

**Belonging at the margins: nation, religion, and
the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at in colonial and
postcolonial India, c. 1930-74**



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Short abstract – Belonging at the margins: nation, religion, and the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at in colonial and postcolonial India, c. 1930-74

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This thesis examines the history of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at in India, c. 1930-1974 through archival and printed sources in Urdu and English. It considers the multiple sites of belonging of nation, sect, and religion that the Ahmadiyya negotiated whilst remaking itself after it was devastated by Partition. The Jama'at's strategies of self-presentation are assessed via its newspaper, *al-Badr*, to trace the formation of a distinct Indian Ahmadi identity in the early postcolonial period.

Chapters 1 and 2 suggest the received wisdom of the Ahmadiyya's political neutrality needs revision by looking at its early history under colonial rule and its active engagement in its fate as Partition became increasingly likely. Chapter 3 explores the impact of suspicion of Punjabi Ahmadis in the aftermath of Partition and during wars with Pakistan to consider how Ahmadis projected themselves as loyal and patriotic Indian citizens. Chapter 4 examines two High Court judgements from 1922 and 1970 through the prism of gender and personal law. It proposes continuities between the colonial and postcolonial periods in how the state responded when Ahmadi claims to Muslimness were challenged. The final two chapters are anchored by anti-Ahmadi events in Pakistan in 1953 and 1974 respectively. Chapter 5 assesses Ahmadi efforts to put forward an idea of Muslim political unity to thrive under secular, non-Muslim rule, whilst not losing sight of sectarian

differences. Chapter 6 considers how the Ahmadiyya's missionary efforts and narratives of growth sat alongside intensifying opposition against them from other Muslims and how this opposition reinforced representations of themselves as followers of True Islam.

The conclusion considers how this thesis contributes to wider scholarly efforts to deepen and broaden understandings of the legacies of Partition and suggests the implications of its intersectional analysis, especially for conversations about the dynamics of Muslim identity during this time of flux.

Long abstract – Belonging at the margins: nation, religion, and the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at in colonial and postcolonial India, c. 1930-74

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The Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at was founded in Qadian, Punjab at the end of the nineteenth century by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908). He claimed to be the Promised Messiah and Mahdi who had been divinely appointed to revive and reform Islam ahead of the Day of Judgement. For many other Muslims, this violates the idea that there could be no new prophets after Muhammad (*khatm-e-nabuwwat*) and renders his followers, known as Ahmadis, heterodox at the very least, and heretical and outside the pale of Islam at the extreme end of the spectrum. Although Ahmadis maintain that Muhammad was the final and most perfect manifestation of a *law-bearing prophet*, this distinction is often dismissed or lost on their opponents.

This thesis examines the history of the Ahmadiyya in India and covers a period of great socio-political tumult both for the subcontinent and for Ahmadis themselves. Research on the Ahmadiyya has traditionally focused on its early history under colonial rule, or on the circumstances surrounding the persecution of Ahmadis in Pakistan. As the experience of Indian Ahmadis has been comparatively less eventful, the history of the Ahmadiyya in India after 1947 has not received any scholarly attention. This thesis attempts to address this lacuna. It centres the voice of Ahmadis themselves in how they negotiated their

changed circumstances in India and in considering their strategies of self-presentation in the early decades of the postcolonial period.

The study begins its analysis in the 1930s as British India advanced towards independence and ends in 1974 as Indian Ahmadis considered the implications of the Ahmadiyya being rendered non-Muslim by the National Assembly of Pakistan. Using Gyanendra Pandey's (2001) definition of Partition as comprising three partitions (the creation of Pakistan; the splitting of Punjab and Bengal; and the division of families and local communities), it is argued that Partition was the defining event for the Indian Ahmadiyya. Almost overnight, it was transformed from a fast expanding, prosperous movement with increasing influence to one decimated by the loss of nearly all of its Punjabi members and many of its North Indian members, its Khalifa (spiritual leader), and the shattering of its organisational infrastructure. In its wake, Indian Ahmadis were left with a sense of insecurity, anxiety, and a loss of purpose.

The research presented here is based on government records, printed sources, Ahmadi literature, and newspapers, in Urdu and English. It considers the multiple sites of belonging of nation, sect, and religion that the Ahmadiyya negotiated during this period in the process of remaking itself after this cataclysmic event by focusing on their Urdu weekly newspaper, *al-Badr* (The Badr). *Badr* functioned as an anchor to local Jama'ats that found themselves unmoored without the guidance of their Khalifa. Further, it provided the 313 Ahmadis left in Qadian a means of communicating with regional Jama'ats throughout India, replacing networks that had been broken during 1947. Through an intersectional analysis, this thesis attempts to answer a series of complex and overlapping questions: how did Indian Ahmadis present themselves at once as loyal

Indian citizens, as part of a wider Muslim community that they were increasingly being excluded from, and as members of a proselytising movement with global aspirations? It demonstrates how the spectre of Partition continued to loom over the Ahmadiyya in this process of identity formation, informing and often dictating the choices that were made.

The chapters are organised broadly chronologically. The first two chapters give context to the Indian Jama'at's post-1947 predicament. They provide new insight into the nature of the Ahmadi leadership's political involvement in the anti-colonial movement and push for Pakistan, particularly as the partitioning of British India on its independence became an increasingly likely prospect. The subsequent four chapters are each organised around a central theme and are anchored by events or incidents of significance to the Ahmadiyya. As Veena Das (1995) has described, studying such flashpoints are significant beyond simply establishing a narrative of what took place during periods of crises; rather, 'critical events' can tell us much about the nature of and context in which debates were conducted, defined, and redefined.

Chapter 1 introduces the reader to the Ahmadiyya by providing an overview of its early history. It seeks to counter the common public understanding of the controversy surrounding the Ahmadiyya, which is also advanced by some scholars, that its beliefs were exceptionally outré. It does this by contextualising the pronouncements made by Ghulam Ahmad in the environment in which he founded the Ahmadiyya in late nineteenth century Punjab and by reference to the history of Islamic thought. Using the shift in Muhammad Iqbal's stance towards the Ahmadiyya during this period as a case study, from an ally at the turn of the twentieth century to laying the foundation of the call to excommunicate them from Islam in the 1930s, I suggest that while theological arguments

are important to grasping the Ahmadiyya's relationships with non-Ahmadis during the final decades of colonial rule, the gradual increase in hostility shown towards the Ahmadiyya after its establishment needs to be understood as social and political as well.

The idea put forward by some historians and the Ahmadiyya's detractors, that their loyalism to the British meant that Ahmadi leaders stood aloof from anti-colonial politics, is shown to be too simplistic in Chapters 1 and 2 through an examination of colonial government records, private papers, and Ahmadi literature. The last half of Chapter 1 suggests that it is difficult to consider the Second Khalifa's involvement in the anti-Dogra campaign in Kashmir in the early 1930s as anything but a challenge to colonial interests. Indeed, it was the main reason that relations between the British and the Ahmadiyya deteriorated. It also shows his eagerness to be at the centre of movements to safeguard broader Indian Muslim concerns whilst simultaneously carving out a distinct identity for the Ahmadiyya.

The Ahmadiyya receive scant, if any, attention in scholarship on the end of Empire in British India, save for acknowledgement of the significance of prominent Muslim League politician and Ahmadi Chaudhry Muhammad Zafarullah Khan in the movement for Pakistan. Chapter 2 demonstrates that this lack of consideration, which leads to the impression that the Jama'at was passive as events unfolded, is misguided. Despite its initial ambivalence because of the tangled alliances between the Indian National Congress, the Muslim League, and the Ahmadiyya's staunchest opponents, the Majlis-i-Ahrar, the Ahmadiyya actively supported the movement for Pakistan and an undivided Punjab. When the plan to partition Punjab was announced, the Ahmadiyya lobbied for its headquarters, Qadian, to be included in Pakistan. It was also heavily involved in the

Muslim League's representations to the Boundary Commission about the territory Pakistan ought to comprise, and later in voicing its recriminations against the way Punjab was divided. Chapter 2 ends by exploring how and to what ends Jama'ats in India and Pakistan remember this time in their history quite differently.

Chapter 3 begins by assessing the impact of Partition in Qadian after it was awarded to India and the majority of East Punjab's Ahmadis were evacuated to Pakistan. It details the experiences of the 313 men that remained in Qadian in the immediate aftermath of this event. It examines how the Ahmadis left in East Punjab began the task of rebuilding networks that had been shattered in 1947 as international borders were fixed and free movement was restricted. Furthermore, the chapter considers the place of the Ahmadiyya, figuratively and literally close to the border with Pakistan, in conversations about loyalty, nationalism, and citizenship during times that Muslims faced heightened suspicion about their fidelity to India. As time wore on, both Indian and Pakistani Jama'ats made conscious efforts to create distance between their two branches, which involved an administrative and financial separation as well as public displays of patriotism. This discussion is expanded upon by examining the experiences and self-presentation of Ahmadis during wars with Pakistan in 1965 and 1971 in *Badr* and how past conduct, theological arguments, and sect-specific beliefs were used to defend the Ahmadiyya against intimations of impropriety from the state and their fellow citizens.

Chapter 4 considers how Ahmadis asserted their Muslim identity when this was legally challenged in two High Court cases in 1922 and 1970. The chapter assesses changes in personal law in the period between the cases as the transition was made from Anglo-Muhammadan law to Muslim Personal Law. Furthermore, continuities between the

colonial and postcolonial period in contests over authority between the ‘*ulema* and the state are highlighted, particularly in the privileging of scripture and conceptions of modernity and rationality in both judgements. It proposes that gender was so significant in disputes about the legitimacy of claims to Muslimness because of how women have historically acted as custodians of identity across patriarchal societies. It is partly because of this that both legal disputes arose in Malabar, a region not typically associated with the Ahmadiyya, as its traditions of matriliney were undermined. The chapter ends by suggesting some of the potential implications that the 1970 case had for Indian secularism and minority rights, some of which would find expression during the Shah Bano controversy 16 years later.

Whilst Chapters 3 and 4 explored the identity of Ahmadis after 1947 as Indians and Muslims respectively, Chapter 5 discusses how the Ahmadis projected themselves as Indian Muslims specifically. The Ahmadiyya’s interventions in debates central to what can be dubbed ‘Muslim politics’, such as the status of Urdu, are used to question the idea that Indian Muslims were politically quietist in this period. Further, the chapter compares the politics of the Ahmadiyya with other groups such as the Jama’at-e-Islami Hind to suggest that doctrinal affiliations and pre-Partition histories had an impact on how Indian Muslims engaged with postcolonial secular democracy. It considers how the Ahmadiyya advanced an idea of Muslim political unity (*siyāsi etihād*), where coreligionists could come together to contend with life as a religious minority under a secular, though Hindu majority government, without losing hold of their distinct sectarian beliefs and the Islamic tradition of intra-Muslim disputation. The final section considers the ways *Badr* presented responses to this suggestion as the anti-Ahmadi Lahore riots raged on in 1953. It shows

that Ahmadis and those in conversation with them in the main stressed the autonomy of Indian Islam by condemning Ahmadi opponents in Pakistan.

Chapter 6 explores how the Ahmadiyya's efforts to be seen as Indian Muslims and loyal citizens sat alongside their self-presentation as members of a transnational movement that cultivated a sense of separateness. It does this by juxtaposing the two issues most associated with the Ahmadiyya – persecution and proselytisation – and shows that these were mutually reinforcing rather than mutually exclusive. The chapter begins by continuing the discussion started in Chapter 1 about the Jama'at's vast organisational and administrative structure. It shows that this has been crucial to creating a sense of community cohesion among disparate Ahmadi populations and to the success of its missionary efforts. India provided an unfavourable climate in which to proselytise after 1947. However, all Ahmadis were still expected to take part in this endeavour as spreading news of the true version of Islam is the Ahmadiyya's *raison d'être*. Indian missionary work is shown to be important in its own right, especially because of the community's reduced numbers after Partition, but also as part of an ambitious, global project. The chapter ends by examining responses presented in *Badr* and the Indian national press to anti-Ahmadi action in Pakistan in 1974. The attitudes of other Indian Muslims are presented as much less favourable to the Ahmadiyya compared to 1953. While Ahmadis took care to defend themselves against the accusations of their opponents, they were buoyed by trust that Indian secularism would protect them from a similar fate, faith in Islamic ethics, and above all, a sense of nobility in suffering that came from being representatives of True Islam.

The conclusion suggests that this case study contributes to an extant scholarly effort to deepen and widen understandings of the legacies of Partition. It suggests the broader implications of its intersectional analysis, especially for conversations about the dynamics of Muslim identity and sectarianism in postcolonial India, during this time of flux. It also adds nuance to scholarly discussions about minority communities that often fall into dichotomies. It brings to the fore the grey areas between persecution and success, solidarity and separation, nationalism and cosmopolitanism, and resistance and submission. The thesis ends by considering how the themes that have been explored continue to impact the experiences of the Ahmadiyya in the present day.

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Note on transliteration

ا	a		ش	sh
آ	ā		ص	s
ب	b		ض	z
پ	p		ط	t
ت	t		ظ	z
ٹ	t		ع	‘
ث	s		غ	gh
ج	j		ف	f
چ	ch		ق	q
ح	h		ک	k
خ	kh		گ	g
د	d		ل	l
ڈ	d		م	m
ذ	z		ن	n
ر	r		ں	n
ڑ	r		و	w, v oo, ū
ز	z		ہ	h
ژ	zh		ی	i, ī
س	s		ے	ey

The table above shows the system of transliteration used in this thesis. In general, only English translations of quotations from Urdu sources are given. However, if the original phrase is potentially ambiguous or if English does not capture the essence of the original,

then the Romanised version is also provided. For the sake of simplicity, long vowels are marked with diacritics in the titles of texts and Romanised Urdu quotations only. Long vowels that occur at the end of words are unmarked. Short vowel sounds have been written according to their pronunciation.

In citations and quotations from English sources, vernacular words and the names of people, places, and organisations are written as they appear in the original text.

Select glossary

ahl-e-kitab – people of the book; followers of Abrahamic religions

bai'at – pledge of allegiance; process of initiation

bi'dah – innovation; deviation

chanda – charitable donation

dar-ul-harb – abode of war

dar-ul-Islam – abode of Islam

dar-ul-kufr – abode of unbelief

darweyshan – saints, mendicants; honorific description of the 313 men who remained in Qadian after Partition (sing. *darweysh*)

faskh – annulment

fatwa – a legal opinion given by a *mufti* on a point of Islamic law (pl. *fatawa*)

fitnah – discord resulting from trial or temptation

hadith – traditions and statements attributed to the Prophet Muhammad

hijrat – religious exodus to a *dar-ul-Islam*

ijma' – consensus in Islamic law

ijtihad – independent reasoning in Islamic law

irtidad – apostasy

hajj – fifth pillar of Islam; pilgrimage to Mecca to be undertaken at least once

Jalsa Salana – annual convention of Ahmadis

janazah-e-ghaiyb – funeral prayer in absentia

jihad – religious effort or struggle; holy war

kafir – an infidel or nonbeliever

kalima – creed of Islam, i.e. 'there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his messenger'

Khalifa – Caliph. Successor; spiritual leader

Khalifat-ul-Masih – Successor of the Messiah; a title used by Ahmadi leaders after Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

khatm-e-nabuwwat – finality of Prophethood

khatim-un-nabiyyin – seal of the prophets

Khilafat – Caliphate. Office of the *khalifa*

khutbah jum'a – Friday sermon

kufr – infidelity; rejection of belief

Mahdi – divinely guided one who will appear before end times to defeat the enemies of Islam

majlis – council or gathering

Majlis-e-Mushawarat - consultative committee; *Khalifa's* advisory council

Masih Mau'ud – Promised Messiah; title given to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

Maulvi – honorific title conferred upon teachers of Islam

mohalla – neighbourhood

mubahala – public prayer dual

muballigh – missionary (pl. *muballigheen*)

mufti – a legal expert entitled to issue a *fatwa*

muhajir – one who performs *hijrat*; term applied to North Indian Muslim refugees in Pakistan

mujaddid – renewer of faith; a person that according to Muslim tradition appears every 100 years to revive and reform Islam (pl. *mujaddideen*)

murtid – apostate

Musleh Ma'ud – Promised Reformer; title given to Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad

nabi – prophet

nāji firqah – the 'saved' sect. Relating to a hadith according to which the *ummah* would be divided into 73 sects, but only one would be saved from hell

namaz - prayer

Nazir - Secretary

qafilah – caravan

qaum – community or nation

qazi – a Muslim magistrate or judge

rasul – messenger

shahada – first pillar of Islam; declaration of faith (see also *kalima*)

shahid – martyr

shari'ah – law of Islam

sharnarhi – non-Muslim West Punjabi refugee in India

shirk – polytheism

shuddhi – Hindu proselytising movement involving the ritual purification of lower castes

siyāsi etihād – political unity

sunnah – the way of the prophet

tabligh – missionary work/proselytisation

takfir – pronouncement of unbelief

talaq - divorce

taqlid – imitation, conformity with precedent

tawhid – Monotheism; oneness of God

'ulema – scholars of Islamic knowledge (sing. *'alim*)

ummah – worldwide Muslim community

usul al-fiqh – principles of Islamic jurisprudence

waqf – a trust or bequest for pious purposes; a charitable or religious endowment for the maintenance of institutions such as mosques

zakat – third pillar of Islam; donation of a portion of one's wealth to charity

Abbreviations

AIKC – All India Kashmir Committee

AIMPLB – All India Muslim Personal Law Board

AML - Ahmadiyya Markazai Library, Qadian

BFML – Baitul Futuh Mosque Library, Surrey

BJP – Bharatiya Janata Party

BJS - Bharatiya Jana Sangh

BL – British Library, London

CO – Colonial Office

CSAS – Centre for South Asian Studies, Cambridge

F&P – Foreign and Political Department

FCO – Foreign and Commonwealth Office

FO – Foreign Office

Home Poll. – Home Political Files

IOR – India Office Records

JEI – Jama’at-e-Islami

JIH – Jama’at-e-Islami Hind

JUH – Jami’at ‘Ulema-i-Hind

L/PJ – Public and Judicial Department Papers

MCB – Muslim Council of Britain

MEA – Ministry of External Affairs

MEO – Military Evacuation Organisation

MIM – All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen

MPL – Muslim Personal Law

MTKN – Majlis-i-Tahaffuz-i-Khatm-e-Nabuwwat (Movement to Protect the Finality of Prophethood)

NAI – The National Archives of India, New Delhi

NAP – National Assembly of Pakistan

OUBL – Oxford University Bodleian Library

PBF – Punjab Boundary Force

TNA – The National Archives, London

UDHR – Universal Declaration of Human Rights

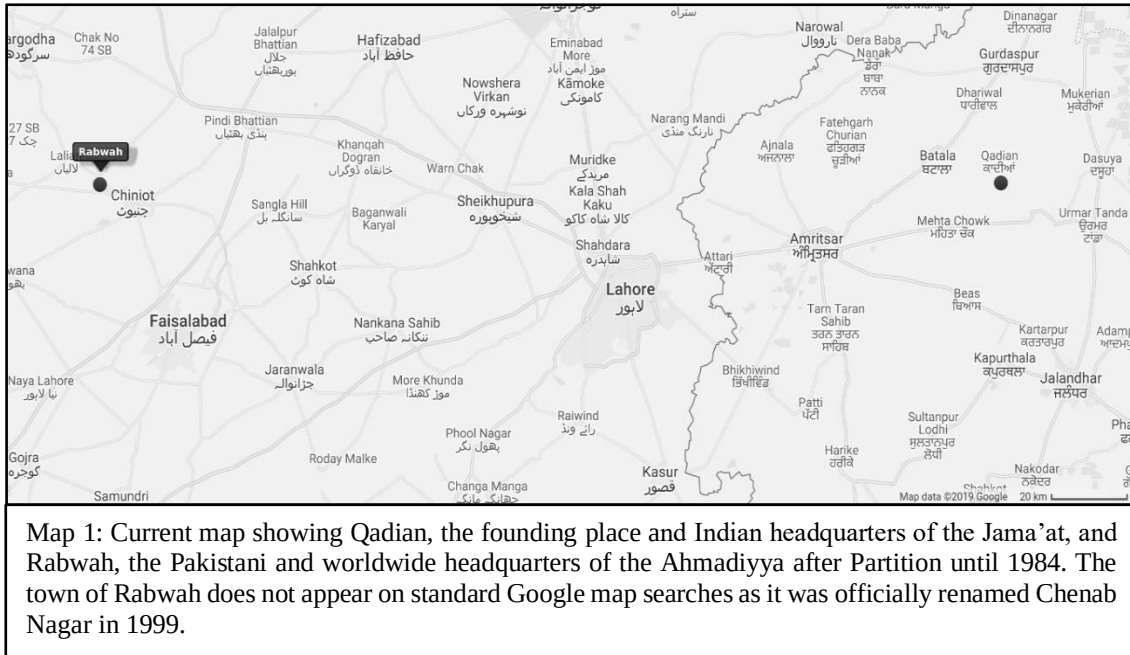
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Introduction

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at was founded in Qadian, Punjab at the end of the nineteenth century by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908). Ahmadis believe that Ghulam Ahmad was the Promised Messiah and Mahdi and was divinely appointed to revive and reform Islam ahead of the Day of Judgement. For many other Muslims, this contravenes the belief that Muhammad was the final prophet. Although Ahmadis do maintain that Muhammad was the last law-bearing prophet, this distinction is often missed or deemed irrelevant by their opponents. In their eyes, this renders Ahmadis heterodox at the very least, and heretical and outside the pale of Islam at the extreme end of the spectrum.

The violence of Partition caused most Ahmadis in East Punjab and Delhi to flee to Pakistan, first to Lahore and then settling in Rabwah, 186 miles from Qadian. Research on the Ahmadiyya has traditionally focused on its early history under colonial rule, or on the circumstances surrounding the persecution of Ahmadis in Pakistan, where they were declared non-Muslim in 1974 and their ability to publicly practise their faith and identify as Muslim was criminalised a decade later. As the experience of Indian Ahmadis has been comparatively less eventful, their history after 1947 has not received attention.



This thesis examines the history of the Ahmadiyya in India through archival and printed sources in Urdu and English. It considers how the Ahmadiyya navigated belonging at the margins of nation and religion whilst remaking itself after it was devastated by Partition. The Jama'at's strategies of self-presentation are assessed via its newspaper, *al-Badr*, to trace the formation of a distinct Indian Ahmadi identity in the early postcolonial period.

The study begins its analysis in the 1930s as India advanced towards independence and ends in 1974 as Indian Ahmadis considered the implications of the Ahmadiyya being rendered non-Muslim by the National Assembly of Pakistan (NAP). Using Gyanendra Pandey's definition of Partition as comprising three partitions (the creation of Pakistan; the splitting of Punjab and Bengal; and the division of families and local communities),¹ it is argued that Partition, rather than the theological controversies most associated with the Ahmadiyya's fate elsewhere, most influenced the trajectory of its history in early postcolonial India. Almost overnight, it was transformed from a fast expanding,

¹ G. Pandey, *Remembering partition: violence, nationalism and history in India* (New Delhi, 2003), p. 14.

prosperous movement with increasing influence to one decimated by the loss of nearly all of its Punjabi members and many of its North Indian members and the shattering of its organisational infrastructure. In its wake, Indian Ahmadis were left with a sense of insecurity, anxiety, and a loss of purpose. After Independence, Indian Ahmadis remained a minority within a minority but were now governed by a Hindu majority, though ostensibly secular, state. Although they pledged loyalty to the ruling power of the day, their ultimate allegiance lay with their Khalifa (spiritual leader), who was a citizen of a de facto enemy state. Furthermore, while the Ahmadiyya was established in India and is rooted in South Asia, Ahmadis see themselves as a group that transcends national boundaries. This context raises a set of interlocking questions: how did Indian Ahmadis present themselves at once as loyal Indian citizens, as part of a wider Muslim world that they were increasingly being excluded from, and as members of a proselytising movement with global aspirations?

In considering these questions, this study makes several significant contributions to ongoing debates about the legacies of Partition and highlights the importance of considering the particularities of Muslim identities in postcolonial India. Seeing Partition and its consequences through the lens of the Ahmadiyya exposes the inadequacy of the broad religious categories that are often used as an explanatory framework at the expense of the histories and experiences of minority, minoritised, and marginalised communities. In this respect, this thesis follows recent path-breaking works centring the experiences of Partition of Dalits and the so-called criminal tribe.² Where it is unique is in offering an

² Some of this literature includes D. Sen, 'Caste politics and Partition in South Asian History', *History Compass*, 10, 7 (2012), pp. 512–22; G. Pandey, 'Nobody's people: the Dalits of Punjab in the forced removal of 1947' in R. Bessel and C.B. Haake (eds.), *Removing peoples: forced removal in the modern world* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 297–319; J. F. Cháirez-Garza, "'Bound hand and foot and handed over to the caste Hindus': Ambedkar, untouchability and the politics of Partition', *The Indian Economic & Social History Review*, 55, 1 (2018), pp. 1–28; S. Gandee, 'Criminalising the criminal tribe: Partition, borders,

exploration of how sectarian affiliation could profoundly influence the meaning of Partition and the ways that belonging has been negotiated and understood in the decades since. In so doing, this thesis punctures a monolithic idea of Indian Muslimness and disrupts several binaries that are often defaulted to when considering Indian society and politics: the majority/minority model of citizenship rights and practices after 1947; the political participation of minority groups as either exemplifying resistance or submission; and a view of relationships between co-religionists as either representing solidarity or sectarianism.

The next section will contextualise this study by exploring more fully how it is positioned in relation to the existing literature. Following this, an explanation of the methodology used in this research will be given. The introduction will end with an outline of the shape of the rest of the thesis.

Before turning to the literature review, a brief clarification of the terminology used throughout this work is needed. In general, a member of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at is referred to as an 'Ahmadi' rather than an 'Ahmadiyya'. 'Qadiani', a pejorative term used for Ahmadis by their opponents and occasionally by scholars, is used only when quoting other work. 'The Ahmadiyya' and 'the Jama'at' are used interchangeably to describe the community as a collective. Finally, the creed advanced by the Ahmadiyya is referred to as 'Ahmadiyyat'.

and the state in India's Punjab, 1947-55', *Comparative studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 38, 3 (2018), pp. 557-572.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at in South Asia

While the Ahmadiyya has been the subject of scholarship in the humanities, there have been few detailed historical explorations of the Jama'at, with most research rooted in theological concerns. One such study, and arguably the best-known work on the Ahmadiyya, is Yohanan Friedmann's *Prophecy Continuous*.³ His book provides a counterpoint to the popular notion that Ghulam Ahmad's brand of heterodoxy was exceptional in its deviancy. Friedmann supplies a detailed exploration of how significant aspects of Ghulam Ahmad's theology had precedents in discussions of Islamic thought since the religion was founded, but particularly in relation to early modern Sufi thinkers such as Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi (1564-1624). For instance, Sirhindi saw himself as distinct from other end-of-century *mujaddideen* (renewers) and ascribed prophetic qualities to himself. Furthermore, like Ghulam Ahmad, who maintained that he himself had no power to create new laws as Muhammad was the last of the law bearing prophets, Sirhindi distinguished between legislative and non-legislative forms of prophecy. Perhaps most significantly, given what seems to be at the crux of the current opposition to the Ahmadiyya, Friedmann also discusses how the finality of Muhammad's prophethood was an issue that continued to be disputed centuries after his death.⁴

Friedmann's work is crucial in informing historians of Ghulam Ahmad's spiritual lineage and in detailing the beliefs of the Ahmadiyya. Given the focus of his study, save for an introductory historical overview, Friedmann's research is not concerned with what happened to the Ahmadiyya in the decades following the faith's establishment in a highly

³ Y. Friedmann, *Prophecy continuous: aspects of Ahmadi religious thought and its medieval background* (2nd edn, Oxford, 2003).

⁴ *Ibid.*, chapter 2.

charged political environment. *Prophecy Continuous* was first published in 1989, and it was not until some twenty years later that the next major study of the Ahmadiyya emerged. Methodist preacher and sociologist Simon Ross Valentine presents an account of the beliefs and contemporary experiences of the Ahmadiyya in both Pakistan and the UK.⁵ His work is based mainly on his observations as a resident of an Ahmadi neighbourhood in Bradford over an eighteen-month period, making Valentine's approach self-avowedly personal. In his own words, he inhabited the position of 'an "outsider" on the "inside"' during the course of his research.⁶ This results in an accessible study of the Jama'at that is of value particularly in adding to our understanding of the everyday lives of Ahmadis and the importance of faith for successive generations of South Asian Ahmadi immigrants to the UK. And yet, it is this intimacy which also leaves Valentine's study open to criticism. Valentine frequently appears beholden to the face-value utterances of his interlocutors. He spends little time reflecting on the variety of concerns of his interviewees through which these conversations could have been refracted; on how his positionality may have influenced this dialogue; or indeed, on the wider literature on his chosen subject.

Until very recently, the only serious historical study of the Ahmadiyya was Spencer Lavan's *The Ahmadiyah Movement*.⁷ Lavan's work is valuable as a narrative of the early history of the Jama'at. He details Ghulam Ahmad's early life, his rise to prominence in Punjab as a result of his participation in debates with Christian missionaries, and the split in the Jama'at after a succession crisis following the death of Ghulam Ahmad's successor and the Jama'at's first Khalifa, Hakeem Nuruddin. Most significantly, Lavan explores the

⁵ S.R. Valentine, *Islam and the Ahmadiyya Jama'at: history, belief, practice* (New York, 2008).

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁷ S. Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah movement: a history and perspective* (Delhi, 1974).

conflict between the Ahmadiyya and the Majlis-i-Ahrar, a religio-political group that embarked on a campaign to expel the community from Islam in the 1930s. However, Lavan does little to engage with the multiplicity of forces that shaped the community's evolution after it was established. Published 45 years ago, Lavan's material could clearly be enriched by the availability of new sources. This is borne out in mentions of the Ahmadiyya in monographs on other subjects. For instance, his discussion of the Ahrar campaign has been expanded by Ayesha Jalal and Samina Awan⁸, and in her study of the Muslims of Malabar, L.R.S. Lakshmi provides a welcome alternative to a North India-centric focus on the Ahmadiyya during the same period.⁹ Moreover, Lavan stops his study in 1936; as mentioned, other historical accounts of the Ahmadiyya focus on their history in Pakistan, creating an empirical gap for understanding the Jama'at's involvement in the movement for a separate Muslim homeland and their experiences of Partition.¹⁰ This thesis aims to redress this gap by exploring this period of Ahmadi history in Chapters 2 and 3.

Elsewhere, historians have discussed the Ahmadis as significant to South Asian history in two contexts. The first is as part of the proliferation of Muslim identities during the last half of the nineteenth century, usually described as a response to Islam's decline under colonial rule. The second is in terms of an existential crisis facing Pakistan after regional and doctrinal differences amongst its citizenry began to surface after 1947. Indeed, this trend also applies to the study of sectarian identity and sectarianism in the Indian

⁸ A. Jalal, *Self and sovereignty: individual and community in South Asian Islam since 1850* (London, 2000), chapter 7 and pp. 447-50; and S. Awan, *Political Islam in colonial Punjab: Majlis-i-Ahrar 1929-1949* (Karachi, 2010), passim.

⁹ L.R.S. Lakshmi, *The Malabar Muslims. A different perspective* (New Delhi, 2012), pp. 97-103.

¹⁰ The exception to this is the brief account of this period given in S. Saeed, *Politics of exclusion: Muslim nationalism, state formation and legal representations of the Ahmadiyya Community in Pakistan* (Ph.D. thesis, University of Michigan, 2010), pp. 153-161.

subcontinent more generally, resulting in its omission as a factor of any significance in the postcolonial history of Indian Muslims.

Scholars have argued that colonial policy provided the impetus for the founding of new sects and educational institutions, though there are differences between historians regarding the extent to which they see colonial influence on the ideology underpinning this and the amount of agency they are willing to ascribe to Indians as participants in it.¹¹ It is said that Christian missionaries emphasised the importance of scripture, introduced new forms of religious organisation and fundraising, and emphasised reason, a key feature of apologetics in this period.¹² Still more scholars have argued that print was crucial to this process, used both to spread ideas and to draw boundaries between groups.¹³ Many have argued that the law was perhaps the most significant catalyst of change produced by colonial rule as codification efforts led to a scramble for authority among the ‘ulema (scholars of Islamic knowledge) and led to many new Muslim groups being established due to conflicts over what the ‘correct’ interpretation of scripture was. This process has had lasting significance as adherence to *shari’ah* became central to the maintenance of Muslim identity.¹⁴ As Asad Ali Ahmed has observed in his work on liberal law and the

¹¹ For instance, Farzana Shaikh argues that the emphasis on colonial policy obscures the extent to which a political discourse informed by Islam revived a sense of belonging to a distinctly Muslim community. See F. Shaikh, *Community and consensus in Islam: Muslim representation in colonial India, 1860-1947* (Cambridge, 1989).

¹² Examples include B. van der Linden, *Moral languages from colonial Punjab: the Singh Sabha, Arya Samaj and Ahmadiyahs* (New Delhi, 2008); K.W. Jones, *Socio-religious reform movements in British India* (Cambridge, 1989); and S.B. Freitag, *Collective action and community: public arenas and the emergence of communalism in North India* (Los Angeles, 1989).

¹³ Ibid.; see also F. Robinson, ‘Islam and the impact of print in South Asia’ in F. Robinson (ed.), *Islam and Muslim history in South Asia* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 66-104; F. Robinson, ‘Islamic reform and modernities in South Asia’, *Modern Asian Studies*, 42, 2/3 (2008), pp. 259-281; U. Sanyal, *Devotional Islam and politics in British India: Ahmad Riza Khan Barelwi and his Movement, 1970-1920* (New Delhi, 1996), p. 4; J. Jones, *Shi’a Islam in colonial India. Religion, community and sectarianism* (Delhi, 2012), p. 49.

¹⁴ See for instance K.P. Ewing, ‘Ambiguity and *Shari’at*: a perspective on the problem of moral principles in tension’ in K.P. Ewing (ed.), *Shari’at and Ambiguity in South Asian Islam* (London, 1988), pp. 1-22; M. Anderson, ‘Islamic law and the colonial encounter in British India’ in D. Arnold and P. Robb (eds.),

Ahmadiyya in both colonial India and Pakistan, the law does not merely reflect preconstituted identities, but has constitutive power in itself.¹⁵

Many of these new movements and institutions, such as Deoband, the Barelwis, Tablighi Jama'at, and Aligarh have been the focus of carefully researched monographs that allow us to understand each movement in great detail.¹⁶ However, a underlying consensus between the authors of such texts is apparent: that the plurality of Islam in India contributed to a wider sense of Islamic renewal rather than fracture, as while such movements may have differed in their methods and beliefs, they shared the same aim, which added to the perception that a broadly unified 'Muslim politics' was developing. Recent work has begun to deconstruct this idea, and this has implications for the notions that the hostility shown to the Ahmadiyya in this period was an exception to the rule and that its consequences would only have meaning later,¹⁷ or that it needs to be understood in terms of the Jama'at's own conduct during this time.¹⁸ Analyses of sectarian unity in the last decades of colonial rule have shown that far from transpiring by happenstance, this unity was engineered intentionally. Faisal Devji shows that Shi'a figures such as Aga Khan III and the Raja of Mahmudabad sought to put forward a vision of a broad-based unified Muslim community under the Muslim League, in part to make space for themselves in an increasingly Sunni-dominated landscape.¹⁹ Devji describes this as 'Shia

Institutions and ideologies. a SOAS South Asia reader (Curzon, London, 1993), pp. 165-185; M.Q. Zaman, *The Ulama in contemporary Islam: custodians of change* (Princeton, 2002), chapter 1.

¹⁵ A.A. Ahmed, 'Adjudicating Muslims: law, religion and the state in colonial India and post-colonial Pakistan' (University of Chicago, Ph.D thesis, 2006), p. 127.

¹⁶ Examples include B.D. Metcalf, *Islamic revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900* (Princeton, 1982); Sanyal, *Devotional Islam and politics in British India*; Y. Sikand, *The origins and development of the Tablighi-Jama'at (1920-2000)* (New Delhi, 2002); D. Lelyveld, *Aligarh's first generation: Muslim solidarity in British India* (Princeton, 1978).

¹⁷ Jalal, *Self and sovereignty*, p. 252.

¹⁸ See the discussion below of A.H. Khan, *From Sufism to Ahmadiyya: A Muslim minority movement in South Asia* (Bloomington, Indiana, 2015).

¹⁹ F. Devji, *Muslim Zion: Pakistan as a political idea* (London, 2013), chapter 2.

ecumenism’,²⁰ a concept expanded upon by Soumen Mukherjee in his exploration of the ideas of Aga Khan III.²¹ Mukherjee calls the Aga Khan’s ideas about the future of Muslims in the subcontinent ‘Muslim political ecumenism’,²² a term that this thesis returns to in Chapter 5 to explore how Indian Ahmadis conceptualised their sense of place in the broader Indian Muslim community after Partition.

As well as advancing more nuanced analyses of the sectarian dimensions of Muslim solidarity in subcontinental politics during the first half of the twentieth century, recent scholarship has also revealed cases which ran counter to this direction. In his study of Shi’ism in the United Provinces, Justin Jones argues that viewing reform movements as harmonious in their aim to respond to subordination obscures the extent to which these movements were often motivated by competition and confrontation amongst themselves. They often presented themselves as autonomous, rather than as feeding into a wider whole.²³ Conflict with other groups could be manufactured in order for disputes among Shi’as to be expressed – as Jones explains, ‘the otherization of an external community allowed these internal debates to be presented as a mark of collective strength, rather than fragility or uncertainty’.²⁴ Thus sectarianism can be understood not as a by-product of religious renewal and rooted in pre-modern differences, but as ‘the chosen means by which delicate internal shifts of doctrine, authority and leadership were debated, negotiated and communicated’²⁵. Sunni-Shi’a rivalry in Lucknow was therefore at its

²⁰ Ibid., p. 67.

²¹ S. Mukherjee, *Ismailism and Islam in modern South Asia: community and identity in the age of religious internationals* (Cambridge, 2017).

²² Ibid., p. 6.

²³ J. Jones., *Shi’a Islam in colonial India*; J. Jones, “‘That Pakistan that is going to be Sunnistan’: Indian Shi’a responses to the Pakistan movement” in A.U. Qasmi and M.E. Robb, *Muslims against the Muslim League: critiques of the idea of Pakistan* (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 350-380.

²⁴ J. Jones., *Shi’a Islam in colonial India*, p. 231.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 28.

highest when intra-Shi'a tension was at its most intense.²⁶

The Ahmadiyya are also discussed as part of the debate on Pakistan's seemingly elusive quest for a cohesive national identity as ethnic and doctrinal differences grew to create competing discourses of nationhood after 1947. Most of these studies focus on acute incidents of anti-Ahmadi activity and later, state-sanctioned persecution, in 1953, 1974, and 1984.²⁷ In his 2015 book *From Sufism to Ahmadiyya*, Adil Hussain Khan takes a different approach and presents the first substantial history of the Ahmadiyya in the colonial period since Lavan's monograph. Khan's broader aim is to trace the genealogy of the controversy surrounding the Ahmadiyya in Pakistan. He adds detail to our understanding of the changes the Jama'at underwent from the more esoteric leanings of Ghulam Ahmad to the Second Khalifa Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad's institutionalisation of his father's charisma and his firmer hand over members via the establishment of the Jama'at's vast organisational structure. While Friedmann's view is that 'the religious ideas of Ghulam Ahmad were the basic reason for the stormy relationship between the Ahmadiyya and the mainstream of Sunni Islam',²⁸ Khan's main argument is that there was nothing inevitable about how relations between Ahmadis and other Sunni groups developed; instead, it was a result of the Jama'at's participation in politics. His exploration of the Jama'at's involvement in Kashmir in particular, from the late 1920s through to the First Kashmir War (1947-48), adds depth to our understanding of the Ahmadiyya in this period.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 232.

²⁷ Some of this literature includes S. Kaushik, *Ahmadiya community in Pakistan: discrimination, travail and alienation* (New Delhi, 1996); S. Saeed, 'Pakistani nationalism and the state marginalisation of the Ahmadiyya Community in Pakistan', *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 7, 3 (2007), pp. 132-52; Saeed, *Politics of exclusion*; Ahmed, *Adjudicating Muslims*; A.U. Qasmi, *The Ahmadis and the politics of religious exclusion in Pakistan* (London, 2014).

²⁸ Friedmann, *Prophecy continuous*, p. 49.

Khan's argument about the Ahmadiyya's perceived success being more critical than doctrinal differences in catalysing anti-Ahmadi movements in the colonial period and in rendering them vulnerable to being collateral damage in Pakistan's quest to define Muslim identity after 1947 is not novel.²⁹ However, the force with which Khan puts this forward is notable. For instance, he argues that the Ahmadiyya should be seen 'both as a religious movement and as a political party'.³⁰ As explored in Chapters 1 and 2 of this thesis, while the Jama'at was undoubtedly engaged with political issues during the colonial period, to deem it a 'political party' does not accord with common sense definitions of party politics. He also does not explain why a minority Muslim group's involvement in politics would render Ahmadis ripe for persecution but not, say, the Ismailis, given the Aga Khan's involvement in establishing the Muslim League. Later, Khan goes on to somewhat contradict his own argument by stating that the personal relationships between Ghulam Ahmad and his interlocutors which cascaded down to subsequent generations gives Ahmadi persecution the character of 'a neo-tribal conflict that extends back multiple generations along hereditary lines, whether physically or spiritually'.³¹ Finally, despite his assertion to the contrary, Khan comes close to transcending his role as a scholar and apportioning blame, offering that 'it still may be possible for Ahmadis to help reduce the alienation of the movement through individual interactions and engaged organizational participation in social and religious affairs with non-Ahmadi Muslims. This may eventually help reduce violence and persecution'.³²

²⁹ See for instance Jalal, *Self and sovereignty*, pp. 364-68.

³⁰ Khan, *From Sufism to Ahmadiyya*, p. 178.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 179-180.

This thesis does not offer judgements on or solutions for Ahmadi persecution. In contrast to Khan's focus, it is not concerned so much with the reasons for the controversy surrounding the Ahmadiyya, or in getting to the root of the motivations of their opponents. It is instead interested in how Ahmadis themselves conceptualised and responded to the opposition against them in the years following independence in South Asia, as highlighted by the discussion in Chapters 5 and 6. Further, in the case of Chapter 4, it asks what implications the airing of this opposition in the legal sphere had for minority rights in postcolonial India. Furthermore, while acknowledging the impact of the colonial period on subsequent articulations of anti-Ahmadi activity, this thesis seeks to distance itself from the teleological explanations this can result in. Instead, it emphasises that Ahmadi identity is not singular but depends very much on the contemporary context in which any given Jama'at is operating.

Muslims in postcolonial India and the legacies of Partition

Since the 1990s, scholarship on Partition has begun to move away from its causes to its consequences. Gyanendra Pandey's *Remembering Partition* has been pivotal in this historiographical shift. He argues that the emphasis on new constitutional arrangements and political manoeuvrings as the subcontinent became independent leads to a narrow perspective that does not accord with the experiences of Partition for its survivors. Instead, violence needs to be placed at the centre of analysis, especially as violence and the restructuring of communities in 1947-48 were co-constitutive.³³ Moreover, Pandey calls for the expansion of definitions of Partition to reflect the fact that it encompassed

³³ Pandey, *Remembering partition*, p. 3, p. 188.

three different partitions, as mentioned above.³⁴ As explored more fully at the beginning of Chapter 2, there have been a number of important studies which have illuminated the realities of how Partition was experienced on the ground. These works explore the dimensions of its violence, the logistics involved, the differences between the partitions of Bengal and Punjab, and issues of refugee relief and rehabilitation.³⁵ Still more studies have since explored the continuing implications of Partition for understanding the Indian Constitution (1950), policymaking, and citizenship rights in independent India.³⁶ Chapter 3 of this thesis aims to contribute to this growing research on the immediate post-1947 years by exploring the experiences of the Ahmadis left in East Punjab in the context of debates about the social, political, and legal consequences of Partition.

A theme that runs through the literature on Indian Muslims post-independence is the pressure that was felt to continually reiterate their ‘Indianness’ and loyalty to the state. Indeed, the fidelity of Indian Muslims to the state in times of war was a concern expressed by even the most seemingly tolerant leaders during the Constituent Assembly debates immediately following Partition.³⁷ Prominent Muslim figures were compelled to emphasise that their religious identity and commitment to India need not be mutually exclusive.³⁸ Despite the oft-cited suspicion of Indian Muslims comprising a Pakistani fifth

³⁴ To reiterate, these were the creation of Pakistan; the splitting of Punjab and Bengal; and the division of families and local communities. Ibid., p. 14

³⁵ See for instance J. Chatterji ‘Right or Charity? The debate over relief and rehabilitation in West Bengal, 1947-50’ in S. Kaul (ed.), *The partitions of memory. The afterlife of the division of India* (Delhi 2001), pp. 74-110 and J. Chatterji, *The spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947-67* (Cambridge, 2007); Y. Khan, *The great Partition: the making of India and Pakistan* (London, 2007); V.F.Y Zamindar, *The long Partition and the making of modern South Asia: refugees, boundaries, histories* (New Delhi, 2008).

³⁶ Some of this literature includes Zamindar, *The long Partition*; R. Bajpai, *Debating difference. Group rights and liberal democracy in India* (New Delhi, 2011); J. Chatterji, ‘South Asian histories of citizenship, 1946-1970’, *The Historical Journal*, 55, 4 (2012), pp. 1049-1071; N.G. Jayal, *Citizenship and its discontents: an Indian history* (Cambridge, Mass., 2013).

³⁷ G. Pandey, ‘Can a Muslim be an Indian?’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 41, 4 (1999), pp. 608-629.

³⁸ For instance M. Mujeeb, *The Indian Muslims* (London, 1967). See also Zaman, *The Ulama in contemporary Islam*, pp. 160-69 for a discussion of Abul Hasan Ali Hasani Nadwi’s emphasis on the autonomy of Indian Islam.

column, scholars have not detailed the consequences of Indo-Pakistani tensions on Indian Muslims with much specificity.³⁹ Thus, Chapter 3 also seeks to outline the tangible consequences that tensions with Pakistan beyond 1947-48 had on the Jama'at.

The research of Mushirul Hasan has illuminated the issues facing Muslims in post-independence India after the acute phase of Partition had ended. In *Legacy of a Divided Nation*, he explored the exacerbation of economic disadvantage, particularly following the flight of the middle class to Pakistan; the survival of Urdu; Muslim Personal Law; and the minority character of Aligarh.⁴⁰ He added to this broad overview with edited collections offering glimpses of the impact of a changed social and political landscape on diverse communities of Indian Muslims.⁴¹ In the last decade or so, Hasan's pathbreaking works have inspired detailed monographs that concentrate on particular facets of Indian Muslim identity. In the main, this output has not included historical analysis of the shape that doctrinal differences between Muslims took after 1947. Many scholars have argued that socioeconomic factors are more determinative to Muslim lives in India than religion.⁴² Hasan himself argued that a purely religious focus in academic work on Indian Muslims can harden perceptions of the immutability of communal lines and undermines the aspirations of Muslims that seek to participate in the Indian public sphere independent

³⁹ See for instance W.C. Smith, *Islam in modern history* (Guildford, 1957), pp. 267-73. Smith refers to the existence of Pakistan, and subsequently the attitude of its leaders towards India, as causing problems for Indian Muslims but does not supply specific examples.

⁴⁰ M. Hasan, *Legacy of a divided nation: India's Muslims since independence* (London, 1997).

⁴¹ Two of these collections are M. Hasan (ed.), *Islam, communities and the nation: Muslim identities in South Asia and beyond* (New Delhi, 1998), and M. Hasan (ed.), *Living with secularism: the destiny of India's Muslims* (New Delhi, 2007).

⁴² See for instance M. Hasan, 'Indian Muslims since Independence: in search of integration and identity', *Third World Quarterly*, 10, 2 (April 1988), pp. 818-42; P.B. Mayer, 'Tombs and Dark Houses: ideology, intellectuals and proletarians in the study of contemporary Indian Islam' in I. Ahmad (ed.), *Modernization and social change among Muslims in India* (New Delhi, 1983), pp. 1-53; Barbara Metcalf, *India, Islam and everyday Jihad* (Egham, 2004), p. 19.

from their faith.⁴³ However, it is equally true that Muslim religious identity is worthy of discussion in a country that contains the second-largest Muslim population in the world. When doctrinal differences are mentioned, this is usually confined to brief commentary on sectarian violence or its absence in postcolonial India. For instance, while Yoginder Sikand acknowledges sectarian rivalries, he ultimately argues that India has been spared the internecine conflicts that plague Muslims in neighbouring countries as Hindu nationalism has made sectarianism impractical.⁴⁴ This makes Irfan Ahmad's work on the Jama'at-e-Islami Hind (JIH) and its student wings notable as he charts the evolution of the JIH's ideology since Partition. Initially debarring its members from participating in the political system of a *dar-ul-kufr* (abode of unbelief) and encouraging social exclusion, the JIH eventually came to allow its members to vote in elections and encouraged cooperation with others.⁴⁵

One approach to studying Muslim identities in postcolonial India with more specificity has been to focus on the Muslims of a particular region. In *The Spoils of Partition*, Joya Chatterji illustrates some of the legacies of Partition for Bengali Muslims who chose to stay in West Bengal after 1947. For instance, she describes how much movement of poorer Bengali Muslims on the Indian side of the border was internal as they sought safety in numbers and moved to rural, northern areas of the state. That Indian Muslims felt an intense pressure to conform has become a truism in writings about India during its early post-independence days; while Chatterji discusses this, she also documents how the concentration of Muslim populations increased their political clout, meaning that flight

⁴³ Hasan, *Legacy of a divided nation*, p. 224.

⁴⁴ Y. Sikand, *Muslims in India. Contemporary social and political discourses* (Delhi, 2006), p. 160.

⁴⁵ I. Ahmad, *Islamism and democracy in India: the transformation of the Jamaat-e-Islami* (Princeton, 2009).

to the Congress Party was not the only option for an increasingly beleaguered minority.⁴⁶ Taylor Sherman further demonstrates the necessity of rooting the study of Muslim communities after 1947 in their specific contexts. In her rich study of Muslims in postcolonial Hyderabad, she illustrates the factors that made their search for belonging after Partition unique. The experience of what is euphemistically known as the ‘police action’ in 1948 in particular is key to understanding expressions of belonging and the way that citizenship was negotiated in the region. Sherman emphasises what made the experience of Muslims in Hyderabad distinctive whilst locating her research in broader debates about Muslims in postcolonial India, such as questions about the operation of secularism, political participation, language policies, and social and economic disadvantage.⁴⁷

Anthropologists have arguably been more prolific than historians in exploring the experiences of minority Muslim communities since 1947.⁴⁸ Radhika Gupta is notable in placing her work firmly in the broader historical context of post-Partition India and in the multidimensionality of her study. Gupta offers a layered analysis of the operation of Muslim minority identity in India by examining the intersection of national, regional, and religious concerns in the expression of identity and belonging for the Shi’as of Kargil, an area located on the border of India and Pakistan and a site of conflict between the two countries in 1999.⁴⁹ They are not usually thought of separately from Kashmiri Sunnis, which, along with greater communal tension amongst the latter with Buddhist

⁴⁶ Chatterji, *The spoils of Partition*, chapter 4.

⁴⁷ T.C. Sherman, *Muslim belonging in secular India: negotiating citizenship in postcolonial Hyderabad* (Cambridge, 2015).

⁴⁸ See also T.M. Howarth, *The Twelver Shi’a as a Muslim minority in India: Pulpit of tears* (London, 2005); K. Sinha-Kerkhoff, *Tyranny of Partition: Hindus in Bangladesh and Muslims in India* (New Delhi, 2006); M. Banerjee (ed.), *Muslim portraits: everyday lives in India* (Indiana, 2008); D.E. Singh, *Islamization in modern South Asia: Deobandi reform and the Gujjar response* (Berlin 2012).

⁴⁹ R. Gupta, ‘Piety, politics, and patriotism in Kargil, India’ (University of Oxford, D.Phil thesis, 2011).

organisations in Ladakh, has led to a growing desire among Kargili Shi'as for the state to recognise the distinctiveness of their identity. Gupta argues that this has been supported by, rather than has occurred in spite of religious, cultural, and ideological influences from Iraq, Iran, and Baltistan. For Kargili Shi'as, the importance of transnational influences on them has also necessitated emphasising that they are patriotic Indian citizens. Gupta demonstrates that in engaging with nationalism and the state whilst retaining a strong sense of the particularities of their identity, Kargili Shi'as defy a resistance/submission dichotomy.⁵⁰

The aforementioned works by Irfan Ahmad, Chatterji, Sherman, and Gupta analyse specific Muslim communities in the aftermath of Partition to expand knowledge on their chosen communities for their own sake and to expand broader scholarly conversations about the postcolonial history of Indian Muslims. Inspired by the models they have provided, this thesis aims to contribute to this conversation. It offers a study of Indian Ahmadis, both to understand their experiences of the late colonial period and after the stroke of the midnight hour on 15 August 1947, and to suggest ways that the Jama'at's history contributes to broader debates about national loyalty, citizenship, the governance of minorities, personal law, sectarian difference, and religious dissent.

Methodology

While the research presented here draws on Ahmadi literature, government records, High Court judgements, and excerpts from the Indian national press, the newspaper *al-Badr* provides the foundation for this thesis and is a source that has hitherto been untapped in

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 168-70.

scholarly research. Named after a key battle won in the early days of Islam in 624, it was founded in 1902 as an Urdu weekly and was one of several Ahmadi periodicals published by the Jama'at in Qadian. After Partition, the publication of all Ahmadi newspapers ceased temporarily. Upon resumption, papers like their Urdu daily *al-Fazl* began to be published in Pakistan, and *Badr* became India's main Ahmadi journal, restarting publication in March 1952.

