

From Pan-Islamism to Muslim Nationalism: Khilafat Movement and the Struggle for Pakistan

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Abstract

Mustafa Kemal Pasha was struggling against the European attempt to demolish the Ottoman Empire when the Muslims of Indian Subcontinent launched a mass protest movement against the British known as the Khilafat Movement. The movement was an expression of Indian Muslims' sentimental attachment to Ottoman Caliphate, which they viewed as the last vestige of Islamic unity and power. The Khilafat Movement was led primarily by the Muslim leaders, but later accelerated by Mahatma Gandhi's non-Cooperation Movement. It included mass rallies and arrests, media campaign, non-cooperation tactics and migration abroad. The Movement gave a boost to the Turkish nationalist struggle and influenced the British diplomacy at the Lausanne Conference. The Khilafat Movement lost its momentum as soon as Mustafa Kemal Ataturk abolished the institution of Khilafat in Turkey, but its relevance continued in Indian Muslim politics. For it mobilized Indian Muslims for

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mass politics and contributed to the growth of Muslim nationalism that finally resulted in the creation of Pakistan in 1947.

Introduction

This article begins by placing the Khilafat Movement (1919-24) in historical context and then describes main developments marking its evolution in response to the Turkish nationalist struggle for liberation. These include Khilafat leaders' successive moves to pressure the British authorities in India through countrywide non-cooperation bid, *en masse* Muslim migration to Afghanistan, advocacy campaign in London and other European capitals, and engagement with Turkish nationalist leaders. Subsequent discussion covers the dilemma, Khilafat leaders faced when the Turkish nationalist leadership itself put an end to the Caliphate, and how they tried to come to terms with this unexpected development. The study concludes by pointing out how a movement rooted in pan-Islamism to preserve the Ottoman Caliphate ended up complementing the already *en vogue* process of Muslim nationalism in India, thereby playing an important role in the creation of Pakistan.

The Muslims of British India had always taken keen interest in the affairs of fellow Muslims worldwide, but their feelings towards the Ottoman Turks were somewhat special: the intimate bond of solidarity that Indian Muslims had for Ottoman Turks demonstrably manifested itself on several occasions, especially from the second half of the 19th Century onwards. In the late nineteenth century, for instance, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, the founder of Aligarh College, urged Indian Muslims to stay loyal to the British and emulate Ottoman Empire's progressive reforms. Sir Syed published articles in his magazine *Tehzeebul-Akhlaq* [Urdu: Refinement of Manners], citing examples of Ottoman rulers like Sultan Mahmud II and Sultan Abdul Hamid who, he argued, gave up religious prejudices and saw no harm in

taking advantage of European arts and sciences or adopting their customs and manners.¹

However, the deep affection of Indian Muslims was only for the Turkish nation, and not for Ottoman Sultans. Thus, in 1909, when Sultan Abdul Hamid was deposed by the Young Turks, a cross-section of Indian Muslim leaders — Maulana Muhammad Ali Jauhar, Maulana Shaukat Ali, Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Nawab Viqarul Mulk, Maulana Altaf Hussain Hali and Maulana Shibli Nomani — paid warm tributes to them. Before the Young Turks could strengthen their hold, the European powers, led by Great Britain, started realizing their plan of dividing the Ottoman Empire beginning with the War of Tripoli in 1911 and the Balkan War of 1912-13. By this time, however, Indian Muslims' affinity with the Turks had crystallized to such an extent that it turned into a forceful movement throughout the Subcontinent.²

The Khilafat Movement

Maulana Mohammed Ali Jauhar, Maulana Shaukat Ali, Maulana Zafar Ali Khan and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad launched a massive media and political campaign in support of the Turks, urging Indian Muslims to provide material support to the suffering Turks. For the purpose, in addition to the weekly *Comrade*, Maulana Jauhar started publishing daily *Hamdard*, Maulana Zafar launched the daily *Zamindar*, and Maulana Azad started the weekly *Al-Hilal*. As a result of this media campaign, the Indian Muslims generated and sent donations worth thousands of British Pound-Sterling to the Turkish Red Crescent to help it rehabilitate the Turks

1 Ishtiaq Ahmad, "Turkish-Pakistan Relations: Continuity and Change", in *Turkey in the 21st Century: Changing Role in World Politics*, Mehmet Tahiroglu and Tareq Y. Ismael, eds., (Gazimagusa: Eastern Mediterranean University, 2000), 143-44.

