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Chapter 10

The Khilafat Movement in Europe and the Reimagining of Authority in Islam

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1. Introduction

On 1 February 1920, a quartet of Indians left Bombay on the Italian steamship, the *Hungaria*. After an eventful voyage via the ports of Karachi, Aden, Massawa, Suez, Port Said, and Venice, then overground through Switzerland and France, the group arrived in London on 26 February to present the cause of the Indian Khilafat Movement (1919-1924) to those drawing up the peace terms to be offered to the Ottoman Empire in the wake of the First World War. Even before the Turkish defeat in the War had become a foregone conclusion, questions surrounding the future of the Ottoman Empire, home of the Ottoman Caliphate (1517-1924), had come to occupy a central place in Muslim political life in India. The year leading up to the trip to Europe had seen an array of parallel efforts aimed at impressing upon British officials the strength of Muslim feeling on the subject. The Central Khilafat Committee (CKC) was established in Bombay in November 1919 to coordinate and direct these activities across India. At the first meeting of the CKC, it was decided that delegations ought to be sent to Britain, America, and

Turkey to advocate for a peace settlement that preserved the Ottoman Empire, safeguarded the Ottoman Caliphate, and maintained the sanctity of the *jazirat al-Arab* (island of Arabia), wherein the Holy Places of Islam were located. A meeting of the All-India Khilafat Conference in Amritsar in December 1919 reiterated the decision. A deputation of influential Muslims met with the Viceroy of India, Lord Chelmsford, in Delhi in January 1920 to state their intentions and to obtain permission to proceed to England in the first instance. They were joined by M. K. Gandhi (1869-1948), who allied the caliphate's cause with the Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-1922), which aimed to secure self-government for India. The deputation received measured support from the Viceroy but also a warning that events in Europe were proceeding at such a pace that any effort to intercede in the fate of the caliphate would likely come too late.[1] The fact that permission was granted at all was notable; a similar request for a delegation from Afghanistan, to be led by the Afghan Amir, Amanullah Khan (r. 1919-1929), was denied mere weeks later.[2]

The Indian Khilafat delegation was consequently hastily organized and substantially smaller than had been initially anticipated. It was headed by Mohamed Ali Jauhar (1878-1931), the founder and editor of two Delhi-based newspapers in the 1910s who, along with his brother Shaukat Ali (1873-1938), had only recently been released from wartime internment in India.[3] Saiyid Sulaiman Nadwi (1884-1953), a scholar at the Nadwat al-ʿUlama in Azamgarh in the United Provinces, was chosen to represent the Indian ʿulama. He was charged with handling

[1] *The Turkish Settlement and the Muslim Attitude* (London: The Indian Khilafat Delegation Publications, 1920).

[2] "Afghanistan: the proposed Afghan Khilafat Delegation to Europe", L/PS/11/169/P1683, Oriental and India Office Collections, British Library, London (henceforth OIOC).

[3] Mohamed Ali and his older brother Shaukat Ali (1873-1938) were released from Betul Jail at the close of 1919. They were first interned in 1915 under the Defence of India Act for allegedly demonstrating pro-German sympathies and inciting unrest.

religious and historical criticisms of the delegation's claims, communicating with Muslims in other countries, and sending weekly reports home.[4] He spent the sea voyage improving his English in anticipation of this work.[5] Syud Hossain (1888-1949), formerly editor of the *Independent* (Allahabad), was tasked with emphasizing pan-Indian support for the Khilafat cause. Lastly, Hasan Muhammad Hayat (1882-1955) was to serve as the group's secretary. Other leading Muslims were to meet these four men in Europe.

The Indian Khilafat delegation's sojourn in 1920 offers a sense of the possibilities of religious internationalism in the years immediately after the First World War. By exploring the claims put forward by the delegation throughout its travels across London, Paris, Rome and beyond, over the course of myriad meetings with statesmen, journalists, members of the public, and the Pope, this chapter seeks to reconstruct an understanding of the history and meaning of the caliphate in Indian thought during a moment of rupture and uncertainty. The Khilafat delegation offers a glimpse of a distinct form of early-twentieth-century internationalism that operated within and between the borders of several European empires.

The nature of the delegation's work might be understood within the context of the recent history of Muslim transnational political and spiritual mobilization. From the late

[4] Naeem Qureshi, "Pleading the Case of the Ottoman Caliphate: Indian Khilafatists' Endeavours in Europe," in Naeem Qureshi, *Ottoman Turkey, Atatürk, and Muslim South Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 76-142, at 77-8. Reprinted from Naeem Qureshi, *Mohamed Ali's Khilafat Delegation to Europe (February-October 1920)* (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1980). On the Indian Khilafat Movement more broadly, see Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement – Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982); M. Naeem Qureshi, *Pan-Islam in British Indian Politics: A Study of the Khilafat Movement, 1918-1924* (Leiden: Brill, 1999); and A. Niemeijer, *The Khilafat Movement in India, 1919-1924* (Leiden: Brill, 1972).

[5] Sulaiman Nadwi (Karachi) to Masud Ali, 3 February 1920, in Sulaiman Nadwi, *Barid-i Farang: Khatut ka Majmuʿa* (Karachi: Majlis-i Nashriyat-i Islam, 1983 [1953]), 21-2.

eighteenth century, successive Ottoman rulers had attempted to strengthen the bases of their power in the face of both internal and external pressures by reasserting their claim to caliphal authority. Under the sultan-caliph Abdülhamid II (r. 1876-1909), the Porte worked assiduously to garner recognition of the caliph's spiritual authority among Muslims dispersed not only across the vast peripheries of the Ottoman Empire but also across Asia and Africa through networks of diplomatic envoys and consular officials. The work of these emissaries of the caliph was centripetal; these were individuals making use of modern technologies of travel and communication but ultimately radiating Hamidian 'conservatism' outwards from Istanbul (Constantinople) in order to strengthen the caliph's authority and power.[6] By contrast, Abdülhamid II appears to have been either disinterested in or actively suspicious of the new kind of religious internationalism represented by the World Parliament of Religions in 1893, which he declined an invitation to attend.

The caliph's assertion, however, of his spiritual – and perhaps political – authority over all Muslims did not imply its ready acceptance. While an Ottoman-centric 'pan-Islamism' was certainly on the rise – in India, from at least the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–8 – critics were quick to note its shallow roots and relatively weak hold. The close of the nineteenth century also saw the emergence of networks and ideas that circumvented Istanbul, questioning the presumed concentration of authority within the contemporary caliphate. One such idea was that of the Muslim "congress" – typically imagined as a forum in which Muslims from around the world might assemble to discuss matters of general interest and importance to Islam. As Martin Kramer has argued, the very idea of a Muslim congress had radical implications, for it assumed 'the diffusion among scattered Muslim communities of that religious and political authority claimed by the sultan-caliph'. Thus, its earliest articulations came from peripheral regions and

[6] Martin Kramer, *Islam Assembled – The Advent of the Muslim Congresses* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 6-7.

'marginal' thinkers critical of the Ottoman Caliphate.[7] The congress idea was later nourished by leading Arab voices such as the Syrian scholar and journalist Rashid Rida (1865-1935) and his journal *Al Manar* (Cairo),[8] though an attempt to hold a pan-Islamic congress in Cairo in 1907, led by the Crimean Tartar writer and educator, Ismail Gaspıralı (1851-1914), met with opposition from Abdülhamid II and faltered in the face of competing agendas.[9] The Young Turk revolution of 1908 created some optimism that the idea of the Muslim congress might now see less resistance from Istanbul, but it was not, in fact, until after the First World War and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and Caliphate that a series of assemblies were held that could make some claim to fulfilling the promise of the congress idea – in Cairo in 1926, in Mecca in 1926, and in Jerusalem in 1931.[10]

If the idea of the congress represented a challenge to caliphal authority concentrated in the person of the Ottoman Sultan, then the Khilafat delegation of 1920 and the Indian Khilafat Movement more broadly might be seen to present a more idiosyncratic indication of changing assumptions regarding the structure of authority within the so-called "Muslim world".[11] The very undertaking of the burden of defending the Ottoman Caliphate from destruction, though notionally in the name of preserving the caliphate's centrality, was already an assertion that Indian Muslims shared in a diffuse political and religious authority, and were thus entitled to help shape the meaning and future of this institution. Notably, on no occasion did the Indian

[7] Ibid., 9.

[8] Ibid., 25-36.

[9] Ibid., 26-54.

[10] Ibid., chapters 9-11. A Congress of European Muslim societies was also held in Geneva in 1935 – see ibid., ch. 12.

[11] On the history of the idea of the Muslim world, see Cemil Aydin, *The Idea of the Muslim World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017).

delegation claim to represent or speak *for* the caliph, but only for Indian interests in the caliphate and Islam at large. The journey from India to Europe – via the East African, Middle Eastern, and Mediterranean littoral – underscored the expansiveness of the delegation's horizons.