Badr provided a platform for the headquarters of the Jama'at in Qadian to communicate with regional Jama'at's throughout India, replacing networks that had been shattered in the wake of Partition. It also provided an anchor to local Jama'at's that found themselves unmoored without the guiding hand of the Khalifa.⁵¹ Whilst its appeal was primarily to other Ahmadis, its editors hoped it would reach a broader readership. Indeed, Ahmadis were advised to spend Rs. 6 per year on a subscription to *Badr* for non-Ahmadis to consult in a public place, such as a library or a waiting room, as a way of participating in missionary work.⁵²

A common criticism of the use of newspapers in historical research is that the existence of editorial bias and subjective reportage casts doubt on the veracity of the facts presented. However, the intention here is not merely to provide an empirical account of the Ahmadiyya's history during this period; *how* events are described is as important to this thesis as *what* is being described. As John Tosh has argued, it is essential to distinguish between "external criticism", where the authenticity of a source is under question, and

⁵¹ See for instance *al-Badr*, Qadian: 21 May 1952, p. 5, p. 12, wherein it was said that a single newspaper allowed Indian Ahmadis to hear a singular voice.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 7 April 1953, p. 2.

“internal criticism”, where the content of a source is analysed.⁵³ To the historian, *Badr* allows for an examination of the discursive practices that the Jama’at was engaging in to constitute its identity, or indeed, reconstitute its identities, after Partition.

Close study of *Badr* also demonstrates how the history of the Ahmadiyya in postcolonial India was contingent on both domestic debates and the broader politics of the subcontinent. Here, the impact of anti-Ahmadi agitation in Pakistan, and India’s relationship with Pakistan, particularly in light of Qadian’s location near the border of these two countries, is instructive. Whilst a sense of upheaval and uncertainty marked the early decades after Partition, those moments where the intensity of events magnified the myriad concerns of the Indian Ahmadiyya Jama'at has informed the selection of the editions of *Badr* that have been considered here. In chronological order, these case studies are the 1953 Lahore riots; the publication of the Munir report in 1954; the 1962 Sino-Indian War; the Second Kashmir War and the death of the Second Khalifa in 1965; the court case *Shihabuddin Imbichi Koya Thangal v. Ahammed Koya* (1970); the Indo-Pakistan War of 1971; and the decision of the NAP to declare Ahmadis non-Muslim in 1974.

Veena Das has described the study of such flashpoints as significant beyond simply establishing a narrative of what took place during periods of crises; rather, ‘critical events’ can tell us much about the nature of and context in which relationships between a range of actors operate.⁵⁴ We can glean the character of debates around issues such as religious identity, sectarianism, minority politics, and nationalism, while also discovering how

⁵³ Cited in J. Secker, *Newspapers and historical research: a study of historians and custodians in Wales* (Ph.D thesis, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1999), p. 25.

⁵⁴ V. Das, *Critical events: an anthropological perspective on contemporary India* (New Delhi, 1995), passim.

such events contributed to a redefinition of these categories.⁵⁵ Textual analysis can lead to insight into how the Ahmadiyya conceived of itself, through discourses of persecution and martyrdom on the one hand, and as part of a triumphant, exponential expansion on the other; as proud Indian Muslims who nonetheless felt compelled at times to distance themselves from their wider community. The violence and upheaval of Partition was the chief 'critical event' for the Ahmadiyya in India and was a prism through which many subsequent crises were refracted; indeed, in some instances, it was a prism through which previous events were refracted as well. Thus the way that Partition was institutionalised and became a social text that informed the Jama'at's sense of insecurity will be highlighted throughout this thesis. As the aim of analysing *Badr* is to examine how Ahmadi leaders were thinking about and presenting their kaleidoscopic identity and sense of belonging, this thesis will not present the impact of *Badr* on the psyches of its readers, notwithstanding the methodological difficulties in doing so anyway. Nor is it within the scope to talk more generally about the impact of the press on public opinion in India or to examine the conversation between *Badr* and the periodicals of other Muslim groups beyond when *Badr* made a clear choice to do so.

How identity and self-presentation are examined in this thesis owes much to Black feminist theory and scholarship. The legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term 'intersectionality' as part of her analysis of why lawsuits regarding employment discrimination against African-American women often failed.⁵⁶ Crenshaw argued that because such cases hinged on either racism or sexism, racialised sexism or gendered racism were not being accommodated in this narrow framework. Instead, there needed to

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 6.

⁵⁶ K. Crenshaw, 'Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: a Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics', *The University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 140 (1989), pp. 139-167.

be a recognition that sites of difference were not binary or additive but coalesced to produce something distinct. Though she gave a name to the necessity of understanding the relationship between multiple social locations, the concept had of course been in existence to explain the oppressions faced by Black women long before her influential article.⁵⁷ Scholars and activists have since expanded the use of ‘intersectionality’ to examine areas of marginalisation in addition to race and gender. These sites come together to suggest new and ever-shifting ways to understand identity depending on which areas of marginalisation and belonging are emphasised at any one time. This fluidity depending on the political or historical context demonstrates that intersectionality is not about differences in and of themselves, but about how structures of power interact with these differences to produce contingent oppressions.

The trajectory of the idea of intersectionality follows a comparable path in scholarship on South Asia. For our purposes, while the study of Indian Muslims has not been explicitly theorised in such terms, its principles are evident throughout the period under review. Perhaps its most famous articulation in subcontinental politics were the remarks of Maulana Muhammad Ali Jauhar at the first of three Round Table Conferences (1930-32): ‘I belong to two circles of equal size, but which are not concentric. One is India, and the other is the Muslim world...We as Indian Muslims...belong to these two circles...and we can leave neither’.⁵⁸ Some scholars see intersectionality as most relevant to South Asian scholarship in the case of caste and gender. Supurna Banerjee and Nandini Ghosh argue for the intersectional thinking of social reformers and intellectuals from Jotirao and

⁵⁷ See for instance The Combahee River Collective, ‘The Combahee River Collective Statement’, in A.G. Hull, P. Bell-Scott, and B. Smith (eds.), *But some of us are brave: Black women's studies* (New York City, 2015), pp. 41-47; hooks, b., *Ain't I a woman: black women and feminism* (Boston, 1981); A. Y. Davis, *Women, race and class* (London, 1982).

⁵⁸ M. Ali, cited in G. Minault, *The Khilafat movement: religious symbolism and political mobilization in India* (New York, 1982), p. 237 note 92.

Savitribai Phule to B.R. Ambedkar.⁵⁹ Further, they state that an intersectional approach is followed in recent work examining the co-constitutive marginalisations of caste and gender by anthropologists and historians such as Anuparna Rao, C.S. Adcock, Rupa Viswanath, and Charu Gupta, among others.⁶⁰ The term has gained more attention in recent years due to a debate on its utility and applicability to India between Nivedita Menon and Mary E. John in *Economic and Political Weekly* in 2015.⁶¹ Among Menon's critiques that are of relevance to academic research rather than to contemporary feminist activism are that it is 1) not a new concept and 2) it ossifies identities. As mentioned, the fact that intersectionality is not novel is not in doubt by its proponents. Rather, it signifies an explicit intention to analyse multiple axes of identity. Further, intersectionality needed to be explicitly labelled and theorised because the interaction of myriad sites of difference has been repeatedly ignored. Menon's second objection does not allow for the flexibility of intersectionality as an analytical tool. Examining multiple identities is a dynamic process and can encompass looking at how the categories in question are internally variegated. Further, while it is important to see that social categories are unfixed, unstable, and artificial, it is equally important to acknowledge that this is not how identities are understood in terms of day-to-day lived experience.

Throughout this thesis, frequent mention is made of the need to account for the intersecting identities of the Ahmadiyya as part of the *ummah* (worldwide Muslim community), as Indian Muslims, as loyal Indian citizens, as a beleaguered minority within a minority, as followers of what they believe to be True Islam, and as members of a

⁵⁹ S. Banerjee and N. Ghosh, 'Introduction. Debating intersectionalities: challenges for a methodological framework', *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal*, 19 (2018), p. 4.

⁶⁰ Ibid. To this I would add W. Gould, *Religion and conflict in modern South Asia* (Cambridge, 2012).

⁶¹ N. Menon, 'Is feminism about "Women"? A critical view on intersectionality from India', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1, 17 (April 25, 2015), pp. 37-44 and M.E. John, 'Intersectionality – rejection or critical dialogue?', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1, 33 (August 15, 2015), pp. 72-76.

distinct sect that is firmly rooted in Punjab but that has transnational aspirations. By this, it is not my intention to suggest static and hermetically sealed sites of difference that can be examined in isolation of each other in a list-like fashion. Instead, as explored above, the identities examined here comeingle and coexist and become more than the sum of their parts.

The propensity of the Ahmadiyya to appear to value outward displays of highly conformist behaviour, or to borrow another term from Black feminist scholarship, to engage in ‘respectability politics’, needs to be understood as stemming from their position as on the margins of both normative national and religious identity. The originator of the term Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham describes how the politics of respectability engaged in by women in the Black Baptist Church at the turn of the twentieth century in the United States reveals both conservatism and radicalism. In policing individual behaviour that did not conform to ideas of white, middle-class propriety, they failed to engage with the institutional racism that was the actual cause of their oppression.⁶² However, hewing to the same norms allowed them to begin contesting racist discourses and facilitated a move towards a less defensive project of self-representation that drew on traditional forms of protest. They drew on biblical teachings, racial self-help, Victorian ideology, and the democratic principles of the US Constitution and interpreted these discourses according to their own aims and purposes. ‘In the dialogic sense of multiple and conflicting meanings’, writes Higginbotham, ‘these concepts became new, resistant pronouncements against white public opinion’.⁶³

⁶² E.B. Higginbotham, *Righteous discontent: the women's movement in the black Baptist church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge, Mass., 1993), p. 15.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

Close reading of *Badr* reveals a similar trajectory in the Ahmadiyya's project of self-representation after 1947. In response to hostility against them, the Jama'at emphasised its orthopraxy and adherence to the cardinal tenets of Islamic theology to underline its religious conformity. This does not necessarily suggest artifice or affectation, but can be seen as part of what Sherman describes as 'a quest for belonging'.⁶⁴ At the same time, the Jama'at drew on traditions of religious dissent that they suggested such adherence afforded them recourse to in order to emphasise their legitimate right to put forward Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's ideas and to criticise those that objected to this. In the same vein, the Jama'at took great care to highlight the loyalty of Ahmadis to the nation and their assimilation into Indian political and social norms. Simultaneously, they used the tenets of secularism, tolerance, and liberalism that were being positioned as integral to Indian identity to demonstrate how their citizenship rights were being compromised. Both of these endeavours to claim belonging and equality involved respectability as a 'weapon of resistance'⁶⁵, and was woven through with the Jama'at's own theology and lived experience to create a distinct articulation of Ahmadi identity.

To conclude this section, it is necessary to outline my positionality and the impact this has had on the materials I have been able to access. Any researcher investigating the Ahmadiyya would face difficulties obtaining a research visa to conduct archival work in Pakistan. However, my background as someone of Indian descent made this even less likely. My positionality also had an impact on my research in Qadian. Through the largesse of the Jama'at, I was able to stay in Qadian during the summer of 2013 to consult volumes of *Badr* as well as other published sources not available in the UK. However, as

⁶⁴ Sherman, *Muslim belonging in secular India*, p. 8.

⁶⁵ Higginbotham, *Righteous discontent*, p. 227.

a non-Ahmadi, Ahmadi leaders were understandably reluctant to open up their internal records to me. I felt their reserve turn into wariness midway through my stay once Ahmadi leaders learnt of the specificities of my personal background, that of belonging to a Sikh Punjabi family that had been displaced during Partition. It was indicated that this had come as a surprise due to assumptions made on the basis of my name. This put me in an unsettling place of being someone difficult to categorise; both an outsider, but also someone potentially too close for comfort.

These challenges meant that I was not able to get basic demographic information about the Ahmadiyya in India. I was informed variously that such numbers were not kept, despite the clear evidence of a Jama'at-wide census in *Badr* and as mentioned frequently in private conversations with Ahmadis in the US and UK, or that such records had been destroyed in a recent fire, or, indeed, that I had misunderstood the Jama'at if I thought such questions relevant at all. While I was able to interview two high-ranking Ahmadi leaders, I was not permitted to talk to other important Ahmadis, including those who had lived through and had remained in Qadian since Partition.⁶⁶ I was informed that this was so I would not get the 'wrong impression' from anyone not experienced in talking to outsiders, bringing an understandable desire to control the narrative about the Ahmadiyya from subtext to text. For the same reason, the time period my research covered was a source of bemusement as it did not cover the Jama'at's establishment and rapid growth in the colonial period, or, as explored in the conclusion, the era of its perceived resurrection in India from the early 1990s after the Fourth Khalifa encouraged a stronger focus on amassing new converts.

⁶⁶ When these interviewees are mentioned in this thesis, their names and positions in the Ahmadi leadership structure have not been provided to protect their anonymity.

It can be said that in not pushing harder to access a wider range of materials, I allowed the Ahmadiyya to dictate the parameters of my research. There is a kernel of truth in this characterisation, but it does not tell the whole story. Aside from my positionality, the obstacles I faced also point to the ethical and security considerations that must be taken into account when conducting research of this kind. Such boundaries were put in place at least in part to provide a sense of safety to a minority group facing untold threats of violence and marginalisation. For instance, while one of my original research questions was about the nature of transborder relations between Ahmadis in Rabwah and Qadian, it is understandable that any answers given could render Indian and Pakistani Jama'ats at risk from accusations about their loyalties given that both are routinely charged with working to undermine the respective nations they belong to in service of the other state. For the same reason, I have not thought it appropriate to speculate on such questions, either.

Similar concerns prevented me from trying to change the minds of Ahmadi leaders about conducting interviews with Partition survivors or taking the opportunities that were available to me to have such conversations informally. I could not simply assume that it was my Sikh background, or indeed my gender that guided the decision of Ahmadi leaders, given the permission granted to non-Ahmadi male researchers to talk to a wider array of people, including those that had remained in Qadian immediately after 1947.⁶⁷ It is incumbent on researchers not to risk retraumatising those who have lived through

⁶⁷ See for instance Valentine, *Islam and the Ahmadiyya jama'at* and N. H. A. Evans, 'Witnessing a potent truth: rethinking responsibility in the anthropology of theisms', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 22 (2016), pp. 356-372.

horrific violence if they have not received informed consent, particularly as most are not equipped with the skills necessary to manage the potential consequences.

Given these constraints, the demographic information presented here about the Ahmadiyya in India after 1947 is provisional, having been pieced together from glimpses offered in *Badr*,⁶⁸ the aforementioned interviews, and estimates given in the contemporary Indian press. Before describing this data, it should be said that the limitations on my research also presented an opportunity. By focusing my attention on India rather than attempting a transnational comparison, I was able to concentrate on what happened to the Ahmadiyya after 1947 in the land of its birth and provide a deeper analysis of a subject generally neglected in academic research, sectarian identity amongst Indian Muslims in the early postcolonial era. Moreover, by witnessing, and some might say, by colluding with the Jama'at in a live example of the politics of respectability, my attention was drawn to the way the Ahmadiyya chooses to project itself and the myriad pressures it has to take into account while doing so. The outcome of this is a richer exploration of the self-presentation of the Jama'at and the implications this has for understanding national belonging and religious identity amongst marginalised groups in postcolonial India than otherwise might have resulted from a more conventional empirical history.

Ahmadis were enumerated separately in the census from 1901-1931, so population figures are available for their presence in Punjab for this period with the proviso that as well as the methodological problems that arise from relying on self-disclosure, not all

⁶⁸ Such glimpses take the form of articles by local Jama'at leaders, missionary tours, and letters of condolence, for example. These can tell us where Ahmadis are present in India, but not usually about how big a given Jama'at is, how long it has been established, or how it has grown over time.

Ahmadis would have known to list themselves by sect rather than religion. The census noted approximately 3,450 Ahmadis in Punjab in 1901, 18,695 in 1911, 28,851 in 1921 and 55,908 in 1931.⁶⁹ In its representations to the Punjab Boundary Commission, the Jama'at claimed it had 1 million members throughout India as a 'modest estimate', with half of these members being based in Punjab.⁷⁰ However, as will be explained in Chapter 2, these figures were not readily accepted. Further, the figure given for Punjab suggests an unrealistic growth on the 1931 census. For the post-Partition period, Ahmadi leaders informed me there were anywhere between 250-400 regional and local Jama'ats and 30-45,000 individual Ahmadis in India in 1991, increasing to around 1,250 local and regional Jama'ats and to 1-1.5 lakh Ahmadis at the time of speaking to me in 2013. The latter figure matches estimates given in Indian press reports over the last decade.⁷¹ However, as the number of Ahmadis that were left in India in 1947 cannot be ascertained, this thesis cannot reliably comment upon the Jama'at's growth over the period of concern.

Though the number of Ahmadis in each city or state are uncertain, the most well established Jama'ats outside Qadian today are in Odisha, Kashmir, Bengaluru, Chennai, Bombay, Tripura, Tamilnad, Hyderabad, and Kerala. These are a mix of old and new Jama'at's, though the research presented in this thesis suggests that an Ahmadi presence in Kashmir, Bombay, Hyderabad, and Kerala existed before Partition. Before 1947, the

⁶⁹ Cited in A.A. Powell, "Duties of Ahmadi Women": educative processes in the early stages of the Ahmadiyya Movement" in A. Copley (ed.), *Gurus and their followers: new religious reform movements in colonial India* (New Delhi, 2000), p. 129. See also Lavan, p. 94 and pp. 114-15.

⁷⁰ 'Arguments of the Ahmadiyya Community, 26th July 1947' in M.M. Sadullah (ed.), *The Partition of the Punjab 1947: a compilation of official documents*, vol. II (Lahore, 1983), p. 245.

⁷¹ See for instance C.M. Naim, 'Learn from Pakistan' in *Outlook India*, 26 April 2011, <http://www.outlookindia.com/article.aspx?271564> [last accessed 12 April 2019]; Y. Rana, 'Ahmadiyyas come out against abolition of triple talaq' in *TOI*, 27 April 2017, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/amritsar/ahmadiyyas-come-out-against-abolition-of-triple-talaq/articleshow/58388606.cms> [last accessed 12 April 2019]; M.G. Sharma, 'Cross-border brides feel the heat of Indo-Pak tension' in *Hindustan Times*, 14 July 2017, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/cross-border-brides-feel-the-heat-of-indo-pak-tension/story-c5zaHQxeGKoSkjVXR7zaXL.html> [last accessed 12 April 2019].

Ahmadiyya's stronghold was in North India. While Jama'at's have been re-established in Delhi, UP, and elsewhere in Punjab since 1947, they have yet to regain their pre-Partition strength. For instance, Delhi has one branch that was established after 1991, in contrast to the seven branches it was home to before 1947.

The socioeconomic complexion of the Ahmadiyya in India is even more difficult to trace. Despite the immense demographic changes that have occurred since Partition, A.H. Khan argues that scholars continue to rely on Wilfred Cantwell-Smith's brief observations about the Ahmadis in his 1943 work *Modern Islam in India: a social analysis* to argue that the prolific and multilingual literary output of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and the Jama'at's own claims about its members' literacy rates, including the near-total literacy of Ahmadi women in Qadian, suggests a highly-educated and economically prosperous following.⁷² However, there are indications that the Jama'at's followers were more diverse than this even before 1947. Qadian's rural location meant that the Jama'at began to attract poorer and less educated members earlier there than elsewhere in India.⁷³ Both Kenneth Jones and Bob van der Linden characterise the membership of the Jama'at at the turn of the twentieth century as 'bipolar',⁷⁴ suggesting a lack of integration between members of differing social groupings and even some discomfort among the Ahmadi leadership at the broadening of its appeal. Indeed, Ghulam Ahmad himself reacted angrily to a passage included in both the 1891 *Gurdaspur District Gazetteer* and the 1901 Punjab census report which contended that he had 'a special mission to the sweepers', replying

⁷² Khan, *From Sufism to Ahmadiyya*, p. 11. Other scholars have lamented the dearth of scholarship on the Ahmadiyya's social origins and composition. See for instance Powell, p. 131 and Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous*, p. xviii.

⁷³ Lakshmi states that although the Jama'at was established in Malabar in the 1890s, it was only in the late 1930s that the conversion of some peasants was recorded. Lakshmi, *The Malabar Muslims*, pp. 99-100.

⁷⁴ Jones, *Socio-religious reform movements in British India*, p. 119 and van der Linden, *Moral languages from colonial Punjab*, p. 111.

that only ‘the intelligent and noble-minded’ were able to accept his teachings,⁷⁵ a very early articulation of the politics of respectability. This accords with impressions I have gleaned speaking to Ahmadi leaders in Qadian. For instance, Kerala is described as having an especially strong Ahmadi presence today and this has been attributed to higher literacy rates enabling people to understand the truth of Ahmadiyyat better. In lieu of concrete data on the actual socioeconomic origins of Ahmadi members over its history, the Jama’at’s continued emphasis on the importance of both religious and secular education and its encouragement of members to work in professional fields suggests at the very least a trend towards upward social mobility.⁷⁶

Thesis outline

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama’at. After outlining the beliefs that make the Jama’at distinct from other Muslim groups and the circumstances of its origins in colonial Punjab at the end of the nineteenth century, the movement’s early history following Mirza Ghulam Ahmad’s death is considered. Following this, the chapter turns to the Jama’at’s involvement in interwar politics and the evolution of its relationship with the British.

Chapter 2 uses colonial government records, private papers, and Ahmadi literature to examine the history of the Jama’at during the final years of the *Raj*. The chapter begins with an assessment of the potential alliances available to the Ahmadiyya as the anti-colonial movement reached its zenith. It then considers the Jama’at’s responses to the

⁷⁵ Quoted in van der Linden, *Moral languages from colonial Punjab*, p. 111.

⁷⁶ T.S. Moles, *The evolution of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community in the UK, 1913-2003* (Ph.D. thesis, Royal Holloway University of London, 2009), p. 64.

Mountbatten Plan and its involvement in Boundary Commission deliberations. After considering the experience of the Ahmadiyya in the immediate aftermath of Partition, it ends by exploring how and to what ends Jama'ats in India and Pakistan remember this time in their history quite differently.

Chapter 3 considers the history of Indian Ahmadi during the early post-Partition years and wars with Pakistan in 1965 and 1971 by looking at Indian government records, Ahmadi literature, and *Badr*. It begins with the departure of Ahmadi leaders and the majority of its Punjabi members to Pakistan and assesses how Ahmadi left in East Punjab began the task of rebuilding networks that had been shattered in 1947 in the context of the fixing of borders and restrictions on free movement. The chapter asks what impact emergency conditions had on the Indian Jama'at's efforts to project themselves as loyal and patriotic Indians. While this was an effort that Indian Muslims in general were forced into, especially at times of heightened tension with Pakistan, the features that made the Ahmadi experience unique, such as Qadian's border location and its strong links with Pakistan, will be examined.

Chapter 4 explores how Ahmadi sought to assert their Muslim identity by examining two High Court cases in 1922 and 1970 that brought this into doubt. It looks at why gender was so significant in disputes about the legitimacy of their claims to Muslimness and seeks to explain why both these legal disputes arose in Malabar, a region not usually associated with the Ahmadiyya. The chapter considers changes in personal law in the period between the cases and highlights continuities between the colonial and postcolonial period in contests over authority between the '*ulema* and the state. It ends by suggesting some of the potential implications the 1970 case had for Indian secularism.

Whilst Chapters 3 and 4 explored the identity of Ahmadis after 1947 as Indians and Muslims respectively, Chapter 5 discusses how the Ahmadis tried to position themselves as Indian Muslims specifically, an identity that was of course more than the sum of its parts. It uses their interventions in political debates to question the idea that Indian Muslims were politically quietist in this period and compares the politics of the Ahmadiyya with other groups to suggest how sectarian and doctrinal affiliation and pre-Partition histories could influence how Indian Muslims engaged with postcolonial secular democracy. It uses responses in *Badr* to anti-Ahmadi action in Pakistan in 1953 to anchor a discussion about how Indian Ahmadis put forward a vision of Muslim *siyāsi etihād* (political unity) within which theological differences could be expressed and contained and how readily this was accepted by their fellow Muslims.

Chapter 6 will look at how the Jama'at's efforts to be seen as Indian Muslims and loyal Indian citizens sat alongside their self-presentation as members of a transnational movement that cultivated a sense of separateness. The chapter begins by outlining the practical components of the Jama'at's foundation in India. It will then examine the importance of *tabligh* (missionary work) to Ahmadis regardless of unfavourable conditions, alongside a discussion of what these missionary efforts involved in India and elsewhere. It ends by examining responses presented in *Badr* and the Indian national press to anti-Ahmadi action in Pakistan in 1974. The shift in the attitudes of other Muslims towards them in the two decades since the 1953 Lahore riots reveals that while Ahmadis took care to defend themselves against the accusations of their opponents, they were buoyed by a sense of nobility in suffering that came from being representatives of what they believed to be True Islam.

After suggesting the broader implications of its intersectional analysis, especially for conversations about the dynamics of Muslim identity and sectarianism in postcolonial India, the thesis ends by briefly considering developments for Indian Ahmadis from 1974 until the present day.

Chapter 1 - Establishing the Ahmadiyya Jama'at: theology, colonial rule, and early controversies

On 7 September 1974, the National Assembly of Pakistan came to a unanimous decision to declare Ahmadis non-Muslim. In a public address announcing this outcome, Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto proclaimed that the decision represented the final decision (*akhri faislah*) on a '90-year-old problem'.¹ In describing the decision as one that had been in the making for almost a century, he articulated and reinforced a narrative of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at being an unrelenting source of torment and anxiety for South Asian Muslims since it was founded. Furthermore, through his choice of words, the significance of Bhutto evoking the attempted annihilation of a religious minority only some 30 years earlier could not have been lost on his audience.

This chapter seeks to introduce the reader to the Ahmadiyya and to offer context for the rest of the thesis by providing an overview of its beliefs, organisational structure, and early history.² In so doing, it will demonstrate that Bhutto's implication that the Jama'at was instantly a cause of crisis for other Muslims is an exaggeration, if not false. The first section describes the establishment of the Ahmadiyya by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, how key aspects of Ahmadi theology differed from what came before it, and to what extent these beliefs were unprecedented in the history of Islamic thought. The founding of the Ahmadiyya will be situated in the context of religious revivalism in late nineteenth

¹ Ahmadiyya Times, *Zulfikar Ali Bhutto claims credit for solving '90-years-old Ahmadi Question' and sowing Islamism*, uploaded on 21 November 2013, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXoB2Z2e7Hk> [last accessed 20 January 2016].

² As an overview, the discussion presented here is necessarily broad. For more detailed analyses of the Jama'at's early history, see for instance S. Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah movement: a history and perspective* (Delhi, 1974); Y. Friedmann, *Prophecy continuous: aspects of Ahmadi religious thought and its medieval background*, (2nd edn, Oxford, 2003); A.H. Khan, *From Sufism to Ahmadiyya: a Muslim minority movement in South Asia* (Bloomington, Indiana, 2015).

century North India. Following this, the way the Jama'at's centralised administrative and financial apparatus was established and consolidated under the leadership of Ghulam Ahmad's son, Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad (1889-1965), will be explored. This signalled the institutionalisation of the Mirza's esoteric claims and would ensure the structural resilience and internal cohesion of the Ahmadiyya through turbulent times.

The chapter will then turn to the Ahmadiyya's history in the inter-war period. Mahmud Ahmad sought to continue his father's attempts to build an Ahmadi identity around the factors which made the Jama'at unique whilst also demonstrating kinship with other Indian Muslims, most notably with its participation in the anti-Dogra campaigns of the 1930s. The consequences of such endeavours upon the relationship of the Ahmadiyya with the colonial government will be explored to add nuance to the conventional view that the Ahmadis were loyalists and remained aloof from anticolonial politics.

Origins of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at

The founder of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, was born in Punjab in 1835 to a landowning family that traced its origins in India to emigration from Samarkand in the sixteenth century. The political upheaval that resulted from the decline of the Mughal Empire dealt a blow to the economic status of the family, but this was ameliorated by the British following the annexation of Punjab by the East India Company in 1849. The family remained loyal to the British during the Indian Rebellion of 1857, though this of course was not unusual in Punjab. Ghulam Ahmad was educated in Islamic theology by private tutors that included Shi'a Muslims and followers of the Ahl-i-Hadith. He briefly worked as a clerk in a courthouse before turning his attention back to religious

matters.³ In 1880, he published the first of four volumes of his work *Barāhīn-i-Ahmadiyyah* ('The Proofs of the Ahmadiyya'), and in 1882 he claimed that he was that century's *mujaddid*, a person that according to Islamic tradition appears every 100 years to revive and reform Islam. The Jama'at was founded in Ludhiana in 1889 after Ghulam Ahmad invited his followers to pledge allegiance to him (*bai'at*). In his words, this was so that the initiated could 'learn true belief, real purity of faith, the way to love God'.⁴ The oath involved subscribing to ten conditions, only the last of which was distinctive and involved unparalleled obedience and devotion to Ghulam Ahmad.⁵

The fervour with which Ghulam Ahmad articulated the need for religious reform earned him praise from Punjabi Muslims in the context of what they saw as increasingly aggressive Christian and Hindu proselytising efforts. As described below, this was partly because of his willingness to engage in public debate with prominent religious leaders, particularly from the Arya Samaj.⁶ It was also a result of his literary output, which was prolific even in the context of print being a key mechanism through which a diverse array of new religious groups established in the nineteenth century were able to communicate their messages.⁷ It was not until Ghulam Ahmad claimed to be both the *mahdi* (divinely guided one) and the *masih mau'ud* (Promised Messiah) in 1891 that he became the subject

³ For more on Ghulam Ahmad's early life, see Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah movement*, chapter 2 and Khan, *From Sufism to Ahmadiyya*, chapter 1.

⁴ M.G. Ahmad, cited in Friedmann, *Prophecy continuous*, p. 5.

⁵ M.G. Ahmad, 'Conditions of initiation' (translated from *Ishtehar Takmeel-e-Tabligh*, January 12, 1889), <https://www.alislam.org/library/articles/conditions-initiation-baiat/> [last accessed 9 June 2019]. Subsequently, Ghulam Ahmad's successors have added detail to what they believe each of the ten conditions mean for Ahmadis in practice. See for instance M.M. Ahmad, *Conditions of Bai'at and responsibilities of an Ahmadi* (Tilford, Surrey, 2005).

⁶ A. Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty: Individual and community in South Asian Islam since 1850* (London, 2000), p. 291.

⁷ Indeed, according to some scholars, print was not just a means but a central cause for the proliferation of these movements in the first place and was especially important to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's visibility. F. Robinson, 'Islam and the impact of print in South Asia' in F. Robinson (ed.), *Islam and Muslim history in South Asia* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 81-82.

of some criticism. For example, prominent Ahl-i-Hadith scholar Muhammad Hussain Batalvi was initially an admirer of Ghulam Ahmad, lauding *Barāhīn-i-Ahmadīyah* in his journal *Ishā'at-i-Sunnah*. However, after 1891, Muhammad Hussain became one of Ghulam Ahmad's fiercest critics, engaging him in *mubahalas* (public prayer duels) and arranging for the signing of a *fatwa* (legal opinion) against him by numerous '*ulema*' from across the spectrum of Muslim groups.⁸

In terms of ritual, there is little to distinguish the Ahmadiyya from Sunni practice. Ahmadis adhere to the five pillars of Islam and hold the same six articles of belief. The three main principles that set the Jama'at apart are 1) belief in Ghulam Ahmad as the Promised Messiah and Mahdi; 2) the claim that Jesus did not ascend to heaven but died a natural death in Kashmir; 3) conceptualising *jihad* (religious effort; holy war) as a non-violent struggle. An exploration of these reveals that the supposed uniqueness of Ghulam Ahmad's claims is questionable.

Of these three principles, Ghulam Ahmad's claim to prophecy is the most contentious for other Muslims as it is seen to violate the finality of Muhammad's prophethood (*khatm-e-nabuwwat*). Ghulam Ahmad maintained that Muhammad was the 'seal' of the prophets, meaning the most perfect manifestation of prophecy, and that no law-bearing prophet could come after him. However, he argued that non-law bearing prophets could appear in order to restore the purity of Islam in the face of corruption and innovation.⁹ Differentiating between legislative and non-legislative forms of prophecy was not novel. For instance, the Andalusian scholar Ibn al-'Arabi (1165-1240) drew this distinction in

⁸ K.W. Jones, *Socio-religious reform movements in British India* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 115-17.

⁹ Friedmann, *Prophecy continuous*, p. 132.

his influential work, *Al-Futuh al-Makkiyya* (The Meccan Revelations).¹⁰ Nor was Ghulam Ahmad the first Muslim in South Asia to claim to be the receiver of divine revelation. Azfar Moin demonstrates that Mughal rulers, at least until Shah Jahan (1592-1666), displayed modes of sovereignty and kingship that can be termed messianic.¹¹ The Sufi thinker Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi (1564-1624) also saw himself as distinct from other end-of-century *mujaddids* and ascribed prophetic qualities to himself,¹² as did Ahmed Raza Khan Bareilvi (1856-1921).¹³ While the idea that Muhammad was the final prophet (*khatm-ul-nabiyyin*) is regarded as incontrovertible amongst most Muslims today, it was something that continued to be disputed centuries after his death.¹⁴ Further, although *khatm-e-nabuwwat* became a significant part of Islam before the Ahmadiyya Jama'at was founded, it can be argued that it became cardinal in no small part because the Ahmadiyya controversy has entailed its constant reiteration as the boundaries of Islam are policed.

Secondly, Ghulam Ahmad's views on the figure of Jesus were contrary to both Christian and Muslim traditions and were likely influenced by a desire to challenge Christian missionaries, as described below. According to Islamic eschatology, Jesus was not crucified but was raised to heaven by Allah. He is prophesied to return before the Day of Judgement to assist the Mahdi in defeating the anti-Christ. As in the classical Muslim view, Ghulam Ahmad believed that Jesus did not die on the cross. However, he argued that rather than ascending to heaven, Jesus was mistaken for dead after fainting. Once he recovered, he travelled east and settled in Kashmir, where he died of natural causes at the age of 120. Moreover, Ghulam Ahmad understood the Mahdi and Messiah to be

¹⁰ Ibid., *Prophecy continuous*, p. 182.

¹¹ A.A. Moin, *The millennial sovereign: sacred kingship and sainthood in Islam* (New York, 2014).

¹² Friedmann, *Prophecy continuous*, passim.

¹³ A. Jalal, *Partisans of Allah: Jihad in South Asia* (Cambridge, Mass., 2008), p. 165.

¹⁴ Friedmann, *Prophecy continuous*, p. 58.

synonymous rather than two different figures and believed that the idea of the Second Coming was to be understood metaphorically rather than literally. He argued that the 'Promised Messiah' described the appearance of someone who was like Jesus, whose purpose was to purge Islam of its accretions and return it to its pristine form. Moreover, Ghulam Ahmad contended that to think Jesus could be the Promised Messiah was to deny that Muhammad was the seal of the prophets, as the Messiah had to be a Muslim.¹⁵

Finally, the Ahmadi perspective on *jihad* renders them distinctive, though this is more of a retrospective appraisal rather than something that marked them apart at the time. Ghulam Ahmad argued that the meaning of *jihad* had been corrupted and its enactment should be by the pen, not the sword. The exhortation to violence was specific to the conditions of early Islam and was designed to be used only in self-defence. Ghulam Ahmad was unequivocal in who he blamed for this corruption. In his 1900 work *The British Government and Jihad*, he wrote 'it should be remembered that today's Islamic scholars...completely misunderstand *jihad* and misrepresent it to the general public...[they] are in fact responsible for murders committed by ignorant, egotistical people who know nothing of why Islam was forced to fight battles in its early history'.¹⁶

Ghulam Ahmad was unique in rendering violent *jihad* obsolete because Islamic tradition described it as unnecessary after the arrival of the Promised Messiah.¹⁷ However, he was by no means the only one of his contemporaries to define *jihad* in non-violent terms, or indeed, to argue that *jihad* against the British was unnecessary. Francis Robinson argues that as British imperial rulers had pledged non-interference in religious matters, the

¹⁵ This section summarises Friedmann, *Prophecy continuous*, pp. 111-118 and Khan, *From Sufism to Ahmadiyya*, chapter 2.

¹⁶ M.G. Ahmad, *The British Government and Jihad* (Tilford, Surrey, 2006), p. 8.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

illegitimacy of *jihad* in this context was a long-held position amongst Sunni *'ulema* in general and that this explains why Muslims across the empire did not all respond to the Ottoman call for *jihad*.¹⁸ In India, both religious revivalists such as Ahmed Raza Khan Bareilvi and modernists like Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-98) also held that as long as the British did not interfere with religious freedoms, *jihad* was illegitimate.¹⁹ Whilst giving his unfavourable views on the nascent Congress, the latter in fact exclaimed that given India's diversity, *jihad* was not only unnecessary but undesirable. In an impassioned loyalist defence, Khan argued it was 'necessary that for the peace of India and for the progress of everything in India the English Government should remain for many years – in fact for ever!'²⁰

The Ahmadiyya Jama'at is often written about by historians as part of the proliferation of Muslim revival and reform movements in nineteenth-century North India in response to colonial rule. However, it is important to consider the specificity of the sociopolitical milieu of Punjab at this time to contextualise the emergence of the Jama'at and core Ahmadi beliefs. The province's religious pluralism is reflected in Ghulam Ahmad's claim that Krishna, Buddha, and Zoroaster, among others, should be recognised as prophets that predated Moses.²¹ As well as announcing that he was the Promised Messiah, Ghulam Ahmad claimed that he fulfilled a prediction that could be found in Hindu texts that an avatar similar to Krishna would appear at the end of days, who would be a killer of swine

¹⁸ F. Robinson, 'The British Empire and the Muslim World' in F. Robinson (ed.), *Islam, South Asia and the West* (New Delhi, 2007), p. 115.

¹⁹ A. Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty: individual and community in South Asian Islam since 1850* (London, 2000), p. 198.

²⁰ Cited in S. Hay (ed.), *Sources of Indian tradition. Modern India and Pakistan: Volume II* (New York, 1988), p. 194.

²¹ Comparisons can be made between Ghulam Ahmad's approach and similar claims by Bahauallah, the founder of the Baha'i faith. P. Smith, *A short history of the Baha'i Faith* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 66-67.

and a protector of cows.²² He also claimed that notable religious figures that appeared after Muhammad, such as Guru Nanak, were Muslim saints.²³

It is unclear whether in making such claims Ghulam Ahmad supposed he would be able to appeal to potential converts from an array of religious backgrounds, or if he was trying to provoke a range of defensive reactions that would bring attention to the Jama'at. Perhaps more important than Punjab's religious pluralism was the influence of a number of new religious movements based there that had zealous proselytising at their core. In the early years of its history, the most substantial opposition to the Ahmadiyya in Punjab came from non-Muslim groups. The Arya Samaj was one of the Jama'at's main antagonists during this period. This was in no small part due to Ghulam Ahmad's predictions of the death of its leaders, such as the founder of the Arya Samaj Dayananda Saraswati (1824-83) and one of its most prominent figures, Lekh Ram (1858-97). Indeed, in the case of the latter, Ghulam Ahmad was accused of his murder, though a police investigation did not bear this out.²⁴ Bob van der Linden argues that rather than being inspired by other Muslim groups in how he chose to organise, it was the Arya Samaj that demonstrated to Ghulam Ahmad the benefits of a centralised administration, extensive bureaucracy, use of public debate alongside print to proselytise, and education as a means to encourage conversion.²⁵

Punjab was the site of the most intense Christian missionary efforts in India at this time by groups such as the Christian Missionary Society. The 1891 census showed a 410%

²² Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous*, p. 123.

²³ B. van der Linden, *Moral languages from colonial Punjab: the Singh Sabha, Arya Samaj and Ahmadiyahs* (New Delhi, 2008), p. 131.

²⁴ Friedmann, *Prophecy continuous*, p. 10.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

increase on the previous decade for Christian converts.²⁶ Ghulam Ahmad's claim to be the Promised Messiah can be seen to be a clear challenge to this activity. The strategies of debate that Christian missionaries employed were also adopted by Ghulam Ahmad. For instance, Ghulam Ahmad appealed to reason in countering Christian narratives about Jesus. In arguing that Jesus survived the crucifixion and thus did not die for humanity's sins, Ghulam Ahmad was trying to show that there was no reason to remain a Christian.²⁷ Further, Ghulam Ahmad's stance on *jihad* can be viewed pragmatically as a way to justify loyalism during colonial rule, but can also be seen as a response to portrayals of Islam by prominent Christian leaders such as C.G. Pfander as a religion that spread through India because of its theologically mandated aggressive and violent nature.²⁸

Life after Mirza Ghulam Ahmad: the split and the institutionalisation of the Jama'at

Following Ghulam Ahmad's death in 1908, Hakeem Nuruddin (1841-1914), the first person to pledge allegiance to the Mirza, was appointed his successor and given the title *Khalifat-ul-masih I* (the first successor of the Messiah). As will be explored in Chapter 6, under Nuruddin, the focus of the Jama'at's proselytising efforts shifted from public debates to expanding its missionary efforts beyond British India. For instance, under his leadership, the first Ahmadiyya mosque was established in England in 1913. However, despite such progress, there were disagreements in the Jama'at over how the succession was handled. While the majority of Ahmadis agreed that Ghulam Ahmad had mandated that he be succeeded by *Khalifas* (Caliphs), a small group argued that he had wanted decisions to be made by consensus via the institution of a Supreme Council. This tension

²⁶ Jones, *Socio-religious reform movements in British India*, p. 101.

²⁷ Khan, *From Sufism to Ahmadiyya*, p. 43.

²⁸ Friedmann, *Prophecy continuous*, p. 169.

came to a head following Nuruddin's death in 1914. After Ghulam Ahmad's son Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad was named *Khalifat-ul-masih* II, those advocating for leadership by consensus such as Maulvi Muhammad 'Ali and Khwaja Kamaluddin broke away to form the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at-i-Islam Lahore (known more commonly as the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement, or Lahori Ahmadis). The Lahori Ahmadis subsequently emphasised that the main reason for the split was their belief that Ghulam Ahmad was Islam's fourteenth-century *mujaddid* who had only referred to himself as a prophet metaphorically. However, Friedmann points out that there is little evidence of such debates during and immediately after the split, and that the parting of ways was primarily a leadership issue.²⁹ Other ideological differences subsequently came to the fore to mark the two groups apart in areas such as methods of *tabligh* (missionary work), the status of non-Ahmadi Muslims, and a willingness to criticise the government of the day.³⁰

Perhaps in part because of the split and the challenge to Mahmud Ahmad's leadership of a fledgling movement that it posed, the institution of the *Khilafat* (Caliphate) came to dominate how the Ahmadiyya functioned. In 1922, the *majlis-i-mushawarat*, or Khalifa's advisory council, was established. This comprised 500-600 delegates, 75% of whom were elected. The Khalifa appointed the rest, and the *majlis* always sat in his presence. This, along with his power to veto decisions he did not agree with, meant that ultimate authority rested with the Khalifa.³¹ Although all but one of Ghulam Ahmad's successors have been related to him, the Ahmadiyya maintain that the position of Khalifa is elected, not hereditary. In 1957, Mahmud Ahmad formalised the system of election that had seen him and Nuruddin appointed by creating an electoral college. However, in 1944 he had already

²⁹ Ibid., p. 18.

³⁰ For more on the split, see Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah movement*, pp. 98-114 and pp. 122-132; Friedmann, *Prophecy continuous*, chapter 7; Khan, *From Sufism to Ahmadiyya*, pp. 84-80.

³¹ Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah movement*, p. 116.

set himself apart from his predecessor and those Khalifas that would succeed him by announcing he was the *musleh mau'ud* (Promised Reformer), a figure that had been prophesied by Ghulam Ahmad.³²

The Khilafat is the fulcrum of the vast organisational structure of the Ahmadiyya established by Mahmud Ahmad that exists today.³³ Depending on the number of Ahmadis in any given area, the centralised structure of the Ahmadiyya's headquarters is replicated at national, regional, and local levels. In India, the responsibility for managing the Jama'at is vested in the Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, Qadian, which delegates responsibilities through its Secretaries (*Nazirs*) and is presided over by the Chief Secretary (*Nazir 'Ala*). Its departments include missionary work and training, finance, and general and external affairs. Wherever there is a presence of three or more Ahmadis, a local Jama'at is formed, with one person appointed President and another Treasurer. The more involved structure of the national Jama'at, with Secretaries attached to various departments via a mix of appointment and election, is replicated once a branch contains over 100 members. Each region has a Missionary-in-Charge, who is responsible for District *Amirs* (leaders) who coordinate activity at the local level.³⁴ *Tabligh* secretaries at the local and regional level send in monthly reports to the centre about their Jama'at's missionary efforts, though evidently, the compulsory nature of this took some time to be appreciated.³⁵ After receiving monthly reports from each regional leader in India, the Chief Secretary in Qadian summarises the country's activities, including its missionary activities, fundraising, and expenditure, and sends a report to the Khalifa's office. There is not much

³² Friedmann, *Prophecy continuous*, p. 32.

³³ For more information on the way the Jama'at is organised, see K. Zirvi, *Welcome to Ahmadiyyat, the True Islam*, (2nd edn, Silver Spring, Maryland, 2003), chapter 12.

³⁴ Conversations with an Ahmadi Secretary in Qadian, summer 2013.

³⁵ Reminders striking a disappointed tone were printed in *Badr* when these obligations were not being fulfilled. See for instance *al-Badr*, 8 January 1953, p. 2; and 14 March 1954, p. 10.

room for unsanctioned innovation or experimentation in this framework, and any request or problem has to be submitted according to the chain of command in this hierarchy, or it will not be dealt with.³⁶ By necessity, this is very different from a movement like the Tablighi Jama'at, whose success is owed partly to its near lack of organisational apparatus.³⁷

The centralised nature of the Ahmadi system allows for the more efficient collection of *chandas* (donations). This is crucial to the Jama'at's financial viability as its activities are funded entirely by its members.³⁸ Some *chandas* are compulsory, and all adult male Ahmadis regardless of income are required to contribute to them regularly under threat of excommunication.³⁹ These include *zakat*, *fitrana* (money for the poor donated at the end of Ramadan) and *chanda 'aam* (basic donation), a regular subscription of 1/16th of one's annual net income. Another key source of revenue is the *Bahishti Maqbara* (celestial cemetery). Towards the end of his life, Ghulam Ahmad claimed he saw such a place in a vision, where select members of the Jama'at destined for heaven ought to be buried. He set aside a portion of his private land for this purpose in Qadian. Ahmadis who want to be buried there must bequeath at least ten percent of their estate to the Jama'at.⁴⁰ An equivalent site was established in Rabwah after Partition.

³⁶ Conversations with an Ahmadi Secretary in Qadian, summer 2013.

³⁷ H. Iqtidar, 'How long is life? Neoliberalism and Islamic piety', *Critical Inquiry*, 43 (2017), p. 797.

³⁸ For more detail on the Jama'at's *chanda* system and financial arrangements, see Zirvi, *Welcome to Ahmadiyyat*, chapter 16.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 389.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 327-28 and Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous*, p. 12.

Interwar politics: loyalism and movement building

Much ink has been spilt about the loyalty of the Ahmadiyya to the British, both by scholars and the Jama'at's detractors.⁴¹ A common argument of anti-Ahmadi groups is that a loyalist stance was maintained even when such a position was inimical to interests deemed specifically Muslim. That the Ahmadiyya did not participate in the Khilafat movement is seen as an early example of this. Ghulam Ahmad had stated that the Ottoman Caliph symbolised an illegitimate institution⁴² and Mahmud Ahmad built upon this argument, reasoning that the war between the British and the Ottomans was political, not religious.⁴³ However, many other prominent Muslim figures also rejected the Khilafat movement, not least of all Muhammad Ali Jinnah.⁴⁴ Further, as has been noted above, the stance of many of Ghulam Ahmad's contemporaries on *jihad* often amounted to an endorsement for the continuation of colonial rule. The idea, therefore, that the Jama'at was unique in its attitude towards British imperialism in India is not supported once it is contextualised.

Ahmadis themselves avowed that they were not interested in political participation and they continue to state that they support the government in whichever country they reside. The purpose of the next two sections is not to radically overhaul this premise as recent

⁴¹ Friedmann, *Prophecy continuous*, p. 34; van der Linden, *Moral languages from colonial Punjab*, p. 189. For an example of this argument by those opposed to the Jama'at, see for instance B. Ahmad, *Ahmadiyya Movement: British-Jewish connections* (Rawalpindi, 1994).

⁴² Van der Linden, *Moral languages from colonial Punjab*, p. 200.

⁴³ Friedmann, *Prophecy continuous*, p. 36. Some prominent Ahmadis were conflicted about the movement. Reflecting on the movement some 40 years later, Chaudhry Muhammad Zafarullah Khan (1893-1985), who would go on to be a principal architect of the Lahore Resolution (1940) and Pakistan's first Foreign Minister, mused 'Turkey did represent the secular strength and prestige of Islam to a large degree'. Chaudhry Muhammad Zafarullah Khan cited in Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah movement*, p. 133.

⁴⁴ A. Jalal, *The sole spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 8.

scholarship has attempted to do.⁴⁵ Instead, it is to demonstrate that viewing the Jama'at's stance towards anti-colonial politics through the lens of political quietism results in a distorted picture. Further, the rest of this chapter shows that the relationship between the colonial state and the Ahmadi leadership during the interwar period was far more fraught and contested than the loyalist narrative allows for and was significantly affected by growing opposition to the Ahmadiyya in the 1930s.

Before proceeding, the intrinsically defiant nature of millenarian movements under colonial rule needs to be noted. A famous contemporaneous example of a millenarian movement against imperial rule was led by the Mahdi of Sudan.⁴⁶ However, overt rebellion was not the only way to present a challenge. In his study of peasant resistance in Malaya, James C. Scott has built upon Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony to argue that millenarian beliefs provide a mechanism for rebellion on a private, quotidian level as they subvert the ideological underpinnings of the state.⁴⁷

Initially, the Jama'at's political engagement took the shape of representations from Mahmud Ahmad to the colonial government. For instance, in June 1928, Mahmud Ahmad presented a memorandum to the Simon Commission in which he explained his support for separate electorates. Mahmud Ahmad reasoned that while joint electorates were preferable in theory, in practice, separate electorates could not be discarded because India was 'in the grip of communal and sectarian bias'. Only separate electorates could give a voice to 'backward communities'.⁴⁸ For similar reasons, Mahmud Ahmad advocated

⁴⁵ Khan, *From Sufism to Ahmadiyya*.

⁴⁶ For more information on the Mahdi of Sudan, see for instance P.M. Holt, *The Mahdist state in the Sudan 1881-1898: A study of its origins, development and overthrow*, 2nd edn (London, 1970).

⁴⁷ J.C. Scott, *Weapons of the weak: everyday forms of peasant resistance* (New Haven, 1985), p. 331.

⁴⁸ 'Memorandum presented to The Statutory Commission on Reforms in India on behalf of the Head of the Ahmadiyya Community, June 1928', June 1928, IOR, Q/13/1/13, item 51.

proportional representation in elections to the judiciary. He argued that the fairness of the judicial system had been compromised since Indians had begun to enter into it. This was not an endorsement of the idea that British imperialism was a 'civilising mission'. He explained that should the British Empire dissolve, its 'unfair and unjust treatment of the Indians' would be to blame, not an essentialised racial difference between the British and Indians.⁴⁹ Rather, 'communal bias and prejudice' was so widespread that 'even judges are not free from its taint'.⁵⁰

Later, Mahmud Ahmad extended his questioning of the lack of Muslim representation by raising the issue of employment. In a meeting held in Simla in 1930, Mahmud Ahmad lobbied the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, about the representation of Muslims in government services. He argued that Muslims were especially poorly represented in temporary jobs, resulting in them coming to lack experience, and reasoned that this was especially odd as Muslims had experience of ruling the country. Mahmud Ahmad's prescription was the introduction of a 33% quota reserved for Muslims in all new recruitment drives, for all applications received to be issued with a receipt, and for more Muslims to be involved in the recruitment process.⁵¹

Mahmud Ahmad tried to maintain a balance between loyalism and kinship with Indian Muslims. However, as the interwar period progressed, this balancing act became increasingly ineffective. From the British perspective, Ahmadi intervention into colonial politics took a decidedly less benign turn in the 1930s as the Jama'at became involved in

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ 'Representation from the foreign secretary to the head of the Ahmadiyya community requesting that certain measures should be adopted to accelerate the employment of a large number of Muslims in the services under the Central Government', Cunningham to Gwynne, 22 September 1930, NAI, Home Department (Establishments), File No. 21/17/30.

