CHAPTER IV

EMERGENCE OF NEW POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG THE MUSLIMS OF INDIA
Nationalism has been a great motivating force in the modern world, yet it defies any precise definition. It is a concept according to which the loyalty and allegiance of individual should be primarily to the nation. It can be described as the desire of a person to be part of a sovereign nation.

Nationalism in Asia is a modern phenomenon. Its origins have varied from country to country and in many cases are several generations old. Although it was evident in the second half of the nineteenth century, its main development took place about the turn of the century.1

In India too, the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century was a formative period in the development of nationalism.

In modern times, the impact of Turkey on India has been rather unique, not witnessed between two other countries of the world. "The last quarter of the nineteenth century witnessed an unprecedented wave of democratic and constitutional developments in the Ottoman empire, the predecessor of modern Turkey, which brought about sweeping changes in

1. J. Kennedy, Asian nationalism in the twentieth century, p.3.
Turkey".\textsuperscript{2} In India too, the second half of the nineteenth century experienced the full flowering of national political consciousness and the growth of an organized national movement. It was the Indian National congress under whose leadership, the Indians waged a prolonged and courageous struggle for independence from foreign rule. In the years of the twentieth century Ottoman Turkey, an empire, and India, a most valuable colony witnessed a chain of historic events which facilitated a remarkable and deep mutual interaction between them. The death, destruction, devastation and crises, on the international scene which resulted in great changes everywhere also made an impact on, and gave a shape to, the interaction between Turkey and India.

Even before the abolition of the caliphate in 1924, the young Turk revolution (1908) exerted an outstanding influence on the Muslims of India, who were guided by religious sentiments. The revolution broadened their outlook and modified their ways of thinking. As a result, they realised the efficacy of progress and reforms and cared to participate in the political and administrative affairs of their own country.

\textsuperscript{2} Prof. Mohammad Sadiq, \textit{The Turkish revolution and the Indian freedom movement}, p.14.
The changes in Turkey were also applauded by a Calcutta paper, the Bengalee:

We were told that there was at least one country in the world whose people were absolutely uninfluenced by western ideals of government, and that was Turkey. People naturally never looked forward to any reforms in its government. So, when we heard that the Sultan had announced the grant of a constitution amid the universal rejoicings of his people, we began to wonder if the news could be true. But the announcement, followed by the dismissal of unpopular Minister, the granting of amnesty to political offenders, the abolition of the system of espionage and press-censorship, makes one feel that evidently the Sultan means to abide by his promise ....There is no reason for doubt that a constitutional Government will give Turkey not only stability but a fresh lease of life.3

The young Turk Revolution convinced the Indian nationalists of the need for self government. They felt that the argument of the Englishman that the representative government was unsuited to India due to diversity of races and people was false. The Turkish example had demonstrated that representative institutions were 'the great solvent of

3. The Bengalee, August 1, 1908.
administrative problems arising from racial controversies. Thus the Bengalee commented in an editorial, are we not, therefore, justified in holding that self government is the only true panacea for the wide spread unrest and discontent which now prevails in India? The fur-coat argument is a plausible fallacy; it is based upon the assumption of an essential difference between the temperament of the East and that of the West. It is forgotten that subject to trivial differences & inequalities, human nature is the same all over the world. "The unchanging East" has been a favourable fiction of western nations. It further observed, India too, feels the pulsations of a new life. She had to control of her destinies, she too would join in the great forward march.  

It was expected that the Indian Muslims, sooner or later, would join the Hindus in search of self-government for India and only then the beautiful figure of speech of sir Syed Ahmad Khan that "the Hindus and Muhammadans are like two eyes of a fair maiden, if you injure the one you injure the other", would be true.  

4. Ibid, August 2, 1908.  
5. Ibid.  
Sir Edward Grey (the British Foreign Secretary) was conscious of the fact that henceforth "Our position in explaining the lack of constitutional rights to British governed peoples will be awkward". In India, Minto was of the view that "the constitutional movement in Turkey is full of meaning"-"to my mind quite one of the most interesting indications of the times, with which we have to deal". However, Morley appears to have been more concerned with the possible impact of the young Turk Revolution on Indians.

"I think the strange new move in Turkey will put a fresh weapon into the hands of our Indian opposition. If the state grants a parliamentary constitution to the Grand Turk and the Mikado and the czars, w'ont they argue why should India be left alone in the world without the same luxury? Will the Turkish move shake the Mohammedans? If it does our case will be rather an awkward, I should guess".

The nationalist saw in the success of the young Turk Revolution, the affirmation and fulfilment of their own aspirations. As anticipated by Morley, it afforded them the opportunity to criticise and attack on the British

7. Minto to Morley, 29 July 1908, No.40, Minto Papers.
8. Ibid, 30 July, 1908, No. 41 Minto Papers.
policies. They hoped that the "sun which had caught the Sultan's turret's would throw its radiance over India also". 9 Indians were asked to emulate Japan and Turkey to regain their lost honour. 10 R.C. Dutt acclaimed the Revolution in these words, "the East is following the footsteps of the west after a lapse of sixty years, as 1908 will be as memorable in history as 1848". 11

It had long been argued that India being a country of diverse people, creeds, sects and religions was unfit for representative institutions. This was also said about oriental people in general. But in the first quarter of the present century all these myths were shattered by the Japanese victory over Russia in 1905, and the success of the young Turk Revolution. These shining events released minds in India, from the self deprecating belief so far fostered by the British rulers. 12

Syed Haider Reza, editor of the Aftab of Delhi, underlined some points where he wrote, "we would have undoubtedly carried on the same agitation, were our rulers Hindu Kings

