserve Police and military were proceeding to Podighat near Malapuram, and in the neighbourhood of Pokatur to arrest some 50 persons and that these persons, though they were members of the Khilafat Committee, were not going to yield

At that time Mr. T.V. Mahomed, the Khilafat Secretary for Ornad Taluk, was with me in the office. I at once wrote two letters to Ali Musaliar and Thayyal Mohamed Kutti Moulvi at Thiruvangady begging them to proceed to Podiyat and pacify the people, prepare those to be arrested to abide by law and imbibe them with the spirit of non-violent non-co-operation, gave these letters to Mr. T.V. Mahomed and sent him by 9-30 train to Thiruvangady.

Having further news of the elaborate preparations of the police and military, I went to Mr. M.P. Kesava Menon the Secretary of the Provincial Congress Committee, and asked him to go with me to Podiyat at once.

As Mr. Kesava Menon told me that it was not safe to go for him or Messrs. Gopala Menon, Madhava Nair or Moideen Koya and that it was enough if myself with a moulvi go, failing to get a car E. Moideen Musaliar, A.P. Moideen Koya a Khilafat volunteer and myself proceeded in jukta to Podiyat some 30 miles away from here at about 1-30 a.m. via Kundotti.

We reached Aruvangad Khilafat office about a mile this side of Podiyat and speaking to some of the persons supposed to be arrested found that most of them were prepared to abide by the mandate of the Khilafat Committee, and that a few were still in doubt whether they were to oppose the unjust action of the Government or not. One Moideen Kutty Kajeraravangura Khilafat Secretary and also one of those supposed to be arrested promised me on the spot that they will keep peace and go to jail cheerfully if it is the command of the Khilafat Committee. Then he himself sent for unruly elements and also to Podiyat for the people of that place to assemble where we were intending to be addressed by the moulvi and myself, particularly on the non-violent side of non-co-operation, unfortunately no meeting could take place.

When we were still talking to those who were on the spot news was brought that the police and military

surrounded the Thirumangady mosque to arrest Ali Musaliar and others, had fired at a mosque and killed and wounded many. The bearer of the news told those present that they ought at once to go to Thirumangady to help their brethren. It was 1-30 p.m. The people who had already shown some sign of anxiety and resentment at the sight of a few English soldiers passing before the Khilafat office in buses with ammunition lorry and guns now seemed to be fretting to be on the scene of action to avenge the insult thrown upon the Islamic sentiment by firing at the mosque. Having got the news of trouble at Thirumangady what we tried to do was to stop spreading of the infection. We tried to appease the people on the spot telling them that this was not a time for armed insurrection. However I got a promise from them that none of them would rush to Thirumangady until I get down Mr. Madhavan from Mangeri about 8 miles off.

I sent Moidoo Musaliar to Podighat to see body goes from there and implicate themselves in trouble. Then I went to Mangeri and returned with Mr. Madhavan Nair at about 7 p.m. Mr. Musaliar also had returned with a promise from the people at Podiyat that they will remain peaceful. At that time very wild rumours had reached the place concerning the demolition of the mosque, many deaths and arrests. Our prevention of the people seemed to be futile for a moment but before leaving the place Hoideen Kutty Hajee informed us that he had succeeded in quieting the people and sending them also. We left Aravangara at about 9 p.m. and reached Calicut early in the morning.

Soon after reaching Calicut Moidoo Moulvi and myself started with Kesava Menon, Gopala Menon and others to Timugady via Kondolhi in a car arranged by Kesava Menon. His hearing the news of the previous day's troubles. This was on the morning of the 21st on reaching Kondotti we received news that the D.M. and the military had left

Thirumangady. Mr. J.V. Mohammad who came there from Thirumangady related to us the previous day's happenings follows:-

He reached Thirumangady from Calicut directly and had sent him at about 2 a.m. on the 20th. On reaching the place he showed my letter to Ali Musaliar and was told by the latter that they can proceed to Podyat early in the morning. He straight away went and slept at Kigapelli, the mosque surrounded by military. When he got up for Subhi Namaz i.e., morning prayers, the mosque was surrounded by the military and <sup>Reserve</sup> police. The people were let into the mosque for Namaz but those who got in were not allowed to go out. At about 7-30 a.m. Mr. Amoo with a Muslim Head Constable went and searched the said mosque for arms but could see none. Yet the people were not let out till after 11 o'clock. By this time the police and military had searched some of the houses in the bazaar, entered the Khilafat office, took away the flag, broke the sign board and charka, arrested 3 persons and retired to the local Magistrate's Court. The military had been guarding either side of the road. The news of the military incursions spreading like wild fire, a large crowd of the people had gathered near the mosque after the military had retired from the mosque premises. [Thayyil Mohammed Kutti Moulvi addressed the gathering on the need of keeping faith to the letter of non-violence and dispersed the crowd for the moment at about 1 o'clock, a large crowd of people coming from Tariloor and other places were fired at by the military without warning on the road west of Court. Still the people in the town were calm at about 2 p.m. Ali Musaliar came out presumably to demand the release of his 3 arrested friends. The crowd was quite unarmed except few knives which people generally used to have with them. The crowd was stopped by the military guarding the Eastern Road and questioned what they wanted. To which they said they wanted only the release of their friends.]

T(2)

then they were asked to sit down and said that their friends will be soon released. The people obeyed and seated themselves on the road. A volley of shots were sent at the seated crowd with absolutely no warning of any kind. The infuriated mob rushed pell mell into the military lines and killed two Europeans and 2 or 3 Reserve men with their hands and knives. Of the people about 20 were killed and 30 wounded. The military and the police afterwards retired to the premises of the Magistrate's Court and spent the night there. He also said the rumour that the mosque was fired at was false.

We were told that a large body of people had gone to Nilambur Kovilam from Podiyat, Aravankara and other places. We therefore decided to proceed to Nilambur to stop if possible any violence occurring there. But the road being blocked by felling avenue trees and the bridges being broken up we could not go forward more than 2 or 3 miles from Kundotty towards Nilambur. We therefore returned to Kundotty and thence proceeded to Thirumangady 8 miles off through a very rugged country and reached there at about 6 o'clock. We were told by many the same story as Mr. Mohammad's related above. On the way thither we got the news that the D.M. and the military had gone from Thirumangady to Parapanangady 4 miles west. We also were told that at Parapanangady people had gathered round the Munsiff's Court while the D.M. and the military were there and the magistrate and company returned to Calicut through the railway line which had already been destroyed, keeping a continuous fire at the mob that followed them. The number of the dead and wounded from the crowd that followed the officers up to Kundabundy (is not known). From Thirumangady we learned and partly saw the destruction done by the mob's fury. On the 20th itself many breaches were made on the railway line on either side of Parapanangady between Karalundy and Thanur and telegraph wires were cut. On

the 21st the mob set fire to the Sub Magistrate's Court, Sub Registrar's Office, and the village Munsiff's Court at Thirumangady and the Munsiff's Court at Parapanangad. We returned to Kundotty at about 12 in the night and reached Calicut in the morning of the 22nd.

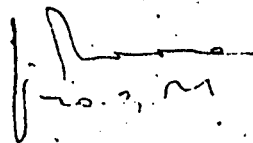
( We received news of the spreading of the troubles to Manjeri, Malapuram, Nilambur and other places and hoping that we may be able to do something towards pacification, Mr. Kesava Menon wrote to the District Magistrate for permission to go to the disturbed areas and got it on the eve of the 26th. Messrs. Kesava Menon, Gopala Menon, Moidin Moulvi, Thayyil Mohammad Cutty, Moulvi Moideen Koya and myself with some others started straight away to Thirumangady early on the 25th.

On our way, in spite of having a letter of permit, from the District Magistrate and the Officer Commanding Malabar area, the Reserve Police placed at Feroke Bridge to guard it since the declaration of martial law on the 22nd abused us most vulgarly. Some of us were ill-treated, the khadar caps being taken and torn the notice calling upon people to be peaceful being taken away and many other sorts of insults ~~being~~ heaped upon us. On the way also at Thirumangady, we met many groups of people who upon our request generally consented to be peaceful. But a small section who seemed to be determined to resist the authorities even at the risk of their lives and arguing that the troubles having risen it is preferable to them to die as men and not be inhumanely tortured and shot to death like dogs is not negligible.

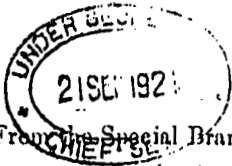
Having reached Thirumangady we placed before the people the necessity of being peaceful and also the horrors of the military regime in case of resistance being offered and left the place at about 8 p.m. taking with us a Hindu Sub Registrar and his family. We had visited the scene of action and the destroyed public buildings and one or two private houses. On our way back we visited

different villages where Muslims and Hindus had jointly

decided to defend their village from any incursion of the looters. We even addressed one of the like meetings attended by both Hindus and Muslims and requested them to be peaceful in spite of any provocation and also keep to Hindu Muslim unity, thus advising the people throughout our way. We returned and reached Calicut at about 8 p.m. on the 17th. On the day we started from here the military had already begun operations. We thought it useless to make any more of the like attempts. Since the beginning of the Military affairs have taken quite a different turn and unfortunately we can't get any authentic news. Reports are coming of people of all sorts going on looting throughout the disturbed area. A few conversions of Hindus into Islam we also reported, but we don't know if any one of them was out of force. However there is much scarcity and both Hindus and Muslims are famished, the former being looted by the mobs and the latter in turn being looted by the military. Many arrests and much military atrocities are also reported. However the trouble seems to subside gradually under military pressure. May God give us peace and strength. We leave the rest to Him who is wiser than any of us.



STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.



No. 1425 C

S.F. 410.

From the Special Branch, Criminal Investigation Department,

Dated 20th September 1921.

Chief Secretary—

(13)  
[The following are copies of letters forwarded by Yako  
Hasan, Madras to the Superintendent, Central Khilafa  
mittee, Bombay.]

\*\*\*\*\*

Kerala Provincial Khilafat  
Committee,  
Calicut, 2nd September 1921.

Hazrath,

(13)  
I have known through the "Hindu" that you are aware  
of the unfortunate happenings in Malabar and also that  
your offer to Lord Willingdon has been refused. My tele-  
graph messages, it seems, are held up. I am now sending  
you and the Central Khilafat Officer statements of facts  
as we ourselves have seen and heard which we believe are  
true. I have no more to add than what is given in the  
statement itself. There is no defence of the conduct of  
the people, but much can be said against the wild accusa-  
tions propagated by the opposite party. All the miscon-  
ducts, lootings and other atrocities are attributed to  
Mappillas alone. This is not the fact when truth is one  
day vindicated you will see what share of the scandal  
should go to them. I know instances of Hindus, Thiyyars  
and others carrying on a regular campaign of looting.]

These will come out when a regular enquiries committee sit and go through the details of events. May I thank you for all that you did at Tanjore for Kerala. I hope you will be doing all in your power to alleviate the miseries which we see coming in the track of the martial law regime which I pray God Almighty to end soon.

I am, Hazrath,

Yours ever obediently,

Sd/- Md. Abdul Rahiman.

To,

Jana<sup>Y</sup> Yakoob Hassan Sait Sahib, Madras.

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Kerala Provincial Khilafat  
Committee,  
Calicut, 3rd September 1921.

Hazrath,

My yesterday's letter might have you ere this. We, Kesava Menon, W.Gopala Menon and myself, had prepared a statement of which I had written to you, but Mr. Kesava Menon himself now objects to its being sent to anybody on the ground that it may come under the regulation No. 12 of part one of the third proclamation made here under martial law. Hence we cannot keep you well informed of the happenings here. However Mr. Prakasham is here with us and you can study the situation more or less accurately on his return to Madras. I appeal to you once again to raise some relief fund and also to recommend our case to the Central Khilafat Committee to render us some help towards lessening the miseries of those unhappy people in Ernad and other devastated places.

I remain, Hazrath,

Yours obediently,

Sd/- Md. Abdul Rahman.

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Kerala Provincial Khilafat  
Committee,  
Calicut, 7th September 1921.

Hazrath,

I hope you are in receipt of my two letters, the

7/23

last of which telling that I am withholding the statements prepared by us. However I am sending you a copy and at the same time request you not to give it to the press, because I don't know whether it may not come under Martial Law regulations. However I am sending it to give you an idea how matters developed into the present state. Unfortunately the Muslims have alienated Hindu sympathy. Even the Congress workers seem to have taken in their minds that the military regime should not be ended soon for fear of Hindus being molested. The military is reported to fire Muslim houses and loot Muslim shops and give away the samans to Hindus. Reports of very horrible atrocities which I don't mention for want of authenticity are reaching us. For God's sake, for the sake of these wretched Muslims try your best to stop this martial law regime. I promise that we may give guarantee to any Hindu that we shall see that no Hindu will be molested if military is withdrawn. The Congress seems to give relief only to Hindus. Will you not do something to relieve the poor innocent Muslim women and children. Please recommend us to the Central Khilafat Committee and get us some relief.

Yours most obediently,

Sd/- Md. Abdul Rahman.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

No. 1467 C

S.F. 410-1.

From the Special Branch, Criminal Investigation Department,

Dated 26th September 1921.

Chief Secretary—

[ A copy of a letter dated the 13th September 1921, from Muhammad Abdul Rehman, Kerala Provincial Khilafat Committee Calicut, to the Superintendent, Central Khilafat Committee, Bombay, is submitted in continuation of this office Note No 1426/C/S.F.410, dated the 20th September 1921. ]

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Kerala Provincial Khilafat Committee

Calicut, 13th September 1921.

Hazrath,

Moulana Shaukat Ali asks me to send if necessary a messenger to give correct information. Unfortunately a Muslim cannot go out of Calicut without a pass to travel by train, and a Hindu I find none trustworthy to undertake the trouble. Such being the situation I have informed you of whatever I have to say through letter which I believe is generally censored still I venture to state what I hear and believe to be true.]

[ Appalling news of military reprisals are reaching. I have authentic information that about 130 houses of Muslims have been burnt down leaving the houses of anti-non-co-operators marked "Not to be destroyed". In other places also burning has taken place. Looting by military houses and

TCW

49

shops and giving away the samans to Hindus is the rule rather than exception. Worse news still of Muslim women being violated is harrowing us. It is said dead bodies of Muslim women clapping their sucking baby on bosom are found in the river below Thirurangudi and believed to have drowned to avoid military violations. Ruin and devastation is everywhere. The police at this moment after the military has left a place after its complete ruin goes to the place and take away what little is left to the poor helpless women. No adult Muslim is let alone, either he is shot or arrested. Many women and children suffer privation. We have asked for permission to send aid to the disturbed areas. I hope you will as soon as you receive my letter send to me whatever your committee decides to send us for relief.

TCW

[Yesterday Mr. Muleamad Schamnad, M.L.A. visited me and in the course of our talk he told me of his interview with Mr. Thomas who told him that he is determined to destroy all Mappillas upon which the M.L.A. said that he is one of them. Then Mr. Thomas exempted the Mappillas of north. Please help us, ask others also to help us.

I am in receipt of your railway parcel of books but am awaiting your price list. I also got yesterday the two insured parcels and the receipts are quite in accordance with your list. They are worth in all Rs. 5750/-. I am wiring today for a thousand rupees since I did not yet get the thousand you telegraphed to me.

Will you please tell me whether you have received my statement about the events in outbreak here? Please say whether you have received it or not.

Awaiting your early reply.

Fraternally yours,

Sd/- Md. Abdur Rahman.



STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

No. 1560 C

S.F. 410-1.

From the Special Branch, Criminal Investigation Department.

Dated 6th October 1921.

Chief Secretary—

A copy of a letter dated the 25th September 1921 from  
Md. Abdul Rehman, Kerala Provincial Khilafat Committee,  
Calicut to Yakub Hasan, Bombay, is submitted for informa-  
tion.

CONFIDENTIAL

Kerala Provincial Khilafat Committee,

Calicut, 25/9/1921.

Hazrath,

As you have not replied to any of my letters I don't  
know whether all the letters addressed to you to Madras  
have reached you. Moulana Shaukat Ali had promised me to  
allot a certain amount from the Central Khilafat Committee  
for Kerala Relief Fund and entrust its administration to  
you. As Moulana has been arrested and Rs.10,000/- has  
been sanctioned by the Central Khilafat Committee and as I  
learn from "Hindu" that you have taken up your permanent  
lodge at Central Khilafat Committee office, I have to re-  
quest you that you will not send the money all here at  
once since Mr. Rajagopala Achari's request to go to the  
disturbed areas to give relief to the sufferers has been  
virtually refused by the Government of Madras, it seems im-  
possible to render any aid in these regions until the mar-

tial

pp 24  
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D

107

regime is ended, therefore I request that you will do well to withhold the money for the time being for very good reasons. I doubt the honesty of the Government in Malabar for Rs.1000/- was sent to me on the 10th instant by T.M.O. and that money has not yet been delivered to me, perhaps to put up us the Khilafat workers under an economic blockade. I am very badly in need of money and have sent many letters and telegrams asking them in the Central Khilafat Committee office to send me another 1000 through the agency of Saith Chotani's or some other firm in Bombay which has agency here also, and reclaim the same thousand from the office of issue. As my treasury is completely drained I would request you to expedite sending me one thousand rupees through the agency of some trustworthy firm or sending it to Mr. Gopala Menon c/o Khilafat, Madras and in either case please inform me by wire.

Mr. Komu Menon and his family of 33 members who had been reported to be the victims of forced conversion are still Mairs. [Kerala has come to a complete deadlock. We pray God that this martial regime be ended at an early date so that we may resume work. From the 19th August propaganda, both Khilafat and Congress, has been completely stopped. The Mappilla riot has given the last chance to the police to tyrannise over the Khilafat workers throughout Kerala and I regret to state that the prolongation of martial law is not producing a very good moral effect.]

Another word I have to say concerning myself. I learnt from the "Hindu" that the Jamiatul Ulama and the Central Khilafat Committee have accepted civil disobedience. You know that I am one of Moulana Muhammad Ali's students and I especially placed under the circumstances as I am at present would prefer to offer civil disobedience and suffer as my Moulana is. But as I am the Secretary of the Provincial Committee and the prospect of another competent person coming forth to take up my place seems rather gloomy, I would like to be advised by you. According to the Dis

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to Govt treas  
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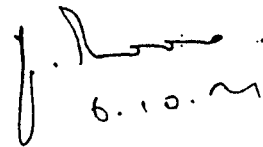
*T (W)*

Magistrate's orders I am not to leave the Calicut Municipal area. I don't think it advisable in Malabar today to ask any committee to offer civil disobedience as advised in the Central Khilafat Committee's resolution. But personally I am prepared and I can do it without producing any violence. I hope and request for your counsel advise.

