



Rohingya Tear

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Wednesday, 21 September 2016

The Emergence of Jamiatul Ulama and its Activities

Article
By Aman Ullah

Jamiatul Ulama in North Arakan, the first Political Organization of Rohingya, was established in 1932 under the leadership of Moulana Abdus Subhan Mazaheri. Moulana Habibur Rahman, Moulana Amir Hamza, mufti Saeedur Rahman, Moulana Sayed Azeem, Moulana Sultan Ahmad, Moulana Abdush Shakur and Moulana Abul Khair were prominent members of Majlis-e Shoura.

There was also another organization named Jamiate Khuddamul Islam as a student wing of Jamiatul Ulama of North Arakan , which was established in 1937 by Moulana Mir Ahmad (Nazem Saheb), Mufti Sultan Ahmad, Moulana Abdul Jalil, and Moulana Muhammad Shafi.

During the horrific massacre of 1942, more than one hundred thousand Muslim of Arakan both male and female were killed and about half a million were driven out of their huts and homes and about 50 thousand of them were in Rangpur refugee camps.

As a huge vacuum of leadership was created by the killing of Ulama, scholars, intellectuals and other prominent people, the Rohingya Muslims could not do much to protect their rights and take concrete and effective steps to prove their own identity. Though the undeniable fact is that Jamiatul Ulama tried hard to achieve and gain a state status for Rohingya majority area North Arakan.

Rohingya Muslims formed Peace Committees to resist the atrocities of Buddhist and this was a step that resulted in establishment of Islamic Republic of North Arakan. It was officially announced on 10 June 1942.

Muslim scholars did everything that brought good to them. Maulana Habib Ullah rendered a valuable service to repatriation and rehabilitation those refugees from refugee camps of Rangpur. This is why Britain declared the area between Naf and Mayu river as Muslim region by circular issued on 31 December 1945.

The Penglong treaty was signed on 12 February 1947 on the occasion of Penglong conference. Rohingya Muslims were kept in darkness about and they were not invited to it, alleged U Razak President of the Burma Muslims Congress (BMC) that he is the representative of all Burma's Muslims while Arakanese Buddhist U Auang Zan Way claimed falsely that he is the representative of all citizens of Arakan. The irony is that neither of them took any sort of approval for representation nor were they agreed to it. Though Muslims were not invited but Jamiatul Ulama sent a two member delegate to the conference unless any decision was taken that would harm Muslims. Unfortunately, due to inconvenient communication means they reached there when the conference was over.

On 7 March 1947, Jamiatul Ulama of North Arakan under the leadership of Barrister Dr. Maulana Sana Ullah met British parliament member Ross William –head of Ross William Commission– in the city of Memyo and submitted a memorandum wherein they demanded that area between Kaladan and Naf river should be declared as a state pertaining to Rohingya Muslims.

Jamiate Khuddamul Islam also played vital role to protect the rights of Muslims in Arakan. In 1947, Aung San and his companions took a stoppage in Delhi on their way to London to meet British Prime Minister Lord Clement Atley. During their stay in Delhi, they met Qaide Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Jawaherlal Nehru. As Jamiat got the news of Burmese delegate a week before, formed a 6 members delegate to meet them. The Jamiat delegate was as follows:
1-Moulana Abdul Quddus Mazaheri (1924-1993),
President of Jamiat, head of the delegate
2-Maulana Sultan Ahmad General Secretary of Jamiat, member
3-Moulana Abu Bakr Siddique member executive comity of Jamiat, member
4-Three other people one of them a Muslim scholar from Rangoon

They met Aung San and his companions at the residence of Jauharlal Nehru at New Delhi and talked to them for 25 minutes. They submitted a memorandum to them demanding the following issues:

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November 2002 Kofi is

1. To rehabilitate those Muslim Refugees evicted and driven away by torture and tyranny mainly Arakanese Muslims who had been forced to take shelter for their lives in the Districts of Rangpur, Dinajpur and other places of the then British India.

2. To give freedom in the observance of Religious rights in Burma regularly and peacefully;

3. To revive the pilgrimage of Hjis which was suspended due to the world war II;

4. Not to frame any law in the constitution of Burma without the opinion and consent of minorities of Burma;

5. To make obligatory for the Government for providing employment to the minorities of Burma in proportion to their population, fitness and qualification;

6. The Government should make provision for the equal seats of the Muslims of Burma in the parliament as the second majority on the basis of Equality, Justice and Fair-play.