Kashmiri politics. However, even before this, the British were becoming increasingly ambivalent about the benefits of their public alliance with the Ahmadiyya. For instance, in 1930, Mahmud Ahmad's Secretary A.R. Dard wrote to furnish the British with details of an anti-colonial agitation in Khost, Afghanistan, and offered to instruct Ahmadis in the region to find out who was funding this. However, it was decided that this would not work as 'all Qadianis are suspected and despised and stand no chance of ever being taken into confidence'.⁵² More than this, S.E. Pears, the Chief Commissioner of NWFP argued that if the Lahori party of the Ahmadiyya, which was often vocally opposed to British rule, came to know of any such investigation by the Qadian branch, this could lead to a 'renewed attack' by them against the British.⁵³ He added the Ahmadiyya's non-violent methods of engagement to his list of reservations against their potential usefulness the following year, stating 'they are not very brave in facing hostile audiences in country villages and I doubt if they would dare to come out into the open with a special uniform'.⁵⁴

This distance began to grow during protests at the oppression of Muslim subjects by Dogra rulers in Jammu and Kashmir, a Muslim majority princely state that had been ruled by Hindus since 1846. On the recommendation of Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938), Mahmud Ahmad became President of the All India Kashmir Committee (AIKC) in July 1931. This was not the first time that Mahmud Ahmad had been involved in campaigns seen as important to India's Muslims. In the 1920s, the Jama'at had taken part in countering two Arya Samaj-led movements. The first of these was the *shuddhi* movement,

⁵² 'Mr A.R. Dard, Secretary to H.H. Hazrat Khalifa-tul-Masih. Interview with Mr E.B. Howell, Foreign Secretary. Certain information furnished by --- Question of the release of Mr Ghaznavi dropped', Petrie to E.B. Howell, 8 August 1930, NAI, F&P, File No. 385-7/30.

⁵³ Ibid., S.E. Pears to E.B. Howell, 1 August 1930.

⁵⁴ 'Correspondence with AR Dard, Secretary to His Holiness the Khalifatul Masih, Qadian (Punjab). His interviews with Foreign Secretary', S.E. Pears to K. Wigram, 2 September 1931, NAI, F&P, File No. 556-F.

which began at the end of the nineteenth century and was designed to stem the conversion of lower caste Hindus to Islam and Christianity by offering ritual purification. By 1910, they had successfully reconverted more than 36,000 people from Sialkot, Gujrat, and Gurdaspur, the district in which Qadian is located.⁵⁵ This number is significant given that the campaign was not institutionalised and begun in earnest until 1923. While the Jama'at claims a prominent role in opposing *shuddhi*,⁵⁶ it is unclear from existing scholarship how influential they actually were.⁵⁷ The Jama'at's role in the *Rangeela Rasul* controversy has been more clearly delineated. Meaning 'The Colourful Prophet', this tract described Muhammad as a flamboyant lothario and was designed to offend. Though its publisher, Rajpal, had been imprisoned in order to control communal tensions, an uproar was caused when the Punjab High Court acquitted him in 1927. Whilst one scholar describes the Ahmadiyya's role as 'tangential but not insignificant'⁵⁸, Adil Hussain Khan argues it was more central than this. He states that Mahmud Ahmad was vital in both instigating protest on the ground and seeking its resolution, and while Muslim solidarity during this affair was 'short-lived', Punjabi Muslims benefited from the Jama'at's 'streamlined institutional hierarchy and organizational framework'.⁵⁹ The Second Khalifa lobbied the government for the release of the editor of the *Muslim Outlook*, who was jailed after criticising the release of Rajpal, and to pass legislation banning the publication of materials defaming the Prophet. He ordered the London mission to raise awareness in the UK, which included a petition to parliament signed by eminent public figures such as Sir

⁵⁵ Van der Linden, *Moral languages from colonial Punjab*, p. 209.

⁵⁶ See for instance M.T. Ahmad, *The national security of the Indian Muslims and the decisive role of the Ahmadiyyah Muslim Jama'at: Review of the Pakistani government's "White Paper": Qadiyaniyyat - a grave threat to Islam. Replies to some allegations: Part 5*, P. W. Ahmad (trans.), (Tilford, Surrey, 2006), pp. 20-37.

⁵⁷ Yoginder Sikand states Ahmadis were excluded from attempts by different Muslim groups to coordinate their respective battles against *shuddhi*, though of course the extent of the Jama'at's impact alone cannot be gleaned from this. Y. Sikand, *The origins and development of the Tablighi Jama'at (1920-2000)* (New Delhi, 2002), p. 46.

⁵⁸ Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah movement*, p. 136.

⁵⁹ Khan, *From Sufism to Ahmadiyya*, p. 92.

Arthur Conan Doyle. Though the Jama'at was not solely responsible for representing and defending Indian Muslims during this time, Khan argues that the positive response to Mahmud Ahmad's heavy involvement encouraged him to pursue more 'political activism'.⁶⁰

As President of the AIKC, Mahmud Ahmad steered it to prominence as the leading anti-Dogra organisation, setting the Ahmadiyya on a collision course with both the British and the Majlis-i-Ahrar (henceforth Ahrar). Dominated by Deobandi leaders such as Syed Ata Ullah Shah Bukhari (1891-1961), Mazhar Ali Azhar (1895-1974), Maulana Habib-ur-Rehman Ludhianvi (1892-d.?), and Chaudhry Afzal Haq (1891-1942), the Ahrar was a religio-political group that emerged from the remnants of the Khilafat movement to campaign for India's independence and to advocate for the socio-economic progress of Indian Muslims. As Lavan has argued, the Ahrar's involvement in Kashmir was intended to oppose the Ahmadiyya as much as it was to represent the interests of Muslims against Dogra rule.⁶¹ The Ahrar accused the Jama'at of hijacking the AIKC for its own ends, branded Ahmadis heretical, and scorned their loyalism. By 1933, Iqbal had become convinced that Mahmud Ahmad was not fit to lead the movement and the latter was forced to step down as President in May of that year. Iqbal then took over the AIKC leadership but soon resigned. He justified his resignation by questioning the commitment of Ahmadi members to the cause, stating 'unfortunately there are members in the Committee who recognise no loyalty except to the head of their particular religious sect'.⁶² In July, Iqbal

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 93.

⁶¹ Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah movement*, p. 149.

⁶² M. Iqbal, 'Statement on his resignation of the office of the President of the All-India Kashmir Committee issued on 20 June 1933.' in L.A. Sherwani (ed.), *Speeches, writings and statements of Iqbal*, (3rd edition, Lahore, 1977), p. 232.

called for the dissolution of the AIKC in favour of a new committee that would not be open to Ahmadi members.⁶³

Iqbal, lauded in Pakistan as its national poet and the first person to articulate two-nation theory, is often mentioned in discussions about the rise of anti-Ahmadiyya sentiment in British India and later in Pakistan. In particular, his 1934 essay *Qadianism and Orthodox Muslims*, in which he calls for the Ahmadiyya to be labelled non-Muslim, is regarded as key.⁶⁴ However, his relationship with the Jama'at started off as a close one. Historians generally agree that Iqbal's brother was an Ahmadi, and some suggest that Iqbal himself was once an Ahmadi until the split in 1914.⁶⁵ Regardless of his familial links with the Jama'at, Iqbal's own pronouncements suggest great admiration for the Ahmadiyya. He declared Ghulam Ahmad was 'probably the profoundest theologian among modern Indian Muhammadans' and in 1911 described the Ahmadis to be the perfect exemplars of the *sunnah* (the way of the prophet).⁶⁶ As mentioned, Iqbal himself recommended Mahmud Ahmad for the leadership of the AIKC in the first place.

It is difficult to ascertain what precipitated his volte-face just a couple of years later. Scholars such as Bob van der Linden and Naveeda Khan argue that Ghulam Ahmad's claim to prophethood undermined Iqbal's modern reconstruction of Islam; that is, that in Muhammad, prophecy had reached perfection and so Muslims had the agency to take charge of their own future rather than waiting for further divine guidance.⁶⁷ This is

⁶³ For more detail on the Ahmadiyya, Ahrar, and the AIKC, see Jalal, *Self and sovereignty*, pp. 342-70 and Khan, *From Sufism to Ahmadiyya*, chapter 4.

⁶⁴ For instance, Awan states rather indelicately that in this essay, Iqbal 'exposed the Ahmadiya ideology on the issue of the finality of the Prophethood in Islam' in S. Awan, *Political Islam in Colonial Punjab: Majlis-i-Ahrar 1929-1949* (Karachi, 2010), pp. 82-3.

⁶⁵ Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah movement*, p. 172.

⁶⁶ Muhammad Iqbal cited in Jalal, *Self and sovereignty*, p. 366.

⁶⁷ Van der Linden, *Moral languages from colonial Punjab*, p. 120; N. Khan, *Muslim becoming: aspiration and skepticism in Pakistan* (New Delhi, 2012), p. 68.

supported by some of Iqbal's writings. In 1935, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote three articles for the *Modern Review* in which, inter alia, he questioned Iqbal's hostility towards the Ahmadis. In response, Iqbal published *Islam and Ahmadism* later that year. In it, he argued that Nehru should not see 'the attitude of the man who is jealous of the boundaries of his own faith as one of intolerance'.⁶⁸ Rather, as Islam was a religion based not on race but on belief in two principles, namely *tawhid* (oneness of God) and *khatm-e-nabuwwat*, the exclusion of the Ahmadiyya was necessary for Islam's survival. As he had explained in *Qadianism and Orthodox Muslims* in 1934, 'since Islam bases itself on the religious idea alone, a basis which is wholly spiritual and consequently far more ethereal than blood relationship [sic], Muslim society is naturally much more sensitive to forces which it considers harmful to its integrity'.⁶⁹ Further, Iqbal argued, Ghulam Ahmad's claims robbed Muslims of the tools for their self-determination. It encouraged 'political servility'⁷⁰, but more importantly, tried to revive 'mediaeval mysticism', which he argued had 'absorbed the best minds of Islam leaving the affairs of the state to mere mediocrities...Islam has already passed into the broad daylight of fresh thought and experience; and no saint or "prophet" can bring it back to the fogs of mediaeval mysticism'.⁷¹ Here, Iqbal was gesturing towards the history of prophetic claims after Muhammad's death and the originality of his own ideas about *khatm-e-nabuwwat*; as Faisal Devji argues, this suggests that Iqbal's arguments can be seen as more heretical than Ghulam Ahmad's.⁷²

⁶⁸ M. Iqbal, 'Islam and Ahmadism' in Z. Khan (ed.), *Islam and Ahmadism: A reply to questions raised by Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru* (New Delhi, 1995), p.11.

⁶⁹ M. Iqbal, 'Qadianism and Orthodox Muslims' in Sherwani (ed.), *Speeches, writings and statements of Iqbal*, p. 161.

⁷⁰ Iqbal, 'Islam and Ahmadism', p. 20.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 22.

⁷² F. Devji, *Muslim Zion: Pakistan as a political idea* (London, 2013), p. 155.

Yet, it is difficult to explain Iqbal's change of heart on the grounds of intellectual thought alone. Writing for the *Hindustan Review* in 1909, Iqbal argued that:

the ethical ideal of Islam is to disenthral man from fear, and thus to give him a sense of his personality, to make him conscious of himself as a source of power. The idea of man as an individuality of infinite power determines, according to the teachings of Islam, the worth of all human action. That which intensifies the sense of individuality in man is good, that which enfeebles it is bad.⁷³

Moreover, the last stanza of his poem *Jiwaab-i-Shikwa* (Response to the Complaint), written in 1913, reads:

With reason as your shield and the sword of love in your hand,
Servant of God! the leadership of the world is at your command.
The cry "Allah-o-Akbar", destroys all except God; it is a fire.
If you are true Muslims, your destiny is to grasp what you aspire.
If you break not faith with Muhammad, we shall always be with you;
What is this miserable world? To write the world's history, pen and tablet we offer you.⁷⁴

Both excerpts demonstrate that the principles of unmediated self-direction articulated in *Islam and Ahmadism* had informed Iqbal's philosophy for many years prior to 1935. Thus, alternative reasons for Iqbal's position on the Ahmadiyya must be considered as well, some ideological and others rather more mundane. For instance, Ayesha Jalal describes a social boycott against him by figures such as Deoband scholar Maulana Syed Muhammad Anwar Kashmiri (1875-1933) after the formation of the AIKC. The latter refused to visit Iqbal's home as long as Iqbal's association with the Ahmadiyya continued.⁷⁵ Further, Jalal cites Iqbal's disappointment at being passed over in favour of prominent Ahmadi Chaudhry Muhammad Zafarullah Khan (1893-1985) for a position on

⁷³ M. Iqbal, 'Islam as a moral and political ideal' in C. Kurzman (ed.), *Modernist Islam 1840-1940: A Sourcebook* (New York, 2002), p. 307.

⁷⁴ M. Iqbal, *Shikwa and Jawab-i-Shikwa. Iqbal's dialogue with Allah*, K. Singh (trans.), (New Delhi, 1981), p. 96.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 367.

the Viceroy's Executive Council, the highest office an Indian could occupy at the time, as another consideration.⁷⁶ Later, Iqbal would speak of his irritation at the Jama'at's insularity, arguing that they could not practice intra-religious exclusion while maintaining that they should be thought of as Muslims.⁷⁷ Iqbal's feelings towards the Jama'at encapsulates how opposition towards the Ahmadiyya developed in India in the 1930s; while theology may have been significant, it was by no means the only factor in turning the tide of public opinion.

The removal of Ahmadis from the anti-Dogra agitation did not stop the issue of their involvement in the region attracting controversy. For instance, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, a young activist who would become the first post-independence leader of Kashmir, formed a close working relationship with Mahmud Ahmad, where the former as a Kashmiri legitimised Ahmadi involvement in the state in return for financial support. Indeed, it is said that Mahmud Ahmad was responsible for Sheikh Abdullah becoming the face of the anti-colonial movement in Kashmir and coining his moniker *Sher-i-Kashmir* (Lion of Kashmir). As a result, Sheikh Abdullah found himself having to continually deny rumours that he was a member of the Jama'at.⁷⁸ However, the Ahmadi issue was not so fraught that it prevented Sheikh Abdullah continuing an alliance with Mahmud Ahmad in Kashmir after the latter's resignation from the AIKC.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Jalal, *Self and sovereignty*, p. 366.

⁷⁷ M. Iqbal, 'A letter to *The Statesman*' in Sherwani (ed.), *Speeches, writings and statements of Iqbal*, p. 172.

⁷⁸ Khan, *From Sufism to Ahmadiyya*, pp. 100-02.

⁷⁹ According to intelligence reports, Mahmud Ahmad and Sheikh Abdullah cofounded an organisation, the Muslim Kashmir Association, in 1934. 'Punjab Fortnightly Reports', first half of February to first half of April 1934, IOR, L/PJ/12/750.

The mere fact of the Ahmadiyya's participation in the AIKC did little to worry the British. For instance, it was felt that the British should draw comfort from the fact that 'the Qadianis are in great disfavour with orthodox Punjabi Muslims'.⁸⁰ Instead, it was the principle of the matter: the Ahmadiyya were spearheading a movement that clearly went against British interests while continuing to profess their loyalism. While it does not appear that the British conveyed their increasing reservations to the Ahmadiyya directly, a change in policy behind the scenes is evident. For instance, the need to prevent the Jama'at from using interviews with and representations to the Government of India 'for the purpose of propaganda' was emphasised, because despite their relatively small size numerically, the ability of the Ahmadiyya to exert any influence in Kashmir was attributed to the impression the community projected of its own power.⁸¹

Trouble on home ground: from Kashmir to Punjab

After the Jama'at was removed from the leadership of the anti-Dogra campaign in Kashmir, the Ahrar brought their anti-Ahmadi activities to their home province of Punjab. Initially, this played out mainly in print. The Ahrar's anti-Ahmadi campaign gained visibility as the group allied with Muhammad Zafar Ali, editor of the newspaper *Zamindar*, who provided a broad audience for the Ahrar's invectives. British action in such situations was typically to give a warning to the editors who published inflammatory material; however, in this case, Zafar Ali was prosecuted for his publications in 1933, along with certain Ahmadis engaged in a print war with him.⁸²

⁸⁰ 'Appreciation of the situation in the Punjab rising from the Ahrar agitation in Kashmir', C.C. Garbett to M.G. Hallett, 16 March 1934, NAI, Home Poll., File No. 42/III/1934.

⁸¹ 'Kashmir disturbances. Activities of S.M. Abdulla, a Qadiani, in connection with the political situation in the State', R.E.L. Wingate to Government of Punjab, 22 July 1934, IOR, R/1/1/2531, File 91-P(S)/1934.

⁸² 'Punjab Fortnightly Reports', second half of February 1933, IOR, L/PJ/12/739.

The growing popularity of the Ahrar also appears to have contributed to British officials in Punjab treating the Ahmadiyya with an increasing degree of scepticism. The British initially had little time for the Ahrar and did not see them as a group that could legitimately claim to represent Indian Muslims. For instance, a fortnightly intelligence report for Punjab in April 1932 stated that the ‘continued failure’ of Ahrar leaders ‘to find a programme to the liking of their community is almost pathetic’.⁸³ However, in the space of two years, the British came to acknowledge the effectiveness of the Ahrar’s anti-Ahmadi campaign in the province. For instance, the Chief Secretary to the Government of Punjab, C.C. Garbett wrote ‘There is no doubt that many orthodox Muslims, who are ordinarily opposed to the Ahrars, are in sympathy with this side of their activities’.⁸⁴ As well as responding to the shift in public opinion against the Ahmadiyya, the Government of Punjab appeared to reach the conclusion that the hostility that the Jama'at faced was at least partially self-inflicted. For instance, in 1934, the Ahrar had graduated from print wars to directly challenging the Ahmadiyya in Qadian, holding a conference there in October of that year. Close to 10,000 people attended, including many people from outside Punjab, such as Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani of Deoband (1879-1957), and a resolution was passed to designate Ahmadis as outside the pale of Islam. The British outwardly justified their non-intervention by arguing that it was their policy not to interfere in religious matters.⁸⁵ However, in private, Garbett wrote that ‘the origin of the conference is indeed largely due to the action which the Ahmadis have taken in the past’, describing an incident whereby Ahmadis dismantled an Ahrar office that had been built on disputed grounds and located latrines on the site instead. He added that future Ahrar

⁸³ ‘Punjab Fortnightly Reports’, first half of April 1932, IOR, L/PJ/12/728.

⁸⁴ ‘Dispute between Ahrars and Ahmadiyyas at Qadian, Punjab’, C.C. Garbett to the Secretary to the Government of India, 1 November 1934, IOR, L/PJ/7/751.

⁸⁵ Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah movement*, pp. 164-67.

conferences should not be banned as the Ahmadis were taking part in similarly provocative activities, such as holding public meetings to prove their assertion that Guru Nanak was a Muslim.⁸⁶

This dispute with neighbouring Sikhs continued to be cited as another reason why the British were less open to warm relations with the Ahmadiyya⁸⁷ and is a less explored facet of anti-Ahmadi opposition in the 1930s. The grievances of Sikhs and non-Ahmadi Muslim groups in Punjab often overlapped, as in the case of land rights. For instance, both groups entered into protracted disputes with Ahmadis over ownership of graveyards, though the reasons for doing so were of course quite different.⁸⁸ One such example is the vandalism of the grave of Rashida Begum of Jalalpur Jattan, whose husband Fakur-ud-Din had arranged for her interment at a cemetery outside town in July 1944. A delegation of Muslims led by Maulvi Lutf Ullah, Imam of the Jama Masjid, objected to an Ahmadi being buried alongside other Muslims. The burial went ahead following the intervention of armed police. However, a month later, planks of the coffin were found removed and burnt-out rags found on top of the corpse. Upon investigation, proceedings were initiated against both parties, though it is unclear from available documents why Ahmadis were deemed complicit.⁸⁹

As will be discussed more fully in Chapter 4, the courtroom became another site for contesting the relationship of the Ahmadiyya to Islam. British Indian High Court

⁸⁶ 'Dispute between Ahrars and Ahmadiyyas at Quadian, Punjab', C.C. Garbett to the Secretary to the Government of India, 1 November 1934, IOR, L/PJ/7/751.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ 'Punjab – Governor's Reports (January-June 1938)', first half of March 1938, IOR, L/P&J/5/239; and 'Punjab – Governor's Reports (January-June 1939)', second half of March 1939, IOR, L/P&J/5/241.

⁸⁹ 'Report about the unearthing of the body of an Ahmadiya lady from the grave at Jalalpur Jattan District, Gujrat', A.A. MacDonald to Government of India, 18 December 1944, Home Department, NAI, Home Poll., File No. 100/44-Poll (I).

judgements in 1916 and 1922 affirmed the right of the community to claim to be within the pale of Islam. However, this is not to say that the British Indian judicial system always acted in the Jama'at's favour. The Ahrar leader Ata Ullah Shah Bukhari was arrested for making an anti-Ahmadi speech just outside Qadian in October 1934. A Magistrate sentenced him to six months in prison for stoking religious tension. However, on appeal in June 1935, Sessions Judge Kholsa upheld the conviction but reduced his sentence to simply the rising of the court. The rationale behind his decision was that he believed the Ahmadiyya deserved the remarks that Bukhari had made. Kholsa stated that Bukhari's offence was merely technical, 'taking account the conditions in Qadian and the extreme resentment which the millions of Mohammadans of India experienced on being called unbelievers and swines and their women being compared to bitches'. Further, Kholsa accused the Jama'at, and Mahmud Ahmad in particular, of intimidation and harassment in Qadian, and argued that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had 'abused' millions of other Muslims by claiming prophethood.⁹⁰ Justice Coldstream of the Lahore High Court agreed with an Ahmadi appeal that the language of Judge Kholsa's judgement 'must tend to raise a doubt whether the learned Judge approached the case from a perfectly fair point of view' and some of his remarks were expunged. However, many allegations were retained, such as Mahmud Ahmad's intimidation tactics preventing local authorities from initiating criminal proceedings against him.⁹¹

Their loss of favour with the British became more apparent to the Ahmadiyya as the 1930s wore on. The Ahmadiyya's Secretary for General Affairs Maulvi Farzand Ali wrote directly to the Viceroy's office in 1935 alleging that the Government of Punjab had acted

⁹⁰ 'Refusal by H.E. the Viceroy to receive Ahmadi deputation for the purpose of representing certain grievances of the Ahmadi community', extract from *The Sunrise*, 25 November 1935, NAI, Home Poll., File No. 72/36: Poll, 1936.

⁹¹ Ibid.

prejudicially against the Jama'at and had ignored its complaints for the last two years. He requested that an investigation be conducted into the judgement of the *Crown vs. Ataullah Shah Bukhari* and that five officials whom he deemed particularly hostile to the community in Gurdaspur be transferred.⁹² While the Jama'at appeared to have had a cordial relationship with James Penny, the Deputy Commissioner of Gurdaspur 1932-34,⁹³ its interactions with his successor, a Mr Shriganesh, were decidedly less warm. Farzand Ali contended that Shriganesh was consistently disrespectful in the way he addressed Mahmud Ahmad and that he colluded with the Ahrar against the Jama'at in the area, for instance in encouraging the Arya Samaj to provide the Ahrar with facilities to stage anti-Ahmadi gatherings.⁹⁴ In response to a reply iterating the independence of provincial governments in such matters, Farzand Ali intimated that Ahmadi placidity should not be taken for granted. He stated 'it seems difficult to understand what steps a class of people who are firm believers in the use of only constitutional means for the righting of their wrongs should adopt for that purpose if the supreme representative in India of His Majesty the King Emperor is pleased to express his inability to help them'.⁹⁵ Examining colonial government records archived in Islamabad, Sadia Saeed explains that the British government's perceived indifference led Mahmud Ahmad to permit the formation of the Ahmadiyya's first political organisation, the National League. One of its tasks was to 'teach courtesy to the Government and its subjects'.⁹⁶ This did not go unnoticed by British officials; a 1938 report predicted that the National League planned

⁹² Ibid., Office of the Private Secretary to the Viceroy to M.G. Hallett, 17 March 1936.

⁹³ J. Penny, *Punjab Memories 1910-45*, (1975), OUBL, p. 143.

⁹⁴ 'Refusal by H.E. the Viceroy to receive Ahmadi deputation for the purpose of representing certain grievances of the Ahmadi community', Office of the Private Secretary to the Viceroy to M.G. Hallett, 17 March 1936, NAI, Home Poll., File No. 72/36: Poll, 1936.

⁹⁵ Ibid., Farzand Ali to Private Secretary to the Viceroy, 21 March 1936.

⁹⁶ Government of Punjab, *The Ahmadiyya Sect: Notes on the Origin, Development and History of the Movement* (National Documentation Center, Islamabad, Pakistan, 1938) cited in S. Saeed, *Politics of Exclusion: Muslim Nationalism, State Formation and Legal Representations of the Ahmadiyya Community in Pakistan* (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Michigan, 2010), p. 152.

to ‘instigate the Muslims of other countries in the name of Islam and pan-Islamic principles against the British government through the preachers of the community already in the field’.⁹⁷

An explicit illustration of the breakdown in relations between the two sides came in 1941 when the Punjabi police raided the home of Mahmud Ahmad’s son, Khaleel Ahmad. The raid was conducted under the Defence of India Act (1939), legislation that effectively placed India under martial law during World War II. An advance copy of a question to be put forward to the State Legislative Assembly demonstrates the anger of the Ahmadiyya at the perceived disrespect that underpinned the action. It was alleged that the raid occurred in order to seize a pamphlet addressed to Mahmud Ahmad’s son, which was delivered minutes earlier. The questioner asked why the pamphlet was not intercepted before delivery and why the police stayed so long after the raid, implying that the decision to raid the house was intended to communicate a message to the Jama’at. They accused the police of ‘serious illegalities and irregularities’ and questioned who had given the go-ahead for such an operation, once again implicating Gurdaspur’s Deputy Commissioner. The question was disallowed.⁹⁸

Intra-Ahmadi disputes reinforced British ambivalence towards the Jama’at in this period. In August 1937, the Governor of Punjab Herbert Emerson wrote to Viceroy Linlithgow detailing the expulsion from the Ahmadiyya Jama’at of Abdur Rahman Misri, Headmaster of the Ahmadiyya High School in Qadian. Misri alleged that Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad was ‘a man of bad personal character’ and had, in Emerson’s words ‘an

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ ‘Question in the Legislative Assembly by Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi regarding raid of a house at Dalhousie occupied by the head of the Ahmadiyah movement by the police – disallowed’, 21 October 1941, NAI, Home Poll., File No. 22/32/41-Poll (9).

immoral connection with [Misri's] son'. Fakhar-ud-Din Multani, who went on to declare himself the new Amir of the Jama'at, supported Misri.⁹⁹ Emerson appears to have had some sympathy for Mahmud Ahmad's antagonists. Describing how Mahmud Ahmad prophesied that God would end the campaign of Misri and Multani, Emerson went on to say 'as has previously happened at Qadian, this prophesy soon found its fulfilment through a human instrument' as Multani was stabbed to death by a member of the Jama'at. While Ahmadiyya leaders distanced themselves from the perpetrator, and Emerson believed Misri and Multani were 'asking for trouble' by remaining in Qadian, Emerson went on to argue that the community had 'shown that the life of anyone who attacks [them] or its leader is not safe in Qadian' and at the very least, Ahmadi leaders 'must morally share his guilt'. Prosecutions were initiated against both sides, and Emerson went as far as to say that there was a 'strong case against the khalifa himself'. However, Emerson's personal views, and indeed criminal law itself, were undermined by pragmatism, as he admitted 'it would no doubt be impolitic to include him in the proceedings, and we shall not do so unless Government desire it'.¹⁰⁰

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an outline of the Ahmadiyya's early history, from its establishment by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad at the end of the nineteenth century in the multireligious and competitive atmosphere of Punjab to the beginnings of the Jama'at's institutionalisation and its first forays into politics under his son, Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad. It has been shown that neither the *khatm-e-nabuwwat* issue nor the Ahmadiyya's

⁹⁹ 'Punjab – Governor's Reports (1937)', H. W. Emerson to V.H. Linlithgow, 16 August 1937, IOR, L/P&J/5/238.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

loyalty and stance on *jihad* were especially outré, both compared to the history of Islamic thought and the actions and pronouncements of Ghulam Ahmad's contemporaries. This is not to say that theological arguments are not important to understanding the Jama'at's relationships with non-Ahmadis during this time, but rather that early controversies need to be understood as multifaceted. The changing nature of the Ahmadiyya's association with Iqbal provides an illustration of this. Furthermore, by examining government records to expand on existing discussions about the relationship between the Jama'at and the British in the interwar period, it has been argued that their relationship was far more contentious and affected by growing anti-Ahmadi opposition in the 1930s than the extant scholarship allows for. Moreover, the participation of Ahmadis in campaigns significant to Indian Muslims during this period demonstrates that rendering the Ahmadiyya insular and uninterested in the future of Indian Muslims due to their loyalism is inaccurate and simplistic. This became increasingly apparent as the independence movement, and later, the movement for Pakistan, grew in importance. It is to these developments that the next chapter will turn.

Chapter 2 - Negotiating the Radcliffe Line: Partition and its aftermath

The Partition of British India has proven an enduringly vibrant and indeed, controversial topic of historical enquiry since 1947.¹ This is not just because of its significance in its own right, but also because of the profound implications it has continued to have for the history and politics of the subcontinent. Initially, both Indian and Pakistani nationalists emphasised the ‘two-nation theory’ as the reason for the creation of Pakistan and Partition. The idea that Hindu and Muslim communities were fundamentally different from each other and that these differences could not be reconciled served as a foundational myth for Pakistani nationalism. Indian nationalists meanwhile tended to see belief in the ‘two-nation theory’ as folly, a tool that the Muslim League used to manipulate their followers for their own cynical ends. Both narratives were called into question by political changes in South Asia, with the independence of Bangladesh in 1971 and the rise of the Hindu right in India in the 1980s being especially significant in this process.

In parallel with these developments, academic historians began to question the idea that Partition was caused by Muslim separatism, such that few scholars today would argue that Partition stemmed from a kind of civilisational clash, or that it represented a realisation that ‘Hindu religious sensibilities could not coexist with Muslim sensibilities in a modern, democratic polity’.² The reappraisal of the causes of Partition initially

¹ For a more detailed overview of the historiography of partition see for instance Y. Khan, ‘Asking new questions about the Partition of the Indian subcontinent’, *History Compass*, 2 (2004), pp. 1-10 and D. Gilmartin, ‘The historiography of India’s partition: between civilisation and modernity’, *Journal of Asian Studies*, 74, 1 (2015), pp. 23-41.

² G.J. Larson, ‘Partition: The “Pulsing Heart that Grieved”’, *Journal of Asian Studies*, 73, 1 (2014), p. 5. Larson further opines that ‘Hindu and Muslim religious sensibilities are the antithesis of one another’ (p. 6), though later in this article he acknowledges the shared history and culture of religious communities in the subcontinent.

focused on the motives of Indian and British leaders in the immediate run-up to independence, with Ayesha Jalal's study of Jinnah, *The Sole Spokesman* (1985) being the most influential text in this genre.³ Regional studies of those areas that saw the most support for the Pakistan movement suggested the significance of medium-term factors that studies of the minutiae of constitutional debates did not allow for. This research has pointed to the importance of understanding local politics;⁴ the ways that colonial policies⁵ and colonialist forms of knowledge politicised and hardened religious identities;⁶ and has brought to the fore the role of Hindu nationalism in a story that had hitherto focused on Muslim separatism,⁷ particularly in the partitioning of Punjab and Bengal once the creation of Pakistan had been announced.⁸ Other scholars have reminded us of the pitfalls of viewing religion in a purely instrumentalised manner, highlighting the intellectual and ideological underpinnings of a Muslim political identity and an independent Muslim homeland in the subcontinent, and linking developments in South Asia to discussions about the future of nationalism occurring across the globe.⁹

³ A. Jalal, *The sole spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League, and the demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge, 1985). See also R.J. Moore, *Escape from Empire: the Attlee government and the Indian problem* (Oxford, 1983); S. Wolpert, *Jinnah of Pakistan* (Oxford, 1984); A. Roy, 'The high politics of India's partition', *Modern Asian Studies*, 24, 2 (1990), pp. 385–415.

⁴ D. Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam: Punjab and the making of Pakistan* (London, 1988); I. Talbot, 'The 1946 Punjab Elections', *Modern Asian Studies*, 14, 1 (1980) pp. 65–91.

⁵ F. Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims: the politics of the United Provinces' Muslims, 1860–1923* (London, 1974); D. Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation: Muslim solidarity in British India* (Princeton, 1978).

⁶ G. Pandey, *The construction of communalism in colonial North India* (2nd edn, New Delhi, 2006).

⁷ J. Chatterji, *Bengal Divided: Hindu communalism and partition 1932–47* (Cambridge, 1994); and W. Gould, *Hindu nationalism and the language of politics in late colonial India* (Cambridge, 2004).

⁸ J. Chatterji, *ibid.*; N. Nair, *Changing homelands: Hindu politics and the partition of India* (London, 2011).

⁹ F. Shaikh, *Community and consensus in Islam: Muslim representation in colonial India, 1860–1947* (Cambridge, 1989); A.R. Mufti, *Enlightenment in the colony. the Jewish question and the crisis of postcolonial culture* (Princeton, 2007); F. Devji, *Muslim Zion: Pakistan as a political idea* (London, 2013); V. Dhulipala, *Creating a new Medina: state power, Islam, and the quest for Pakistan in late colonial North India* (Cambridge, 2015).

The influence of the subaltern school and postcolonial theory contributed to a sense that the focus on the causes of Partition had created a kind of ‘blame-game’ among historians and had obscured the traumas wrought by Partition itself. Oral history was especially crucial in the endeavour to recover the individual experiences of those who had lived through Partition and to recover meanings of Partition that had been subsumed by nationalist myth-making.¹⁰ Such work also provided a methodological critique; the work of Urvashi Butalia in particular has been significant in centring the memories of women, Dalits, and children, and in reminding us of the epistemological violence enacted against marginalised communities through an overreliance by historians on official, English language sources.¹¹ However valuable this corrective has been, it nonetheless also has its shortcomings. A reluctance to ask questions about the non-elite perpetrators of violence means that such work often fails in its aim to restore agency to ordinary Indians and Pakistanis.

Recent work on Partition reflects an understanding of the need to bridge high political and people’s histories of Partition, and to see it as a process that spanned several years and straddled borders rather than a discrete event whose consequences could be quarantined in the new nation-states created after decolonisation in August 1947.¹² Of these studies, Vazira Zamindar’s *The long Partition* is especially notable in looking at both India and Pakistan.¹³ These works add to the growing literature on the implications of Partition for South Asian politics and identity up to the present day. Mushirul Hasan

¹⁰ G. Pandey, *Remembering partition: violence, nationalism and history in India* (New Delhi, 2003).

¹¹ U. Butalia, *The other side of silence: voices from the Partition of India* (New Delhi, 1998) and R. Menon, and K. Bhasin, *Borders and boundaries: women in India’s Partition* (New Delhi, 1998).

¹² S. Ansari, *Life after Partition: migration, community and strife in Sindh, 1947-62* (Oxford, 2005); J. Chatterji, *The spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947-67* (Cambridge, 2007); Y. Khan, *The great Partition: the making of India and Pakistan* (London, 2007); V.F.Y Zamindar, *The long Partition and the making of modern South Asia: refugees, boundaries, histories* (New Delhi, 2008).

¹³ Of course, that most historians have not carried out research in both countries is often down to visa and travel restrictions rather than an unwillingness to do so.

has brought attention to the need to study not just the refugees that Partition created, but also the minorities that were left behind.¹⁴ Joya Chatterji has shown that internal displacement is an important and under-researched component of this story,¹⁵ and recent studies by Kathinka Sinha-Kerkhoff and Taylor Sherman demonstrate that even those areas relatively unaffected by the migration caused by Partition were not immune to its effects.¹⁶ As will be explored further in the next chapter, Sherman's study of Muslims in early postcolonial Hyderabad in particular suggests profound consequences for the way Muslims understood their place and negotiated citizenship in India after 1947.

This thesis seeks to contribute to efforts to see Partition and its consequences as both drawn out and highly contingent. Chapters 3-6 will focus on the consequences of Partition for the Ahmadiyya in the decades after 1947 and will argue that without accounting for the reverberating effects of Partition, the history of the Jama'at in India is incomprehensible. This chapter will mainly concentrate on the first two components of Partition as defined by Pandey, that is, the creation of Pakistan and the splitting of Punjab and Bengal.¹⁷ The Ahmadiyya receive very little attention in scholarship on the end of Empire in British India. This chapter presents new empirical research on the experience of Partition for the Jama'at. Moreover, it seeks to correct the implication of this lacuna in the literature, reinforced by the characterisation of the Ahmadiyya as a politically abstentious besieged minority in the decades since, that the Jama'at was passive as events unfolded around them. Instead, it will be shown that the Ahmadi leadership actively

¹⁴ M. Hasan, *Legacy of a divided nation: India's Muslims since Independence* (London, 1997).

¹⁵ J. Chatterji, *The spoils of Partition*, Chapter 4.

¹⁶ K. Sinha-Kerkhoff, *Tyranny of Partition: Hindus in Bangladesh and Muslims in India* (New Delhi, 2006) and T.C. Sherman, *Muslim belonging in secular India: negotiating citizenship in postcolonial Hyderabad* (Cambridge, 2015).

¹⁷ G. Pandey, *Remembering partition: violence, nationalism and history in India* (New Delhi, 2003), p. 14. Chapter 3 will explore the third component in more detail, that is the division of families and local communities.

intervened to steer the direction of the Jama'at's fate as the departure of the British grew closer and forcefully advocated for the community despite rapid and unexpected changes in the socio-political landscape.

The following section will examine the muddled and overlapping alliances and enmities between the Ahmadiyya, the Ahrar, the Congress, and the Muslim League, relationships that were in flux right up to the moment of Independence. The chapter will then turn to the Jama'at's perspective on the partition of Punjab. This includes the involvement of Ahmadi leaders in Boundary Commission deliberations and a brief look at the controversy surrounding the award of Gurdaspur to India rather than Pakistan. The focus will then shift from political and cartographical wrangling to the impact of Partition on the lives of Ahmadis on the ground and how they tried to ameliorate their predicament. After detailing the immediate and practical realities of Partition for Ahmadis in Qadian, the chapter will end by considering how Ahmadis themselves remember Partition and what this has contributed to their self-understanding as citizens of a particular nation-state.

Tangled alliances: the Indian National Congress, the Muslim League, and the Majlis-i-Ahrar

Despite the Congress Party's self-professed commitment to a secular ideology in general and Nehru's probing of Iqbal's antipathy towards the Jama'at as described in Chapter 1 in particular, two points are important to note. Firstly, that the Ahmadiyya were consistently opposed to the Congress, and secondly, that the Ahrar and Congress were allies in Punjab. On the first point, the Ahmadiyya's opposition to the Congress stemmed

not just from the Jama'at's loyalist stance, but also from their belief that the Congress did not represent the best interests of Indian Muslims. One argument made by Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad to the British for the increased representation of Muslims in government was that his sources had made it clear that many government officials were encouraging Congress propaganda 'and they are nearly all of them Hindus'.¹⁸ The British, he recommended, should counter this by distributing their own propaganda that spelt out that they were willing to 'give to the Indians the greatest possible measure of responsibility' through literature 'written by experts who understand mob psychology', offering the Jama'at's own 'experienced propagandists' for the task.¹⁹ The Ahmadiyya also opposed Congress more directly. For instance, despite the reluctance of the British to associate themselves with any Ahmadiyya campaign against anti-colonial unrest in NWFP in the early 1930s as mentioned in the last chapter, the Ahmadiyya nonetheless persevered with their efforts. They attempted to influence Abdul Ghaffar Khan's lieutenants to persuade them that Khan's alliance with Congress was inimical to Muslim interests. The Ahmadiyya were also represented on the working committee of the All India Muslim Conference, which had been established to advocate for separate electorates in the wake of the Nehru Report. The main thrust of this organisation's efforts in NWFP was to oppose the Congress on communal lines.²⁰

An association with Congress had been a central plank of the Ahrar project since it was founded. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (1888-1958), scholar and prominent Congress

¹⁸ 'Copy of a letter from the Mirza of Qadian to H.E. the Governor of the Punjab forwarding a memo containing certain proposals to ease the present political situation', G. Cunningham to H.W. Emerson, 25 June 1930, NAI, Home Poll., File No. 227.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ 'Correspondence with AR Dard, Secretary to His Holiness the Khalifatul Masih, Qadian (Punjab). His interviews with Foreign Secretary', Howell's account of meeting with A.R. Dard, 20 September 1931, NAI, F&P, File No. 556-F.

leader, acted as a mentor for many former Khilafatists, particularly Habib-ur-Rehman Ludhianvi, who was one of the Ahrar's founders. It was on Azad's suggestion that Muslim nationalists disillusioned with the Congress because of the Nehru Report form a separate organisation.²¹ This created an outlet for discontent and avoided to avoid the prospect of such figures joining the Muslim League.

Azad is described by his confidant and biographer, the journalist Abdur Razzaq Malihabadi, as tolerant of inter- and intra-religious difference. In *Zikr-e-Azad*, Malihabadi uses Azad's position on the Ahmadiyya to illustrate this. He quotes Azad stating:

I look upon the Quadianis [sic] simply as a bunch of misguided people who, notwithstanding their claim to be true Muslims, have, in fact, lost their way. I only consider the fanatics among them to be guilty of apostasy. I am not prepared to label or call them non-Muslims. Do they not believe in one God, and in Mohammad as God's messenger or Prophet? Do they not have faith in the Day of Judgement or turn towards the Kaaba while praying?²²

And yet, there proved to be limits to Azad's capacity for tolerance. It was after consulting with Azad that the Ahrar decided to launch a civil disobedience movement in Kashmir, lest they lose the initiative to the Ahmadiyya.²³ As the Muslim League do not seem to have been active in the anti-Dogra agitation, Azad's advice appears unconnected to party political rivalries.

This is not to say that the alliance between the Ahrar and the Congress was straightforward. The Ahrar were often reluctant to appear supportive of Congress initiatives and defected to the Muslim League in the early 1940s, albeit briefly. However,

²¹ S. Awan, *Political Islam in colonial Punjab: Majlis-i-Ahrar 1929-1949* (Karachi, 2010), p. 11.

²² Cited in A.S. Malihabadi, 'Religious ideology and Indian nationalism' in S.S. Hameed (ed.), *India's Maulana: Abul Kalam Azad*, vol I (New Delhi, 1990), p. 203.

²³ Awan, *Political Islam in colonial Punjab*, p. 42.

the Ahrar openly professed their close ties to the Congress at many points until the eve of independence, with the Central Congress Fund even contributing Rs. 50,000 towards the Ahrar campaign against the Muslim League in Punjab in the 1945-46 elections.²⁴ As described below, the Ahrar did not eschew their ties to the Congress and pledge their support to the Pakistan idea until March 1947.²⁵

For the Ahmadiyya, their commitment to the ruling power of the day came under increasing strain as the British promise to grant India independence drew closer to coming to fruition. In a speech made by Mahmud Ahmad in August 1942 and published in the Ahmadiyya's Urdu and English periodicals, he warned that the Jama'at could not rest assured simply because they had stood aloof from politics. Reflecting the changed nature of their relationship with the British since the early 1930s, Mahmud Ahmad suggested that their loyalty to the British could not be counted upon for protection either, as 'many representatives of the British and the Government of India...have never missed a chance to stab us in the back'.²⁶ Moreover, considering their imminent departure, continuing to support the British was 'to invite one's own destruction'.²⁷ As mentioned above, supporting Congress was never seen as a credible option for Mahmud Ahmad, who regarded the future of Indian Muslims unsafe in their hands.²⁸ Indeed, Mahmud Ahmad described the Jama'at's opposition to Congress as the root of Ahrar hostility and as souring once amicable relations between the Ahmadiyya and Ahrar.²⁹ However, he reserved the bulk of his ire for Gandhi, deeming him the 'greatest enemy' of Muslims due to his opposition to the Cripps Mission in 1942. Mahmud Ahmad described the Quit India

²⁴ 'Punjab – Governor's Reports (1946)', first half of January 1946, IOR, L/P&J/5/249.

²⁵ 'Punjab – Governor's Reports (1947)', second half of March 1947, IOR, L/P&J/5/250.

²⁶ B.M. Ahmad, 'Our duty in these days of peril', *Review of Religions* (Qadian, September 1942), p. 349.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 350.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 350-51.

²⁹ B.M. Ahmad, 'Our course in the Indian crisis', *Review of Religions* (Qadian, September 1942), p. 356.

movement and Gandhi's call for immediate independence as 'impatient' in the light of Gandhi's previous commitment to wait for freedom until the terms were satisfactory to all Indians. Gandhi's reversal was explained by reference to 'the malice he bears against the Muslims [that] seems to lie so deep and strong in his heart that the moment he perceives that the Muslims are about to gain any slight benefit, an irrepressible fire of anger begins to consume him from the sole[s] of his feet to the hair upon his head.'³⁰

In a statement issued by Mahmud Ahmad approximately ten days after this speech, he had come to a decision. Whilst actively opposing the Congress was the only option that would satisfy the needs of the community, in the present circumstances, going against one's countrymen for a foreign ruler had made this untenable. Thus, as the Quit India movement continued, Ahmadis were to limit themselves to supporting the war effort and ought to speak out in support of the British only if the latter made efforts to punish Congress lawbreakers.³¹ Individual Ahmadis were permitted to go further in support of the British but were not permitted to support Congress.

The relationship between the Ahrar and the Muslim League was inconsistent and unpredictable. In 1944, the *Eastern Times* reported that Jinnah had described the Ahrar as 'a party for ever searching in political dust bins [sic] for crumbs and refuse'.³² The Ahrar soon responded by dubbing him *Kafir-i-Azam* (Great Infidel), a play on his sobriquet *Qaid-i-Azam* (Great Leader).³³ Such rancorous exchanges belie the fact that Jinnah actively solicited and secured support from the Ahrar at various points during the 1930s and 1940s. For instance, he sought their help to set up a Muslim League

³⁰ Ahmad, 'Our duty in these days of peril', p. 351.

³¹ Ahmad, 'Our course in the Indian crisis', pp. 355-360.

³² 'Punjab – Governor's Reports (1944)', first half of June 1943, IOR, L/P&J/5/247.

³³ Awan, *Political Islam in colonial Punjab*, p. 132.

parliamentary board in Punjab in preparation for the 1937 election. However, in August 1936, the Ahrar broke with the parliamentary board over a disagreement about expenses, and more importantly, over Jinnah's refusal to heed their demand to expel Ahmadis from the Muslim League.³⁴ This remained Jinnah's stance until the impending departure of the British signalled the need for a new strategy to increase support for the Muslim League. Ahraris were initially unmoved by Jinnah's more equivocal position on the Jama'at, described below. For instance, they supported the paramilitary, pro-Union group the Khaksars in a clash between Khaksars and the League in Lahore during September 1945,³⁵ and publicly denounced the Muslim League along with the Ahmadiyya, Hindu Mahasabha, and the Communists later that year.³⁶ However, by early 1947, the position of nationalist Muslims had become increasingly difficult, especially because of the complicity of the Congress in communal violence over the previous few months. In Punjab, Hindu and Sikh support for the partition of the province was the final straw for the Ahrar who pledged their support for the Muslim League in March 1947. Governor of Punjab Evan Meredith Jenkins saw this decision as understandable, commenting 'Even Muslim Congressmen are dismayed for they feel that their parent body has discarded its pretence of nationalism and they are anxiously considering where their loyalty should now be given'.³⁷

The Ahmadis publicly aligned themselves with the Muslim League in 1945, but they did not do so with ease. As mentioned above, Jinnah initially refused to become embroiled in anti-Ahmadi movements, and the Punjab branch appears not to have consulted Jinnah or

³⁴ A. Jalal, *Self and sovereignty: individual and community in South Asian Islam since 1850* (London, 2000), p. 374.

³⁵ 'Punjab – Governor's Reports (1945)', first half of September 1945, IOR, L/P&J/5/248.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, first half of November.

³⁷ 'Punjab – Governor's Reports (1947)', second half of March 1947, IOR, L/P&J/5/250.

the central Muslim League when it banned Ahmadis from its membership in the mid-1930s.³⁸ However, *realpolitik* necessitated a more ambiguous posture from Jinnah. When contacted by the Ahmadiyya to clarify the Muslim League's position on whether they were entitled to join given the policy of the Punjab branch, Jinnah and his assistants answered obliquely that the Provincial Leagues had been restructured, or that membership was on an individual rather than a group basis.³⁹ British intelligence reports from 1944 suggest that Jinnah decided to court the Ahmadiyya in a bid to bolster his support base in Punjab and that this had provoked a debate in the Muslim press over whether it was appropriate for Ahmadis to join the League.⁴⁰ Jinnah's response to this coverage was that he had not commented on the matter specifically, and had only reiterated that to become a member of the Muslim League one had to be an adult Muslim resident of British India.⁴¹ When notified during the following year that the Ahmadiyya had decided to support the Muslim League publicly, Jinnah did not respond.⁴²

Preparing for Partition

Given the Jama'at's Punjabi roots and support of the Muslim League, the Ahmadiyya unsurprisingly supported the creation of Pakistan but opposed the partition of Punjab. Mirza Bashir Ahmad, the brother of Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, laid out the Jama'at's case in the aptly titled *Mussalmānon ka mutālbah Pākistān aur us key muqābil par taqseem Punjāb ka sawāl* ('The Muslim demand for Pakistan and against it, the question of partitioning Punjab'), published in May 1947. The province's geographical features,

³⁸ S. Saeed, *Politics of exclusion: Muslim nationalism, state formation and legal representations of the Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan* (Ph.D. thesis, University of Michigan, 2010), p. 154.

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 154-55.

⁴⁰ 'Punjab – Governor's Reports (1944)', June 1944, IOR, L/P&J/5/247.

⁴¹ Saeed, *Politics of exclusion*, p. 157.

⁴² Ibid.

its inhabitants' shared culture, language, and history, and the distribution of its religious groupings meant that there was no intuitive basis for dividing it and thus no 'unprejudiced' person could support such an idea.⁴³ This echoed the language used by Jinnah in his appeals to Mountbatten to preserve the unity of Bengal and Punjab. He stated that residents of each state respectively had 'national characteristics in common: common history, common ways of life'.⁴⁴ However, Bashir Ahmad sought to emphasise the uniqueness of Punjab's case rather than comparing the two provinces that were under consideration for partition. He argued that the partition proposal was 'unnatural' as Punjab had never previously experienced a campaign for its division, unlike other parts of British India in recent history.⁴⁵ It was merely a reaction to the creation of Pakistan, and thus was the product of 'the Hindu community's selfish policy and communal mentality'.⁴⁶ Hindus either wanted to force Muslims to live under Hindu rule or, failing that, they wanted to 'eliminate the independent existence of the Sikh community' and then try to weaken Pakistan.⁴⁷ Thus rather than ally with Punjabi Hindus, Sikhs ought to ally with the region's Muslims on account of 'the similarities between their religion, culture, and civilisation'.⁴⁸

In the event that the partition of Punjab was unavoidable, Ahmad continued, then it should be carried out according to population only and the principle of division ought to be applied to individual *tehsils* (administrative districts).⁴⁹ If Muslims numbered more than either Hindus or Sikhs in any given area, then that area ought to be awarded to Pakistan.

⁴³ M.B. Ahmad, *Mussalmānon ka mutālbah Pākistān aur us ke muqābil par taqseem Punjāb ka sawāl* (Qadian, May 1947), p. 5.

⁴⁴ Cited in Pandey, *Remembering Partition*, p. 30.

⁴⁵ Ahmad, *Mussalmānon ka mutālbah Pākistān*, p. 5.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

As Hindus and Sikhs regarded themselves as distinct from each other, argued Ahmad, this fact could not be disregarded simply because of a ‘temporary political compromise’.⁵⁰ Where Muslims were in the minority but their livelihoods in adjacent Muslim majority areas depended on economic or physical features located in the minority province, that area too ought to be allocated to Pakistan; as Hindus and Sikhs would have created the situation that made a partition unavoidable, it was up to them to bear the consequences, such as the loss of Amritsar.⁵¹ Ahmad implored his readers to publicise his suggestions to the region’s Sikhs, without whom the Hindu community could not enact a partition. They had to be shown that failing to change their minds would leave them carrying ‘an empty pot and nothing else’.⁵²

Following the announcement of the Mountbatten Plan of 3 June and the establishment of the Boundary Commission on 30 June, the Ahmadiyya mostly stuck to these principles. The Jama’at recruited the Australian geographer Oskar Spate to advise both the community and the Muslim League in their representations to the Punjab Boundary Commission. The diary he kept provides a glimpse into the chaotic uncertainty that marked the final weeks of the *Raj*. Though Spate had been against the idea of Pakistan, once its creation had been announced he was convinced of the ‘essential justice’ of the Muslim League’s case.⁵³ In contrast, Spate felt that unwarranted attention was being given to the claims of the numerically small and geographically dispersed Sikh community. Instead, he argued, the partition should prioritise the outcome that would be

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 11-12.

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 12-13.

⁵² Ibid., p. 14.

⁵³ O.H.K. Spate Papers, 19 July 1947, p. 2.

most conducive to peace between the two countries. In Spate's view, the border ought to have been the Beas-Sutlej line with the inclusion of Bist Doab and Amritsar in Pakistan.⁵⁴

Spate first met Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad on 22 July 1947. He observed that the Khalifa 'looked like something out of the old testament [sic]'⁵⁵, and commented on a visit to Qadian a few days later that 'life is lived just as it was 2000 years ago'.⁵⁶ However, in the main, Spate remarked with some wonder and considerable condescension at the modern aspects of the Jama'at, stating 'whenever anyone tells me Indians (pardon: Pakistanis) can't organise I will refer them to Ahmadis. Even own a 2-seater aircraft... 199 commissioned officers in war, extraordinarily high proportion for size of community [sic]'.⁵⁷ He marvelled at Mahmud Ahmad's grip over the community and its internal discipline, comparing it to 'the Society of Jesus, the Quakers, the Communist Party, even the Salvation Army'.⁵⁸ Spate's diary also offers a perspective of the mindset of Ahmadi leaders at this time that does not come through in their contemporary published work, filtered as it was by political exigencies. Mahmud Ahmad spoke of his family's history of thorny relations with Sikhs since the eighteenth-century, and offered anecdotes that suggested to Spate that the Sikhs' 'public morality is far superior to Hindus but private pretty sordid'.⁵⁹ Spate noted that Mahmud Ahmad was 'very proud of Q[adian] as a living centre, not just plots of ground where a guru had sat' (emphasis in the original).⁶⁰

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 22 July 1947, p. 6.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 2 August 1947, p. 25.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 22 July, p. 8.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 2 August, p. 36.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 22 July, p. 6.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 22 July, p. 7.