I am, Nazrath,

Yours fraternally,

Sd/- Md. Abdul Rehman.

  
6.10.21



cause trouble.

I apprehend much greater calamities to befall the Muslims of the disturbed area. Mr. Clark's answer to Raza Ali in the Council of State that the martial law administration will have to be strictly observed and the preparations here made by the authorities give room to believe that a wholesale massacre of the Mappilla community in the disturbed areas is not improbable. The pity of it is that the innocent women and children are also seem to be made victims of shot and shell. The authorities here are forcibly carrying away the whole Hindu population of these areas to Calicut and giving them relief here while Muslim women and children who attempt to come off to Calicut are prevented. They are refused the relief we intend giving them in those areas and also they are prevented from going out and getting anything. If they are only thus prevented some may die from starvation and some may still live, but what I fear is that they are prevented from leaving places to shell them. I hope and request that you will do the necessary to see that these poor innocents are allowed egress from the areas immediately to be bombed.)

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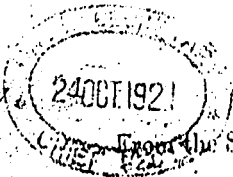
Many are suffering here now simply because they are Muslims. 18 Muslim teachers are reported to have been dismissed from Ponnani Board School saying they are Mappilla and Philanthropists.

I believe you will take immediate steps to see women and children saved from shot and shell for which I believe they are not allowed to leave those areas.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

1695

No. S.P. 410-1.



From the Special Branch, Criminal Investigation Department,

Dated 24th October 1921.

Chief Secretary—

[Copy of a letter dated 14th October 1921 from Muz  
Abdul Rehman, Kerala Provincial Khilafat Committee, Cal  
to Yakub Hassan, Bombay, is submitted.]

Kerala Provincial Khilafat Committee  
Calicut, 14/10/21.

You may be surprised to hear that about four t  
sand refugees are being fed and lodged at Calicut. Of  
these only about 1200 are under our care while about 3  
are cared by the Government party. Most of them are  
people fled from the disturbed areas out of Sheerpaine  
and written to you about the molestation of Hindus by  
las and I have got reliable information which proves t  
the recent troubles at Shanur and other places have r  
from the police arrests and the Hindus helping the pol  
and that the Moplas in revenging have maltreated only  
Hindus who took part in looting and arresting Moplas  
houses and persons. But those localitiss are wholly  
deserted by Hindus now.

[One special feature of the influx of the refugees  
here is the utter absence of a single muslim woman or  
child. Certainly Muslim families both those of the

*Handwritten notes:*  
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revised  
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was in  
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*Handwritten notes:*  
M. S. S.

are now engaged in warfare and also of those who are arrested either taking part in the troubles or for taking part in the Khilafat movement which number above 2800 are in a miserable state Muslim's women and children are not allowed to leave the areas seeking relief. Hearing that Muslim women and children intending to come off to Calicut seeking relief I had addressed a letter to Mr. E.F. Thomas, requesting him to instruct the police and military authorities not to obstruct Muslim women and children leaving those areas seeking relief and also to permit me to send a few persons to fetch the sufferers here. This letter I am sending to the press seeing no reply I have sent him a reminder yesterday. Besides addressing the Collector on the subject I visited a few of the leading Muslims and represented *and requested them* the gravity of the situation before them to approach the Collector and devise some <sup>an</sup> means to relieve the distressed Muslims. I don't think that any one of them will dare to approach him since I am ashamed to say that they are mortally afraid to tell the Collector that they want to relieve the wives and children of the rebels. It is pitiable to hear the heart-rending news of the sufferings of the Muslim women and children who are left to the tender mercies of the police, military and Thiyys. While Hindus are taken care of both by Government and ourselves Muslims are not allowed to receive even the little help any one may render them.

I hope and request you will move in this matter and see that innocent lives are not left to be starved and butchered.

Thinking of wiring to the Viceroy the position of the

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*This is precisely what they did in relief camps arranged at Quilaut in N. Malabar*

*Abdullah*  
22-20

22  
T(b)

women and children and the obstructions laid in their way  
of receiving relief and seeing whether permission will be  
granted to save the innocent lives, but unfortunately I  
haven't got money even for necessity and I am sorry to  
I am deterred from doing much for lack of funds. I think  
you might have instructed Chotani's agent here to pay me  
the required sum. If not please wire to him and to me  
immediately. I am anxious to know about the miscarried  
money. I think you will not keep me in suspense any  
-er for funds.

Yours fratern.

Sd/- Md. Abdur Ha

Nothing like 1200 are being fed by  
the European Committee. a case  
have complaints of their health  
The action of two years for people  
the statement that would  
of children were for  
Please from nothing else

Returned to you

## APPENDIX II

**[Abdurahiman's appeal to the Muslims not to participate in the meeting convened by the anti-nationalist Ulama]**

### A WARNING !

Dear brothers,

Some of you might have seen a notification regarding a 'great public meeting' proposed to be convened by Puthan Veetil Kallarakkal Mohamed Alias Kunhibava and four others at Pathar, Ponnani Chunkam at 2 pm on 24<sup>th</sup> July. The meeting is convened on the pretext to prove that the Khilafat and Non-co-operation are against the principles of Islam. If the real motive of the people behind the meeting is not exposed, there is a chance of misunderstanding in the minds of the people. So some important facts are expressed here.

The notice itself proclaim that the "great meeting" is against the decisions of Jamiyyath-ul-Ulama, Nadvath-ul-Ulama, Majlis-ul-Ulama and the Kerala Majlis-ul-Ulama. The members of these groups of Ulama are having enormous knowledge of religion. The decisions taken by them are just and strictly in accordance with the injunctions of Islam. But the sponsors of the 'great meeting' at Ponnani are selfish and unpatriotic. The decisions taken by them will be incorrect and will never be a matter of concern of Islam or the Muslim community.

Besides being propagated in India, the decisions of the Nadvath-ul-Ulama are also propagated among the people of Egypt, Africa, Afghanistan and other countries. The people of these countries are also on the road of freedom struggle. In such a circumstance, you should follow the majority of

the Ulama and the Muslims. You should also strictly adhere to the Hadith [Tradition of the Prophet] in Ibn Majah that who ever went astray, will be thrown to the Hell. To follow such ambitious 'Kunhan' [little] Musaliars will be against the canons of Islam.

So as to prevent yourself from falling prey to the mischief of these sacrilegious 'Ulama', I request you not to participate in the aforesaid 'Mahayoga'.

Muhammed Abdurahiman,  
Worker of Kerala Provincial Khilafath Committee.

Source:- Ubaid, T.K., (ed.), Prabodhanam Special, Kozhikode, April, 1998, p.60. The write up is reproduced from the Khilafath Patrika, (date not given), collected from the personal library of Abdul Kareem, K.K.M., Kondotty. Photocopy is also appended.

### APPENDIX III

[Notice issued by the District Magistrate warning the people against the revival of 'Nerchas' and other congregations of the Mappilas to commemorate the martyrs of the rebellions of 1921].

#### Notice

All of you are well aware of the riots at Pukkottur and the defeat of the rebels and the assassination of many during the rebellion of 1921. The dead bodies of the rebels were buried at different parts of Pukkottur. It is known to us that some Mappilas are trying to commemorate the death of these rebels by giving some special marks on the burial places, by conducting 'Nerchas', by composing songs or by some other means. It is very clear to all of us that the Mappilas had lost their life while fighting against the Government. So they deserve punishment for their criminal offences. We put an end to the rebellion. Now all the communities of the Malabar district are living in harmony and co-operating with the Government. If the aforesaid activities are allowed it may cause unrest in the society and may create troubles to the authorities. The result will be the beginning of atrocities and tumults as had happened during the rebellion of 1921. Now it is informed that the Government has the power to deport the rebels under the Moplah Acts.

It is now declared that any one who will try to commemorate the Mappilas by conducting 'Nerchas' or by singing songs or giving special marks to their burial places will be sent to other districts under the Moplah Acts. It is the duty of every citizen to dissuade anyone who engages in such mischievous activities. Further, it is the bounden duty of the people to inform

the Government officials about this kind of preparations. If anyone fails to report, they will also be treated like the rebels under the Moplah Acts.

Office of the Malayam District Magistrate,  
Kozhikode,  
26-4-25

J.A. Thorne  
District Magistrate.

Source:- The document is from Public Department Files, Regional Archives, Calicut. Photocopy of the document is also appended.

## APPENDIX IV

**An appeal to those who are getting ready to go to the Andaman  
Protest meetings should be held in all the Muslim inhabited villages**

**The attack of the Government should be stopped**

**Message by Janab Uppi, M.L.C.**

It is known that more prisoners have been brought to Malabar to bewitch Mappila women and children to be carried to the Andaman. This is against the report by the representatives of the people like M/s Muhammed schemnad, Sayyid Murtaza Sahib and Abbas Ali. This is also opposed to the wishes of the people and the opinion of the Madras Legislative Council. So I request those who are about to go to the Andaman to demand the Government to make clear the estimation of these three distinguished personalities. In the mean time, report on the real condition of the Andaman will be published. I request those who are getting ready to go to the Andaman not to believe the words of those prisoners under the custody of the policemen and the words of the policemen themselves.