This chapter both builds upon and departs in some ways from a corpus of recent work on interwar 'Muslim transnationalism', which has focused on border crossings, contact zones, and processes of cultural exchange among enclaves of diasporic Muslims, mainly in European cities. Indeed, the role of the diasporic – frequently exilic – colonial Muslim subject has been central to much of this new scholarship; these were individuals whose politics saw the intersection of distinct ethnic, religious, and national identities with the cosmopolitanism of life in European cities.[12] These were subjects on the move, literally and figuratively, their lives shaped by networks, 'entanglements' and 'trans-culturality'.[13] Muslim presence appears in such work constitutive of European modernity, while Europe for Muslims of this period was a 'borderless, cross-cultural, multi-ethnic and a pluri-national sphere', an imagined space that enabled the emergence of a range of hybridized identities.[14] This scholarship has drawn much-needed attention to the participation of non-Europeans during what might be described as the

[12] Nathalie Clayer and Eric Germain (eds), *Islam in Inter-War Europe* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); Götz Nordbruch and Umar Ryad (eds), *Transnational Islam in Interwar Europe: Muslim Activists and Thinkers* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Bekim Agai, Umar Ryad, and Mehdi Sajid (eds), *Muslims in Interwar Europe: A Transcultural Historical Perspective* (Leiden: Brill, 2016); Cemil Aydin, "'The Muslim World' Question during the Interwar Era Global Imaginary, 1924-1945," *New Global Studies*, vol. 10, no. 3 (2017), 345-72. For the prominent role played by exiles in interwar Europe, see also Michael Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis: Interwar Paris and the Seeds of Third World Nationalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[13] Agai, Ryad, and Sajid (eds), *Muslims in Interwar Europe*, esp. 1-17.

[14] Ibid., 5.

first peak of internationalism, as processes of space-time convergence brought like-minded groups from across the globe into more significant contact with one another. Certainly, the Khilafat delegation might be read as part of a period of intense cross-cultural encounter and intellectual exchange, with its members' writings speaking of the profound significance of their meetings with Europeans and Muslims from other parts of the world while in Europe.

Incommensurability, however – whether in terms of ideas, methods, or visions of the future – has been less readily accounted for in existing scholarship. The Khilafat delegation was operating in a period of high political tension, when not only the peace terms for the Ottoman Empire but the more fundamental question of whether Islamic nations could or would be admitted into the most ambitious of post-War liberal internationalist projects – the League of Nations – was still uncertain.[15] In communications with Europeans, the delegation's arguments came to centre upon the need to resist the caliphate's 'vaticanisation', that is to say, to resist the separation of its spiritual and temporal powers. In making these arguments, the Indians resisted the logic of analogy and convergence central to European historicism. They articulated an understanding of the caliphate as a world-historical institution without parallel and an institution that could not be understood through comparison. Not only did their understanding of the caliphate's significance diverge from dominant European frameworks for conceptualizing the relationship between religion and politics, but the delegates found that they disagreed, too, with fellow Muslims in Europe in this period, for many of whom the caliphate was no longer central let alone indispensable. Even those sympathetic to the delegation's cause were forced to acknowledge that the present sultan-caliph, Mehmed VI (r. 1918-22), had been rendered a virtual cypher by the establishment of the Grand National Assembly in Ankara (formerly Angora) in 1920 under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal (d. 1938) and the Turkish

[15] Ameer Ali, "Address by the Right Hon. Syed Ameer Ali on Islam in the League of Nations," *Transactions of the Grotius Society*, vol. 5 (1919), 126-44.

nationalist party. Given the difficult position of the imperial government in Istanbul, a division of duties between the spiritual and temporal functions of the caliph – an idea unconscionable to the Indian delegation in 1920 – might have opened a route for the caliphate's very survival as an institution.

The following section will trace some of the Khilafat delegation's encounters in Europe in order to lay out the political context of the discussion to follow. Thereafter, this chapter will focus on the particularity of Indian claims made about and on behalf of the caliphate, focusing on forays into historical explanation, observations on the present state of the caliphate, and allusions to the institution's future. The delegation's four key members were afforded many opportunities to lay out their case, enabling us to reconstruct their views on the institution in some detail. At the same time, they were also prone to elisions and imprecision. The Khilafat delegation frequently discussed the 'caliphate' synonymously with the Ottoman Empire and with Turkey; they exacerbated the potential for confusion by largely refusing to acknowledge the distinction between the temporal power of the sultanate at the head of a vast, multi-ethnic territorial empire, and the spiritual dimensions of the caliphate – it was, after all, the very indivisibility of these elements that formed the cornerstone of their arguments. As the third section details, however, tensions emerged in their narrative, for the Khilafat delegation was apologetic but not wholly uncritical of the Ottoman Caliphate. Its members affirmed through various speeches, articles, letters, and pamphlets the growing influence of a language of Islamic republicanism in this period, suggesting that, even among those who were most stridently defending the Ottoman cause, there was room to imagine a post-Ottoman Muslim world.

This approach runs counter to both the best-known account of the Indian Khilafat Movement, which stresses the strategic exigencies of its politics and brackets the Khilafat delegation itself with the 'old methods' of Indian politics, and to approaches that treat "pan-Islamism" more broadly as a primordial form of identification, naïve and ill-suited to the post-

War moment.[16] This chapter argues instead that Khilafat sources invite us to understand the caliphate as an idea, a key concept animating Muslim thought in the early twentieth century. Focusing on the delegation to Europe enables us to see the idea of the caliphate as one articulated iteratively in and through encounters with diverse interlocutors, an idea responsive to old and new pressures alike. It allows us to highlight the discursive nature of Islam in a period of both crisis and creativity; indeed, it is precisely the 'liminality' of this period, when Muslim thinkers were 'trying to resuscitate the caliphate with one eye on the new world of republics and nation states', that renders this moment of transnational petitioning compelling.[17]

2. Peripatetic Pan-Islamists

The Indian delegation arrived in Britain at a time when anti-Ottoman sentiment was at a peak. While there was a long history of Turcophobia in Britain and William Gladstone's 'bag and baggage' policy still had many adherents, the more recent history of Istanbul's wartime alliance with Germany made the delegation's advocacy for the Ottoman Empire seem a wilful anachronism. The delegates were not, however, entirely without friends. As Naeem Qureshi has detailed, there were pre-existing organizations conducting pro-caliphate propaganda in Britain, including the Islamic Information Bureau and the London Muslim League, headed by the Shiʿa historian, jurist, and political organizer, Sayyid Ameer Ali (1849–1928).[18] The Woking Mission of the Lahori Ahmadis, which had its own journal, the *Islamic Review and Muslim India* (London), was another advocate, as were prominent British converts, including

[16] Minault, *Khilafat Movement*, 84-91.

[17] Andrew F. March, *The Caliphate of Man: Popular Sovereignty in Modern Islamic Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019).

[18] Qureshi, "Pleading the Case," 86-88.

Marmaduke Pickthall. Mohammed Chotani, President of the Central Khilafat Committee, had expressly urged Mohamed Ali to be cognisant of men such as Ameer Ali and Pickthall, who might not hold much sway with the British public but could be 'useful in their own way'.[19] Such figures had arranged meetings, interviews, resolutions, pamphlets, articles, and even a Khilafat day in Britain in October 1919.[20] The delegation attended Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha celebrations at the Woking Mosque in June and August, respectively, where they were among other 'Indian Muslims in turbans of different colours… Muslims from Egypt and Arabia in red turbouches… Muslims from the heart of Africa in long-flowing robes, and above all… British Muslims in their English dresses…'.[21] A seasoned newspaperman in India, Mohamed Ali focused on bolstering the public conversation around the Khilafat cause, including through the financial support of other sympathetic publications, such as the Islamic Bureau's *Muslim Outlook* (London), which published at length about the delegation. A copy of the delegation's itinerary, drawn up by officials at the India Office, indicates that the delegation had numerous meetings at newspaper offices in London and later in Paris.[22] Though the accuracy of this itinerary is doubtful, it provides a sense of how busy the delegation was during its time in Britain and continental Europe; this is reinforced by the wealth of letters written by Mohamed Ali and Sulaiman Nadwi detailing their encounters. Beyond private meetings with politicians

[19] M. M. Chotani (Bombay) to Mohamed Ali, 14 May 1919, in Mushirul Hasan (ed.), *Mohamed Ali in Indian Politics*, 3 vols (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 1986) vol. 3, 66-8.

[20] *Islamic Review and Muslim India* (London), November 1919, 406-8.

[21] *Islamic Review*, June-July 1920, 224–225 and August-September 1920, 286.

[22] 'Itinerary', in "The Indian Khilafat Delegation. Memorandum by Political Intelligence Officer attached to the India Office, Maj. N. N. E. Bray, January 1921," L/PS/18 B361, OIOC.

and editors, the delegation's activities primarily consisted of public events – in London, Manchester, Edinburgh and beyond.[23]

The Liberal-led coalition government, headed by Prime Minister David Lloyd George, was lukewarm and, at times, actively hostile towards the Indian delegation and the idea of any special pleading for the Ottoman Empire. In a combative meeting with Lloyd George in March, for instance, the delegates were asked why, if the principle of self-determination could be applied to the Austria-Hungarian Empire, it should not be granted to the populations of the Ottoman Empire. The delegates were challenged on the matter of Turkish atrocities against religious minorities, and particularly the treatment of Armenians – an issue which was coming to define Britain's post-war identity as a humanitarian power.[24] There was little that the delegation could say that would counter these accusations effectively; Mohamed Ali regarded them as a product of 'religious and racial prejudices ingrained for centuries past'. Nevertheless, he proposed an international commission to visit Turkey and investigate the allegations, which could include the Nizam of Hyderabad, members of the Indian ʿulama such as ʿAbd al-Bari (1878-1926) of the Firangi Mahal seminary and Maulana Mahmudul Hasan (1851-1920), the rector of the Dar al-ʿUlum seminary in Deoband (who was at the time under British internment in Malta), and both Hindu and Muslim leaders of Indian public opinion.[25] For Lloyd George, however, the question of atrocities was part of a more fundamental critique: that Turkey was

[23] Ibid.

[24] Michelle Tusan, "'Crimes Against Humanity': Human Rights, the British Empire and the Origins of the Response to the Armenian Genocide," *American Historical Review*, vol. 119, no. 1 (2014), 47-77.