10. G.V. Joshi, the nationalist leader published a signed leading article, 'Thoughts on the Revolution in Turkey', in Marhatta (Poona), 30 August, 1908.
or Mohammedan Sultans." All agitations for a democratic government and constitution are not directed against any particular government.\(^{13}\) He further argued that "the very fact that the Caliph of the Mohammedans is elected, shows clearly that the Mohammedans are familiar with representative institution from times immemorial".\(^ {14}\) The people of Turkey, by forcing their ruler to establish a parliament, in their country has shown themselves capable of establishing representative institutions.\(^ {15}\) It was argued that history records no instance where the rulers voluntarily recognized that their subject have reached a state where they can be entrusted with self-government. Such fallacies have been exploded and no inherent incapacity could be ascribed to eastern people for constitutional government.\(^ {16}\)

The Bengalee wrote, "what has happened in Turkey, will be repeated on the banks of the Ganges. It has been established that self-government where introduced amongst heterogeneous populations with divergent creeds and interests has

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13. Syed Haider Reza had earlier argued that Islam favours democracy and patriotism, that these ideas dominated Persia and in fact the entire Asiatic continent with only exception of Indian Muslims (Aftab) Delhi, 1907.

14. Ibid.


16. Praja Bandhu (Bombay), 24 April, 1909.
acted as the most potent dissolvent of all racial and sectarian hatreds and Jealousies".\textsuperscript{17}

Abbas S. Tyabji, a Judge of the Baroda High Court, sought to persuade Muslims, to join the congress movement which was non-sectarian and has the interest of the country at heart. The Muslims had not joined the congress so far because of mistaken notions of loyalty to the British. Abbas had the impression that the western representative system is a good system; and now with the young Turk Revolution, Indian Muslims could see that "Turkish Muslims no longer consider that loyalty means unqualified submission to the power that be".\textsuperscript{18}

To many it remained a riddle how the young Turk succeeded against the Abdul Hamid. It was considered as an indication that anywhere bureaucracy would go on yielding place to popular representative systems of government. The forces of democracy was becoming strong and opening up new paths of national progress.\textsuperscript{19} Turkey had obtained both the representative institutions and the liberty of the press,

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\item[17.] The Bengalee (Calcutta), 16 Oct., 1908.
\item[18.] A.S. Tyabji, Indian Musalmans and the Indian National Congress Hindustan Review, Dec. 1908.
\item[19.] Nade gannadi (Bengalore), 16 August, 1908.
\end{itemize}
the two indispensable accessories of progress. 20 "There is in the history's wrote the Punjabee, "of the young Turk movement lessons alike for the people and the Government of India". The former Should see that a constitutional form of government may be won without bloodshed and seismic convulsions in the body politic of the process of education and organization be kept up steadily, even if slowly... how the young Turks educated in western style, kept up their propaganda with immense pluck and resourcefulness, until they brought over to their side everyone in the country who could think... no effort had been spared to familiarise the army and its officers with the principle of constitutionalism.... It is true that the Army being in the hands of the Reforms meant an element of force, pregnant with possibilities of bloodshed if any resistance had been offered. 21

Abul Kalam Azad acknowledges, how the ideals and aspirations of the young Turks influenced him. In 1908, just before the young Turk Revolution, he had visited a number of Middle Eastern countries and had the opportunity to meet the revolutionaries of those countries. He met a group of young Turk in Cairo. In Turkey he came in contact with the leaders of the young Turk movement, with whom he remained in


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regular correspondence for several years. Azad writes that the Arab and Turkish revolutionaries confirmed him, in his own political beliefs.\textsuperscript{22} These committed revolutionaries expressed their surprise as to why Indian Muslims were either indifferent to or against the Indian nationalist demands. Instead, they should have led the national struggle for freedom. They failed to understand, why the Muslims were mere camp followers of the British in India.\textsuperscript{23} Azad was fully convinced that Indian Muslims must cooperate with their compatriots for the liberation of India. To propagate his ideas among Indian Muslims he launched an Urdu journal the Al-Hilal, in 1912.\textsuperscript{24}

The success of the young Turks, against Abdul Hamid II, signified that the sovereign will of the people could get rid of a ruler who had not served them well.\textsuperscript{25} The two papers of Tilak, the Kesri and the Mahratta, made significant observations as regards the impact of the young Turk Revolution on India. The Kesari commented:

Swaraj in Turkey has a good deal to do with swaraj in India. For more than five hundred years, the principles

\textsuperscript{22} Abul Kalam Azad, Indian wins Freedom, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{25} Akash (Delhi), 20 May 1909.
that were in vogue at Istanbul, were followed by the rest of the Muslim world. Istanbul, set the law to Delhi, and through it to the whole of India... In short ...ruled the ideas of Muslims all over the world.26

While the Mahratta observed, the Mohammedan religion is a democratic religion, but as the mild, philanthropic and saintly teachings of Christ are now welded into a political instrument of conquest and self aggrandisement... so the democratic nature of the teachings of Mohammad set aside... and the Sultanate of Turkey served for the last two centuries the purpose of a Chinese wall checking the onward march of constitutionalism towards the East and the Middle East.27 The paper further commented:

The Absolute and autocratic rule of the old Sultans, is responsible not only for the backward condition of the Muslim countries in and around the Turkish Empire, but to a certain extent for the present political stagnation in India... the Sultanate of the Khalifa of Constantinople, has been a great hindrance to the assimilation of constitutionalism by both the Hindus and Muslim masses of India.28

