



BRILL

---

Chapter Title: NATIONALISM AND PAN-ISLAMISM IN 19TH CENTURY INDIA

Book Title: The Khilafat Movement in India 1919-1924

Book Author(s): A. C. NIEMEIJER

Published by: Brill

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.com/stable/10.1163/j.ctt1w76v5c.5>

---

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



This content is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0). To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>.



JSTOR

Brill is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Khilafat Movement in India 1919-1924*

## CHAPTER II

### NATIONALISM AND PAN-ISLAMISM IN 19<sup>TH</sup>-CENTURY INDIA

As we observed in the preceding chapter, Indian nationalism started as a cultural movement in the 19th century. This is not surprising; India's political life being wholly dominated by the British, political independence was unattainable, hardly visible even as a goal. This cultural movement first manifested itself among the Hindus who, having lost less than the Muslims in the process of subjection by the British, were in a better position to recover.

As Indian nationalism came into being in an encounter with the West, it was natural for the Indians to borrow from the West as well as to reject what the West had to offer. This pattern we may discern in all nationalist movements in India, but the extent to which either the former or the latter trend dominated them may differ greatly. In the first of these movements, the *Brahmo Samaj*, founded by the Bengali Brahmin Rammohan Roy in 1828, western influences are conspicuous: a rational monotheism, a leaning towards the moral precepts of Christianity,<sup>1</sup> an aversion from the social evils of latter-day Hinduism, such as *suttee*, female infanticide and child marriage. He insisted upon English as the best medium of public instruction, since the Sanskrit system of education was full of vain and empty subtleties.<sup>2</sup>

It should, however, not be forgotten that he never regarded himself as anything but a Hindu and wore the sacred thread of the Brahmins up to his death;<sup>3</sup> he wanted to reform Hinduism, not to abolish it. Within the *Brahmo Samaj*, this double perspective occasioned tensions between Hindu conservatives and progressive reformers; the clash between these two sections led to several secessions and to the founding of the *Sadharan Brahmo Samaj* in 1878, which took a steady course towards constitutionalism and social reforms, and influenced Hindu social thought to a considerable degree.<sup>4</sup>

It was protest against this westernizing aspect of the *Brahmo Samaj* which gave rise to the *Arya Samaj*, founded in 1875 by Swami Daya-

nanda Sarasvati, who for some time had been influenced by *Brahmo Samaj* leaders. Whereas Rammohan Roy had been attracted by the Upanishads, Dayananda went to what he considered to be the real source of Hinduism, the Vedas, looked upon by him as the infallible, perfect and complete revelation. Whereas the *Brahmo Samaj* leaders pointed out the defects that Hinduism had acquired in a fossilizing society, and found their main inspiration in reason and Christian ethics, the revivalist movement of the *Arya Samaj* approached morality from a Hindu point of view and was not willing to acknowledge any debts to western thought. Whereas the *Brahmo Samaj* held liberal, broad-minded views with regard to Christianity and western culture, the *Arya Samaj* was intolerant in this respect; it held that all knowledge, secular as well as religious, was to be found in the Vedas.

Its followers believed that a scrutiny of the sacred texts would reveal the principles of all modern "western discoveries", such as the steam engine, the radio and the like, and that all great cultures of the world had their origin in India.<sup>5</sup> In this hyperbolic pride in Indians and their culture, and in this total imperviousness to the opinions of modern western scholarship<sup>6</sup> it is a typically nationalist movement. Wholly consistent with this judgment on the unique value of the Vedas were Dayananda's efforts to bring renegades back into the Hindu fold by means of *shuddhi* rites. It is not surprising that the *Arya Samaj* won its greatest popularity in the Punjab where the Hindus, being a minority, were more conscious of their identity which they had to defend against the Sikhs and the Muslims.

These doctrinal differences, however, do not keep the practical manifestations of the *Brahmo* and the *Arya Samaj* from bearing some resemblance. Both movements devoted themselves to the same kind of reforms, and both were characterized by a puritanical streak.<sup>7</sup> So it is understandable that one author compares Rammohan Roy and Dayananda with Erasmus and Luther,<sup>8</sup> and stresses Dayananda's stubborn fight against a degenerated Brahmanism, while another characterizes the relation between Roy's reformism and Dayananda's revivalism by drawing a historical parallel with the Dutch Remonstrants and Calvinists, the latter being less optimistic and tolerant than the former, and more disposed to looking back to a "Golden Age" of their religion.<sup>9</sup>

Both movements, the reformist and the revivalist as we may call them in a generalizing way, had several ramifications like the *Parthana Samaj*, the Ramakrishna Mission and the Theosophical Society, but we do not intend to go into the details of these. For our purpose it is important

to note some aspects of their impact on cultural and political trends of the first decades of the 20th century. Both of them helped to restore Indian self-confidence; the reforms they advocated could make Hinduism acceptable to the western rulers, and western admiration for the richness and subtlety of Hindu religious thought, as represented by Ramakrishna's disciple Vivekananda and by Mrs. Annie Besant, were a balm for battered Indian pride.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore we may state that the revivalist movement got the upper hand about the beginning of this century.<sup>11</sup> The most notable consequence of this fact was the steady hinduization of the Indian nationalist movement, which brought it into conflict not only with the West, but also with dissentient groups among the Indians themselves. Muslims, of course, could scarcely be very enthusiastic about this development — this is an aspect we intend to deal with later — but neither were all Hindus. The revivalist movement appealed to the more westernized reformers in so far as it wanted reforms too, just as Luther appealed to Erasmus, but they could not be its whole-hearted supporters because of its anti-western and anti-rational tendencies. Moreover, the revivalist movement displayed a leaning towards violence and terrorism<sup>12</sup> which the westernizers could admire for its boldness and its readiness for self-sacrifice, but which in the last resort was unpalatable to them. And then there were, of course, Hindus who adhered to orthodox principles and were apt to regard revivalism as heresy. These tensions found their expression in the relation between Tilak and Gokhale — the revivalist and the reformer — and in later years between Gandhi and the younger Nehru. To them we might add Pandit Malaviya as representing the orthodox group, which organized itself in the *Hindu Mahasabha*.

At this point, however, we are approaching the purely political side of India's evolution in the last decades of the 19th century. Here a landmark is provided by the founding of the Indian National Congress which met for the first time in 1885 in Bombay. The initiative was taken by a retired Civil Servant, A. O. Hume, but we should mention that for a few years some purely Indian political associations had already been under way, the most important of which was probably Surendranath Bannerjea's Indian Association, founded in 1876 in Calcutta. Congress, in its first years, met with active support from the Viceroy Lord Dufferin, who took an interest in Hume's scheme and even corrected it; English officials, like Sir James Meston, attended its meetings. But after 1890 British official support was withdrawn; the Viceroy, who first looked upon Congress as filling the place of Her Majesty's most loyal opposi-

tion<sup>13</sup> soon lost faith in it and styled it "seditious". Other Britons, however, such as Sir William Wedderburn and Sir Henry Cotton maintained a very friendly attitude towards Congress.