For its representations to the Boundary Commission, the Ahmadiyya presented a memorandum and gave evidence for two days (25-26 July 1947) in Lahore. It was the only Muslim minority group to do so. Ahmadi delegates described including the district of Gurdaspur in Pakistan as logical in terms of demographic and other ‘special’ considerations. The memorandum presented to the Boundary Commission stressed the need to take account of the religious significance of Qadian to the Ahmadiyya, as it ‘ranks next to the sanctity of Mecca and Madina’.⁶¹ Appeals were made to ‘the services of the Community in Peace and War’; in the light of such services, its interests ‘should not be sacrificed to those of any other community’.⁶² However, it was argued that population should be the most important criterion for deciding the new border in Punjab. Gurdaspur had a Muslim majority population by a margin of 2.8%, and this was assuming that Christians and Scheduled Castes wanted to be grouped together with Hindus and Sikhs.⁶³ The memorandum argued that Amritsar’s inclusion in Pakistan was necessary for the new nation’s security⁶⁴ and that if administrative or economic factors were taken into account, Amritsar and Kangra ought to be awarded to Pakistan.⁶⁵ However, in underscoring the primacy of population as the basis of any award, the memorandum also seemed to acknowledge that Amritsar would be awarded to India.

On the second day of its attendance at the Boundary Commission, the Jama’at’s estimate of its adherents in Punjab was scrutinised.⁶⁶ The veracity of the 1941 census figures was disputed by all parties who accused each other of gerrymandering, though in any case,

⁶¹ Members of the Central Ahmadiyya Association Qadian, ‘Memorandum of the Ahmadiyya Community presented to the Punjab Boundary Commission’ in M.M. Sadullah (ed.), *The Partition of the Punjab 1947: a compilation of official documents*, vol. I (Lahore, 1983), p. 441.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 428.

⁶³ ‘Memorandum of the Ahmadiyya Community presented to the Punjab Boundary Commission’ p. 437.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 447.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 429.

⁶⁶ ‘Arguments of the Ahmadiyya Community, 26th July 1947’ in M.M. Sadullah (ed.), *The Partition of the Punjab 1947: a compilation of official documents*, vol. II (Lahore, 1983), pp. 245-48.

Ahmadis had not been enumerated separately from other Muslim groups at the last counting. However, as far as Qadian was concerned, it seems that the Ahmadiyya had been less than accurate when reporting its population to census takers. Spate recalled that Mirza Nasir Ahmad, Mahmud Ahmad's son and his successor in 1965, had told him that 'the community for reasons of its own had kept the pop[ulation] of Qadian scaled down as much as possible last census – actually ab[ou]t 12,000 instead of 10,000 returned. Be sure your sins...[ellipsis in original]'.⁶⁷ This misreporting was perhaps from a concern to prevent opposition generated by awareness of the Jama'at's growth.

Acting as the Muslim League's counsel, Zafarullah Khan limited himself to saying of Qadian that it was 'the most active missionary and educational organization among the Muslims with branches in all parts of the world'.⁶⁸ This was brought to the attention of the Commission's chairperson, Cyril Radcliffe, by Muhammad Munir, one of the Boundary Commission judges appointed by the Muslim League and future head of the Inquiry into the anti-Ahmadi Lahore riots in 1953. He argued that because of its worldwide missionary reach and 'its religious, educational and industrial activities Qadian is one of the most important Muslim places in the Punjab...this Tahsil, therefore, can on no account be detached from Pakistan'.⁶⁹ However, it was because of the Jama'at's Muslim identity that one of the Congress appointed judges, Teja Singh, argued that Qadian should not be given special treatment as it 'could not claim any better position than any other Muslim town could be given'.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Spate Papers, 29 July 1947, p. 14

⁶⁸ 'Arguments of the Muslim League, 30 July 1947', in Sadullah (ed.), *The Partition of the Punjab 1947*, vol. II, p. 441.

⁶⁹ 'Report by Justice Muhammad Munir, 6 August 1947' in M.M. Sadullah (ed.), *The Partition of the Punjab 1947: a compilation of official documents*, vol. III (Lahore, 1983), p. 133.

⁷⁰ 'Report by Justice Teja Singh, 4 August 1947', *Ibid.*, p. 244.

By 5 August, Spate had joined the Boundary Commission judges and Radcliffe in Simla and felt relatively optimistic about the Muslim's League's case, remarking 'we sh[ould] be all right except perhaps for Amritsar'.⁷¹ However, the change in his tone two days later as news about Radcliffe's deliberations spread is striking. On the rumour that except Lahore, the Upper Bari Doab would be awarded to India, Spate lamented:

Oh this offence is rank, it smells to heaven...[ellipsis in original] Ahmad & Dard talking wildly about Sikhs boasting they've bribed [Christopher] Beaumont [Radcliffe's Private Secretary] to give Radcliffe false figures. I hope to god all this isn't true; if it is, all it means is that for the sake of appeasing the Sikhs now they jeopardise the future of Pakistan and so the prosperity & peace of all-India for the future...Louis [Mountbatten] may be G[overnor] G[eneral] of India but not such a fool surely as to jeopardise lasting cooperation for 3 additional districts and a month's peace now...the apparent sudden change in attitude is v[ery] odd?⁷²

On 17 August it was confirmed that most of Gurdaspur District and Ferozepur and Zira tehsils had been awarded to India, despite being 'contiguous majority areas of Muslims' outlined in the terms of reference for the Boundary Commission when its establishment was announced.⁷³

The Radcliffe Award and Gurdaspur: contention and controversy

As described in the excerpt from Spate's diary above, doubts about the integrity of the process of boundary making and conspiracy theories about why certain allocations were made have circulated since before the Radcliffe Award was even announced. This was not just the result of what the first British High Commissioner to Pakistan L.B. Grafftey

⁷¹ Spate Papers, 5 August 1947, p. 45.

⁷² Ibid., 7 August 1947, p.48.

⁷³ 'Bengal Boundary (Radcliffe) Commission 1947 and Punjab Boundary (Radcliffe) Commission: Reports', 1947, IOR, V/26/261/60.

Smith described as ‘an after-glow of resentment’⁷⁴ or a consequence of the impossibility of satisfying the competing claims of numerous interested parties. Indeed, in the case of Ferozepur, direct allegations of wrongdoing were made by prominent officials involved in the Boundary Commission. Writing 40 years after Partition, Beaumont described the discrepancies between the actual Award and the shape of the border that was communicated by Mountbatten’s Private Secretary, George Abell, to Jenkins around 11 August. A map was exchanged as part of this communication, and it later fell into Pakistan’s hands, ‘hence the suspicion by Pakistan (justified) that the line had been altered by Radcliffe’.⁷⁵ Beaumont’s argument hinged on a meeting on 12 August between Radcliffe and Mountbatten’s Private Secretary Lord Ismay. After this meeting ‘the Punjab line was changed: Ferozepur going to India [sic].’⁷⁶ However, Beaumont dismissed rumours that changes had also been made in the allocation of Gurdaspur.⁷⁷ Munir’s allegations about changes to the Award were similar to Beaumont’s. He argued that alterations were made to the allocation of Ferozepur and ‘the areas that lie between the angle of the Beas and the Sutlej’⁷⁸, but that in the case of Gurdaspur ‘it was clear to both Mr Din Mohammed and myself from the very beginning of the discussions with Mr Radcliffe that Gurdaspur was going to India’.⁷⁹

Rather than direct allegations of impropriety and boundary tampering, criticism of the Gurdaspur award has tended towards a general sense of unfairness based on the lack of clarity around the rationale of the award. As Tan Tai Young and Gyanesh Kudaisya point

⁷⁴ ‘Pakistani criticism of the Radcliffe Award in the partition of the Punjab between Muslim and non-Muslim communities’, L.B. Graftey Smith to P. Liesching, 26 January 1951, TNA, FO 371/92869.

⁷⁵ ‘The truth of the partition of the Punjab in August 1947’, C. Beaumont, 1989, IOR, Mss Eur Photo Eur 358.

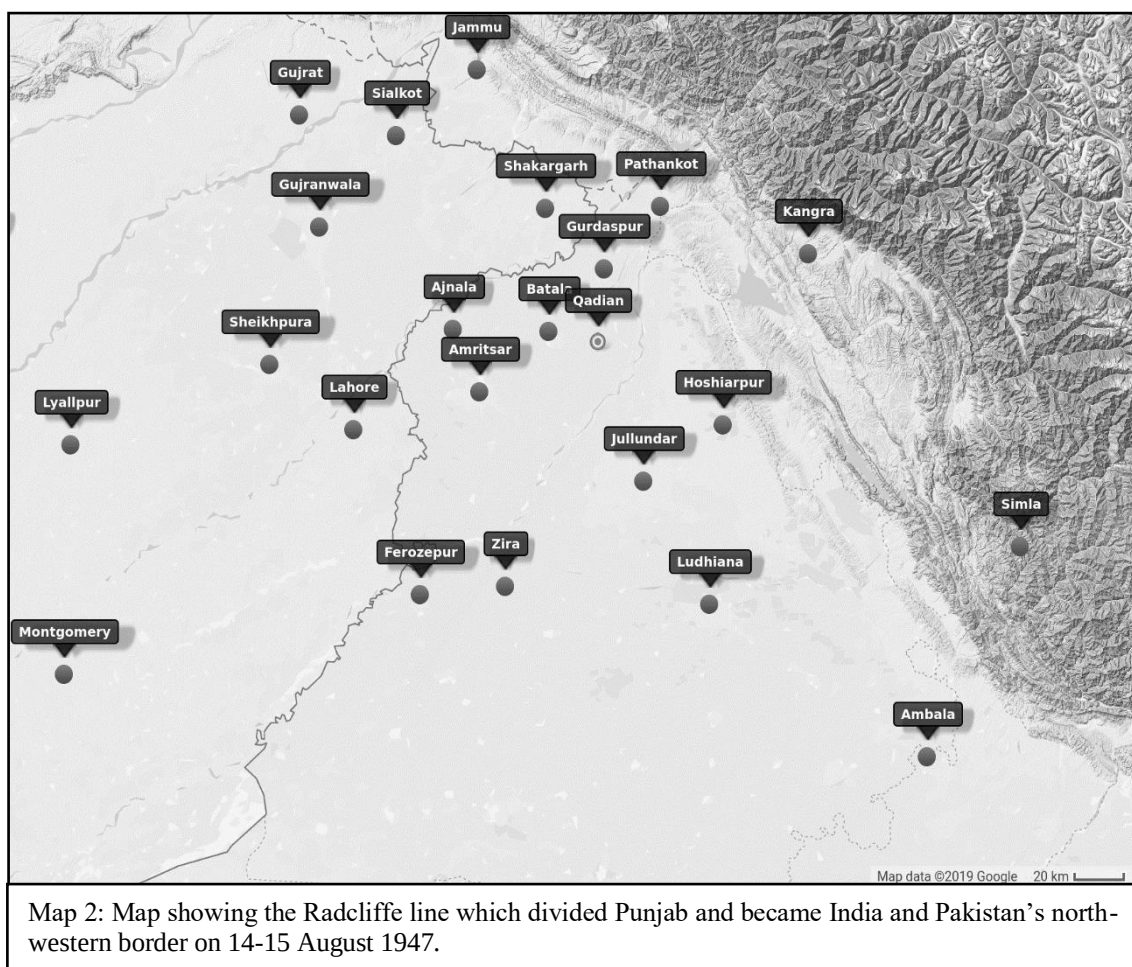
⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ M. Munir, *From Jinnah to Zia* (Lahore, 1980), p. 14.

⁷⁹ M. Munir quoted in L.P. Chester, *Borders and conflict in South Asia. The Radcliffe Boundary Commission and the Partition of Punjab* (Manchester, 2009), p. 123.

out, in some cases entire districts were awarded on the basis of their demographic majority, but in others, divisions were made at the *tehsil* level. Despite all four *tehsils* of Gurdaspur having Muslim majority populations, Batala, Gurdaspur, and Pathankot *tehsils* were awarded in their entirety to India, as was part of Shakargarh *tehsil*. Meanwhile, the entire district of Amritsar was awarded to India, despite it having only a bare majority of non-Muslims and its northern *tehsil*, Ajnala, having a Muslim majority population.⁸⁰



The inconsistent application of the factor that had been stressed as the overriding guiding principle in the creation of the border, that of demographic majority, meant that it was not

⁸⁰ T.Y. Tan and G. Kudaisya, *The aftermath of Partition in South Asia* (London, 2002), pp. 94-95.

difficult to find grounds on which to raise serious questions about the Gurdaspur award. Historians have focussed on Radcliffe's motives to try and explain it. More generous assessments of Radcliffe characterise him as a hapless, harried bureaucrat who did his best to come up with a utilitarian solution. Lucy Chester describes a secret memo in which Arthur Henderson, the Minister of State for Commonwealth Relations at the time of Partition, had recounted his meeting with Radcliffe on 19 August. Henderson's impression was that Gurdaspur was awarded to India out of a concern to maintain the irrigation system of Amritsar District as much as possible, as well as for the benefit of the Sikh community.⁸¹ Ishtiaq Ahmad also argues that it was Radcliffe's way of consolidating the Sikh community in East Punjab and criticises Radcliffe for his lack of transparency rather than his intentions.⁸²

Even those who raise questions about the Ferozepur award and see Radcliffe as complicit in partitioning Punjab in India's favour do not malign his motives but instead cast him as a figure out of his depth and worn down by the machinations of the canny politicians around him. Instead, Mountbatten is the figure most commonly at the centre of allegations of impropriety. For instance, while Beaumont felt that Mountbatten was also being pressured by Nehru and V.P. Menon, he ultimately concluded that 'Mountbatten interfered and Radcliffe allowed himself to be overborne...this episode reflects great discredit on Mountbatten and Nehru, and less on Radcliffe'.⁸³ For Munir, the delay between Radcliffe submitting his report and the announcement of the Award led to 'the irresistible conclusion' that 'the award was altered some time [sic] between the 12th and

⁸¹ Chester, *Borders and conflict in South Asia*, p. 74.

⁸² I. Ahmed, 'The 1947 Partition of Punjab: Arguments put forth before the Punjab Boundary Commission by the parties involved' in I. Talbot and G. Singh (eds.), *Religion and Partition: Bengal, Punjab and the Partition of the subcontinent* (Oxford, 1999), p. 160.

⁸³ 'The truth of the partition of the Punjab in August 1947', C. Beaumont, 1989, IOR, Mss Eur Photo Eur 358.

17th August and the alteration could only be made at the instances [sic] of Lord Mountbatten'.⁸⁴

Mountbatten also features prominently in debates over the allocation of Gurdaspur. While the rumours and suggestion that surround this are not the stuff of clandestine meetings and hastily rewritten maps, its award to India has arguably been more contentious than the Ferozepur award. The main reason for this is the issue of Kashmir. The gist of such allegations is that Congress leaders colluded with Mountbatten to pressure Radcliffe into awarding Gurdaspur to East Punjab to facilitate India's access to Kashmir. This view was expressed both in the mainstream Pakistani press⁸⁵ and by contemporary politicians. For instance, Zafarullah Khan reflected on the award by noting that 'it facilitated the Indian intervention in Kashmir, as from the plains only Gurdaspur District could give the Indians an access [sic] to Kashmir'.⁸⁶ Tan and Kudaisya argue that this is *ex post facto* reasoning as no one would have expected Kashmir to accede to India.⁸⁷ Chester also questions the idea that Gurdaspur was awarded to India for the latter's ease of access to Kashmir, pointing out that there was no all-weather road that linked Gurdaspur and Kashmir in 1947.⁸⁸ The grounding of these responses in common sense makes them convincing, and yet neither Chester nor Tan and Kudaisya deal satisfactorily with whether Mountbatten understood the situation in the same way. For instance, in a meeting with the Nawab of Bhopal on 4 August 1947, Mountbatten remarked that unlike Bhopal and Hyderabad, Kashmir's location meant it could plausibly join either India or Pakistan, 'provided part

⁸⁴ Munir, *From Jinnah to Zia*, p. 15.

⁸⁵ 'Pakistani criticism of the Radcliffe Award in the partition of the Punjab between Muslim and non-Muslim communities', Press cutting from *Dawn* titled 'Mr Patel's disclosures', 18 January 1950, TNA, FO 371/92869.

⁸⁶ A.H. Batalvi (ed.) *The forgotten years: memoirs of Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan* (Lahore, 1991), p. 158.

⁸⁷ Tan and Kudaisya, *The aftermath of Partition in South Asia*, p. 96.

⁸⁸ Chester, p. 109. See also I. Ahmad, 'The 1947 Partition of Punjab', p. 160.

of Gurdaspur were put into East Punjab by the Boundary Commission'.⁸⁹ This suggests that the logical and logistical considerations put forward by Chester and Tan and Kudaisya may not necessarily have informed Mountbatten's position on Kashmir.

Qadian – a test case?

Immediately after Partition, the general policy of both countries was to encourage individuals to remain where they were. The Pakistani Cabinet in particular was concerned that it did not have the resources to cope with anything approaching a transfer of minority populations in each nation. However, the scale of migrations across divided Punjab and the inability of the Punjab Boundary Force (PBF) to control the violence was such that both governments came to accept that they would have to change their approach in that province. By 28 August, the PBF was replaced with the joint Military Evacuation Organisation (MEO), established to assist Muslims from East Punjab and Hindus and Sikhs from West Punjab across the border. Soon after, both governments agreed that a planned transfer of populations would need to take place in Punjab.⁹⁰ In September, government ministries were established in both India and Pakistan specifically to provide aid and rehabilitation to Punjabi refugees. Even those who wanted to remain where they were could be forced out by local officials who exploited the confusing messages coming from New Delhi and Karachi about whether minorities should stay or leave.⁹¹

⁸⁹ 'Record of interview between Rear-Admiral Viscount Mountbatten of Burma and the Nawab of Bhopal and the Maharaja of Indore', 4 August 1947, Document 335 in N. Mansergh, E.W.R. Lumby, P. Moon, (eds.), *The transfer of power, 1942-47*, vol. XII (London, 1983), p. 509.

⁹⁰ Zamindar, *The long Partition*, pp. 40-42.

⁹¹ Khan, *The great Partition*, p. 159.

The experience of the Jama'at in the weeks following Partition reflects the chaos and confusion of the time. After the Award was announced, the Ahmadiyya initially decided to remain in India, with Mahmud Ahmad stating on 22 August that leaving would 'amount to lack of trust in God'.⁹² Zafarullah Khan sent a telegram to Nehru and Mountbatten on 23 August asking that they direct the PBF commander in the area to protect the Khalifa and vulnerable Ahmadis who were being besieged by 'hostile Sikhs'.⁹³ Tarlok Singh, Nehru's Private Secretary, responded that a PBF officer who had visited Qadian had found a 'well-armed private regiment' as well as 'two aeroplanes which had been used for firing from air on people in surrounding areas'.⁹⁴ Singh advised Khan to 'inform Ahmadyya [sic] leaders at Qadian [sic] that any such aggressive action will not only endanger them but also cannot be tolerated by East Punjab Government'.⁹⁵ The head of the PBF Major General T.W. Rees later reported that he had ordered that these two planes be grounded, though he also stated these had been used for 'reconnaissance and flying out Refugees', not for attacking neighbouring communities.⁹⁶

A.R. Dard, a close confidant of Mahmud Ahmad and former Imam of the Fazl Mosque (London), made many representations to the British government on his community's plight. One tract he supplied them with was a collection of statements and letters published by the Ahmadiyya in Lahore at the end of 1947. The tract's title *Qadian: A Test Case* referred to the Jama'at's argument that the fate of Qadian's Ahmadis would show how the Indian government intended to treat its minorities. In his covering letter to Phillip

⁹² 'Position of the Ahmadiyya community...', telegram from Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad enclosed in a letter from M.A. Bajwa, 28 August 1947, IOR, L/PJ/7/12415.

⁹³ 'Disturbances in the Punjab, 1947', M.Z. Khan to J. Nehru and L. Mountbatten, 23 August 1947, IOR, R/3/1/171.

⁹⁴ Ibid., T. Singh to M.Z. Khan, 25 August 1947.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ 'Report of the Punjab Boundary Force, 1 August-Midnight 1/2 September 1947', p. 22, IOR, Mss Eur D807.

Noel-Baker, the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, Dard described the status of the Jama'at in Qadian after August 1947 as 'forced exile'. This, it was argued, was because of 'the lawless sikhs [sic] with the active support of Hindu-Sikh military and police and with the connivance of the Indian Government'. The latter refused to protect the community and 'did everything possible to encourage sikh [sic] savagery and barbarity'.⁹⁷

The letters presented in the collection suggest that numerous appeals were made to luminaries in Indian politics to intervene, or at least to grant an audience with representatives of the Jama'at. Accounts of violence, looting, desecration, and bogus arrests were described, as well as the seizure of licensed arms and vehicles.⁹⁸ On 2 September, it was written, Mahmud Ahmad saw Nehru in Lahore, and he had promised to take action.⁹⁹ Nehru's later claim that the community was being protected by the military was angrily refuted by the Jama'at in Lahore, who lamented in a statement to the press 'would to God your own former history had provided you with a lesson for a fairer treatment of weak and oppressed parties!'¹⁰⁰ Vallabhbhai Patel and Gandhi were also recipients of pleas of assistance. To the latter it was written on 10 October that the Ahmadis would only contemplate leaving Qadian if the government told them they did not want them to stay there in writing:

Until, however, such a writing [sic] is given, we propose to stick to Qadian. Ahmadi blood will continue to flow in the lanes of Qadian to prove to the world that Ahmadies cannot abandon their sacred places; when those who hold the place die, there will be others to take their place until God restores our sacred town to

⁹⁷ 'Ahmadiyya Community, Qadian, Punjab (1947-49)', A.R. Dard to P. Noel-Baker, 16 February 1948, TNA, DO 142/323.

⁹⁸ Ibid., *Qadian – A test case*, passim.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 52.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 72-73.

us. Aye, Ahmadies will continue to make a present of their blood to the Indian Union.¹⁰¹

The tract described all such appeals as having gone unanswered.¹⁰² However, this did not mean that the Ahmadiyya were entirely off the radar of senior leaders. On 23 September, Vallabhbhai Patel forwarded Mountbatten an intercepted letter dated 25 August 1947 addressed to Khan Faiz Ullah Khan that alleged that Ahmadis had killed 1,300 Sikhs in Qadian and were being supplied arms from West Punjab, implicating the Sialkot D.C. who was apparently ‘an I.C.S. and a Mirzai [Ahmadi]’.¹⁰³ Though marked secret, the content of this intercept was reported in the *Hindustan Times*.¹⁰⁴

Such correspondence provided justification for British officials to ignore appeals from national heads of the Jama’at worldwide, such as in Spain, Nigeria, and Ceylon, for them to press upon the Indian Government the necessity of intervention.¹⁰⁵ The British limited themselves to informal enquires, citing lack of jurisdiction. To the then Imam of the Fazl Mosque (London) Mushtaq Ahmad Bajwa, K.A. East, Assistant Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for India wrote the ‘risk of embarrassment’ were the British to intervene would be compounded by reports in the Indian press that ‘Qadian has been the operational base of gangs of marauders wearing military uniform, led by former military officers, and using modern weapons’. East continued that ‘even though [such reports] may be quite baseless, they show that it would be impossible for His Majesty’s Government to take action on your behalf without exposing themselves to accusations of partiality in the

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 55.

¹⁰² Ibid., passim.

¹⁰³ ‘Disturbances in the Punjab, 1947’, V. Patel to L. Mountbatten, 23 September 1947, IOR, R/3/1/173.

¹⁰⁴ ‘Disturbances in the Punjab, 1947’, ‘Plan for evacuation of minorities in W. Punjab’, *Hindustan Times*, 27 August 1947, IOR, R/3/1/171.

¹⁰⁵ ‘Position of the Ahmadiyya community...’ passim., IOR, L/PJ/7/12415.

communal conflict that is taking place'.¹⁰⁶ Accusations of Ahmadis stockpiling weapons were denied in *Qadian: A Test Case*.¹⁰⁷ Bajwa also sent several letters to this effect to the Commonwealth Relations Office in October,¹⁰⁸ though in his personal utterances to Spate in July 1947 he had allegedly expressed his wish for Muslims in the region to acquire arms.¹⁰⁹ Bajwa speculated that perhaps there was a secret pact between the British and Indian Government and stated that 'Muslim blood' had no value for them,¹¹⁰ proclaiming 'if there is any day of reckoning in this world or in the hereafter then certainly your Government shall have to account for the present massacres'.¹¹¹

The newly independent Indian government also refused to intervene in Qadian despite exhortations from Ahmadis abroad. The Jama'at in Indonesia reminded the Indian government of the international context in which the Ahmadiyya was operating, stating 'we beg you with politeness but earnestly to protect Qadian if Hindustan do [sic] not wish that the whole Muslim world would become her enemy', particularly because the Jama'at included people of influence.¹¹² Pressed by Ahmadis in Iran who were alarmed by accounts in Ahmadi newspapers of atrocities being committed in Qadian, the Indian Ambassador to that country also asked for an official report of the situation. The Ambassador was forwarded a copy of a telegram sent to the Imam of the Fazl Mosque

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, K.A. East to M.A. Bajwa, 30 September 1947.

¹⁰⁷ 'Ahmadiyya Community, Qadian, Punjab (1947-49)', *Qadian – A test case*, passim., TNA, DO 142/323.

¹⁰⁸ 'Position of the Ahmadiyya community...' passim., IOR, L/PJ/7/12415.

¹⁰⁹ Spate Papers, 19 July 1947, p. 4.

¹¹⁰ 'Position of the Ahmadiyya community...' Letter from M.A. Bajwa, 16 October 1947, IOR, L/PJ/7/12415.

¹¹¹ Ibid., M.A. Bajwa to A. Henderson, 8 October 1947.

¹¹² 'Petitions by the Indian Muslim Association in Indonesia regarding the protection of their religious shrines in Qadian and other places in East Punjab', R. Joesoef Ahmadi, Anjuman Ahmadiyya Qadian, to Government of Hindustan by the intermediary of the Consul of India in Batavia, 14 November 1947, MEA, Far East Asia branch, NAI, File No. 163-FEA, 1947.

that stated unequivocally that the Indian Government was not pressurising Ahmadis to leave Qadian and which chastised the community for circulating such reports.¹¹³

By the autumn, there was a sense that the Jama'at had exhausted all their options for staying in East Punjab. On 2 October, Mountbatten received a telegram from Zafarullah Khan who implored him in his capacity as India's Governor-General to ask the East Punjab government to arrange for the safe transport of women and children out of Qadian.¹¹⁴ By the end of October, the Government of India had issued orders for the evacuation of the Jama'at from Qadian.¹¹⁵ Ahmadi women and children had been evacuated by 24 October,¹¹⁶ and save around three hundred men to care for places of religious significance, the rest of the community soon followed suit.

The Jama'at are always exact in the number of Ahmadis they claim remained in Qadian. They maintain that 313 men stayed behind and point out that this is the same number of people that participated in the Battle of Badr, a clash seen as turning point in overcoming the opposition of the Quraysh in Mecca to Muhammad.¹¹⁷ A significant aspect of how the Battle has been mythologised since it took place in 624 is that the Prophet's followers knew they were vastly outnumbered, but chose to fight because of the strength of their belief, preferring to die for their faith than surrendering. By repeating the figure of 313 men, the Ahmadiyya have been able to draw on a pre-existing shorthand signalling the nobility in suffering for the cause of True Islam, a theme that will be explored further in

¹¹³ 'Alleged attacks on Radianis [sic] in Qadian', Foreign Affairs Department, Government of India, to B.A. Bajwa, 20 October 1947, MEA and Commonwealth Relations, NAI, File No. 19 (104) 1A/48.

¹¹⁴ 'Disturbances in the Punjab, 1947', M.Z. Khan to L. Mountbatten, 2 October 1947, IOR, R/3/1/174

¹¹⁵ 'Position of the Ahmadiyya community...', Rumbold to M.A. Bajwa, 24 October 1947, IOR, L/PJ/7/12415.

¹¹⁶ 'Ahmadiyya Community, Qadian, Punjab (1947-49)', *Qadian – A test case*, p. 24, TNA, DO 142/323.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., *Qadian – A test case*, passim.

¹¹⁷ B.A. Zafar, *Markaz-e-Ahmadīyyat Qādiān* (2nd edn, Qadian, 2004), p. 221.

Chapter 6. Moreover, the community that remained is referred to as the *darweyshan* in Ahmadi literature (saints, mendicants), which acts as a further reminder of the self-sacrifice that imbued their decision to stay in Qadian in the context of continuing violence.

Reframing the struggle for Independence

The role of history in the ‘invention’ or ‘imagining’ of group identities has been much theorised, particularly in relation to nationalism and nation-building.¹¹⁸ The ways in which a group mythologises its past, in what it chooses to forget as much as what it chooses to remember, reveals much about its contemporary concerns and the socio-political conditions it has had to navigate. It is an unending effort, a ‘daily plebiscite’.¹¹⁹ Scholars such as Veena Das, Butalia and Pandey have illustrated this in their respective works on the aftermath of Partition.¹²⁰ They demonstrate the role of violence, memory and silence in the telling and retelling of the experiences of those that lived through it and the way that this shaped the reconstitution of communities after 1947. Butalia shows how the history of Partition is a living history, particularly when it is weaponised and transmogrified in post-1947 communal violence in India, as both text and subtext.

As will be explored in subsequent chapters, Partition was an ever-present spectre for the Jama’at as it tried to rebuild in the years following 1947. One way this manifested was through the linking of piety and patriotism, an act that requires reiteration, especially

¹¹⁸ See for instance B. Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London, 1983); E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds.), *The invention of tradition* (Cambridge, 1983); E. Gellner, *Nations and nationalism* (Oxford, 1983).

¹¹⁹ E. Renan, ‘What is a Nation?’ in H. Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and narration*, M. Thom (trans.), (London, 1990), p. 19.

¹²⁰ V. Das, *Critical events: an anthropological perspective on contemporary India* (New Delhi, 1995); Butalia, *The other side of silence*; Pandey, *Remembering Partition*.

when the citizenship rights of minority groups are explicitly or implicitly threatened.¹²¹ This performance can be seen in a collection of articles by Munir Ahmad Khadim, the then editor of the *al-Badr*, to mark the 50th anniversary of Independence in 1997. This collection serves almost as an apologetic in the way it addresses the two ways that Indian Ahmadi claims to national loyalty have been most frequently undermined by their most vociferous opponents. Firstly, as described in the previous chapter, that the Ahmadiyya relied on British support and thus were against independence. Secondly, as has been touched on in this section and will be explored more fully in subsequent chapters, the accusation that Indian Ahmadis are proto-Pakistanis and thus merit suspicion, particularly because of Qadian's proximity to the India-Pakistan border.

Khadim argues that the Jama'at's ambivalence towards independence in the early years of the nationalist movement can be explained by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's prediction in his final work, *Paighām-e-Sulh* ('Message of Peace'). In this, Ghulam Ahmad stated that unless Hindu-Muslim communalism was eradicated before India gained independence, Partition was inevitable.¹²² Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad heeded his father's warning, explains Khadim, and was motivated not by a sense of affinity with the British, but by a concern to maintain India's territorial integrity. Therefore, the Jama'at's vision for independence was based on Hindu-Muslim unity, non-violence, and the abolition of the caste system.¹²³ Though Mahmud Ahmad emphasised the rejection of violence, this should not be conflated with support for the Gandhian tactics of non-violent resistance and civil disobedience used in the most iconic campaigns of the nationalist movement. While Khadim refrains from including uncomplimentary descriptions of Gandhi by

¹²¹ See for instance R. Gupta, *Piety, politics, and patriotism in Kargil, India* (University of Oxford, D.Phil thesis, 2011).

¹²² M.A. Khadim, *Azādai Hind aur Jamā'at-e-Ahmadīyya* (Qadian, 1998), pp. 1-9.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 16

Mahmud Ahmad of the kind mentioned earlier in this chapter, he explains that Mahmud Ahmad was critical of non-cooperation, reasoning that such methods would do little to further the cause of independence. As a long-term strategy, Mahmud Ahmad encouraged Ahmadis to instead provide the British with an example of Islam such that they would convert. In becoming Muslims, they would see for themselves that they should not enslave another nation, thus furthering the progress of both the nation and Islam.¹²⁴

In the more immediate term, Khadim writes, Mahmud Ahmad exerted influence on British and Indian politicians alike. For instance, Mahmud Ahmad's treatise *Hindustān key maujoodah siyāsi masāel ka hal* ('Solution to India's current political problems') provided a 'beacon' to delegates of the Round Table Conferences (1930-32).¹²⁵ Further, Zafarullah Khan's contributions to the nationalist movement are framed as Ahmadi contributions, whether a link between his contributions and the Jama'at can be drawn directly or not. For instance, Zafarullah Khan's participation in the Round Table Conferences is described as the result of Mahmud Ahmad's beneficence in granting him permission to attend and providing him with the necessary guidance once there.¹²⁶ More significantly and in keeping with the effort to distance the Indian Jama'at's history from that of Pakistan described in the next chapter, Zafarullah Khan is described as the 'great freedom fighter' (*azeem mujāhid-e-azādi*), while his centrality to the Muslim League and his role in authoring the Lahore Resolution (1940) is omitted entirely.

In early 1945, Khadim writes, the Jama'at began to campaign for independence in earnest as Mahmud Ahmad had been informed by God that the war would soon be ending.

¹²⁴ Ibid., pp. 21-23.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 49.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 51.

Dreams and dream interpretation occupy an important place in Islam as a source of unmediated divine guidance potentially available to all Muslims, though usually conferred only on the most pious.¹²⁷ In a *khutbah jum'a* (Friday sermon) on 12 January 1945, Mahmud Ahmad argued that Indian independence was crucial to world peace and thus his was not a political intervention, but an ethical one. Khadim describes this *khutbah*'s influence on the British as a 'historical fact', after which 'conditions in Britain began to change to a miraculous extent, such that British officials themselves began the journey towards Indian independence'.¹²⁸ The text then concludes rather abruptly. Mahmud Ahmad's goal of Hindu-Muslim unity was gaining ground, only to be thwarted by the divisive campaigns of Jami'at 'Ulema-e-Islam and the Hindu Mahasabha, two organisations that would have had particular salience for the Ahmadiyya in 1997, the latter in the context of the rise of Hindu nationalism over the preceding decade and the former having held a conference on the finality of Prophethood in Delhi 'to counter Qadiani blasphemous activities in India'¹²⁹ just weeks before the time of Khadim's writing. The text finishes by describing Partition as a compromise reached by the Congress and the Muslim League. The effect of this compromise on the Jama'at is left unsaid.

The way that Pakistani Ahmadis publicly remember the Jama'at's role in Independence is almost the mirror opposite of this, the logical outcome of a different set of concerns. This is demonstrated in a tract written by Dost Muhammad Shahid titled *Tehreek-e-Pākistān meṃ Jamā'at-e-Ahmadīyya ka kirdār* ('The role of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at in

¹²⁷ M. Balzani, 'Dreaming, Islam and the Ahmadiyya Muslims in the UK', *History and Anthropology*, 21, 3 (2010), pp. 295-97.

¹²⁸ Khadim, *Azādai Hind aur Jamā'at-e-Ahmadīyya*, p. 82.

¹²⁹ 'Role in the Independence', *Jami'at 'Ulema-i-Hind*, <https://www.jamiatulama.in/role-in-independence> [last accessed 12 August 2019].

the Pakistan Movement', date unknown), which serves as a refutation of the main arguments marshalled against the Ahmadiyya during the 1953 Lahore disturbances. As Tahir Kamran has described, these arguments included the idea that the Jama'at was created by the British to harm Islam, and that Ahmadis in Pakistan were doing the Indian government's bidding.¹³⁰ Further, the fact that the Ahmadiyya sent a separate delegation to the Punjab Boundary Commission was deemed by Bukhari as evidence that Ahmadis saw themselves as separate from other Muslims and were not ideologically committed to Pakistan.¹³¹

Shahid argues that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had vehemently stressed the need to maintain the political separateness of Indian Muslims and had always opposed the composite nationalism of the Congress.¹³² He instructed Ahmadis not to participate in the *swadeshi* movement against the first partition of Bengal (1905-11) as it was organised by Hindus who did not want Bengali Muslims to escape from their 'political and social slavery'.¹³³ As moves were made for Indians to be granted more of a role in the nation's governance, Ghulam Ahmad enthusiastically supported the creation of the Muslim League, as for him it was 'incredible that a community that prefers animals to humans and thinks nothing of murdering a person because of cow slaughter would be just rulers'.¹³⁴ In the 1920s, it was the Jama'at that carried out much of the work that the Muslim League had been established for, citing the Ahmadiyya's role in opposing the *shuddhi* movement and in the Rangeela Rasul controversy described in Chapter 1.¹³⁵ In a sermon delivered a year

¹³⁰ T. Kamran, 'The pre-history of religious exclusionism in contemporary Pakistan: Khatam-e-Nubuwwat 1889–1953', *Modern Asian Studies*, 49, 6 (2015), pp. 1863-1865.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1863

¹³² D.M. Shahid, *Tehreek-e-Pākistān meṃ Jamā'at-e- Ahmadiyya ka kirdār* (Rabwah, N.D.), p. 7.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-21.

after the promulgation of Ordinance XX in Pakistan that criminalised the act of Ahmadis identifying as Muslim, Mirza Tahir Ahmad (1928-2003), the fourth Khalifa, also pointed to Ahmadi leadership in these campaigns, arguing that their success led Hindus in the subcontinent to pit other Muslims against them.¹³⁶ Shahid describes Mahmud Ahmad as having been devastated at Jinnah's decision to move to London, in contrast to the Ahrar who were content to leave the political leadership of Indian Muslims to Gandhi, Nehru, and the Congress.¹³⁷ Sensing trouble because of this vacuum, Mahmud Ahmad instructed A.R. Dard to persuade Jinnah to return to India.¹³⁸

The actions of the Jama'at and the fortunes of the Muslim League and the Pakistan movement were inextricably linked in Shahid's narrative. This was in contrast to the Jami'at 'Ulema-e-Islam, Jama'at-e-Islami, and the Ahrar,¹³⁹ all of whom were central actors in the anti-Ahmadi agitation of 1953. It was argued that these groups acted as the Congress' 'fifth column' against the Muslim League and Pakistan movement in the 1945-46 elections.¹⁴⁰ Indeed, in language identical to that used by the Ahrar to describe the relationship between the British and the Ahmadiyya in their anti-Ahmadi campaigns in the early 1950s,¹⁴¹ Shahid describes the Ahrar as a *khud-kashta pauda* (a 'plant') of the Congress.¹⁴² It was because of the Ahrar's dissemination of disinformation about the Ahmadiyya, designed to discredit the Muslim League by association, that the Jama'at sent a separate delegation to the Punjab Boundary Commission, lest the Congress allege

¹³⁶ M.T. Ahmad, *Ahmadiyyah Muslim Jama'at and the Muslims of India: Review of the Pakistani government's "White Paper": Qadiyaniyyat - a grave threat to Islam. Replies to some allegations: Part 6*, M. Ahmad (trans.) (Tilford, Surrey, 2007), pp. 6-9.

¹³⁷ Shahid, *Tehreek-e-Pākistān*, pp. 32-34.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 42-46.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

¹⁴¹ Kamran, 'The pre-history of religious exclusionism...', p. 1863.

¹⁴² Shahid, *Tehreek-e-Pākistān*, p. 42.

that Ahmadiis were not Muslim in order to tip the demographic balance of Gurdaspur.¹⁴³ The Jama'at had participated in the struggle for Pakistan to a greater degree than the rest of the subcontinent's Muslims; thus it was fitting, Shahid concluded, that they would continue to bear the brunt of British- and Congress-instigated vengeance after 1947.¹⁴⁴

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that much like other minority communities across India going into the last few years of the *Raj*, the fate of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at was difficult to predict. Their future was subject to the vagaries of individuals from across the political spectrum in British India and the empire's metropole, from unionists to separatists, from those who exercised power through their ability to command the loyalty of hundreds of thousands to civil servants with no prior knowledge of India who were tasked with creating new national borders. While much was outside their control, this did not mean that the Jama'at stood by passively as events unfolded around them. Far from being resigned to their powerlessness in the face of rapidly changing circumstances, Ahmadi leaders advocated actively and forcefully for their community as some form of partition became a likely prospect and throughout the turbulence of 1947.

This chapter provided insight into the early experiences of the Ahmadiyya in the newly divided subcontinent to contextualise the struggles it would come to face after the violence of Partition subsided. It is unsurprising that the Jama'at's support for the Muslim League and demand for Pakistan rendered Indian Ahmadiis vulnerable to accusations of

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 60

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 68.

disloyalty in the immediate aftermath of Partition, which will be explored further in the next chapter. That this positioning would provide Ahmadis with no defence in Pakistan given the pre-Partition politics of the groups that would most vociferously deny the right of Ahmadis to share in Pakistan's national imagining of itself as the world's first state created in the name of Islam, such as the Ahrar and the Jama'at-i-Islami, is altogether more unexpected.

Chapter 3 - Navigating belonging in postcolonial Punjab

The idea that Muslims were less entitled than other groups to claim India as their homeland is, of course, one that predates Partition. V.D. Savarkar articulated a version of this sentiment that would have enduring consequences for India's postcolonial politics. In *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?*, first published in 1923, Savarkar argued that 'Hindu' was not a religious category, but an ethnic, cultural, and racial one. Loyalty could only be guaranteed by those who saw India as both their 'fatherland' and their 'holyland'.¹ Thus Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs were bound to Hindus 'by the common blood that courses through our veins' as well as by 'the tie of the common homage we pay to our great civilization – our Hindu culture'.² This excluded Muslims and Christians because 'their holyland is far off in Arabia or Palestine...consequently, their names and their outlook smack of a foreign origin. Their love is divided'.³ Less extreme manifestations of this ideology permeated Congress politics and dissuaded many Muslims from accepting that it was truly a secular movement.⁴ As Barbara Metcalf points out, even those such as Jawaharlal Nehru who included Muslims in their visions of political and civic life in independent India described Muslims as immigrants and invaders and thus fed into an ethno-nationalist narrative.⁵

The creation of Pakistan and the trauma that was wrought by Partition added a ferocity and bitterness to debates about the nature of Indian identity, especially as anti-colonialism gave way to a nationalism that in many ways was undergirded by opposition to Pakistan.

¹ V.D. Savarkar, *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?* (New Delhi, 2003), passim.

² Ibid., p. 92.

³ Ibid., p. 113.

⁴ W. Gould, *Hindu nationalism and the language of politics in late colonial India* (Cambridge, 2004).

⁵ B. D. Metcalf, *India, Islam and everyday Jihad* (Egham, Surrey, 2004), p. 13.

The hostility displayed by Savarkar towards all religious groups that did not originate in India was narrowed down to focus on Indian Muslims. Gyanendra Pandey examines an editorial in the Kanpur Hindi daily *Vartman* of 12 October 1947 that illustrates this.⁶ Christians were accepted as belonging to India because many had converted only to escape untouchability; Anglo-Indians had been abandoned by the British and thus they had to remain faithful to India; and Parsis had settled in India to escape religious persecution and had contributed economically to the nation. In any case, *Vartman* argued, these communities were too small to pose a significant threat to the nation. Muslims, on the other hand, were portrayed as aggressive invaders. Even converts were written off as they had ‘cut themselves off from Indian civilization and culture’.⁷ The Muslims that remained in India after the ultimate betrayal of the creation of Pakistan only did so because they could not leave and thus they could not be trusted, reasoning that clearly contradicted an argument in favour of placing trust in Anglo-Indians.

Indian Muslims were constantly called upon to make their loyalty to the nation explicit. Hypothetical wars were a frequent conduit for this demand. In October 1947, the Chief Minister of UP Govind Ballabh Pant stated that ‘Every Muslim in India would be required to shed his blood fighting the Pakistani hordes, and each one should search his heart now, and decide whether he should migrate to Pakistan or not’.⁸ Pandey shows that Muslim leaders such as the Raja of Mahmudabad felt obliged to make public pronouncements to this effect, with the frequent references to a willingness to shed blood becoming ‘a password to citizenship’.⁹ As tensions lowered, so too did the volume of demands on

⁶ G. Pandey, ‘Can a Muslim be an Indian?’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 41, 4 (1999), pp. 621-25.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 623.

⁸ Cited in Pandey, ‘Can a Muslim be an Indian?’, p. 617.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 617-18.

Indian Muslims to make corporal offerings in support of their claims to belonging. However, a sense of insecurity bred by conditional acceptance permeated public life and expressed itself in more insidious ways. As will be explored in Chapter 5, political organisation around an Indian Muslim identity was severely circumscribed in India's early postcolonial history, particularly for those that had first-hand experience of violence during 1947-48. Seeking redress of the discrimination they faced because they were Muslim was thus often indirect, for instance, via constitutional protections for minority groups and cultures. For the same reason, instead of organising politically around the issue of their discrimination, in the main Indian Muslims allied with Congress, or, from the late 1960s, with left-wing or regional parties.¹⁰

Indian Muslims shared a common history as targets of suspicion and discrimination after 1947. However, the ways that the diverse range of people that the general term 'Indian Muslim' encompasses felt these pressures and demands differently depending on regional, socioeconomic, sectarian, or gender-based intersections is relatively understudied. This chapter seeks to contribute to existing efforts to add specificity to an otherwise general picture.¹¹ It examines the experiences of Qadian's Ahmadis in the early postcolonial period in this context of violence and insecurity, and their framing of these experiences via their newspaper *al-Badr*. The terror felt by the Ahmadis left in East Punjab after Partition was not just a result of physical violence and state surveillance but at the prospect of being forcibly separated from their spiritual centre. This, after all, was

¹⁰ M. Hasan, *Legacy of a divided nation: India's Muslims since Independence* (London, 1997), p. 272.

¹¹ Important works adding specificity to an otherwise general historiographical landscape on the experiences of Indian Muslims after 1947 include S. Mayaram, *Resisting regimes: myth, memory and the shaping of Muslim identity* (Delhi, 1997); K. Sinha-Kerkhoff, *Tyranny of Partition: Hindus in Bangladesh and Muslims in India* (New Delhi, 2006); J. Chatterji, *The spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947-67* (Cambridge, 2007); R. Gupta, *Piety, politics, and patriotism in Kargil, India* (D.Phil thesis, University of Oxford, 2011); D.E. Singh, *Islamization in modern South Asia: Deobandi reform and the Gujjar response* (Berlin 2012); T.C. Sherman, *Muslim belonging in secular India: negotiating citizenship in postcolonial Hyderabad* (Cambridge, 2015).

their reason for not joining the majority of their Punjabi coreligionists in Pakistan. The chapter will begin by exploring what happened between the time the last *qafilah* (caravan) left Qadian for Lahore in November 1947 and the introduction of passports in October 1952. In particular, the relationship between the Jama'at and the East Punjab state government will be considered as the 313 men who remained in Qadian began to rebuild their lives. Following this, the way the Jama'at sought to remake an Indian Ahmadi identity in the context of its prior opposition to the tactics of the anti-colonial movement, and in responding to implicit and explicit charges of disloyalty because of its perceived prior closeness with the British and the Khalifa's residence in Pakistan, will be explored. Finally, the history of Qadian's Ahmadis during wars in 1962, 1965, and 1971 will be considered. The fact that they were an isolated Muslim community in East Punjab, at the margins both of Indian Islam and of the nation, is integral to understanding their experiences during the Second and Third Indo-Pakistan Wars. Despite the fact that Qadian's Ahmadis fulfil Savarkar's criteria for loyalty in seeing India as both their 'fatherland' and their 'holyland', Partition informed the invisibility of their sectarian identity to state officials and their non-Muslim opponents during conflict with Pakistan. In response to this invisibility, Ahmadis sought to make what sets them apart from other Muslims hypervisible.

Before turning to the Ahmadis left in East Punjab just after Partition, it is necessary to outline what kind of exploration of citizenship is offered in the following discussion. This chapter is influenced by the perspective offered by Taylor Sherman's study of Muslims in postcolonial Hyderabad following the princely state's annexation by India in 1948. Sherman examines how Muslims negotiated citizenship in the aftermath of the 'police action' and advances an understanding of it as 'a quest for belonging', preferring the term

‘belonging’ to ‘identity’ in order to ‘shift the focus onto affective practices and onto the performative aspects of identity to signify the ways in which humans understand themselves, their politics, and their own desires as these are produced in particular historical contexts’.¹² The experience of violence meant that belonging for Muslims in Hyderabad ‘tended to be coloured by expressions of anxiety’ and led to ‘more submissive forms of citizenship’.¹³ Thus, while this chapter touches on the three aspects of Indian citizenship identified by Niraja Gopal Jayal’s comprehensive study on this subject, namely as a legal status, as rights and entitlements, and as a form of identity and belonging, it focuses primarily on the third of these concepts.¹⁴

Under suspicion in post-Partition Punjab

Although the number of Ahmadis remaining by the time the last Lahore-bound *qafilah* left Qadian on 16 November was small, it is remarkable that any stayed in East Punjab given the disorder and uncertainty described at the end of Chapter 2. By some estimates, the number of people evacuated in Punjab had exceeded 8 million by November 1947.¹⁵ Whereas pre-Partition Punjab had a Muslim majority of 53.2% according to the 1941 census, by 1951 the Muslim population in East Punjab was below 1%.¹⁶ The experience of being viewed as potentially traitorous was one that was common for North Indian Muslims in both the immediate aftermath of Partition and beyond. However, this lone

¹² Sherman, *Muslim belonging in secular India*, p. 8

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁴ N.G. Jayal, *Citizenship and its discontents: an Indian history* (Cambridge, Mass., 2013), p. 13. For detailed explorations of the theory and practice of Indian citizenship during this period, see for instance *Ibid.*; A. Roy, *Mapping citizenship in India* (New Delhi, 2010); O. Shani, ‘Conceptions of citizenship in India and the “Muslim Question”’, *Modern Asian Studies*, 44, 1 (2010), pp. 145-173; J. Chatterji, ‘South Asian histories of citizenship, 1946-1970’, *The Historical Journal*, 55, 4 (2012), pp. 1049-1071.

¹⁵ Y. Khan, *The great Partition: the making of India and Pakistan* (London, 2007), p. xxii.

¹⁶ A. Bigelow, ‘Post-Partition pluralism: placing Islam in Indian Punjab’ in F. Mir and A. Malhotra (eds.), *Punjab reconsidered: history, culture and practice* (New Delhi, 2012), p. 411.

concentrated Muslim community in East Punjab just 50 miles away from the Western border with Pakistan meant that Ahmadis in Qadian were put under especially intense scrutiny by local state officials.

The East Punjab Government expressed alarm at communications between Qadian and Pakistan during the winter of 1947-48. It claimed that it had been 'conclusively established' that Ahmadis had been sending cypher messages to Lahore by telephone, and it was also suspected that Qadian's Ahmadis were contacting Lahore via a wireless transmitter.¹⁷ M.R. Sachdev, Chief Secretary to the East Punjab Government, reported that 'these activities lent support to the apprehensions expressed by non-Muslims that the Muslims left in East Punjab were not only disloyal; but constituted a menace to the security of the country'.¹⁸ In a letter written to the Secretary of Relief and Rehabilitation, Sachdev acknowledged that the Ahmadiyya had suffered casualties in the aftermath of Partition. However, he went on, the military always acted to stop violence, even if this meant inflicting casualties on non-Muslim attackers. Sachdev accused Ahmadis of engaging in worse behaviour and of looting and killing 'on a fairly large scale'. In his view, the nefarious intent of the Ahmadiyya was demonstrated by the large store of arms that they had collected, which was discovered in raids by local police in Qadian, including at the compound of Mahmud Ahmad's former residence.¹⁹ In May 1947, British intelligence had noted that 'members of all communities are very active in applying for licenses and collecting arms from wherever they can get them' and likened Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim volunteer organisations to 'private communal armies'.²⁰ However, this

¹⁷ 'Fortnightly Reports on the Political Situation in East Punjab for 1947', Report for the second half of December 1947, Ministry of States, Political Branch, NAI, File No. 10(16)-PR/47.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ N. Singh to V. Shankar, 23 Feb 1948, NAI, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Papers.

²⁰ Cited in T.C. Sherman, *State violence and punishment in India* (Abingdon, 2010), p. 140.

context did not matter to Sachdev, who concluded that the discovery of weapons ‘clearly showed their intention to attack non-muslims and to paralyse and upset, the Government established by law in this part of the Province’.²¹ His remarks were echoed by his colleagues. The Superintendent of Police in Gurdaspur reacted to the recovery of weapons by remarking ‘it is obvious how these Ahmedie [sic] were preparing themselves to kill their poor neighbouring cultivators by these modernised fire-arms and weapons and still they boast to be peace loving people’.²² In forwarding the Superintendent’s reports about the raids to V. Shankar, Private Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister Vallabhbhai Patel, Nawab Singh of the East Punjab Civil Secretariat also mocked the Ahmadiyya’s self-proclaimed commitment to non-violence, stating ‘the reports tend to illustrate how peacefully the Ahmedies were residing in Qadian before their departure!’²³ Again, these discoveries were not seen as ordinary during an extraordinary time but were framed as something altogether more sinister. Writing in April 1948, Sachdev concluded that ‘despite their profession of verbal loyalty to the Government of the Indian Union, Qadianis have not yet given up their subversive and seditious activities’.²⁴

The Pakistani Jama’at tried to draw the attention of the Indian central government to the plight of the Ahmadiyya in Qadian. However, their methods for doing so were ineffective at best and counterproductive at worst. Mahmud Ahmad wrote a pamphlet in 1948 entitled *Mazālim-i-Qadiān ka khūni roznāmchah* (Diary of violent atrocities in Qadian) which was banned by the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs and considered ‘highly

²¹ ‘Alleged attacks on Radianis [sic] in Qadian’, M.R. Sachdev to Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation, 19 April 1948, MEA and Commonwealth Relations, NAI, File No. 19 (104) 1A/48.