27. Merhatta (Bombay), 2 May 1909.
The young Turks could not continue peacefully in their office for long, because soon Abdul Hamid was found preparing for a counter-revolution to overthrow them. But the prompt measures of the young Turks thwarted the designs of the Sultan, who was then deposed and replaced by Muhammed VI, who promised to rule like a constitutional monarch. Though the young Turks advocated the gospel of brotherhood and the equality of the races, yet due to economic difficulties and trouble with foreign powers', they failed in their attempts to unite the various races.29

Taking advantage of the internal difficulties of Turkey, Italy declared war on her and forcibly occupied Tripoli in North-Africa in September 1911. The Turko-Italian war had a great impact on Indian politics. It stirred the pan-Islamic sentiments of the Indian Muslims. The action of Italy has exasperated the entire Muslim world and all fair minded non-muslims too have not failed to condemn Italy for having entered into a war without any justification whatsoever.30

Ameer Ali in a letter to the editor of the times, expressed the desirability of Britain's intervention in this war. He wrote: England has undoubtedly the greatest stake

in the maintenance of peace in the Eastern world. She has
in her charge the welfare and progress of 40,00,00,000 of
people, of whom fully one-fourth are Muslims. As a British
subject who has worked for many years past in strengthening
the bond of sympathy between the East and west, I feel that
it is of the utmost importance to England, for the Sake of
her great trusteeship to do all in her power to bring the
one-sided struggle to an early end on an equitable basis.31
The Westminster Gazette, Sharing Ameer Ali's feelings also
in an editorial, wrote that England must use her good of­
fices, in locating the quarrel and try her best to save the
Turkish flag in Tripoli, and to guard her interests wherever
it was threatened.32

The Times, in an editorial cautioned the British of the
outcome of this policy of non-intervention. It expressed, a
Holy war in Tripoli, might react all over that Muslim world
to which so many millions of British subjects belong. The
central powers of the continent are naturally most concerned
with the possible consequences of such a contest in the
Balkan and in Turkey herself. Those consequences might
prove to be very formidable to us as well as to them; but it

31. The Times, Oct. 11, 1911.
is as the greatest of Muslim powers that we have special cause to dread troubles that to Muslim eyes might seem a conflict between Christianity and Islam.  

The report on Indian constitutional reforms mentioned that the Muslims upto 1910 had kept themselves 'aloof from the revolutionary movement, and retained their traditional attitude of loyalty to the English. But from 1911 this attitude changed. As the report mentions. Their first disquiet arose from the war which broke out between Italy and Turkey in 1911, when Great Britain's neutrality engendered some bitterness of feelings. It appeared to our Muslims, in India that in deference to the religious susceptibilities of her seventy million subjects, Great Britain ought to have supported Turkey.

When the Indian Muslims were seething with resentment, the very time the annulment of the partition shocked some of the Muslim leaders of India." The annulment of the partition of Bengal by the King at the Delhi Darbar in December 1911, was heart-breaking for Nawab Salimullah that after presiding over the session of the league which was held in

33. The Times, Sept. 28, 1911.
35. Ibid.
Calcutta in March 1912, he announced his withdrawal from the public activities and died shortly afterwards".36

The Turko-Italian war, and the partition of Bengal, made Muslims to realise their folly of loyalty to Britain and they began to think of casting their lots with the Hindus. Mohammad Ali observed that the annulment of the partition of Bengal was distinct landmark in the political progress of the Muslims. Nothing could have more clearly convinced them, than this dependence upon a foreign Government, for support against the sister communities laid them perpetually open to such betrayals. They now realised that they could place no reliance on such support, whether at home or abroad, and it set them thinking that perhaps at a much smaller sacrifice they could maintain lasting peace and even secure the friendship of their neighbors and fellow countrymen.37 To quote Ram Gopal, "They learnt from the Turks to read into the British foreign policy, a purpose of deliberate hostility to Islam itself, and therefore they grew hostile to the British and cast their eyes beyond the Muslim league, at the congress".38

36. Prasad Rajendra, India Divided, pp.110-111.
Bishan Narayan Dhar in his presidential address of the Congress session of 1911, advocated the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity. He said, ... I regret the feeling of estrangement which has sprung up between the two communities in recent years; for believing as I do that the ultimate good of India lies in the union of both, it is the most cherished desire of my heart that this estrangement may be healed and that some basis of compromise and accommodation may be found which may be honourable to both and detrimental to neither. I know what India owes to Mohammedans; I know what mark they have made in the world's history; I know how cordial have been our relations with them, how even now outside the dusty atmosphere of politics those relations remain undisturbed.39

The Turko-Italian war undermined the faith of Muslims in the Britishers. The attitude of Britain in the war was considered as an insult to their loyalty and made them conscious of the true nature of the British policy. As a result, the Muslims of India drew closer to the Hindus and Hindu-Muslim unity became the talk of the day. The Hindus also joined protest-meetings against the Italian attack. Bipan Chandra Pal presided one of the meetings at Calcutta—while explaining reason for joining the meetings, Pal said

that nationalism was in favour of preserving Turkey intact, because nations are limbs of humanity. Secondly, the loss of Turkey meant loss to the world civilization, thirdly Turkey represented the real federation which was neither political nor economic, but a federation of a nation's civilization and religion. He strongly pleaded that the civilized world must not let Turkey be effaced from the map of Europe as Turkey had an important mission to fulfil.