We have mentioned these origins of Congress in some detail because of the slur many Indian authors cast on the founding of the Muslim League in 1906, coming in the wake of the Simla deputation.<sup>14</sup> British benevolence towards the Muslim League in these years is treated as something of an original sin from which the League could never free itself. In our opinion, Congress got in its first years certainly no less British, and even official British, patronage than the League, but we would not think of using this as an argument against the truly nationalist character of Congress in its subsequent career. Up to about 1905 Congress certainly took a loyal stand. It wanted reforms, but under the British aegis; it wanted increasing Indianization of the Services; but it was only in 1908 that it declared its aim to be obtaining "a colonial type of Self-Government" — a very moderate demand, we should think. It was not until 1920 that it changed this aim to "Swaraj by all peaceful and legitimate means", and only in 1929 did it ask for "complete independence".<sup>15</sup>

But in spite of this very moderate character of Congress aims in the first decades of its existence, the British attitude towards it developed into one of hostility and contempt. Dufferin already described it as the instrument of a "microscopic minority" of the Indian people;<sup>16</sup> Curzon joined him in this opinion and declared it to be his belief that "the Congress is tottering to its fall";<sup>17</sup> Chirol reproached it with its lack of interest in social problems.<sup>18</sup> It is curious to note, incidentally, Gandhi's impression of his first acquaintance with Congress at the Calcutta session in 1901: he clearly thought it a rather pompous gathering without any interest for the problems of the common people,<sup>19</sup> corroborating in this respect Chirol's estimate.

From its very beginning Congress took the stand that it was a national organization, representing all communities and condemning communalism. Notwithstanding this creed — and we would not doubt the sincerity of many who professed it — a certain hinduization of Congress came about. This was partly caused by the abstention of the Muslims who were dissuaded by their greatest leader, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, from participating in Congress activities. The Deoband leader Maulana Gangohi declared, when Congress started its work, that co-operation with Hindus was lawful for Muslims,<sup>20</sup> but his verdict carried less weight with the western-educated Muslims for whom it mattered: after some

years in the nineties which were marked by a fairly important participation of Muslims, their attendance dropped very considerably in the years after 1900.<sup>21</sup> This development might encourage the supposition that the advice of the above-mentioned leaders was not all-important and that the Muslim attitude was primarily conditioned by a process which took place within Congress itself: the growing influence of the Hindu revivalist movement (increasing revivalism among Muslims themselves may have been a factor, too).

An exponent of this trend was B. G. Tilak, a Chitpavan Brahmin from Poona. Perhaps he should be called neither an enemy of Muslims,<sup>22</sup> nor an enemy of Hindu reform,<sup>23</sup> but by using communal weapons in the national struggle, and by subordinating social reform to political agitation, he came certainly very near to being both. When in 1890 the Age of Consent Bill came up, putting an end to child marriage, Tilak waged a vehement campaign against it, not because he was an advocate of child marriage in itself — he did not marry off his own daughters before they were of age — but because he denied the British Government of India any right to meddle with affairs that concerned only the Indians themselves. As a symbol of Indian heroism and fighting spirit he propagated Shivaji — who was a famous warrior indeed, but one whose name had a bitter taste for Muslims, since he had treacherously killed his Muslim enemy Afzal Khan.

Tilak's excuse was that Shivaji was a Deccan hero and that, if he had tried to rouse northern India to political consciousness, he would have adopted Akbar as his hero.<sup>24</sup> Other instances of his activities which could not fail to antagonize Muslims were his fervent advocacy of the Hindu Ganpati festival and the Hindu Anti-Cow-Killing Society. One might say perhaps that Tilak was, essentially, an anti-British nationalist but that, by seeking communal support for his political ends, he did more to further communalism than nationalism. Thus the Muslims were repelled from Congress when Tilak and his Extremist friends became the rising force in this organization after 1900. Afterwards, the hinduization of Congress was continued by Gandhi, though in a far less provocative way. His concept of *satyagraha* and non-violence, his stress on hand-spinning and the use of *khaddar*, his language — he wrote about the "Cow of Khilafat" — were far more acceptable to Muslims than Tilak's revivalism, but made them feel uneasy all the same. Gandhi could, by no stretch of the imagination, be styled a communalist leader, but he had a greater appeal for Hindus than for Muslims.<sup>25</sup>

So Congress, by far the most important political body in India

throughout its entire career, could not be the all-embracing national organization it claimed to be. In another respect it was very well suited for the part it intended to play. It was, until shortly before Independence, more a movement than a party and could accommodate several groups of widely divergent shades of policy and ideology, as long as they subscribed to the general Congress creed. In this way, Congress acted as the "umbrella" under which various groups and interests could be kept together, a role it had to fulfil in the years when the élite nationalism of the westernized minority was replaced by mass nationalism.<sup>26</sup> The *Hindu Mahasabha* for instance was a group within Congress until its exclusion in the mid-thirties because of its clearly communalist character; the communists formed a unit within Congress until 1945.<sup>27</sup> Certainly before 1930 Congress was not an exclusive party which admitted only members of a very definite conviction and so it was possible, even for leading politicians, to hold positions in Congress as well as in groups outside its fold.<sup>28</sup>

But if these broad views of Congress made possible the co-existence of several factions within it, they did not prevent quarrels between them in which control of Congress policy and organization was at stake. About the turn of the century, Congress witnessed a growing tension between Moderates and Extremists, leading up to an open conflict and a split of Congress in 1907. The leaders of the Moderates were Gokhale, Sinha and Bannerjea; the foremost Extremists were Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai and Aurobindo Ghosh. These two sections in Congress represented different views on two main points: the ends of political action in India, and the means to be used. The Moderates were thinking along purely constitutional lines; they wanted no revolutionary change in the relationship between Great Britain and India because they felt that India had a lot to learn from its rulers, but only political reforms, to be got by means of persuasion and constitutional action. The Extremists wanted more; they were much more ready to sever the British connection,<sup>29</sup> and advocated boycott and passive resistance as the means of attaining their aims; if they did not recommend terrorism, they did not conceal their admiration for it. They wanted to assert their rights proudly, and branded Moderate tactics as "mendicancy". Underlying these attitudes were, on the Extremist side, a rejection of western values, and, on the Moderate side, acceptance of them as a model for reforming Indian society;<sup>30</sup> it was, perhaps, mainly this attitude which separated the two groups, since in practice their political formulae did not always widely diverge.<sup>31</sup>

Parallel with the increasing influence of the Extremists in Congress ran the rise of terrorism in Maharashtra (Tilak's homeland), Bengal and the Punjab in the years before and during the First World War. Certainly not all Extremists applauded terrorism, but there was a general feeling of sympathy with the resolute and self-sacrificing young men practising it, even among people who could not on principle approve of their actions. And sometimes one finds indications of something more than mere sympathy with terrorists on the part of otherwise law-abiding politicians.<sup>32</sup> We might see in these attitudes a prelude to the problems which Gandhi's non-violence was to cause for a good many of his followers.

Another notable aspect of the terrorist movement was the almost total abstention from it of Muslims.<sup>33</sup> This should not surprise us when we realize that the national awakening among Indian Muslims in the 19th century could not follow the same course as it took among Hindus, owing to its start from a different position. About the middle of the century the Muslims had to realize that they were in a very critical situation. They "found their prestige gone, their laws replaced, their language shelved and their education shorn of its monetary value",<sup>34</sup> and then had to swallow the final blows in the annexation of Sind and Oudh and the abortive Mutiny, the aftermath of which put an end to the last shadow of their former rule. Perhaps all this would not have been so bad if the Hindus had found themselves in quite the same plight. But the Hindus had, partly at least, only exchanged Muslim rule for British; they had adjusted themselves better to the new circumstances and made better use of new opportunities it offered them in the economic field; they showed less aversion to English education than the Muslims and, consequently, were better qualified to get such posts as government allotted to Indians.