Sd/-

K.Uppi

27-11-26

The Government is now trying to dispatch the families of the prisoners by bringing convicts from the Andaman. This act disregards not only the wish of the entire Muslims of India, but also the opinion of the Members of the Legislative Council and the advice of those three among the four whom the Government had deputed to the Andaman. One group of prisoners was sent to Thamarassery and the other to Ernad while the rest was taken to Walluvanad. So what we want to tell the Muslims is that if you want

to go to the Andaman, you should be well aware of the present condition there.

We are publishing the investigation report of persons like M/s Schmand and the speeches at the Legislative Council on the Andaman issue. In order to end this offence, meetings should be convened at all places in Kerala at the earliest. A meeting will be held at the auspices of *Al-Ameen* the day after tomorrow (Tuesday) or on the next day. It will be intimated later by pamphlet.

Expect next issue of *Al-Ameen*.

Al-Ameen Press,  
Kozhikode.

Editor.

Source:- The document is from the Andaman Colonization Files, Regional Archives, Calicut. Photocopy of the document is also appended.

## APPENDIX V

[Editorial of Al-Ameen issued in connection with the Salt Satyagraha, inspiring the Muslims to sacrifice themselves for the freedom of the country].

Jihad-ul-Akbar<sup>1</sup>

If love of one's country is a part of the true faith, if Islam is a religion that extols the message of freedom, it is the duty of true Muslims to sacrifice every thing for the freedom and salvation of the mother country and renounce life in the path of God. . . The Prophets, the Khalifs and the Imams employed their valuable lives to win freedom from unrighteousness and injustice. . . If there are any among the Muslims who deride this passive resistance, they are guilty of having contravened the order of Islam. They trample under foot the crowning principles of religion. . . They are the enemies of Islam and of India. The great Prophet himself said that air, water and salt should not be taxed. A mound salt worth only three annas is taxed one rupee and four annas by the Government. What is wrong in calling this a satanic unrighteousness? As this is entirely against Islamic injunction, it is a religious duty for the Muslims to put forth all their power to do away with the salt tax. Muslims who die in the war of salt law breaking will certainly deserve compensation from God and will be blessed. . . The Muslims are crowding at all centres of warfare and Malabar Muslims are not backward. That favourite child of the Malabar Muslim community, the little flower that model for youth, Mr. Abdurahiman, is now in jail. Let the Malabar police remember that the hand laid on that valiant warrior will not be free from sin till the end of the world and from eternal torment. The hot blood that flows at Sholapur and Peshawar shows that loaded cannon, drawn swords and naked gallows will not be able to suppress this war for freedom. It is creditable for Muslims that the number of

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<sup>1</sup> The Great Holy War.

their warriors who are bold enough to sacrifice their lives for India and Islam is increasing. May this war of salt satyagraha, the war of freedom, this Jihad-ul-Akabar be victorious.

**Source:-** *Al-Ameen*, dated 6<sup>th</sup> July 1930, abstract given in the Madras Native Newspaper Report [MNNPR], July-August 1930, p. 1040. [TNA]

# APPENDIX VI

## REPORT

OF THE

### MALABAR TENANCY COMMITTEE.

DISSENTING MINUTE BY Md. ABDUR RAHIMAN SAHIB BAHADUR, M.L.A.

I am of opinion that any attempt at settlement of the tenancy question without drastic changes in the system of land tenure itself is well nigh fruitless because it is impossible to devise any means for giving the actual cultivator "full security that if he plants trees, he will be left free to gather their fruits and that if he reclaims land from the waste, he will be left free to enjoy the fruit of his labour and capital" within a system in which there are landlords and intermediaries with a right to share the fruit of the cultivators' labour and a right to evict him from his holding however well regulated these rights be. It is very well to uphold in theory the absolute right of the janmi and the long-established right of the intermediary. These rights when viewed legalistically may seem immutable. But the right of the producer to enjoy the fruits of his labour is irrefutable.

Moplah comes on the scene with this conception of man's right of enjoying the fruits of his labour as taught by his religion. He might have been economically oppressed and socially tyrannised and provoked to revolt by exasperating him under intolerable evictions and imposition of humiliating conditions. For over a hundred years now Moplah outbreaks have been disturbing the peace of this fair land, forcing the attention of the Government on the urgent necessity for tenancy legislation. Government have failed to do justice to the cultivator. The cause of this failure of the Government is attributable partly to their own capitalist mentality which led them to uphold the vested interests, partly due to the fact of the Moplah's own ignorance and illiteracy which incapacitated them from representing at proper quarters their grievances and seeking redress from oppression and tyranny of the landed aristocracy, and partly due to the fact that the local advisers of those in authority were invariably those related one way or other with landlords' interests and so naturally the tenants' interests were more misrepresented and Moplah as a matter of fact was made a fanatic and the outbreaks attributed to fanaticism. When the diagnosis is wrong, the remedy applied should miscarry and aggravate the malady. This is what has been happening in Malabar in relation between Moplah tenants and Hindu landlords.

Now naturally the question echoes back, what then is the real remedy. I can at once say that the Moplah or the South Malabar tenant does not require or seek any particular remedy or special treatment for this disease which is none other than the common disease of Indian peasantry and particularly of the cultivating tenants all over Malabar. The common disease of the peasantry, nay, the country itself is the insufficiency of the farmer. The farmer does not get enough to feed himself and his children and keep himself healthy and work efficiently and allow his children grow sturdy citizens nor are they clothed and housed properly. Then naturally the cattle cannot be expected to be fed and kept up to the standard; the cultivation deteriorates and yield decreases. When thus the agriculturist is finding himself in such a vicious circle, that is, the rural population is slowly but surely going down into ruin and gradual extinction, towns cannot grow, trade cannot flourish and industries cannot develop. In short the nation cannot advance. To avoid this national calamity the ailment of the farmer should be cured. Give him enough to eat and feed his children with and keep themselves healthy and well clothed and housed so that he may produce enough for all to eat and for commerce and industry to flourish, i.e., raise the standard of life of the agriculturist, the national standard will then raise itself. An economic planning is essential to rehabilitate the country-side and co-ordinate the commerce and industries and harmonize the growth of the entire nation in our advancement. But no economic planning will improve, by itself, without the means to carry out the plan, the standard of life of the agriculturist unless he is provided with the wherewithal to finance the scheme. Financing cannot and should not be done by the Government, but it should be made available from the land itself. Abolish landlordism and save the colossal sum of over Rs. 2½ crores flowing into the pockets of the few landlords draining both the fertility of the soil and the health of the cultivator, annually leaving behind both land and man less and less productive and efficient and make it available to the impoverished agriculturist.

Then he will improve himself, his children and cattle, effect all round improvements by employing better means and methods in agriculture and investing his saving in industries and other enterprises. There will be no need for baby weeks and health weeks, children well fed and clothed will grow happy and healthy and they will flock to schools to get educated. Dispensaries and doctors may not be so much in demand as at

present, because all may have enough of good nutritious food and so all may be healthy. All may have employment and so there may not be many robberies and thieves and less need for policing the country may be felt. This rosy picture of a happy and contented life of the agriculturist for which abolition of landlordism is the first and essential condition to be fulfilled, is not going to be realized, I know, under this Government; nor is this Committee or any such other Committee going to consider the real remedy to the extremely bad plight in which the agriculturist is finding himself in or even if forced to consider to recommend any such changes as is envisaged in the above paragraphs.

Knowing as I do that the above much needed reform cannot be effected for the present I would have certainly been happy to join the majority of my colleagues on the Committee and if possible produce an unanimous report. It is rather unfortunate that I have to express my feeling that the majority has been terribly anxious to uphold the *status quo* and in this anxiety of theirs they have even gone back upon the present Act; this retrogression of the majority is traceable in some of the most important of their recommendations touching questions of fixity of tenure, fair rent, etc., and elimination of intermediaries seems unthinkable to them. Except for the fact that the majority of the members of the Committee are either kanamdars themselves or members of kanamdar families or otherwise connected with this mostly non-producing tenure-holders, I cannot understand why their "endeavour has been as far as possible to perpetuate the existing state of things and therefore confer fixity on all real kanamdars without making any distinction between cultivating and non-cultivating kanamdars."

My colleagues can afford to be generous to their own class, the non-producing kanamdar and allow him to sit tight upon the hard-working producer and suck the poor man's blood in the name of some ancient karnavan being born to a janni or a few panams having been advanced in olden times by one of the members of the family to a janni. Should there be no end to this living on interest on money advanced by ancients? Why not the same theory of Dandapat brought in operation by the Debt Relief Act be applied to kanamdar also and he be disposed of at the earliest opportunity—then it would have been easier and simpler to reform tenancy relations. The majority who advance the argument in the case of Gudalur tenant that the investing Rs. 1,000 and recovering in 12 years Rs. 2,820 in rent "had thus recouped his capital more than twice over" do not feel the injustice of allowing the kanamdar who might have "recouped" his capital two hundred times over to continue fleecing the hard-worked, ill-fed and ill-clad cultivator. I feel that all non-cultivating kanamdars who might have received back in rent twice the amount of kanam they might have advanced might cease to receive any further rent or to have any claim to the kanam amount and the cultivating tenant should have full enjoyment of the rent thus saved. Moplabs might have been content to take kanam, but I have no doubt that they could have been "content" if at all, they were only in the inavailability of better rights just as France could now be considered "content" to acquiesce in her present plight by Germany.