At the beginning of the war, the British publicly made it clear, whatever the outcome might be of those hostilities, in no case would the powers permit any alteration in the status quo. However, in a speech of the Guild Hall on Nov. 9, 1912, Asquith Herbert Henry (British Prime Minister) declared,

The Balkan armies are in effective possession of Macedonia and Thrace. Salonic, the gateway through which Christianity first entered Europe, is occupied by the Greeks... The power sought honestly and earnestly, by diplomatic pressure and without resort to force, to secure conditions of order and good government in the European provinces of

40. The Times of India, Nov. 5, 1912.
41. Ibid.
the Ottoman Empire, but forces were at work which were beyond the control of any diplomatic manipulation. The Balkan States took matters with their own hands. Things can never be again as they were and it is the business of statesmen everywhere to recognise and accept the accomplished fact... The map of Eastern Europe was to be recast... upon one thing, I believe the general opinion of Europe to be unanimous, viz; that the victory are not to be robbed of the fruits which cost them so dear. 43 This declaration was contrary to the earlier declaration which the Foreign Secretary had proclaimed. This was pointed out by Arnold ward, a member of the House of commons during debate in the British Parliament on war in Balkans. He observed, 'you can not defend both these declarations, for if one was right the other must have been wrong'. 44

The general feeling among the Muslims of India was that they had been betrayed by Britain. They also felt that Britain and other Christian powers were making a slow but concerted attempt for the dismemberment of the Ottoman empire. The result of the war led the Muslims to cooperate with the Hindus and thus with the congress, which was the

43. The Times, Nov. 11, 1912.
44. Parliamentary Debates (H.C.), Vol, LVI, 1913, p.2311.
vanguard of the freedom movement. Thus the base of the Indian National Movement was broadened.

From Balkan wars till the outbreak of first world war, a number of outstanding Turkish personalities visited India and expressed their gratitude to the Indians for their generous support during the Balkan wars. Their contact with Indian nationalist leaders made them realise in the conspiracy of the Imperial powers against the Turks and to draw a parallel between their own plight and that of the people of India. Their visit resulted in closer ties between the young Turks and the nationalists of India.45

At the time, when First world war broke out, rumour spread concerning the possibility of Turkey joining the war and the people of the world believed that the entire Muslim world would come to the Turkish side. The entry of Turkey in the war put the Muslim population of India in a State of dilemma. Their loyalty to the Sultan of Turkey came in conflict with the loyalty to the British power. This was realised by the British government and an attempt was made to win over their loyalty. R.C. Majumdar writes, the British Government fully perceived the difficulty of the Indian Muslims, and in order to win their sympathy and support

45. Prof. Mohammed sadiq, op.cit, p.40.
during the war, gave assurances of sympathetic treatment of Turkey at the end of the war. 46

To win the support of the Indian Muslims, a communique was issued by the Government of India which said, "Great Britain, the greatest Mohammedan power in the world, and the faithful and consistent friend of Turkey", who has steadfastly helped to maintain her position in Europe and to recover her stability, which has shaken in the Balkan wars, would see with greatest regret that Turkey had been decoyed into ranging herself on the side of England's enemies and into adopting an attitude as unjustified as it would be ungrateful, but it can not be denied that the present situation shows that there is a chauvinistic element endeavouring to drive Turkey into war with England for the benefit of Germany and Austria, enemy of the Turkish state. 47

No sooner did Turkey enter the war than the young Turks made an effort to win the Indians over. In a speech published soon after, Enver Pasha, one of the members of the ruling triumvirate, invited the Indians, Muslims and Hindus alike, to revolt against and eliminate the British power in India and liberate their country. He also emphasised the

need to strengthen the bonds of brotherhood between the Hindus and the Muslims of India for the sake of the liberation of their country. "Hindus and Mohammedans, you are both soldiers of the army and you are brothers, and this low, degraded English is your enemy; you should become Ghazis by declaring Jehad and by combining with your brothers, murder the English and liberate India".  

Turkey, in another appeal to the Muslims of India urged not to help the British government in the war attempts. The appeal reads like this.

You, Indians are helping the Englishmen, they are the enemies of our faith, and they are ruling over India and spoiling you and, still, you people think that, they are your rulers. Such a government is not acceptable even to the beasts. They destroy your mosque with your help and yet you are going to help them in the war efforts. This is nothing but sheer misuse of your blood. You all know that the shrewd Englishmen want to spoil this country too. You cannot imagine, how they are persecuting the Egyptians but you do not sympathise with them. Those who assist the infidels, they ruin their future. The Egyptians, the Afghans and the Indians who come to this side pray for the

welfare of one another at the Holy Shrines of Syria and Constantinople. They also pray to God for the prosperity of Islam. Perhaps you do not realise, that it is your duty to help us as being Muslims. This is your tremendous responsibility, if you join us, you will be helping us and strengthening your faith and religion. If God blesses India would be soon free, if you join us and work together for each other, the Sultan of Turkey will pay you the highest respects for your this cooperation. Those Indians who are either in Egypt or in Syria or in Constantinople or in any hospital of this zone are receiving the best possible treatment. The Englishman or any other people cannot serve them so well. If you do not believe, we are sending you the photographs for your satisfaction. Those who have come to us from your side are quite well and living like kings. Do not worry for their family and children, if the Englishmen hurt them, they would go direct to heaven as Allah says that those who are killed become martyrs and they live in the abode of God and enjoy everything there.  