These aspects of the communal tangle in India are too well known for it to be necessary to dwell on them in any detail.<sup>35</sup> Less attention has been given to a fact that may very well have had a considerable influence, to wit a quicker rate of growth of the Muslim community in India than of that of the Hindus. This has been noted by M. L. Ferrar<sup>36</sup> and Gopal,<sup>37</sup> and neither of these authors looks to a higher birth-rate or lower death-rate for an explanation for this fact; both of them point to the attraction Islam has for low-caste Hindus and to the proselytizing character of Islam. This situation might well be the principal cause of the *shuddhi* activities of the *Arya Samaj* — purification rites by means of which persons who had been converted to other faiths

are readmitted to the Hindu caste system.

At any rate, Hindus and Muslims found themselves in different situations, and this may explain why, in the last decades of the 19th century, nationalism made headway among Hindus while Indian Muslims lagged behind, owing partly to their social and educational backwardness, and partly to the shocks which had dazed them and of which the Mutiny and its aftermath was the worst. It was mainly the upper and middle class Muslims who were affected by this situation, and the ulama were hardly prepared to give them very useful guidance in these circumstances, since they were not able to formulate new solutions for the new problems that arose.<sup>38</sup> A more promising lead was given them about 1870 by Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, the most prominent representative of Islamic liberalism in India in the second half of the 19th century.

Sir Sayyid, coming from a family of high esteem at the dying Mughul court at Delhi, felt a hearty and healthy contempt for the last emperor, Bahadur Shah.<sup>39</sup> He recognized that Mughul rule had only itself to blame for its replacement by British power, as the latter was a definite improvement.<sup>40</sup> He made it his object to dispel British suspicion towards Indian Muslims — who were mainly blamed for the Mutiny — and to reconcile his co-religionists with British rule, with a view to enabling them to profit from the social, economic, and educational possibilities it opened up. Theoretically, he therefore had to give an interpretation of Islam as not inimical towards western civilization and Christianity; by this means he could remove British suspicions,<sup>41</sup> and at the same time do away with Muslim prejudices which he ascribed to Hindu influence and to corrupt traditions. Here, of course, he was on slippery ground.

In the educational field his greatest work was the founding of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh, which was started in 1875 with considerable help from the government and private donations from wealthy Muslims and Hindus. The college set out "to procure the acceptance of European science and literature as the basis of Mohammedan education. It has accomplished this by scrupulously providing for the religious offices of the pious Mohammedan youth."<sup>42</sup> But another of its stated aims was "to make the Mussulmans of India worthy and useful subjects of the British crown."<sup>43</sup>

In connection with our subject there are two main questions concerning Sir Sayyid's activities which we should try to answer. The first one is: what was his attitude towards the Hindu community and towards Congress? We have already mentioned the support for the Aligarh

project which he got from Hindus; the college was, for that matter, open to Hindus, as well as to Parsis and Christians. Seven years after its foundation the college had 259 pupils, among them 57 Hindus.<sup>44</sup> When formerly engaged in educational work — a Translation Society in which he took the initiative in 1864 — he sought the co-operation of Hindus too.<sup>45</sup> So we may conclude that he was certainly no enemy of the Hindu community. On the other hand, he very soon realized that the Hindus, being the stronger of the two communities, might easily endanger the position of the Muslims. This was as early as 1867, when Hindu leaders in Benares advocated the adoption of Hindu in Devanagari script in court matters, and the elimination of Urdu in Persian script — a proposal that was repeated some years later in the Scientific Society which had replaced the Translation Society.<sup>46</sup> Much more important, however, was the stand he took towards Congress, in which he dissuaded Muslims from participating. Why did he do so? Various explanations are given. He looked upon Congress as too critical an organization, too opposed to the British whose favour the Muslims needed, as is argued by W. C. Smith<sup>47</sup> and Nehru,<sup>48</sup> who deny that he regarded it as too preponderantly Hindu a body. In the light of his opposition to Hindu demands in linguistic matters, however, it seems probable that he feared at least certain sections of Hindu opinion,<sup>49</sup> and his rejection of representative institutions with elections after the British model, because the Muslim minority would then be at the mercy of the Hindu majority,<sup>50</sup> points in the same direction.

Some authors<sup>51</sup> see in Sir Sayyid's attitude the effect of a sinister British influence, mainly that of Sir Theodore Beck, principal of Aligarh College from 1884 to 1893. This explanation, we think, is rather dubious, since Sir Sayyid must have been a very strong-willed man, with the courage to oppose not only a considerable part of his own community but British officials as well — not a person to allow others to make use of him.<sup>52</sup> The most convincing explanation, to our mind, is to be found in the fact that Sir Sayyid was first and foremost interested in education, and did not want politics to divert the Muslim mind from this field,<sup>53</sup> particularly as he supposed that the Muslims, being the deposed rulers and inclined to self-pity, would be only too willing to play the part of critics of the British.

A second question is: what view did his co-religionists take of his activities? With his liberalism, Sir Sayyid was not really a man of the people. His ideas reached the large landowners, the professional class and the officials — a small but influential group. The peasants did not

come within their reach, and the lower middle class and the ulama were opposed to them.<sup>54</sup> His rationalism and reformism provoked vehement protests: he was called a heretic, an atheist and a Christian; *fatwas* were issued putting a ban on support for Aligarh College; he even got letters threatening him with assassination.<sup>55</sup> The most famous of his opponents was Jamal-ud-din Afghani, who attacked his readiness to co-operate with the British.<sup>56</sup> Sir Sayyid's admiration for the British, sometimes bordering on the excessive or even the ridiculous,<sup>57</sup> must have been irritating to some people. Nevertheless, there is no denying that within the small group of people mentioned before — and they were people who mattered — Sir Sayyid was held in great reverence. But did this influence go deep? W. C. Smith doubts this,<sup>58</sup> because the liberalism of Sir Sayyid and other congenial leaders was only applied to religion, not integrated with it. Therefore the liberal trend remained peripheral. Sir Sayyid's successors at Aligarh, Mohsin-ul-Mulk and Viqar-ul-Mulk, sought closer relations with the ulama, and this resulted in a strengthening of Sunni orthodoxy in the College and a more conservative attitude in the first decades of the 20th century.<sup>59</sup>

Another leader representing this gradual change was Amir Ali. Sir Sayyid had interpreted Islam in the light of western values, shedding a good deal of the content in the process; Amir Ali, author of *The Spirit of Islam*, tried to prove that authentic Islam and western values coincided. In the words of W. C. Smith, "Sir Sayyid . . . had written in his life of the Prophet an account of what Muhammad was not. Amir Ali presented what he was. Sir Sayyid had maintained that Islam was not inimical to progress. Amir Ali presented an Islam that is that progress."<sup>60</sup> These different points of view are mirrored by their respective attitudes towards the Caliphate. Sir Sayyid was certainly pro-Turkish, but mainly because he admired their efforts towards modernization.<sup>61</sup> But when the Sultan propagated Pan-Islamism, hoping to interest non-Turkish Muslims in the maintenance of the Caliphate, Sir Sayyid warned his compatriots not to foster feelings towards the Sultan-Caliph of their own time which might have befitted them in the days of the first four Caliphs.<sup>62</sup> Amir Ali, however, stressed the continuity of the Caliphate, with all its rights, up to modern times.<sup>63</sup>

Sir Sayyid wanted to give a wider range than Aligarh College alone to his educational work by founding the Mohammadan Educational Conference in 1886. According to Albiruni,<sup>64</sup> this organization became the political mouthpiece of the Muslims too, but it was Amir Ali who tried to give Indian Muslims a communal political organization in his

Central National Mohammedan Association, founded in 1877, and this lead was followed by Mohsin-ul-Mulk with his Urdu Defence Organization of 1900,<sup>65</sup> and by Viqar-ul-Mulk with his Muhammadan Political Organization of 1903.<sup>66</sup>

Thus the first years of the 20th century witnessed a slight but clearly discernible shifting of the balance between two trends of Muslim opinion: a liberal, westernizing trend and an orthodox, revivalist trend, with the latter getting the upper hand,<sup>67</sup> just as had happened among the Hindus some twenty years before.