[25] Muhammad Ali and Shaukat Ali, *For India and Islam. Speeches by the Ali Brothers* (Calcutta: Saraswaty Library, 1922), 48-9 and 53-4. The allegations against the Turks mainly focussed on the "Cilician massacre" of 1909, when some 30,000 Armenian Christians were killed in the aftermath of the counter-revolution that wrested control of Government back from the Committee of Union and Progress in April 1909.

not 'fit to govern' and was 'incapable of protecting its own subjects'.[26] Lloyd George insisted that the Turkish question was not one of religion but of good government, gesturing to the rise of a host of nationalist demands within the Ottoman Empire. When he asked Mohamed Ali whether the latter opposed the independence of Arabia, Ali replied in the affirmative, but there could be 'special arrangements' for the autonomy of Arabs, Jews, and Christians within the Turkish Empire.[27] The answer was unsatisfactory; Lloyd George refused to entertain the notion that the caliph should retain temporal power over any non-Turkish population.

The delegation also met with H. A. L. Fisher on behalf of the Secretary of State for India, Edwin S. Montagu. Sulaiman Nadwi noted during that meeting that he was likely the first 'maulvi' to visit Britain and that he had no political agenda – this was in the hope of convincing His Majesty's Government that 'this is not a political matter to us, but a religious matter'.[28] Montagu, mindful of the delicacy of Muslim public opinion in India, home to the British Empire's largest population of Muslims, was sympathetic to the cause and advocated for a pro-Turkish policy in Cabinet. Montagu's effort to gain the delegation some consideration had a negligible effect on the Liberal, let alone Allied, approach, however. The question of 'Muslim sentiment' might have been important, but it was countered by a sense that pan-Islamism was not, ultimately, a serious form of politics when the dominant questions of the day revolved around the unit of the nation.[29] The delegation met with Liberals out of

[26] Ibid., 58-9.

[27] Ibid., 52.

[28] *The Secretary of State for India and the Indian Khilafat Delegation* (London: The Indian Khilafat Delegation Publications, 1920), 19.

[29] Johan Mathew, "Spectres of Pan-Islam: Methodological Nationalism and Imperial Policy after the First World War," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 45, no. 5 (2017), 942-68.

government, too, including Herbert Asquith, who led the substantial number of Liberal MPs opposed to the coalition government; thismeeting was reported to be similarly unproductive.[30]

The delegation – and the Khilafat Movement in general – was seemingly out of step with the 'Wilsonian moment' – a self-consciously liberal moment – in advocating for the continuance of a regime believed to be murdering its subjects and in resisting claims for separate statehood for the constituent nationalities of the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, they realized the hypocrisy of the challenge before them, claiming themselves to be in favour of the 'full autonomy and right of free development of all non-Turkish races within the Turkish Empire as embodied in the fourteen points of President Wilson'.[31] It was Britain, instead, that pursued the 'vivisection of Syrians', the mandates over Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia, and the continued protectorate over Egypt, despite the latter's 'unanimous desire for independence'.[32] Mohamed Ali pointed out to cheering public halls in London and Paris that while the League's mandates system was sold as a form of benign tutelage that would prepare the former territories of the German and Ottoman Empires for independence, India, a land that had enjoyed 150 years of such benevolent tutelage, was still not deemed ready for self-determination.[33] Syud Hossain claimed the Khilafat Movement opposed Arab independence

[30] Mohamed Ali (London) to Shaukat Ali, 11 March 1920, Shaukat Ali Papers, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi (henceforth SAP).

[31] M. H. Abbas, *All About the Khilafat, with the views of Mahatma Gandhi & others; together with full details of the Indian Khilafat Delegation in Europe headed by Mawlana Mohammed Ali* (Calcutta: Ray and Ray Choudhury, 1923), 157. For other invocations of Wilsonian principles, see *The Turkish Settlement*, at 5, 6-7, and 11.

[32] Abbas, *All About the Khilafat*, 156-7.

[33] Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); *A People's Right to Live* (London: The Indian Khilafat Delegation Publications, 1920).

from the Ottoman Empire because, for the first time in the history of Islam, a claim had been laid on Arabia by someone who was not a caliph, referring to the British-backed Hashemite potentate, Sharif Hussein of Mecca. The delegation's discerning commentary on the imperial nature of the peace settlement brought them a warmer reception on the left; surprisingly, perhaps, the delegation's call for the preservation of the Ottoman Caliphate and its territorial power was well received among various socialist and pacifist organizations in Britain, including the Independent Labour Party, led by the Christian socialist George Lansbury.[34]

Despite these encouraging connections, this was hardly likely to be an effective route towards safeguarding the future of the caliphate. In the weeks following their disappointing meeting with Lloyd George, the Khilafatists briefly contemplated travelling to Japan and the USA before directing its attention to the continental European powers. The four men crossed the channel several times during the spring and summer of 1920, visiting Paris, Versailles, Rome, Geneva, and Montreux. Trips to Paris were numerous partly because the city allowed the delegation contact with the vast numbers of statesmen, diplomats and official representatives who had arrived to participate in the Peace Conference.[35] For instance, the delegation met with the representatives of the Porte on at least three occasions in Paris, in May, June, and August 1920. Mohamed Ali wrote to his brother, Shaukat Ali, about the delegation's first impressions of the Ottoman representatives and later described dining with them in

[34] On the impact of the Khilafat Movement on socialist organisations in Britain, see Faridah Zaman, "The Abstraction of Sovereignty: Socialist Thought and the Ottoman Empire," *Twentieth Century British History*, vol. 34, no. 1 (2023), 60-97.

[35] India did have official representation at the Paris Peace Conference – the only non-self-governing nation to do so – via a small delegation comprised of the Secretary of State for India, Edwin Montagu, lawyer and statesmen, Satyendra Prasanno Sinha, and the Maharaja of Bikaner, Ganga Singh. These figures attempted to draw the Supreme Allied Council's attention to the Khilafat cause.

Versailles.[36] The delegation was in Paris when the terms of the peace treaty, which set out the enormous territorial losses that the Ottoman Empire was to undergo and the mandatory regime that would be established in Arabia, were presented to these representatives in May 1920 following the Allied conference in San Remo in April.[37] The Indians were indignant at the terms offered – so much so that they telegrammed Mehmed VI directly on 10 May to urge him to reject them. After sensing that the Sultan was in no position to respond appropriately to the proposed treaty's terms, the delegates worked even more frantically to promote its reconsideration in Europe. In a subsequent letter to Mehmed VI, explaining the situation in India, it was made clear to him that should the sultan-caliph sign the treaty and thereby lose his sovereignty and temporal power, Indian Muslims would cease to recognize him as caliph.[38] The letter also made unsubtle allusions to a rival defender of Islam, the Amir of Afghanistan, who was showing himself to be 'a true *mujahid*' (fighter) in the Khilafat cause.[39]

Paris also allowed the delegation opportunities to discuss the future of the caliphate with a host of potential Muslim allies, that were gathered in the city during this world-making moment – constituting a kind of ad hoc congress. The Indians were frequently in touch with Tunisians, Algerians, Iranians, and Egyptians, as well as Chinese and Russian Muslims.[40] They were also in conversation with Arab delegations from Syria and the Hijaz, with whom they

[36] Mohamed Ali (Paris) to Shaukat Ali, 15 May 1920, published in the *Independent* (Allahabad), 29 June 1920, and Mohamed Ali (Paris) to Shaukat Ali, 11 June 1920, published in the *Independent*, 22 July 1920. Reproduced in Hasan (ed.), *Mohamed Ali in Indian Politics*, vol. 3, 68-71 and 97-102.

[37] Qureshi, "Pleading the Case," 105-6.

[38] Mohamed Ali (Paris) to the Sultan of Turkey, 28 May 1920, Mohamed Ali Papers, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi (henceforth MAP).

[39] Ibid.

[40] Nadwi (Paris) to Masud Ali, 27 May 1920, *Barid-i Farang*, 113-5; Mohamed Ali (Paris) to Shaukat Ali, 21 May 1920, SAP; Abbas, *All About the Khilafat*, 228.

sometimes struggled to contain their frustrations.[41] '[W]e realized', writes Mohamed Ali, 'that Paris was… the political centre for Eastern people'.[42] Nadwi, too, reflected on the effect of Muslims from so many faraway parts of the world being able to meet and discuss their shared suffering.[43] In Paris, the delegation attended a conference at the Collège de France and one at the Salle des Ingénieurs Civils organized by *La France et l'Islam*.[44] Mohamed Ali gave a public lecture in Paris in May before the Comité national d'études politiques et sociales on the Islamic aspect of the Turkish settlement; the lecture was chaired by the Dean of the Faculty of Law at Sorbonne and translated line by line by an interpreter.[45] Among Frenchmen, a key ally was the socialist political activist Jean Longuet (1876-1938), the grandson of Karl Marx who had founded the influential paper *Le Populaire* during the War. *Le Populaire* published several articles on Turkey, as well as an interview with the delegation.[46] Longuet personally helped arrange public meetings for the delegation, at which the Indians advanced familiar arguments as well as some new ones seemingly tailored for their French audiences. As in Britain, however, the warmth of socialist reception was unlikely to produce meaningful changes to the Turkish treaty – if the British Labour Party was at least in ascendance in 1920, the French Socialist Party (SFIO) was headed towards a decisive split between socialist and Communist factions later that year. . As in Britain, the delegation's impact was more considerable on public opinion than among those with political sway; while they reported that they received 'a most

[41] Nadwi (Paris) to Masud Ali, 17 July 1920, *Barid-i Farang*, 139-41.