The first World War ended in the discomfiture of Germany and Turkey. The Turkish defeat left a profound mark on the national movement of India. It also divulged some

realities demonstrating the hypocrisy of the imperialist mind.\textsuperscript{50} The British Government, knowing full well where the sympathies of Indian Muslims lay, their loyalty had been purchased during the war by assurances of generous treatment of Turkey after the war. The British Prime Minister Lloyd George, publicly declared on January 5, 1918 that, "Nor are We fighting to deprive Turkey of its capital or of the rich and renowned lands of Asia Minor and Thrace which are predominantly Turkish in race". on July 8, 1918, Woodrow Wilson, the President of the U.S.A. in a message to the Congress also endorsed this view.\textsuperscript{51} These tall promises led the Indian muslims to believe that the territorial integrity of Turkey would be maintained. However, Britain had already entered into certain clandestine agreements with the Allies during the war aimed at depriving the Turks of all their territories, even their capital. On October 31, 1918, Turkish and British Statesmen signed the armistice which was a formal recognition of the defeat of the Ottoman Empire. After a fortnight Allied armies landed at Istanbul apparently to fight the Bolshevicks but in actual fact to put into effect the secret treaty of 1915 envisaging the partition of the Ottoman Empire.

\textsuperscript{50} Prof Mohammad Sadiq, Op.cit, p.50.

\textsuperscript{51} Leonard, A.R. war addresses of woodrow wilson, p.99.
The treatment meted out to Turkey was a great betrayal on the part of Great Britain which wounded the feelings of the Muslims. The Muslims regarded the Caliph of Turkey as their spiritual head and were naturally upset when they found that he would retain no control over the holy places, it was his duty as Caliph to protect. The Muslims were also agitated over British instigation to the Arabs which resulted in their assertion of independence from Turkey.

This fact has also been corroborated by Thadani, the dismemberment of Turkey, the last great Muslim Empire, exposed the nakedness of the imperial ambition of England and her allies, and filled Indians, Hindus and Muslims alike, with the apprehension that a new chain of bondage has been forged for the East along Basra & Baghdad. Muslims saw, in the ruin of Turkey a death-blow to the strongest Muslim power and rallied round the Khilafat to save it, and the Hindus realising the necessity of unity for national progress made its cause their own. 52

The Muslim League also passed resolutions telling the British Government that the Muslims would not tolerate interference in the matter of the Caliphate. It categorically and unequivocally made it clear that decisions as

52. N.V. Thadani, The Historic Trial of Ali Brothers, pp.3-4.
regards the caliphate should rest with the Muslims alone. It also urged the British Government to ensure through its representatives to the peace conference that the sultan Caliph retained full and independent control over the holy places of Islam and the Jazirat-ul-Arab in accordance with the law of islam.

Meanwhile the Rowlatt act, Jallianwalah Bagh massacre and martial law in Punjab had belied all the generous wartime promises of the British. The Montagu-Chemistford Reforms, announced towards the end of 1919, with ill-considered scheme of dyarchy satisfied few. Even those who were willing to treat the happenings at Jallianwala Bagh and other places in Punjab as aberrations, that would soon be "corrected", were disillusioned when they discovered that the Hunter committee appointed by the Government to enquire into the Punjab disturbances was an eye wash, exacer bated the emotions of the people, both Hindus and Muslims, throughout the country. 53

In the given political scenario, the Muslims had no option but to launch a countrywide agitation for their demands. At Lucknow, at All India Muslim Conference on September 21, 1919, a decision was taken to observe a Khila-

53. Bipan Chandra, *India's struggle for Independence*, p. 184
fat Day throughout India on October 17, 1919 as a protest against the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. The editor of Taj (Jabalpur) and the editor of the Congress (Delhi) published message to Indian Muslims on the eve of the Khilafat Day, which reads, "Hazrart Maulana Abdul Bari, Firangi Mahal, Lucknow, sends a message to all Mussalmans of India that they should realise the importance of the Khilafat Day, suspend all business, hold monstrous meetings and pray Almighty Allah, the protector of the weak, supporter of the oppressed, to help them in the present crisis through which the Muslim World is passing and to preserve the glory of the Islam."

In an editorial, the Mussalman wrote, The demonstrations on the khilafat Day that was observed throughout this vast continent on Friday (Oct 17) last are emblematic of the fact that the integrity of the Muslim feeling in regard to the question of Khilafat and the threatened dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire is universal and that any decision adverse to Turkey and outrageous to the feelings and sentiments of the Muslims will create a permanent unrest in the Muslim confraternity. If Lloyd George and other British Statesmen have not yet formed an adequate idea of the depth

of feelings of the Mussalmans in regard to the Turkish question, we hope, after the demonstration of Friday last, they will be convinced of the genuineness and intensity of the Muslim feelings and will shape their policy accordingly.56

The leader expressed, The Khilafat Day will be memorable not only as a day of solemn protest of the Muslims all over the country against the threatened dismemberment of Turkey, but also a day which will, we hope, be a landmark in the history of the movement for bringing about Hindu-Muslim unity. Never did before the members of the two communities join together with more genuine brotherly feeling to protest against the impending wrong towards a country, the integrity of which is bound up with some of the deepest religious sentiment of Mohammedans in this country.57

A Khilafat committee was soon formed under the leadership of Alli brothers, Maulana Azad, Hakim Ajmal Khan, and Hasrat Mohani in November 1919. At a meeting held on November 11, 1919, this Khilafat Committee changed its title to the Central Khilafat Committee of India with the object: -

1. To secure for Turkey a just and honourable peace,
2. To

secure the fulfilment of the pledges given by Right Honourable Lloyd George in his speech on January 5, 1918 and to preserve the integrity of the Turkish Empire and 3. With a view to securing the above objects to memorise the British Ministers, His Excellency the Viceroy, and if necessary, the president of the United States of America. 58

Although the Khilafat movement ostensibly had the purely religious object of compelling the maintenance of spiritual and temporal Muslim control over the Holy places of Islam. Yet there is no doubt that the real aim of its most revolutionary and active leaders was the destruction of British rule in India: an aim which was justified on the ground that Britain is the most powerful rival to the Muslim influence in the Near East. Gandhi quickly realised and, appreciating the value of a common object for the non-cooperation and Khilafat Movement, provided them with a common platforms, i.e. the Punjab and Khilafat wrongs, from which to appeal to the feelings of people of all denominations. 59

"Gandhi identified himself so closely with the aspirations and expectations of the Muslims that they willingly reposed their faith in him and rallied round him. They have not come


across any person talking so honestly and fearlessly".  