The main representatives of religious revivalism among Indian Muslims in the 19th century were the so-called Wahabis and the Deoband school. The Wahabis in India were probably not closely related to their Arabian namesakes, but were the spiritual heirs of the 18th century Indian reformer Shah Wali-ullah of Delhi, who wanted to purify Islam and to return to its origins. But, like those of all early reform movements, his efforts were aimed in two directions: against internal decay and against external aggression, and not all adherents accentuated these aspects to the same degree.<sup>68</sup> Therefore, the name "Wahabis" in India is applied to men who would not all have liked to be identified with the same name. Sir Sayyid called himself "a thrice bitter Wahabi",<sup>69</sup> and defended the Wahabis against the attacks of W. W. Hunter in *The Indian Musalmans*. In Sir Sayyid's defence of them the Wahabis are shown as pure reformers: "In my opinion, what the Protestant is to Roman Catholics, so is the Wahabi to the other Mohammedan creeds."<sup>70</sup> But the Wahabis about whom Hunter wrote<sup>71</sup> were fighters; since about 1820, certain followers of Shah Wali-ullah, like his son Abdul Aziz, and Sayyid Ahmad Barelawi, a disciple of this son, had organized an armed Muslim resistance against the Sikhs and, when the Punjab had been captured by the British, against the latter. About 1830 they had succeeded in setting up a little state in the N. W. Frontier region, with a Caliph of their own.<sup>72</sup> This rebellion against the British, of course, was something of which Sir Sayyid could never have approved; nor could he have felt any sympathy with the rigid orthodoxy into which Shah Wali-ullah's reforming zeal had developed among the Wahabis.<sup>73</sup> So we see that the name "Wahabis" is used in widely divergent senses.<sup>74</sup>

About 1870 the rebellion of these fighting Wahabis or *mujahidin* was largely suppressed by the British forces which, however, never annihilated it completely. Their main significance in relation to our subject seems to be that they operated with the concept of *dar-ul-Islam* and *dar-ul-harb*, and, declaring India to fall within the latter category,

had no other choice than *jihad* or *hijrat* — a theme recurring in the days of the Khilafat movement. About 1870, this concept lost something of its sting, because authoritative *fatwas* had assured the Indian Muslims that *jihad* in their case was not justified. One *fatwa* argued that India had not become *dar-ul-harb*; another one contended that it was no longer *dar-ul-Islam*, but that in the prevailing conditions Indian Muslims were bound to obey the new rulers. Hunter, explaining these arguments at considerable length,<sup>75</sup> concludes; “The Indian Musalmans, therefore, are bound by their own law to live peaceably under our Rule. But the obligation continues only so long as we perform our share of the contract, and respect their rights and spiritual privileges.”<sup>76</sup> There was the danger — changing conditions could revive the theme of *dar-ul-harb* and the connected ideas of *jihad* and *hijrat*, as happened in the days of the Khilafat movement.

This was probably the most important legacy the Wahabi movement bequeathed to Indian politics in the 20th century. Another point to be remembered, however, is that it kept alive in the minds of Indians and British the idea of an invasion by the Afghans or the warlike frontier tribes, a danger that had always lurked behind the Wahabi threat. This fear may have lost substance in an age of technical warfare, but it could be revived as late as 1947 when Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir, was threatened by the Pathan tribesmen.<sup>77</sup>

Among these *mujahidin* mingled fugitive rebels from the Mutiny; in the Mutiny itself traces of Muslim revivalism may be found.<sup>78</sup> But some of the former rebels changed not their place of action, but their tactics. Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanawtawi, who had fought at Shamli near Delhi in 1857, became the first head of the religious seminary founded at Deoband in 1867. The similarity of the aims sought by the Mutiny and the Deoband School is stressed by Faruqi: “Shamli and Deoband are, as a matter of fact, the two sides of one and the same picture. The difference lies only in weapons. Now the sword and the spear were replaced by the pen and the tongue. There, at Shamli, in order to secure political independence and freedom for religion and culture, resort was made to violence; here, at Deoband, a start was made to achieve the same goal through peaceful means. There, for the cause of religio-political freedom individuals were used; here for that purpose individuals were to be produced.”<sup>79</sup> The programme of Deoband may be outlined thus: the education of students in strict observance of Sunni orthodoxy of the Hanafi School and the seeking of closer relations with the Turkish Sultan-Caliph.<sup>80</sup> So the Deoband

School stood for orthodoxy and rigid tradition,<sup>81</sup> but politically, by its anti-British attitude, it was apt to be drawn towards Congress.<sup>82</sup> Both these attitudes gave rise to an estrangement between the westernizing followers of Sir Sayyid and his Aligarh College on the one hand and the Deoband ulama on the other hand. It was only when Pan-Islamism became an important issue that they were able to find common ground, but it was to be expected that their alliance could never be quite cordial.

And it was precisely in the last decades of the 19th century that Pan-Islamism came to the fore, at least in all political discussions, speculations and calculations. Defining it, in a very general way, as a sense of unity of all Muslims, we may note at the same time that it existed mainly as a cultural, social and religious phenomenon, but that as a political reality it led a rather dubious existence. A sense of unity is natural to Islam; from this point of view Pan-Islamism may be called as old as Islam itself, being based on Quranic injunctions.<sup>83</sup> In the same vein Muhammad Ali treated it in his *Comrade*:<sup>84</sup> "If Pan-Islamism is anything different from every-day Islam, the Mussulmans do not believe in it." This view is more or less corroborated by assertions that, except for language, Muslims from different parts of the Muslim world felt at home within its whole reach: "The whole *Dar-al-Islam* was his country, other country he had none. His affections might centre on his native land, but his loyalty, and all the other sentiments which we associate with patriotism, were given to the Moslem world and its religious culture as a whole."<sup>85</sup> On the other hand, even in the religious-cultural and social field there existed animosities or more or less latent differences, as is stressed by Sir Harcourt Butler: "I have always maintained that pan-Islamism is a feeling and not a force. The Arab, the Turk, the Punjabi Muhammadan, the class that go to Aligarh and the Muhammadans of Eastern Bengal have very little in common with each other and mostly despise each other."<sup>86</sup> But anyway, we may probably assume that the religious, social and cultural unity was more real than the political one.

So we are faced with a problem: was Pan-Islamism a reality or not? Butler's verdict: "a feeling and not a force", is not a very clear one, as a feeling may very well have great force.<sup>87</sup> We think the situation might be better expressed in this way: Pan-Islamism was a sense of unity, but not that unity itself,<sup>88</sup> and the sense was prevented from taking on full reality because it was based on a past and on a theory which had long since been caught up with by modern practice. Unity had been in full bloom in the days of the Prophet and the first four Caliphs, but after-

wards political unity was definitely lost and religious unity — with all its cultural and social aspects — began showing fissures like the Sunni-Shia schism. But nevertheless the old concepts were maintained<sup>89</sup> and kept the way open for a possible revival to take effect.