[42] Abbas, *All About the Khilafat*, at 257. On post-war Paris, see also Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis*.

[43] Nadwi (London) to Masud Ali, 23 April 1920, *Barid-i Farang*, 71-3.

[44] 'Itinerary' in "The Indian Khilafat Delegation," L/PS/18 B361, OIOC.

[45] Mohamed Ali (Paris) to Shaukat Ali, 21 May 1920, SAP.

[46] 'Le Monde muselman affirm sa solidarité', *Le Populaire* (Paris), 16 April 1920, 1.

sympathetic hearing' from various statesmen in the Quai d'Orsay, it is unclear what, if any, encouragement they received from the French Premier, Alexandre Millerand.[47]

Members of the delegation were reported to have stopped in numerous other locations across Europe that summer, including at the second meeting of the Communist International in Geneva in July-August 1920;[48] they were reported to have communicated with the Bolsheviks directly, members of the Committee of Union and Progress in European exile, and with Sinn Feinners, though many of these apparent encounters are difficult to corroborate.[49] They seemed to have received their warmest welcome when they arrived in Italy. The Italian Government, led by the experienced liberal statesmen, Prime Minister Giovanni Giolitti, was unhappy with the Turkish treaty, as were both the Christian Democrats and the Socialist Party.[50] Giolitti granted the delegation a meeting and reportedly expressed great sympathy with their cause; he agreed that 'until Eastern countries were freed from the yoke of foreign rule there could never be permanent peace in the world'.[51] Even more suggestively, two delegation members met with Pope Benedict XV at the Vatican (discussed below).[52] While in Rome, the delegation attended a meeting of the League of Oppressed Nations, which sought to encourage 'Eastern' agitators to work together.[53] The left-leaning *La Stampa* (Turin) printed supportive accounts of the Indian agitation against the British treatment of Turkey and the delegation's trip to Europe, as

[47] Abbas, *All About the Khilafat*, 197-8; Mohamed Ali (London) to Shaukat Ali, 12 August 1920, SAP.

[48] "Grave movimento anti-inglese nell'India," *La Stampa* (Turin), 3 August 1920, 1.

[49] "The Indian Khilafat Delegation," L/PS/18 B361, OIOC.

[50] Qureshi, "Pleading the Case," 108-10.

[51] Afzal Iqbal, *The Life and Times of Mohamed Ali* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1979), 214.

[52] "The Indian Khilafat Delegation," L/PS/18 B361, OIOC.

[53] Qureshi, "Pleading the Case," 108-10.

well as news of spontaneous pro-caliphate protests in Benghazi in the Italian colony of Libya.[54] Such reports sustained the impression that Italy was the European power most well-disposed towards the caliphate and, indeed, the sole bulwark against Franco-British imperialism in the Middle East. Ultimately, however, the delegation's attempts to excite jealousy among the European colonial powers failed in Rome as they had in Paris, for the Italians could do little to help the delegation influence the peace settlement. Turkish representatives signed the Treaty of Sèvres on 20 August, extinguishing the raison d'être of the Khilafat Movement; the delegation prepared to leave Europe for India shortly afterwards.

3. The Past, Present, and Future Caliphate

The narrative of the Khilafat delegation's movements in 1920 would suggest a period of urgent, determined activity that ultimately ended in disappointment. While there were few tangible results of this period of 'Muslim cosmopolitanism', unpacking some of the arguments made during the trip does, however, allow us to explore aspects of the religious and political imagination of the Khilafat movement. The pronouncements of the Khilafat delegation were rooted in multiple religious and historical claims. On the one hand, the delegation claimed that they 'approached the question of the future of the Turkish Empire not as a Turkish or an Arab question, but as a Muslim question, a question that vitally affected some of the most essential injunctions of their faith'. Their demands were 'for the preservation of the temporal power of the Khalifa, adequate to the defence of the Faith, which involved the restoration of the *status quo ante bellum*, the Khalifa's wardenship of the Holy Places of Islam and the Executive

[54] "Grave movimento anti-inglese nell'India," *La Stampa,* 3 August 1920, 1; "Adunanza Islamita a Bengasi," *La Stampa*, 1 May 1920, 1.

Muslim Control of the "Island of Arabia"…'.[55] Copious if rather vague references to the Qurʾan, the traditions of the Prophet (hadiths), and the opinion of the ʿulama were intended to demonstrate the theological soundness of these demands as well as their essential constancy: '[W]hat is unalterable by human hand', they said, '… shall remain unaltered'.[56] But the delegation also claimed a right to present these arguments 'on the basis of the perfect freedom in matters of faith guaranteed to the Muslims of India by the Proclamation of 1858 and subsequently confirmed by King Edward VII and King George V'.[57] The delegation thus invoked specific commitments to religious freedom made to Indian Muslims after the Rebellion of 1857-8, underscoring why it was they, and not some other group of Muslims, who presumed to advocate for the caliphate in Britain in 1920.

The delegation expected Lloyd George to comment on the veracity of their religious claims; if they were demonstrably true, then their demands could not be rightly refused.[58] Lloyd George was unmoved. 'The question of the temporal power of a spiritual head [was] not confined to Islam', he stated, 'referring to the 'fierce controversies' over the temporal power of the Roman Catholic Church. Though he did not claim to express any opinion on what ought to happen to the caliphate, he noted that 'after the Pope was deprived of his temporal power his spiritual power was as great as and very likely greater than ever'. Just as there were 'Catholics who take one view and other Catholics who take a very different view of the temporal power of the Pope', among 'sincere, earnest, zealous' Muslims, there were those 'who take a very different view of the temporal power (of the Khalifa) from the one which is taken by Mr.

[55] *The Turkish Settlement*, 7.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Abbas, *All About the Khilafat*, 153-4. See also *Justice to Islam and Turkey* (London: The Indian Khilafat Delegation Publications, 1920), 8.

[58] Abbas, *All About the Khilafat*, 154.

Mohamed Ali to-day…'.[59] In response to this provocation, the delegation argued that 'not one single sect of Islam' subscribed to the view that the caliph should not have temporal power. 'Even the Shias, who do not believe in the present Khalifah, require that power for their Imam and valiantly sacrificed their lives for the supremacy of Ali and Hussain (may the peace of God be upon them both) in the past', they asserted.[60] This statement invoked a shared Islamic understanding of the spiritual-cum-temporal power of the caliphate, despite the acknowledged doctrinal difference.[61]

The manifesto of the All-India Khilafat Conference in 1920 presented the cause as two-pronged. The first claim was that the Ottoman Empire should remain a sovereign state. The second claim was that it should retain sovereignty over the *jazirat al-Arab* and custody of the Holy Places of Islam. The Khilafat delegation, following suit, treated the inviolability of the entire *jazirat al-Arab* as central to its cause. Though technically a peninsula, Islamic theologians defined Arabia as an island, 'bounded by the Mediterranean Sea, the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf, the Euphrates and the Tigris'. The Holy Places included 'the three Sacred Harems, namely, Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem, and the Holy Shrines, namely, Najaf, Karbala, Samarra, Kazimain, and Baghdad'. 'In reality this claim is included in the first', they continued, 'but it is distinguishable from it in that the custody of the Holy Places has ever

[59] *The Prime Minister and the Indian Khilafat Delegation* (London: The Indian Khilafat Delegation Publications, 1920), 21.

[60] Abbas, *All About the Khilafat*, 155.

[61] That difference was regarded as having undermined earlier presentations of the Khilafat issue in London; ensuring, therefore, that the leading Shiʿa voice in Britain, Ameer Ali, and the Ismaili leader, Aga Khan III (1877-1957), were articulating the Khilafat cause in the same terms as the Khilafat delegation were doing was something that Mohamed Ali was particularly concerned about in 1920, though it is not clear that either Ameer Ali or the Aga Khan were willing to take instruction from him – see Mohamed Ali (London) to Shaukat Ali, 11 March 1920, SAP.

since the establishment of Islam been under the Khilafat, and unlike the boundary of the latter, which has fluctuated from time to time, has never suffered any diminution whatsoever'.[62] The Indians insisted, nevertheless, that the 'Khalifa alone shall be the Warden of the Holy Places'.[63] In their meeting at the India Office, they articulated a privileged claim to the territory: 'We who consider ourselves to be the spiritual heirs of Abraham and Moses and Jesus, consider that this is a land apart and consecrated in a peculiar degree and reserved for us. We are charged with the duty of maintaining its sanctity inviolate, of keeping it peaceful and tranquil, a sanctuary for the Faithful, and safe for Theocracy.'[64] The land was 'consecrated', Mohamed Ali said, because it contained 'the birthplaces and graves of the great Prophets of the world'.[65] For Syud Hossain, the land was 'hallowed by the memories of fourteen hundred years of Islamic history'; the Holy Places and shrines remaining in Muslim hands was indispensable to the 'spiritual and cultural existence' of Muslims.[66]

When it was suggested to the delegates that the principal Holy Places in Mesopotamia were 'only Holy Places of pilgrimage for the Shiahs [*sic*] who do not recognize the Khalifa', the Indians retorted that the 'Holy Places are held in very great reverence and by all sects; many Sunni Mahomedans also visit the shrines'.[67] Sulaiman Nadwi offered an extensive inventory of Arabia's significance, describing the particular importance of Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, Jerusalem, Mecca and Medina as sites bound up with the history of prophecy and

[62] *The Turkish Settlement*, 10.

[63] Ibid., 6.

[64] *The Secretary of State for India and the Indian Khilafat Delegation* (London: The Indian Khilafat Delegation Publications, 1920), 7.

[65] Abbas, *All About the Khilafat*, 203-4.