²² First report from Superintendent of Police (Gurdaspur), enclosed in letter from N. Singh to V. Shankar, 23 February 1948, NAI, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Papers.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ ‘Alleged attacks on Radianis [sic] in Qadian’, M.R. Sachdev to Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation, 19 April 1948, MEA and Commonwealth Relations, NAI, File No. 19 (104) 1A/48.

objectionable'.²⁵ Other luminaries of the Pakistani Jama'at also intervened personally. For instance, Zafarullah Khan alleged to the United Nations Security Council that his house in Qadian had been destroyed, though correspondence between the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the Government of East Punjab suggests that the latter were able to provide certified photographs to demonstrate that this was not the case.²⁶

Ahmadi leaders outside South Asia were better positioned to criticise the East Punjab Government for ignoring or even exacerbating issues of safety and subsistence for Qadian's Ahmadis. On behalf of the Jama'at in Chicago, Khalil Ahmed Nasir spoke of the hardship of the *darweyshan* who were living without their families and without local means to support themselves. This meant it was essential that money orders from Lahore totalling almost Rs. 10,000 that had been stopped by the East Punjab Government be released to the Ahmadiyya. Shortages were made worse, he argued, by officials in Qadian refusing to allow the Jama'at to stockpile wheat.²⁷ Later reflections in *Badr* add to this picture, with descriptions of a social boycott in the two years following Partition designed to drive remaining Ahmadis out of East Punjab by depriving them of food and other basic necessities.²⁸ Ahmad Nasir described this as a 'state of semi-siege', especially because Ahmadis in Qadian were also psychologically isolated.²⁹ The banning of the Pakistani Ahmadi newspaper *al-Fazl* in East Punjab meant that they were cut off from instruction

²⁵ 'Circular Memorandum from the Ministry of Home Affairs requesting to withheld [sic] in the course of transmission in the post copies of an urdur [sic] pamphlet entitled "Mazalim-i-Qadian ka khuni roznamcha"', Ministry of States, General Branch, NAI, File No. 101 (2)-G/48.

²⁶ 'Alleged attacks on Radianis [sic] in Qadian', Bajpai, Under Secretary to Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations to Chief Secretary to the Government of East Punjab, 8 July 1948, MEA and Commonwealth Relations, NAI, File No. 19 (104) 1A/48.

²⁷ 'Ahmadiya community – Request for the grant of certain facilities for their journey to Qadian and return of their property at Qadian', S.V. Sampath to Chief Secretary to the Government of East Punjab, 28 October 1949, Home Poll., NAI, File No. 57/54/49-Poll.

²⁸ *al-Badr* (Qadian), 28 May 1953, p. 6.

²⁹ 'Ahmadiya community – Request...', S.V. Sampath to Chief Secretary to the Government of East Punjab, 28 October 1949, Home Poll., NAI, File No. 57/54/49-Poll.

from Mahmud Ahmad, 'one of the greatest tortures inflicted on an Ahmadi'.³⁰ Ahmad Nasir admitted that the paper was not strictly apolitical but appealed to the Indian Government on the terms on which it had begun to define itself against Pakistan: 'no democratic Government, claiming to give freedom of opinion and press would deprive its citizens from receiving spiritual inspiration on this account'.³¹ As long as they were forced to exist in such punishing conditions, he concluded, 'there cannot be any other consequence but an evacuation of all Ahmadies ultimately from their sacred centre'.³² The central government denied all of Ahmad Nasir's allegations. The money orders, it was said, had been disrupted during the Partition disturbances, and would be reissued. A system of controlled distribution of foodstuffs was in place for everyone in the region, so Ahmadis were not being singled out for punitive treatment. Finally, flattering the government's democratic aspirations was not enough to provoke a relaxation of the ban on *al-Fazl*. If the paper's 'anti-Indian policy and propaganda' ceased, it was argued, so too would the ban.³³

After the acute violence of Partition had been brought under control, the Indian government turned its attention to preventing the relative peace from facilitating the return of Muslims who had fled to Pakistan for their lives to their homes and families in India. As Vazira Zamindar shows, controls over freedom of movement were by no means inevitable, and the British had left the question of nationality laws to the newly independent governments to decide.³⁴ However, on 14 July 1948, the Indian government unilaterally announced the introduction of a permit system, followed by the Influx from

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., S.V. Sampath to First Secretary, Embassy of India in the USA, Washington DC, 2 February 1950.

³⁴ V.F.Y Zamindar, *The long Partition and the making of modern South Asia: refugees, boundaries, histories* (New Delhi, 2008), p. 82.

Pakistan (Control) Ordinance, which made entering India without a permit a criminal offence. It was put into effect just five days later,³⁵ giving those who intended to return, or those who had merely gone to visit family, little chance to act. For many, this signalled the ‘real’ Partition.³⁶ Anti-Muslim sentiment and the image of the deserving *sharnarhi* (non-Muslim West Punjabi refugee) was used to paint this decision as justifiable for the rehabilitation of Hindus and Sikhs, in much the same way as the planned transfer of Muslims from East Punjab had been.³⁷

The introduction of permits makes it unsurprising that the Jama’at continued to find its movements scrutinised. Notions of how much fairness it was reasonable for Qadian’s Ahmadis to expect given their Muslim identity underlay their interactions with local government during this time. Answering Ahmadi criticism that their comings and goings in Qadian were still restricted two years after Partition, the East Punjab Government informed the centre that Ahmadis who wanted to leave Qadian were assisted up to Ambala as long as complete information about their onward travel plans were given to local police. According to Chief Minister Bhim Sen Sachar, this condition was imposed ‘in order to keep a reasonable watch over their movements as some members of the community have lately been accused of indulging in pro-Pakistan propaganda and other anti Indian activities’.³⁸ This was deemed especially important due to Qadian’s border

³⁵ Ibid., p. 82 n. 4.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 82.

³⁷ For more on how the state perpetuated stereotypes of Punjabi self-reliance in its refugee rehabilitation efforts, see I. Talbot, ‘Punjabi refugees’ rehabilitation and the Indian state: discourses, denials and dissonances’ in T.C. Sherman, W. Gould, and S. Ansari (eds.), *From subjects to citizens: society and the everyday state in India and Pakistan, 1947-1970* (Cambridge, 2014). For an examination of just how differently refugee rehabilitation was viewed and implemented in Bengal, see J. Chatterji, ‘Right or Charity? The debate over relief and rehabilitation in West Bengal, 1947-50’ in S. Kaul (ed.), *The partitions of memory. The afterlife of the division of India* (Delhi 2001), pp. 74-110.

³⁸ B.S. Sachar to V. Shankar, 26 July 1949, NAI, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Papers.

location.³⁹ Indeed, in East Punjab intelligence reports to the central government, it was reported that local Hindus and Sikhs were critical of the Government's decision to allow entry to a large number of Ahmadis from Pakistan for the Ahmadiyya's annual gathering, the *Jalsa Salana*, in December 1948: 'They thought that the Pakistan Muslims would carry back information collected by the Indian Ahmedis for them and that this visit of theirs would also facilitate transfer of cash and jewellery to Pakistan'.⁴⁰

There is evidence to suggest that the central government was not indifferent to such concerns. In answering complaints from the head of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at in Bombay about the lack of facilities afforded to the community in Qadian, it was said that Pakistani Ahmadis were allowed to come to the *Jalsa Salana* every year 'despite the fact that Qadian falls in the District of Gurdaspur, which is closed to all Pakistani officials and nationals'.⁴¹ Furthermore, it was stated that despite assurances that the 313 men that stayed in Qadian after 1947 would remain in India permanently, it was obvious that Indian Ahmadis were travelling to Pakistan regularly, and were being temporarily substituted by Pakistani Ahmadis while they did so.⁴² It was made clear that this state of affairs could not continue, especially as Pakistan denied Hindus and Sikhs the opportunity to visit their holy sites: 'such facilities can be granted only on a reciprocal basis'.⁴³ As explored later in this chapter, while such visits to Qadian from Pakistan for the *Jalsa Salana* did in fact continue, they were stopped in times of crisis.

³⁹ 'Ahmadiya community – Request...', B.R. Tandon to Assistant Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, 27 October 1949, Home Poll., NAI, File No. 57/54/49-Poll.

⁴⁰ Fortnightly reports from the Chief Secretary to the Government of East Punjab, second half of December 1948, Ministry of States, Political (A), NAI, File No. 9(45)-P/49.

⁴¹ 'Ahmadiya community – Request...', M.L. Mehta to Head of the Ahmadiyya Community, Bombay, 15 May 1950, Home Poll., NAI, File No. 57/54/49-Poll.

⁴² Lists of Ahmadis in Qadian visiting Pakistan were printed periodically in *Badr* in the early 1950s, perhaps in response to accusations of this kind. See for instance *al-Badr*, 28 August 1953, p. 4.

⁴³ 'Ahmadiya community – Request...', M.L. Mehta to Head of the Ahmadiyya Community, Bombay, 15 May 1950, Home Poll., NAI, File No. 57/54/49-Poll.

Rebuilding Qadian

According to a *Times of India* profile of Qadian published in 1953, ‘...not a single Ahmediya [sic] suffered any persecution, and not a house in Qadian was damaged’ during Partition.⁴⁴ However, in Ahmadi publications looking back at this time, Qadian is described as having been destroyed by Partition. One account describes Qadian looking as if it had been transported back to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad’s grandfather’s time. Buildings had been destroyed to such an extent that even their bricks had been taken. The author of this account lamented that it had not been restored to its pre-1947 splendour at the time of his writing some 40 years later.⁴⁵

During the Jama’at’s representations to the Punjab Boundary Commission, it was argued that population should be the only criterion when making awards.⁴⁶ As discussed in the previous chapter, the Ahmadiyya did describe the religious significance of Qadian to the Jama’at, but this was in response to lobbying from Sikh representatives for ‘special considerations’, namely for areas of religious and cultural significance, to be taken into account.⁴⁷ However, Gurdaspur falling on the Indian side of the border after Partition necessitated a change in strategy for the Jama’at in how it advocated for its interests. As Qadian was the spiritual centre of the movement, Ahmadis argued, the Jama’at deserved greater rights than other numerically dominant communities. This is why refugees

⁴⁴ *TOI* (Bombay), 5 April 1953, p. 7.

⁴⁵ B.A. Zafar, *Markaz-e-Ahmadiyyat Qādiān* (2nd edn, Qadian, 2004), pp. 221-22.

⁴⁶ Members of the Central Ahmadiyya Association Qadian, ‘Memorandum of the Ahmadiyya Community presented to the Punjab Boundary Commission’ in M.M. Sadullah (ed.), *The Partition of the Punjab 1947: A Compilation of Official Documents*, vol. I (Lahore, 1983), p. 429.

⁴⁷ I. Ahmed, ‘The 1947 Partition of Punjab: Arguments put forth before the Punjab Boundary Commission by the parties involved’ in I. Talbot and G. Singh (eds.), *Religion and Partition: Bengal, Punjab and the Partition of the subcontinent* (Oxford, 1999), p. 157.

renaming parts of Qadian was particularly irksome and was expressed in terms of a violation of religious rights.⁴⁸ However, restoring the Jama'at's pre-Partition near-total dominance in Qadian on this basis was not possible. The significance of Qadian to the Ahmadiyya was subsumed by the repercussions of India and Pakistan's decision to transfer minoritised populations in Punjab. The Jama'at was not able to avoid the consequences of a refugee rehabilitation programme that was based on exacting the costs from Muslims simply by virtue of remaining in India. This is exemplified by the category of the 'intending evacuee', a designation that could be applied to Indian Muslims and lead to their dispossession whether they had been to Pakistan or not, until it was removed from evacuee property laws in 1953.⁴⁹

Ahmadis from all over India appealed for houses and other property holdings including educational institutions, a library, and a hospital that had been reallocated to Hindu and Sikh refugees from Pakistan to be restored to the Jama'at. The head of the Jama'at in Bombay reminded the Home Minister that it was government policy to return property to Muslims that did not migrate.⁵⁰ The President of the Jama'at in Bhagalpur City, Bihar, was more direct in his criticism, stating Ahmadis who were Indian nationals 'are faced with problems and difficulties of a special nature which, we regret, have not been appreciated by the authorities of the Indian Union as they should have been'.⁵¹ The government stuck to the same line in all its replies to such queries. It was argued that nothing needed to be done about the issue as the Ahmadiyya already occupied all

⁴⁸ 'Ahmadiya community – Request...', S.V. Sampath to Chief Secretary to the Government of the Punjab, 22 February 1950, Home Poll., NAI, File No. 57/54/49-Poll.

⁴⁹ Zamindar, *The long Partition*, p. 131.

⁵⁰ 'Ahmadiya community – Request...', Z. Islam, Head of Ahmadiyya Community in Bombay, to Home Minister [n.d.], Home Poll., NAI, File No. 57/54/49-Poll.

⁵¹ Ibid., Copy of Resolution of Ahmadiyya Bhagalpur City (President Maulvi Akhtar Ali Saheb) to Home Minister of India, 15 May 1949.

mosques, graveyards, and other places they held in esteem.⁵² In terms of personal property, Ahmadis were in possession of a number of houses ‘far in excess of the number of Qadianis resident in the town’.⁵³ If more property were to be given to them, it would be at the expense of displaced persons from West Punjab. This the East Punjab Government would not countenance. This stance was partly justified by the argument that it could not be proved that certain Ahmadis had not left for Pakistan and then later ‘infiltrated’ the country, thus ‘it would not be just and equitable to permit them to re-occupy their houses at Qadian’.⁵⁴ More telling was the refusal to restore property to Ahmadis who moved to other parts of India during Partition and later sought to return to their homes in Qadian.⁵⁵ Quite apart from doubts about the migration status of individual Ahmadis was a more frank statement of a hierarchy of citizenship rights. It is difficult to envisage a situation where Hindu or Sikh residents of East Punjab who had not moved during Partition would be denied their rights to private property in this manner, and much less have been required to be grateful with their diminished lot. This attitude is encapsulated by Under Secretary to the Government of India Shri Madan Lal Mehta’s response to the Head of the Bombay Jama’at in May 1950: ‘In contrast to the *generous* [emphasis added] facilities enjoyed by Ahmедыas [sic] the barest of needs of persons displaced from West Pakistan and now living at Qadian have been met’.⁵⁶

Nevertheless, East Punjab intelligence reports from early 1952 show that Ahmadis were still engaged in disputes over their property in Qadian. The Jama’at’s case was being

⁵² Khalil Ahmed Nasir of the Chicago Jama’at would later deny this, claiming that an orchard belonging to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad’s family had been forcibly evacuated, leaving the Ahmadiyya cemetery unguarded (Ibid., S.V. Sampath to Chief Secretary to the Government of East Punjab, 28 October 1949).

⁵³ ‘Ahmadiya community – Request...’, Under Secretary Political for Chief Secretary to Government, East Punjab, to Assistant Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, 5 July 1949, Home Poll., NAI, File No. 57/54/49-Poll.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., letter from S.V. Sampath to Z. Islam, 19 December 1949.

⁵⁶ Ibid., letter from M.L. Mehta to Head of the Ahmadiyya Community, Bombay, 15 May 1950.

considered by the Additional Custodian, Jullundur, and was being opposed by legal counsel paid for by the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS).⁵⁷ Where Ahmadis were unsuccessful in their appeals, they set up alternative institutions. The aforementioned hospital was not returned to the Jama'at and became a state-run hospital. The Jama'at therefore set up an alternative *shifa khanah* (convalescent home) which it described as serving mainly Hindus and Sikhs from Qadian and its surrounding areas, an 'example of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at's tolerance and service to mankind'.⁵⁸ The Jama'at's leadership advised individual Ahmadis in Qadian to press the authorities as well. For instance, *Badr* provided guidance for property holders on how to appeal against official decisions on state seizures and alerted its readers to upcoming deadlines six years after the introduction of permits.⁵⁹ The avenue of appeal appears to have been exhausted by 1956 when the Jama'at chose to repurchase 191 houses from the Custodian of Evacuee Property.⁶⁰

Disputes over property in Qadian were not just between the Jama'at and the government but also took place between communities without formal mediation. The front page of the 14-21 December 1953 edition of *Badr* described the 'baseless and condemnable' news stories about the Jama'at preventing the construction of an ashram in Qadian that had been published in the *Tribune* and other newspapers.⁶¹ *Badr* argued that before Partition, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's family had allowed a Dalit family to build a temple on their land. The contemporary dispute about the ashram was between two sections of this same family

⁵⁷ Fortnightly reports from the Chief Secretary to the Government of Punjab, first half of February 1952, Ministry of States, Political (A), NAI, File No. 20(25)-PA/52.

⁵⁸ *al-Badr*, 28 December 1953, p. 12.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 7 July 1954, p. 9.

⁶⁰ *Hindustan Times* (Sunday weekly), 13 October 1974, p. 6.

⁶¹ *al-Badr*, 14-21 December 1953, pp. 1-2.

and implicating the Jama'at in the conflict was an example of 'false propaganda' against 'an international and peaceful Jama'at'.⁶²

The strength of the Jama'at's emotional response and public display of indignation demonstrates sensitivity to any potential for communal conflict and renewed scrutiny on their presence in East Punjab. This article reveals how limited the Jama'at was in the number of options Ahmadis had access to in disputes with other communities in Qadian. *Badr* was the only outlet for the Jama'at to defend itself publicly, and given its readership was predominantly comprised of other Ahmadis, this was mainly a rhetorical exercise rather than an effective way to win hearts and minds. They pleaded for the government to intervene even though this had proved to be a largely ineffective way of seeking redress even where it had the jurisdiction to act. In calling upon the government to punish 'provocateurs' (*fitna angeyz lōgōn*) to teach them that such action had no place in a secular country,⁶³ the Jama'at demonstrated that it understood the language of Indian nationalism as it stood at the time. For the same reason, the Jama'at's exceptionalism was stressed in the parameters of what behaviour would render them exemplary Indian citizens; the Ahmadiyya were 'distinct from all other communities and religions' on account of their 'religious tolerance and law-abiding behaviour' (*Ahmadīyya Jamā'at apni mazhabi rawādāri aur pāband qānūn rawayah ki wajah sey dusri tamām jamā'aton aur mazāhib sey mumtāz hey*).⁶⁴ Finally, it sought to counter claims that Ahmadis were preventing the ashram's construction out of a desire to ingratiate themselves with the region's Christians. This accusation invoked the recent memory of criticisms levelled

⁶² Ibid., p. 1.

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 1-2.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 1.

against the Jama'at during British rule, and thus the President of the Punjab Christian Association was quoted to dismiss allegations of collusion between the two groups.⁶⁵

Rebuilding Qadian for the 313 men that remained there throughout the Partition violence meant more than reclaiming physical space and reconstructing buildings; it also meant reuniting with their families. The wives and children of the *darweyshan* were evacuated to Pakistan with the understanding that they would return to India once peace had been restored. The unexpected introduction of the permit system in July 1948 meant this became a far more complicated task than had been anticipated. According to the East Punjab Government's intelligence report for the second half of July 1949, Ahmadis were unimpressed by the level of support they were receiving from their counterparts in Pakistan. The report claimed that 'great dissatisfaction' was felt among Qadian's Ahmadis 'on account of the alleged callousness of their leaders in Pakistan towards them', particularly in terms of financial hardship and the delay in arrangements being made for their wives and children to join them in India.⁶⁶ The East Punjab Government denied it had any part in the hold up, arguing in February 1950 that officials were 'faithfully carrying out the pledge given' by Nehru that the families of the *darweyshan* could return from Pakistan.⁶⁷

However, in both communications between the Jama'at and the government and in *Badr*, the responsibility for the delay was placed squarely on the Indian government. The Jama'at's Secretary of General Affairs disagreed with the above assertion that any

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 2.

⁶⁶ Fortnightly reports from the Chief Secretary to the Government of East Punjab, second half of July 1949, Ministry of States, Political (A), NAI, File No. 9(45)-P/49.

⁶⁷ 'Ahmadiya community – Request...', S.V. Sampath to First Secretary, Embassy of India in the USA, Washington DC, 2 February 1950, Home Poll., NAI, File No. 57/54/49-Poll.

progress had been made, writing ‘in spite of several reminders no intimation has since been received by us in regard to the permission given by the East Punjab Gov[ernmen]t to bring our families back to Qadian’.⁶⁸ According to *Badr*’s 21 July 1952 issue, the matter was further delayed because the Deputy High Commissioner in Lahore did not receive official permission from New Delhi until June 1951, and that too, for only 12 families. Consequently, many Ahmadi wives remained in Pakistan ‘unsupervised’, which it was said reflected poorly on the Indian government.⁶⁹ By the time passports were introduced in October 1952, a further 24 families had been permitted to return to Qadian, though some had been prevented due to the very small window allowed between the issuing of permits and the date by which they had to reach India.⁷⁰ This number did not rise in the months following the anti-Ahmadi Lahore riots in 1953, despite renewed appeals in the context of increased threats to their safety.⁷¹ The issue caught the attention of *Riyāsat* (Delhi) which noted that even those family members who had been permitted to return had not been granted Indian citizenship. As a result, they needed government permission each time they needed to leave Qadian. This was rendered more inexplicable in the case of women, who apparently acquired their husband’s citizenship automatically throughout the rest of the world.⁷² Indeed, the issue of citizenship for dependents from Pakistan continues to be a point of conflict between Qadian’s Ahmadi and the Indian government today.⁷³

⁶⁸ Ibid., J. Singh to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Punjab, 31 March 1950.

⁶⁹ *al-Badr*, 21 July 1952, p. 2.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 21 October 1952, p. 1.

⁷¹ Ibid., 28 May 1953, p. 6.

⁷² Ibid., 7 November 1953, p. 2.

⁷³ Y. Rana and I.P. Singh, “‘Indian’ dream eludes many from Pakistan’ in *TOI*, 2 January 2016, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Indian-dream-eludes-many-from-Pakistan/articleshow/50412024.cms> [last accessed 13 January 2016].

Disentangling the Indian and Pakistani Jama'ats

In an attempt to avoid the scale of the displacement seen in Punjab, the Indian and Pakistani governments sought to reassure religious minorities in Bengal by passing the Nehru-Liaquat Pact in April 1950.⁷⁴ Minorities in both nations were promised 'freedom of movement' and 'complete equality of citizenship'.⁷⁵ Indeed, unlike in Punjab, 'non-Muslim refugees' could access rehabilitation programmes in East Pakistan, as could 'Muslim refugees' in West Bengal if they returned to their homes before the end of that calendar year.⁷⁶ India also agreed to restore properties of Muslims from UP if they returned from Pakistan between 1 February and 31 May 1950.⁷⁷ However, hopes that the Nehru-Liaquat Pact was a harbinger of a less strict approach to relations between the two governments and their citizens were dashed in October 1952 when a passport and visa system for travel between India and Pakistan came into force. In much the same way that the Indian government introduced the permit system to deal with Indian Muslims returning from Pakistan, the passport system was introduced by Pakistan to stem the migration of UP Muslims.⁷⁸

In the first few months of the establishment of *Badr* in early 1952, its editors responded to accusations of disloyalty elsewhere in the Indian press by restating the generic affirmation of the loyalty of all Ahmadis to their respective governments. For instance, an article titled 'The loyalty of Ahmadis' was published on 14 July 1952 in response to a piece in the *Hindu* (New Delhi/Jalandhar) that had expressed alarm at the supposed

⁷⁴ For more on West Bengal's Muslim minorities after Partition see Chatterji, *The spoils of Partition*, chapter 4.

⁷⁵ Cited in Zamindar, *The long Partition*, p. 166.

⁷⁶ Cited in *Ibid.*, p. 167.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

⁷⁸ For more on this see *Ibid.*, pp. 161-226.

security implications of Ahmadis in Pakistan returning to India.⁷⁹ In this response, it was argued that the loyalty, organisation, and civic engagement of Ahmadis were assets for whichever country they were established in. Despite the defensive nature of *Badr*'s reply, it was argued that Ahmadis need not defend themselves in the face of such baseless accusations, as they could have no negative impact on the Jama'at: 'after all', the editor asked, 'if you spit at the moon, what harm comes to the moon itself?'⁸⁰ However, the tightening of border controls and the fixing of citizenship in October 1952 meant there would be no relief for Indian Ahmadis hoping that the border location of their spiritual centre would become less relevant to how they were viewed.⁸¹

Analysis of *Badr* in the months following October 1952 reveals an effort to create a sharper separation between the Jama'at's in India and Pakistan, both institutionally and politically. This was a concern felt by both Qadian and the leadership of the Jama'at in Rabwah, the town that became the Pakistani and worldwide headquarters of the Ahmadiyya in September 1948. Just two months after passports were introduced, Mahmud Ahmad sent a message to Qadian addressing this issue, which was subsequently printed in *Badr*'s 7 January 1953 edition.⁸² In unambiguous terms, Mahmud Ahmad described the necessity of a demarcation between the two Jama'ats because of acrimonious relations between India and Pakistan. Efforts were to be made to avoid giving ammunition to those that sought to create a wedge between the Indian Jama'at and the Indian government. This, he explained, was the reason that Indian Ahmadis had been

⁷⁹ *al-Badr*, 14 July 1952, p. 3.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁸¹ This is not to say that the relationship between passports and citizenship was straightforward. Jayal shows how in the early postcolonial period, a Pakistani passport did not necessarily contradict an individual's claim to Indian citizenship. Later, even the possession of an Indian passport could be insufficient as a claim to citizenship if it was held by a presumed illegal migrant from Bangladesh. Jayal, *Citizenship and its discontents*, p. 70.

⁸² *al-Badr*, 7 January 1953, pp. 3-4.

instructed to send financial contributions to the President of the Indian Jama'at instead of to the headquarters as was previous custom. He admonished the leadership in Qadian for acting like a village panchayat rather than the spiritual centre of the Ahmadiyya responsible for rebuilding the Indian Jama'at, and criticised Indian Ahmadis more generally for being reluctant to travel to Qadian despite relatively safe conditions. He advised that their missionary efforts should be limited to India, both to re-establish its status in India and to avoid 'international complications' (*beyn-ul-aqāumi peychīdgi*).⁸³ Self-consciously restating a prediction that Ahmadis would one day be the cause of peace between the two countries and ending his message with an exhortation for *Badr*'s readers to be loyal to their country as Pakistani Ahmadis were to theirs suggests that Mahmud Ahmad was cognisant of potentially unintended audiences of his message.⁸⁴

In the absence of additional direct messages from the Khalifa, *Badr* chose to underline these points by applying his contemporary speeches to the Indian context. A speech by Mahmud Ahmad on 16 May 1953 to the Jama'at's *Majlis-e-Mushawarat* (Consultative Committee) in Rabwah was accompanied by an editor's note that explained that although the Khalifa's speech was in response to the Lahore disturbances earlier that year, its principles should be heeded by Indian Ahmadis as well.⁸⁵ Such notes from the editors were not customarily included in accounts of the Khalifa's addresses, which were usually printed without comment. Whilst *Badr* usually devoted considerable space to Mahmud Ahmad's speeches, the first half of 1953 is notable for their infrequency, most likely because of the disruption caused by the Lahore disturbances and the declaration of martial law. Indeed, publication of the Jama'at's Pakistani newspaper *al-Fazl*, from which *Badr*

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 28 June 1953, p. 6.

garnered much of its information on the goings on of the worldwide headquarters, was prohibited for a year on 1 March 1953.⁸⁶ It is perhaps due to this scarcity that *Badr* chose to make explicit the thematic and practical relevance of the Khalifa's words to Indian Ahmadis. The foundational principles of Ahmadi belief were presented in a way that suggests that Mahmud Ahmad was mindful of a non-Ahmadi audience: Ahmadis believed that Muhammad was *khatim-un-nabiyyin* and adhered to the same five pillars as other Sunni Muslims. The Jama'at was not a political group, the Khalifa continued, and so to avoid any confusion, he implored his followers to limit their proselytising activities to their local area. If Ahmadis insisted on holding more high profile and public events, tolerance and love should be centred and 'controversial beliefs should not be discussed' (*mutanāza 'aqā'id zeyr behs na lāya jā'ey*).⁸⁷ The printing of Ahmadi literature would continue, as would the issuing of measured responses to the opposition they faced, but no action would be taken that would violate the rules of the government.⁸⁸

A month later, another address by the Khalifa was printed on the front page of *Badr*, again accompanied by an editor's note asking readers to extrapolate the guidance issued in the Pakistani context to their circumstances in India.⁸⁹ This address was decidedly less avuncular in tone. Mahmud Ahmad relayed with considerable exasperation that the Secretary of Tabligh in Rawalpindi had sent a senior army official some Ahmadi literature on Eid. Of course, it was unfair that other groups could distribute their religious literature without negative consequences, including 'the Baha'is, who turn a human being into God'. But given the mood towards the Jama'at, a more sensible approach was needed. Ahmadis needed to avoid controversy, support the government, and generally keep a low

⁸⁶ *TOI*, 2 March 1953, p. 3.

⁸⁷ *al-Badr*, 28 June 1953, p. 6.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 21 July 1953, p. 1.

profile. Mahmud Ahmad was aghast that he even needed to give such guidance, exclaiming 'I am made to feel ashamed of your foolish actions. And I cry at your [lack of] common sense'.⁹⁰ Toby Howarth suggests that Shi'as in postcolonial Hyderabad (India) were offered similar advice; though it was important to resist injustice, political quietism was preferred as a means of ensuring their safety as a Muslim minority sect, as their primary objective was to continue advancing their truth.⁹¹

Mahmud Ahmad's advice reminded Indian Ahmadis to emphasise the national specificity of their identity and of the limited discursive terrain they had access to. Chapter 5 will explore in more detail how the Jama'at involved itself in contemporary political debates via *Badr* given these limitations. Here, as the suspicion Indian Ahmadis faced in postcolonial India is considered, it is important to note that their connection to Pakistan was not the only constraint on their commentary on political matters. As earlier chapters have demonstrated, the idea that the Jama'at was unthinkingly loyal to the British government and stood completely aloof from the anti-colonial movement is untrue. Nonetheless, while the Pakistani Jama'at could rely on its involvement in the push for a separate Muslim homeland in the 1940s to challenge the idea that the Ahmadiyya were slavishly loyal under colonial rule, the Indian Jama'at obviously could not lay claim to such a legacy. This left Indian Ahmadis vulnerable to the accusation that they had opposed Indian independence because they did not take part in the defining campaigns of the anti-colonial movement in the 1920s and 1930s.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ T.M. Howarth, *The Twelver Shi'a as a Muslim minority in India: pulpit of tears* (London, 2005), pp. 165-67.

A keenness to respond to this criticism is apparent in the paper's coverage of industrial unrest and strike action in the early 1950s. Such reports were often accompanied by the observation that Congress, the party that once championed civil disobedience and non-cooperation, was now intolerant of these methods of protest.⁹² This did not indicate that the Ahmadiyya had come to accept direct action as a valid way of expressing dissent; instead, it was intended as a wry commentary inspired by a confidence that Ahmadis had been vindicated in their abstention from civil disobedience movements in the interwar period. The Ahmadiyya's commitment to peace had been conflated with British loyalism, it was argued, and the Jama'at had opposed the methods, not the aims, of the Congress under the *Raj*.⁹³ Direct action was framed as a colonial import that, because of its unnaturalness in the subcontinent, would impede the nation's future progress. Ahmadis had refrained from using these tactics during colonial rule, and this demonstrated the Jama'at's rejection of Western ideas about how the public should engage with the state.⁹⁴ *Badr*'s view on civil unrest formed part of a broader quasi-postcolonial critique that independent India had not fully decolonised as it was continuing to model its social and political culture on Britain.⁹⁵

By casting their choices as the more authentically Indian, *Badr* attempted to change the conversation around the place of Ahmadis in the independence movement. Negative coverage of ongoing industrial unrest served a similar purpose. Describing strikes as infantile or comparing those that chose to go on strike to children became a recurrent trope used by the Jama'at to communicate its disdain.⁹⁶ For instance, *Badr*'s Assistant

⁹² See for instance *al-Badr*, 28 August 1952, p. 3; and 14 March 1954, pp. 1-2.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 21 March 1953, p. 3.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 14 March 1954, p. 2

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 7 November 1953, p. 9; see also 21 April 1954, p. 4.

Editor opened an article on this subject by giving examples of the actions of children that are tolerated because of their age, such as lounging in a state of undress or wetting the bed. Through time, children learn that having a tantrum is not the way to get what they want. But by giving in to the demands of those on strike, the government was encouraging such behaviour to continue well past the point that it was reasonable to tolerate it.⁹⁷ The writer conceded that employers should listen to the grievances of their employees to prevent such agitation; however, he concluded that most industrial unrest was a consequence of workers who were employed in adequate conditions putting their own interests ahead of the country's. This position echoed Gandhi's view that labour and capital were interdependent, with capitalists acting as 'trustees' for the 'welfare of the labouring classes'.⁹⁸ For this reason, Gandhi implored workers to make demands only after careful consideration of their employer's or industry's economic position.⁹⁹ However, *Badr* was rather more blunt how it communicated this argument, stating that it was just a fact of life that there are two groups, 'one that gives orders and another that obeys them'.¹⁰⁰ Trouble arose when the boundaries of these groups were not respected:

The reality is that all of this is a result of people transgressing their designated place in this configuration... (*haqīqat yeh hey keh yeh sab kuch apney apney dāirey 'amal sey tajāwaz kar jāney ka natīja hey...*) if we learn to fulfil our duties and stop demanding our rights, then there is no reason for these movements to arise in the first place.¹⁰¹

The entreaty to 'fulfil our duties and stop demanding our rights' signifies a way of relating to authority that was more akin to a subject than a citizen position and echoes Sherman's assessment of Muslims practising 'more submissive forms of citizenship' in postcolonial

⁹⁷ Ibid., 7 November 1953, p. 9.

⁹⁸ Cited in R. Chandavarkar, *Imperial power and popular politics: class, resistance and the state in India, c. 1850-1950* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 283.

⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 282-83.

¹⁰⁰ *al-Badr*, 7 November 1953, p. 9.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

Hyderabad, as described at the beginning of this chapter.¹⁰² Disapproval of direct action extended beyond the sphere of industrial relations. For instance, Dalits were urged to advance their aims through legal and political methods rather than civil unrest,¹⁰³ and those demonstrating against rising tram fares in Calcutta were criticised for placing the city's interests ahead of the nation's.¹⁰⁴ Implying that direct action was antinational allowed the Ahmadiyya to communicate its loyalty to India and its support of the government. To borrow a term from sociology, the Jama'at can be seen here to be perpetuating the stereotype of the 'model minority', positioning itself as unthreatening and compliant in contrast to those marginalised groups that adopted disruptive strategies to gain redress of their grievances.¹⁰⁵

Indian Ahmadis did not distinguish themselves from their Pakistani counterparts only by defensively reacting to implicit or explicit accusations of disloyalty. Patriotism was expressed in more intentional ways as well. *Badr* is replete with accounts of local Jama'ats throughout India taking part in national celebrations. The paper reliably published reports of every Republic Day and Independence Day celebration in the period under review. Reports of these celebrations in 1953 provide an illustration of the template that was followed in subsequent years. Republic Day celebrations in Qadian were a front-page story. As well as attending local Congress-led events, the Jama'at organised its own procession, raising slogans such as 'Allah-hu-Akbar' and 'Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

¹⁰² Sherman, *Muslim belonging in secular India*, p. 11.

¹⁰³ *al-Badr*, 7 February 1954, p. 1.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 14 August 1953, p. 1.

¹⁰⁵ This term has begun to be used more frequently in analyses of how and to what end minority or minoritized groups are described in relation to each other in India. In particular, it has been applied to how Parsis have been viewed by colonial rulers and Hindu nationalist leaders in contrast to Muslims. See for instance J. Buck, "'The world's best minority': Parsis and Hindutva's ethnic nationalism in India", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 40, 15 (2017), pp. 2806-2822 and M. Sharafi, 'Many think Parsis are a model minority. Are they?', *TOI*, 20 September 2017 <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/many-think-parsis-are-a-model-minority-are-they/articleshow/60759044.cms> [last accessed 6 March 2018].

Zindabad’ and donating money to the poor.¹⁰⁶ Radhika Gupta shows that similar dynamics can be found amongst Shi’as in Kargil. Though they have not had to endure the same level of contempt and obloquy from other Muslims, her ethnographic study suggests the experience of Kargili Shi’as is comparable to Qadian’s Ahmadis in a number of ways. Both communities have to assert their status as patriotic Indian citizens due to their border location, their ethnic links to Pakistan, and their broader transnational ties. Further, the elements that make them distinct from other Muslims in India are often ignored by state actors. Gupta shows that Kargili Shias also reiterate their loyalty to India by performances at national events, or by refracting transnational religious ideology through nationalist discourse, for instance, by recounting Gandhi’s admiration for Imam Husayn.¹⁰⁷

In an account of Qadian’s Independence Day celebrations later in 1953, it was said that local Ahmadis participated in festivities ‘with complete dedication and interest, as per our traditions’.¹⁰⁸ It was noted that, as had been the case in previous years, ‘the rest of the public did not take much of an interest’.¹⁰⁹ Making explicit contrasts with other Indians served to bolster the Ahmadiyya’s self-presentation as inhabiting the qualities of ‘good’ citizens and constituted respectability politics as a means of defence. The condemnation of boycotts of such celebrations as a means of protest by some Indian Muslims fulfilled a similar function. For instance, while Ahmadis were similarly outraged by an article in *Amrita Patrika* that had made disparaging remarks about the Prophet, the editors of *Badr* argued that to not participate in Independence Day celebrations because of this was counter to religious instruction; Muhammad had instructed Muslims to always cooperate

¹⁰⁶ *al-Badr*, 28 January 1953, p. 1.

¹⁰⁷ Gupta, *Piety, politics, and patriotism in Kargil, India*.

¹⁰⁸ *al-Badr*, 21 August 1953, p. 1.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

with the government and to refrain from choosing methods of discord (*fasād aur fitna*) to voice their grievances.¹¹⁰

National celebrations are obvious occasions to display one's relationship to national identity outwardly. Likewise, war provides opportunities for the public presentation of patriotism. For the Ahmadiyya, this could mean taking part in events to demonstrate support for India against China;¹¹¹ shedding blood, if not on the battlefield then in publicised blood drives for armed services' personnel;¹¹² or celebrating the return of victorious soldiers with a day-long *jalsa*.¹¹³ However, not all affirmations of patriotism presented in *Badr* were centred on special occasions. National pride and its attendant denotation of loyalty was communicated in more subdued, everyday ways as well. For instance, Ahmadis were encouraged to donate money to be sent to the government, not just in wartime as is explored below, but also in peacetime. All Indians needed to take responsibility for paying off the country's national debt and contributing to its development in areas identified by the editors as sites of economic and infrastructural weakness.¹¹⁴ Ideologically too, the Jama'at was quick to distance itself from any movement that threatened the normative political culture in the country, even if this was at the expense of its own members. A notice was issued in December 1965 explaining that 19 Ahmadis had effectively been expelled from the Jama'at because of their links to communist politics in Kerala.¹¹⁵ Communism and Ahmadiyyat were described as antithetical, and the choices these individuals had made 'have no justification in a spiritual

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 28 August 1952, p. 3.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 1 November 1962, p. 12.

¹¹² Ibid., 15 November 1962, p. 12.

¹¹³ Ibid., 20 January 1972, p. 1, p. 12.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 21 June 1954, p. 1.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 2 December 1965, p. 12.

organisation'.¹¹⁶ Aside from the Jama'at's own feelings about communism, the global, national, and regional context was important to this reaction. Though India was non-aligned in the Cold War, it could not avoid its consequences. The country was fresh from an international conflict in which China, which had itself defeated India three years earlier, had provided substantial support to Pakistan and during which the Jama'at had suffered renewed scrutiny on where its loyalty lay. This announcement also came six years after the central government dismissed an elected Communist Party-led state government and imposed President's Rule in Kerala. Bearing this in mind, the Jama'at may have viewed any association with this group as being too dangerous to its precarious status in the nation. Ahmadis were instructed to shun these individuals until they publicly admitted their mistake and expressed their regret.¹¹⁷

Projecting patriotism: The Second and Third Indo-Pakistan Wars

According to Ian Talbot, disturbances in Kashmir, including a crisis involving the disappearance and reappearance of a sacred relic from the Hazratbal shrine in Srinagar at the end of 1963, controversy generated by plans to bring Jammu and Kashmir more line with other Indian states in December 1964, and protests against the arrest of Sheikh Abdullah in May 1965, led Pakistani officials, especially Foreign Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, to believe that the time was ripe to tip the balance in Kashmir in their favour. This was reinforced by India's losses in its war with China in 1962 and against Pakistan in the disputed area of the Rann of Kutch in the spring of 1965. Operation Gibraltar involved armed volunteers from Pakistan infiltrating the Indian-held section of Kashmir to

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

capitalise on existing discontent and to foment a rebellion in the region. The conflict escalated in August 1965 as regular units of the Pakistani Army became involved and started advancing further South, known as Operation Grand Slam. In response, India crossed the international border and moved towards Lahore and Sialkot on 6 September, constituting the official beginning of the war. The Pakistani Army was strategically and materially unprepared for this. A ceasefire was declared on 22 September, and a peace treaty where both countries agreed to revert to their pre-war positions was signed in January 1966.¹¹⁸

Badr was not published for the duration of the war, with no new editions between 2 and 30 September. Communications between Rabwah and Qadian were disrupted during the war and the ceasefire. This meant that news about Mahmud Ahmad's declining health, his death on 7 November, and the election of his successor Mirza Nasir Ahmad could not reach Qadian directly. Instead, this news was delivered circuitously via telegrams from Jama'ats in London, Rangoon, and Colombo.¹¹⁹ More significantly, travel restrictions prevented Indian Ahmadis from attending Mahmud Ahmad's funeral.¹²⁰ This led regional Jama'ats to organise equivalent occasions of mourning. For instance, Ahmadis throughout Orissa attended a *janazah-e-ghaiyb* (funeral prayer in absentia) organised by the Kerang branch.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ I. Talbot, *Pakistan: a modern history* (London, 2009), pp. 176-79. See also V. Schofield, *Kashmir in conflict: India, Pakistan, and the unfinished war* (London, 2000), chapter 5; A. Lamb, *Kashmir: a disputed legacy 1846-1990* (Hertingfordbury, 1991), chapter 7; and S. Ganguly, *Conflict unending: India-Pakistan tensions since 1947* (New York, 2001), chapter 2.

¹¹⁹ *al-Badr*, 4 November 1965, pp. 1-2; 25 November 1965, pp. 7-8.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 11 November 1965, p. 8; 25 November 1965, p. 9.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 2 December 1965, p. 7.

Following the resumption of publication on 30 September, *Badr* dedicated its first page to reminding Indian Ahmadis of their responsibility to cooperate with the government and participate in the defence of their country. It condemned Pakistan for contributing to global instability through its ‘aggression’ and its ‘undesirable behaviour’ compared to India’s ‘reconciliatory behaviour’.¹²² Readers were advised that despite the ceasefire, Pakistan continued to be a threat to ‘Kashmir, which is a part of India’.¹²³ A copy of a circular that had been sent out on 20 September to every Indian Ahmadi was reprinted. It contained reminders to cooperate with the government and participate in the defence of the nation by making every possible sacrifice. It also reminded Ahmadis that under a ‘secular system’, everyone was entitled to ‘equal rights and freedom’,¹²⁴ a significant aside that prevents the advice given from conforming to a simple resistance/submission dichotomy. The Jama’at issued regular reminders for Ahmadis to participate in its own Defence Fund as well as the government’s. Aside from being a way to demonstrate their patriotism, donations also served other functions. Half of all donations were to be sent to Qadian so that the Jama’at could submit a collective donation; this would strengthen relationships between individual Ahmadis and their national leaders,¹²⁵ and was essential for their safety as it would remind the government of the importance of Qadian as the Ahmadiyya’s spiritual centre.¹²⁶ By way of encouragement, several letters of thanks for the Jama’at’s support from the Prime Minister, Chief Minister of Punjab, and other officials were printed in *Badr*.¹²⁷

¹²² Ibid., 30 September 1965, pp. 1-2.

¹²³ Ibid., p. 2.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 1.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 7 October 1965, p. 10.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 14 October 1965, p. 8.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 7 October 1965, p. 1, p. 12; 14 October 1965, p. 8, p. 12.

Qadian's Ahmadis felt the consequences of war in more direct ways than this run-of-the-mill advice to *Badr's* readers suggests, and despite the paper's effort to put a positive gloss on what they had faced, their experiences were not hidden from its wider readership. 29 Ahmadis had been sent to Gurdaspur jail on 15 September and were detained for a week. These were wives and children of the *darweyshan* whose application for Indian citizenship was still under consideration. Initial reporting of this event downplayed its significance. It was described as a precautionary measure, with the treatment of Pakistani citizens when relations between India and Pakistan deteriorated described as understandable and a matter of 'ordinary law'.¹²⁸ In a subsequent issue, more detail was offered about how their release was secured. The Jama'at's Treasury Secretary Sheikh Abdul Hameed was in Delhi at the time of the war, and he met with junior officials in the Home Ministry and Indira Gandhi (then Minister of Information and Broadcasting) to discuss both this detention and the arrest of Ahmadis in Calcutta under the Defence of India Act. Their lobbying proved largely fruitless until a meeting with Home Minister Gulzarilal Nanda on 22 September. The Jama'at's 'international position', the importance of Qadian as its spiritual centre, and the community's demonstration of 'every kind of practical cooperation at every opportunity' with the government of the day was emphasised.¹²⁹ Nanda argued that he could not intervene in the arrest of Bengali Ahmadis as the government there had acted on its own initiative, but was able to arrange for the release of the Ahmadi women and children in Punjab as their detention had been ordered by the central government.¹³⁰

¹²⁸ Ibid., 30 September 1965, p. 2.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 7 October 1965, p. 8.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 2, p. 8.

Aside from these arrests, Qadian saw an increased presence of state and security forces during the war. District officials arranged for special guards to be stationed in every *mohalla* (neighbourhood) in Qadian. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that their purpose was at least in part to surveil Ahmadis in the area. However, *Badr* described such measures as designed for the protection of Ahmadis and thus frequent mention was made of how grateful the Jama'at was for them.¹³¹ This 'timely attention' was credited in preventing 'mischief makers' from disturbing the peace.¹³² In addition to the special guards, a Defence Committee was established and led by local MLA Sardar Satnam Singh Bajwa. Its members were credited with 'timely dispelling of rumours and misunderstandings which kept the peace in the town'.¹³³ The origin of these rumours was touched on in subsequent editions, with references to a meeting of local Jan Sanghis on 12 September designed to 'spoil the atmosphere against us'.¹³⁴

Ahmadis in Qadian continued to experience difficulties from ongoing official suspicion of them after active conflict ended. Visas for 200 Pakistani Ahmadis to visit Qadian for the Jalsa Salana in 1965 were denied, with the Punjab government informing the centre that the District Commissioner of Gurdaspur could not recommend the visit due to the recent war.¹³⁵ Indeed, this was not just limited to Pakistani visitors. *Badr* lamented the misfortune of all international visitors being prevented from attending and implored Indian Ahmadis to demonstrate their gratitude for their comparative good fortune by making a special effort to attend in increased numbers.¹³⁶ Conditions post ceasefire were

¹³¹ Ibid., 30 September 1965, pp. 1-2.

¹³² Ibid., p. 1.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 7 October 1965, p. 2.

¹³⁵ 'Proposed visit of a party of 200 Muslim pilgrims from West Pakistan to Qadian (Dt. Gurdaspur) from 10th to 15th December 1965', Assistant Secretary (Political) for Chief Secretary Government Punjab to Under Secretary of Ministry of External Affairs, 27 December 1965, MEA, NAI, File No. P (PIV) 2913 (12)/65.

¹³⁶ *al-Badr*, 21 October 1965, p. 1.

favourable enough, readers were told, that the war was not a sufficient reason not to attend. It was the duty of Ahmadis to overcome any metaphorical roadblocks in the name of their religion.¹³⁷ Any difficulties on the journey that did arise were to be welcomed as God would bestow a reward commensurate with the struggle to fulfil his will.¹³⁸ This did not mean that caution was dispensed with. Ahmadis were advised to travel in groups as ‘any Muslim travelling in this area [East Punjab] is not free from danger’¹³⁹ and were advised to carry proof of their identity and Indian nationality that had been verified by a magistrate, gazetteer officer, or MLA at all times.¹⁴⁰

The war brought latent anxieties about the precariousness of their position in Qadian to the surface. It forced Ahmadis to directly confront the fact that despite their professions of loyalty over almost two decades, the Indian government still saw them as a potential fifth column lurking in the country’s borderlands. The occasion of the *Jalsa Salana* in December 1965 provided a forum for a collective expression of fear, disappointment, and the Jama’at’s resilience. This is encapsulated by a report of a speech given at the *Jalsa Salana* about their recent experiences, *Hakūmat-e-waqt aur Jamā’at Ahmadīyya* (‘The current government and the Ahmadiyya Jama’at’) by the Additional General Secretary Chaudhry Mubarak Ali.¹⁴¹

The speech moved the subtext of reporting and opinion printed in *Badr* about the Jama’at’s experiences of the recent war being reminiscent of Partition into text. Ali recalled how during 1947, the government had both arranged for their safety and put them

¹³⁷ Ibid., 11 November 1965, pp. 7-8.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 18 November 1965, p. 3.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 2 December 1965, p. 1.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 30 December 1965, pp. 5-7, p. 12.

under ‘special supervision’. This had been a bitter pill for Ahmadis to swallow; ‘like any other respectable citizen, each Ahmadi felt supervision of this kind to be an insult’. However, Ali continued, it turned out to be a ‘blessing’. It demonstrated both that an Ahmadi ‘is a true Muslim and a true standard-bearer of Islam’, and that ‘there was no stain of conspiracy (*sāzish*) or treachery (*ghadāri*)’ on the Jama’at. Since Partition, ‘the presence of a CID officer and representative of District Security on a permanent basis’ in Qadian was similarly an opportunity provided by God. Through this ‘special supervision’ (*khās nigrāni*), which included knowing that ‘post reached us after every single word had been read’, Ahmadis were able to demonstrate their ‘sincere obedience’ (*khulūs atiā’at*). Similarly, during the recent war with Pakistan, no-one, from the lowest ranking government officer to the Defence Minister, was able to find evidence of wrongdoing (*bad gumāni*).¹⁴²

The recent war had demonstrated that a ‘pious transformation’ had taken place since 1947.¹⁴³ Though some ‘misunderstandings’ had led to the detention of local Ahmadis, the Jama’at could now have their appeals to provincial and central government officials heard. Moreover, though a few of the local Congress MLA’s political opponents tried to launch a smear campaign against the Ahmadiyya, it did not succeed; this showed that the majority of Hindus and Sikhs in the area must regard them with ‘sincere love’, otherwise they would not have been able to demonstrate such ‘steadfastness’.¹⁴⁴ As described below, despite this tone of vindication and the framing of opposition against the Jama’at as minimal, Ali went on to devote a considerable amount of his speech to refuting allegations of divided loyalty.

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

Ali's contrast of 1965 with 1947 serves multiple functions. He could recount the inequities that the Jama'at experienced during Partition and beyond and condemn its mistreatment while avoiding directly implicating the current regime by framing the treatment of the Jama'at during the Second Kashmir War as a positive evolution. He provides context for the continued surveillance of Ahmadis despite no wrong-doing coming to light over the previous 18 years, which in itself acts as an implicit admonishment of the surveillance, while also signalling to those listening to him of the need to continue to police their own behaviour. The political nature of the local opposition to them is stressed to avoid giving currency to the idea of an inescapable disconnect between Muslims and non-Muslims and to present it as a cynical move instead. The emotions that drove the Jama'at's opponents during Partition are described as understandable in order to contain them in that specific time and to undercut the through-line of anti-Ahmadi sentiment that their detractors could use to potentially mobilise more significant activity against them. This was reinforced by another speech given at the Jalsa Salana, which proclaimed that Qadian was undoubtedly 'a living picture of Hindu-Muslim unity'.¹⁴⁵ Finally, as will be explored more fully below, the comparison between 1947 and 1965 allowed for a shared experience of oppression to strengthen the national bonds of a community that had been weakened since Partition.

To what extent did things change when another war between India and Pakistan broke out six years later? The Third Indo-Pakistan War officially started on 3 December 1971 after a series of pre-emptive strikes by Pakistan in North-Western India, known as Operation Chengiz Khan. However, the protracted build-up to the conflict after

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 9.