2 M. Naeem Qureshi, *Pan-Islamism in British Indian Politics: A Study of the Khilafat Movement, 1918-1924* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 70-75; Gopal Krishna, "The Khilafat Movement in India: The First Phase (September 1919-August 1920)", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1968), 37-53.

displaced during the wars of Tripoli and the Balkans. Owing to its pro-Turkish leanings, the Muslim press became a victim of British government's repressive policies. *Comrade*, *Zamindar* and *Al-Hilal* were in particular penalized. Maulana Jauhar had to deposit considerable sums of money twice as security for continuing the publication of *Comrade* after the arbitrary forfeiture of the previous security. What annoyed the British was 'The Choice of the Turks,' a long article serialized by the paper on the eve of the First World War, castigating the British and explaining why the Turks were forced to join the Axis Powers during the war. Subsequently, Maulana Jauhar, Maulana Zafar and Maulana Azad were imprisoned, and their papers were forced to cease publication.³

Such persecutory tactics by the colonial authorities only helped fuel the Indian Muslims against the British attempts to 'divide and rule' the Ottoman territories. From December 1918, the Muslim leaders launched the Khilafat Movement, led initially by a small group of leading individuals like Maulvi Abdul Bari, Dr. Ansari, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Seth Chotani, Abul Qasim, Maulana Azad, Maulana Hasrat Mohani, Mushir Husain Kidwai, and, of course, the Ali Brothers — Maulana Shaukat and Maulana Jauhar. First expressions of pro-Turkish sentiment were made the same month at the annual session of the Indian Muslim League in Delhi. The intention was to organise a popular movement for the Turks ahead of a British-sponsored peace conference in London that was to decide the fate of the Ottoman Empire. On the occasion, All-India Muslim League President Fazlul Haq and other Muslim leaders condemned the acts of Sherif Husain bin Ali, the Emir of Mekkah, at the behest of the British. They demanded that the *Jaziratul-Arab* [Arabic: Arabian Peninsula] and Holy Muslim Sites should remain under the Ottoman Sultan. In a

3 Gail Minault has authored a pioneering work on the emergence of Khilafat leadership on the Indian political scene and the media campaign it undertook to articulate the Khilafat cause. See Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

meeting held in Bombay on November 14, 1919 the Central Khilafat Committee was founded, with Seth Chotani as its president followed by the establishment of local and regional Khilafat Committees all over India.⁴

An all-India Khilafat Day, which was observed on October 17, 1919 turned out to be the first major expression of Muslim-Hindu unity on the Khilafat question. Mahatma Gandhi also joined in, by linking the issue of *Swaraj* [Hindi: self-governance] with Khilafat, thereby galvanising Hindus support. On the occasion, markets across India closed down in protest, and mass rallies were brought out in several Indian cities. In November 1919, the Central Khilafat Committee met in Delhi to chalk out a countrywide agitation agenda. The objectives of the movement were also laid out, including defending the Turkish Caliphate, protecting Muslim Holy Sites, and preserving the unity of Ottoman Empire. Mahatma Gandhi presided over the Delhi meeting, which asked for Indian representation at the London peace conference and demanded that Istanbul should remain in the hands of Turks. Subsequently, all the three representative bodies of the Indian society — the Central Khilafat Committee, the All-India Muslim League and the Indian National Congress — jointly took up the Khilafat issue. In a December 1919 meeting in Amritsar, they declared their commitment to Muslim aspirations and decided to send a delegation of Khilafat leaders to London and other European capitals to cultivate international support for the movement.⁵

The Khilafat delegation to London and Europe included Maulana Jauhar, Syed Sulaiman Nadvi and Abul Kasim. The delegation left India on February 1, 1920; and while it was still on its way, the peace conference began in London. After reaching London on February 26, Khilafat leaders attended

4 Minault, *The Khilafat Movement, Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India*. Also see Ahmad, "Turkish-Pakistan Relations", 143-44.

5 K. K. Aziz, *The Indian Khilafat Movement 1915-1933: A Documentary Record* (Karachi: Pak Publishers Ltd., 1972), 60-64.

the British parliamentary proceedings on the Turkish question. Anti-Turkish sentiments were widespread not only among British parliamentarians but also Prime Minister Lloyd George and his cabinet.⁶ Khilafat leaders were shocked to observe that British public opinion was equally hostile to Turks and was supportive of the redemption of Hagia Sophia mosque to Christianity. Anglican Archbishops of York, London, Manchester and Canterbury through their sermons depicted the Turkish question as part of the age-old struggle between Islam and Christianity. Under these circumstances, Khilafat leaders knew, it was difficult to expect a lenient British approach to the Khilafat cause.⁷

Khilafat leaders held two rounds of talks in London. They met first Lord Fisher on March 2, 1920, instead of Lord Montague, the Secretary of State for India, who was ill at the time. Maulana Jauhar expressed the Indian Muslim view that the Caliph was the defender of their faith, and, therefore, his spiritual and temporal authority must remain intact and the Turkish territories stay undivided. Lord Fisher assured them that the British Government would take the Muslim feelings into account.⁸ The second round of talks was held with Prime Minister George on March 17. Khilafat leaders repeated the same demands, but his response was blunt: the Turks were to be dealt with according to the same principles that had been applied to other vanquished nations. They had fought against Britain and had to bear the consequences of defeat.⁹ Even though disappointed by the British leadership, Khilafat leaders continued to advocate the cause of Khilafat. They toured Britain and went to France

6 Azmi Ozcan, *Pan-Islamism: Indian Muslims, the Ottomans and Britain (1877-1924)* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 190.

7 M. Naeem Qureshi, *Mohammed Ali's Khilafat Delegation to Europe* (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1980), 14-15.