The majority report is halting in so far as even waste lands and forests are concerned. They have been endeavouring to perpetuate the undesirable state of leaving vast areas of productive land being still left waste. I would suggest that any man be free to cultivate any waste land after notifying the Collector and enjoy it paying only usual assessment to Government. For this the Government may declare immediately after enacting the law all waste lands taken over by them and those who are supposed to possess them may be given the option to commence improving them within six months and complete reclamation within three years. All forests, wastes and irrigation and other water sources should be taken over by Government; and not only the timber but rich mineral resources available also should be developed and worked in national interest and should not be allowed to be exploited and gain monopolized by individuals.

I am not for compensating anybody. Neither the cultivating tenant should be asked to compensate, the non-cultivating landlord nor the Government, the jannis who claim rights over lands, forests, wastes and rivers, fish and pebbles in rivers, beasts and stones in forests and all sorts of imaginable things they claim as theirs. But nobody can seriously now think of compensating for using these rights which they had usurped from the community, and kept to themselves. If anybody is to compensate it must be jannis who have so far deprived the community the rightful use of all these.

I said that the majority report in certain respects is retrogressive. The majority seem to hold out a vision of rosy future to the tenant by seemingly conferring fixity of tenure to all. They even say that the fixity they confer is not much different from occupancy right. According to Sir Charles Turner, occupancy right though non-existent in this name was existing in practice in old Malabar, that is the tenant enjoyed an inalienable right over the land he cultivated and he built his own house on. The majority

report so circumscribe what little they confer in the name of fixity that it is highly doubtful if ever the tenant can enjoy this precious right. A tenant who fails to pay rent due in Makaram by Kumbham can be evicted even if he pays up by Medam. Thus fixity is nullified. So I suggest to change the conditions as follows:

- (1) Failure to pay the whole or part by the 30th Kanni (next) will entitle the landlord to sue for arrears.
- (2) Failure to pay in full three years' rent or partly in more time but aggregating three years' rent within a decade should make the tenant liable to furnish security.
- (3) Failure to pay the whole or any part of the rent for two consecutive years may make the tenant liable for eviction.

In the matter of eviction for *bona fide* cultivation by janni also a maximum of 20 acres must be fixed of the land alienable by janni and a minimum of 5 acres to be left over with the tenant. And a further restriction on the landlord that his family income should not be over Rs. 1,500 a year if he should be allowed to evict tenants and take to agriculture.

All kudiyruppu-holders should have occupancy right with regard to kudiyruppu and all those kudiyruppu-holders who have no other holdings in land or other immovable properties or have no income exceeding Rs. 60 per month should be exempted from rent. All kudiyruppu-holders except Ulkudi-holders should have the option of purchasing their holdings (kudiyruppus) whenever they can afford to do so without waiting the landlord's pleasure to sue him for eviction.

Ulkudi-holders also must be given fixity of tenure and if they should be evicted the landlord should be able to provide him with another site for a home.

With regard to fixing of fair rent I am sorry to say that the authors of the report have gone back even from the present Act. The Act provides 25 Palghat paras for cultivation expenses. Rao Sahib V. Krishna Menon, Calicut, Sri V. Raman Menon, Parappanangadi, Senior Raja of Amarampalam, Sri Ambalakkat Ramurthi Menon, Perintalmanna, all are for allowing four times actual seed for cultivation expenses and 5 Calicut or 7½ Palghat paras to be taken as seed actually required. These are weighty witnesses who cultivate and are not overzealous to help tenants. So I suggest cultivation expenses be taken as 30 Palghat paras and fair rent be half the net produce for wet lands. For dry lands wherever the present contract rates be lower than the fair rent based on formulæ suggested by the report, then that be fixed as fair rent.

To meet the cost of the fair rent fixing machinery only a nominal charge of annas four or so be levied on every holding from the cultivator or 5 per cent of his fair rent fixed be only collected from the tenant.

With regard to renewal and renewal fees I cannot agree with the majority. There is no reason why the tenant should be making this extra payment. If the renewal is to be made every 12 years as an acknowledgment of the overlordship, the tenant need only renew his document and whatever he pays must go to the Government in the form of stamp and fees and not to the private pocket of the landlord.

The tenant be exempted from liability to pay assessment in excess of his proportion due on his holding.

(Signed) Md. ABDUR RAHMAN.

## APPENDIX VII

[Supplement issued in connection with the publication of *Al-Ameen* stating the aims and objectives of the newspaper]

Supplement to this issue

*Al-Ameen*

The public might have heard about the registration of a company with the aim of starting a Malayalam newspaper namely *Al-Ameen*. The printing work related to this has almost completed. Our press is situated at the court road.

*Al-Ameen* royal 1/8 size, in good paper will be published from Kozhikode thrice a week (Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday). The first issue will come on *Rabi-ul-Awwal* 12<sup>th</sup>, 11/12 October 1924.

Besides the local news, articles on different subjects from the leading English, Arabic, Urdu and Tamil newspapers will be included in *Al-Ameen*. Reports on business, agriculture and education, current affairs from India and abroad, all will be covered in the newspaper.

*Al-Ameen* will be helpful especially to know the news related the Khilafat and the Congress. Those who want to read the opinions of Maulana Mohamed Ali as expressed in his *Comrade* should subscribe to *Al-Ameen*.

*Al-Ameen* published on Thursday will cover various subjects. Special features related to our nation, Islamic history and Hindu-Muslim unity will be seen. Above all these, biographies of inspiring personalities of the world, special columns for ladies, articles related to science also will be included.

*Al-Ameen* which aims at social harmony, political freedom and progress of the public, will be indispensable for peasants, merchants and

common men alike to keep themselves in touch with the current affairs, to read with pleasure and to develop their general awareness.

(Rate of subscription and tariff is also given in the supplement)

Al-Ameen Press,  
Kozhikode,  
14-9-24

Muhammed Abdurahiman

Source:- The document is located from the personal collections of Abdurahiman Kurikkal, Manjeri. Photocopy of the document is also appended.

മലബാറിൽ സാമ്രാജ്യത്വവിരുദ്ധസമരം ശക്തമായ ഘട്ടത്തിൽ, 1921 ജൂലായ് 24ന് പൊന്നാനി പാതാറിൽ ഏതാനും യാഥാസ്ഥിതികപണ്ഡിതന്മാരുടെ പിന്തുണയോടെ ബ്രിട്ടീഷുകാർ സർക്കാർ അനുകൂലികളുടെ ഒരു യോഗം വിളിച്ചുകൂട്ടാൻ തീരുമാനിച്ചു. ഇതിൽ പ്രതിഷേധിച്ച് മുഹമ്മദ് അബ്ദുർറഹ്മാൻ സാഹിബ്, മൗലവി എ. കുഞ്ഞി മുഹമ്മദ് സാഹിബ് എഡിറ്ററായിരുന്ന 'ഖിലാഫത്ത് പത്രിക'യുടെ ഒന്നാം പുസ്തകം ഒന്നാം ലക്കത്തിൽ കൊടുത്ത പ്രസ്താവനയുടെ പുർണ്ണരൂപമാണ് ചുവടെ: സമ്പാ: കെ. കെ. മുഹമ്മദ് അബ്ദുൽകരീം

# ഒരു മുന്നറിയിപ്പ് !

**പ്രിയസഹോദരങ്ങളേ,**

ഖിലാഫത്ത്, സഹകരണത്യാഗം, സായംഭരണം ഇവ മൂന്നും ഇസ്ലാംമത സിദ്ധാന്തങ്ങൾക്ക് വിരുദ്ധമായവയാണെന്ന് തെളിയിക്കുമെന്ന നാട്യത്തോടുകൂടി 1921 ജൂലായ് 24-ാം തീയതി പകൽ 2 മണിക്ക് പൊന്നാനി ചുങ്കം പാതാറിന്മേൽ ഒരു മഹാജനയോഗം കൂടുവാൻ നിശ്ചയിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു എന്ന് പുത്തൻവീട്ടിൽ കല്ലറക്കൽ മുഹമ്മദ് എന്ന കുഞ്ഞിബാവ മുതൽ നാലുപേർ ഒപ്പിട്ട് പ്രസിദ്ധപ്പെടുത്തിയിരിക്കുന്ന പരസ്യം ഇപ്പോൾ പലരും കണ്ടിരിക്കുമല്ലോ. ഈ യോഗത്തിന്റെ യഥാർഥ ക്ഷണനകാര്യങ്ങളെ ഉദ്ദേശവും പൊതുജനങ്ങളെ മുൻകൂട്ടി അറിയിക്കാതിരിക്കുന്നതായാൽ അവർക്ക് പല വിധമായ തെറ്റിദ്ധാരണകളും ഉണ്ടാവാൻ എളുപ്പമുള്ളതുകൊണ്ട് ചില പ്രധാനസംഗതികൾ മാത്രം ഇവിടെ പ്രസ്താവിക്കുന്നതാണ്.