Bangladesh declared its independence from Pakistan in March and India supported its subsequent Liberation War meant that *Badr* announced 1971's Jalsa Salana would be postponed in its 2 December issue.¹⁴⁶ Although there was no stoppage of the newspaper this time, a total blackout at night was imposed as a precaution against airstrikes, which led to editions containing fewer pages than usual due to a lack of time.¹⁴⁷ The instructions for its readers during the war and in the circular sent to all Indian Ahmadis on 5 December were substantively the same as during the previous Indo-Pakistan war. However, some differences in the words chosen suggests the application of hard-won lessons. Instead of stressing the values and responsibilities of Indian Ahmadis as *citizens*, *Badr* instead emphasised the loyalty of 'Ahmadis living in the country' (*mulk key andar rehney wāley Ahmadi*),¹⁴⁸ suggesting a fear of a repeat of the arrests of Ahmadis whose Indian citizenship was still pending in 1965. Similarly, this time, the contact details of the Head of the Hyderabad Jama'at were given as an alternative source of religious instruction in case communication between Qadian and local branches was disrupted again.¹⁴⁹

While mass arrests were not reported, Ahmadis in Qadian still found themselves affected by governmental security concerns about their presence near the western war front. An account of their experiences was published in the newspaper's 16 December issue.¹⁵⁰ On 5 December, rumours had begun circulating that they would be forcibly transferred for their 'safety' [quotation marks in original text].¹⁵¹ The article emotively recounted how the *darweyshan* had stayed in Qadian after Partition at considerable personal and financial cost to them, losing family members and property in the process. This, and their sense of

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 2 December 1971, cover sheet.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 16 December 1971, p. 3.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 9 December 1971, p. 2.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 16 December 1971, p. 2.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

duty, meant that for the *darweyshan* ‘to be apart from this holy area is as hurtful and tortuous as it is for a fish to be out of water’.¹⁵² This state of despair remained for the next few days as Ahmadi leaders reached out to government officials and the laity sat in prayer. The rumour was confirmed at a meeting with the Sub-divisional Magistrate of Batala, the Superintendent of Police in Gurdaspur, and the District Commissioner of Gurdaspur. Following the meeting, these officials conducted a detailed inspection of Qadian and spent a considerable amount of time deliberating. Local politicians attested to the Jama’at’s civic virtues. Among them was the local BJS General Secretary Prabhakar Sahib, a significant detail given anti-Ahmadi activity in Qadian attributed to the BJS during the 1965 war. He stated ‘these people are Indian citizens like any other’ and of the country’s defence that ‘they strengthen our hand’.¹⁵³

The paper was careful not to present this limbo as one during which officials had to be convinced of the loyalty of Ahmadis. The idea that the Jama’at’s fidelity to the nation was suspect was portrayed more like a nebulous implication than a direct accusation. *Badr* reported that visiting officials stressed that they would not want Ahmadis to think that they thought them disloyal; indeed, they thought them ‘more loyal and better citizens than others’.¹⁵⁴ The purpose of the evacuation was for the community’s own safety, ‘to prevent mischief-makers and to prevent harm coming to any citizen’.¹⁵⁵ Details about what kind of trouble could be caused in Qadian in aid of the Pakistani war effort with or against Ahmadis but not against non-Ahmadi residents were not forthcoming. The recollections of Ahmadi leaders during my research in Qadian suggest that the Jama’at’s fidelity to the nation was more directly assailed than was portrayed in *Badr*, with the *minarat-ul-*

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

masih's (minaret of the messiah) potential to be used to deliver signals to Pakistan being a focus of suspicion.¹⁵⁶ In the end, Ahmadis were permitted to stay in Qadian. Instead of an evacuation, a police guard and a welfare officer were instated, put up in the Jama'at's own accommodation.¹⁵⁷

Hesitation marks the tone of *Badr*'s commentary on contemporary events even after the war ended on 16 December. For instance, in the first issue printed after the ceasefire was declared, the editors seemed to go out of their way to not use the word 'Bangladesh' unless they were quoting politicians, referring instead to events in East Bengal.¹⁵⁸ Similarly, in praising the Indian government for providing shelter to those fleeing across the border, the people in question were referred to as 'émigrés' or those in exile (*tark-e-watan*) rather than as refugees (*panah gazeen*), suggesting a concern to couch the issue in as politically neutral language as possible.¹⁵⁹ This anxiety and sense of insecurity manifested in more tangible ways as well. Local Jama'ats were admonished for failing to respond to the aforementioned circular sent from the centre to Indian Ahmadis at the start of the war and were pleaded with to understand the importance and urgency of reporting how they participated in the nation's defence to Qadian.¹⁶⁰ A list of specific questions to answer was supplied:

1. To what extent did the Jama'at contribute to the Defence Fund.
2. To what extent did the Jama'at contribute to the Relief Fund.
3. To what extent did the Jama'at collect money for the National Plan Saving Certificates
4. To what extent did the Jama'at provide blankets and warm clothing to soldiers?
5. How many members of the Jama'at are serving in the army and other defence schemes
6. How did the Jama'at cooperate with government officials in matters of defence.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁶ Conversations with Ahmadi leaders in Qadian, summer 2013.

¹⁵⁷ *al-Badr*, 16 December 1971, p. 2.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 23 December 1971, *passim*.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 13 January 1972, p. 1.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

This template demonstrates the ideal level of financial, physical, and performative effort expected of Indian Ahmadis in times of conflict with Pakistan. Similar instructions were given during the 1962 Sino-Indian War, but as will be explored next, they were delivered with palpably less urgency and desperation.¹⁶²

Ahmadi exceptionalism and the Sino-Indian War (1962)

The preceding discussion of the experience of Ahmadis during the Second and Third Indo-Pakistan wars demonstrates how the Jama'at drew on past examples of dutiful obedience to defend against doubts about their fidelity to the nation. Alongside this was an effort to stress the theological basis of their loyalty. As discussed in Chapter 1, while Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was far from unique in twinning loyalty and faith in the colonial period, it nonetheless was a much-vaunted aspect of his teachings. Independence and the creation of Pakistan meant that the implications of the religious demographic balance in India took on new and added significance. An ethno-nationalist, majoritarian narrative about the dubious capacity of Muslims to be loyal to India was reframed in the pages of *Badr*. Far from being loyal *despite* their religion, it was argued that Indian Muslims were loyal *because* of their religion.

As will be explored in Chapter 5, *Badr*'s attempts to challenge the premise of accusations against Indian Muslims did not arise only as a response to state action in the wake of war but were a recurring feature of its peacetime output as well. However, conflict with Pakistan necessitated more attention to this issue. This is illustrated by an article in *Badr*'s

¹⁶² Ibid., 8 November 1962, p. 2.

14 October 1965 edition titled ‘Practical proof of patriotism’ (*hab-ul-watani ka ‘amli sabūt*).¹⁶³ Muslims had previously stayed quiet in the face of suspicion because love was not something that could be shown by force but was instead proven in the ‘field of action’ during times of hardship. Though public service was not just confined to the battlefield, the sacrifices made by Indian Muslims in the Second Kashmir War were so exemplary that they ‘destroyed all doubts’ that the majority once held about the country’s minorities. And yet, it was extraordinary that despite this, one section of society had not been able to ‘purify its mind’ (*dimagh ko sāf nahin kar pāya*). This was due to a fundamental misunderstanding of the ‘truth of Islamic teachings’ as ‘a Muslim whose heart is empty of love for country is also empty of belief and love for Islam’. The author underlined this claim by citing the speech of Hiren Mukherjee, a Communist Party member, during a Lok Sabha debate on the ceasefire. Mukherjee had argued that the ashes of Hindus were scattered in a river after death, so one could not really determine their final resting place. In contrast, Muslims being buried meant that they never leave their country, showing that ‘in both life and death they are this country’s citizens’.¹⁶⁴

However, *Badr*’s proclamations of the Jama’at’s loyalty during the 1965 War and its aftermath usually centred on their loyalty as Ahmadis specifically. As explored above, while the injunction to be loyal to the current government was described as deriving from the Qur’an, the zeal with which the Jama’at adhered to this principle was frequently mentioned. A direct plea was made in the first edition of the newspaper after the ceasefire in 1965: that the devotion of Ahmadis to their country (*deysh bhagati*) should not only be an example for others to follow but that ‘every Ahmadi brother needs to prove through

¹⁶³ Ibid., 14 October 1965, p. 2.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

his actions that no one can be more devoted to his country than him'.¹⁶⁵ Healthy young Ahmadis were instructed to join the army, police, or national guards. This was both to serve the nation and for the state recognition of the Jama'at that such service would provide.¹⁶⁶ The entreaty to go above and beyond what could reasonably be expected of an ordinary citizen suggests that the Jama'at felt a strong need to project itself as a model minority. The Jalsa Salana provided Ahmadis with an opportunity to express their projected exceptionalism collectively. A resolution supporting India's 'appropriate steps' against 'our enemies, China and Pakistan' and continued cooperation with the government was passed unanimously.¹⁶⁷ The text of the resolution contained the ways that Indian Jama'ats had contributed to the war effort, particularly monetarily, in keeping with their 'established traditions'.¹⁶⁸ It was agreed that the resolution would be circulated to Indian newspapers and the state and central governments.¹⁶⁹

Though a contrast between the normative behaviour of Ahmadis against other Muslim groups is implied in referencing the past and present behaviour of Ahmadis in times of national emergency specifically, elsewhere, it is made more explicit. Returning to Additional General Secretary Chaudhry Mubarak Ali's speech, he argued that Qadian had repeatedly reminded Kashmiri Ahmadis not to let 'peace, obedience, and complete loyalty slip from their hands...or by dint of any kind of emotion conduct themselves in a way that would allow future historians the opportunity to say that there was ever a time that Indian Ahmadis had forgotten or abandoned their foundational principles'.¹⁷⁰ As a result, Ali claimed, other Muslims had started a social boycott against them and had

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 30 September 1965, p. 2.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 14 October 1965, p. 8.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 30 December 1965, p. 1.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 30 December 1965, p. 1; 23 December 1965, p. 6.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 30 December 1965, p. 7, p. 12.

threatened their lives, but Kashmiri Ahmadis had stood firm, a ‘result of 17 years of training, given by Ahmadi representatives in light of the teachings of the Qur’an’.¹⁷¹

As Chapter 5 will explore, during peacetime, the Jama’at was more likely to assert itself as part of a broader Indian Muslim minority when it came to national politics and engaging with the state. Why did the self-presentation of Ahmadis tilt more towards stressing what made them distinct from other Muslims during times of geopolitical crisis? As a small and isolated Muslim community in East Punjab, the presence of the Jama’at near the border with Pakistan during a time of conflict with that country meant that the suspicion it faced was incomparable with most other minority communities in India. This context meant that there was little safety to be found in solidarity with other Muslims at times of war. More importantly, the Jama’at was compelled to distinguish itself from other Muslims because of the specific nature of the mistrust and accusation levelled against them. Ali denounced the effort of Ahmadi opponents to convince the government and the broader public that they could not be trusted because their Khalifa was located in Pakistan. While Ali’s speech appears to be the only time that the allegation that Indian Ahmadis were less loyal because of their leader’s location was clearly delineated in *Badr* during this period, it nonetheless provides the backdrop to other professions of Ahmadi exceptionalism. It was true that ‘every Ahmadi in the world would be ready to sacrifice their most precious things’ if the Khalifa ordered it. However, it was inconceivable that the person God had chosen to establish *shari’ah* would take steps contrary to *shari’ah*, because ‘the Khalifa is not a dictator’. Mahmud Ahmad himself is quoted in the article as saying in 1949 that ‘the belief that Indian and Pakistani Ahmadis are only loyal to their

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

respective governments until the Imam Jama'at-e-Ahmadiyya says is stupidity and folly to the first degree'.¹⁷²

Thus, the Jama'at's emphasis on what distinguished them was both by design and by necessity. Comparing *Badr's* narration of their experience in 1965 and 1971 with the Sino-Indian War in 1962 brings this out further. There are many familiar elements to the paper's coverage during this conflict, which took place 20 October - 21 November in Ladakh and the North-East Frontier Agency and coincided with the Cuban Missile Crisis. Loyalty to the government as a religious duty was emphasised;¹⁷³ donations to the state's own National Defence Fund and the Jama'at's '*Chanda* (donation) National Defence' were demanded, both as a contribution to the war effort and to raise the profile of the Jama'at;¹⁷⁴ Ahmadis were encouraged to cooperate with local government officials;¹⁷⁵ and letters of thanks from government ministers in Delhi and Chandigarh were printed.¹⁷⁶ However, *Badr's* coverage in 1962 differed from the Indo-Pakistan Wars in important respects. Chiefly, its writers were willing to engage in ideological critiques of India's opponent and to offer theological remedies for wider geopolitical issues that were not possible when that opponent was Pakistan.

China had to be defeated not only because of its 'aggressive steps' against India¹⁷⁷ but because it was a communist country. This was stated plainly in a circular sent to Indian Ahmadis. China was an enemy nation because it had disturbed the peace and 'in its

¹⁷² Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 25 October 1962, p. 2; 1 November 1962, p. 1.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 8 November 1962, p. 1, p. 2, p. 12.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 15 November 1962, pp. 1-2; 22 November 1962, p. 1; 29 November 1962, p. 1.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 25 October 1962, p. 2; 1 November 1962, p. 1.

principles is an enemy of religion and God as well', as was Russia.¹⁷⁸ Elsewhere too, the Qur'an would be described as having predicted a battle between two forces towards the end of days, Gog and Magog, which were interpreted by the Ahmadi writer as representing capitalism and communism.¹⁷⁹ It was clear from China foregoing negotiation and going straight to military action to resolve the dispute that the conflict was not about the border but was part of extending China's 'communist programme'.¹⁸⁰ Nor were other ideologies spared. *Badr* indicted 'Western civilisation' (*maghreybi tehzīb*) for creating more potential for conflict along borders through measures such as the introduction of passports.¹⁸¹ Moreover, it argued that people needed to move away from materialism (*mādah parasti*) and towards spiritual development. Accepting Islam would allow humans to unite around the idea of everyone being the creation of one God and thus would bring about world peace.¹⁸²

These observations on the state of world politics reveal a tone of remove and assumed objectivity that was only possible when the Jama'at was not simultaneously entangled in the consequences of the crises that engendered the commentary. The paper's conjuring of an image of a deviant and dangerous other threatening India was only possible because China's society was sufficiently different from India's. For the same reason, *Badr* could only employ the word 'homeland' (*watan*) when there would be no wilful confusion by Ahmadi opponents over which country it was imploring its readers to defend.¹⁸³ It is not that the paper shied away from considering the world's ills in 1965 and 1971. However, the remedies suggested were different. Instead of emphasising Islam specifically as the

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 8 November 1962, p. 2.

¹⁷⁹ B. Ahmad, *Future of Ahmadiyya movement* (Qadian, 1970), p. 10.

¹⁸⁰ *al-Badr*, 22 November 1962, p. 8.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid., 6 December 1962, p. 2.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 25 October 1962, p. 2.

route to world peace, the corrosive effects of nationalism on religiosity were decried, as the ‘love of religion’ had been replaced with ‘the slogan of nationalism’.¹⁸⁴ A modern political system that was based on science and industry and that relegated religion to the private sphere was ‘the biggest killer of human values’.¹⁸⁵ When Islam was explicitly mentioned, it was in the context of emphasising the Jama’at’s example of ‘True Islam’, working as it was for the good of humankind.¹⁸⁶ This is not to say that the Ahmadiyya were engaged in dissembling. Instead, the differences in their responses in 1962 compared to 1965 and 1971 demonstrates that the aspect of their identity that they chose to highlight was context-specific and depended on how best they could ensure their safety.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the experiences of Indian Ahmadis in Qadian after the majority of their co-religionists left East Punjab following Partition. While the intense scrutiny on them by local and central governments in the months after August 1947 may have subsided, the spectre of Partition and its attendant violence and insecurity would loom over them for decades to come. While Ahmadis were not alone in facing suspicion and discrimination at the hands of the state because of their religion, it was heightened by their presence as an isolated community in a border state that was otherwise empty of Muslims. Furthermore, the uniqueness of their experience comes through in how they responded to the demands made of them and what they were motivated by. The Jama’at engaged in the politics of respectability by stressing its exceptionalism as it sought to defend itself against state officials and non-Muslim opponents because its geographical

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 28 October 1965, p. 2.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

isolation made refuge in a broader Indian Muslim identity during times of conflict with Pakistan inaccessible. The charge that they were proto-Pakistanis lurking on the fringes of the country was compounded by the fact that the leader that they owed primary allegiance to was in Pakistan. Consequently, they sought to distance themselves institutionally and politically from Rabwah and projected a distinct Indian Ahmadi identity. As the following chapters will show, it is not that *Badr* attempted to hide the Muslimness of Ahmadis. Instead, the Jama'at chose to emphasise those intersections of the multi-layered identity of Indian Ahmadis that would be most likely to deliver them from danger and anxiety and strengthen their claim to belonging in Qadian. This was not simply a strategic move. Rather, it was informed by the deeply held religious commitment to maintaining a presence in their spiritual centre.

Chapter 4 - Gender, personal law, and Muslim identity: two cases in 1922 and 1970

Tensions in pluralistic societies arising from the often-competing claims of cultural autonomy and equality, as outlined in instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (1948), find frequent expression in debates about the rights of women. Women's rights become weaponised to serve broader ideological interests, meaning that these debates are not conducted by recourse to moral or philosophical arguments alone and are intensely political. Any accommodation reached reflects the balance of power between people and ideas at a particular moment in time, rendering it prone to disruption. In the context of colonial rule in India, concern about the protection of women became an agent of justifications for empire. For instance, the abolition of *sati* (the immolation of a widow on the funeral pyre of her husband) in 1829 is memorably described by Gayatri Spivak as having been 'generally understood as a case of "White men saving brown women from brown men"'.¹ The idea of a 'civilising mission' was reinforced after such a previously marginal practice became imbued with added significance as a form of resistance against oppression.

While the end of colonial rule in India changed the context in which such debates occurred, the thematic underpinnings of these tensions endured after 1947. Congress governments have been reluctant to offer solutions to the dilemmas created when cultural autonomy and women's rights appear at odds. This has been framed as a concern to avoid a heavy-handed majoritarianism towards India's religious minorities, or to use Spivak's

¹ G.C. Spivak, 'Can the subaltern speak?' in P. Williams and L. Chrisman (eds.), *Colonial discourse and post-colonial theory: a reader* (London, 1994), p. 93.

formulation, to avoid a situation whereby state policies are perceived as Hindu men saving Muslim women from Muslim men. Meanwhile, Hindu nationalists have framed the accommodation of religious diversity as minority appeasement and have tried to make Hindu values normative by appropriating the language of universal rights and the defence of secularism. The voices of the women that these contests are supposedly about remain silenced.

This chapter explores these debates through a detailed examination of legal challenges to the religious identity of the Ahmadiyya in colonial and postcolonial India. Two cases in particular, in 1922 and 1970, respectively, are central to this study. Both cases concern the marriage of a non-Ahmadi Muslim woman to an Ahmadi Muslim man in Malabar. It will be argued that this commonality is not a coincidence. Societal shifts in the region made it fertile ground for these conflicts to find expression there. Furthermore, the attempted relegation of religion to the private sphere led to minority identities becoming inextricably linked with marital, familial, and conjugal laws. Women's bodies were instrumentalised and policed as part of several overlapping projects of identity formation, be they sectarian, religious, cultural, or national. This was complicated by struggles over authority and representation between the ruling power of the day and the '*ulema*'.

The period between the two cases under consideration saw a transition not just from imperial rule to self-governance, but also from Anglo-Muhammadan law to Muslim Personal Law (MPL). Anglo-Muhammadan law was a hybrid legal system that was designed to codify an understanding of *shari'ah* based on a very circumscribed group of texts to resemble the British positivist model of jurisprudence. While the Indian Penal Code ended the criminal application of Anglo-Muhammadan law in the 1860s, the latter

continued to apply to civil laws until 1937, bolstered by a growing body of case law. During this time the ‘*ulema*’ of leading Muslim educational and political institutions issued *fatawa* on the issues decided by Anglo-Muhammadan law, providing parallel sites of authority. The principle that a form of religious law should govern the personal affairs of Indian Muslims was universalised by the passing of the Muslim Personal Law (Shari’at) Application Act in 1937. The Act listed areas of law to which Indian Muslims would be subject without specifying what this entailed.² Furthermore, differences between sects and schools of thought were not acknowledged, allowing the Act’s chief promulgator, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, to present it as a triumph of a coherent and unified Indian Muslim community.³

Hakim Khalil Ahmad vs. Malik Israfi was the first notable court case relating to the right of Ahmadis to claim a Muslim identity. The case stemmed from a dispute over access to a mosque in Dillawarpur, Monghyr, in 1911. Local Ahmadis were prevented from entering the mosque after they had begun praying behind an Ahmadi Imam separately from the majority Hanafi congregation, having previously worshipped together. Both sides appealed to the Patna High Court after lower courts decided that Ahmadis were Muslim and had a right to access the mosque, but that they were not entitled to form a separate congregation. The Patna High Court dismissed the appeal in 1916. In its judgement, most of the discussion pertained to the issue of separate congregations, with the right of Ahmadis to claim to be Muslims taken as self-evident.⁴

² E. Newbiggin, ‘Personal law and citizenship in India’s transition to independence’, *Modern Asian Studies*, 45,1 (2011), p. 28.

³ D. Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam: Punjab and the making of Pakistan* (London, 1988), pp. 169-73.

⁴ *Hakim Khalil Ahmad vs. Malik Israfi* (1916) cited in H.A. Walter, *The religious life of India: the Ahmadiya movement* (Calcutta, 1918), pp. 155-59.

The other cases that concerned the legal right of Ahmadis to identify as Muslims centred on the marriages of non-Ahmadi Muslim women to Ahmadi Muslim men. This commonality is to be expected given that, as described above, personal law has been the primary realm in which Muslims have been able to express their religious identity in the public sphere in India, which in turn has led to the conflation of MPL and Muslim identity. Adding to this is the role that women have been assigned as reproducers of identity across a range of historical contexts. This is, of course, meant literally but can also be understood socially and culturally. Such a role does not confer power or agency on women because their own identity is seen as irrelevant. Instead, in this imagining, women are simply repositories of the identities of men. As such, this endowment is inherently precarious as it is continually under threat from force or manipulation by whoever has been deemed the 'other'. As a result, the autonomy of women is often restricted when the security and maintenance of a group's identity is perceived to be under attack.⁵ In times of crisis the fragility of this investment in women's bodies is brought to the fore through acts of violence, seen in its most extreme manifestation when rape is used as a weapon of war and ethnic cleansing.⁶

⁵ See for instance P. Chatterjee, *The nation and its fragments: colonial and postcolonial histories* (Princeton, 1993), chapters 6-7; T. Sarkar, *Hindu wife, Hindu nation: community, religion, and cultural nationalism* (London, 2001); U. Butalia, *The other side of silence: voices from the Partition of India* (New Delhi, 1998); G. Minault, 'Women, legal reform and Muslim identity in South Asia', *Jura Gentium: Journal of Philosophy of International Law and Global Politics*, <https://www.juragentium.org/topics/rol/en/minault.htm> [last accessed 6 September 2017].

⁶ In the South Asian context this has most often been documented in accounts of sexual violence against women during Partition. See for instance V. Das, *Critical events: an anthropological perspective on contemporary India* (New Delhi, 1995), chapter 3; R. Menon and K. Bhasin, *Borders and boundaries: women in India's Partition* (New Delhi, 1998), especially chapter 2; A. Major, "'The chief sufferers': Abduction of women during the partition of the Punjab" in D. A. Low and H. Brasted (eds.), *Freedom, trauma, continuities: Northern India and Independence* (Delhi, 1998), pp. 57-73; and Butalia, *The other side of silence*. Similar patterns have been described in work on ethnic cleansing campaigns in Bosnia and Rwanda in the 1990s. See for instance M. Alison, 'Wartime sexual violence: women's human rights and questions of masculinity', *Review of International Studies*, 33, 1 (2007), pp. 75-90.

This discourse can be seen at work in both the formal and informal rules governing marriage across religious traditions and their implications for the children produced as a result. In Islam, Muslim men are permitted to marry non-Muslim women who are *ahl-e-kitab* (people of the book), which literally means followers of monotheistic scriptures but in practice applies mainly to Jewish and Christian women. Though it is preferable for a woman who is *ahl-e-kitab* to convert if marrying a Muslim man, it is not compulsory as long as any children resulting from the marriage are raised Muslim. However, Muslim women are not permitted to marry non-Muslim men, *ahl-e-kitab* or not. Furthermore, if a non-Muslim woman married to a non-Muslim man converts to Islam, that marriage is suspended pending the husband's conversion and dissolved if the husband refuses. From this, two inferences can be made. First, that religious descent is patrilineal, and second, that a Muslim woman in an interfaith marriage would in all circumstances lack the power needed to ensure that her children were raised Muslim. Both interpretations afford women as mothers no agency and no ability to impart their own identity onto their children.

The Muslim women in the two main cases under discussion here were charged with bigamy after marrying non-Ahmadi men without divorcing their Ahmadi husbands first. The lawyers arguing against the Ahmadi men in each case contended that no bigamous marriage had taken place as Ahmadis were apostates and thus their first marriages had been automatically invalidated in accordance with *shari'ah*. The stance of the Indian 'ulema towards apostasy as grounds for annulment (*faskh*) was not in fact as rigid as this argument suggests. Apostasy via conversion to Christianity was increasingly used as a way for Muslim women to separate from their husbands in the early twentieth century, illustrating both the growth of Christian missionary activity in this period and the limited methods by which Muslim women could secure a divorce in India. As mentioned, while

Muslim men are permitted to marry women who are *ahl-e-kitab*, this did not mean that a marriage in which a previously Muslim wife converted to another monotheistic religion could be sustained. The panic surrounding recourse to conversion was such that in 1924, Muhammad Iqbal urged Indian ‘*ulema* to exercise *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) to reform Hanafi law on this point.⁷ The task was undertaken by Deobandi scholar Maulana Ashraf ‘Ali Thanwi, who in 1913 had issued a *fatwa* stating that apostasy automatically invalidated a marriage, regardless of the motivation behind it. In 1931, he issued *Al-Hilat un-Najiza li'l-Halitat al-'Ajiza* (‘A Successful Legal Device for the Helpless Wife’) in which he reversed his position. He drew on Maliki doctrines to expand the grounds on which Muslim women could seek a divorce, consulting with a range of *muftis* (jurists entitled to issue *fatawa*) in India and abroad to demonstrate *taqlid* (imitation, conformity with precedent) and add legitimacy to his position. This cause was taken up by the Jami’at Ulema-e-Hind and enshrined in the 1939 Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act.⁸ However, this reform did not apply to apostasy in the case of a husband. The position remained that the marriage would be automatically annulled. He would then have to choose between returning to Islam and death, though in practice the latter usually involved social ostracism rather than execution.⁹

The Ahmadiyya take care to demonstrate orthopraxy, possibly in part to temper the volume and types of criticisms that can be levelled against them. This holds true in the

⁷ M.K. Masud, ‘Apostasy and judicial separation in British India’ in M.K. Masud, B. Messick and D.S. Powers (eds), *Islamic legal interpretation: muftis and their fatwas* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1996), p. 195.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 193-203. Indeed, one of the main sponsors of the bill was Zafarullah Khan (R. De, ‘The two husbands of Vera Tiscenko: apostasy, conversion, and divorce in late colonial India’, *Law and History Review*, 28, 4 (2010), p. 1027). For a more detailed discussion about the political consensus between the ‘*ulema*, Muslim reformers, politicians and women’s rights groups that led to the passing of this Act, see R. De, ‘Mumtaz Bibi’s broken heart: the many lives of the Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act’, *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 46, 1 (2009), pp. 105-130.

⁹ Masud, ‘Apostasy and judicial separation in British India’, p. 200.

sphere of gender relations. While women and men are regarded as equal, this does not mean they are permitted to fulfil the same roles. As Karimullah Zirvi, the author of a Khalifa-sanctioned guide to Ahmadiyyat puts it, women have equal rights to men, ‘but not in a manner that would disregard the distinctive features of their anatomy and their exclusive responsibilities in the rearing and nursing of children’.¹⁰ This tendency towards conservatism means that while the pursuit of education is encouraged and women are permitted to enter the workforce, gender segregation and *purdah* is strongly enforced where possible.¹¹ In conventions regarding marriage too, the Ahmadiyya adhere to the same rules as other Muslims, with one important exception: women are not only prohibited from marrying non-Muslims, they are not allowed to marry non-Ahmadis, either. Zirvi argues that ‘the reasoning behind this is very sound’. He continues:

A woman is not permitted to marry outside her faith because when she is in her husband's home environment, she and her children are exposed to non-Muslim and non-Ahmadi culture and practices. This makes it very difficult for her to remain steadfast in her own faith and bring up her children as Muslims. A man, on the other hand can more easily influence his wife and bring her into the Islamic way of life.¹²

This excerpt emphasises the point that as in other cross-cultural traditions and societies, Ahmadi women are seen as vessels of identity rather than bestowers of it.¹³ However, despite this ardent prescription for endogamous marriage, it is unclear what the view of the Jama’at would be if this stipulation were transgressed once a marriage had already

¹⁰ K. Zirvi, *Welcome to Ahmadiyyat, the True Islam*, (2nd edition, Silver Spring, Maryland, 2003), p. 434.

¹¹ For more on the status of women in Ahmadiyyat see Ibid., chapter 18.

¹² Ibid., p. 417. For more on marriage norms in Ahmadiyyat see Ibid., pp. 417-431.

¹³ For an exploration of the place of Ahmadi women in the early stages of the movement, see A.A. Powell, “‘Duties of Ahmadi Women’: educative processes in the early stages of the Ahmadiyya Movement” in A. Copley (ed.), *Gurus and their followers: new religious reform movements in colonial India* (New Delhi, 2000), pp. 128-156. For a description of how Ahmadi norms governing women worked in practice in the UK at the turn of this century, see T.S. Moles, *The evolution of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community in the UK, 1913-2003* (Ph.D. thesis, Royal Holloway University of London, 2009), pp. 170-183.

taken place, such as if an Ahmadi woman's husband turned away from Ahmadiyyat but remained a Muslim.

Narantakath Avullah v. Parakkal Mammu (1922)

At first glance, it is surprising that both the 1922 and the 1970 cases were heard in Malabar. This is both because of the Ahmadiyya's association with North India and conventional wisdom that South India has been relatively untouched by communal and sectarian controversies. The Jama'at came to be established in Malabar via a Maldivian trader's visit to Cannanore in the late 1890s rather than through a planned *tabligh* effort from Punjab. In fact, Ahmadi missionaries from Qadian did not visit Malabar until 1919, by which time branches had also been established in Calicut and Koodali.¹⁴ However, after contact with members from Qadian, the activities of Ahmadis in Malabar became more organised in the 1920s. For instance, annual meetings were established, as was a Malayali newspaper *Sathyadoothan*, which helped to keep Ahmadis in Malabar informed of and in line with the development of the Jama'at in its heartland.

Scholars such as Spencer Lavan and Ayesha Jalal have argued that prior to the late 1920s the main thrust of the opposition towards the Ahmadiyya came from non-Muslim religious reform movements rather than from other Muslims.¹⁵ However, the Ahmadi community in Malabar appears not to have enjoyed such a honeymoon period with their co-religionists. This was in part due to profound shifts occurring in the way social relations were organised in the region. Malabar became part of the Madras Presidency in

¹⁴ L.R.S. Lakshmi, *The Malabar Muslims. A different perspective* (New Delhi, 2012) p. 98.

¹⁵ A. Jalal, *Self and sovereignty: individual and community in South Asian Islam since 1850* (London, 2000), chapter 6; S. Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah movement: a history and perspective* (Delhi, 1974), p. 141.

1792 and thus its religious laws and customary practices were subject to the same codification processes as those in the rest of British India. This led to the matrilineal system that had previously governed property rights coming under increasing strain over the nineteenth century. As G. Arunima has argued, by the 1870s, Victorian notions of the family as a patriarchal unit that constituted the foundation of society served to undermine matriliney further. This upheaval, Arunima argues, made Malabar ‘the most litigious district in the Madras presidency’ by the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁶

Matriliney has been associated with Hindu communities in the region, and with the Nair castes in particular.¹⁷ However, it was also practised by the Mappila Muslim community from which the majority of new Ahmadi converts were drawn.¹⁸ L.R.S. Lakshmi describes how the methods employed to encourage conversion were a factor in the almost immediate hostility shown to Ahmadis in Malabar. For instance, Ahmadis led a social boycott against the non-Ahmadi Mappila community in Cannanore.¹⁹ Consequently, many Ahmadi converts were removed from their wives’ *marumakkathayam tharavaads* (a family home where inheritance is matrilineal). However, others were able to convince their family members to become Ahmadis, and as a result, Ahmadi adherents grew from 13 at the start of the boycott in 1909 to 100 in 1915.²⁰ This is not to say that women were

¹⁶ G. Arunima, ‘Multiple meanings: changing conceptions of matrilineal kinship in nineteenth and twentieth-century Malabar’, *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 33, 3 (1996), p. 285.

¹⁷ For more on this, see Arunima, *Ibid.*, and G. Arunima, ‘A vindication of the rights of women: families and legal change in nineteenth-century Malabar’ in M. Anderson and S. Guha (eds.), *Changing concepts of rights and justice in South Asia* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 114-139.

¹⁸ ‘Mappila’ and ‘Muslim’ are often used interchangeably in work on Malabar. However, Saidalavi P.C. calls attention to the diversity of Muslims in the region. He describes non-Mappila Muslim communities in Malabar. Further, while most scholars consider the community to be descendants of Arabs and local women dating back to the seventh century, P.C. also points out how the term ‘Mappila’ originally encompassed Jewish and Christian communities as well, and that many Mappilas are converts from both lower and upper Hindu castes. See S. P.C., ‘Muslim Social Organisation and Cultural Islamisation in Malabar’, *South Asia Research*, 37, 1 (2017), pp. 19–36.

¹⁹ Lakshmi, *The Malabar Muslims*, p. 98.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

ignored by Ahmadi missionaries. Attention was paid to women's education, and indeed, *Sathyadoothan* encouraged Ahmadi women to learn Arabic to be better able to fight legal battles against their male relatives.²¹ By the late 1930s, the Ahmadiyya began to expand its reach beyond Malabar's wealthy elite and started to draw converts from the region's peasantry.²²

Aside from this animosity between those who had recently converted and their less receptive kinfolk, Ahmadis were also opposed by prominent members of the region's *'ulema*. For instance, Chalilakath Kunhahammad Haji, founder of Darul Uloom Vazakkad, published an anti-Ahmadi book in Arabi-Malayalam in 1911. The most ardent critics of the Jama'at included his students such as Vakkom Moulavi, founder of the reformist movement Kerala Muslim Aikya Sangam whose central message was that every Muslim should read and understand the Qur'an for themselves rather than rely on religious scholars. As well as verbal and written condemnation, Ahmadis also faced stone-pelting attacks and were not permitted to enter mosques or use common burial grounds.²³

The catalyst of *Narantakath Avullah v. Parakkal Mammu* (1922) was the second marriage of a non-Ahmadi woman without official dissolution of her first marriage to an Ahmadi man. The defence argued that as apostasy was grounds for the annulment of marriage under *shari'ah*, the charge of bigamy did not apply. The lower court had acquitted the woman and in so doing implied that Ahmadis were non-Muslim under the law. This is how the High Court came to hear an appeal that the defence had attempted to quash for

²¹ Ibid., p. 100.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., p. 101.

both its ordinariness and also by arguing that it was beyond the scope of the British courts as it hinged on a theological question. To the first point, Justice Oldfield acknowledged that it was not usual practice for the High Court to overturn acquittals but that they were hearing the appeal ‘only because we are satisfied that a question of public importance [sic] relating to the personal status of a substantial part of the Moslem community is raised’.²⁴ On the second point, Justice Krishnan argued ‘it is undoubtedly a question of Mahomedan theology to say what deviation from the recognised doctrines of Mahomedanism would amount to apostacy [sic]; but as civil rights and legal status of parties are based on its decision, we must decide it ourselves’.²⁵ Indeed, it was for this reason that Zafarullah Khan, representing the Ahmadi complainant, made it clear to the Justices that he was not asking for the case to be reopened and retried, but only sought clarification on the Jama’at’s legal status.²⁶

Justices Oldfield and Krishnan engaged with the principles of Islamic jurisprudence (*usul al-fiqh*) in a rather clumsy manner to consider whether Ahmadis were Muslims. Oldfield in effect described the principle of *ijtihad* by arguing that ‘private judgement and analogical deduction’ was permissible in Islam and was to some extent inevitable in any religion ‘so long as it retains life and growth and adapts itself to altered conditions’.²⁷ For this reason, complaints about the Ahmadi view of *jihad*, the death of Jesus, or the status of non-Abrahamic religious figures were not accepted by the Justices. The principle of *ijtihad* is usually described by scholars in opposition to *taqlid*. It is to be used only when an unambiguous answer to the question being considered cannot be found by consulting

²⁴ *Narantakath Avullah v. Parakkal Mammu* (1922), *The Madras Law Journal Reports*, vol. xliii, part xx, p. 664.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 671-72.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 670

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 668

the Qur'an and Hadith, or where there is not an established scholarly consensus (*ijma'*). The Justices did not expand on why they believed the criteria had been met for *ijtihad* to be appropriate on the matter of the death of Jesus or the prophetic qualities of figures from non-monotheistic religions. Nor did they explore the distinction between *ijtihad* and the concept of *bi'dah* (innovation; deviation) as it related to Ahmadi theology. The endorsement of new interpretations of theology by the Justices is notable given what Asad Ahmed describes as 'the usual colonial fetishization of originary texts and customary norms'.²⁸ In other words, the British otherwise tended to lean towards conservative understandings of *shari'ah* as expressed in Anglo-Muhammadan law, which, as described above, misunderstood *shari'ah* as an inflexible, rule-based system at the expense of discretion.

Although the lower court had reached its decision that Ahmadis were apostates via consensus, the use of consensus was not in itself disputed as a valid method of adjudication, and the Justices did not dispense with it entirely. Rather, Justices Oldfield and Krishnan argued that the consensus reached by the lower court was not robust. Oldfield argued that as Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had died a mere 15 years earlier, 'it is difficult to suppose that Islam or even Islam in India can have come to any mature conclusion on his teachings'.²⁹ Furthermore, Oldfield continued, the consensus had been advanced by disreputable people using *fatawa* that they could not supply the provenance of.³⁰

²⁸ A.A. Ahmed, *Adjudicating Muslims: law, religion and the state in colonial India and post-colonial Pakistan* (Ph.D thesis, University of Chicago, 2006), p. 117.

²⁹ *Narantakath Avullah v. Parakkal Mammu*, p. 665.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 666

The most important factor in the Justices deciding in favour of the Ahmadi petitioner was the profession of the *kalima*. For Justice Krishnan, this fact stood in stark opposition to the dubious evidence offered by the accused. Ghulam Ahmad's own words referred to Muhammad as the last law-bearing prophet, Krishnan argued, and as such 'we must take the doctrines as propounded by Ahmad himself and accepted by his followers and not the distorted version of them as given by their opponents'.³¹ The Justices used previous cases that involved disputes between different Muslim sects to determine that 'monotheism and belief in Muhammad as God's prophet are the only essentials'.³² That Justices Oldfield and Krishnan would question the reputation of the '*ulema* and overrule their decision is significant given that non-interference in religious affairs was the watchword post-1857. This cannot be explained simply by the Justices' desire to safeguard the 'civil rights' of the Ahmadiyya as it is conceivable that this could have been attempted without the High Court passing judgement on theological questions. Instead, the Justices' refusal to defer to the consensus of the '*ulema* in this case can be seen as an attempt to reassert the authority of the British courts in such matters.

A similar flexibility in approach can be seen when the issue of the Ahmadiyya, marriage, and apostasy coincided elsewhere in the British Empire. For instance, Colonial Office records from 1951 show a request for information from J.J. Tawney, an administrator in Tanganyika, regarding whether Ahmadis were apostates from Islam or not. Advice from the Islamic law scholar Norman Anderson demonstrates the concern of the British to temper precedent with pragmatism in the later stages of empire. He argued that while a British Court would say that a non-Ahmadi Muslim woman could not claim dissolution

³¹ Ibid., p. 672

³² Ibid., p. 666. This was the first time a legal definition of a Muslim was put forward. A legal definition of a Hindu would not be advanced until 1961. De, 'The two husbands of Vera Tiscenko', p. 1019.

of marriage on the grounds of her Ahmadi husband's apostasy, a Liwali (Governor) would disagree. Anderson expressed sympathy for the woman's action, though for different reasons to the Governor. Somewhat paternalistically, he continued:

In my opinion it would be unwise to overrule the latter [the Liwalis] on appeal. Seeing the husband could divorce his wife at any moment and for any or no reason it seems only reasonable to let her claim a dissolution of marriage if she feels she cannot live with an Ahmadi - and almost all orthodox Muslims in East Africa would support this.³³

Despite the precedent set by a British Indian court in 1922, a case in 1935 suggests that the status of the Ahmadiyya continued to be contested in the interwar period. It originated in Bahawalnagar, Bahawalpur, a princely state south of British Punjab that in 1935 was under the administration of the Punjab States Agency. A civil case involving the annulment of a marriage between an Ahmadi man and a non-Ahmadi woman who had allegedly not been informed of his doctrinal affiliation was decided in the woman's favour. In a case lasting almost ten years, having first been referred to the State Court who then demanded a *de novo* enquiry, the woman's father did not let her go home with her husband after learning that he had become an Ahmadi, and claimed that as the husband was a *murtid* (apostate) and the marriage had not been consummated, it should be declared unlawful. The plaintiff's side produced six '*ulema* from different Muslim reform movements, including Deoband luminary Muhammad Anwar Shah Kashmiri and his protégé and future Chief Mufti of Deoband, Muhammad Shafi Deobandi. They proclaimed that the Ahmadiyya were not Muslim because they did not believe that Muhammad was the last prophet, that Ahmadis insulted both Muhammad and Jesus, and that they called other Muslims *kafirs*. They also produced *fatawa* from both within and

³³ 'Tanganyika: comment on the two sects of Islam into which the Ahmadiya can be divided and question of interpretation of Islamic marriage law', C. Winnington Ingram to J.J. Tawney, 6 December 1951, TNA, CO 822/434.

outside India to demonstrate the unanimity of their view. The Ahmadi side referred to the British Indian High Court judgements of 1916 and 1922 and argued that Ahmadi Muslim and Sunni Muslim essentials did not differ, but District Judge M. Muhammad Akbar was unmoved. Despite it not being one of the five pillars of Islam or one of the six articles of faith, he concluded that *khatm-e-nabuwwat* was fundamental to the religion, stating ‘this belief has been consistently followed by all sections of the Mohammadans since the days of the holy prophet’ and that Ahmadis ‘followed a sect or religion which fundamentally differed from Islam’.³⁴ Further, Akbar argued, Ahmadis practiced social exclusion by refusing to allow their daughters to marry non-Ahmadi Muslims and ‘these practices were also against the Islamic Shariat’.³⁵ As those who embraced Ahmadiyyat were guilty of *irtidad* (apostasy), a Muslim woman’s marriage to such a man could be automatically annulled.³⁶ According to diplomatic correspondence on this matter, the Ahmadiyya did not appeal against this judgement, perhaps because of the lack of wider applicability of this case at a time when their resources were being stretched battling the Ahrar in British courts in Punjab.

Citizenship, rights, and community after independence

As Indians went from being subjects of an imperial power to citizens of an independent country, their relationship to the state also underwent a discursive shift. Whilst the relationship of Indians to the state had previously been mediated through a collective identity, the newly autonomous government voiced its intention to move away from this model. This happened in tandem with the replacement of an internationally accepted

³⁴ ‘Annulment of the marriage of one Adbur Razak on his embracing Ahmedia (Qadian) Faith, 1935’, F&P, External, NAI, File No. 517.X.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

category of group rights with a globalised and individuated human rights regime.³⁷ Rochana Bajpai analyses the Constituent Assembly debates (1946-50) to bring the ideological underpinnings of this change to the fore, arguing that the Congress changed the terms of debate on national identity following Independence and created a new hegemonic political framework ‘in part through the taming of group rights in accordance with its vision of the nation’.³⁸ Other scholars have made broad references to this concept through phrases such as ‘Nehruvian consensus’, but Bajpai deconstructs this idea to specify its component parts, namely ‘the ascendancy of a normative vocabulary comprising secularism, democracy, justice, national unity, and development’.³⁹

Bajpai suggests that scholars have paid insufficient attention to the ideas about the possibilities for India’s future that were percolating in the Constituent Assembly and have instead focused on the impact of Partition on these discussions. She regards this emphasis as undue considering that the Constituent Assembly initially approved of political safeguards for minorities after the creation of Pakistan was announced and that political calculation meant that ‘the Congress could hardly afford to be seen as simply using its brute majority to force through a narrow party or Hindu agenda, on a question that had

³⁷ The timing of and reasons behind this change from group to individual rights is contested. Mark Mazower argues that the UN, held up as the bastion of human rights as we understand them today, was formed in the 1940s to protect imperial interests. That it became a forum for articulating anti-colonialism was by accident rather than design. Mazower attributes the shift from group to individual rights after World War II to the failure of the League of Nations’ framework of minority rights to offer effective protection to Jewish people in central Europe in the 1930s and 1940s (M. Mazower, *No enchanted palace: the end of empire and the ideological origins of the United Nations* (Princeton, NJ, 2009)). Samuel Moyn meanwhile argues that undue emphasis is given to the Holocaust in historical treatments of contemporary human rights. Instead, Moyn sees individual rights emerging from Jimmy Carter’s use of human rights to further US foreign policy aims in the 1970s (S. Moyn, *The last utopia: human rights in history* (Cambridge, MA, 2010)). Stefan-Ludwig Hoffman also sees the Holocaust as less important to the creation of an individual human rights regime than anti-Communist concerns in the context of decolonisation in the 1950s and 1960s. (S. Hoffmann, ‘Introduction: Genealogies of Human Rights’ in S. Hoffman (ed.), *Human Rights in the twentieth century* (New York City, 2011), pp. 1-26).

³⁸ R. Bajpai, *Debating difference. Group rights and liberal democracy in India* (New Delhi, 2011), p. 117.

³⁹ Ibid.

for so long and so bitterly divided Indians'.⁴⁰ However, this overstates the extent to which Nehru's conceptions of minority citizenship were shared by his colleagues, both privately and in public. Taylor Sherman shows that Nehru's pluralist vision of secularism was implemented unevenly and in largely symbolic ways in Hyderabad, leaving it unable to withstand the efforts of the state's new governors to apply secularism in largely majoritarian terms.⁴¹ Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister Vallabhbhai Patel provided a vivid illustration of the disconnect between Nehru and other sections of the Congress leadership during a Constituent Assembly debate on minority rights that occurred just days after Partition. He dismissed suggestions that pre-independence methods to safeguard the political rights of Muslims, such as separate electorates or a quota of seats for Muslims in the legislature, be retained, by arguing:

Those who want that kind of thing have a place in Pakistan, not here... we are laying the foundations of One Nation, and those who choose to divide again and sow the seeds of disruption will have no place, no quarter here...you must change your attitude, adapt yourself to the changed conditions... don't pretend to say "Oh, our affection is great for you." We have seen your affection. Let us forget the affection. Let us face the realities. Ask yourself whether you really want to stand here and cooperate with us or you want to play disruptive tactics.⁴²

By decontextualising the ideas expressed in the Constituent Assembly, Bajpai overlooks the ways that events on the ground influenced debates at the top levels of government.⁴³

Historians have not been immune to viewing policy decisions during this period as a one-way process, either. Joya Chatterji demonstrates that rather than being a top-down

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 65-66.

⁴¹ T.C. Sherman, *Muslim belonging in secular India: negotiating citizenship in postcolonial Hyderabad* (Cambridge, 2015).

⁴² Constituent Assembly Debates: Official Report. vol. V, 271., cited in G. Pandey, 'Can a Muslim be an Indian?', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 41, 4 (1999), p. 618.

⁴³ Bajpai acknowledges this and describes it as a choice rather than a limitation, stating 'unlike the historian who typically seeks to tell the whole story of conceptual and political change, my approach is akin to the social scientist in isolating one portion of a complex story for close analysis'. Bajpai, *Debating difference*, pp. 18-19.

imposition as scholars such as Vazira Zamindar have suggested, South Asian citizenship after 1947 was produced through an interactive negotiation. Initially, both Indian and Pakistani governments favoured *jus soli* (citizenship by place of birth) as the basis of citizenship to reassure minorities in their respective countries and prevent mass migrations. However, the actions of refugees and the resulting public mood towards ‘evacuee’ property forced both governments to change course, leaving religious minorities without the rights to property, freedom of mobility, and right to return that their fellow citizens enjoyed.⁴⁴ Niraja Gopal Jayal expands on this and argues that while the influence of Partition has increased over time,⁴⁵ as seen with how differently Bangladeshi Muslim immigrants have been treated compared to diasporic Indians, who are disproportionately Hindu and wealthy,⁴⁶ tensions between *jus soli* and *jus sanguinis* (citizenship by blood) were present almost immediately after 1947, with distinctions being made between “migrants” and “refugees” in Articles 6 and 7 of the Constitution primarily on the basis of religion.⁴⁷ In Jayal’s view, such factors undermine the ‘smug shibboleths that have characterized the standard view of the foundational values of the Indian Constitution – robustly inclusionary, multicultural before the word was invented, and a model for diverse and plural societies’.⁴⁸ Thus although the Constituent Assembly debates indicated that the relationship between Indians and the state would no longer be mediated through a collective identity, the shift in political discourse did not usher in a transformation of state-society relations in practice.

⁴⁴ J. Chatterji, ‘South Asian histories of citizenship, 1946-1970’, *The Historical Journal*, 55, 4 (2012), pp. 1049-1071.

⁴⁵ N.G. Jayal, *Citizenship and its discontents: an Indian history* (Cambridge, Mass, 2013), chapter 2.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-60.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

The hybridity of the Indian legal system encapsulates the myriad and often conflicting ways that citizenship, rights, and secularism were defined and enacted after Independence. Minorities were treated as individuals except when claiming their religious and cultural rights, which they could do on a collective basis, most frequently via personal law. There was a modest attempt at reform of Hindu personal law in part because of this dissonance. Rina Verma Williams argues that despite Hindus being divided on what reforms should take place, Nehru pushed through four relatively progressive Hindu code bills in the 1950s. His vision of reform for Hindu personal law to be more compatible with the values expressed in the Constitution was shared by only a minority of his co-religionists, but he felt able to press ahead as a member of the majority religion himself. He did not, therefore, feel comfortable doing the same for MPL and thus ‘helped create the idea that Hindus were progressive and reformists where Muslims were not’.⁴⁹ This was exacerbated by the persistence of colonial ideas about the basis of religious personal law. While Muslim reformers had been able to point to scriptural sources when making arguments about authentic religious practices, Hindu reformers lacked access to similar arguments. Consequently, Eleanor Newbigin argues, Hindu reformers ‘drew on a more secular discursive framework’ out of necessity, not because Hinduism was inherently more compatible with secularism than Islam.⁵⁰ After 1947, the widening of the gap between Hindu and Muslim population numbers in India as well as the ideological convergence between Hindu reform and the ‘Nehruvian consensus’ had implications for state-society relations; as Newbigin explains, it made Hindu reformers ‘more dependent

⁴⁹ R.V. Williams, *Postcolonial politics and personal laws: Colonial legal legacies and the Indian state* (New Delhi, 2006), p. 18.

⁵⁰ Newbigin, ‘Personal law and citizenship...’, p. 32.

on, and therefore brought them into closer alliance with, the structures of civil power and apparatus of the state' than their Muslim counterparts.⁵¹

The friction between political discourse and practice, between group rights and individual rights, and the reform of some personal laws but not others, led to what Bajpai has described as a 'justificatory deficit' in perceptions of accommodations for religious minorities.⁵² This gave the impression that the recognition and protection of religious and cultural rights were concessions from a benevolent government rather than entitlements, and emboldened Hindu nationalists to accuse Congress of minority appeasement. The Shah Bano case is the clearest illustration of this.⁵³ The Supreme Court decided that a Muslim woman's former husband was to provide his ex-wife maintenance beyond *iddat*. This is the waiting period a woman must observe after the death of her spouse (four months) or divorce (three months) before she can remarry. However, Rajiv Gandhi's government overturned the decision by passing The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act (1986). It was not that the Congress had abandoned its aim of eventually abolishing personal law in favour of a Uniform Civil Code; rather, it was argued that the impetus for this change had to come from within the Muslim community. By arguing that they were acting in accordance with the community's wishes, the Congress government allowed the most vocal members of the '*ulema* to act as the sole arbiters of a diverse range of opinion across Muslim communities in India and to cast

⁵¹ Ibid. For an exploration of the Hindu Code Bills, gender equality, and political economy, see E. Newbigin, *The Hindu family and the emergence of modern India: law, citizenship and community* (Cambridge, 2013).

⁵² Bajpai, *Debating difference*, p. 169.

⁵³ For more on this see for instance Bajpai, *Debating Difference*, chapter 5; Z. Hasan, 'Religion and Politics in a Secular State: Law, Community and Gender' in Z. Hasan (ed.), *Politics and the State in India* (New Delhi, 2000), pp. 269-289; R. Kapur, 'Un-veiling equality: disciplining the 'other' woman through human rights discourse' in A.M. Emon, M.S. Ellis and B. Glahn (eds.), *Islamic law and international human rights law: searching for common grounds?* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 265-290; N.G. Jayal, 'Secularism, identities and representative democracy' in M. Hasan (ed.), *Islam, communities and the nation: Muslim identities in South Asia and beyond* (New Delhi, 1998), 159-178.

Islam as uniformly conservative and oppressive of women.⁵⁴ This, in turn, enabled the Hindu right to claim that they were the true defenders of secularism, as opposed to the Congress who were peddlers of what the Hindu nationalist politician L.K. Advani would come to term ‘pseudo-secularism’, reinforcing the association between Hinduism and secularism.

