

## UNIT 22 – UPSC - Start of Non-Cooperation Movement

**India's History : Modern India : The Khilafat Movement started; Mahatma Gandhi leads the Congress; Non-co-operation Movement - 1920**

### The Khilafat Movement



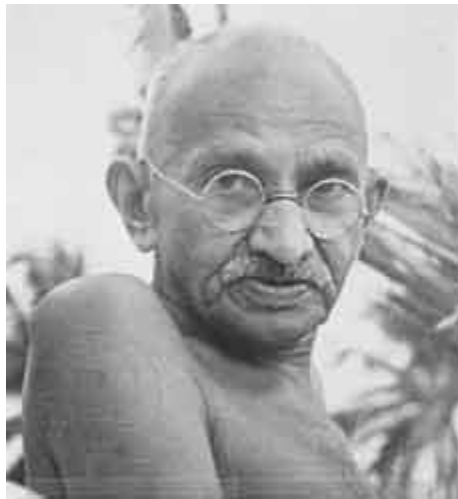
Khilafat Movement (1919-1924) was a Pan-Islamic movement influenced by Indian nationalism. The Ottoman Emperor Abdul Hamid II (1876-1909) had launched a Pan-Islamic programme to use his position as the Sultan-Khalifa of the global Muslim community with a view to saving his disintegrating empire from foreign attacks and to crush the nationalistic democratic movement at home. The visit of his emissary, Jamaluddin Afghani, to India in the late nineteenth century to propagate Pan-Islamic ideas received a favorable response from some Indian Muslim leaders.



These sentiments intensified early in the twentieth century with the revocation in 1911 of the 1905 partition of Bengal, the Italian (1911) and Balkan (1911-1912) attacks on Turkey, and Great Britain's participation in the First World War (1914-18) against Turkey.

The defeat of Turkey in the First World War and the division of its territories under the Treaty of Sevres (10 August 1920) among European powers caused apprehensions in India over the Khalifa's custodianship of the Holy places of Islam. Accordingly, the Khilafat Movement was launched in September 1919 as an orthodox communal movement to protect the Turkish Khalifa and save his empire from dismemberment by Great Britain and other European powers. The Ali brothers, Muhammad Ali and Shawkat Ali, Maulana abul kalam azad, Dr MA Ansari, and Hasrat Mohani initiated the Movement. Khilafat Conferences were organised in several cities in northern India. A Central Khilafat Committee, with provisions for provincial branches, was constituted at Bombay with Seth Chotani, a wealthy merchant, as its President, and Shawkat Ali as its Secretary. In 1920 the Ali Brothers produced the Khilafat Manifesto. The Central Khilafat Committee started a Fund to help the Nationalist Movement in Turkey and to organise the Khilafat Movement at home.

## Mahathma Gandhi leads the Congress - Declaration of Non-Cooperation Movement



Contemporaneously, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi led his non-violent nationalist movement satyagraha, as a protest against government repression evidenced, for example, in the Rowlatt Act of 1919, and the Jalian Wallah Bagh Massacres of April 1919. To enlist Muslim support in his movement, Gandhi supported the Khilafat cause and became a member of the Central Khilafat Committee. At the Nagpur Session (1920) of the Indian National Congress Gandhi linked the issue of Swaraj (Self-Government) with the Khilafat demands and adopted the non-cooperation plan to attain the twin objectives.

By mid-1920 the Khilafat leaders had made common cause with Gandhi's non-cooperation movement promising non-violence in return for Gandhi's support of the Khilafat Movement whereby Hindus and Muslims formed a united front against British rule in India. Support was received also of Muslim theologians through the Jamiyat-al Ulama-i-Hind (The Indian Association of Muslim Theologians). Maulana mohammad akram khan of Bengal was a member of its Central Executive and Constitution Committee.

However, the movement's objectives of communal harmony and nonviolence suffered a setback because of the Hijrat (Exodus) to Afghanistan in 1920 of about 18,000 Muslim peasants, mostly from Sind and North Western Provinces, the excesses of Muslims who felt that India was Dar-ul-Harb (Apostate land), the Moplah rebellion in South India in August 1921, and the Chauri-Chaura incident in February 1922 in the United Provinces where a violent mob set fire to a police station killing twenty-two policemen. Soon after Gandhi called off the Non-cooperation movement, leaving Khilafat leaders with a feeling of betrayal.

The extra-territorial loyalty of Khilafat leaders received a final and deadly blow from the Turks themselves. The charismatic Turkish nationalist leader Mustafa Kemal's startling secular renaissance, his victories over invading Greek forces culminating in the abolition of the Sultanate in November 1922, and the transformation of Turkey into a Republic in October 1923, followed by the abolition of the Khilafat in March 1924, took the Khilafatists unaware. By 1924 the Khilafat Movement, had become devoid of any relevance and significance and met its end.