മേൽപറഞ്ഞ 'മഹായോഗം' ഇന്ത്യയിൽ അറിയിക്കപ്പെടാതെ കൂടിയ ജംഇയ്യത്തുൽ ഉലമ, നദ്വത്തുൽ ഉലമ, മജ്ലിസുൽ ഉലമ, കേരള മജ്ലിസുൽ ഉലമ ഈ നാലു ഉലമാ സംഘങ്ങളിലും വെച്ച് സർവസമ്മതമായി പാസ്സാക്കപ്പെട്ട തീർപ്പിനും നമ്മുടെ നേതാക്കന്മാരുടെ ആലോചനയോടുകൂടിയ അഭിപ്രായങ്ങൾക്കും തീരെ വിപരീതമായിട്ടുള്ളതാണെന്ന് അതിന്റെ നോട്ടീസ്സുതന്നെ വിളിച്ചുപറയുന്നുണ്ട്. നമ്മുടെ മതകാര്യങ്ങളെ സംബന്ധിച്ച് അപാരമായ അറിവും ധാരാളമായ ലോകപരിചയവും സിദ്ധിച്ചിട്ടുള്ള ഇന്ത്യ

യിലെ അനേകായിരം മഹാന്മാർ ഒത്തൊരുമിച്ച് തീർച്ചപ്പെടുത്തിയിട്ടുള്ളതായ ഖിലാഫത്ത്, സഹകരണത്യാഗം ഇവയെ സംബന്ധിച്ച തീർപ്പുകളെ ധിക്കരിക്കുവാൻ വേണ്ടി പൊന്നാനിയിൽ വെച്ച് കൂടുവാൻ പോകുന്ന മഹായോഗം വാസ്തവത്തിൽ ഇസ്ലാംമതത്തെയോ മുസ്ലിംസമുദായത്തെയോ സരാജ് സ്നേഹമില്ലാത്ത ചില ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥന്മാരുടെയും, ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥന്മാരെ കണ്ണുചീമ്മി ഭ്രമിപ്പിക്കുന്നവരുടെയും സ്വന്തമായ ഓരോ അഭിപ്രായത്തെ സഹജമാക്കുവാൻ മാത്രമാണെന്ന് മനുഷ്യരുടെ സാമന്ത്ര്യത്തെയും സ്വാഭാമതത്തെയും നിലനിർത്തുവാൻ കാക്ഷിക്കുന്ന ഏവനും സമ്മതിക്കുന്നതായിരിക്കും. ശരിയായ വാദപ്രതിവാദം നടത്തി രണ്ടുഭാഗവും കേട്ട് വിഹിതമായി തീർപ്പുകൽപിക്കേണ്ടതായ എത്രയും ഗൗരവമേറിയ നമ്മുടെ മതകാര്യം ചിലരിലുള്ള അതിരറ്റ ഭ്രമംകൊണ്ടോ ചിലരുടെ ഭീഷണിയെ മറന്നോ മതജ്ഞാനികളെന്ന് തന്നത്താൻ നടിച്ചു തെളിയുന്ന രണ്ടോ, നാലോ ആളുകളുടെ അഭിപ്രായത്തിന് അനുസരിച്ച് തീർച്ചപ്പെടുത്തുന്നതായാൽ ആ തീർപ്പ് എത്രത്തോളം ശരിയായിരിക്കുമെന്ന് ആർക്കും ഊഹിക്കാവുന്നതാണല്ലോ. അത് ഇസ്ലാംമതത്തിനോ മുസ്ലിംസമുദായത്തിനോ ഒരു കാലത്തും ബാധകമായിരിക്കുന്നതുമല്ല.

മേൽപറഞ്ഞ പ്രകാരം നദ്വത്തുൽ ഉലമ മുതലായ സംഘങ്ങളിൽ തീർച്ചപ്പെടുത്തി ഇന്ത്യയിൽ പ്രചരിപ്പിച്ചുവരുന്നതിനു

പുറമെ മിസ്ർ, ആഫ്രിക്ക, മറ്റു ദേശങ്ങൾ, ആഫ്ഗാനിസ്താൻ മുതലായ രാജ്യങ്ങളിലെ മുസ്ലിംസമുദായങ്ങളും സമ്മതിച്ച് അധികാരം നിലനിർത്താൻ യത്നിച്ചുവരുന്നുണ്ട്. കാര്യം ഇങ്ങിനെയിരിക്കെ ഉലമാക്കളിൽനിന്നും മുസ്ലിമിങ്ങളിൽ നിന്നുമുള്ള ഭൂരിപക്ഷത്തെ നിങ്ങൾ തുടർന്നുകൊള്ളണം. ഏവൻ പിന്തിരിഞ്ഞു നിന്നുവോ അവൻ പിരിഞ്ഞ് നരകത്തിലും കടക്കേണ്ടിവരും എന്ന് ഇബ്നുമാജയിലുള്ള ഹദീസിനെ നിങ്ങൾ മുറുകെപ്പിടിക്കുവിൻ. ഇവിടങ്ങളിലുള്ള ഗവൺമെന്റിനെ സർവഥാ യേശ്വകയും അവരുടെ സ്ഥാനമാനങ്ങളെ ഇച്ഛിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്ന പ്രമാണികളെയും കുഞ്ഞൻമുസ്ലിമാരെയും ഇക്കാര്യത്തിൽ തുടരുന്നത് ശർഇന് തീരെ വിരോധമാകുന്നു.

അതുകൊണ്ട് മുസ്ലിംസഹോദരന്മാരായ മതസ്നേഹികൾ ആരും മതദേശികളായ അൽഫാ ഫിലി മുബ്ബരയികളുടെ പിറ്റിലും പകിട്ടിപ്പറും മൗദിനി തന്റെ സന്ദർഭമായ നിവൃത്തിയും വിവൃത്തിയും വിറ്റുതിന്നാതെയും ഇവിടാൻ 'മേപ്പടി മഹായോഗം'ത്തിൽ പങ്കുകൊള്ളുകയോ, അതിൽ അടിച്ചുവീശുന്ന വിഷവായു ഏൽക്കുകയോ ചെയ്യാതിരിപ്പാൻ പ്രത്യേകം അപേക്ഷിക്കുന്നു.

മുഹമ്മദ് അബ്ദുർറഹ്മാൻ  
കേരള സംസ്ഥാന  
ഖിലാഫത്ത് പ്രവർത്തകൻ

# നെട്ടിസ്സ്.



1921-ലെ ലഹളക്കാലത്തു പൂക്കോട്ടൂർ വെച്ച ഒരു പോരാട്ടം നടന്നതും അതിൽ ലഹളക്കാർ ശോററുപോയ്ക്കും അവാരിൽ പലരേയും കൊന്നതും എല്ലാവർക്കും അറിയാം. അവർ മരിച്ച സ്ഥലത്തിനടുത്തു, പൂക്കോട്ടൂരിൽ പലേ പ്രദേശങ്ങളിലായി, ആ പോരാട്ടത്തിൽ മരിച്ചവരുടെ മയ്യത്തുകൾ മറച്ചെടുത്തു. അവരെ മറച്ചെടുത്ത സ്ഥലങ്ങൾക്ക് പ്രത്യേക അടയാളങ്ങൾ കൊടുത്തോ, സ്റ്റാൻഡിംഗായി അതാതുകാലത്തു നെട്ടി മുതലായ ക്രിയകൾ നടത്തിയോ, പാട്ടുകൾ കെട്ടിയോ, മറ്റു വിധത്തിലോ, അവരുടെ മരണത്തെ സ്റ്റാൻഡിംഗായിത്തീർക്കുവാനായി, മുറുന്മാരായ ചില മാപ്പിളമാർ ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്നുണ്ടെന്നു നമുക്കു അറിവായിരിക്കുന്നു. സർക്കാരിനോടു പോരാടുന്ന സമയത്താണ് ഇവർ മരിച്ചതു എന്നു എല്ലാവർക്കും നല്ലവണ്ണം അറിയാം. അതിനാൽ അവർ ക്രിമിനൽകററങ്ങൾക്കു ശിക്ഷായോഗ്യന്മാരും ആയിരുന്നു. ലഹള ഇല്ലായ്മയ്ക്കു മലയാളിപ്പിള്ളിലെ എല്ലാ സമുദായങ്ങളും ഇപ്പോൾത്തൊഴിച്ചു സെന്ററൽത്തൊടുക്കിയും സർക്കാരിനോടു യോജിച്ചും കാലയാചനം ചെയ്തുവരുന്നു. ഈ ലഹളക്കാരുടെ ഓർമ്മയെ മേൽവീവരിച്ചവിധത്തിൽ നിർത്തിപ്പോരവാൻ അനുവദിക്കുന്നതായാൽ, അതിന്റെ ഫലം, വിവിധസമുദായങ്ങൾ തമ്മിൽ ഈർപ്പുതയുണ്ടാവുകയും അധികാരധീനത്തിലിരിക്കുന്നവരെ അസഹ്യപ്പെടുത്തുകയും, ലഹളക്കാർ പെരുമാറിയ മാതിരി നടക്കുകയാണ് തങ്ങൾക്ക് നല്ലതെന്ന് ഒരു വിശ്വാസം ജനിപ്പിച്ചു, ആ വഴിയിലേക്കു മുൻപോട്ടും ഭോഷ്കന്മാരും ആയവർ പോകുവാൻ ഒരു മാർഗ്ഗമുണ്ടാക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നതാകുന്നു. അതിന്റെ ഫലം എന്തെന്നുവെച്ചാൽ ബലാപ്കാരം ചാടി പുറപ്പെടുകയും, ലഹളകാലത്തെ കലശങ്ങളും കഷ്ടാനുഭവങ്ങളും വീണ്ടും ആരംഭിക്കുകയും, ചെയ്യും സമുദായസമാധാനത്തിന്നു വിപ്ലവം വരുത്തുന്നവരെ മറ്റു ജില്ലകളുടേയും കലാപങ്ങളെ നിവാരണം ചെയ്യാൻ മാപ്പിള ആക്രമകാരം സർക്കാരിനായികാരമുണ്ടു.