While addressing a conference at Delhi on November 24, Gandhiji observed, we talk of Hindu-Mohammedan unity, it would be an empty phrase if the Hindu held aloof from the Mohammedan when the vital interests of the latter was at stake. Some have suggested that we Hindus can assist our Mohammedan countrymen only on conditions. Conditional assistance is like adulterated cement, which does not bind. The solitary question therefore is how to help. When Khilafat conference has come to the decision not to participate in the following peace celebration. "I think that it is a proper decision. Peace celebration can have no meanings for India when a vital part of the peace, affecting one-fourth of the Indian population, remained under trouble...". 

At the Amritsar Session in 1919, the congress passed the following resolution:

The Congress respectfully protests against the hostile attitude of some of the British Ministers towards the Turkish and Khilafat question as disclosed by their utterances and most earnestly appeal to and urges upon His Majesty's Government to settle Turkish question in accordance with the just and legitimate sentiments of Indian Mussalmans and the

60. Prof Mohammad Sadiq, Op.cit, p.54.
61. The Mussalman, Nov. 28, 1919.
solemn pledges of the Prime Minister without which there will be no content among the people of India. 62

It became clear that Turkey is going to be unjustly treated and that created a great resentment among the Indian Muslims. Consequently, a Khilafat deputation consisting of eminent persons, such as Ali brothers, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Dr. M.A. Ansari, Abdul Bari, Seth Chotani, Abul Kalam Azad, Dr Kitchlew, Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Shardhanand and many others, met the Viceroy of India on January 19, 1920. They presented a memorandum to the viceroy stating that: The continued existence of the Khilafat as a temporal no less than spiritual institution was the essence of their faith and that they could never agree to any change in its character or to the dismemberment of its Empire. 63

The reply of the viceroy was perturbing but of course in sophisticated language. To quote Rushbrook Williams, Lord Chemsford replied in a most sympathetic manner, referring to the precautions which had been taken by his Government and by the Secretary of State for India to place the sentiments of Indian Muslims before the peace conference. He pointed out that the case for the favourable treatment of

63. Rushbrook Williams, India in 1920, p. 32.
Turkey had been pressed with an earnestness of purpose and a force of argument which could not be surpassed, and that ever since the Armistice he had been in private communication with the secretary of State, urging upon His majesty's Government the view that Muslim feeling in India had to be taken into the most serious account before coming to a final decision. He emphasised the fact that the question did not lie in the hands of Great Britain alone, but promised that his tireless efforts towards a settlement favourable to Muslim opinion would not be relaxed and that he would do all he could to assist the Muslim deputation which was about to leave India for the purpose of placing its views on the Khilafat question before the British Cabinet.64

The reply of viceroy was extremely disappointing and a wave of resentment swept throughout India. The Muslim leaders realized that the achievement of the objectives of the Khilafat movement depended largely on the independence of their country.65

64. Ibid.

65. "The holy places of the Muslims and muslim domains will never be free from danger until India has achieved swraj... so, those who favour the protection of the caliph, those who are eager to preserve the sanctity of the holyland, those who aspire to the independence of Iraq and Egypt and those who wish well for constantinople and the Khilafat domains must all, first of all, think about achieving the freedom of India in order to attain the objectives of their nation and religions",
Although the Khilafatists aspired for the protection and preservation of the Ottoman Khilafat and its control over the holy places of Islam, they resolved to try their real strength on the altar of the freedom movement for this subcontinent, because the logic of circumstances set before them the independence of India as a prerequisite for the achievement of their Khilafat ideals. Abdul Kalam Azad declared, "The real solution of the problem of Khilafat is dependent upon the independence of India". Thus, Hindus and Muslims were launched upon a struggle to free their native land from British rule.

...Continued...

exclaimed a Bengali Muslim leader (chotani, Bengali weekly, Calcutta, Jaisthan, 4th No. 1330. B.S. 1923).

66. Abul Kalam Azad, Taza mazamin, p. 12 cited in Tarachand, History of the Freedom Movement in India, p. 268. Mohammad Ali also on his return from Europe in early Oct. 1920 expressed the opinion that "the freedom of Islam is dependant on the freedom of India". In Europe his delegation had experience that international affairs can not be determined or influenced by a people, however, numerous, who were not sovereign or independent. On arriving in Bombay, in course of a statement to the press and in reply to a reception organized in honour of the delegation, he declared that attainment of "swraj" was the goal and noncooperation only the means. Indian freedom had to be attained by work in India and not in England. He added that he wished "to lay more emphasis on Indian freedom than Khilafat Wrong, because he realised that success will be achieved in the Muslim cause only when India was in Indian hands... India's good must be the chief and sole consideration". (The statement reproduced in the Mussalman, 15 Oct. 1920).

67. P. Handy, Musslims of British India, p. 190.
Following the decision at the all India level by all the organisations to start a non-cooperation movement for attaining the twin-objectives of Swaraj & Khilafat, the Khilafat and non-cooperation movement began to receive vigorous stimulation and from now on the Khilafat & non-cooperation were inextricably interwined.  

However in the wake of the violence at Chauri Chura, Gandhiji called off the non-cooperation movement. The movement lost its vigour, creating confusion and disappointment in the nationalist forces.