[66] Ibid., 112. See also *The Secretary of State for India and the Indian Khilafat Delegation*, 7.

[67] *The Secretary of State for India and the Indian Khilafat Delegation*, 15.

where caliphs, companions of the Prophet, and warriors of the faith were buried: 'Every inch of this land is replete with memories and traditions of Islam and is consequently dear to us and is our acknowledged Holy Land', he concluded.[68] The idea that the *jazirat al-Arab* had been inviolate and in Muslim control for 1400 years was critical to their argument. The Hashemite-led forces in Arabia currently challenging Turkish rule were thus engaged in an 'unreality' since their bid for power was inconsistent 'with their acceptance of even the spiritual sovereignty of the Khalifa'.[69] In some articulations, the inviolability of the *jazirat al-Arab* seemed to be a greater priority to the delegation than the sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire or even the caliphate itself, since the latter existed as a means to defend the former. More frequently, the distinction was expressed as Islam having 'two centres': 'a personal one', in the figure of the caliph, and a 'local' or 'geographic' one, referring to the *jazirat al-Arab*.[70]

Regarding the caliphate itself, the Indians insisted that this was an existential question for Islam. 'If Islam is to exist in the world, then it is absolutely essential that Islam should have a Caliphate,' said Syud Hossain. 'That has been the history and tradition of Islam ever since its foundation fourteen hundred years ago…'[71] Nadwi elaborated on what form such a caliphate should take: the 'first condition, in fact the very foundation of the Islamic institution of the Khilafat – as taught by our sacred books – is that the Khalifa must be independent; he should have adequate power to defend the Faith; he should have sufficient military and economic

[68] Abbas, *All About the Khilafat*, 226-7.

[69] *The Turkish Settlement*, 10. See also Maulana Syed Sulaiman Nadwi, "Khilafat and the Koreish," *Foreign Affairs: A Journal of International Understanding* (London), July 1920, Special Supplement, vi-ix, at viii. This essay was likely written up in English by Mohamed Ali – see Mohamed Ali (Paris) to Shaukat Ali, 25 June 1920, SAP.

[70] *The Prime Minister and the Indian Khilafat Delegation*, 3-4. See also Abbas, *All About the Khilafat*, 226-7.

[71] Abbas, *All About the Khilafat*, 209.

resources at his disposal, and the area under his dominion should be sufficient to satisfy the needs and requirements of an independent State'.[72] The caliph did not require these resources for aggression, nor even for the defence of Turkey, but so that 'whenever the liberty of conscience of the Mussulman in any part of the world is placed in jeopardy, he should at least be able to say to the aggressor, "you shall not do that with impunity"'.[73] Nadwi's articulation gave the impression that scriptural sources contained a highly sophisticated conception of the caliphate as a power that should come to the rescue of beleaguered Muslims anywhere in the world. Elsewhere, the delegation acknowledged that there was no way to stipulate what were 'sufficient… resources' since the matter was relative. Still, there were frequent reprisals of the claim that they sought 'the restoration of the territorial *status quo ante bellum*'.[74] It was, ironically, when writing in the journal of the British pacifist organization, the Union of Democratic Control, that Mohamed Ali was most truculent on the subject of armed force. So long as the rest of the world was not prepared to dispense with temporal power in the form of armies and navies, and men still fought to dominate and exploit others, he argued, the Khilafat could not do without force.[75]

The Khilafat delegation frequently elided the more complex aspects of the caliphate's history. 'For the last 400 years the Caliphate has been vested in the House of Othman, and the Sultans of Turkey have accordingly commanded the unquestioned and spontaneous spiritual allegiance of the Muslim world by virtue of their position as "Commander of the Faithful"', claimed Syud Hossain in a characteristically sweeping statement.[76] As might be expected,

[72] Ibid., 225.

[73] Ibid., 201.

[74] *The Prime Minister and the Indian Khilafat Delegation*, 4.

[75] Mohamed Ali, "Islam and the Khilafat," vi.

[76] Syed Hossain, in *L'Information* (Paris), 22 April 1920, reproduced in Abbas, *All About the Khilafat*, 244-50.

Nadwi's historical accounts were both the most fulsome and the most engaged with theological sources. According to Nadwi, the Prophet 'directed the Mussulmans in the most unambiguous language never to let the smallest period go by without choosing an Imam, or in other words a Khalifa… The final decision, on many ecclesiastical and theological points in Islam, depends on the very existence of a Khalifa'.[77] Nadwi also invoked most clearly Islam's 'republican' history: 'The Khalifa is the successor of the Holy Prophet of Islam, the Leader of the world-embracing brotherhood of the Faith, and the recognized and acknowledged Head of the Republic of Islam.'[78]

Nadwi emphasized the continuity of the caliphate as the lynchpin of the 'Republic of Islam', from Medina, the seat of the first three caliphs, through Kufah in Mesopotamia, to the caliphate of the Umayyads in Damascus. Then the Abbasids 'performed the functions of the Khilafat for over five hundred years from Bagdad'. 'On the sack and destruction of that romantic city of the hands of the Tartars, in 1258, Egypt became the centre of the Khilafat.' Finally, 'when Sultan Selim wrested that country from the hands of the Memlukes [*sic*], in 1517, the last of the Abbasside [*sic*] Khalifas went over to Constantinople and resigned his exalted office in favour of the Turkish Sultan and appointed him his successor'.[79] Nadwi presented a seamless history of the caliphate, skirting over, for instance, the absence of a caliphate between 1258 and the eventual installation of an Abbasid descendent in Cairo by the Mamluk ruler, Beybar, in 1261. The final transition, from Cairo to Istanbul, was critical for him to establish firmly and without a doubt: the last Abbasid caliph 'handed over to the Turkish Khalifa the holy relics of the Prophet, which are still in the custody of the present Khalifa at Constantinople.' Since that time, 'the sovereigns of the Ottoman State have been

[77] Abbas, *All About the Khilafat*, 221.

[78] Ibid. See also *Justice to Islam and Turkey*, 24.

[79] Abbas, *All About the Khilafat*, 222-3.

unquestionably recognized as the Khalifas of Islam and their names have been invoked every Friday in the mosques of Europe, Asia, and Africa'.[80] This last point was surely made in awareness of the argument, pervasive in European scholarship and contemporary commentary, that the Ottoman claim to the caliphate had only emerged sometime after 1517 and that its longevity was therefore fabricated.[81]

In a lengthy essay published in July 1920, Nadwi also took to task the prevalent argument that the Ottoman Caliphate was illegitimate because the House of Othman did not belong to the Prophet's tribe, the Quraysh.[82] He sketched in some detail the early history of succession in Islam and the election of caliphs, drawing on the hadith collection of Imam al-Bukhari to demonstrate that while the Quraysh did succeed the Prophet in the first instance, this had followed a process of 'due deliberation and consultation among the Companions [of the Prophet]'; there was nothing to say that the caliphate had been reserved exclusively for them. He described the Umayyad Caliphate in Damascus as an unfortunate period, when 'although the semblance of election was maintained, the reality had disappeared'. Nevertheless, Muslims still acknowledged these kings and dynasts as caliphs because 'they unreservedly placed all their powers at the disposal of Muslim piety for the defence of the faith'. As Nadwi and other members of the delegation repeatedly articulated, since the sixteenth century, 'the Ottoman Sovereigns have been the Khalifas of the Mussulmans' because they alone were

[80] Ibid.

[81] There is a strong textual record, including European sources from the sixteenth century, corroborating the Ottoman claim to having acquired the title of caliph after the conquest of Mamluk Egypt in 1517 under Selim I. Muslims in the early twentieth century by and large treated Orientalist claims to the contrary to be false and political motivated – see Mona Hassan, *Longing for the Lost Caliphate: A Transregional History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), 9-11.

[82] Nadwi, 'Khilafat and the Koreish', vi-ix.

'considered to satisfy the conditions necessary for the proper continuance and defence of this institution'.[83] Muslims would have accepted the claim of the Ottoman Sultans to the caliphate on these grounds alone, but Selim further 'fortified his position by an Act of Cession, and the Khilafat was thus conferred upon him with the consent of the Islamic world without conflict or controversy'.[84]

Nadwi did not solely rely on Muslim authorities to attest to the Ottoman Caliphate's legitimacy: 'All the Great Powers have acknowledged them as [caliphs] without any opposition, and this status of the Sultans of Turkey has been specially mentioned in more than one international document and treaty'. Furthermore, '[w]henever a political need has arisen the Government of Great Britain has always obtained from the Turkish Khalifas orders and firmans addressed to the Mussalmans of India'. For instance, when the British were fighting the French ally, Tipu Sultan, in southern India in the eighteenth century, 'a firman of this kind was obtained, in which the Turkish Sovereign, as Head of the Islamic Brotherhood and Church, called upon the Indian Sultan to break off all his relations with the French and enter into an alliance with the English'.[85] The very existence of this document suggested that by the eighteenth century at least, the British recognized the legitimacy of the Ottoman claim to the caliphate. Later, 'on the occasion of the Mutiny in India in 1857, the Turkish Khalifa was requested to issue another firman calling upon the Mussalmans of India to remain loyal to the English, who were the friends of the Sultan Khalifa'. Even today, 'fatwas are being forced from Constantinople and distributed [and] broadcast in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and India, and thus

[83] Abbas, *All About the Khilafat*, 225.

[84] Nadwi, "Khilafat and the Koreish," vi-ix. On reappraisals of the Ottoman Caliphate in Indian Muslim historiography, see Faridah Zaman, "The Future of Islam, 1672-1924," *Modern Intellectual History*, vol. 16, no. 3 (2019), 961-91.