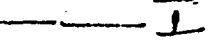
നാം ഇതിനാൽ അറിയിക്കുന്നതെന്തെന്നാൽ, നെട്ടി മുതലായ വല്ല ക്രിയകൾ നടത്തിയോ, പാട്ടുകൾ കെട്ടിയോ പഠിച്ചോ, മയ്യത്തുകൾ മറച്ചെടുത്ത സ്ഥലങ്ങളിൽ വല്ല അടയാളങ്ങൾ വെച്ചോ മറ്റു വിധത്തിലോ ഈ ലഹളക്കാരുടെ ഓർമ്മയെ നിർത്തിപ്പോരവാൻ മേലാൽ വല്ലവരും ശ്രമിക്കുന്നതായാൽ, നാം അവരുടെ മേൽ മാപ്പിള ആക്രമകാരമുള്ള നടപടികൾ നടത്തി അവരെ മലയാളിപ്പിള്ളിൽനിന്നു പുറത്തു അയച്ചുകളയുന്നതാകുന്നു. ഇതിനെ മറ്റുള്ളവർക്കും അറിയിച്ചുകൊടുത്തു ഈ വിധം ഭോഷ്കന്മാരായ നടപടികളിൽ പ്രവേശിക്കാതെ പഠിച്ചു വിശ്വസിക്കുന്നതും, അവരെ അതിൽനിന്നു വിട്ടുവിരപ്പിക്കുന്നതും, ഇണമോഷ്ടബോധമുള്ളവരും, നിയമനിഷേധമുള്ളവരും ആയ എല്ലാ ജനങ്ങളുടെയും മുറയാകുന്നു. ആ വിധം തെക്കങ്ങൾ വല്ലതും ഉണ്ടാക്കുന്നുണ്ടെന്നറിഞ്ഞാൽ ഉടനെ സർക്കാരുദ്യോഗസ്ഥന്മാരെ അറിയിക്കേണ്ടതും എല്ലാവരുടെയും മുറയാകുന്നു. അങ്ങിനെ ചെയ്യാൻ വീഴ്ച വരുത്തിയാൽ മേൽ പറഞ്ഞ നടപടിയിൽ നേരിട്ട പദ്ധതികളെന്നവരെപോലെ അവരുടെ മേലേയും മാപ്പിള ആക്രമകാരം പ്രവൃത്തിക്കാൻ ഇടയുള്ളതാകുന്നു.

മലയാള ഡിസ്ട്രിക്ട് മജിസ്ട്രേട്ട് കച്ചേരി,  
കോഴിക്കോട്,  
26-4-25.

ജ. എ. തോറൻ,  
ഡിസ്ട്രിക്ട് മജിസ്ട്രേട്ട്.

# അന്തമാനിലേക്കു പോകുവാൻ ഒരുങ്ങുന്നവരോടു ഒരുപേക്ഷ.

മസ്ലിംകൾ അധിവസിക്കുന്ന ഓരോ ഗ്രാമത്തിലും പ്രതിഷേധയോഗങ്ങൾ കൂടണം.



ഗവണ്മെന്റിന്റെ ഈ അക്രമത്തെ എങ്ങിനെയും നിറുത്തണം.

ജനാബ് കെ. ഉപ്പി എം. എൽ. സി. യുടെ സന്ദേശം.

അന്തമാനിലേക്കു സ്രീകളെയും കുട്ടികളെയും വശീകരിച്ചുകൊണ്ടു പോകുവാൻ പല ഞെടി വീണ്ടും കരേ തടവുകാരെ മലബാറിലേക്കു കൊണ്ടുവന്നിട്ടുണ്ടെന്നറിയുന്നു. ഈ പൊതുജനപ്രതിനിധികളായ മെസ്സേർസ് മഹംമദ്ദുശംനാടു, റെജുദുൽ സാസാഫിബ്, അബ്ദുസഅലി എന്നീ മൂന്നു മസ്ലിം മെമ്പ്രന്മാർ ചെന്നുകണ്ടു അന്വേഷിച്ചു ചെയ്തു റിപ്പോർട്ടിന്നും തീരെ എതിർപ്പും മദിരാശി നിയമസഭയുടെ അഭിപ്രായത്തിനെതിരാണ്. പൊതുജനങ്ങളുടെ ഹിതത്തിനെതിരാണ്. അതുകൊണ്ടു എന്റെ തല്പാപത്തെ അപേക്ഷ അങ്ങിനെ പോകാൻ ഒരുങ്ങുന്നവർ, അന്തമാനിൽ പോയികണ്ടു ഈ മൂന്നു മഹാന്മാരുടെ അഭിപ്രായമെന്താണെന്നു കാണിച്ചുകൊടുക്കുവാൻ ഗവണ്മെന്റിനോടു ആവശ്യപ്പെടണം. ഇതിനിടക്കു അന്തമാനിനെ പറ്റി യഥാർത്ഥവിവരം പ്രസിദ്ധപ്പെടുത്തുന്നതാണ്. പോലീസുകാരുടെ കയ്യിൽ ഇരിക്കുന്ന തടവുകാരും പോലീസുകാരും പറയുന്നതെല്ലാം വിശ്വസിക്കാതിരിപ്പാൻ അപേക്ഷിക്കുന്നു.

കെ. ഉപ്പി (കുറുപ്പ്)  
27-11-26.



ഇന്ത്യയിലെ സർവ്വ മസ്ലിംകളുടേയും അഭിപ്രായത്തെ മാത്രമല്ല ഗവണ്മെന്റുടേ അന്വേഷണാർത്ഥം അന്തമാനിയിലെ നാലിൽ മൂന്നു പേരുടേയും റിപ്പോർട്ടുനെയും അസംബുളികൗൺസിൽ മെമ്പ്രന്മാരുടെ അഭിപ്രായത്തെയും അഗണിക്കേടിയിൽ തള്ളിയാണ് ഗവണ്മെന്റിപ്പോൾ അന്തമാനിയിൽനിന്നു ഒരു കൂട്ടം തടവുകാരെ കെട്ടുവന്നു അവരുടെ കുടുംബാദികളെ അന്തമാനിലേക്കയക്കുവാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുന്നതു. തടവുകാരിൽ ഒരു കൂട്ടരെ താമരശ്ശേരിക്കും ഒരു കൂട്ടരെ ഏറനാട്ടേക്കും മറ്റൊരു കൂട്ടരെ വള്ളവനാട്ടേക്കും അയച്ചിട്ടുള്ളതായറിയുന്നു. മസ്ലിംകളോടു ഞങ്ങൾക്കു പറയുവാനുള്ളതു നിങ്ങൾ പോകുവാനൊരുങ്ങുന്നതായാൽ അന്തമാനിലെ പൂർണ്ണ സ്ഥിതികൾ മനസ്സിലാക്കി വേണമെന്നു മാത്രമാണ്.

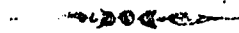
മെസ്സേഴ്സ് ശംനാടുമുതൽ പേരുടെ അന്വേഷണഫലവും കൗൺസിലിലെ അന്തമാൻ പ്രമേയത്തെ പറ്റിയുണ്ടായ പ്രസംഗങ്ങളു ഞങ്ങൾ പ്രസിദ്ധപ്പെടുത്തുന്നുണ്ട്. ഈ അക്രമത്തെ മൂടനെ നിറുത്തേണ്ടതിന്നു കേരളത്തിൽ എല്ലാ സ്ഥലങ്ങളിലും യോഗങ്ങൾ കൂടി പ്രമേയങ്ങൾ പാസ്സാക്കേണ്ടതിന്നു ഒട്ടും താമസിപ്പിച്ചുകൂടാമെന്നാൽ (ചൊവ്വാഴ്ച) അല്ലെങ്കിൽ പിറ്റേന്നു അൽ-അമീൻറെ ആഭിമുഖ്യത്തിൽ മറുപടിയുടെ ഒരു മഹായോഗം കൂടുന്നതാണ്. വിവരം പിന്നീടു ലഭ്യമാകുമെങ്കിലും അറിയിക്കപ്പെടും.

“അൽ-അമീൻ” അടുത്ത ലക്കത്തിൽ കാക്കുക.

പത്രാധിപർ.