Nationalists in Turkey under Mustafa Kemal, meanwhile, went its own way, first abolishing the Ottoman Sultanate and finally doing away with the caliphate itself.

In November 1922 the Turkish Grand national Assembly in Ankara struck the first blow at the Khilafat by abolishing the Ottoman Sultanate, deposing Sultan Wahiduddin Muhammed VI, and declaring Abdul Majid the new Caliph. Thus separating the spiritual duties of the Khilafat from the temporal power of the State. The reception of the news in India was mixed: The Jamiat- al-ulema refused to believe the news coming from such a tainted foreign source as Reuters. Many believed that separation of the temporal and spiritual

68. Govt. of India, Home Poll (Deptt.) Nos. 185, 1925; P.C. Bamford, op.cit, p.159.
powers of the Caliph was against the Sharia, but others rejoiced at the reinstatement of an elective Khilafat, as opposed to the hereditary Sultanate.  

Indian Muslims justified Kemal's action that Wahiduddin had proven to be a puppet of Britain and other foreign powers and hence did not deserve to remain either Sultan or Caliph. Ajmal Khan and M.A. Ansari expressed that the selection of a new Caliph by the Turkish National Assembly was a return to the great tradition of elected Caliphs, and this would strengthen Indian Muslims' hand for the cause of Turkey.

At the annual session of the Khilafat conference in December 1922, Dr. M.A. Ansari as president maintained that the Turks had not really separated the Caliph's spiritual and temporal powers, but had only made the Sultan a constitutional monarch. In the resolution recognising the new Caliph, the Khilafat conference expressed its pleasure at the restoration of the ancient practice of electing the Caliph. They gave Mustafa Kemal a title: Saif-al-Islam (The Sword of Islam), a term used in the past for conquering

69. Gail Minuuet, the Khilafat Movement: Religious symbolism and political Mobilization in Indai. Delhi, 1982, p.201.
Sultans. 70 Although the abolition of the Sultanate signified a move towards secularism and republicanism, i.e., a divorce from the outdated political legacy of the past, the Indian Muslims still interpreted it in terms of the laws of Islam.

Indian Muslims awaited the result of the Near East Conference, and there was a strong feeling among them that their agitation would die out if Kemal accepted the proposals made to him. This feeling was also expressed in a joint letter issued at this time by the secretaries of the Bengal Provincial Congress and Khilafat Committees to their subordinate bodies, from which the following is quoted,

"We wish to make it abundantly clear that Khilafat is unattainable without swaraj and that swaraj without Khilafat would be weak, inglorious and transient. We wish to point out that the problems of the Khilafat can not be solved without the deliverance of the Jazirat-ul-arab from non-muslim control and if Mustafa Kemal is compelled to accept a treaty which abandons jazirat-ul-Arab, our struggle for religious freedom will still continue and Khilafat can then be saved by the attainment of swaraj alone". 71

70. Resolutions of the All India Khilafat Conference at Gaya, December 1922, IAR 1922-23, pp.937-43.
71. P.C. Bamford, op.cit, p.196.
Thus Khilafat became an instrument of liberation from foreign rule and it brought under its fold all sections of people for the common cause.

The political process of Turkey followed its own course, without giving any considerations to what the Indians thought of it. When Turkey was proclaimed a Republic in October 1923, the Khilafatists failed to understand the main trends in Turkey politics. In fact, Mohammad Ali expected that the valiant and God fearing Turks will revive the Khilafat. And finally the abolition of the caliphate on 3 March 1924 deprived the Khilapat movement in India of its very raison de'être.

The incredible news of the abolition of the caliphate caused grief and consternation among Indian Muslims. Kenal's struggle for national liberation had widely been interpreted as being simultaneously a struggle in the defence of the Khilafat.

Under the circumstances, the Khilaft committee and the jamait-ul-ulema jointly appealed for the Turkish National Assembly to reconsider its historic decision, so far as it related to the abolition of the office of the Khalifa. They entirely dissociated themselves from any desire to inter-

vene in Turkish affairs, but they urged for the re-establishment of the Khilafat, and asked for an opportunity to the delegation of Indian Muslims to visit Ankara and make a fuller representation on this subject. Mustafa Kemal, however refused to carry on any negotiations on this decision.

The central khilafat committee again met in Delhi on 23 June 1924. Shaukat Ali denounced the abolition of Khilafat as breach of religious injunctions and wanted Abdul Majid to be restored at least as a president of the Assembly, and felt that Kemal should not hold the office of the president in case the office of the Khilafat was to be vested in the presidency. The other members of the Khilafat working committee resented this outburst on the part of the Ali brothers. The committee thought it impolitic to demand the restoration of Abdul Majid. After all the Muslims had


74. At the meeting of the Khilafat working committee telegram from Ankara was read conveying that the decision was in the interest of the Khilafat and Turkish territory was unalterable and no negotiations will be carried on. But Indian Muslims would be welcomed. Report dated 13 May, 1924, F & Poll Deptt. Secret Extt. I.F. No, 34-x-of 1924 and Home Poll Deptt. F.No. 167 of 1924, NAI.

75. Home Poll Deptt. F.No. 167 of 1924, NAI.
earlier accepted the deposition of Sulthan Abdul Hamid and the banishment of wahiduddhin as being in the interest of Islam. 76 The Jamait-ul-Ulema members Maulana Husain Ahmad Madni and Mufti Kifayatullah also strongly opposed the views of the Ali brothers, and were unwilling to denounce Mustafa Kemal and his supporters.

