# The Khilafat Movement

The origins and objectives of the Khilafat Movement, the Khilafat Conferences and delegations, the Hijrat Movement, Gandhi and Non-Cooperation, the reasons for failure and the impact on Muslims in the subcontinent.

## The Khilafat Movement

### What was the Khilafat?

The **Caliph** (**Khalifa**) was the religious and political head of the Muslim world, and the **Ottoman Sultan** of Turkey held the title. Muslims in India respected him as the guardian of the **holy places** (Makkah, Madinah and Jerusalem).

### Origins and reasons for the rise of the movement

- Turkey fought on the side of **Germany** in the **First World War**. The British promised Muslims that they would **not harm** the Caliphate or the holy places.
- After the war, the **victorious Allies** planned to **break up the Ottoman Empire**. The **Treaty of Sèvres (1920)** took away much of Turkey's territory and the Caliph's power. Muslims saw this as a **betrayal**.
- Indian Muslims were also **angry** with the British because of the **Rowlatt Act**, the **Amritsar Massacre** and the failure of the reforms. The Muslim press, such as **Zamindar** (Zafar Ali Khan), **Comrade** and **Al-Hilal** (Abul Kalam Azad), whipped up feeling, and the leaders **Maulana Muhammad Ali Jauhar** and **Shaukat Ali** (the **Ali Brothers**) were arrested during the war.

### The aims (objectives) of the Khilafat Conference

The **Khilafat Conference** was held at **Delhi in 1918** (and the **All-India Khilafat Committee** was formed in **1919**). The aims were to:

1. protect the **Caliph** and his **position as head of Islam**;
2. ensure that the **holy places** stayed under Muslim control;
3. prevent the **break-up** of the Ottoman Empire, and so to get **fair terms** for Turkey from the British.

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## Main features

| Year | Event |
|---|---|
| **1918** | Khilafat Conference, Delhi |
| **1919** | **All-India Khilafat Committee** formed; Hindus (Gandhi) joined; a **hartal** on 17 October 1919 (Khilafat Day) |
| **1919–20** | Khilafat delegations: one under **Maulana Muhammad Ali Jauhar** went to **England** in **1920** and met Prime Minister **Lloyd George**, who refused to change the terms |
| **1920** | **Non-Cooperation Movement** (Gandhi). The Khilafat leaders joined. The **Hijrat (migration) Movement** |
| **1922** | Non-Cooperation ended after **Chauri Chaura** |
| **1924** | **Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk)** abolished the **Caliphate** in Turkey |

## Gandhi and the Non-Cooperation Movement

**Gandhi** joined the Khilafat Movement, which gave him the support of Muslims and made him the leader of the **nationalist movement**. He combined the Khilafat cause with the **Non-Cooperation Movement** (a boycott of schools, courts, councils, titles and foreign cloth, with non-payment of taxes). Together they produced the **greatest Hindu–Muslim unity** and mass participation of the period. Some Muslim leaders, such as **Jinnah**, opposed the mixing of religion and politics and **left Congress**.

**Chauri Chaura (February 1922).** At Chauri Chaura, a village in the United Provinces, a procession of Non-Cooperation supporters clashed with police on **5 February 1922**. The police fired, and the angry crowd set the police station on fire, killing about **22 policemen**. Gandhi, who insisted on non-violence, was shocked and **called off the whole movement**. Khilafat leaders felt that one local incident should not have ended a national campaign.

**The delegation to England (1920).** A Khilafat delegation under **Maulana Muhammad Ali Jauhar** spent several months in Britain, spoke to the public and to politicians, and met **Lloyd George**, who would not treat Turkey more leniently than the other defeated powers. It returned without success, which led the leaders to turn to Non-Cooperation.

**Turkey's own change.** The **Treaty of Sèvres** (August 1920) took away Turkey's lands. **Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk)** and his national government in Ankara rejected it, defeated the Greeks, ended the **Sultanate (1922)** and finally abolished the **Caliphate** (**March 1924**), so the Indian movement lost its purpose.

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## The Hijrat Movement (1920)

- Some ulama declared India **Dar-ul-Harb** (a land of war) and said that Muslims should migrate to **Dar-ul-Islam**, **Afghanistan**.
- About **30,000** Muslims, mostly from **Sindh** and the **North-West Frontier**, sold their property and set out for Afghanistan in **1920**.
- **Failure:** the Amir of Afghanistan, **Amanullah**, did not welcome them (the country had no way to support large numbers), closed the border, and the migrants suffered **hunger, disease and loss**. Many returned penniless.

## Reasons for the failure of the Khilafat Movement

- **Mustafa Kemal** abolished the Caliphate (1924), which made the aim **meaningless**: the Turks themselves had ended it.
- **Gandhi called off Non-Cooperation** in 1922 after **Chauri Chaura**, without consulting Muslims.
- **Hindu–Muslim unity broke down**: riots such as the **Moplah (Malabar) rebellion** (1921) and communal riots followed.
- **Government repression**: the **Ali Brothers** and other leaders were **arrested**.
- **Hijrat** failed, leaving the community poorer and disillusioned.
- Leaders **quarrelled** and the movement lacked a **clear political plan**.

## Impact on Muslims in the subcontinent

- **Positive:** a **mass political awakening** of Muslims, including ordinary people and the ulama; **cooperation** with the Hindus; and the experience of **organising** and protest.
- **Negative: disillusionment** with Congress and Gandhi; Muslims realised that **Hindu cooperation** was only a matter of **convenience**; the **hardship** of the Hijrat; **communal riots**.
- **Long-term:** Muslims turned back to their own leaders and the **Muslim League** later grew, and the idea of **separate interests** grew.

NOTE

Typical 14-mark questions ask whether **one** reason was the most important (the Afghan migration, Gandhi's withdrawal, Chauri Chaura, the abolition of the Caliphate, or poor leadership). Pick the abolition of the Caliphate as the one that made the movement pointless, and show how the others added to it.

TRY IT

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> Why did the Khilafat Movement fail?

**Outline.** The abolition of the Caliphate by Ataturk (1924); Gandhi ending Non-Cooperation (1922); government repression; the failure of the Hijrat Movement; Hindu–Muslim riots; poor organisation. **Judgement:** the **abolition of the Caliphate** removed the movement's purpose.

> **TRY IT**
>
> How successful was the Khilafat Movement in advancing the cause of the Pakistan Movement?

**Outline.** *Successes:* political awakening and mass participation; Muslim solidarity and experience of organising. *Failures:* it **failed** to save the Caliphate, **broke** Hindu–Muslim unity and left Muslims **divided and discouraged**. **Judgement: partly** successful in building political awareness, but its failure helped Muslims to see that they needed their own political path.

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