# Supplement to this issue.

## അൽ അമീൻ.



അൽ-അമീൻ എന്ന നാമധേയത്തിൽ ഒരു മലയാള വർത്തമാനക്കടലാസ്സു നടത്തേണ്ട പ്രധാന ഉദ്ദേശത്തോടു കൂടി ഒരു കമ്പനി രജിസ്റ്റർ ചെയ്തു അതിന്നു വേണ്ടി പരിശ്രമിച്ചുവരുന്ന വിവരം പൊതുജനങ്ങൾ അറിഞ്ഞിട്ടുണ്ടായിരിക്കുമല്ലോ. ഇതു സംബന്ധമായി റോയൽ അച്ചടി ഏജന്റുമാർക്കുണ്ടായ ഏതാണ്ടു പുത്തിയായിരിക്കുന്നു. ഞങ്ങളുടെ പ്രസ്സും ആർക്കിസ്സും കോട്ടറോഡിലാണ് സ്ഥിതി ചെയ്യുന്നതു.

അൽ-അമീൻ, റോയൽ എട്ടു ഭാഗം നല്ല കടലാസ്സിൽ ആഴ്ചയിൽ മൂന്നു പ്രാവശ്യം (ഞായർ, ചൊവ്വ, വ്യാഴം) കോഴിക്കോടു നിന്നു ഈ "റബീഉൽഅവ്വൽ" 12-നു 1924 ഒക്ടോബർ 11-ാംനം പ്രസിദ്ധം ചെയ്യുന്നതാണ്.

സാധാരണ വർത്തമാനങ്ങളും കമ്പി വാർത്തകളും ഉണ്ടാകുന്നതിന്നു പുറമെ ഇന്ത്യയിലേയും അന്യ ദേശങ്ങളിലേയും പ്രധാനപ്പെട്ട ഇംഗ്ലീഷ്, അറബി, ഉറുദു, തമിഴ് മുതലായ ഭാഷകളിലുള്ള വർത്തമാനക്കടലാസ്സുകളിൽ നിന്നും, മാസികകളിൽ നിന്നും പലവിധ വിഷയങ്ങളെ പറ്റിയുള്ള ലേഖനങ്ങൾ അൽ-അമീനിൽ ചേർത്തിരിക്കും. കച്ചവടം, കൈതൊഴിൽ, കൃഷി, വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം ഇവയെ സംബന്ധിച്ച ചെറിയ ഉപന്യാസങ്ങൾ, ഇന്ത്യയിലും അന്യരാജ്യങ്ങളിലും അപ്പപ്പോൾ നടക്കുന്ന പ്രധാന സംഭവങ്ങൾ, കച്ചവടക്കാർക്കറിവേണ്ടുന്ന സംഗതികൾ, സാഹിത്യ രസികന്മാർക്കു തരമുള്ള വിഷയങ്ങൾ—ഇവയെല്ലാം അൽ-അമീനിൽ ഉണ്ടായിരിക്കുന്നതാണ്.

ഖിലാഫത്തു, കാൺഗ്രസ്സു സംബന്ധമായ വർത്തമാനങ്ങൾ അറിയുന്നതിന്നും, കാര്യങ്ങൾ ഗ്രഹിക്കുന്നതിന്നും അൽ-അമീൻ പ്രത്യേകം സഹായമായി തീരുന്നതാണ്. മെഴലാനാ മുഹമ്മദലി സാഹിബ് തന്റെ "കോറോഡിൽ" പ്രസിദ്ധം ചെയ്യുന്ന അഭിപ്രായങ്ങളും മറ്റും അറിയുവാൻ ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്ന മലയാളികൾ "അൽ-അമീൻ" വരിക്കാരായിരുന്നാൽ മതിയാകും.

വ്യാഴാഴ്ച പ്രസിദ്ധം ചെയ്യുന്ന "അൽ-അമീൻ"ൽ കൂടുതൽ വിഷയങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ടായിരിക്കും. രാജ്യ കാര്യങ്ങളെ പറ്റിയൊ, മുസ്ലിം ലോകചരിത്രസംബന്ധമായൊ, മുസ്ലിമീങ്ങളും അന്യ മതസ്ഥരുമായനുവർത്തിക്കേണ്ട ക്രമങ്ങളോടു കൂടി റിസ്തു മുസ്ലിം മൈത്രിമുതലായൊ മറ്റുള്ള വിഷയങ്ങളെ കുറിച്ചൊ വിശേഷപ്പെട്ട ലേഖനങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ടാകുന്നതിന്നു പുറമെ ലോകമഹാപുരുഷന്മാരുടെ ജീവചരിത്രങ്ങൾ, സ്രീകൾ പ്രത്യേകം അറിയേണ്ടതായ സംഗതികൾ, ചരിത്രസംബന്ധമായ ലേഖനങ്ങൾ, ശാസ്ത്രസംബന്ധമായ വിഷയങ്ങൾ ഇവയെല്ലാം ഉണ്ടാവുന്നതാണ്.

പൊതുജനങ്ങൾക്കും, രണ്ടനെയും രാഷ്ട്രീയസ്വതന്ത്ര്യ സിദ്ധിയേയും പൊതുജന ശേഷമത്തെയും ഉദ്ദേശിച്ചു നടത്തുന്ന അൽ-അമീൻ കർമ്മം, വ്യാപാരികൾ, സാധാരണക്കാരനും ഒരുപോലെ വർദ്ധമാനമറിയുവാനും, രസമായി വായിക്കുവാനും, പൊതുജനാനുമുണ്ടാക്കുവാനും ഒഴിച്ചു കൂടാത്തതായിരിക്കും.

വരിസംഖ്യ എപ്പോഴും മുൻകൂറായടക്കണം.

	ക.	ണ.	പ.
ഒരു മാസത്തേക്ക്	1	4	0
മൂന്നു മാസത്തേക്ക്	3	8	0
ആറു മാസത്തേക്ക്	6	8	0
ഒരു കൊല്ലത്തേക്ക്	12	0	0
(ഇന്ത്യക്ക് പുറമെ)	15	0	0
റെറപ്രതിക്ക്	0	1	6

വരിക്കാരാകുവാൻ ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്നവർ പേരും മേൽനാമസവും തപാലപ്പീസിന്റെ പേരും വരിസംഖ്യയോടുകൂടി മാനേജർ ഉടനെ അയച്ചുകൊടുക്കണം. ആദ്യലക്കം മുതൽ കിട്ടുവാൻ ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്നവർ ഈ 30-ാം നമ്പർ പേർ റജിസ്റ്റർ ചെയ്യിക്കണം. അപേക്ഷകന്മാരുടെ എണ്ണത്തിനനുസരിച്ചു പ്രതികൾ അടിക്കുന്നുള്ളു.

പരസ്യശ്രദ്ധിയുടെ നിരക്കു ആപ്പീസിൽ നേരിട്ടൊ കത്തു മുഖമൊ മാനേജരോടാവശ്യപ്പെട്ടാൽ അറിയാവുന്നതാണ്.

ഇംഗ്ലീഷ്, മലയാളം, തമിഴ് എന്നീ ഭാഷകളിൽ ഏതുവിധം അച്ചടി പ്രവൃത്തികളും വൃത്തിയായും, ഭംഗിയായും മിതമായ നിരക്കിൽ അൽ-അമീൻ അച്ചുകൂടത്തിൽ നിന്നു നിശ്ചിത സമയങ്ങളിൽ കൃത്യമായി ചെയ്തു കൊടുക്കുന്നതാണ്. റൂളിങ്ങ്, റൈൻഡിങ്ങ് മുതലായ പ്രവൃത്തികളും ഞങ്ങൾ ചെയ്തു കൊടുക്കുന്നതാണ്.

ഒരു കൊല്ലത്തെയൊ മുതൽമുടിയ പക്ഷം ആറു മാസത്തെയൊ വരിസംഖ്യ മുൻകൂറായി ഞങ്ങൾക്കു ക്ലോബർ 1-ാം നമ്പർ-ക്കകം എത്തിച്ചു തന്നു സഹായിപ്പാനും കഴിയുന്നത്ര വരിക്കാരെ ചേർത്തു തരുവാനും ഞങ്ങൾ ഞങ്ങളുടെ ഏല്പാ സ്റ്റേറ്റ് മിതന്മാരോടും ഗുണകാംക്ഷികളോടും അപേക്ഷിക്കുന്നു. വേദാനുസരണവും ചെയ്യാൻ കഴിയുന്നവർ ലേഖനങ്ങൾ അയച്ചും അതാത് സ്ഥലങ്ങളിൽ കഴിഞ്ഞുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്ന വാർത്തകളെ കൂടശ്രമം അറിയിച്ചു തന്നും വരിക്കാരായും കമ്പനിയിൽ ഷെറോട്ടത്തും സഹായിപ്പാൻ സാധിക്കുന്നവർ അങ്ങിനെ ചെയ്തും മറ്റുള്ളവരെക്കൊണ്ടു ചെയ്യിപ്പിച്ചും അച്ചടി പ്രവൃത്തികൾ ഉള്ളവർ ഓർഡർ തന്നുംമാറ്റു വേണ്ട ഏല്പാവിധ സഹായങ്ങളും ചെയ്തു തന്നു ഞങ്ങളെ പ്രോത്സാഹിപ്പിച്ചാൻ താഴ്മയായപേക്ഷിച്ചുകൊള്ളുന്നു.

കോഴിക്കോട്.

14-9-'24.

മുഹമ്മദബ്ദുറഹ്മാൻ

അൽ-അമീൻ പ്രസ്സ് കോഴിക്കോട്.

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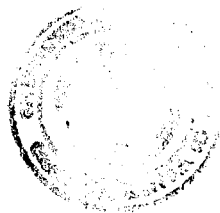
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