Shihabuddin Imbichi Koya Thangal v. Ahammed Koya (1970)

Many of the complex dynamics of the post-1947 legal and political landscape that found clear expression in the controversy surrounding the Shah Bano case can be detected in a case heard in the Kerala High Court by Justice Krishna Iyer in 1970. In this case, the legal status of the Ahmadiyya was debated once more through the prism of marriage in Malabar. Iyer’s deliberations demonstrate continuities between the colonial and postcolonial state in how communal quandaries were viewed and minority communities were managed, not least because of Iyer’s extensive use of the 1922 judgement to bolster his decision. Aside from privileging scripture over other forms of religious authority, Iyer also conflated MPL and Muslim identity. Further, he categorised sectarian disputes as unreason in a similarly paternalistic tone.

Iyer heard the appeal of a *qazi* (a Muslim magistrate or judge) implicated in the bigamous marriage of a non-Ahmadi Muslim woman while her first marriage to an Ahmadi had not been officially dissolved in *Shihabuddin Imbichi Koya Thangal v. Ahammed Koya*

⁵⁴ The discussion here is about what motivated the Congress and how it was framed by its opponents. However, this is not to say that in its consequences, the Act was without merit. Flavia Agnes points to how it bestowed greater economic rights to women than the Indian Constitution, whether advertently or inadvertently. F. Agnes, ‘Transgressing boundaries of gender and identity’ in *Economic and Political Weekly*, 37, 36 (2002), p. 3695.

(1970). At the outset, Iyer acknowledged that the issue of apostasy was not something ordinarily taken up by the Indian court system, noting sheepishly ‘my duty is as embarrassing as my jurisdiction is limited’.⁵⁵ However, the charge of bigamy could only be avoided on this basis. Thus, Iyer had to decide whether in becoming an Ahmadi, the husband had ceased to be a Muslim, thereby initiating an automatic annulment.

At the behest of the petitioner’s counsel, Iyer briefly considered the role of consensus in Islam. In the absence of ‘broad unanimity in the Islamic world’ and the failure of the petitioner’s counsel to provide proof in making this argument, Iyer concluded that he could not render Ahmadis apostates on the basis of *ijma*’.⁵⁶ Despite his more general allusions to the *ummah*, it is clear that Pakistan in particular was the litmus test for Iyer. He baulked at the idea that India could be the first of the two countries to take such an exclusionary step:

Islam is an international religion, as it were, and is not confined to Malabar or India...it would be extraordinary if on a narrow view of what people in one region think a sect were to be excommunicated, thus leading to the grotesque sequel of a person being un-Islam [sic] in Malabar is [sic] but devout Musalman in Pakisthan [sic] and in other countries.⁵⁷

Iyer reinforced this by referring to Zafarullah Khan, noting that it would be ‘startling if one of the most distinguished representatives of a country which has adopted Islam as the State religion should himself be deemed an apostate’.⁵⁸

It is difficult to ignore the dramatic irony of Iyer’s argument, made only four years before the Ahmadiyya would be declared non-Muslim in Pakistan. However, this rehearsal of

⁵⁵ *Shihabuddin Imbichi Koya Thangal v. Ahammed Koya* (1970), *Kerala Law Times* 1971, p. 68.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

the secular/theocratic binary that underpinned India and Pakistan's projects of self-imagination was ultimately a secondary point in his deliberations. Like Justices Krishnan and Coldfield, Iyer also saw the *kalima* as what apostasy in Islam primarily hinged on. Indeed, he made extensive use of the 1922 court judgement to support his conclusion. Iyer's own reading of Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad's exegesis on the Qur'an led him to conclude that 'even the basic teachings of Ahamad [sic] do not give room for the tall contention that Ahamadees [sic] are infidels'.⁵⁹ Thus Iyer could not accept the appellant's argument that no bigamous marriage had taken place as in his view, the *kalima* enabled heterodox sects to remain within the fold of Islam. As he put it, 'minor cults in every religion cannot be equated with major desertion of faith even if it may produce quakes in a section of the community'.⁶⁰ A palpable sense of unease runs through Iyer's judgement, reminiscent of colonial anxieties about the potential for communal and sectarian tensions to spiral out of control and disturb the social order. As Gauri Viswanathan has argued in her work on conversion in India, 'by undoing the concept of fixed, unalterable identities, conversion unsettles the boundaries by which selfhood, citizenship, nationhood, and community are defined, exposing these as permeable borders'.⁶¹ By centring the *kalima* in this way, Iyer, like his predecessors, mitigated the disruptive potential of new religious movements to existing modes of social organisation by allowing for the assimilation and containment of heterodoxy.

As described in Chapter 1, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's theology drew on a diverse range of traditions and ideologies. As well as Sufism and millenarianism, aspects of Ahmadi thought share much in common with Muslim reform movements that also became

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 74

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 68

⁶¹ G. Viswanathan, *Outside the fold. Conversion, modernity and belief* (Princeton, 1998), p. 16.

prominent in nineteenth-century British India. An important element of Ghulam Ahmad's argument for the continuation of prophecy was that it was necessary to ensure Islam's survival and its ability to adapt to contemporary times. We have seen that such a mechanism was anathema to Muhammad Iqbal, and Sayyid Ahmad Khan also dismissed the Ahmadiyya movement as 'preposterous'.⁶² However, what Ahmad Khan, Iqbal, and Ghulam Ahmad shared was a preoccupation with relevance in the face of Western conceptions of modernity and rationality, no matter how incomplete their engagement with these ideas might have been.⁶³ This is especially evident when looking at Ghulam Ahmad's responses to Christian missionary efforts. He took particular exception to 'childish doctrines' concerning the crucifixion and its relation to original sin, arguing 'the suicide of a Messiah has no conceivable relation to the remission of another man's sins'. Such narratives, he argued, 'on account of their absurdity are rejected by every sensible person'.⁶⁴ Both Ghulam Ahmad and Ahmad Khan emphasised the compatibility of science and Islam, a project that the Ahmadiyya has continued especially as atheism has supplanted Christianity as the biggest perceived threat to Islam.⁶⁵ Arguments in favour of *jihad* as an armed struggle and loyalty to the Ottoman Caliphate were similarly dismissed by these figures, who each appealed to Muslims to see such positions as unreasonable given their relative religious freedom.⁶⁶

As noted above, while Indian secularism and Hindu reform in the early post-independence years might be seen as more congruent on the surface, this was more to do with political

⁶² Cited in B. Van der Linden, *Moral languages from colonial Punjab: the Singh Sabha, Arya Samaj and Ahmadiyahs* (New Delhi, 2008), p. 130.

⁶³ F. Devji, 'Apologetic Modernity', *Modern Intellectual History*, 4, 1 (2007), pp. 61-76.

⁶⁴ Cited in van der Linden, *Moral languages from colonial Punjab*, p. 184.

⁶⁵ See for instance Ahmadi publications such as Mirza Tahir Ahmad, *Revelation, rationality, knowledge and truth* (Tilford, Surrey, 1998).

⁶⁶ M.G. Ahmad, *The British Government and jihad*, T.S. Ahmad and L. Rahman (trans.) (Tilford, Surrey, 2006); Jalal, *Self and sovereignty*, chapter 6; van der Linden, *Moral languages*, p. 200.

expediency than any notions of natural compatibility. This is highlighted by how the aforementioned Islamic modernist trends also dovetailed with aspects of secularism after 1947. As other scholars working on Muslim identities in postcolonial South Asia have shown, this experience was not unique to India or the Ahmadiyya.⁶⁷ Returning to the Kerala High Court in 1970, this confluence is clearly articulated by Iyer throughout his judgement. His characterisation of the ‘ulema as uniformly inflexible and unreasonable shared much in common with Muhammad Munir’s characterisation of the ‘ulema in his report on the 1953 Lahore disturbances. Ali Usman Qasmi describes the way Munir created a value-laden opposition between ‘mullahs and modernity’ to serve his own ideological proclivities.⁶⁸ Similarly, Iyer pitted his comparable depiction of the ‘ulema against a more favourable assessment of Ahmadi theology. For instance, he argued:

Total conformity, rigid adherence to a static doctrine and suppression of all ferment of spiritual thought pave the way for stagnation and decline. Every religion has produced from time to time men of light and learning who have within the limits of the fundamental framework of each religion contributed spiritually to the upgrading of the human personality.⁶⁹

In framing his argument this way, in words not dissimilar from Ghulam Ahmad’s own rationale for establishing the Jama’at, Iyer implicitly ascribed normative value to Ahmadi theology. In so doing, he demonstrated the capacity of the law to be more than a site of ossification, despite its continuities with colonial modes of administration.⁷⁰ By extolling the adaptability and rationality of the Ahmadiyya, Iyer used the law to comment more

⁶⁷ See for instance H. Iqtidar, *Secularizing Islamists? Jama’at-e-Islami and Jama’at-ud-Da’wa in Urban Pakistan* (Chicago, 2011); R. Gupta, *Piety, politics, and patriotism in Kargil, India* (D.Phil thesis, University of Oxford, 2011).

⁶⁸ A.U. Qasmi, *The Ahmadis and the politics of religious exclusion in Pakistan* (London, 2014), p. 28.

⁶⁹ *Shihabuddin Imbichi Koya Thangal v. Ahammed Koya*, p. 74.

⁷⁰ In her analysis of Pakistan’s relationship to Islam, Naveeda Khan argues that the law should be seen as ‘a fecund site for experimentation over what it is to be a Muslim’. N. Khan, *Muslim becoming: aspiration and skepticism in Pakistan* (New Delhi, 2012), p. 206.

broadly on Indian society, and positioned the Ahmadiyya as a model for religious minorities living in an ostensibly secular system.

The fact that Iyer decided that Ahmadis were Muslims should not obscure the fact that for this question to be considered at all, there had to exist a possibility that he could decide they were not Muslim. It is worth reflecting on the implications of this counterfactual, not as a ‘parlour game’ but to explicate the potential for crisis making that this question had. The most immediate problem would have been that Ahmadis would be prevented from accessing the rights promised to all Indians under Article 25 of the Constitution, that is ‘freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion’.⁷¹ Furthermore, even if this would have rendered Ahmadis non-Muslim *de jure* but otherwise able to live as Muslims as was the case in Pakistan between 1974 and 1984, this would still have created a situation where the wife could secure an annulment under the terms of MPL but the marital status of her husband, having lost access to that system, would be undetermined. An Ahmadi in such a situation would still be married according to his faith, but it is not clear which system of personal law he would be governed by. The potential for difficulties arising from such a split status can be illustrated by *Bruker v. Marcovitz*, a case heard by Canada’s Supreme Court in 2007. Under Jewish law, a husband has to grant his wife a *get* (religious divorce) of his own free will. In this case, the couple in question were divorced under civil law, but the husband refused to grant her a religious divorce. In the absence of a *get*, the woman was unable to remarry within her faith. This is known as *agunah*, literally meaning that Bruker was a ‘chained’ wife. Her only recourse was to sue for breach of contract and argue that Marcovitz had previously

⁷¹ Article 25, *Constitution of India*, <https://indiankanoon.org/doc/631708/> [last accessed 4 August 2017].

promised he would grant her a religious divorce.⁷² The Supreme Court ruled in favour of the woman, acknowledging after a further appeal by Marcovitz that Bruker had been denied her right to religious freedom and gender equality.⁷³

Such cases point to the difficulty of seeing religion as something that can simply be relegated to the private sphere as well as the problems that arise when civil and personal law cannot be reconciled and one is privileged over the other. Moreover, the tension between the components of religious freedom as it is commonly understood, that is freedom *to* practice and freedom *from* discrimination, is brought into view. In ruling that Ahmadis were Muslim, Iyer was able to avoid a clash between MPL and the Indian Constitution. Further, in deciding this theological question himself, Iyer did not have to engage with intra-community contests over religious authority and representation.

One might expect *Badr* to have made much of this judgement. However, save for one article on 25 February 1971, scant reference was made to it in the months either side of the judgement.⁷⁴ Though it occupied the front page of the aforementioned edition of the paper, the treatment the judgement received was unusually prosaic in the context of the usual tone and style of the paper. It mainly consisted of an article from the daily newspaper *Mathrubhumi*, translated from Malayalam by an Ahmadi *muballigh* (missionary) based in Madras. The *muballigh*'s accompanying note was not especially illuminating in its content or language, either. One reason for this reluctance to be too

⁷² Asad Ahmad notes the way that liberal law in Pakistan, especially in the areas of contract, property, and copyright law, was used to justify the increasing exclusion of Ahmadis. This began from 1974 but intensified after Ordinance XX was issued in 1984 and the right of Ahmadis to practice Islam was effectively criminalised. A.A. Ahmed, 'The paradoxes of Ahmadiyya identity: legal appropriation of Muslim-ness and the construction of Ahmadiyya difference' in N. Khan (ed.), *Beyond crisis: Re-evaluating Pakistan* (London, 2010), pp. 273-314.

⁷³ Cited in A. Shachar, 'Privatizing diversity: a cautionary tale from religious arbitration in family law', *Theoretical Inquiries in Law*, 9, 2 (2008), pp. 573-607.

⁷⁴ *al-Badr*, Qadian: 25 February 1971, p. 1.

triumphalist about the judgement may have been because of the shift taking place in how Ahmadis were conceiving of the opposition against them. Chapter 5 will explore how in the 1950s, the Jama'at advanced a vision of Indian Muslim solidarity within which sectarian differences could be expressed. However, Chapter 6 will show how this would come under strain in later decades; anti-Ahmadi action would be framed as proof of the Prophet's prediction that the *ummah* would divide into 73 sects, with only one of them representing True Islam. Thus according to one article from *Badr*'s 21 October 1965 edition, annulments resulting from *takfir* (pronouncement of unbelief) were disheartening, but should be tolerated.⁷⁵

The only noteworthy detail from *Badr*'s account of the judgement was that the involvement of the *qazi* whose appeal Iyer was deciding was not limited to conducting the second marriage, but he had in fact issued a *fatwa* against KP Ahammed Koya once he became an Ahmadi. It was this *fatwa* that had caused his father-in-law to arrange his wife's marriage to another man.⁷⁶ Whilst the list of people Koya filed a case against involved his estranged wife, neither the text of Iyer's judgement nor this account in *Badr* allowed any space for her voice.

Conclusion

The nature and consequences of conflicts between civil and personal law in India illuminates much about the values and norms of its society and the character of social change. The law is not just a site where identities are expressed but is also where they are

⁷⁵ Ibid., 21 October 1965, p. 9.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 25 February 1971, p. 1.

formed and take shape. The similarities between the two main cases that have been considered in this chapter, separated by 50 years, an anti-colonial struggle, and the formation of two sovereign nations, suggest that little change had occurred in the treatment of religious minorities and sectarian controversies in India in the intervening period. The question of whether Ahmadis were Muslim under the law was debated through the language of religious authenticity and a return to scripture in both 1922 and 1970. In relying so heavily on the 1922 judgement, in concurring that the *kalima* was the fundamental basis of Islam, and implicitly chastising the '*ulema* for their failure to be sufficiently rational, Justice Iyer displayed a state paternalism and a desire to reassert the authority of the established order to decide such matters that would not have seemed out of place to his predecessors, Justices Oldfield and Krishnan. Thus despite the discursive shift from non-interference and cultural relativism under the *Raj* towards the elision of religious difference as a way of managing a pluralistic society after independence, Iyer's decision cannot be seen as simply a triumph of Indian secularism.

Although Iyer was able to stave off a confrontation between civil and religious laws, the Shah Bano controversy demonstrates that the dilemmas arising from India's hybrid legal system could not be deferred indefinitely. As described above, the threat of Hindu majoritarianism has imbued personal law with an inflated significance as its protection became conflated with the safety of Muslim identity in India. Furthermore, the perceived severity of the threat towards personal law encouraged the minimisation of dissenting opinions. This was enabled by the prominent role played by the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) in opposing the Supreme Court's decision in the Shah Bano case. The dominance of that organisation helped perpetuate the idea of a unified Muslim community that spoke with one voice (notwithstanding its exclusion of the Ahmadiyya).

Once the heightened political climate around the Shah Bano case abated, a somewhat less polarised discussion on the reform of personal law was able to take place.

Yet it remains an intensely fraught and thus faltering conversation. In his analysis of MPL in twenty-first century India, Justin Jones notes the ‘fragile double language’ employed by members of the AIMPLB eager to maintain the notion that personal law is off-limits to state interference as a way of resisting the imposition of a Uniform Civil Code, while at the same time desiring to codify MPL.⁷⁷ The fact that a practice like triple *talaq* (divorce), which allows a Muslim man to legally divorce his wife by saying the word ‘*talaq*’ three times, was only abolished in India in 2017 even though it had been banned in many Muslim majority countries, including Pakistan, decades ago, provides another demonstration of the sense of fragility of religious minority identity in India. However, a concern to resist state interference has not been the only reason why personal law reform has been so difficult. Intra-community contests have become more apparent as the AIMPLB broadened its remit after the Shah Bano case. For instance, the triple *talaq* issue brought differences between AIMPLB members to the fore, as Barelwi clerics argued for its retention whilst Shi’a representatives argued for its abolition. The compromise position, that it remain legal but be thought of as inadvisable, pleased no one.⁷⁸ Such disputes were formalised by the creation of parallel boards, which both reflect theological differences between Muslims in India and serve as mechanisms by which established hierarchies of authority can be challenged *within* these communities.⁷⁹ The creation of a Muslim Women’s Personal Law Board in 2005 demonstrates a tentative step towards

⁷⁷ J. Jones, “‘Signs of churning’: Muslim Personal Law and public contestation in twenty-first century India’, *Modern Asian Studies*, 44, 1 (2010), p. 189.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 197.

redressing the marginalisation of the very voices that are often the most adversely affected by such debates.

Chapter 5 – *Siyāsi etihād*: “Muslim politics”, secularism, and sectarianism

Chapter 3 discussed the difficulty for Ahmadis in Qadian in finding refuge in a broader Indian Muslim identity during the crises of Partition and wars with Pakistan. It considered the ways that *Badr* tried to use the Jama’at’s specificity to its advantage by demonstrating Ahmadi exceptionalism. This was to strengthen their claim to belonging and as a protective measure against implicit and explicit accusations of disloyalty from the government and opponents of the Ahmadiyya, an endeavour that sometimes involved contrasting other Indian Muslims unfavourably with Ahmadis. This chapter widens the focus from East Punjab to consider how the Jama’at carried out a parallel project of building solidarity and seeking inclusion within a broader Indian Muslim community when it was unencumbered by the exigencies of war or warlike conditions.

The meaning of Partition for the politics of both countries it created was far from a foregone conclusion on 14-15 August 1947. Gyanendra Pandey argues that the fact that it took Gandhi visiting the makeshift refugee camp at Delhi’s Purana Qila on 13 September for the Indian government to state clearly that it took responsibility for internally displaced Muslims ‘is a telling comment on the place assigned to the Muslims in the early days of independent India, and on the struggle that had to be waged to establish a nation which declared plurality and secularism, and a sociality consonant with those principles, to be its goals’.¹ In this context, it is understandable that the Ahmadiyya might feel that Muslims of different hues would need to band together to negotiate their place in a Hindu majority country, despite the state’s rhetoric of inclusion. Subscribing

¹ G. Pandey, *Remembering partition: violence, nationalism and history in India* (New Delhi, 2003), pp. 140-41.

to homogenised communal categories integral to colonial governance, and increasingly, to postcolonial methods for managing a plural society, could continue to offer Ahmadis a sense of safety in numbers, a capacious identity into which they could disappear. Thus, at first glance, the stance of the Ahmadiyya towards other Indian Muslims after 1947 can be seen as a continuation of a narrative of Muslim unity that dominated the colonial period, particularly in the context of the movement for Pakistan.² However, this chapter suggests that below the surface, Ahmadis were thinking more creatively about unity and sectarian identity than this. While the Jama'at stressed the need for togetherness in the face of majoritarian politics, this did not entail subsuming what made the Ahmadiyya distinct as it was argued that sectarian debates needed to continue to further the ultimate aim of Muslims to find and defend the path to True Islam.

Before outlining the chapter, an overview of “Muslim politics” in early postcolonial India will be given to contextualise the discussion. The use of quotation marks here is to acknowledge the fact that Indian Muslims had so many differences, of region, class, and sect, amongst others, that its use can obscure as much as it reveals. Similarly, the definition of politics can be contested. “Muslim politics” could mean the participation of Muslims in electoral politics, a vision of state-society relations with Islam at its centre, or, as Jinnah had wanted, for a minority identity to no longer be a factor in the distribution of political power. However, while the bluntness of the term means its use as an analytic category is limited, it is still important to examine the experiences that all Indian Muslims shared during this time; that of being grouped together and minoritised. The levelling

² As mentioned throughout this thesis, the work of Justin Jones on Shi'as in colonial UP has been significant in challenging this picture. See J. Jones, *Shi'a Islam in colonial India. religion, community and sectarianism* (Delhi, 2012) and J. Jones, “‘That Pakistan that is going to be Sunnistan’: Indian Shi'a responses to the Pakistan movement’ in A.U. Qasmi and M.E. Robb, *Muslims against the Muslim League: critiques of the idea of Pakistan* (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 350-380.

effect of official categorisation and its consequences meant that complex identities became two dimensional, as in the case of Meos in Rajasthan who became simply Muslim,³ or Adivasis in Jharkhand who became Hindu,⁴ due to what Yoginder Sikand describes as the independent state's inability to deal with liminal communities.⁵ This of course had started before Partition but was exacerbated by it. Even if the sociological basis for assumptions of unity were unsound, it is nonetheless true that a public discourse around the perceived shared interests and issues of a singular Muslim community informed, and indeed, continues to inform Indian politics.

Organisation around an Indian Muslim identity would have felt next to impossible in the aftermath of Partition. The atmosphere was oppressive, not just in terms of the looming threat of violence and overt discrimination, but also in terms of what possibilities could be imagined for full participation in independent India's civic and political life in the years immediately after 1947. While the dominant discourse of the government may have emphasised equal citizenship regardless of religion, in this state of flux and insecurity, it was difficult for minority groups to be reassured by the promises of secularism. Vallabhbhai Patel could be relied upon to remind Indian Muslims that they were only conditionally accepted. During a by-election campaign in Lucknow in January 1948, he condemned Muslims who were continuing to engage in 'communal' politics, warning that 'a Hindu State would become inevitable instead of a secular democratic state' if they did not fall in line, adding 'you do not know what it is costing the government to protect you'.⁶ While Patel was one of the most high-profile Ministers espousing such views, he

³ S. Mayaram, *Resisting regimes: myth, memory and the shaping of Muslim identity* (Delhi, 1997).

⁴ K. Sinha-Kerkhoff, *Tyranny of Partition: Hindus in Bangladesh and Muslims in India* (New Delhi, 2006).

⁵ Y. Sikand, *The origins and development of the Tablighi Jama'at (1920-2000)* (New Delhi, 2002), p. 155.

⁶ M. Hasan, *Legacy of a divided nation: India's Muslims since Independence* (London, 1997), p. 148.

was by no means alone amongst Congress politicians in demonstrating a view of secularism as a gift dependent on good behaviour rather than an ideological commitment based on notions of pluralism and equality.⁷ As discussed in Chapter 4, this was not necessarily because there was a dispute amongst mainstream leaders over the centrality of secularism to India's postcolonial future. Mushirul Hasan notes the stigma opposing secularism carried, at least in the first decade after Independence.⁸ Instead, this dissonance can partly be explained because secularism was, and indeed still is, an umbrella term that is understood in a variety of ways. For instance, Taylor Sherman argues that minority rights, non-discrimination, and majoritarianism all staked a claim to Indian secularism.⁹ While Irfan Ahmad is convincing in suggesting that the opposite of secularism for Nehru was not communalism but majoritarianism,¹⁰ Nehru's position was not necessarily reflective of how secularism was understood by other Indian politicians.

Omar Khalidi describes the abolition of separate electorates by the Constituent Assembly in May 1949 as akin to a 'political castration', designed to remove whatever remnants of political power Indian Muslims continued to hold in the early years of independence.¹¹ Though the abolition of separate electorates was not unexpected, it was nonetheless a clear institutional signal that the relationship between the state and Indian Muslims would be remade so that the idea of protecting 'minority rights' would not take the same shape as it had done under the *Raj*. In this fraught and precarious context, Muslims tried to recalibrate their participation in India's political system. Understandably, there was no

⁷ Ibid., chapter 5, *passim*.

⁸ Ibid., p. 164.

⁹ T.C. Sherman, *Muslim belonging in secular India: negotiating citizenship in postcolonial Hyderabad* (Cambridge, 2015), p. 15.

¹⁰ I. Ahmad, *Islamism and democracy in India: the transformation of the Jamaat-e-Islami*, (Princeton, 2009), p. 17.

¹¹ O. Khalidi, *Indian Muslims since Independence*, (New Delhi, 1995), p. 229.

consensus on which strategy would be the safest to follow, both nationally and at a more micro level. Leaders from a variety of ideological traditions sought to represent the interests of Indian Muslims, namely former Muslim Leaguers, Muslim nationalists affiliated with the Congress, educationalists, and scholars. Who would win the most support amongst these groups was not necessarily predictable and varied from place to place.

Detailed regional studies have begun to fill in this otherwise broad picture of politics in the early post-Partition period for Indian Muslims. In West Bengal, Joya Chatterji demonstrates that ‘the hard calculus of politics’ enabled leaders with Muslim League connections to be more welcome into the post-independence political establishment than old Congress allies.¹² This did not signify improved fortunes for ordinary Muslims, who were being removed from border zones and systematically disenfranchised.¹³ Some attempted to demonstrate their readiness to assimilate by giving up rights to public space that had been hard-won, for instance, the right to slaughter cattle during Baqr Eid.¹⁴ However, this was seen as a gesture of surrender rather than compromise, meaning that it yielded little respite.¹⁵ Sherman provides an illustration of the lack of consensus in practice by looking at Hyderabad in the run-up to India’s first general election (1951-52). She argues that Muslim candidates had to be very careful in articulating their politics, lest they be written off as simply ‘communal’. Many avoided speaking for Muslim interests, emphasising socioeconomic issues without exploring how the two might have intersected.¹⁶ This caution went beyond religious community and extended to other

¹² J. Chatterji, *The spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947-67* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 174-75.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

¹⁴ Hasan notes that the same action was also carried out as a way to demonstrate loyalty in Bareilly. Hasan, *Legacy of a divided nation*, p. 189.

¹⁵ Chatterji, *The spoils of Partition*, pp. 177-180.

¹⁶ Sherman, *Muslim belonging in secular India*, p. 136.

movements that were associated with separatism, such as the Dravidian movement that Muslims had participated in before 1947.¹⁷ Muslim citizens were divided between those who thought eschewing party politics altogether and concentrating on bolstering their economic position was the best way forward, and others that felt that joining the Congress would offer the community the best protection.¹⁸

It was not until the mid-1960s that there was an effort to organise Muslims politically on a national level with the founding of the Majlis-e-Mushawarat, a coalition of Muslim groups that promoted candidates who supported issues such as the recognition of Urdu as a second official language in North Indian states, Muslim Personal Law, and the minority character of Aligarh, ultimately to little electoral success.¹⁹ What had changed? Many scholars point to Nehru's death in 1964 as a turning point. It was not just the symbolic nature of the loss of India's first Prime Minister heralding the end of an era; rather, it underscored a growing sense that Nehru's vision of secularism, where the link between religion and politics would eventually become irrelevant but in the meantime all religions would be treated equally, had failed to gain hegemony and grow roots within the rest of the party. Sherman argues that the way this problem manifested in Hyderabad was that Nehruvian secularism was unevenly applied, often enacted through symbolic gestures, and was not institutionalised.²⁰ Hasan puts this more strongly, arguing that Nehru's personal vision of secularism did not prevail because of his failure to perform an 'ideological cleansing' of the Congress, allowing figures like Rajendra Prasad to hinder his efforts to consign communal categories in Indian politics to the past.²¹

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 143.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 128-131.

¹⁹ M. Hasan, 'Indian Muslims since Independence: In search of integration and identity' in *Third World Quarterly*, 10, 2 (April 1988), pp. 823-24

²⁰ Sherman, *Muslim belonging in secular India*, p. 14.

²¹ M. Hasan, *Islam in the Subcontinent: Muslims in a plural society*, (New Delhi, 2002), p. 375.

Ahmadis themselves held to the line that they were a purely ‘spiritual’ Jama’at that had no involvement in politics when interacting with government officials.²² However, the next section will question the diagnosis of political quietism that is prevalent in the secondary literature on this subject. It will be argued that minority groups in a majoritarian system are usually forced into a non-threatening posture when advocating for issues of community importance. For instance, the campaign to protect the status of Urdu was couched in ‘cultural’ rather than ‘political’ terms, not because there is necessarily a meaningful distinction to be made between these categories, but as a matter of expediency. Instead of highlighting the language’s theological importance to the Jama’at specifically, their advocacy instead accorded with the arguments of both Muslim and non-Muslim proponents of Urdu.

Following this, the Ahmadiyya’s engagement with secular democracy will be considered. The section will question the idea that sectarian differences were of little importance or scarcely worth dwelling upon, which has until recently dominated the historiography on Indian Muslims in both late colonial and early postcolonial India. I will look at how historical, sectarian, and doctrinal differences affected the responses of groups such as the Jama’at-i-Islami Hind (JIH) to politics in India after 1947 compared to the response of the Ahmadiyya.

The final section will build on this by looking at the Jama’at’s attempt to put forward a vision of Indian Muslim identity that encompassed both political unity (*siyāsi etihād*) to contend with the threat of majoritarianism and the ability to retain and indeed, be proud

²² See for instance *al-Badr*, 7 October 1965, p. 2, p. 8; 2 December 1965, p. 2.

of specific sectarian affiliations within a broader framework. This was an effort to counter the idea that sectarian differences were as harmful as the negative connotations attached to the concept of ‘sectarianism’ imply. It will be argued that in the Jama’at’s view, sectarian differences did not need to be articulated with malice and hostility. Instead, civil debate could be had and contained under the broader umbrella of Islam. To borrow a phrase from Soumen Mukherjee, this was a kind of ‘Muslim political ecumenism’.²³ Indian Ahmadis did not believe themselves to be putting forward a revolutionary understanding of cross-sect solidarity but instead rooted their call for political unity in Islamic scriptures and traditions. Responses to the anti-Ahmadi Lahore riots of 1953 as they were printed in *Badr* will be used to examine how successful this call was.

Culture, politics, religion? The case of Urdu

The ability of Indian Muslims to escape the label of communalism when advocating for community interests was an unwinnable task. Nonetheless, great care was taken in the way pertinent issues were expressed to avoid the designation. One way this was done was for culture rather than religion to be the dominant theme in the claiming of rights via constitutional protections for minority groups. It is not that there was an attempt to elide the links, for instance, between Aligarh and Indian Muslims. However, given attacks in the UP Legislative Assembly and in Parliament about Aligarh’s alleged continuing links with Pakistan,²⁴ in order to remove any tinge of separatism, the movement to protect its

²³ S. Mukherjee, *Ismailism and Islam in modern South Asia: community and identity in the age of religious internationals* (Cambridge, 2017), p. 6; passim. In describing the Aga Khan’s ‘Muslim political ecumenism’ in the late colonial period, Mukherjee expands on the idea of ‘Shi’a ecumenism’ put forward by Faisal Devji to explain how Shi’a figures attempted to bring together a national Muslim community under the Muslim League whilst also making space for themselves in an increasingly Sunni-dominated version of Islam. F. Devji, *Muslim Zion: Pakistan as a political idea* (London, 2013), p. 67.

²⁴ Hasan, *Legacy of a divided nation*, p. 275.

status was expressed as one to retain its 'Islamic character' as a centre of cultural importance for Indian Muslims.²⁵ This was not a drastic departure from the institution's ethos in the colonial period, but the postcolonial context meant the distinction between religious identity as heritage rather than as active practice was emphasised.

Indian Ahmadis understood the need to consider these norms of engagement in advocating for the rights of Muslims. As Muslims themselves, Ahmadis obviously had a stake in advancing these issues as well. However, their manner of expression reveals a concern to project unity with other Indian Muslims, both for their *tabligh* message to be most effective and for the political protection and psychological comfort that could come from broad-based efforts at building solidarity.

The need to couch claims for rights in the appropriate terminology according to the hegemonic political discourse is exemplified by debates around the status of Urdu.²⁶ Hindustani in both Devanagari and Nasta'liq scripts was touted as the nation's lingua franca by many prominent leaders of the independence movement. However, after Partition, and especially after Urdu was adopted as Pakistan's national language in 1948, supporters of Hindustani met with significant opposition. Whilst Urdu was included as one of the 14 recognised languages of India in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution, Hindi and English were declared the Republic's national languages. Despite this victory for Hindi proponents, there was a persistent effort to defund and marginalise Urdu, especially in education and administration.

²⁵ Interview of Education Minister Triguna Sen published in *Radiance* (Bihar): 7 May 1967, printed in A.G. Noorani (ed.), *The Muslims of India: a documentary record* (New Delhi, 2003), p. 357.

²⁶ For more on this see for instance P. Brass, *Language, religion and politics in North India* (Cambridge, 1974), chapter 4; D. Bredi, 'The destiny of Urdu in Independent India: Language and Muslim identity' in A. Farouqui (ed.), *Redefining Urdu politics in India* (New Delhi, 2006), pp. 128-145; Y. Tyagi, 'Legal aspects of minority languages' in Farouqui (ed.), *Redefining Urdu politics in India*, pp. 274-293.

As the majority of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's writings and speeches were in Urdu and the language was described as key to the spread of Ahmadiyyat in India, conversations around the need to protect and promote Urdu post-1947 had an added spiritual dimension for Ahmadis.²⁷ However, this line of argument was usually avoided in articles calling on the government to do more to defend Urdu. Instead, the Jama'at decoupled Urdu from religion and emphasised its Indian origins.²⁸ This was an approach shared by other Muslim and non-Muslim proponents of Urdu in the first decade after Partition.²⁹ The Jama'at argued that it was a symbol of unity between major religions,³⁰ a language of reconciliation because it had been developed by Hindus and Muslims alike.³¹ Further, it was a language that could be easily understood by all the nation's citizens, which was vital to the country's development.³² It was the only language that could rival English in how widely it was understood in India, and it would be easier for South Indians to learn than Hindi in the Devanagari script.³³ Urdu would best serve India's foreign policy aims, it was argued, as its script and idioms were understood throughout Muslim majority countries, from Indonesia to Morocco.³⁴ *Badr* argued that Indians should respond to Pakistan's adoption of an Indian language as its national language by feeling flattered rather than repulsed;³⁵ Indians should be pleased that 'a thing of *our own* is also enjoyed by outsiders' [emphasis added] (*humāri apni cheez...kissi gheyr ko bhi pasand hey*).³⁶ By

²⁷ See for instance *al-Badr*, May 7 1952, p. 1; 28 July 1952, pp. 3-4.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 28 July, pp. 3-4; 28 November 1953, p. 1.

²⁹ See for instance Maulana Azad's speech to the Constituent Assembly announcing his resignation from the Drafting Committee printed in Noorani (ed.), *The Muslims of India*, pp. 293-299 and 'Nehru says Urdu deserves greater encouragement being essentially an Indian language' in *TOI*, 26 October 1956, printed in Noorani (ed.), *The Muslims of India*, p. 357.

³⁰ *al-Badr*, 28 June 1953, p. 5.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 7 November 1952, p. 5; 28 July 1952, pp. 3-4; 28 November 1953, p. 1.

³² *Ibid.*, 7 April 1954, p. 4.

³³ *Ibid.*, 28 November 1953, p. 1.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 28 July 1952, pp. 3-4; 28 September 1953, p. 1.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 7 November 1952, p. 5.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

way of mitigation, it was pointed out that Urdu was not even uniformly popular there, as shown by frequent agitations against it in East Pakistan and Sindh.³⁷

Emphasising the support for Urdu of prominent nationalist leaders was a simple way of arguing for the centrality of Urdu to Indian identity, regardless of religion. Nehru was held up as a key proponent of Urdu, especially in his efforts to reiterate that Urdu was a language of UP and Delhi, not of the regions that comprised Pakistan.³⁸ Numerous articles pointed to Gandhi's support of Urdu³⁹, and he was used to demonstrate that even devout Hindus saw Urdu as the language most suited to India's needs.⁴⁰ Indeed, after his assassination, Gandhi's support of Hindustani with two scripts was frequently invoked to add emotional heft to the case for Urdu during the Constituent Assembly debates.⁴¹ While it was clear to the Jama'at that on the whole, Congress Committee members did not share the same vision, *Badr* argued that this should be rectified if only for the party's political self-interest as their stance had led to Muslims casting fewer votes for the Congress in the last municipal elections in UP.⁴²

Ahmadi Secretary for General Affairs B.A. Rajeké attempted to appeal to Hindus by directly referring to anxieties about the religion's continued dominance in India. Ordinary language was crucial to the spread of religion, he argued, and it was for this reason that other religions, such as Buddhism and Sikhism, had been able to take root in the country

³⁷ Ibid., 28 September 1953, p. 1.

³⁸ Ibid., 28 July 1952, pp. 3-4.

³⁹ See for instance Ibid., 21 September 1953, p. 3; 28 September 1953, p. 1; 14 January 1954, p. 3; 7 April 1954, p. 4.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 28 September 1953, p. 1.

⁴¹ For one of many examples see 'Muslim members of the Constituent Assembly plead for adoption of Hindustani as the lingua franca of India', *TOI*, 20 August 1949, printed in Noorani (ed.), *The Muslims of India*, p. 291.

⁴² *al-Badr*, 14 January 1954, p. 3.

despite Hindu rule.⁴³ Rajeke criticised the Sanskritisation of Hindustani by those tasked with shaping India's language policy. He brought out the implications of this not just for religion but for the country's political culture. Replacing simple Urdu words with 'difficult and obscure Sanskrit words and phrases' (*Sanskrit key murdah alfāz aur ma'ulik mahāwarāt*) would exclude ordinary Indians from civic engagement.⁴⁴ The Jama'at questioned why the language question was being treated as a zero-sum game, quoting from the Sikh newspaper *Ajit* to demonstrate that while Sikhs were trying to promote the use of Punjabi and the Gurmukhi script in East Punjab, they still had space and respect for Urdu.⁴⁵ Indeed, the editors of *Badr* took great care to stress that they wanted Hindi to flourish as well as Urdu. They advised their readers of the need to counter the propaganda that ignorant or uneducated Hindi speakers were susceptible to by teaching them that the promotion of one language did not have to come at the expense of the other.⁴⁶ If Hindi were to replace English as the country's lingua franca, it would be a source of great happiness; but to achieve this via the demonisation of Urdu was unacceptable and was creating an atmosphere harmful to the national interest.⁴⁷

At the same time, palpable frustration was expressed that this argument was unpersuasive to those committed to not accepting it. *Badr* noted the contrast with which Urdu, an Indian language, was treated compared to English and other non-native languages.⁴⁸ To this end, editorials wondered why Urdu was being singled out for punitive treatment because of its promotion by the British when other inventions and facilities developed under colonial

⁴³ Ibid., 7 April 1954, p. 4.

⁴⁴ Ibid. See also 7 May 1954, p. 5.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 7 November 1952, p. 5.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 28 June 1953, p. 5.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid., May 7 1952, p. 1.

rule were retained.⁴⁹ They asked why campaigns for the promotion of other languages did not provoke a debate about nationalism or the loyalty of their respective proponents.⁵⁰ Elsewhere, these rhetorical questions were discarded, and the problem was named directly as the result of communalism (*firqah parasti*)⁵¹ and explicable only by ‘blind religious prejudice’.⁵²

In Hyderabad, the defence of Urdu was reframed so that the fact that it was the mother tongue of more Hyderabadis than Kannada was prioritised over its utility as a link language without a specific territory. This then accorded with the discourse of safeguards for linguistic minorities leading up to the States Reorganisation Act in 1956.⁵³ This strategy meant that Urdu received more protection in Hyderabad compared to other areas that did not adapt their defence of Urdu according to the prevailing norms of the time. States Reorganisation led to a shift in how Urdu was defended elsewhere too, as its universality was dispensed with and instead its cultural importance was emphasised in order to access constitutional protections for minority languages. In Anwar Alam’s view, endorsing the idea of Urdu as a minority language that is central to the religio-cultural identity of Indian Muslims has done more harm than good as it has lost its market value as a result of this association and encourages a majority backlash.⁵⁴ However, the suggestion that holding firm to the conviction that Urdu was a universal Indian language would have resulted in greater acceptance and the reversal of engineered neglect in the longer term lacks historical grounding. Anwar’s comment is also indicative of an

⁴⁹ Ibid., 28 July 1952, pp. 3-4.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 21 November 1952, p. 5.

⁵¹ Ibid., 7 November 1952, p. 5; 28 June 1953, p. 5.

⁵² Ibid., 21 September 1953, p. 3.

⁵³ Sherman, *Muslim belonging in secular India*, p. 168.

⁵⁴ A. Alam, ‘Hindutva and future of Muslims in India’, in M. Hasan (ed.), *Living with secularism: the destiny of India’s Muslims* (New Delhi, 2007), pp. 142-44.

insinuation that often arises in the literature on Indian Muslims after 1947: that an emphasis on cultural issues was part of a more significant trend towards political quietism or assimilation.⁵⁵ First of all, this suggests that the distinction between cultural and political issues was a meaningful one rather than a discursive necessity in post-Partition conditions that allowed space for claims and protections to be made only if they were expressed in very particular ways. Secondly, it falls into another binary, that of resistance and submission, which does not capture the nuances of the political engagement of marginalised groups that have to contend with a more limited set of parameters in which to express their desires and grievances. It is ‘quietist’ for, in this case, a religious minority in a majoritarian system, to pick and articulate their battles carefully, or is it a matter of political expediency often born out of a concern for safety?

Sectarian identity, secular democracy and the public sphere

This section will examine how the Ahmadiyya engaged with the state as part of a secular democracy in the early postcolonial period. It will also offer a glimpse of how variations in sect or doctrinal affiliation and pre-Partition histories influenced how different groups attempted to navigate this terrain. The main point of comparison will be the JIH. This may seem a curious choice given that the JIH is not a minority in the same way that the Ahmadiyya, Twelver Shi’as, or Ismailis are.⁵⁶ However, aside from the dearth of work on Shi’as in postcolonial India, there are a number of points that make a comparison between the Ahmadiyya and the JIH instructive. Both had opposed the Congress in the

⁵⁵ See for instance Noorani, who claims that ‘After independence, the Muslim politics saw spread [sic] of the “Uncle Tom” phenomenon’, ‘Introduction’ in Noorani (ed.), *The Muslims of India*, p. 25.

⁵⁶ For more on the Shi’a’s in colonial India, see J. Jones, *Shi’a Islam in colonial India*. For more on Ismailis see T. Purohit, *The Aga Khan case: religion and identity in colonial India* (Cambridge, Mass., 2012) and S. Mukherjee, *Ismailism and Islam in modern South Asia*.

1940s and were in disarray after 1947 as they struggled with the loss of their leadership to Pakistan; both were required to manage an association with their parent organisations in Pakistan which rendered them targets of additional suspicion in India; and both would initially appeal to a similar constituency of educated, middle-class Muslims once they set their sights on their main project of *tabligh*.

Sayyid Abu'l A'la Mawdudi (1903-1979) established the Jama'at-e-Islami (JEI) in 1941.⁵⁷ Mawdudi was concerned that no other organisation representing Indian Muslims had *hakumat-e-ilahiya* (government of God) as its aim.⁵⁸ He argued that in contrast to the Jama'at-e-Islami, the Muslim League were a *Jama'at-e-Jahiliyat* (party of pagans), and an independent state for Muslims run by the League would not be qualitatively different from a Congress-run country if it was not based on *shari'ah*.⁵⁹ He went as far as to prohibit members from voting for the League and its *Napakistan* (impure land) in the 1945-46 elections, but once the establishment of Pakistan looked inevitable, he changed tack, hoping to transform it from the inside eventually.⁶⁰

Before leaving for Pakistan, Mawdudi gave a speech to the southern Indian convention of the JEI in April 1947, which would come to be known as the Madras address. In it, he advised that members should continue to guard against those affiliated to other political parties and religio-political groups. Further, they 'should assure Hindu nationalism that there is no competing Muslim nationalism. This is the only way to remove the

⁵⁷ For more detail on Mawdudi's biography see S.V.R Nasr, *Mawdudi and the making of Islamic revivalism* (Oxford, 1996). For a detailed study of the JIH in India, see Ahmad, *Islamism and democracy in India*.

⁵⁸ Ahmad, *Islamism and democracy in India*, p. 71.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 62.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 63.

extraordinary prejudice the non-Muslim majority has against Islam'.⁶¹ Members were to boycott the political process and instead concentrate on missionary work. They ought to learn vernacular languages for this purpose, as it was unlikely that Urdu would survive Partition in India.⁶² Even though the JIH initially heeded his advice, Mawdudi was quick to cut emotional ties to his former followers in India. In 1951 he proclaimed that Muslims in Pakistan could not marry Muslims in India because the latter was *dar al-kufr* (abode of disbelief).⁶³ Three years later, the head of the Inquiry into the 1953 Lahore disturbances Muhammad Munir reported that Mawdudi exclaimed 'I should have no objection even if the Muslims of India are treated in that form of government as shudras and malishes [sic] and Manu's law are applied to them, depriving them of all share in the government and the rights of a citizen. In fact such a state of affairs already exists in India', though Mawdudi would later deny saying this.⁶⁴

Despite Mawdudi's disavowal, Irfan Ahmad argues that secularism played a vital role in the moderation of the JIH from the 1960s as it had a profound effect on its ability to retain members. He argues that on the whole, Muslims had rejected their ideology, choosing to affiliate with religious groups that did not regard secular democracy as alien to Islam.⁶⁵ The beginnings of a shift in the JIH's position is exemplified by Maulana Abul Lais' Presidential address given at the All-India Conference of the JIH in November 1960.⁶⁶ This was not a complete about-turn; Lais still found it problematic that sovereignty in such a system rested with people and not with God, but it was better this

⁶¹ Cited in Khalidi, *Between Muslim Nationalists and Nationalist Muslims*, p. 75.

⁶² Ibid., pp. 75-76 and Ahmad, *Islamism and democracy in India*, pp. 78-79.

⁶³ Ahmad, *Islamism and democracy in India*, p. 225.

⁶⁴ Cited in Khalidi, *Between Muslim Nationalists and Nationalist Muslims*, p. 78.

⁶⁵ Ahmad, *Islamism and democracy in India*, p. 8.

⁶⁶ A. Lais, *Presidential Address* (Delhi, 1960).

than authoritarianism.⁶⁷ The JIH would make their acceptance of secularism public in 1970.⁶⁸ Lais distanced himself from Mawdudi, extolling the JIH's 'universal message...irrespective of the circumstances in which the Jamaat was founded or the people who brought it into being',⁶⁹ though by the 1990s, then Amir Abdulhaq Ansari incorporated Mawdudi in the JIH's embrace of secularism by arguing that 'certain writings' of Mawdudi legitimised a 'secular democratic system'.⁷⁰ Instead, Lais argued that the JIH was committed to adopting '*constructive and peaceful means*' [emphasis in original] and it would 'abjure ways and means that may be construed as subversive' in order to focus on moral reform in accordance with the Qur'an and the Sunnah.⁷¹ This meant that the JIH's self-imposed isolation would end, as the universality of their message precluded 'the possibility of discrimination between Muslims and non-Muslims or the various sects and sections of the two communities'⁷², though he took care to both open and close his address affirming that Muslims believed that Muhammad was the last of the Prophets.⁷³

As discussed in Chapter 3, after 1947, Indian Muslims were called upon to affirm and prove their loyalty to the nation constantly. In times of crises *Badr* focused mainly on the Ahmadiyya's specific history to make this case. However, outside emergency conditions, the Jama'at focused on emphasising the deep and enduring links between India and Islam more generally, and in defending the rights of Muslims to call the country their own. A subversive approach involved comparing the conduct of Hindus and Muslims.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 27.

⁶⁸ Ahmad, *Islamism and democracy in India*, p. 220

⁶⁹ Lais, *Presidential Address*, pp. 2-3.

⁷⁰ Ahmad, *Islamism and democracy in India*, p. 221

⁷¹ Lais, *Presidential Address*, pp. 19-20.

⁷² Ahmad, *Islamism and democracy in India*, p. 222.

⁷³ Lais, *Presidential Address*, p. 3, p. 31.

Responding to an article in the Urdu daily *Pratāp* (Delhi) claiming that Muslims could not be loyal to a Hindu dominated government, it was argued that Hindus could not be counted upon to remain loyal to a Hindu dominated government either. Indeed, the response continued provocatively, Gandhi was emblematic of this, paying for his disloyalty with his life.⁷⁴ In invoking Nathuram Godse's justification for assassinating the Father of the Nation just six years earlier, *Badr* could challenge the idea that religion had any bearing on nationalism while effectively portraying those who held to this argument as anti-national themselves. Similarly, Ahmadis folded this contrast into their critique of direct action. In an article about the idea of restrictions on conversions of Hindus to other faiths, *Badr* attributed this policy to the propensity of Hindus to go on strike. Rather than punishing them for turning the country into a 'children's playground' (*bāzīcha-e-atfāl*, echoing Ghalib's famous couplet), the government allowed itself to be intimidated into ruling by the court of public opinion.⁷⁵ Muslims were thus made to bear the cost of this weakness 'because those going on strike are from this group [i.e. Hindus]. And Muslims have never chosen this method'.⁷⁶ Here, *Badr* was not just signalling the patriotism of Ahmadis for not participating in civil unrest, but the patriotism of Indian Muslims in general.

The Jama'at appealed to secularism to remind their readers of what had been promised to them and to demonstrate the ways in which the state was falling short. The burden placed on Indian Muslims to demonstrate that they were sufficiently patriotic was contrasted unfavourably with the lack of effort on the part of the government to curb the activities of Hindu nationalist organisations.⁷⁷ It is important to note that the intent of Congress

⁷⁴ *al-Badr*, 21 June 1954, p. 2.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 21 April 1954, p. 4.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 7 October 1952, p. 5.

policies was not criticised directly, nor were ideological arguments made against the party. Rather, the criticism of Congress by the Jama'at mainly came down to concerns of safety, often from physical violence. While Nehru's quickness to condemn communalism and communal violence was acknowledged, the Prime Minister and his government were criticised in the pages of *Badr* for not being proactive in their efforts to combat it.⁷⁸ This was both at the level of discourse and in the failure to tackle the anti-Muslim bias of state officials who did not only fail to investigate discrimination properly but in many cases were perpetrators of it.⁷⁹ For instance, policy around *tabligh* was an area where minorities felt 'despondent and unprotected'.⁸⁰ It was reasonable for the government to determine if foreign missionaries were taking part in secret activities and to take action accordingly. However, Indian citizens should not be prevented from propagating their faith by 'prejudiced organisations'. Those that sought to curtail the missionary efforts of Indian minorities by baselessly accusing them of 'treachery', *Badr* argued, should be 'silenced'.⁸¹

More commonly, this criticism was expressed through commentary on cow slaughter.⁸² The Jama'at's disapproval of the campaign to ban it was articulated in terms of pragmatism, the craven appeasement of Hindu nationalists, and the undermining of secularism. *Badr* argued that a tacit ban should be put in place for at least ten years as India faced shortages of milk, ghee, and butter. But this was unsustainable in the long-term, it was said, because there was no industry that could run without the skin of cows.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 21 May 1953, p. 3.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 7 September 1952, p. 3.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 7 May 1954, p. 5.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² For more on this see S.B. Freitag, *Collective action and community: public arenas and the emergence of communalism in North India* (Los Angeles, 1989), pp. 148-79; G. Pandey, *The construction of communalism in colonial North India* (2nd edn, New Delhi, 2006), pp. 158-200; S. Tejani, *Indian secularism: a social and intellectual history, 1890-1950* (Bloomington, 2008), pp. 27-75.

More importantly, it was undesirable. As cow slaughter already took place under a veil of secrecy, it was clear that those taking part in it acknowledged that there were potentially deadly consequences for them. Enshrining a ban into law would, therefore, serve no deterrent purpose. Instead, it would threaten Indian secularism and signal that the country was a ‘Hindu Sultanate’.⁸³ Commenting pointedly on President Rajendra Prasad’s pledge to earmark a substantial sum of money for the care of old and weak cows whilst attending a *gai puja* (cow worship) in Amritsar in 1953, *Badr* stated that it hoped that the government would match this commitment to animals with a similar commitment to the development of the Dalit community.⁸⁴ Here again, *Badr* placed its criticism of the Indian government firmly within the language of secularism, lamenting its failure to live up to its promise to keep the public sphere free of the dominance of any one religious ideology.⁸⁵

Looking at Bangladesh and Pakistan, Naveeda Khan asks what the colonial imperative to know its subjects in order to rule them means after Independence when the question becomes what it means to know and rule oneself.⁸⁶ *Badr*’s criticism of the government’s response to communalism suggests Indian Ahmadis were asking politicians to engage more seriously with this question. The paper argued that communal violence could no longer be blamed on colonial rule. As an independent nation, India had yet to provide equal opportunities to all its citizens, and it was no longer the beneficiary of the British government’s ‘moral people and good teachings’ (*ahl-e-akhlāq aur ‘umdah bāteyn*)

⁸³ *al-Badr*, 7 July 1953, p. 2.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 28 November 1953, p. 6.

⁸⁵ See for instance *ibid.*, 21 July 1952, p. 9; 7 September 1952, p. 3; 7 July 1953, p. 2; 14 January 1954, p. 3.