8 Aziz, *The Indian Khilafat Movement*, 92.

9 Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India*, 88. Also see Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: A Study of Indian Muslim Leadership, 1919-24* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania, 1977), 22.

and Italy to meet politicians, journalists and intellectuals, including the Pope at the Vatican. They organised several public meetings, generated contribution for the Red Crescent Fund for Turkish relief, and finally returned to Bombay in October 1920.

While the Khilafat delegation was in Paris, the Treaty of Sevres¹⁰ was signed on August 10, 1920. Under it, although the Sultan-Caliph still remained in Istanbul, he was virtually a prisoner of the Allies. Under the circumstances, all their efforts for the cause of the Khilafat were in jeopardy. Khilafat leaders telegraphed Sultan Vahiduddin to express their support and urged him to reject the treaty. While in Europe, they also communicated with prominent Turkish figures like Talat Pasha, Halil Halid and even Mustafa Kemal Pasha who encouraged them to continue agitation in Europe and India.¹¹ Indian Muslims were anxiously following the activities of the Khilafat delegation in Europe. When the news of the Treaty of Sevres reached India, they were in protest. So were the non-Muslim supporters of Khilafat Movement. Maulana Shaukat took the lead and declared March 19 as a day of mourning. Thereafter, a new non-violent mode of struggle was chosen: no one was to work in government offices as part of a non-cooperation policy.¹²

On June 22, 1920, Mahatma Gandhi wrote a letter to the British Viceroy in India protesting the treatment of Turkey and asked him to resign because he had failed to meet the expectations of Indians. This was followed by a *fatwa* [Arabic: a Religious Decree] sanctioned by hundreds of Muslim Ulema forbidding Muslims to cooperate with the government in any way or form.¹³ Subsequently, the Khilafat leadership announced August 1, 1920 as the deadline for

10 Full text of the Treaty of Sevres is available at Hellenic Resources Network <<http://www.hri.org/docs/sevres/>>

11 Ozcan, *Pan-Islamism*, 193-94.

12 Ozcan, *Pan-Islamism*, 193-94.

13 Shan Muhammad, *The Indian Muslims: A Documentary Record 1900-1947*, (New Delhi: Meenakshi Prakashan, 1985), VII: 37.

the Viceroy to redress Indian Muslim grievances regarding the Treaty of Sevres. Since the British were unwilling to do so, the Khilafat leadership had no option but to implement the non-cooperation policy. People were asked to renounce the titles and offices that had been conferred on them by the government and to refuse to attend official functions. Students were also asked to gradually withdraw from government schools and institutions. The Civil Disobedience Movement also advocated a boycott of all foreign goods and refusal to enlist for service in the British army. Soon the movement had the overwhelming support of the Indian people. The common feeling among Indian Muslims at the time was that the Britain and its European allies had decided to destroy the Ottoman Empire, which they perceived as the cradle of Islamic civilization.¹⁴

Upon his return to India, Maulana Jauhar and Mahatma Gandhi travelled across India to enlist public support for Khilafat. They advocated a policy of peaceful resistance, which won significant mass support but only in the initial stage. Gradually, violent tendencies crept in the Khilafat Movement. The British reaction also became more oppressive. Indian jails were filled with Khilafat activists, and the country almost lapsed into anarchy. In February 1922, a group of non-cooperation activists set on fire a police station in Chaura Chauri, killing 21 policemen. Consequently, Mahatma Gandhi decided to abandon the Civil Disobedience Movement, which marked the end of Hindu-Muslim alliance.¹⁵

Another Indian response to the Allies' treatment of the Ottoman Empire and British disregard of public aspirations was the Hijrat Movement, which started in the summer of 1920. It was an offshoot of the Khilafat Movement and advocated the mass migration of Muslims from a land

14 For details, see Shakir Moin, *Khilafat to Partition* (New Delhi: Kalamkar Prakashan, 1970). Also see Ozcan, *Pan-Islamism*, 193-94.

15 Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization*, 123, 143-45.

viewed as *daru'l-harab* [Arabic: House of War] to Muslim lands considered *daru'l-Islam* [Arabic: House of Islam]. At the Khilafat conference in Patna in early 1920, Maulana Shaukat declared, "if the Khilafat was tampered with, there were but two courses open to Indian Muslims: *Jihad* or *Hijrat* [Arabic: Migration]."¹⁶ Maulvi Abdul Bari issued a *fatwa* stating that *Hijrat* was permissible in circumstances where people felt that they could no longer perform their religious duties under an alien non-Muslim authority.¹⁷ Many other Ulema followed suit. Maulana Azad stated:

All Muslims who would like to fulfil Islamic obligations must quit India. Those who cannot migrate immediately should help the migrants. The *Sharia* gives no alternative course, except migration. Emigration from India before the war was desirable, but now it is mandatory. Only those Muslims can remain in India who are needed to carry on the struggle or have acceptable reasons against migration.¹⁸