[85] Nadwi, "Khilafat and the Koreish," viii.

attempts are being made to deceive, in the most open manner, the Mussulmans in these countries about the real state of affairs'.[86]

The confidence with which Nadwi handled historical criticisms made him a valuable member of the delegation. Attached to the research and publishing arm of the Nadwat al-ʿUlama, Nadwi would become best known for completing the monumental project of writing the multi-volume *Sirat al-Nabi* (The Life of the Prophet), started by his mentor, Shibli Numani (1857-1914). Shibli envisaged the *Sira* as a means by which to acquaint Muslims with an accurate history of their faith and, implicitly at least, to respond to European critics of Islam and the Prophet. Shibli published the first volume of the *Sira* in 1913, a year before his death; a second volume, completed by Nadwi, was published in 1920. Five more volumes authored by Nadwi followed. Shibli had spent formative years at the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh and, mindful of developments in modernist historiography, he strove to treat his sources critically and his subject historically even as he sought to defend the Prophet from European criticisms, producing tensions in his work. Muhammad Qasim Zaman has suggested that because Nadwi, by contrast, was much less exposed to modernist influences, he felt far less need to take up this defensive, 'apologetic' posture. There are, consequently, far fewer critical, scholarly aspects to his volumes and much more consideration given to what would best serve his reformist ambitions.[87] Nadwi had declared as early as 1915 his interest in taking up a more 'aggressive' approach as a *mutakallim* (theologian), speaking of the "imperative that one who stands up for the defence of Islam should be an expert not just in defence but also in attack".[88] The delegation to Europe in 1920 gave Nadwi a chance to take his attack beyond

[86] Abbas, *All About the Khilafat*, 224.

[87] Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "A Venture in Critical Islamic Historiography and the Significance of Its Failure," *Numen*, vol. 41, no. 1 (1994), 26-50.

[88] *Al-Nadwa*, vol. 11, no. 5 (1911), quoted in ibid. at 41.

India, not only through writings and speeches but also through gathering texts and meeting with scholars sympathetic to his cause, such as the eminent Persianist and Professor of Arabic at the University of Cambridge, E. G. Browne.[89]

While the delegation insisted that the caliphate remain an independent temporal power, its emphasis on the idea of a 'Republic of Islam' meant the Indians had to make clear that the caliph himself was not sovereign in a monarchical sense. Mohamed Ali stated that the caliph was the 'Amir-ul-Mumineen' [*amir al-muʾminin*]; he commands Muslims 'within the law of Islam and on behalf of God. He does not arrogate to himself a kingly function'. The doctrine of the Khilafat is, accordingly, 'the doctrine of a Republic', and thus, 'alone among the Sovereigns of the world the one whose Coronation ceremony does not take place in a palace is the Khalifa'.[90] Nadwi described the era of the *Rashidun* (the Rightly Guided) as the period when Islam was 'truly a Commonwealth, and the Khalifa its elected Chief and Leader'; this was the model to which the caliphate aspired.[91] In France, Mohamed Ali hoped that Longuet could help him communicate the idea that the 'Islamic Brotherhood is a Republic and the most determined advocate of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity'.[92] In Britain, when asked by Lloyd George if the caliphate was hereditary, Mohamed Ali responded:

[89] While in London, Nadwi compiled an article about Urdu texts in the India Office Library and on a visit to Cambridge, Nadwi met with E. G. Browne and was gifted several Persian texts – see Nadwi (London) to A.T., 5 May 1920, *Barid-i Farang*, 90-94. On the influence of travelling to Europe on Muslim historians, see Nile Green, "Spacetime and the Muslim Journey West: Industrial Communications in the Making of the 'Muslim World'," *American Historical Review*, vol. 118, no. 2 (2013), 401–29 and Zaman, "Future of Islam".

[90] *The Prime Minister and the Indian Khilafat Delegation*, 14-15.

[91] Nadwi, 'Khilafat and the Koreish', vi-ix.

[92] Abbas, *All About the Khilafat*, 258.

> Islam required temporal power for the defence of the Faith, and for that purpose, if the ideal combination of piety and power could not be achieved, the Muslims said, "Let us get hold of the most powerful person, even if he is not the most pious, so long as he places his power at the disposal of our piety." That is why we agreed to accept Muslim Kings, the Omayyids [*sic*] and the Abbasids, as Khalifas, now the Sultans of Turkey.

But,

> If the Turks agreed with other Muslims, and all agreed that the Khalifa may be chosen out of any Muslim community, no matter who he was, the humblest of us might be chosen, as they used to be chosen in the days of the first four Khalifas, the Khulafa-i-Rashideen or truly guided Khalifas. In that case all the power of Islam could once more be put at the disposal of the most pious amongst us.

If the latter happened, 'Muslims would be overjoyed', said Mohamed Ali, though he thought it unlikely since history suggested that no ruler liked to part with power.[93] In an essay published some weeks later, Mohamed Ali again described the caliph as 'the head of Islam's Republic', but even more pointedly referred to the 'mere accident, and an *unfortunate accident* at that, that he happens to be a king'.[94]

The latter point was a particularly delicate one, but Mohamed Ali had no qualms alluding to the 'unfortunate' history of the Ottoman Caliphate in direct communication with the sultan-caliph. In the letter of 28 May 1920, laced with fears that the Porte would sign the deleterious peace terms offered to it by the Allies, he explained why the caliph could do no

[93] *The Prime Minister and the Indian Khilafat Delegation*, 14-15.

[94] Mohamed Ali, "Islam and the Khilafat," *Foreign Affairs*, July 1920, iii-vi, at v. Emphasis added.

such thing according to both Islamic law and the history of the caliphate. In so doing, he referred to the diminishing power of the caliphate under recent Ottoman rule, suggesting the limitations of Hamidian efforts: 'Certainly the Khilafat was always meant to be something higher and greater than any merely national sovereignty [but] it cannot be denied that in the last few generations at least the *Khulafa* have not asserted themselves as such, and have generally appeared before the world as Sultans and *Padshahs*…'. Indeed, it was because for centuries 'the work of the Khilafat was done indifferently' that Muslims failed 'to come to his aid in the hour of his need'. No one was as likely to realize this than His Majesty, who, acceding to the throne in 1918, had 'inherited the awful consequences of the neglect of your predecessors'.[95]

In public speeches, too, the Indians occasionally acknowledged that the Ottomans were regarded as dissolute, unjust, and inept, though they also argued that the Ottomans had been placed in the most difficult of positions for centuries, besieged by European powers. Occasionally, they damned the Ottomans with faint praise; history would vindicate their 'basic toleration of Islam, and the essential humanity of the Turk'.[96] At other times, it seems apparent that they were striving to hold the character of the Ottoman government somewhat apart from the institution of the caliphate. Syud Hossain made an argument about practicality: it may be an 'unfortunate responsibility' that the Sultan of Turkey also happened to be caliph, and 'the claims of the Ottoman Sultans to the Khilafat may not be so satisfactory', he said, but that did not change the reality that seventy-five million Muslims in India recognized the Sultan of Turkey as their caliph. In such a case, the character of the Ottoman Caliphate was irrelevant.[97]

[95] Mohamed Ali (Paris) to the Sultan of Turkey, 28 May 1920, MAP.

[96] *The Turkish Settlement*, 7.

[97] *A People's Right to Live*, 16.

Looking forward, the delegation advanced a vision of a restored Turkish Empire as a force for peace. Muslims were convinced, it was said, 'that the reintegration of the Ottoman Empire on lines of order and progress will be a powerful factor for a world-peace… just as its disintegration cannot fail to involve the world in immeasurable discord and conflict'.[98] Counter-intuitively, the continued existence of the caliphate as part of a secure Ottoman Empire was frequently presented as an anti-imperial question: the Muslim world was not ready to see the caliphate perish, they said, because it was clear that the forces working for its destruction were nothing better than the 'same old factors' of imperialistic and financial exploitation 'that have already destroyed the freedom and culture of so large a portion of the non-European world'; 'India, as well as the Muslim world, is not willing that the last of the Islamic States, constituting the sole symbol of the temporal tradition of Islam shall pass from the world, as one more victim of the insatiable lust of European aggrandizement.'[99] It was precisely these sorts of arguments that led to the delegation's relatively warm reception within British pacifist quarters.

Another fraught issue was whether the caliphate was required to remain in Istanbul. The city was already effectively under Allied occupation after the War, and it looked likely that it would soon be placed under an international mandatory regime, perhaps under the League of Nations. European commentators, although sensitive to the city's historical symbolism and strategic significance, generally denied that it possessed a sacred character. The Khilafatists, however, insisted it was integral to caliphal power, that it was 'held very sacred by all the Muslims of the world', and that 'the uninterrupted historical tradition of nearly five centuries has created such an overwhelming sentiment with regard to Islambol, or the "City of Islam".' That did not mean the caliphate could be constrained to Constantinople alone, with

[98] Abbas, *All About the Khilafat*, 248-9.

[99] Ibid.