Another aspect of the problem is brought out by the question: was Pan-Islamism compatible with nationalism or not? We do not want to take into account here the larger question of whether Islam and nationalism could go together, and so we are confronted with a problem of much the same kind as would be posed by the relationship between Pan-Germanism or Pan-Slavism and nationalism. Then it is obvious that in a defensive phase, when Muslim peoples were trying to protect themselves from foreign domination, and when the position of Muslim power in general was so weak that the frequent incursions of foreign powers into Muslim territories could be interpreted as evidence of a great conspiracy against Islam as a whole, national resistance against these aggressions would welcome help from other Muslims. But when freedom from foreign domination and aggression was regained and sovereign Muslim states had been restored or had sprung into existence, as was more or less the case after 1920 — then the national egoism of these states would make Pan-Islamism a difficult goal to attain. Then, too, the special relationship between Islam and nationalism would come to the fore as a new problem. As Rosenthal puts it: “The real problem<sup>90</sup> only emerged on home ground after the external enemy . . . had been cleared from the old/new fatherland.”<sup>91</sup> This would explain why Pan-Islamism, after a period of relative strength between 1880 and 1920, lost ground to national aspirations after World War I. But it was, as we remarked before, in the nature of Islam that it would never be entirely lost sight of.

This situation must have made it rather difficult, for Muslim reformers and revivalists as well as for European observers, to get a clear view of the prospects of Pan-Islamism in the last decades of the 19th century. After about 1880 there was a tendency to activate Pan-Islamic sentiment for political purposes. These efforts came from two sides. The Sultan of Turkey, who was steadily losing territories and influence in North Africa and the Balkans, saw an opportunity of making good these losses on the Asian side by stressing his religious authority over all Muslims in his capacity of Caliph.<sup>92</sup> At the same time certain reformers, troubled by the attacks on the Muslim world, looked for redress not only by means of internal reforms of Islam, but also by restoring the lost political unity of all Muslims.

Of the latter, the most notable was Jamal-ud-din Afghani who, incidentally, was not an Afghan but an Iranian by birth.<sup>93</sup> Alarmed by the encroachments of western imperialism on the Muslim world, he rejected mere Islamic traditionalism as well as imitation of the West as the means of stopping this process, but aimed at a reinterpretation of Islam, emphasizing a freer use of human reason and activism within the Islamic tradition.<sup>94</sup> Time and again he urged the Muslims to take their fate in their own hands, referring to Quran 13-11: "God changes not what is in a people, until they change what is in themselves."<sup>95</sup> Pointing out the necessity of political and military strength, he countenanced nationalism among single Muslim peoples as well as Pan-Islamism.

One thing about Jamal-ud-din is certain: he was anti-British. In many other respects he is enigmatic. The impression he made, and wanted to make, on the general public in Muslim countries was that of an orthodox and devote Muslim. But there are good reasons to think that his innermost thoughts and his ultimate aims were quite different; that his orthodoxy and his show of devotion were intended to screen from the public eye his real convictions, which were those of a freethinker and a revolutionary.<sup>96</sup> Part of that screen seems to have been constituted by his well-known *Refutation of the Materialists* (1881), directed mainly against Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan.<sup>97</sup> Nor is it quite clear how far his influence with Sultan Abdul Hamid II went, but probably it was a good deal less than his own utterances, and those of his friends and admirers whom he inspired, seem to suggest.<sup>98</sup> This may be explained partly by his character — he was an intriguer who was likely to see his own role in practical high politics as much more important than it really was — and partly by his disposition to speak and write in one tone when addressing himself to an élite or a western audience, and in quite another when seeking contact with the general public.<sup>99</sup> But even if his direct influence during his lifetime was more modest than is often believed, his influence afterwards certainly should not be underestimated, impressing itself as it did on the Islamic liberalism of his disciple Muhammad Abduh as well as on the more conservative revivalism of Rashid Rida,<sup>100</sup> and on the Indian poet and philosopher Iqbal too.<sup>101</sup> But in most cases it was an influence emanating not from his deepest convictions but from his myth, as created by himself and his friends: the image of an activist but orthodox Afghani. By his teaching and his activity he made Islam the mainspring of solidarity, which was of the utmost importance in an age when ideologies like

Arab nationalism were not yet acceptable.<sup>102</sup> The same might be said about Indian nationalism, though for different reasons, and Jamal-ud-din's influence on Abul Kalam Azad and the Khilafat movement is unmistakable.<sup>103</sup>

Some of his success is very likely to have been due to the attitude of Sultan Abdul Hamid II. In the Turkish constitution of 1876 the latter stressed his role as Caliph,<sup>104</sup> and after the Turkish losses at the Berlin Congress of 1878 he sent out emissaries to Egypt, Tunisia, Afghanistan and India, and even to China and Java, to win the active support of the Muslims in those countries. It is difficult to evaluate the success his efforts met with; whereas Arnold does not think much of it,<sup>105</sup> Stoddard holds the opinion that he got results with many Muslim princes and notables, and certainly with the Muslim masses.<sup>106</sup> A circumstance adding to the difficulty is that several cross-currents existed in Pan-Islamism. The natural centre of the movement was to be found in Turkey, the largest Muslim power in the 19th century, but the traditional centre should be looked for in Arabia, the fountain-head of Islam. Jamal-ud-din did not even entirely rule out the possibility of an Arab Caliphate. Turkey was a westernizing power and therefore held a certain attraction for Muslims in European colonies, who had some knowledge of western institutions and admired them — but the very same fact made Turkey unpalatable for religious revivalists like the Senussis.<sup>107</sup> And on the other hand, the Sultan's government was, despite a show of liberalism, despotic and therefore unacceptable to liberal reformers. Even Jamal-ud-din Afghani, who centred his efforts round Turkey, thought Abdul Hamid unfit for this reason.<sup>108</sup> And when in 1908 Abdul Hamid lost his power to the Young Turks, the new rulers started with a Pan-Turanian orientation, but soon tried to drive Pan-Turanianism and Pan-Islamism in double harness — a difficult task.<sup>109</sup>

Once more we return to our question: was Pan-Islamism a reality?, but now in another form: how real was it, and what results did it have? There are reasons for asking this question again: the various and sometimes conflicting sources from which the movement originated, and the fact that the same question was posed repeatedly in the years after 1900.

Those writers who pointed, as we have seen, to the natural tendency of Islam towards Pan-Islamism, declared too that Pan-Islamism as the West understood it, was "a bogey". Muhammad Ali concedes only the existence of a defensive reaction towards western attacks on the Muslim

world, but not of an aggressive movement.<sup>110</sup> His anonymous biographer goes one step further and asserts that it is an exclusively religious, social, and commercial movement — perhaps, in a way, political, but without any diplomatic designs and never politically aggressive.<sup>111</sup> The same aspects of Pan-Islamism were accentuated by the Pan-Islamic Society in London, founded in 1903, and in connection with this tendency an inquiry among missionaries is mentioned which failed to produce any indication of an organization with clear aims.<sup>112</sup> We have already noted Sir Harcourt Butler's opinion on Pan-Islamism, and Ronald Storrs thought Pan-Islamism "mainly the creation of the India Office."<sup>113</sup>

In this dubious state of affairs we might turn to practical results, but there again we do not find much clarification. One may point to the Hijaz-railway, the construction of which between 1901 and 1908 was financed with contributions from the whole Muslim world, to the medical aid Turkey got from Indian Muslims during the Balkan wars in 1912 and 1913,<sup>114</sup> and to the stand the Libyans took when Turkey was attacked by Italy in Tripoli. Precisely these facts may have induced the Young Turks to accept Pan-Islamism.<sup>115</sup> On the other hand, the declaration of *jihād* by the Sultan-Caliph in 1914 had scarcely any effect,<sup>116</sup> and this was a test case of Pan-Islamism if there was one.