Aziz Hindi, a Khilafat activist from Amritsar, got Afghan Government's permission for Indian migrants' entry into Afghanistan. Thousands of Muslims were persuaded to sell their possessions and join the Hijrat Movement. Within a couple of weeks, the exodus of Indian Muslims towards Khyber Pass got in motion. In August 1920 alone, around 25,000 people moved into Afghanistan. Soon, the Afghan authorities realized that they could not cope with it and started turning the migrants back. As a result, the *Hijrat* process slowed down. Some 60,000 Indians attempted it, but two-third of them returned to India. Many could not cope with the hardships of the journey.¹⁹

16 Ishtiaq H. Qureshi, *Ulema in Politics* (Karachi: The Inter Services Press Limited, 1972), 265.

17 Qureshi, *Ulema in Politics*, 265.

18 Hafeez Malik, *Muslim Nationalism in India and Pakistan* (Washington D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1963), 343-44.

19 For comprehensive discussion on the subject, see M. Naeem Qureshi, "The Ulema of British India and the *Hijrat* of 1920," *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (1979), 41-59.

Even though the Khilafat Movement suffered a major setback due to the failure of the *Hijrat* option, it did not subside for it was essentially linked with developments in Turkey. As the Turkish Liberation of War gained momentum, Indian Muslims began collecting donations for the Turkish Relief Fund. Their support for Turkish nationalist forces continued until the defeat of the Greek forces in September 1922,²⁰ after which the Ankara Government was established under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. During the Greco-Turkish War, Indian Muslims had campaigned for the revision of the Treaty of Sevres. They even contemplated forming a special Ankara Legion to be sent to Turkey, and a committee was elected for this purpose. Thus, they were taken aback when the Turkish nationalist leadership started adopting political reforms contrary to their expectations.²¹ The separation of the Sultanate and Caliphate in November 1922 came as a shock to Khilafat leaders. For this was a key issue they had consistently raised in Europe while campaigning the defence of Khilafat. However, before Khilafat leaders could respond, the Caliph Mehmet Vahiduddin fled from Turkey after being deposed, and Abdulmejid was elected as a new Caliph with no political power.²²

The initial reaction of Indian Muslim to the unexpected developments was a mix of hesitation, disbelief and denial. The news emanating from Europe about these developments were treated with suspicion and portrayed as a European bid to cause a rift between Indian Muslims and the Turks. When they turned out to be true, not everyone was willing to accept the *fait accompli*. While several Ulema termed the said decision of the Ankara Government as anti-Sharia, some Khilafat leaders hoped that the Turks were only trying to save the Caliph from the burden of governance

20 Ozcan, *Pan-Islamism*, 197.

21 For details, see Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

22 Qureshi, *Pan-Islamism in British Indian Politics*, 14.

so as to enable him to concentrate on wider Muslim world affairs. For instance, Dr. Ansari and Hakim Ajmal argued that the decision to separate Sultanate from Caliphate indicated a return to the Islamic tradition of electing the Caliph. Therefore, the Khilafat Conference of Gaya held on December 27, 1922 cautiously welcomed the step and bestowed Mustafa Kemal Pasha with the title of *Seyfu'l-Islam* [Arabic: The Sword of Islam] and *Mujahid-i Khilafat* [Persian: Devotee of Caliphate].²³ Subscribing to the Turkish nationalist view, Dr. Ansari accused former Sultan Vahiduddin of signing the unjust Treaty of Sevres. The treaty, in his words, could have been ratified had the Turkish nationalists not intervened and established themselves in Ankara.²⁴

Consequently, several resolutions passed by Khilafat committees congratulated Mustafa Kemal for the victories that had brought honour not only to Islam but all of Asia as well. The Muslims were also reminded through these resolutions that the defence of Islam was as much the duty of Indian Muslims as that of Mustafa Kemal. For the Indian Muslims, there was no reason to conclude that the loyalty of the Turks to Islam had weakened. Thus, they kept supporting the Ankara Government.²⁵

Meanwhile, the Lausanne Conference, which had already been convened to discuss the final settlement, produced the Treaty of Lausanne on July 24, 1923.²⁶ The harsh attitude of the Allied powers, especially Britain, towards Turkey during the conference had upset the Khilafat leaders. This was also reflected in the Khilafat Conference of Gaya, which passed the following resolution:

23 Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization*, 202.

24 Muhammad, *The Indian Muslims*, 183-87.

25 Ozcan, *Pan-Islamism*, 199.

26 Full text of the Treaty of Lausanne is available at the official website of Harold B. Library, Brigham Young University. <http://www.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Treaty_of_Lausanne>

Musulmans will oppose all those terms of the Allies at the Lausanne Conference which either impair the power and the prestige of the Khilafat or in any way interfere with the Khalifah's complete independence or do not safeguard the sanctity of the Holy Places and do not free them from non-Muslim influence or help to place other Muslim states under non-Muslim control.... This meeting warns that in the event of war with Turkey due to the unjust attitude of the Allies, particularly Britain, the Muslims of India would immediately launch civil disobedience with a programme which would include spreading their propaganda among the police and the army, stopping of fresh recruitment, refusal to subscribe to war loans, recruitment to the Angora legion, picketing of foreign cloth and liquor and preventing the exports of food grains.²⁷