With the regard to above items from No.1 to 5, General Aung San and his Party promised to materialize the terms and conditions of the delegation except the items No.6, which he agreed to refer to the parliament for consideration later on.

The Jamiat requested the delegate members to pay a visit to its central office at Deoband for further discussions and negotiation on matters concerning the future of Muslims in Burma, the Burmese delegation, who accepted it, and a pledge to meet in Deoband after returning from London.

The Jamiat received a telegram from London that the Burmese delegate would directly go Burma immediately owing to the developments and the deteriorating security situation in Burma. Rather, they invited the Jamiat officials to visit Rangoon in a convenient time for further discussion on the issues that were agreed upon in New Delhi by both side.

The Jamiat called for a meeting of its Majlis-e Shoura (advisory council) after it had received the telegram to look into the matter. After a few days of discussion, they decided to send a four member delegate to Rangoon. The delegate was as follows:

- 1- Moulana Abu Bakr Siddique head of the delegate;
- 2- Moulana Abdul Quddus Mazaheri, member;
- 3- Moulana Sultan Ahmad, member;
- 4- Moulana zafrul Islam bin Chowdhury Abul Khair, member.

When they reached in Maungdaw on their way to Rangoon, they talked seriously to various strata of local people including Ulama and prominent citizens. After then, they arrived in Akyab via Buthidaung wherein they exchanged views with different classes of people.

Due to some incidents during their trip, it was not possible to meet Aung San, so the Jamiat delegate postponed the program and sent a detailed report to Deoband when they came back to Maungdaw. One letter was sent to Burmese governor in Shimla, and another letter of apology was sent to Aung San. The delegate came back to India.

A conspiracy was fabricated to deprive Rohingya Muslims of their right to vote in the Legislative Council election in 1947 labeling them as foreigners, alien and intruders and a large number of Muslims' names were removed from the voters list. It was all done in the sight of world community. The Jamiat resisted the evil move and eventually became able to restore a plausible number of their names in the voter list. Mr. Sultan Ahmad President of Jamiat and his deputy Mr. Abdul Ghaffar were elected members in the Legislative Council to the Burma.

Moreover, the officials with Jamiat got elected in both upper house and lower house after independence. A great deal of efforts was met to achieve the separate state in North Arakan for Rohingya Muslims. The Jamiat even joined the coalition government in this regard, but unfortunately due to heavy pressure by ruling party, the elected members of Jamiat could not keep their own political identity and causes intact and high.

To recover what they lost in this process, Moulana Abdul Quddus came to political field with a new idea, more ambition and high morale. He played the vital role for renaissance of North Arakan Jamiatul Ulama and Jamiatul Ulama in the name of Rohingya Jamiatul Ulama in 1954.

The Jamiat in its new rise established United Rohingya Organization in 1956 that brought all political and social organization under one umbrella. It was a great achievement in itself as it created a harmony, unity and understanding among all Rohingya people.

Where the Burmese government was strained to declare the north Arakan a separate authority which was first step towards a Rohingya State and also, it was an recognize their identity, language, culture, civilization and more importantly their existence & entity were recognized at national level. The government Radio began to broadcast the various program in Rohingya language.

This is how Muslims in Arakan strove very hard over the years and decades to prove their presence, language, culture. But the scenario did not remain so for long. It dramatically changed after a military power take-over led by General Ne Win. He imposed ban on all Rohingya organizations. He denied them many basic human rights including, political, economic and cultural ones and then, began to try to drive them out of their homes in large scale labeling

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them as intruders and alien people who settled in Arakan. In such critical circumstances and conditions the dark forced Rohingya.

Jamiatul Ulama to work under ground but its members remained active in neighboring countries. They did whatever they could to serve fleeing Rohingya Muslims anywhere they got shelter. The biggest exodus was to Bangladesh as a next door country to Burma. A large number of Ulama faced all sort humiliation, tortures, discrimination and harassment with courage and preferred to stay home in order to serve the people and guard their Faith, Creed, Religion and culture.

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