In the light of this conflicting evidence and the difference of opinions we might offer the following, tentative conclusion: in the years between 1880 and 1920 the Muslim world was drawn towards Pan-Islamism because circumstances were favourable. Muslims felt threatened, and religion was for them the first thing to turn to when seeking unity and support. In this respect, Pan-Islamism played a role analogous to nationalist movements— it acted as an "umbrella" under which various ethnic groups, class interests and shades of opinion, conservative as well as reformist, could assemble themselves when unity was the first thing that mattered.<sup>117</sup> But it lost its appeal when nationalism came to the fore, a process already set in motion before World War I in countries like Egypt and Turkey, but accelerated, intensified and widened greatly by that war. Therefore it is understandable that in the first decades of the 20th century different views prevailed with regard to the prospects of Pan-Islamism; those who looked upon it as a force to be reckoned with had their good reasons, but those who thought its importance was being exaggerated had so too. It is only our hindsight which enables us to state that the latter view would in future be proved true, at least for the time being: the idea of Islamic solidarity did maintain itself as an undercurrent in Muslim nationalism.<sup>118</sup>

We said the Muslim world felt threatened, alluding to the fact that in the years between 1880 and 1920 it was everywhere on the defensive against western imperialism.<sup>119</sup> We should now see how this fact affected Indian Muslims who were not directly threatened themselves. Even though they were not directly threatened, indirectly they were involved in several ways. Having lost their own independence, they must have felt sympathy with other peoples losing theirs; when these were Muslim peoples, a sentiment of Muslim solidarity was aroused in addition. But they felt concerned perhaps most strongly because of the part played by Great Britain, their own sovereign, in the attacks on the Muslim world. Notably the British attitude towards Turkey had changed for the worse and, Turkey being for many Muslims a symbol of Muslim power, this was particularly resented by Indian Muslims too. Through most of the 19th century England had acted as Turkey's ally — for instance during the Crimean War and even at the Berlin Congress, where Russian claims were rejected (not quite disinterestedly on Great Britain's part, since Disraeli brought home "peace with plunder"<sup>120</sup>). In those years, Britain tried to stave off the partition of the inheritance of Europe's sick man. Gladstone, however, took the lead with a definitely anti-Turkish policy and this course was continued, with less moral indignation but with the same results, by the Conservative Foreign Secretary, Salisbury. So Turkey lost in the last decades of the 19th century part of its Balkan territories, Egypt and Tunis.

The anti-Turkish policy was part of a wider re-orientation of British foreign policy by which England sought an accommodation with Russia and France in view of increasing German influence in the Middle East.<sup>121</sup> That this accommodation came about at the cost — partly — of Muslim territories like Persia, Turkey and Morocco was probably in the main accidental, but Muslims could hardly be expected to take a quite detached view of things. At the same time there was, for that matter, something of a change in the British attitude towards Islam, as Norman Daniel sets forth: more than in the previous period Muslim fanaticism, cruelty and despotism were decried, and an influential statesman like Lord Cromer pictured Islam as a primitive creed, utterly failing as a social system.<sup>122</sup> In this picture Pan-Islamism figured as a sinister trait — and not the less so when it appeared to be irreligious into the bargain. That was the view Mark Sykes — a diplomat with access to the inner circle of British policy-makers — took of the Young Turks in 1915: "... cosmopolitan knaves ... who believe neither in Allah nor the Koran ...", but driving "... a revolutionary, anti-theological

pan-Islamic machine . . ." At the same time he expressed his doubts as to whether the Government of India were fully abreast of these trends.<sup>123</sup>

In Pan-Islamism the Caliphate was apt to play a central role, since it was certainly the most obvious rallying point when it came to uniting all Muslims.<sup>124</sup> But before discussing the appeal it had for Indian Muslims in particular, we must say something about the Caliphate in general.

The institution of the Caliphate dated from the death of the Prophet (A.D. 632), when Abu Bakr was chosen as his successor. In 661 Muawiyah, the Umayyad Caliph, founded a hereditary monarchy in practice, but in theory the principle of the election of a successor was maintained.<sup>125</sup> In 750 the Abbasids took over rule from the Umayyads, but at the same time the splitting up of Muslim power began. The Abbasid Caliphate could not maintain itself either; it disintegrated, was brought down finally by the Mongols, and entirely independent Muslim kingdoms sprang up in India, Afghanistan, Persia, Turkey and Egypt, to mention only some.

The purpose of the original Caliphate had been "to maintain the unity of the Arabs, to retain divine guidance in their government, and to lend both unity and guidance a new continuity."<sup>126</sup> The theory on which these aims were based was relatively simple: sovereignty belonged to God but the practical exercise of it, meaning authority on earth, was vested in the Prophet Muhammad, and after him in his vicegerent, the *Khalifa*. It was his duty to implement the *sharia*, to defend the faith and the faithful, and to ensure their ability to live by the prescriptions of the *sharia*.<sup>127</sup> Muhammad being the last Prophet, whose message replaced all former revelations, there could be only one Caliph, implementing the one Divine Law.<sup>128</sup>

Muslim political thinkers could not but see that a rift had opened between the theoretical ideal and historical reality. They held up the ideal, remote and faded though it might seem, and found means to interpret historical reality in terms of the ideal. Thus, when Abbasid power declined, they condoned usurpation of the Caliph's office and stressed the importance of the ulama as interpreters of the *sharia*.<sup>129</sup> Perhaps the most daring adjustment was Ibn Khaldun's, who saw the transformation of the Caliphate into the *mulk*, or temporal rule, as a sociological inevitability, but contended that even the *mulk* could preserve qualities of the former ideal<sup>130</sup> and accepted a plural Caliphate.<sup>131</sup> But his ideas did not find favour with the ulama who could not accept petty dynasties as the partial heirs to the Abbasid Caliphate.<sup>132</sup>

When in 1258 Baghdad was sacked and the Caliph put to death by the Mongol prince Hulagu, the Abbasid Caliphate was "restored" by the Mamluk Sultans of Egypt, but without any real power; it served only to legitimate their own position. Other Muslim rulers, too, sought an investiture by these "Egyptian" Caliphs, but not a few Muslim sovereigns took for themselves the title of Caliph. "The title of Khalifah seems . . . to have assumed a new significance; it certainly no longer implied descent from the house of Abbas or any claim to belong to the tribe of the Quraysh. The Muslim monarch now claimed to derive his authority directly from God, to be vicegerent of Allah, not a mere successor of the Prophet."<sup>133</sup>

The rise of the Ottoman dynasty and the weakening of its rival powers in Persia and India restored former conditions to a certain degree: there was one great Muslim power and its ruler recovered some of the prestige of the universal Caliphs — he was no longer considered a Caliph among others. The rule of the ulama was fully acknowledged and orthodoxy was insisted upon; in return, the ulama became the staunch supporters of Ottoman rule. The classical theory of the Caliphate was revived.<sup>134</sup> But we do not think it necessary to give here a complete exposition of the theory of the Caliphate — nor, for that matter, would we consider ourselves competent to do so. But we do have to go into some of its aspects, because they received much attention at the time of the Khilafat movement.

The first of these is the question of whether the Caliphate should be looked upon as a political or a religious concept. It is difficult to give an absolutely unequivocal answer to this. Islam does not know the strict dividing line between religion and politics that is drawn by Christianity, nor the conflict between State and Church — if only because no Church in the proper sense exists in Islam. The Prophet Muhammad, at first the spiritual leader of the believers, became their temporal and political ruler as well, and that this new role was not a burden he had to take on by accident, but the fulfilment of his mission, is symbolized by the fact that Islamic chronology starts with the establishment of his community at Medina, where Muhammad had to fill both functions.<sup>135</sup> In this light it would seem logical to consider the Caliphate a concept in which the political and religious aspects were blended into complete unity. When after Muhammad's death, however, Abu Bakr became his Caliph (vicegerent or successor) and took over authority, it was with one exception: he succeeded him only in his capacities of ruler, judge, and commander-in-chief, but had no

spiritual powers, as Muhammad had been the last Prophet.<sup>136</sup> When it came to ascertaining the true meaning of Quran and *hadith*, revealed and transmitted truth, the community resorted to *ijma* (consensus), first of the community itself, then of the ulama.<sup>137</sup> The Caliph's role became that of defending the faith and implementing Divine Law; he had no religious but only political authority, though he certainly had religious functions.