'the Khalifa as a sort of hostage' in the city.[100] 'If it is really to be the case that the Khalifa is to be kept at Constantinople under the guns of the Allied Powers, and is to exist in constant fear even of his own life, his position would be worse than that of the Pope at the Vatican. He would be the Pope at Avignon' – referring to the period in the fourteenth century when seven successive popes resided in the town of Avignon in south-eastern France – 'and even worse than that, for he would be a prisoner of a people of alien faith and race'. If that were to be the case, 'we would far rather see him in exile in Broussa [Bursa], or even Koniah [Konya], than in such a plight'.[101] In an interview intended for American audiences, the delegation repeated that 'If there is any question of setting up a "Prisoner of the Bosphorus," similar to the present Status of the Pope in Rome, or more particularly as at Avignon in time gone by, Mussulmans will have none of it'.[102]

The analogy to the papacy was frequently discussed in this period. In an address to the Viceroy in January, representatives of the CKC had claimed that 'no analogies from other creeds, the lacerating and devitalizing distinction between things spiritual and think temporal, between the Church and State, can serve any purpose save that of clouding and befogging the clearest of issues. Temporal Power is of the very essence of the institution of the Khilafat…'[103] Mohamed Ali was aware that their critics accused them of pressing 'an anachronistic claim' on Europe by suggesting that the 'Head of the Muslim Church' should have any more temporal

[100] *The Prime Minister and the Indian Khilafat Delegation*, 7.

[101] *The Secretary of State for India and the Indian Khilafat Delegation*, 18. See also *The Prime Minister and the Indian Khilafat Delegation*, 7; *A People's Right to Live*, 10; and *Justice to Islam and Turkey*, 9.

[102] Interview with the Indian Khilafat Delegation cabled to the United States by the United Press of America, reproduced in Abbas, *All About the Khilafat*, 193.

[103] *The Turkish Settlement*, 6. The claim was made frequently while in Europe – see indicatively Abbas, *All About the Khilafat*, 244-50 and *The Secretary of State for India and the Indian Khilafat Delegation*, *passim.*

power than the 'Head of the Christian Church', who had been relieved of all power. But all such 'criticisms and suggestions go astray in misunderstanding the very nature and ideal of Islam and the Khilafat, and in relying on analogies from faiths which, whatever their original ideals, have, for all practical purposes, ceased to interpret life as Islam seeks to do'.[104]

Warming to the theme, Mohamed Ali claimed that since Muslims did not believe that there was any inconsistency in the faith preached by any of the prophets from Adam through to Muhammad, they did not believe that Christ could have said that his was the Kingdom of Heaven and that men 'were to render under Caesar what was due to Caesar, and to God what was due to God'. Nevertheless, 'the ordinary Christian conception has been that the kingdom of Christ was not of this world, and no Pope or priest could consistently with this conception, demand temporal power'. The Pope had, he continued,

> always claimed to be the successor of St. Peter and the inheritor of *his* prerogatives. As such he has been looked upon as the door-keeper of the kingdom of heaven, his office being strictly and avowedly limited to the spiritual domain… Thus, without meaning any offence, it may be said that the acquisition of temporal power by the Popes was a mere accident, and they have certainly been divested of it without doing the least violence to the religious feelings of one half of the Christian world.[105]

By contrast, temporal power was the 'essence' of the caliphate, an idea traceable 'to the Prophet himself' and the earliest caliphs.[106] Mohamed Ali reflected that this point proved challenging to make in Britain. In contrast, in France, a country that was 'perhaps preponderatingly anti-

[104] Ali, "Islam and the Khilafat," iv-v.

[105] Ibid., v-vi. Emphasis in the original.

[106] Ibid.

clerical, it did not take us long to justify, from our point of view, the retention of temporal power by the Commander of the Faithful. Here, certainly, was no talk of "vaticanising" the Khalifa.'[107] Nadwi also frequently suggested that Catholic France and Italy understood their cause better than Protestant England.[108]

In the context of recurring discussions surrounding the 'vaticanisation' of the caliphate, it is striking that two members of the delegation, Mohamed Ali and Muhammad Hayat, had an audience with Pope Benedict XV on 28 July 1920. Mohamed Ali wrote an account of this meeting at the Vatican in a letter to his brother, subsequently published in the *Bombay Chronicle*; this is likely to be the only substantial account of what transpired. According to Mohamed Ali, Benedict XV was warm and attentive. He had apparently already been appraised by Cardinal Gasparri of Lloyd George's comments regarding the history of the papacy. In response, Benedict is reported to have said that 'the loss of the temporal power of the papacy was an argument in our favour than against us, for he realized every day that having been deprived of temporal power there were many things he could not do in the interests of the Catholic faith which he would otherwise have done quite reasonably and legitimately'.[109] If Benedict XV had said as much, he had somewhat understated the extent to which the papacy was engaged in active international diplomacy both during and after the First World War – writing directly to the Porte, for instance, in a bid to intercede on the Armenian question. But

[107] Abbas, *All About the Khilafat*, 253.

[108] For example, Nadwi (Paris) to ʿAbd al-Bari, 13 May 1920, *Barid-i Farang*, 99-101, at 101.

[109] Mohamed Ali (Paris) to Shaukat Ali, 5 August 1920, published in the *Bombay Chronicle*, 22 September 1920, in Hasan (ed.), *Mohamed Ali in Indian Politics*, vol. 3, 150-60, at 153-5.

he had also betrayed the fact that many of these efforts had ended in disappointment.[110] Mohamed Ali, at least, was encouraged by the meeting and hoped this was 'not the end, but the beginning of relations with the Vatican'.[111]

While resisting the caliphate's 'vaticanisation' was a prevailing concern, it is worth noting that on several occasions, Mohamed Ali appended a further thought to this: 'the Khalifa is something more than a Pope… *But he is also less than the Pope, for he is not infallible*.'[112] The caliph could not 'in all circumstances exercise unquestioned authority, for Allah was the only Sovereign'.[113] 'In all matters in which Mussulmans cannot see eye to eye with him the final arbiter is Allah Himself and we must refer back to the Quran and the Traditions of the Prophet.'[114] The Khilafat delegation's arguments here gesture to a long intellectual tradition within Islam of understanding the Qurʾan's affirmation that *al-hukm* (authority) belonged to God alone and it was He who bestowed *al-mulk* (authority) on kings and rulers as meaning that sovereignty ultimately rested with God.[115] This was not to say that kings and rulers had no authority but that political authority ultimately emanated from one source.[116] The delegated, limited authority of the caliph implied, the Indians said, that Muslims were 'not at his mercy and human conscience is still free. In fact, if [the caliph] persists in un-Islamic conduct we can

[110] John Pollard, *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism, 1914-1958* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), esp. chapters 2 and 3; Guiliana Chamedes, *A Twentieth-Century Crusade: The Vatican's Battle to Remake Christian Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019), esp. introduction.

[111] Mohamed Ali to Shaukat Ali, 5 August 1920, 155.

[112] *A People's Right to Live*, 9 – emphasis added. See also Ali, "Islam and the Khilafat," v.

[113] *Justice to Islam and Turkey*, 9.

[114] *A People's Right to Live*, 9.

[115] Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "The Sovereignty of God in Modern Islamic Thought," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 25, no. 3 (2015), 389-418.

[116] Ibid., 392.

depose him, and have deposed him more than once'.[117] The Khilafat advocates noted one specific circumstance in which they would not remain loyal to the present caliph. If the government of the caliphate were responsible for the murders and massacres of which it was accused, Muslims would need to consider whether 'such a Khilafat could be tolerated any longer'. And if they were to do so, then history would provide them with a model, for the Prophet's grandson, Hussain, was killed in the battle of Karbala opposing the tyrannical second Umayyad Caliph, Yazid I: '[N]o true Muslim could owe allegiance to such a tyrant.'[118]

This watchful stance complicates the view that Khilafat advocates were naïve and indeed 'perverse' in their support for the Turkish Sultan.[119] While they were grievously underinformed about political conditions within the Ottoman Empire, especially the scale of violence against religious minorities, their willingness, however cautiously framed, to think of the person of the Turkish Caliph and the institution of the caliphate as distinct entities suggests they were also able to see beyond the present moment.[120] The Khilafat delegation could not yet imagine an Islamic temporal order without a caliphate, and yet they did not present the institution as one in which authority was unlimited. They made clear that the historical association between the caliphate and monarchy was contrary to Islam's 'republican' ideal. As has been suggested in relation to Rashid Rida's writings on the caliphate *circa* 1920, it is possible to demonstrate an 'awareness of the most important dilemmas of sovereignty in an

[117] *A People's Right to Live*, 9.

[118] *The Prime Minister and the Indian Khilafat Delegation*, 12.

[119] 'Mohamed Ali wasted years of his life trying to make a hero out of the Turkish Sultan – a perverse a task as was ever attempted' – Mushirul Hasan (ed.), "Introduction," in Mohamed Ali, *My Life: A Fragment* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1999), 43.

[120] Zaman, "Future of Islam," esp. 20-23.

Islamic legal order' even while stressing 'the necessity and importance of the unitary (if not fully sovereign) executive authority'.[121]

The 'sovereignty of God' would become a critical concept within Islamist thought later in the twentieth century; without offering a fully worked-out statement about the relationship between God and temporal rulership, it is notable that the representatives of the Khilafat Movement were already invoking the sovereignty of God as a way to highlight their own capacity to determine the character of the Ottoman Caliphate.[122] In their articulation, the sovereignty of God did not render man helpless – that is to say, it was not God who took authority away from those who violated the principles of good rulership.[123] Instead, they gestured towards the idea of a Muslim body politic that possessed 'free will' and the ability to hold its own rulers to account; in this light, the Khilafat Movement as a whole might be read as an articulation of the authority of ordinary Muslims to determine the future of the caliphate. The Khilafat delegation's words arguably anticipated the language of the 'caliphate of man' and popular sovereignty already nascent in this period, though the Indians surely did not foresee the imminent redundancy of the Turkish Caliphate itself in this new landscape.