This message undoubtedly reached London — even though it was unclear as to how much it influenced the British approach during the Lausanne Conference. The Indian agitation and the Viceroy's warnings about it could have influenced the British thinking on the occasion. However, the Lausanne Treaty still fell short of fulfilling Indian Muslims' expectations. Khilafat leaders continued criticizing the British Government for not honouring their demands concerning *Jaziratul-Arab*. Thus, there was still some reason to keep the movement alive.²⁸

However, six months later, on March 3, 1924 the Khilafat Movement faced its biggest blow when the Turkish Parliament abolished the Ottoman Caliphate. The developments in Turkey regarding the Caliph's position, especially after the establishment of the Turkish Republic on October 29, 1923 had already been a source of anxiety for Khilafat leaders. In November 1923, Agha Khan and Amir Ali, as representatives of the Indian Muslims, wrote a letter to the Turkish Prime Minister, Ismet Inonu, urging the Turkish Government to restore the Caliphate "on a basis, which would command the confidence and esteem of Muslim

27 Muhammad, *The Indian Muslims*, 183-87.

28 A. C. Niemeijer, *The Indian Khilafat Movement* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 153-54.

nations, and thus impart to the Turkish state unique strength and dignity.”²⁹

Although the letter was addressed to the Turkish Prime Minister in Ankara, some Istanbul papers published it even before the Turkish Government became aware of it. This was taken as evidence of a conspiracy against the Turkish state, for the Istanbul papers were identified with the pro-caliphate opposition. There was a furore in Ankara for what was called an unwarranted interference in the internal affairs of the Turkish Republic. Since both Agha Khan and Amir Ali were known to be loyal to the British, their move was interpreted as a tactic motivated by the British Government. By using this letter as a pretext, Mustafa Kemal seized the opportunity to abolish the Caliphate. The matter was taken to the Grand National Assembly on March 1, 1924. Two days later, the deputies voted to banish the office, depose the Caliph within 24 hours, and expel all members of the Ottoman dynasty as well.³⁰

One of the main reasons why Mustafa Kemal's acted to abolish the Caliphate was that the Republican form of the new regime and the secular reforms that he intended to adopt were deemed incompatible with its existence. This radical step by the Ankara Government came as a great shock to Indian Muslims, especially the Khilafat leaders. They requested the Turkish Government to reconsider its action. Mustafa Kemal's plea that the new Turkish Republic did not need a Caliphate, which had been a constant source of strife and duplicity among Muslims, was not persuasive enough for the Indian Muslims.³¹

After the initial shock and furore, the Khilafat leaders understood that the Turkish government would not withdraw its decision under any circumstances. Therefore, they

29 Ozcan, *Pan-Islamism*, 200.

30 Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 263.

31 Niemeijer, *The Indian Khilafat Movement*, 155.

suggested that Mustafa Kemal should accept the title of Caliph himself, which was also rejected by the Turkish leader. Maulana Azad argued that the Caliphate as an institution had been vested upon a person of the most powerful Muslim nation. Hence, the expulsion of Abdulmecid could not do away with the institution, which now automatically passed to the Turkish Parliament as the representative body of the most powerful Muslim state.³² Unlike Azad, other Indian Muslim leaders approached the matter rather pragmatically. They considered the developments in Turkey as progressive and acceptable under Islam. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, for example, justified them as being an exercise of the right of *Ijtihad* [Arabic: Independent Reasoning]. He argued that the Ottoman Caliphate had long become a “mere symbol of power which departed long ago. The idea of a universal caliphate was a workable idea when the empire of Islam was intact.”³³

Failure and Implications

Despite all the appeals and protests by Indian Muslims, the process of Turkish secularization could not be stopped. The abolishing of the Caliphate also dramatically changed the political situation in India. The Khilafat Movement lost its political force, for it was deprived of its justification.³⁴ The Movement's leaders, thus, failed to perceive the conflict between decadent monarchic institution of Caliphate and rising democratic aspirations of Turkish Republicans and frame their response accordingly. They failed to see that it was Turkish nationalist forces rather than the Caliph who put up successful resistance against unjust terms of Treaty of Sevres and led to its eventual repudiation. The intra-Turkish divide, argues Bernard Lewis, was so strong that Sheikh-ul-Islam Durrenzade Abdullah Effendi, issued a *fatwa*, on the

32 Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization*, 204-205.

33 Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), 149.