After the first four "rightly guided" Caliphs — Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali — the different aspects of the office became less closely linked, and in the Umayyad Caliphate military power became the real basis of rule, but this actual disestablishment of the political and religious foundations of the State was never admitted theoretically.<sup>138</sup> This meant that the various Caliphs could (and did) emphasize the various aspects of their office in different ways. The early Caliphs held three titles: *Khalifa*, *Amir ul-Muminin*, and *Imam*; <sup>139</sup> the first stressed his relation to the Prophet, the second accentuated his supreme authority as warlord and head of the civil administration, the last his religious functions. But not all Caliphs laid the same emphasis on each title. The Umayyad Caliphs were in the first place *Amir ul-Muminin*; the Abbasids, however, stressed their title of *Imam*. Sceptre and seal were the symbols of the Umayyads; for the Abbasids it was the mantle of the Prophet.<sup>140</sup>

And it was not only the Caliphs who viewed the exact meaning of their office in different ways; European theorists were apt to do so too. So Gibb, for instance, writes: "The Caliph, by position and function, is the temporal embodiment of the Sacred Law in Islam; he is the person who is charged with the duty of maintaining its supremacy both against external enemies and internal rebels. Being himself bound by the Law, he may neither modify it nor interpret it in his own responsibility, but is concerned solely with the task of applying it, and in the carrying out of this purpose he is entitled to claim from all Moslems the same unhesitating obedience as they owe to the Law itself. His office is thus essentially a political one, but the sanctions on which his authority is based are primarily religious."<sup>141</sup> There is no great difference between this characteristic of the Caliphal office and the one given by Arnold: "For the understanding of the status of the Caliph, it is important therefore to recognize that he is pre-eminently a political functionary, and though he may perform religious functions, these functions do not imply the possession of any spiritual powers setting him thereby apart from the rest of the faithful."<sup>142</sup> Yet the attitude

of these authors is not quite the same; Gibb recognizes the claims the Caliph has to support from all Muslims, owing to the religious aspects of his office, whereas Arnold stresses the religious equality of the Caliph and other Muslims.<sup>143</sup>

The point may be, in this case, that Arnold wanted to refute certain claims the Ottoman Caliphs had put forward since the 18th century, using to their advantage the fact that Europeans were inclined to think in terms of entirely separate functions between which Muslims never made sharp distinctions. By this means, they succeeded in getting accepted the contention that they held religious authority over Muslims outside their territory, since European powers supposed these claims to have no political consequences. When the Russians perceived that this religious authority, acknowledged by themselves in the aforementioned treaty of Küçük Kainarji of 1774, did have political implications, they wanted to delete the relevant clauses of the treaty in 1783.<sup>144</sup> Nevertheless, in the first decades of the 20th century the Sultan succeeded in getting similar clauses into his treaties with Austria (1908), Italy (1912), and Bulgaria and Greece (1913).<sup>145</sup> When after World War I the Ottoman Empire was carved up, whether these claims should be met or not became an important issue, and the India Office — one of whose top advisers in these matters was Arnold — wanted to exclude from the treaty of Sèvres any article on which the Sultan would be able to base pretensions to obedience of Muslims outside Turkey. This may explain why Arnold — and other contemporary authors like Snouck Hurgronje and Nallino, who were aware of the dangers of the position — assumes a very strict attitude, whereas Gibb, writing ten years later when Caliphal pretensions were no longer to be feared, used a less exclusive formula. And even in the years about 1920 not everybody was fully aware of the political implications of recognizing some kind of religious authority of the Caliph: the Government of India, for instance, was ready to give in to Muslim desires in this respect, and some Cabinet ministers in London at first took the same position.<sup>146</sup>

Related to this whole problem is the question of whether the Caliph's position could be compared with the Pope's. Though this comparison had forced itself on many authors as early as the Crusades,<sup>147</sup> there seems to be an overwhelming case against it: the Caliph is not a priest working the miracle of the mass; he has no power to absolve sins; he has no authority to create, to judge, or to interpret religious dogma.<sup>148</sup>

Considering this state of affairs, the Caliph could hardly be styled the "spiritual head" of Islam. Yet this was what was done by many

Muslims after the Ottoman Sultan had put forward his claim in the 18th century. This idea — encouraged by western misunderstandings about the nature of his position — found support with many Muslims, both inside and outside Turkey.<sup>149</sup> And if this view was correct, then the Caliph had to be “something more than a Pope”,<sup>150</sup> because of the close relations between religion and politics in Islam, and the Caliph’s obligation to defend the faith as a temporal ruler too.

Nor could the Caliph, if he was something more than a Pope, be “vaticanized”: the close interconnection of religion and temporal power did not permit this solution. And yet this was exactly what the Turkish government did in 1922. How could this come about? We will examine this question in fuller detail later, but we would like here to say one thing about it: the main reason seems to be that westernized Muslims clearly saw the drawbacks of the close connection between religion and politics, and since a constitutional and responsible government would be incompatible with the traditional conception of the Caliphate, they wanted to separate religion from temporal power. We may observe this trend with the Young Turks<sup>151</sup> and, in a far less outspoken form, with Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, who warned his co-religionists not to confuse religious and political issues.<sup>152</sup> This view was one of the causes of the neutral attitude most Muslims assumed when in 1914 the Sultan-Caliph called on their loyalty.

Thus we have established, if we may sum up the foregoing in a very generalized way, three views on the nature of the Caliphate. Western scholars, in conformity with orthodox Muslim opinion, regarded it as a predominantly political office, having religious implications but no religious authority. Westernized Muslims — though not all of them, certainly, — reached the conclusion that the Caliph should be “vaticanized” and his office be deprived of all political meaning. And lastly the Pan-Islamic view wanted to restore the Caliphate to all its possibilities, investing it with political and religious authority. But we should bear in mind that the attitudes assumed in practical politics do not always correspond to the theoretical views of those professing them. So the Agha Khan writes: “According to the Sunni School — the majority of Muslims — the Prophet’s religious authority came to an end at his death, and . . . Abu Bakr assumed only the civil and secular power.”<sup>153</sup> But in the same book he tells us how in 1920, together with Amir Ali, he advocated recognizing the Sultan’s “spiritual suzerainty” in the provinces the Ottoman Empire was going to lose.<sup>154</sup> On the other hand, as we will see later, many Indian Muslims who had been the

staunch supporters of the view that the Caliph needed sufficient temporal power to enable him to fulfil his religious duties, rather easily accepted the fact that the Angora government deprived him of all temporal power. It is clear that political expedience often got the upper hand over theoretical objections.

Another question was whether the Ottoman Sultan rightly claimed the Caliphate or not: a somewhat complicated problem because several factors could be taken into account. A first point to consider is the attitude of the Shias, who generally hold that the Imamate descends by divine appointment in the apostolical line; they repudiate the authority of the believers to elect a spiritual head, and reject also military power, or conquest of *de facto* power as claims to religious leadership. They do not acknowledge the Prophet's successors as Imams; in consequence, to them the Sultan-Caliph of Turkey was nothing more than the ruler of a Muslim state. It was only the twelfth Imam, having disappeared but still living on "unseen but seeing", who could reappear and could re-establish the universal Caliphate.<sup>155</sup> This, however, is the theoretical position. In practice, the Shias were less averse to acknowledge the Sultan of Turkey as their leader. Abdul Hamid tried to win a following among Persian Shias and Jamal-ud-din made some efforts in that direction too;<sup>156</sup> we have already observed how the Agha Khan, the religious leader of the Shia Ismaili sect, supported the claim of the Turkish Sultan to religious suzerainty over Syria, Arabia and Mesopotamia: two indications that the Sunni-Shia schism was not too important when after 1880 the advocates of Pan-Islamism centred their efforts round the Sultan-Caliph of Turkey.