The president of the Lucknow session of the Muslim League in December 1924, Syed Reza Ali, called upon Indian Muslims to switch over their attention to the internal problems of our motherland's and not to be disturbed by what was going on in a distant land. Extra-territorial patriotism is a most noble and inspiring sentiment it kept within reasonable bounds. 77

Yet, there was another view which saw the developments in Turkey as part of the process of ijtihad, or creative interpretation of the laws of Islam. Abul Kalam Azad said that the Turkish government, by abolishing the Khilafat of the Ottoman dynasty, had merely rectified the unsatisfactory division of spiritual and temporal powers which had existed since 1922. Most Muslims in India were displeased by the abolition because they thought that the institution

76. Ibid.

of the Khilafat had ceased to exist, but this was not the case at all. The Khilafat is not like the papacy; it could not truly exist separated from temporal power. Hence, the most powerful independent Islamic government automatically has the Khilafat vested in it. That government can be in Turkey or any where; as long as an Islamic government exists, so too will the Khilafat continue to exist. The president of Turkey had not been formally recognized as the Caliph, but the Khilafat nevertheless continued to reside with the Turkish government. 78

Mohammad Iqbal too, approved of the developments in Turkey, to him the abolition of the Khilafat was an act of proper ijtihad and he personally believed that "Turkish view is perfectly sound and dynamic step".

He averred, "the truth is that among the Muslim nations of today Turkey alone has Shaken off its dogmatic slumber, and attained to self consciousness. She alone has claimed her right of intellectual freedom - suggesting new points of view-fresh interpretations- the Turks is on the way to creating new values. The question which confronts him today, and which is likely to confront other Muslims coun-

78. Abul Kalam Azad,"Masala-e-Khilafat war jumhuviya Turkey", zaminder (Lahour), May 11-15, and June 8-11, 1924.
tries in the near future is whether the law of Islam is capable of evolution -- this is sure to be answered in the affirmative...". 79

The revolutionary resolution to abolish the Khilafat by the Turkish National Assembly was certainly a radical step. Its profound significant was lauded by M. N. Roy who wrote: "Neither the papacy of the Roman Church nor the patriarchate of the Greek Church was ever abolished by any bourgeois revolution." They were only deprived of all influence over the state. 80

The abolition of caliphate, the historian Khuda Bakhsh wrote, 'ends a fiction and ushers in modern as opposed to medieval ideas; it lays open the path for the development of nationalism and removes the embargo on liberalism. 81

The spectacular progress made in Turkey under Mustafa Kemal became a glaring example for Indian people particularly the Intelligentsia the Vanguard of the India's freedom movement. They were fully convinced that a mere political


freedom would not serve the purpose of people. India needed
social freedom to remove its social evils and to built an
egalitarian society. Independence must necessarily involve
freedom from all exploitation and oppression, and to bring
this about one must attack everything that helps the ex-
plorer. A society which did not adapt itself to new cir-
cumstances was bound to be perished. So, for Indians too,
secularization, modernization and independence from colonial
rule will be panacea of all evils.82

The example of the Turks, once the "Champion of Islam"
and now the architects of their national freedom, brought
about new national consciousness among the Indian Muslims.
It was the cause of the Turks that had inspired the Indian
Muslims to champion pan-Islam. And now when the Turks
themselves changed their old outlook, it was natural for the
Indian Muslims too change their ideological perspective.
This had far-reaching implication for the freedom movement
in India. A new consciousness and a change in the political
outlook came about signifying a shift in the ideological
perspective. For many years the Indian Muslims had been
preoccupied with the international issues, particularly with
the world of Islam. Now they started to feel, more keenly
than ever before, that they shared a common destiny with the

other communities of India and that India's freedom should be their foremost concern.83

However, it would be worthwhile to analyze the question: was pan-Islamism compatible with nationalism or not? Various theories were worked out to resolve this dichotomy and to remove the widespread conception that the essence of pan-Islamism implied a break with territorial nationalism. The ideologues of the Khilafat movement insisted that the sum and substance of pan-islamism was to remove foreign domination; so their activities had an obvious nationalist dimension; and were inextricably bound with the concept of an emerging Indian nation. The emblem used on the Khilafat delegation stationery made up of twin circles of equal size and overlapping, with the word 'Khilafat' on one and the word 'India' on the other was symbolic of their loyalty to the nationalist cause, and indicated their perception of the link between their vision of a free India and the liberation of the Muslim countries from the yoke of colonial rule.84

Even after the abolition of the caliphate, which changed the very complexion of Indian politics, we find three broad groups among the Khilafatists. One of the important groups which disappeared temporally from the national scene was that of the ulema. The setback to the Khilafat cause had shattered their plans and brought to an end their

83. Ibid, p.115.

influence in all-India politics. Their attempts to continue
the Khilafat committees had failed and they found themselves
isolated from the mainstream of politics yet it should be
noted here that the uleme were the hardcore nationalists and
were never reconciled with the British rule.

Another group began to organise themselves into their
respective states for the cause of nation. For example in
Bengals C.R. Das enlisted the support of many leading Khilaf-
atists for the swaraj party, including Maulana Akaram Khan,
Mujibur Rehman, Wahid Hussain and Maulvi Abdul kerim. In
punjab, Muslims rallied behind Fazl-i-Husain's 'Rural Par-
ty', which was strengthened by an alliance with the rural Hindus.

The third group which consisted of men like M.A. An-
sari, Ajmal Khan Abdul Kalam Azad, Asaf Ali and many others
were identified as 'Nationalists Muslims'. They were com-
mitted to the ideas of Indian nationalism, adherered to the
principles of secularism, and were proud of the composite
Indian culture which they saw as the logical consequence of
a long process of integration and assimilation between
different ethnic and religious groups.85

85. Mushirul Hasan, Nationalism and Communal Politics in