The first stirrings in favour of the Khilafat Movement in Bengal was seen on 30 December 1918 at the 11th Session of the All India muslim league held in Delhi. In his presidential address, Ak Fazlul Huq voiced concern over the attitude of Britain and her allies engaged in dividing and distributing the territories of the defeated Ottoman Empire.

When the Paris Peace Conference (1919) confirmed these apprehensions, Bengali Khilafat leaders such as Maulana Akram Khan, Abul Kasem, and Mujibur Rahman Khan held a Public meeting in Calcutta on 9 February 1919 to enlist public support in favour of preserving the integrity of the Ottoman Empire and saving the institution of Khilafat.

In Bengal, the Khilafat-Non-Cooperation Movement (1918 to 1924) became a mass movement in which both Muslims and Hindus participated. The Bengal movement benefited from coordinated action by and between the Central and Provincial Khilafat leaders. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad propagated Khilafat ideas in rural Bengal. In the initial stage, the movement was popularised by Bengali leaders such as Maulana Akram Khan, Maniruzzaman Islamabadi, Mujibur Rahman Khan, the brothers Maulana Abdullah Kafi and Maulana Abdullah Baqi, Ismail Hossain Shiraji, Abul Kasem and AK Fazlul Huq. Maulana Akram Khan and Maniruzzaman Islamabadi toured Bengal and organised Khilafat meetings, particularly in Dhaka and Chittagong. In an article Asahojogita-o-Amader Kartabya, Maniruzzaman Islamabadi declared that to protect Khilafat and to acquire Swaraj were the twin aims of the movement and that it was the sacred duty of every Indian to support these ideas.

During the observance of the first Khilafat Day on 17 October 1919, most Indian-owned shops remained closed in Calcutta, prayers were offered at different mosques, and public meetings were held all over Bengal. On 23-24 November 1919 the first All-India Khilafat Conference held in Delhi was presided over by AK Fazlul Huq from Bengal. It was resolved that pending a resolution of the Khilafat problem there would be no participation in the proposed peace celebrations, that British goods should be boycotted, and that a policy of non-cooperation with the government would be adopted. In early 1920 the Bengal Provincial Khilafat Committee was organised with Maulana Abdur Rauf

as President, Maniruzzaman Islambadi as Vice President, Maulana Akram Khan as General Secretary, and Mujibur Rahman and Majid Baksh as Joint Secretaries respectively. The office of the organisation was located at Hiron Bari Lane of Kolutola Street in Calcutta.

The first Bengal Provincial Khilafat Conference was held at the Calcutta Town Hall on 28-29 February 1920. Several members of the Central Khilafat Committee attended. Prominent Bengali Khilafat leaders such as A K Fazlul Huq, Abul Kasem, Mujibur Rahman participated in the conference and reiterated the view that unless their demands on the Khilafat problem were met non-cooperation and boycott would continue. The conference decided to observe 19 March 1920 as the Second Khilafat Day.

In March 1920 a Khilafat delegation led by Maulana Muhammad Ali went to England to plead for the Khilafat cause. Abul Kasem represented Bengal in this delegation. Local Khilafat Committees were also constituted. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Maulvi Abdur Rahman became President and Secretary respectively of the Calcutta Khilafat Committee. On 20 December 1919 the Dhaka Committee was founded at the ahsan manzil with Nawab khwaja habibullah as President, Syed Abdul Hafez as alternate President, and Gholam Quddus as Secretary. In response to the demands of the citizens of Dhaka, a "Sadar Khilafat Committee" was formed; Khwaja Sulaiman Kadar was its President, Maulana Abdul Jabbar Ansari, Hafez Abdur Razzak, Hafez Abdul Hakim its Vice-Presidents, and Maulvi Shamsul Huda its Secretary.

On 19 March 1920 the Second Khilafat Day was observed in Bengal. In Calcutta life almost came to a standstill and numerous Khilafat meetings were held in Dhaka, Chittagong and Mymensingh. The largest meeting was held in Tangail and was presided over by Abdul Halim Ghaznavi, the liberal nationalist Muslim zamindar. At this meeting, Maniruzzaman Islambadi urged the public to adopt Satyagraha as the symbol of the Khilafat movement.