34 Aziz, *The Indian Khilafat Movement*, 33.

invitation of the Grand Vezir Damad Ferid Pasha, declaring that killing of the nationalists was a religious duty of Muslims. Caliph Vahiduddin had begun purging the Turkish army and ordered the formation of the special forces of discipline to fight against it.³⁵ Yet, utterly confused about the rapidly evolving Turkish reality, the Khilafat leaders continued glorifying Mustafa Kemal Ataturk as a *ghazi* [Urdu: veteran] while simultaneously veneering the Caliph. Thus, as soon as Ataturk himself abolished the institution of Caliphate in 1924, the Movement they spearheaded in India for over four years fizzled out under the burden of its contradiction.³⁶

It is thus clear that the goals of Khilafat Movement and Turkish Liberation Movement were always different — with the former grounded in the ideal of pan-Islamism and the latter was founded on the realist notion of Turkish nationalism. Tensions between the two Movements — initially showing the compatibility of interest vis-à-vis the common enemy, Great Britain — were bound to appear the moment nationalist leadership succeeded in its mission of liberating the Turkish nation. In the end, while the Khilafat leadership was still holding on to its utopian pan-Islamist vision for post-liberation Turkey, the Turkish nationalist leadership was busy adopting a series of modernist-secular reforms. Each Turkish step, away from the Caliphate, added to the moral dilemma facing the Khilafat leadership. Yet until the Caliphate's abolition, the Khilafat leaders tried to convince themselves and their supporters among Indian Muslims that Ataturk's reforms were motivated by circumstantial realities and have only temporal significance.³⁷ Their opposition to Ataturk became apparent in 1924, when he decided to abolish the Caliphate, thereby

35 Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*.

36 For details, see Hamza Alvi, "Ironies of History: Contradiction of the Khilafat Movement", *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 17, No.1 (1997), 1-16.

37 Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, *A Speech delivered by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk 1927* (Istanbul, 1963). For its analysis, see Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

rendering a blow to their pan-Islamist ambitions. Three years later, in a long speech at a convention of the People's Party of the Republic of Turkey, from October 15 to 20, 1927 Ataturk justified the abolition of Caliphate and the establishment of Republic, while accusing Caliph Vahiduddin and Vezir Pasha of conspiring with the British against Turkish Republican Revolution.

Even though the Khilafat Movement failed to achieve its founding objectives, it did serve as a morale booster for the Turkish nationalist forces under Mustafa Kemal's command. Additionally, it helped generate the much-needed financial resources for the Angora Fund from Subcontinent Muslims in the form of British currency as well as gold and silver ornaments deposited voluntarily by Indian Muslim women in the Khilafat account. It was partly this financial help with which the building for the Turkish Grand National Assembly was constructed, and the gold and silver contributed by the Indian Muslim women helped create the reserve for the Turkish Ish Bankasi. The victory of Turkish nationalist forces led by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, which was celebrated throughout the Subcontinent by its Muslim populace, also inspired the Indian Muslim League and its leaders and followers in their struggle for freedom. Indian Muslims saw Turkey's struggle for independence similar to their own freedom struggle.³⁸

For the Indian Muslims, the Turkish War of Liberation served as an example of resistance to foreign domination. The subsequent establishment of a modern Turkish Republic encouraged them to wage their own nationalist struggle towards the same end. Pro-Turkish sentiments among Indian Muslims contributed to the development of a nationalist identity among them as well as their alienation from the British. Above all, perhaps for the first time in history, the Muslims of the Subcontinent could patch up their differences on a single issue — the concern for the Ottomans and the Caliphate — and join hands for a common

38 Qureshi, *Ulema in Politics*, 265.

cause. The same factor also united Muslims and Hindus. However, this unity was short-lived, as Mahatma Gandhi, due to his personal conviction for non-violence, renounced the Movement as soon as violence gripped it. Even otherwise, Gandhi's participation in an anti-British Indian mass movement was motivated by Indian nationalism rather than pan-Islamism, which distinguished him from Muslim leadership of the Khilafat Movement.

Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who led the All-India Muslim League struggle for the creation of Pakistan, was not opposed to the Khilafat question in principle. For instance, in his presidential address at the All-India Muslim League in Calcutta in September 1920, Jinnah described the Khilafat issue as one "which we consider, from a purely Musalman point of view, a matter of life and death."³⁹ His opposition was to the methods the Khilafat leadership had adopted for the purpose, especially Mahatma Gandhi's Non-Cooperation Movement. He feared such politics of mass agitation would only result in further fragmentation of Indian society. Instead, he proposed the moderate, constitutional political course of action against the colonial administration. He gave up on the Khilafat cause as soon as the Turkish nationalist leadership decided to abolish the Caliphate. Thus, "Jinnah's attitude towards the Khilafat Movement seems fairly consistent and suggestive of political acumen and foresight."⁴⁰

Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal was equally pragmatic. He underwent an ideological metamorphosis before articulating the concept of Pakistan on the basis of Indian Muslim nationalism in his famous address at the annual session of All-India Muslim League in Allahabad in December 1930. Iqbal had to transform his pan-Islamism ideal into the concept of Muslim nationalism in response to the grand Turkish shift from Ottoman Caliphate to

39 Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, ed., *Foundations of Pakistan: All-India Muslim League Documents: 1906-1947*, (Karachi: National Publishing House, 1969), 1: 544.

40 M. Naeem Qureshi, "Jinnah and the Khilafat Movement (1918-1924)," in *World Scholars on Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah*, ed., Ahmad Hasan Dani (Islamabad: Quaid-i-Azam University, 1979), 160.