4. From Caliphate to Congress

When the Grand National Assembly deposed Mehmed VI, abolished the sultanate, and appointed a purely spiritual caliph, Abdülmecid (r. 1922-1924), in 1922, it did so on the basis

[121] March, *Caliphate of Man*, 42-3. See also, Mahmoud Haddad, "Arab Religious Nationalism in the Colonial Era: Rashīd Ridā's Ideas on the Caliphate," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 117, no. 2 (1997), 253–77.

[122] Zaman, "The Sovereignty of God."

[123] The latter was an argument Rida made in an unpublished Qurʾanic *tafsir* (commentary) – see ibid., 392-3.

that "God's representative (on earth) is the people…", not the Sultan.[124] While many Muslims felt betrayed by the change wrought by Turkish nationalists in 1922, some – including Indian figures as diverse as Ameer Ali and the scholar and political revolutionary Muhammad Barkatullah (d. 1927) – were cautiously optimistic, believing that the republican nature of the caliphate could be reinvigorated by its separation from an autocratic imperial regime and the reintroduction of the principle of election.[125] Indian reactions to the Turkish renegotiations of the peace settlement in the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, which saw the restoration of a significant degree of Turkish territory, were likewise mixed. While the new peace was celebrated on the streets of Delhi, there was also nervousness that the caliphate did not appear to be a part of the future imagined by Turkish nationalists.[126] When the news came of the deposition of Abdülmecid and the abolition of the caliphate in March 1924, it was for some the realization of their worst fears. The All-India Khilafat Conference of May 1924 decided to send out another delegation, to Ankara this time, to seek clarity and 'to remove such misunderstandings as may have interfered with a settlement of the Khilafat question'; on this occasion, however, the Government of India denied the delegation's members passports for travel, underscoring the contingent nature of projects of religious internationalism that were necessarily dependent on the infrastructures of empire.[127]

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[124] March, *Caliphate of Man*, 38, quoting from a poem of 1922 by Ziya Gökalp (1876-1924).

[125] Zaman, "Future of Islam," 989-90; Mohammad Barkatullah Bhopali, *The Khilafet* (London: Luzac, 1924). On the initial decision of the GNA to preserve the caliphate, see Basheer M. Nafi, "The Abolition of the Caliphate in Historical Context," in Madawi Al-Rasheed, Carool Kersten, and Marat Shterin (eds), *Demystifying the Caliphate: Historical Memory and Contemporary Contexts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 31-56.

[126] *Muslim Outlook* (Lahore), 23 November 1923, reproduced in Mushirul Hasan and Margrit Pernau (eds), *Regionalizing Pan-Islamism: Documents on the Khilafat Movement* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2005), 374-6.

[127] Mohammad Sadiq, *The Turkish Revolution and the Indian Freedom Movement* (Delhi: Macmillan India, 1983), 119-21.

Once it was clear that this was an irrevocable break, the future of the caliphate became an object of urgent international attention. In keeping with the spirit of the 1920 delegation, former Khilafat leaders insisted on a collective way forward. In July 1924, the Hashemite Sharif Hussain of Mecca (1853-1931), tried and failed to have himself recognized as caliph by Muslim representatives gathered for the Pilgrimage Congress in Mecca.[128] When news of a potential Cairene caliphate congress emerged, Shaukat Ali wrote to the head of Al Azhar mosque and university, which appeared to be promoting a new Egyptian caliphate in the person of King Fuad I (r. 1920-36), to insist that the 'future of the khilafate should be left to be settled by [a] world Muslim conference', one in which Muslim representatives from around the world would play a part in proportion to their population.[129] Khilafat leaders M. A. Ansari (1880-1936) and Hakim Ajmal Khan (1868-1927) visited Cairo to convey the importance of this point to the Egyptians in person.[130] The eventual Cairo Caliphate Congress of 1926, beset by tensions and suspicions, was not as broadly attended as had been hoped – the Khilafat Committee declined its invitation – and, tellingly, the Congress ultimately chose not to attempt to select a caliph on this occasion.[131] In the same year, a rival conference was held in Mecca under the auspices of the new Wahhabi ruler of the Hijaz, ʿAbd al-ʿAziz Ibn Saʿud (1875-1953), notionally to discuss pilgrimage conditions but effectively to normalize Ibn Saʿud's rule over the Holy Places.[132] The Meccan Congress was similarly marked by discord. Mohamed and

[128] Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, 84-85.

[129] Shaukat Ali (Aligarh) to Shaykh al-Azhar (Cairo), cited in Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, 93 and 86-105 more broadly. Khilafat representatives repeated this demand at the Mecca Congress in 1926 discussed below – see ibid., 112-113.

[130] Ibid., 95.

[131] Ibid.

[132] Ibid., 106-22.

Shaukat Ali attended as part of an Indian Khilafat delegation, but "when they came to Mecca and saw what they saw", they were said to have "carried out harsh and relentless assaults against the government of Ibn Saʿud and criticized his administrative and religious policy", refusing to refer to him as king of the Hijaz.[133] Ibn Saʿud's most implacable critics did not attend at all.[134]

The apparent failures of these congresses counter-intuitively affirmed the idea that the Muslims could and should collectively deliberate over the future of the caliphate and the Hijaz; subsequent congresses in the 1930s reinforced the principle of a globally dispersed authority and the importance of consensus (*ijmaʿ*). The fact that no consensus was ever reached on establishing a new caliphate might suggest that once this departure had taken place, it was difficult, if not impossible, to return to a model where so much authority was vested in a single personality. In 1930, the hugely influential Indian Muslim philosopher and poet Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938), would even argue that the Grand National Assembly's abolition of the caliphate was a radical exercise of *ijtihad* – a term that denoted, for Iqbal, not simply an act of legal reasoning, but the very 'principle of movement in the structure of Islam':[135]

> Turkey's Ijtihād is that according to the spirit of Islam the Caliphate or Imāmate can be vested in a body of persons, or an elected Assembly […] Personally, I believe the Turkish view is perfectly sound. It is hardly necessary to argue this point. The

[133] Report by Shaykh Muhammad al-Ahmadi al-Zawahiri, chief of the Egyptian delegation, undated MS, quoted in ibid., 109 and 112.

[134] Ibid., 111-112.

[135] Muhammad Iqbal, "The Principle of Movement in the Structure of Islam," Lecture VI in Muhammad Iqbal, M. Saeed Sheikh (ed.), *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012), 116-42, at 117. The lectures were first delivered and published in 1930; this text is based on the second edition, published in 1934.

> republican form of government is not only thoroughly consistent with the spirit of Islam, but has also become a necessity in view of the new forces that are set free in the world of Islam.[136]

While Iqbal is ambiguous here with regards to the scope of this 'elected Assembly' vested with the authority of the caliphate, the action taken by Turkish nationalists was, he argued suggestively, a step in the process of realizing the 'International ideal' in Islam: 'modern Islam' would see the birth of a 'living family of republics' that would, in turn, demonstrate that Islam is neither imperialism nor nationalism but 'a League of Nations'.[137] The following year, Iqbal attended the 1931 General Islamic Congress in Jerusalem.[138] In light of the preceding discussion, it may be noted that Sulaiman Nadwi was an important interlocutor for Iqbal while he worked out the historical and legal bases of his arguments surrounding *ijtihad* in Islam.[139]

Mona Hassan points to the parallels between the ways in which Muslims after 1924 and the papacy after its loss of political and territorial sovereignty in the 1860s sought to recalibrate visions of spiritual power, authority, and community.[140] Just as the papacy's loss of territorial power had allowed it to be 'reconstituted as the core of a transnational religious regime', one that remained relevant in the arena of international diplomacy into the First World War and beyond, the fact that the spiritual power of Islam had not been ineluctably constrained to a single empire or political regime had enabled Muslims to envision 'alternative ways of

[136] Ibid., 124-5.

[137] Ibid., 125-6.

[138] Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, 132.

[139] Iqbal, "The Principle of Movement," 205-6, n. 47. See also Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "South Asian Islam and the Idea of the Caliphate," in Al-Rasheed et al. (eds), *Demystifying the Caliphate*, 57-79, at 59-60.

[140] Hassan, *Longing*, 193-4.

configuring the world' for over a thousand years.[141] After 1924, 'Muslims around the world actively imagined ways to retain and reconfigure the caliphate that had so potently symbolized that interconnected discursive community or *ummah*'.[142] This chapter has necessarily focussed on only a portion of the extensive corpus of Indian writing on the caliphate in this period, a portion that is, given the delegation's intended audiences in Europe, more rhetorical and less juridical in nature than other contemporary expositions. Such writings do, however, provide grounds to re-evaluate the intellectual work of the Indian Khilafat Movement – a movement that has frequently been regarded as an anachronistic and even anarchic form of politics.[143] What the four men of the Khilafat delegation to Europe described as the ideal caliphate appeared to most European contemporaries tantamount to a theocracy, but this was a theocracy in which sovereignty lay with ordinary Muslims, the delegation argued, not the caliph himself; indeed, the latter was a figure they sought to both counsel, caution, and even admonish from afar. The Ottoman Caliphate emerges in their works as an imperfect but redeemable custodian of Islam's republican potentiality, rendering this a critical juncture within broader transnational debates concerning the future of Islam.

[141] Ibid., 194.

[142] Ibid.

[143] Gandhi was charged by some critics with having "thrown to one side [his] moral responsibilities and allied [himself] with one of the prevailing anarchies" by supporting the Khilafat Movement and the "cruel and unjust despotism of the Stamboul Government". In response, Gandhi strongly defended his support of the Indian Muslim cause. See "Why I have joined the Khilafat Movement," *Young India* (Bombay), 28 April 1920, in M. K. Gandhi, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, 100 vols (New Delhi: Publications Division, Government of India, 1956-1994), vol. 17, 349-51.

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