Most districts of Bengal witnessed a mushroom growth of Khilafat Committees alongside existing Congress Committees, often with common membership. This was the first significant anti-British mass movement in which Hindus and Muslims participated with equal conviction. The media, both Muslim and Hindu, played a vital role in popularising

the movement. 'Mohammadi', 'Al-Eslam' and 'The Mussalman' were publications, which deserve mention. The Khilafat Movement engendered a Muslim political consciousness that reverberated throughout Bengal under the leadership of Maulana Azad, Akram Khan, Maniruzzaman Islambadi, Bipin Chandra Pal and Chitta Ranjan Das. Though the Khilafat movement was orthodox in origin, it did manage to generate liberal ideas among Muslims because of the interaction and close understanding between Hindus and Muslims. Following the example of Calcutta, volunteer organisations were set up in rural Bengal to train volunteers to enforce boycott of foreign goods, courts, and government offices. They were also engaged in spinning, popularising items of necessity, and raising contributions for the Khilafat cause. In some areas in Dhaka, Muslim zamindars extracted 'Khilafat Salami' from Muslim tenants by declaring themselves the representatives of the Sultan of Turkey. Ironically, due to the ignorance of these tenants this custom continued long after the Khilafat was abolished.

Visibly shaken by the popularity of the Movement, through a Notification on 19 November 1921 the Government of Bengal declared the activities of the Khilafat and Congress volunteers illegal. Government officers raided Khilafat offices, confiscated documents and papers, banned meetings, and arrested office bearers. About a hundred and fifty personalities including Maulana Azad, CR Das, Akram Khan, and Ambika Prasad Bajpai were arrested in Calcutta on 10 December 1921.

At this critical juncture, a rift arose between Khilafat and Non-cooperation leaders on the issue of boycotting educational institutions and legislative councils. Some Muslim leaders believed that such boycott would be suicidal for Muslims. They were in favor of participating in the elections under the India Act of 1919 that assured self-governing institutions in India.



Prominent among this group of Swarajist leaders were CR Das, Bipin Chandra Pal, Motilal Nehru, Surendranath Banerjea, Ashutosh Chowdhury, Asutosh Mookerjee and Sarat Chandra Bose. Notable Muslims subscribing to the same ideas were AK Fazlul Huq, Abul Kasem, Khwaja Muhammad Azam, Khwaja Afzal, Nawab Khwaja Habibullah, Hakim Habibur Rahman, Syed Nawab Ali Chowdhury, Sir Syed Shamsul Huda, Sir Abdullah al-Mamun Suhrawardi, Maulana Abu Bakr Siddiky (Pir of Furfura), Shah Ahsanullah, Kazem Ali and Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy. Indian National Congress and the Muslim nationalists were strongly opposed to the idea of joining the councils.

Eminent Hindu personalities in Bengal who supported the Khilafat movement were Bipin Chandra Pal, Shrish Chandra Chattopadhyaya, Kaminikumar Bandyopadhyaya, Dr Rai Kumar Chakravarty, PC Ghosh, Basanta Kumar Majumdar, Aswini Kumar Dutta, Pyarilal Roy, Gurucharan Aich, Sarat Kumar Gupta, Poet Mukunda Das, Haranath Ghosh, Nagendra Bhattacharya, Satindra Sen, Dr Tarini Gupta, Sarol Kumar Dutta, Nishi Kanta Ganguly, Monoranjan Gupta, Sarat Kumar Ghosh, Nagendra Bijoy

Bhattacharya, Nalini Das, Sailendra Nath Das, Khitish Chandra Roy Chowdhury and many others.

In addition to the front-rank leaders of the Khilafat movement, a new class of Muslim leaders emerged during this period from urban as well as from distant parts of Bengal. They gained experience in organizing and mobilizing the public. The Khilafat movement provided an opportunity to throw up a new Mofassil based leadership, which played a key role in introducing a coherent self-assertive political identity for Bengali Muslims. After the 1947 Partition, these personalities played effective roles in their respective areas of activity.

## The Non-Cooperation Movement



Mahatma Gandhi initiated non-Cooperation Movement. To advance the Indian nationalist cause, the Indian national congress under the leadership of Gandhi decided in 1920 to follow a policy of passive resistance to British rule.

The Rowlatt Act, the Jallianwala Bagh massacre and martial law in Punjab had belied the generous wartime promises of the British. The Montague Chelmsford report with its ill-considered scheme of diarchy satisfied few. Gandhi, so far believing in the justice and fair play of the government, now felt that Non-Cooperation with the government must be started. At the same time, the harsh terms of the Treaty of Sevres between the Allies and Turkey was resented by the Muslims in India. The Muslims started the Khilafat movement and Gandhi decided to identify himself with them. Gandhi's 'skilful top level political game' secured in winning over the Muslim support in the coming Non-Cooperation Movement in India.

The movement was launched formally on 1st August 1920, after the expiry of the notice that Gandhi had given to the Viceroy in his letter of 22 June, in which he had asserted the right recognized 'from time immemorial of the subject to refuse to assist a ruler who misrules'. At the Calcutta Session (September 1920) the programme of the movement was clearly stated. It involved the surrender of the titles and offices and resignation from nominated posts in the local bodies. The Non-Cooperators were not to attend Government duties, Durbars and other functions and they were to withdraw their children from schools and colleges and establish national schools and colleges. They

were to boycott the British courts and establish private arbitration courts; they were to use swadeshi cloth. Truth and non-violence were to be strictly observed by Non-Cooperators.