Nationalist Republic. Sharif al-Mujahid⁴¹ identifies three stages in the evolution of Iqbal's political philosophy, from nationalistic to pan-Islamist to Muslim nationalist. He initially favoured Indian nationalism, realising that the regeneration of Indian Muslims lay in their marching together with other communities towards a nationalistic dispensation. However, soon the Partition of Bengal in 1905 and Muslim disunity in the name of nationalism in places like Turkey, Egypt and Iran contributed to his revulsion against nationalism. This is when he began to voice support for the sort of pan-Islamic solution to Muslim problem argued earlier by Sayyid Jamal-al-Din al-Afghani. However, by the 1920s, he could not ignore the bitter reality of Afghan authorities turning way Indian Muslim émigrés and Turkey's leaders opting for a nationalist choice. As the nationalistic Muslim struggles emerged as a preferred option to liberate Muslim people from Western colonialism, Iqbal "sought to resolve the conflict between nationalism, the fact of life, and pan-Islamism, the ideal towards which he would like to see them strive." Thus, like Afghani, he "arrived at the concept of 'Islamic' but, more accurately, Muslim nationalism."⁴²

While in 1924, Iqbal had bemoaned the abolition of the Caliphate with the verse, *Lo! The unthinking Turks have torn asunder the mantle of Khilafat*,⁴³ five years later, he defended Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's precipitate and extremely controversial decision. More important, he even went to the extent of considering "perfectly sound" Turkey's *ijtihad* in vesting Caliphate or *Imamat* "in a body of persons, or an elected Assembly."⁴⁴ If one

41 Sharif al Mujahid, "Muslim Nationalism: Iqbal's Synthesis of Pan-Islamism and Nationalism," *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, 2, no.1 (1985): 29-40.

42 Wilfred C. Smith, *Islam in Modern History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 48.

43 Sharif al Mujahid, "Muslim Nationalism", 36.

44 Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 157. Inspired by Ataturk and his vision of modern Turkey, Allama Iqbal wrote a series of poems. Two verses from one such poem from *Payam-e-Mashriq* written in Urdu in July 1922 are worth mentioning: *There was a nation through whose wisdom we learned the secrets of destiny; Our origin was just a small spark; He cast a glance at us, and we became Sun, which conquered the world.* See "Khitab Ba Mustafa Kamal Ayda Allah," *Payam-e-Mashriq*-055, (July 1922), cited in Qureshi, *Ulema in Politics*, 145.

represented the anguished cry of a pan-Islamist, the other represented the enthusiastic defense of a nationalist venture by the leader, however much accredited, of a single Muslim country in a matter intrinsically Islamic without consulting, in fact in complete disregard of the consensus of the rest of the Muslim world.⁴⁵ Like Ataturk, Iqbal advocated multi-nationalism in Islam, but with one major distinction: Whereas Kemal was for restricting the social horizon of Turkish Muslims to Turkey alone, Iqbal was against 'restricting the social horizons' of the members of a Muslim nation. This crucial difference made Kemal's multi-nationalism concept essentially nationalistic while making Iqbal's basically pan-Islamic... Even so, this new stance represents a radical shift in Iqbal's previous position: from the high pedestal of a universal Islamic state he comes down to the more prosaic and pragmatic plan of separate but "strong and powerful" (i.e., independent) "Muslim states,"⁴⁶ which formed the core of his Allahabad address.

The genesis of the Khilafat Movement can be traced to the mindset of the Indian Muslims that if Ottoman Turkey, the symbol of Islam's worldly power, was to disappear, their political importance in Hindu majority India would be compromised. This psychological factor, quite apart from the romantic appeal of pan-Islamism, pushed them to action. The Khilafat Movement was, therefore, a political ride propelled by the Indian Muslims' minority syndrome⁴⁷ and apprehensions about an uncertain future. Gail Minault argues that the movement was concerned with power, not piety. Communalist politicians rallied Muslim masses around the Caliphate symbol to secure a following that they could use to realise political self-interests.⁴⁸ The Khilafat Movement certainly

45 Sharif al Mujahid, "Muslim Nationalism", 36.

46 See Iqbal's Presidential Address to the 25th Session of the All-India Muslim League Allahabad, December 29, 1930 in Latif Ahmed Sherwani, ed., *Speeches, Writings, and Statements of Iqbal* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 1977), 3-26.

47 Naeem Qureshi also mentioned the Muslim minority syndrome as a main factor for causing tension in Indian Muslims' relationship with the Hindus and the Europeans, and inculcating in them the spirit of pan-Islamism. See Qureshi, *Pan-Islamism in British Indian Politics*, 2.

48 See Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization*. For general description about the politics behind pan-

had a domestic political context, as the Muslims of India were quite desperately looking for an extraneous symbol of Muslim power i.e., the Ottoman *Khalifa*, that they could relate to while living as a minority in a Hindu-dominated country under the British colonial rule. They took upon the pan-Islamic ideology not merely to challenge the British but also to develop their own collective self-identity.