But there were other things to consider. Very general among Muslims was the special admiration they felt towards the Caliphate of the first four "rightly guided" Caliphs.<sup>157</sup> This in their eyes was the ideal Islamic state, the "golden age" when Islamic ideals of democracy and social justice were realized — two values they felt Muslim society in the last part of the 19th century was badly lacking.

But when the fourth Caliph, Ali, met his death by murder, the Umayyads founded a temporal monarchy. Now two lines of reasoning could be followed. Even when realizing that the true Caliphate belonged to the past,<sup>158</sup> it was possible either to accommodate some of the facts to theory, or to formulate a new theory that better fitted in with the real facts. The first course was chosen by traditional Muslim thinkers, the second by Ibn Khaldun.<sup>159</sup> But then there was still another solution: if only the "rightly guided" Caliphs were true ones, they were succeeded

by rulers not deserving the title! In support of this view a saying of the Prophet could be referred to, that the Caliphate was to last for thirty years after his death. This argument was advanced by Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, and he concluded from it that certainly the Ottoman Sultan was no Caliph of Indian Muslims.<sup>160</sup>

But even when accepting the view that the Caliphate in a more or less corrupted state had survived after its spell of pristine glamour and purity, one could raise other objections to the Ottoman claim on it. Did the Ottoman Sultans meet the requirements of a Caliph? There were quite a few of these, like being of blameless character, having sufficient knowledge of the *sharia*, being brave and intelligent, and so on<sup>161</sup> — qualifications that were as reasonable to demand from, as they were easy to ascribe to, any candidate. But two requirements were of special significance: the Caliph should possess sufficient power to be able to protect the faith and the faithful, and he should belong to the tribe of the Quraish. The first condition constituted a strong argument in favour of the Ottoman Sultan; about the year 1900 he was the only Muslim sovereign who, to some extent at least, could shoulder this task. This was one of the grounds on which, twenty years later, the Khilafat leaders based their demand that the Sultan-Caliph should not lose too large a part of his territories, for if he did, he would no longer be able to perform the duties that went with his exalted office.

The second condition certainly made the Sultan's claim somewhat dubious, the more so because there was another ruler who did satisfy it: the Sharif of Mecca. But the Sultan's partisans could point out some facts in his favour. History had legitimated the position of Caliphs who did not belong to the Quraish, and secondly, it was not the Prophet himself who had said that the Caliph should be of this tribe, but Abu Bakr, and he had said so because in his time only a member of this tribe would command sufficient prestige.<sup>162</sup> So it was possible to treat this requirement as a "technicality" which could not be a serious objection to the Sultan's claim,<sup>163</sup> and to most Indian Muslims some kind of allegiance to the Sultan-Caliph was fully acceptable.<sup>164</sup>

Another fact — to be correct: an illusion, but an illusion one thinks to be true has all the appearances and effects of a fact — stimulating Muslim loyalty towards the Ottoman Sultan was the transfer of the Caliphate by the last Abbasid Caliph Mutawakkil to the Ottoman Sultan Selim I in 1517. After the sack of Baghdad the Abbasid Caliphate had been "restored" in Egypt, but the Caliphs in the next two and a half centuries were mere showpieces, serving only to legitimate the

actual Mamluk rulers. The Caliph's name was not even mentioned in the *khutba* (the Friday prayer), nor did his effigy appear on coins.<sup>165</sup> This restored Caliphate lasted until 1517, when Selim conquered Egypt and Mutawakkil handed over his office and its symbols — the Prophet's mantle, some hairs from his beard and the sword of Umar — to the victor. Thus, at least, runs the story of these happenings as accepted by Muslim historians in the 19th and early 20th centuries.<sup>166</sup>

Even when accepted in this form, some objections could be raised — and in fact were raised by Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and some of his followers — against the proceedings. Selim became master of Egypt by murder and treason; he waded through a sea of blood of true believers to reach his goal.<sup>167</sup> Moreover, Mutawakkil, a puppet of the Mamluks, having no real power, was no true Caliph — so how could he hand down an office he never really held? <sup>168</sup> And then there was the attack of modern western scholars who proved that the story of a formal deed of transfer in 1517 was a fiction, dating from the last part of the 18th century and propped up by the Ottoman Sultans because it served their political interest.<sup>169</sup>

But notwithstanding these possible objections, the official story was generally accepted in the Muslim world, unshaken. It is curious to note how relatively little use was made of these arguments against it by Muslim adversaries of the Khilafat movement. Therefore we may assume that, on the whole, Indian Muslims in the late 19th and early 20th centuries considered the Ottoman Caliphate as valid. Once more we conclude that political and sentimental arguments counted for more than theoretical considerations.

This brings up a last question related to the Caliphate: why were Indian Muslims attracted by the idea of the Ottoman Caliphate, and what did it mean to them? In the Khilafat movement Indian Muslims played a more important role than any other Muslims outside Turkey; in the 19th century pro-Turkish sentiments were fairly common among Indian Muslims, as we pointed out in connection with the Deoband school. It was also the Pan-Islamic enthusiasm of his compatriots which prompted Sir Sayyid's warnings against confusion of political and religious issues. So we may assume that Turkey, the Caliphate and Pan-Islamism — three closely interrelated issues between which often no clear distinctions may be made, not even by the people attracted by them — held some significance for them.

One reason why Indian Muslims were perhaps more pro-Turkish than Muslims elsewhere, may be that Indian Muslims did not know

the Turks very well. The Arab peoples knew them better, and their acquaintance with Turkish rule could hardly make them love it. But side by side with this explanation there is probably another one, to which many authors on the subject call attention. Gopal writes: "The Turkish Empire, ruled by a Muslim Sultan, Abdul Hamid II, who also enjoyed the unique position of the Khalifa (Caliph), was the pride of most Muslims of the world, especially those whose primary loyalty was to the Khalifa, and not to the nation of which they were citizens."<sup>170</sup>

Here it is suggested that an unsatisfactory situation with respect to national feelings could make Muslims susceptible to an extra-territorial allegiance. Now the identity of Indian Muslims was threatened by dangers from two sides: from the British, who had put an end to Mughul power, but also from the Hindus, who could smother the Indian Muslim minority if ever India became independent. Both dangers were apt to strengthen feelings of Muslim solidarity without regard to state frontiers, and to make Indian Muslims look for help and sympathy from Turkey. A clear example of the high hopes cherished by them in this respect was given by Amir Ali, who in 1909 told Morley that "any injustice and any suspicion that the British were unjust to Mohammedans in India would provoke a serious and injurious reaction in Constantinople."<sup>171</sup> And though admiration for Turkey and Pan-Islamism, and attachment to the Caliphate are certainly not one and the same, the Caliph was the most obvious symbol to embody Islamic solidarity.

It is, of course, very difficult or even impossible to discern which of the two dangers mentioned figured primarily in orientating Indian Muslims towards an extra-territorial allegiance.<sup>172</sup> The subsequent history of the Khilafat movement will produce evidence of the inextricable tangle of anti-British and anti-Hindu feelings in Muslim India.