The Calcutta decision was endorsed at the Nagpur Session of the Congress (December 1920). There the betterment of party organization was emphasized. Congress membership was thrown open to all adult men and women on payment of 4 annas as subscription. The adoption of the Non-Cooperation resolution by the Congress gave it a new energy and from January 1921, it began to register considerable success all over India. Gandhi along with Ali Brothers undertook a nation-wide tour during which he addressed hundreds of meetings.



In the first month, 9,000 students left schools and colleges and joined more than 800 national institutions that had sprung up all over the country. The educational boycott was particularly successful in Bengal under the leadership of Chitta Ranjan das and subhas chandra bose. Punjab, too, responded to the educational boycott and Lala Lajpat Rai played the leading role. Other areas that were active were Bombay, UP, Bihar, Orissa and Assam; Madras remained lukewarm.

The boycott of law courts by lawyers was not as successful as the educational boycott. Many leading lawyers, like, CR Das, Motilal Nehru, MR Jayakar, S Kitchlew, V Patel. Asaf Ali Khan and others gave up lucrative practices, and their sacrifice became a source of inspiration for many. In number again, Bengal led followed by Andhra, U P, Karnataka and Punjab.

But perhaps, the most successful item of the programme was the boycott of foreign cloth. The value of imports of foreign cloth fell from Rs. 102 crore in 1920-21 to 57 crore in 1921-22.

In July 1921, a new challenge was thrown to the government. Mohammad Ali along with other leaders was arrested for holding the view that it was 'religiously unlawful for the Muslims to continue in the British army'. Gandhi as well as the Congress supported

Mohammad Ali and issued a manifesto. The next dramatic event was the visit of the Prince of Wales that began on 17 November 1921. The day the Prince landed in Bombay was observed as a day of hartal all over India. He was greeted with empty streets and downed shutters wherever he went. Emboldened by their successful defiance of the government, Non-Cooperators became more and more aggressive. The Congress volunteer corps emerged as a powerful parallel police, and the sight of its members marching in formation and dressed in uniform was hardly one that warmed the government heart. The Congress had already granted permission to the Provincial Congress Committees to sanction mass civil disobedience including the non-payment of taxes wherever they thought that the people were ready. The Non-Cooperation Movement had other indirect effects as well. In UP it became difficult to distinguish between a Non-Cooperation meeting and a peasant meeting. In Malabar in Kerala it helped to rouse Muslim tenants against their landlords. In Assam, laborers on tea plantations went on strike. In Punjab, the Akali movement was a part of the general movement of Non-Cooperation.

As the Non-Cooperation Movement continued it became clear that the women of Bengal were willing to play an active role in the protest movement. The women nationalists here organised themselves under the Mahila Karma Samaj or the Ladies Organisation Board of the Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee. Women of the Samaj organised meetings and propagated the spirit of Non-Cooperation. Women volunteers were enlisted. Basanti Devi and Urmila Devi, wife and sister respectively of CR Das, Nellie Sengupta, and wife of JM Sengupta, along with others like Mohini Devi, Labanya Prabha Chanda played a prominent role in this movement. Picketing of foreign wine and cloth shops and selling of Khaddar on the streets happened to be the main areas of their activities.

The government promulgated Sections 108 and 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure at various centres of the agitation. Volunteers' Corps was declared illegal and by December, over 30,000 people were arrested from all over India. Among prominent leaders, only Gandhi remained out of jail. In mid-December there was an abortive attempt at negotiations, initiated by Malaviya, but the conditions offered were such that it meant sacrificing the Khilafat leaders, a course that Gandhi would hardly accept. At that time he had been also under considerable pressure from the Congress rank and file to start the phase of mass civil disobedience. Gandhi presented an ultimatum to the government but as the government did not respond he started to initiate the civil disobedience movement in Bardoli taluqa of Surat district. Unfortunately at this time the tragedy of Chauri Chaura occurred which changed the course of the movement. A mob of 3,000 killed twenty-five policemen and one inspector. This was too much for Gandhi who stood for complete non-violence. The result was that he gave order for the suspension of the movement at once. Thus on 12 February 1922, the Non-Cooperation Movement came to an end.

As regards the limitations and achievements of the Non-Cooperation Movement, it apparently failed to achieve its object of securing the Khilafat and making good of the Punjab wrongs. The Swaraj was not attained in a year as promised. Still, the retreat that was ordered on 12 February 1922 was only a temporary one. The battle was over, but the war would continue.