The Khilafat Movement aimed to recreate a moribund institution of Khilafat, which had outlived its utility and time. Instead, it deepened the feelings of religious nationalism among Indian Muslims. The Movement, argues Naeem Qureshi, was “ostensibly designed to save the Ottoman Empire from dismemberment following the First World War. It was a conscious attempt to promote Muslim political interests in India. In other words, pan-Islamism was merged into Indian nationalism to obtain freedom from India.”⁴⁹ Hamza Alvi, on the other hand, does not consider it as an anti-colonial movement. In his opinion, the main achievement of the Khilafat Movement was the turning away of Indian Muslims from a secular understanding of politics, towards a religious and communal one.⁵⁰ His criticism of the Khilafat Movement is two-fold: that it destroyed the Hindu-Muslim amity resulting of the Lucknow Pact⁵¹ of 1916 between the All-India Muslim League and the Indian National Congress; and that it

Islamism, see Jacob M. Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam: Ideology and Organization* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

49 Qureshi, *Pan-Islam in British Indian Politics*, 112. Though the Khilafat Movement was born of pan-Islamic fervour, Qureshi cautions against viewing it as a mere exercise in romanticism, or even altruism. As he says, the Khilafatists “were pursuing the salvation of Muslim sovereignty and power abroad and, with it, the security of the Muslim community in India.” See Shahid Kamal, “Khilafat Revisited,” *Dawn*, November 27, 2009.

50 See Hamza Alvi, “Ironies of History: Contradictions of The Khilafat Movement,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 17, no. 1(1997): 15. Also see Mushirul Hasan, “Pan-Islamism versus Indian Nationalism,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, 21, no. 24 (June 14, 1986): 1074-79.

51 In the Lucknow Pact, the Indian National Congress for the first time accepted Indian Muslims’ right to separate electorates, and, therefore, Indian Muslims as a distinct political community in India and the All-India Muslim League as their representative body.

introduced religious idiom in the politics of Indian Muslims, with lasting impact on post-Partition politics in India and Pakistan.⁵²

It is true that the political struggle waged by the All-India Muslim League under Jinnah's leadership was essentially meant to secure due constitutional rights for the Indian Muslims. However, Khilafat Movement was not the only time when communal trend crept into Indian politics. Hindu nationalism had already emerged as a crucial factor in the politics of Indian National Congress, particularly under leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, with Hindu revivalist organisations such as Hindu Mahasabha sabotaging the Lucknow Pact as soon as it was concluded. Given that, a framework of competing religious nationalisms provides a better understanding of the evolution of Indian politics in the run up to Partition. The genesis of Pakistan Movement lies in a much wider historical context, and the complementary role of the Khilafat Movement for the purpose, in political rather than religious sense, cannot be overlooked. Pan-Islam, even though it proved chimerical in the end, played an important role in mobilizing Indian Muslims for mass politics and in so doing contributed decisively to the development of Muslim nationalism in the long run.⁵³

After all, the Khilafat Movement was the first-ever countrywide agitation of the Muslims of British India with a central organisation to guide its course. It trained them in political agitation and taught them how to pursue their demands. It changed political alignments and introduced new ones in their place. Muslim regions hitherto lagging in political experience, such as the Punjab, Sindh and the Frontier, responded side by side with Bombay, Bengal and the UP, which had well-established political traditions. Although the Khilafat Movement achieved no ostensible success, however it was of considerable value for making Indian Muslims politically more conscious and preparing educated professionals among them, such as journalists, lawyers and businessmen, for political action. It provided "a broad-based leadership and taught the techniques of organizing a mass movement to Indian Muslims."⁵⁴

52 Alvi, "Ironies of History", 1-16.

53 Kamal, "Khilafat Revisited," *Dawn*, November 27, 2009.

54 Ishtiaq H. Qureshi, *The Struggle for Pakistan*, (Karachi: University of Karachi Press, 1967), 41.

Thus, even though unwittingly, the Khilafat Movement bequeathed a pattern of politics, which the Muslims of India later followed in the run up to the creation of Pakistan.

Conclusion

Thus the post-Khilafat Movement, Indian politics had its own peculiar dynamics as was apparent from an ever-widening rift between the All-India Muslim League and the Indian National Congress. Secondly, the introduction of politics of agitation in the guise of pan-Islamism could have influenced its course only up to an extent. Though, the Khilafat Movement utterly failed to realise its founding pan-Islamic objectives, however, the moral and material support Turkish nationalists received from Indian Muslims under its auspices inadvertently contributed to the establishment of the modern Turkish republic under Ataturk's leadership. The success of Turkish nationalism, indeed, became a precursor to reinvigorated Muslim nationalist politics in British-led India and the consequent struggle for Pakistan. The establishment of a separate homeland for Indian Muslims was initially conceptualised by Iqbal and eventually actualised by Jinnah, and both of them admired Ataturk's revolution and reforms. Thus, whatever impact the Khilafat Movement had on the struggle for Pakistan, including in terms of preparing Indian Muslim masses for forceful political action, was indirect and complementary in nature but it cannot be overlooked nor can it be exaggerated.