⁸⁶ N. Khan, ‘Of what does self-knowing consist? Perspectives from Bangladesh and Pakistan, *The Annual Review of Anthropology*, 44 (2015), p. 458.

either.⁸⁷ In addition, and somewhat contradictorily, it was argued that secularism was not being implemented properly because Indians had been ‘bound by the chains of slavery’ for so long that they were not used to governing.⁸⁸ The Congress was still beholden to the majority/minority politics of the *Raj* instead of governing with all the trappings of an independent state – tolerance, democracy, and a responsibility towards all its citizens.⁸⁹ In this line of reasoning, the idea of Ahmadis as British loyalists compared to the anti-colonial Congress was turned on its head by the suggestion that the political class had not fully decolonised. Solutions were proffered. The British had pioneered portrayals of the Mughals as cruel and despotic rulers, and this was still being used to abuse Indian Muslims. Removing such characterisations from newspapers and the curricula of schools and universities, and then making further claims to this effect a punishable offence, would remove a significant cause of communal tension.⁹⁰ Legislation should also be used to engender interfaith respect. The example of the Prophet could provide the government with guidance on how to ensure debate could take place without causing offence. This included only making a positive case in describing what one’s religion had to offer and not making any criticisms that one could not accept if the charge were reversed.⁹¹

Appeals were made to political self-interest to underscore the point that communalism was not a two-sided affair but was, in fact, anti-Muslim discrimination. An account of a conversation between the Prime Minister and the editor of *Haqīqat* (Lucknow), Anis Ahmad Abassi, in which Nehru expressed disappointment that Muslims had not supported Congress in recent municipal elections in UP, was used as a starting point for

⁸⁷ *al-Badr*, 7 April 1952, pp. 3-4.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 21 July 1952, p. 9.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 7 April 1952, pp. 3-4; 21 May 1953, p. 3.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 14 April 1952, p. 3.

a discussion on this issue on the front page of *Badr*'s 28 December 1953 edition.⁹² Abassi responded that Muslims had become anxious at the lack of support shown to them by the Congress, particularly at the district and provincial levels. *Badr* expressed solidarity with Abassi, stating that Indian Muslims had many legitimate causes for concern that were being ignored by the Congress. If they wanted to get Muslims back on side, not just in UP but throughout India, then the tenets of secularism should be more strictly adhered to by making communalism and religious hatred a criminal offence.⁹³ A month later, the issue was taken up again on the front page of *Badr* under the headline 'Respect for the emotions of minorities'.⁹⁴ Commenting on recent appeals at a conference of Indian Christians in Allahabad and by the JUH for the inclusion of Indian Muslims in definitions of India's 'backward classes', *Badr* argued that the willingness of Muslims and Christians to sacrifice their 'community and ethnic pride' in this way was clear evidence of how deep the distrust of authority among the country's minority communities was. Again, entreaties were made to the government to do more for the country to be truly secular so that religious minorities did not feel compelled to take such action.⁹⁵

It was not immediately evident how the Ahmadiyya would participate in electoral politics after Independence. How would the loyalty principle translate in a democratic system? Would this mean loyalty to the government, to the Constitution, or a different interpretation entirely? An unequivocal policy has not been clearly elucidated by the Jama'at. Intelligence reports from 1957 suggest the Chief Secretary to the Government of Punjab believed bloc voting was in operation and that branches throughout the country

⁹² Ibid., 28 December 1953, p. 1.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 28 January 1954, p. 1.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

had been advised to support Congress candidates in that year's general election.⁹⁶ However, conversations with Ahmadi leaders in Qadian suggest that Ahmadis meet with local politicians of all hues to ascertain first and foremost what candidates have to offer the community and the advancement of Muslims more generally after which their replies are disseminated to the rest of the community. Members are then instructed to consider the interests of the Jama'at but to make up their own minds rather than vote as a bloc.⁹⁷ This is in keeping with coverage of party politics in *Badr* during the 1950s. Endorsements and opposition are withheld, but as shown above, criticism of particular policies or political directions are not. The Shi'a community in Hyderabad appear to have followed a similar path. The All-India Shi'a Conference was admonished by the Urdu newspaper *Siyāsāt* for endorsing Congress in the country's first general election, arguing that Muslims had a duty to uphold the separation of religion and politics especially because many Hindu religious groups were not.⁹⁸ Toby Howarth suggests that this criticism was heeded later, and, in general, the community in Hyderabad stayed non-aligned because of their perceived vulnerability.⁹⁹

Given Mawdudi's advice during the Madras address, it is not surprising that the JIH initially boycotted most edifices of the state, including elections, the judiciary, the army, the banking system, and 'western' universities.¹⁰⁰ As mentioned above, a gradual shift occurred from the 1960s as a dwindling membership meant that the JIH needed to reconsider its approach. Previously refusing to share a platform with any Muslims that did not see the imposition of *shari'ah* as crucial to their outlook, they participated in the

⁹⁶ Fortnightly Reports from the Government of Punjab for the year 1957, report for second half of January, Home Poll., NAI, File No. 4/8/57-Poll.II.

⁹⁷ Conversations with the author, summer 2013.

⁹⁸ Sherman, *Muslim belonging in secular India*, pp. 136-137.

⁹⁹ T.M. Howarth, *The Twelver Shi'a as a Muslim minority in India: Pulpit of tears* (London, 2005), p. 31.

¹⁰⁰ Ahmad, *Islamism and democracy in India*, p. 196.

Majlis-e-Mushawarat in the mid-1960s, though they did not put up any candidates themselves. By 1977, the JIH allowed its members to vote for the 'restoration of democracy' following the Emergency despite Mauwdudi's disapproval from Pakistan.¹⁰¹ The ban would be lifted entirely in 1985.¹⁰²

The JUH could afford to be more direct in their political interventions than the Ahmadiyya or the JIH, largely because of its pre-independence affiliations. Unlike them, the JUH had taken an active role in the anti-colonial movement, had supported the Congress, and had opposed Partition. This did not make them immune to the pressures facing Indian Muslims after 1947, but as their credentials were not as easy to gainsay it allowed scope for fuller participation in the electoral sphere. Having said this, Sherman demonstrates that this was not always straightforward even within the JUH. Many members of the Jamiat Working Committee resigned when the Hyderabad branch adopted a more antagonistic approach to the Congress after the 1952 election by establishing party branches and criticising inaction on the problems of rehabilitation and unemployment.¹⁰³ *Siyāsat* once again lamented this action for bringing religion into politics and thereby diminishing the scope for Muslims to object to the Hindu Mahasabha, the Akali Dal, and other non-secular parties.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 219.

¹⁰² I. Ahmad, 'The Indian Jama'at-i Islami reconsiders secular democracy' in B.D. Metcalf (ed.), *Islam in South Asia in practice* (Princeton, 2009), p. 451.

¹⁰³ Sherman, *Muslim belonging in secular India*, p. 145.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

‘Islam is one and indivisible’: reframing sectarian difference

The danger of intra-Muslim conflict at a time when the future of Muslims in the subcontinent was uncertain was a common refrain during the years leading up to Independence and Partition. For instance, this can be seen in the founding of the Nadwat-ul-‘Ulema, established by Maulana Muhammad Ali Monghiri in the last decade of the nineteenth century with the explicit aim of uniting Muslim leaders across sectarian lines.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, the Muslim League was created in 1906 and sought to represent the political interests of all of India’s Muslims.¹⁰⁶ As described in Chapter 1, Muhammad Iqbal played a pivotal role in pushing anti-Ahmadi activity from the fringes into the mainstream in the 1930s. However, writing in *The Hindustan Review* just a few months after the granting of separate electorates through the 1909 Morley-Minto reforms, Iqbal made an impassioned plea for unity:

Islam is one and indivisible; it brooks no distinctions in it. There are no Wahhabis, Shi’is, Mirza’is [Ahmadis], or Sunnis in Islam. Fight not for the interpretations of the truth, when the truth itself is in danger...Let the idols of class distinctions and sectarianism be smashed forever; let the Musalmans of the country be once more united into a great vital whole. How can we, in the presence of violent internal dispute, expect to succeed in persuading others to our way of thinking?¹⁰⁷

There is a sense that denominational distinctiveness could be expressed only between members of a particular sect or grouping, and that it needed to be ignored otherwise for fear of imperilling any shared political project. It is as though sectarian difference if brought out into the open would necessarily descend into sectarianism as it is commonly understood; that is, overt hostility and even violence. Scholars such as Asad Ali Ahmed

¹⁰⁵ Though as Jones points out, this was at the exclusion of Shi’as and exacerbated Sunni-Shi’a hostility. Jones, *Shi’a Islam in colonial India*, pp. 56-57.

¹⁰⁶ For more on this see Devji, *Muslim Zion*, chapter 2.

¹⁰⁷ M. Iqbal, ‘Islam as a moral and political ideal’ in C. Kurzman (ed.), *Modernist Islam 1840-1940: a sourcebook* (New York, 2002), p. 313.

have argued that this was an understanding of sectarianism located in colonial governance and its preoccupation with unity, with sectarian debate or religious conflict being categorised, or indeed, stigmatised, as ‘unreason’.¹⁰⁸

To some extent, this has been reflected in the historiography. While historians have mapped the diversity of Indian Islam during this period, until recently, differences between religio-political groups and sects have been seen as part of a more general project of Muslim renewal. Recent work has begun to probe the more complicated dynamics of relations between different sects and provide more nuanced accounts of both the tensions and accommodations that existed between them. As discussed in the Introduction to this thesis, Justin Jones’ study of Shi’ism in colonial India has been key to challenging the dominance of the unity narrative of intra-Muslim relations in India before 1947.¹⁰⁹ Further, recent works on Ismaili-led efforts to advance a broad-based Indian Muslim identity during the last few decades of colonial rule also brings out rather than glosses over the differences and concerns over Shi’a minoritisation that existed below the surface of such movements.¹¹⁰

However, research on Muslims in postcolonial India has tended to continue to emphasise commonalities between Muslim sects after Partition.¹¹¹ Echoing Ayesha Jalal’s assessment of sectarianism in South Asia, namely that it became significant only after

¹⁰⁸ A. Ahmed, ‘Adjudicating Muslims: law, religion and the state in colonial India and post-colonial Pakistan’ (University of Chicago, Ph.D thesis, 2006), p. 56.

¹⁰⁹ Jones, *Shi’a Islam in colonial India* and Jones, “‘That Pakistan that is going to be Sunnistan’...”

¹¹⁰ Devji, *Muslim Zion* and Mukherjee, *Ismailism and Islam in modern South Asia*.

¹¹¹ See for instance Y. Sikand, *Muslims in India. Contemporary social and political discourses* (Delhi, 2006); M. Hasan, ‘Indian Muslims since Independence: In search of integration and identity’ *Third World Quarterly*, 10, 2 (1988), pp. 818-42; P.B. Mayer, ‘Tombs and Dark Houses: ideology, intellectuals and proletarians in the study of contemporary Indian Islam’ in I. Ahmad (ed.), *Modernization and social change among Muslims in India* (New Delhi, 1983), pp. 1-53; B.D. Metcalf, *India, Islam and everyday Jihad* (Egham, 2004).

independence in Pakistan because ‘the war against internal others...had to await the successful conclusion of the one against the perceived oppression of the external enemy’,¹¹² Sikand posits that India has been spared Sunni-Shi’a conflict because Sunnis cannot afford to concentrate on it in the presence of Hindu nationalism.¹¹³ Other scholars imply that such enquiries are misplaced. Hasan laments the tendency of researchers working on India to see Islam as a way of life rather than just a religion.¹¹⁴ In his view, this has led to a distortion in analysis as it is the consequences of ‘Muslim’ as a sociological category rather than as a signifier of belief that has had the most profound effect on the lives of Indian Muslims since 1947.¹¹⁵ This section does not seek to challenge the primacy of pragmatic and socioeconomic realities or to suggest a new hierarchy of concerns that privileges sectarian identity over other factors relevant to the lives of Indian Muslims. Nor does it seek to equate the scale and intensity of sectarianism and sectarian violence in India and Pakistan. Instead, it proposes that sectarian identity is worthy of discussion outside of the supposedly theocratic part of the subcontinent. Moreover, it suggests that sectarian identity should also be explored outside of the framework of sectarianism, which carries with it connotations of violence and acrimony. Further research on this subject will contribute to a fuller picture of the lives of Indian Muslims after 1947, an important endeavour on its own. From a comparative perspective, it is of value to begin to understand sectarianism in India and how and why its dynamics differed in the countries that make up South Asia today.

¹¹² A. Jalal, *Self and sovereignty: individual and community in South Asian Islam since 1850* (London, 2000), p. 252.

¹¹³ Sikand, *Muslims in India*, p. 160.

¹¹⁴ Hasan, *Legacy of a divided nation*, p. 19.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

There are significant religio-political and identitarian reasons why sectarian disputes did not necessarily disappear into obscurity in India after Partition. It is not clear why Jones' argument that sectarian conflict could be an agent of religious revival and change, not just an unfortunate consequence of it, would cease to apply following Independence. This is highlighted by the re-emergence of sectarian violence between Sunni and Shi'a communities in Lucknow over the recitation of *tabarra* (the cursing of Sunni Caliphs) and *madh-i-sahaba* (the praise of Sunni Caliphs) towards the end of the period under consideration in this chapter.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, there are many examples of animus between non-Ahmadi Sunni groups in 1950s India. Before Partition, 'ulema from across denominations had condemned Mawdudi for making pronouncements as if he were a prophet. These involved declaring all other groups anti-Islamic because they did not have the establishment of an Islamic state as part of their agenda and proclaiming that Muslims had to embrace the JEI or stand condemned like the Jews.¹¹⁷ As mentioned, after 1947, the JIH continued to refuse to share a stage with non-JIH Muslims because they lacked 'the fundamental perspective of Islam' and believed in the '*kalima* of secularism'.¹¹⁸ In response, the Chief Mufti of Deoband issued the following *fatwa* about the JIH in 1951:

Muslims must shun the Jama'at-i-Islami and treat it as a deadly poison. They must also dissuade others from joining it so that they are not misled. The Jama'at being more harmful than beneficial, association with it is not permissible under the Shari'ah. Whoever helps it through publicity is a sinner; far from being rewarded he would be deemed to be a partner in sin. It is not proper for Muslims to pray behind a member of the Jama'at.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Jones, *Shi'a Islam in colonial India*, p. 232-233.

¹¹⁷ Ahmad, *Islamism and democracy in India*, pp. 70-71.

¹¹⁸ Cited in *Ibid.*, p. 223.

¹¹⁹ M.S. Agwani, *Islamic fundamentalism in India* (Chandigarh, 1986), pp. 86-87.

In the same period, *Badr* published an account from the daily *Pasbān* (Bombay) of a Barweli jalsa in which it was said ‘members of the JUH are *kafirs* and those who did not regard them as such were also *kafirs*’.¹²⁰

The presence of sectarian conflict does not necessarily contradict Sikand’s contention that Hindu nationalism has been the most important threat facing Indian Muslims. Both of these things can coexist. Different concerns take precedence at different times for members of groups with intersecting identities and points of marginalisation. Furthermore, sectarian affiliation can serve to strengthen one’s own broader religious identity. As Talal Asad argues, Orientalist scholars have tended to view argumentation and reasoning with alarm and have marginalised these practices in their depiction of what constitutes ‘Islamic tradition’. However, rather than being a symptom of ‘the tradition in crisis’, it has a productive function and is ‘a necessary part of Islamic discursive traditions’.¹²¹ Further, as Alam argues, the ‘*ulema* of various denominations consider Muslims of different *maslaks*, or ‘interpretative communities’, far more dangerous to Islam than non-Muslims are to the laity as they have greater capacity to sow the seeds of *fitnah* by having their misguidedness less easily perceptible to the untrained eye.’¹²² As well as tradition, the twentieth-century context also created conditions where sectarianism would have a symbolic utility. Markus Daechsel has argued that the 1930s-1950s saw the rise of a new political culture which privileged individualism over community interests; ‘collective identities were invoked for the sole purpose of giving a quest for personal salvation some form of meta-historical grounding’.¹²³ He references the 1953 Lahore riots

¹²⁰ *al-Badr*, 28 October 1952, p. 7.

¹²¹ T. Asad, ‘The idea of an anthropology of Islam’, *Qui Parle* 17, 2 (2009), pp. 22-23.

¹²² A. Alam, ‘Muslim identity in North India’, *Modern Asian Studies*, 42, 2/3 (2008), p. 624.

¹²³ M. Daechsel, *The politics of self-expression: The Urdu middle-class milieu in mid-twentieth century India and Pakistan* (London, 2006), p. 206.

as part of his analysis, observing that ‘the temptation to use synthetic and symbolic confrontations with government as a prop for self-empowerment by all sorts of political groups never really went away’.¹²⁴ To some extent, this can also be applied to anti-Ahmadi feeling as it existed in postcolonial India. While the government may not have been part of the equation, opposition to the Ahmadiyya can be said to have served an important symbolic function to other Muslims struggling with an overwhelming expectation to engage in respectability politics: to assimilate, to be apolitical, and to mute their religious expression in order to diminish how threatening they appeared to the Hindu majority. There did not necessarily have to be a sustained movement against Ahmadis or a concrete goal in mind as religious argumentation itself could be an act of piety and striving.¹²⁵

On the surface, it would appear that the Ahmadiyya sought to continue the colonial narrative of a homogeneous Muslim identity. It was argued that it was perfectly possible for Indian Muslims to be governed by non-Muslims if the *qaum* stopped arguing over internal differences. Unity, empathy, and cooperation would ensure that they could live in India without compromising their beliefs and ethics.¹²⁶ This suggested that sectarian differences posed an existential threat to Indian Muslims. However, as demonstrated by other chapters in this thesis as well, it is not that the Ahmadiyya sought to ignore all points of disagreement among sects; instead, they argued that these disagreements could be expressed within the confines of a broad understanding of Islam without leading to violence and animosity. Especially as citizens of a self-ruling secular democracy, there was room for a more multifaceted idea of Muslim identity that was undergirded by liberal

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 75.

¹²⁵ See N. Khan, *Muslim becoming: aspiration and skepticism in Pakistan* (New Delhi, 2012), passim.

¹²⁶ *al-Badr*, 21 July 1952, p. 9.

ideas of freedom of expression that all groups had equal access to. An article in the 28 March 1952 edition of *Badr* emphasised this, opening with a quotation from Maulana Muhammad Ali Jauhar: 'Either murdering apostates is against the Qur'an and Hadith or I'll have to say that I'm not a Muslim!'¹²⁷ Linking freedom to consumerism under capitalism, the author argued that in the same manner that someone can reject items whilst shopping without the need to justify their choices or explain their personal tastes, so too should people be free to exercise freedom of religion. To see Muslims ignoring the principle that only God could punish those guilty of apostasy was described as particularly heart-breaking.¹²⁸

Badr's response to an excerpt from *Dawat*, the newspaper of the JIH, in which it was argued that there were two types of Muslims, true Muslims and nominal Muslims, provides a clear example of the desire to communicate both Ahmadi distinctiveness and to project the Jama'at as simply part of a wider conversation within Indian Islam. *Badr*'s editors argued that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was the first to draw a distinction between true and nominal Muslims, and he was followed by the likes of Altaf Hussain Hali and Muhammad Iqbal. Further, the author asked rhetorically why the JIH openly made use of such distinctions while expressing outrage over Ahmadis doing the same.¹²⁹ Elsewhere, Mirza Bashir Ahmad, the Khalifa's brother, conceded that Ahmadi tracts were for Ahmadi audiences and thus the language used could be indelicate; however, all sects, whether Sunni, Shi'a, or Sufi, emphasised what set them apart from other sects whilst continuing to see themselves as part of Islam.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Ibid., 28 March 1952, p. 6.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 21 June 1954, p. 2.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 14 September 1953, pp. 3-4.

This principle was articulated more fully by Maulvi Abdul Huq, the head Ahmadi *muballigh* in Bihar. He happened upon a *jalsa* in Jamshedpur in autumn 1965 which had JIH, Deobandi and Barelwi speakers and descended into *takfir* (pronouncement of unbelief) by the end of the session.¹³¹ In Huq's assessment, the problem and the solution could be found in the *hadith* that predicted that the *ummah* would divide into 73 sects and only one sect would be saved (the *nāji firqah*).¹³² Rejecting all differences would be going against the truth of the Prophet's prediction and thus it was a 'dangerous mistake' to call for all Muslims to unite as one. However, focusing on which sects had it more wrong than others was dangerous because the resulting *fitnah* made it more difficult to find clarity on which was the *nāji firqah*. The correct course of action was instead for each sect to concentrate on advancing positive arguments in speech and writing about the truth of their own position. While bearing in mind their differences, Muslims ought to unite politically (*siyāsi etihād*) for their own protection and because an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding would make it easier to find the *nāji firqah*.¹³³

The Jama'at sought to emphasise that their *tabligh* efforts were designed not merely to attract new converts to their community, but to advance the spread of Islam in India more broadly. In the pages of *Badr*, this can be seen in the space devoted to describing spikes in proselytising activity around occasions of religious importance across sects, such as Milad un-Nabi, Eid-ul-Azha, Ramadan, and Eid ul-Fitr. To reinforce this, excerpts from Urdu newspapers attesting to the impact of the missionary zeal of the Ahmadiyya were reprinted in *Badr*. For instance, in an extract from *Riyāsat* (Delhi)'s report on Khwaja Nizamuddin's evidence to the Munir Inquiry, the author argued that Ahmadis had a

¹³¹ Ibid., 14 October 1965, p. 9.

¹³² Ibid., 21 October 1965, p. 9.

¹³³ Ibid., 21 October 1965, p. 10.

presence in every Indian state and in most countries and that they did more *tabligh* for Islam than any other Muslim group.¹³⁴ Responses to conversion efforts by non-Muslims in India were also expressed in terms of the Jama'at's position as part of a larger Muslim minority. For instance, in its 14 January 1954 edition, *Badr* argued that the precarious situation of Indian Muslims left them susceptible to advances from Hindu proselytisers. Thus a suggestion from the JUH to establish new madrasas to ensure future generations would be fully informed and committed to the teachings of Islam was described as insufficient. It did not take into account the predicament of the current generation, whose financial insecurity left them vulnerable. Regional Muslim leaders should disregard sectarian affiliation and take steps to improve the economic situation of Muslims in their community, argued *Badr*, or at the very least, be more diligent in collecting *zakat* so that some relief could be provided to the most impoverished.¹³⁵

Stressing the unity of the Indian Muslim *qaum* and the above attempt at a conversation with the JUH should not be taken as evidence of a prohibition on debating the 'ulema on matters of theology rather than just of strategy. As will be explored more fully in the next chapter, the subtext of the Ahmadiyya's call for unity was that eventually, Muslims ought to unite under them. Thus, while the Jama'at did not engage in *takfir*, they did not shy away from public debate, either. The Jama'at was not content to just put their own perspective on *khatm-e-nabuwat* forward and accept neutrality from other Muslims; they instead sought outside agreement. This can be seen in a back and forth with Maulana Sayyid Suleyman Nadwi,¹³⁶ co-author of *Sirat-un-Nabi* (Life of the Prophet), completing it after Shibli Nomani's death. The Jama'at entered into correspondence with him after

¹³⁴ Ibid., 14/21 December 1953, p. 18.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 14 January 1954, p. 3.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 28 September 1952, pp. 6-7.

reading his view in *Arz ul-Qur'an* that a law was evident in the Qur'an that in times of ignorance, a messenger or vice (*na'ib*) messenger would arise to steer the *qaum* on the right path. From the accounts of the back and forth published in *Badr*, Suleyman Nadwi was encouraged to connect his statement to the Jama'at and effectively sanction Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. Suleyman Nadwi stopped responding after his Ahmadi correspondent noted his failure to give a view unequivocally, intimating that his evasiveness was inflected with cowardice (*jān chhorānah*).¹³⁷ This was seen as evidence that the Jama'at needed to continue to push for reform within the 'ulema.

There is some evidence of opposition outside the realm of print which suggests this approach was not entirely without its shortcomings. As described in Chapter 4, despite the Jama'at's association with North India, Malabar was often the site of anti-Ahmadi activity both before and after 1947. Outside legal entanglements caused by personal disputes, opposition to the Ahmadiyya could be more abstract, spontaneous, and physical. A major *tabligh* tour of South India in 1952 was marred by opposition along many stops.¹³⁸ General protest at their visibility was reported in Mangalore,¹³⁹ Madras,¹⁴⁰ and Payangadi.¹⁴¹ More targeted opposition was expressed as well. Some of this was passive-aggressive; for instance, in response to a two-day *jalsa* in Kannur, non-Ahmadis organised another *jalsa* nearby for the same time with the stated aim of preventing their success.¹⁴² Elsewhere, it was more straightforwardly aggressive. Public opposition from a group of unspecified Maulvis had predated their arrival in Calicut and resulted in the publication of anti-Ahmadi material including a Malayali tract titled 'An Atomic Bomb

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 7 May 1952, pp. 9-10 and 14 May 1952, pp. 5-6.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 14 May 1952, pp. 5-6.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 7 May 1952, pp. 9-10.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 14 May 1952, pp. 5-6.

¹⁴² Ibid., 7 May 1952, pp. 9-10.

on Qadianiat', as well as family separation and a social boycott.¹⁴³ At the end of the tour further north in Bangalore, the local Muslim Association announced that if the planned Ahmadi *jalsa* wasn't called off, there would not be a window of the hall left unbroken. However, it does not appear that they followed through on this threat.¹⁴⁴

The implications of the 1953 Lahore riots for Indian Ahmadis

The first real test of the Indian Jama'at's project of *siyāsi etihād* came with the Lahore riots of 1953, the first major postcolonial anti-Ahmadi campaign in the subcontinent. According to British intelligence reports for West Punjab, flashes of Anti-Ahmadi activity in Pakistan appeared soon after Partition. While Lt. Col R.R. Burnett, Acting High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, did not name the periodicals he was describing, he reported in 1948 that newspaper articles were declaring the Ahmadiyya to be *kafirs* and disloyal to Pakistan and were criticising the government for allotting land to the Jama'at for the building of a town to replace Qadian as their home.¹⁴⁵ Further, in 1950 *Zamīndar* was arguing that as the Ahmadis' real interest was in Qadian, they could not be loyal to Pakistan.¹⁴⁶ This accusation is interesting given *Zamīndar*'s previously pro-Congress stance. Other groups that had histories of being Muslim nationalists before Partition also used such smears. For instance, the Ahrar bi-weekly organ *Azād* criticised the number of high-level appointments filled by Ahmadis, particularly in the armed forces, and predicted a coup d'état. Furthermore, *Azād* attributed the failure to obtain a favourable settlement of the Kashmir issue to Zafarullah Khan's attempt to use Kashmir

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 14 May 1952, pp. 5-6.

¹⁴⁵ 'Reports from West Punjab, July-December 1948', L. Grafftey Smith to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, 3 September 1948, IOR, L/P&J/5/332.

¹⁴⁶ 'Reports from West Punjab, January-June 1950', report for week ending 11 January, IOR, L/P&J/5/336.

as a bargaining chip for Qadian and alluded to Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Khan's possible complicity in encouraging this rumour.¹⁴⁷ Intelligence reports from April 1948 and January 1950 describe small scale riots and skirmishes between Ahmadis and other Muslims, showing that these debates had implications beyond the media.¹⁴⁸

The Ahrar had continued their anti-Ahmadi activities after migrating to Pakistan after Partition. By 1952, their campaign had converged with the demands of a significant section of the *'ulema* and the JEI for Islamic principles to be the basis of the future constitution of Pakistan. After months of escalation, direct action was threatened if the Pakistani state refused to declare Ahmadis non-Muslim and to remove them from roles in government. Following sporadic disturbances during the winter of 1952-53, violence on a larger scale broke out in February 1953 after the deadline for this ultimatum had passed. Martial law was declared on 6 March, and the dismissals of the Chief Minister of Punjab and the Prime Minister soon followed. A Court of Inquiry was established to investigate the disturbances, and its report, commonly referred to as the Munir Report, was issued in April 1954.¹⁴⁹

While Chief Secretary to the Government of Punjab Nawab Singh reported that there was 'no abnormal interest displayed in the disturbances' amongst East Punjabis,¹⁵⁰ the Lahore riots and the Inquiry dominated the pages of *Badr* in 1953-54. This coverage also included

¹⁴⁷ 'Reports from West Punjab, 1949', report for week ending 7 December, IOR, L/P&J/5/335.

¹⁴⁸ 'Reports from West Punjab, July-December 1948', IOR, L/P&J/5/332; 'Reports from West Punjab, January-June 1950', reports for week ending 11 January and 25 January, IOR, L/P&J/5/336.

¹⁴⁹ For analyses of the 1953 riots, see S. Kaushik, *Ahmadiya community in Pakistan: discrimination, travail and alienation* (New Delhi, 1996); A. Ahmed, 'Adjudicating Muslims', pp. 32-55; S. Saeed, 'Pakistani nationalism and the state marginalisation of the Ahmadiyya Community in Pakistan', *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 7, 3 (2007), pp. 132-152; A.U. Qasmi., *The Ahmadis and the politics of religious exclusion in Pakistan* (London, 2014), pp. 65-164.

¹⁵⁰ 'Fortnightly reports from the Chief Secretary to the Government of Punjab', second half of March 1953, Ministry of States, Political (A), NAI, File No. 20(16)-PA/53.

commentary from other Indian newspapers. The issue of selection bias is an obvious shortcoming of using these extracts to glean the reaction of the Urdu press in India to anti-Ahmadi campaigns in Pakistan. Even unfavourable excerpts published in *Badr* were ones that could provide the basis for a strong and critical response from its editors, and so served Ahmadi interests. However, more important is the insight that these selections provide into the way the Jama'at framed the opposition against them and the implications of this for *siyāsi etihād*.

To try to defend against the potential impact of the opposition facing Ahmadis across the border, articles on *khatm-e-nabuwwat* were a mainstay of *Badr* during the anti-Ahmadi disturbances in Pakistan and its aftermath in the early 1950s. The day after the declaration of martial law in Lahore on 6 March 1953, *Badr* ran a front page with the headline 'We believe that the Prophet (peace be upon him) is *khatim-un-nabiyyin* to the Ahmadiyya and the Qur'an is the final revelation of God. We do not believe that like Hindus and Christians, "non-Ahmadi Muslims" are also outside the pale of Islam'.¹⁵¹ The significance of *khatim-un-nabiyyin* was described more fully in a number of subsequent articles. In an address by Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad to the Majlis-e-Mushawarat Jama'at Ahmadiyya meeting in Rabwah, he described Muhammad as the *sardar* (head) of all prophets and affirmed that Ahmadis were strict in their adherence to the five pillars and regarded anyone who did not read and accept the *kalima* or pray towards the Ka'aba as non-Muslim.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ *al-Badr*, 7 March 1953, p. 1.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 7 June 1953, p. 6; 28 June 1953, p. 6.

The editors of *Badr* included excerpts from unfavourable coverage of the Lahore disturbances and its aftermath as a mechanism by which they could provide a clear reply to critics of the Ahmadiyya in the Indian press. While *Khilāfat* (Bombay) initially expressed sympathy for the plight of the Ahmadiyya in Pakistan, arguing that it was one thing to express differences in belief, but to express them in such extreme ways could ‘in no way be seen as a sign of mental stability’¹⁵³, two months later another article from that paper was excerpted in *Badr* that suggested a rather more callous position. Expressing alarm that Pakistani Ahmadis would migrate to India after they had ‘already killed Pakistan’, *Khilāfat* then went on to describe Ahmadis in terms redolent of a contagion that required them to be quarantined. The paper implored the Indian government not to give them permission to migrate to India and spread their *fitnah* among Indian Muslims. Instead, they should be expelled from Pakistan and should settle either in the US or, confusingly, in Qadian.¹⁵⁴ In response, *Badr* admonished *Khilāfat* for the paper’s failure to provide proof that the Ahmadiyya had created *fitnah* anywhere and warned that the inconsistency of its editorial line would lead to a loss of trust amongst its readers.¹⁵⁵

Inconsistency was not a charge that could be levelled against the Urdu daily *Pratāp* (Jalandhar/Delhi). Coverage of this paper’s reporting elicited the most unambiguous remarks in *Badr* on how the situation in Pakistan was having an impact on the Jama’at in India. An article titled ‘Anti-Ahmadi provocation and false propaganda in India’s newspapers: for the attention of the government’ was published in the 21 March 1953 edition of *Badr*.¹⁵⁶ In this, it was argued that although India’s ‘serious classes’, including the Prime Minister, had condemned the anti-Ahmadi disturbances in Lahore, others were

¹⁵³ Ibid., 21 March 1953, p. 6.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 21 May 1953, p. 6.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 21 March 1953, p. 3

trying to take advantage of this sensitive time to create a similar atmosphere against the Jama'at in India. Two articles in *Pratāp*'s 16 and 17 March editions were singled out as especially objectionable as they contended that the Ahmadiyya Jama'at was based on loyalty to the British and had opposed India's independence. *Badr* took on *Pratāp* again in an article titled 'Impure propaganda against the Ahmadiyya Jama'at' in its 28 March 1954 edition.¹⁵⁷ In the excerpt provided, *Pratāp* argued that an attempt on the life of Mahmud Ahmad in Rabwah should not be seen as a consequence of anti-Ahmadi agitation, but was actually related to discontent within the Ahmadi community. It was alleged that a 'strong minority' had 'intense differences' with Mahmud Ahmad and were unable to voice their concerns without being ostracised.¹⁵⁸ In *Badr*'s response, its editors wondered why the leaders of anti-Ahmadi violence would be so quick to distance themselves from violence committed against the Khalifa – did Ahmadis no longer deserve such attacks? Instead, *Badr* argued, the attempted murder of Mahmud Ahmad was a ploy to divert the Pakistani government's attention away from uncovering a 'deep conspiracy' (*gehri sāzish*).

In the main, excerpts from *Riyāsat* (Delhi) could be relied upon to demonstrate unqualified support for the Jama'at. An excerpt from *Riyāsat*'s 3 November 1952 edition concerned the resolution presented in Pakistan's Constituent Assembly that Ahmadis be declared non-Muslim, in part because Mahmud Ahmad had allegedly expressed his desire for the reunification of India and Pakistan.¹⁵⁹ In this excerpt, it was argued that other Muslims deeming Ahmadis non-Muslim was absurd given their orthodoxy and missionary zeal. Further, *Riyāsat* asked, was it not the case that most Pakistanis thought

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 28 March 1954, p. 1.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 14 November 1952, p. 7.

Partition was a mistake that had led to the impoverishment of Muslims on both sides of the border? If the resolution passed, the article concluded, Pakistani Ahmadis should return to the safety of India.¹⁶⁰ That this article generated controversy illustrates the fractious context in which this commentary was taking place. While the intention of the paper was to provide support to Ahmadis, it did so by inadvertently drawing on accusations of Pakistani Ahmadi opponents that they were Indian stooges working to undermine the integrity of the country. As reported in an edition of *Riyāsat* some six months later, a newspaper described as a *sharnarhi* journal had used *Riyāsat*'s suggestion above as grounds to accuse the Ahmadiyya in Pakistan of having asked the Indian government for permission to return to India.¹⁶¹ An Indian Ahmadi elder had been in touch with *Riyāsat* to refute these claims and to explain why they were harmful to the Pakistani Jama'at's claims to belonging there, demonstrating the concern of Indian Ahmadis for their coreligionists across the border. Thus, *Riyāsat* issued a correction of sorts, affirming that Ahmadi theology mandated loyalty to the ruling power of the day in whichever country they were in, and any attempt to question their loyalty was to obscure the 'truth' (*haq*) and their 'authenticity' (*sadāqat*).¹⁶²

Whilst *Riyāsat* may have been the most effusive, it was by no means the only Urdu newspaper from which supportive articles were excerpted. For instance, *Aqdām* (Hyderabad) wondered how violence against the Ahmadis could be justified when even the Prophet did not employ coercion in religious matters. Disagreements amongst sects could be had but violating freedom of thought and religion undermined the Islamic democracy that Pakistan aspired to become. If it continued to be tolerated, other sects

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 7 June 1953, p. 7, p. 10

¹⁶² Ibid.

would be next.¹⁶³ Similarly, *Nigār* (Lucknow) wrote of the barbarity of perpetrators of anti-Ahmadi violence and argued that their actions were an ‘irremovable stain’ on both Islam and Pakistan.¹⁶⁴ Further, it cautioned that any successful anti-Ahmadi agitation would have far-reaching consequences and could provoke additional *takfir* movements, against, for example, the Shi’as,¹⁶⁵ a warning that had added salience coming from a Lucknawi periodical. The suggestion that anti-Ahmadi agitation had the potential to spiral into more widespread sectarian animus across South Asia was taken up more directly by other newspapers, such as *Huq* (Lucknow), *Inqilāb* (Bombay), and *Haqīqat* (Lucknow). Prefiguring the conclusions of the Munir Inquiry, *Inqilāb* wrote that they did not agree with Ahmadi beliefs, but that if it were left to Maulvis to declare whether or not members of a particular sect had the right to call themselves Muslim, eventually, there would be no one left to call a Muslim. Further, it was argued, this was a political movement spearheaded by *muhajirs* and those that had opposed the creation of Pakistan such as the Ahrar.¹⁶⁶ The Ahrar also faced criticism in the pages of *Huq*. Although Ahmadi beliefs were out of the ordinary, Syed Ata Ullah Shah Bukhari was creating the same ‘shameful atmosphere’ in Pakistan as he had in India before 1947, dividing Muslims at a time when they should have been coming together.¹⁶⁷ *Haqīqat* evoked the image of the model Muslim to convey its incredulity:

Imagine a person who reads the *kalima* of God and his Prophet. Follows the principles of Islamic law. And calls himself a Muslim. Who has the right to declare them non-Muslim on the basis that on the issue of *khatm-e-nabuwwat*, their beliefs, compared to the beliefs of ordinary Muslims...[ellipsis in original] are somewhat different?¹⁶⁸

¹⁶³ Ibid., 7 April 1953, p. 6

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 14 April 1953, p. 9.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 14 October 1952, p. 8.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 7 March 1953, p. 6.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 14 March 1953, p. 9.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

These excerpts show that this coverage was broadly supportive and congruent with the Jama'at's aim for sectarian differences to be recognised without undermining *siyāsi etihād* and a broader Muslim identity. However, it is important to note that in so far as differences between Muslims were being acknowledged, comparing Ahmadis to the rest of the 'ordinary' *ummah* as the above quotation does still marks the Jama'at as unusual in a way that could easily have future implications.

Despite some alarm voiced about the possibility that *takfir* movements could find expression in India, there was a sense that this was a specifically Pakistani malady. In some ways, this is unsurprising. Attempts by the Ahmadiyya and the JIH to distinguish between their Indian and Pakistani members has been noted, but an effort to emphasise the autonomy of Indian Islam would be made by individuals affiliated with other institutions as well.¹⁶⁹ *Inqilāb*'s editors chastised the Pakistani government for trying to accommodate rather than suppress groups like the Ahrar, who then used their position to accrue more power by discrediting the government. This was possible due to 'the naturally emotional Pakistani public', with residents of Punjab and Karachi deemed particularly susceptible to sectarian scaremongering.¹⁷⁰ This theme was explored in an extract from the JUH's newspaper. They too argued that the 1953 disturbances were the result of emotions being manipulated for political gain. The paper implored Muslims in both India and Pakistan to become better versed in their religion to prevent such exploitation in the future.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ See for instance Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi's emphasis on the autonomy of Indian Islam in response to growing Arab nationalism, discussed in M.Q. Zaman, *The Ulama in contemporary Islam: custodians of change* (Princeton, 2002), pp. 163-69

¹⁷⁰ *al-Badr*, 28 March 1953, p. 5.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 21 May 1954, p. 2.

The idea that this was a Pakistani problem was reinforced in the national press. Socio-political differences were brought to the fore, with secular democracy suggested as the missing ingredient in Pakistan. *The Hindu* and the *Times of India (TOI)* made no reference to Ahmadi communities in India when reporting on the Lahore riots. The tone of reportage and opinion pieces conveyed a sense that this was a somewhat inevitable problem that arose from the foundations of Pakistani nationhood and identity itself. One opinion piece in the *TOI*, for instance, dismissed ideas that the disturbances were the result of economic anxiety.¹⁷² It pronounced ‘the religious fanatics in West Pakistan are at their game again’, the game being ‘using the Ahmediya community as a pawn to achieve their goal of converting Pakistan into a theocratic State’.¹⁷³ It lamented the failure of the Pakistani government to counter the narrative that this was a religious issue. The only way out was for the government ‘to make up its mind that religion and politics are two different matters and that democracy is an unqualified concept’.¹⁷⁴ *The Hindu* also challenged the notion that the disturbances were religious in origin. In a mirror of accusations levelled against the Ahmadiyya in corners of the Pakistani press, it offered the theory that anti-Ahmadi agitation was part of an Ahrar plot to destabilise the country ‘by fomenting internecine dissensions under the cloak of religious movements’.¹⁷⁵ This claim was based on ‘reliable evidence’ that was not elaborated upon in the article but which apparently showed that the Ahrar had ‘not reconciled themselves to the establishment of Pakistan’.¹⁷⁶ Where mention was made of Indian Ahmadis, such as in a profile of Qadian in the *TOI* in April 1953, their good fortune was emphasised in contrast to their Pakistani counterparts to

¹⁷² This was an argument put forward in a piece in *The Hindu*, which attributed the scale of the agitation to the food crisis in Punjab. *The Hindu*, 6 March 1953, p. 5.

¹⁷³ *TOI*, 3 March 1953, p. 6.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ *The Hindu*, 28 February 1953, p. 7.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

underline India's beneficence. 'In their hour of suffering, the persecuted Ahmediyas look to Qadian and India as a haven of refuge and security. There could be no greater proof of India's secularism and no greater tribute to her policy of tolerance'.¹⁷⁷

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to demonstrate that while political engagement amongst Indian Muslims may have been restricted after Partition, a diagnosis of quietism and its implied disconnection with Indian political life is also inaccurate. Furthermore, it has argued that the terms on which different Muslim groups could navigate the secular democratic system in the 1950s and early 1960s were to some extent determined by their pre-Partition politics. While the years immediately following 1947 may have been characterised by extremes and uncertainty, it is unhelpful to think of this time in dichotomies. Examining the political participation of the Ahmadiyya in this period shows that they did not conform to binaries that pitted culture and religion, assimilation and separation, and resistance and submission against each other. Along with other groups, the Ahmadiyya were thinking imaginatively about what it could mean to live in an independent, ostensibly liberal society. They were both cautious about how much secularism could mitigate the dangers of majoritarianism and were exploring the potential for promised freedoms under this political system to facilitate more expansive expressions of religious identity.

The preceding discussion also questioned the idea that sectarian differences were of little importance or scarcely worth dwelling upon. For the Ahmadiyya, *siyāsi etihād* was the key to meeting the challenges of being a Muslim minority in postcolonial India. However,

¹⁷⁷ *TOI*, 5 April 1953, p. 7.

differences between sects and Muslim groups were important and needed to be closely held as the ultimate aim of all Muslims was to find the *nāji firqah*, that is, the sect that would be saved from hellfire during the end of days. The maintenance of differences within *siyāsi etihād* was thus within everyone's interest and did not need to lead violence. This was a position that the Jama'at argued should be supported rather than stymied by the capacious potential of secularism to encompass the civil expression of difference.

To some degree, this aspiration of the Jama'at was fulfilled in the 1950s. The Ahmadiyya and the other Muslims in conversation with them were engaged in a shared project of stressing the autonomy of Indian Islam in the face of accusations that they were fifth columnists posing a latent danger to India; thus, despite their own prejudices against the Ahmadiyya coming through in their expressions of dismay at what was happening across the border, the aim of the condemnations of anti-Ahmadi activity across the border and their reporting in *Badr* was in part to suggest that this sort of thing happened in Pakistan and would not happen in India. This speech act contained both a statement and an instruction that sectarianism and its potential to spiral beyond the Ahmadiyya towards other minority Muslim groups had to be contained.

There are some indications that this tentative consensus was beginning to fracture by the mid-1960s. The advice of Maulvi Abdul Huq mentioned earlier, to concentrate on the positives of one's belief system rather than criticising others, was not heeded by Ghulam Sarwar, the editor of the daily newspaper *Sangam Patna*. In October 1965, Huq wrote to Sarwar, who was also a prominent Bihari politician and campaigner for Urdu, decrying the 'very provocative and insulting language' used to describe Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, who was dubbed a 'demonic leader' (*sheytāni peyshwa*) in an article about a British man

claiming to be his successor.¹⁷⁸ Huq drew attention to Maulana Azad in defence, whom he described as a leader of Sarwar's sect, and who had called Ghulam Ahmad Islam's *fateh naseeb General* (victorious General).¹⁷⁹ In addition, during the same year Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, former rector of Nadwa, founding member of the Majlis-e-Mushawarat and the AIMPLB, first published *Qadianism: a critical study*. In this text, he recited a number of familiar conspiracy theories about the Jama'at being established to do the bidding of the British, as a money-making venture, and that both Ghulam Ahmad and Mahmud Ahmad saw themselves as superior to Muhammad.¹⁸⁰ Like Iqbal, he saw in the idea of *khatm-e-nabuwwat* the maturation of humankind and a protective mechanism against innovations that would seek to undermine this. In his words, finality 'has been like a fortress wherein this *ummah* took refuge from the inroads of imposters [sic] and adventurers who tried to demolish the entire structure of Islam and to replace it by a new structure'.¹⁸¹ The implications of this escalation in anti-Ahmadi rhetoric for the Jama'at's sense of belonging will be considered next.

¹⁷⁸ *al-Badr*, 28 October 1965, p. 10.

¹⁷⁹ See Chapter 2 for more on Maulana Azad's complicated relationship with the Ahmadiyya.

¹⁸⁰ S.A.H.A. Nadwi, *Qadianism: A Critical Study*, translated into English by Z.I. Ansari (6th edn, Lucknow, 1980), *passim*.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

Chapter 6 – maintaining a distinct identity: *tabligh*, discrimination, and the meaning of suffering

In a letter to Indian Ahmadis attending Qadian's *Jalsa Salana* in December 1974, Mirza Nasir Ahmad reminded his followers of their ultimate aim: spreading Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's message throughout the world. 'For this', he wrote solemnly, 'we will have to make countless sacrifices. And for the honour of Islam we will have to tolerate humiliations. And we will have to bear all kinds of pain'. But it was only through this suffering that they would be able to fulfil their 'higher purpose' (*maqsad azeem*) of propagating Ahmadiyyat.¹

The Third Khalifa intended to console Ahmadis still reeling from the decision made by the National Assembly of Pakistan (NAP) to declare the Jama'at a non-Muslim minority less than four months prior. Through his words, he acknowledged the hurt and bewilderment his followers were experiencing. But he also tried to frame this experience as something that was to be expected or even welcomed. The Prophet Muhammad had predicted that the chosen sect out of the 73 factions his *ummah* would split up into would need to suffer nobly as it disseminated the truth and therefore, the Ahmadiyya could not abandon their responsibilities of *tabligh*.

Previous chapters have dealt with how members of the Jama'at fought to be recognised as loyal Indian citizens, as Muslims in general, and as part of the Indian Muslim community in particular, whilst still remaining firm in their identity Ahmadis. This chapter delves further into how Ahmadis projected themselves as a distinct sect with

¹ *al-Badr* (Qadian), 26 December 1974.

transnational aspirations. As suggested by the excerpt above, it does this by looking at how Ahmadis chose to maintain this sense of difference themselves, and what they made of attempts by their opponents to impose a sense of difference upon them.

It will begin by examining how Indian Ahmadis sustained the Jama'at's centralised organisational structure described in Chapter 1 and reformed networks between Qadian and Jama'ats in the rest of India that had been shattered by Partition. This was necessary for a sense of community cohesion and to establish a solid foundation for its missionary work. The Jama'at transnational *tabligh* activities in the countries it has been most successful in will be reviewed to emphasise the scope of the Ahmadiyya's ambitions and to suggest that despite its organisational rigidity, there was some flexibility in how it presented the theology of the Ahmadiyya depending on what aspect of their belief system would resonate most with potential new followers. This survey will also place their efforts to propagate Ahmadiyyat in India as part of a global programme. Missionary work in the country of the Jama'at's birth was an endeavour that was restarted remarkably soon after Partition. The chapter will consider the methods used to encourage conversion, such as stressing the importance of Qadian as a spiritual centre, debates in print compared to more conciliatory approaches in person, and the use of both formal and informal missionaries to spread the Jama'at's message.

Following this, the chapter will turn to the events of 1974 in Pakistan to ground a discussion of how the Ahmadiyya dealt with attempts to force a sense of separateness upon them from the outside, on terms that they did not agree to and could not control. It will show that the Jama'at's objections to the NAP's decision comprised multiple facets and will examine how Indian Ahmadis framed its long-term consequences. It will be

argued that the decision was folded into a larger narrative of opposition and hostility against Ahmadis as being an unpleasant but inevitable manifestation of sacrifices that had to be made by members of God's chosen Jama'at. Suffering was both a price that had to be paid and proof of their status as followers of True Islam.

Rudolph Heredia has argued that scholarship on religious conversion in India has been unduly focused on those promoting and opposing it rather than the reasons why people convert from one creed to another in the first place.² This is perhaps true; however, it is difficult to probe into the reasons for conversion without in many cases ignoring an individual's deeply held religious conviction in what they believe in for a more instrumentalist or mercenary approach to faith. Bearing this in mind, as well as the methodological difficulties of such an endeavour in the case of Indian Ahmadis, this chapter approaches missionary work from the perspective of the Jama'at's practitioners of *tabligh* and the ways they sought to make their message resonate rather than delving deeply into the motives of those who converted to Ahmadiyyat.

Organisation and community in India

As described in Chapter 1, the Jama'at has a rigid and hierarchical organisational, administrative, and financial infrastructure with the office of the Khalifa at its centre.³ This section will describe how the framework of the Jama'at continued to work in practice after 1947, especially because it required rebuilding due to the migration of most Ahmadis

² R.C. Heredia, *Changing Gods: Rethinking conversion in India* (New Delhi 2007), p. 124.

³ For more information on the way the Jama'at is organised, see K. Zirvi, *Welcome to Ahmadiyyat, the True Islam*, (2nd edn, Silver Spring, Maryland, 2003), chapter 12.

in North India, the impoverishment of those that remained, and the decimation of communication networks between local Jama'ats and the centre in Qadian after Partition.

Despite its location outside India and thus its consequences for the Jama'at's claim to national belonging as outlined in Chapter 3, the Khilafat remains the heart of this highly centralised system. As expressed in one Ahmadi text, it 'provides unity, security and progress' for the Jama'at,⁴ and thus great care is taken to promote the importance of the Khilafat and to protect its legitimacy as a sacred institution. Commentaries in the wake of Mahmud Ahmad's death attest to this. It was his becoming the second Khalifa that the Lahori group gave as the reason for their split from the Ahmadiyya in 1914 and so the Jama'at was sensitive to his death making the issue of who should fill that position contentious once again. Obituaries in *Badr* stressed that whilst Mahmud Ahmad was dismissed by some as just a 'child' when he became Khalifa aged 25, the transformation of the Jama'at in the 51 years of his leadership showed that these detractors had been 'short-sighted'.⁵ While Hakeem Nuruddin, the Jama'at's first Khalifa from 1908-1914, had previously barely received attention in accounts of the Ahmadiyya's history in *Badr*, he was invoked in order to counter criticisms that the Ahmadi Khilafat was a dynastic institution designed to entrench the power of generations of Ghulam Ahmad's family. Then Chief Secretary Mirza Waseem Ahmad argued that the fact that Nuruddin was not a familial successor to Ghulam Ahmad, just like Abu Bakr was not related by blood to the Prophet, demonstrated the legitimacy of the Khilafat. Any suggestions to the contrary were being propagated by 'a group of selfish people whose faith was defective', which had led them to leave the Jama'at and go to Lahore.⁶ In the final days of the second

⁴ Ibid., p. 287.

⁵ *al-Badr*, 11 November 1965, p. 1.

⁶ Ibid., p. 5.

Khilafat, these same people had ‘started pamphleteering in Lahore and had even started sending their dirty literature’ to some Jama’ats in India. However, ‘in the whole of India, they could not find even one Ahmadi who had weak beliefs or the germs of hypocrisy in him’, providing ‘clear proof’ that all Indian Ahmadis ‘have full faith and belief’ in the Khilafat.⁷ Nonetheless, Waseem Ahmad implored Indian Ahmadis to send in their oaths of allegiance to the new Khalifa straight away.⁸

One tier below the Khilafat, the Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, Qadian, continues to provide leadership in national matters. Its role became more important to the operation of the Indian Jama’at after 1947 due to the relocation of the Khilafat and for inculcating a sense of community cohesion after the fracture of Partition. The seriousness with which a centralised leadership system is taken is exemplified by a circular published in *Badr* at the start of the 1971 Indo-Pakistan War. Indian Ahmadis were left directionless when Qadian had been subject to a communications stoppage during the 1965 War, thus to avoid a similar standstill, readers were advised to contact the President of the Hyderabad Jama’at if this happened again so they were not left adrift and deprived of ‘spiritual and religious instruction’.⁹

The *Jalsa Salana* provides an opportunity for Ahmadis across a given country to come together once a year. For Indian Ahmadis, this is especially important due to their geographical dispersal. Members were implored to save each month so they could afford the journey to receive religious instruction, take part in collective prayers, and for new adherents to gain a sense of community.¹⁰ Though this was advice Ahmadis in all

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., 9 December 1971, p. 2.

¹⁰ Ibid., 14 December 1952, p. 1.

countries received, the religious importance of Qadian imbued attendance with an added significance.¹¹ Despite this emphasis on personal spiritual enrichment, outward appearances were also important. This is demonstrated by the concern mentioned in Chapter 3 that not as many people would attend the *Jalsa Salana* in December 1965 because of ceasefire conditions restricting international visitors to the area. Each household, or at the very least, each local Jama'at, was instructed to send at least one representative¹² and to try to bring along their non-Ahmadi friends to make up the numbers.¹³ A preoccupation with numbers reveals an understanding of the power of community solidarity, important both for reinforcing the commitment of existing Ahmadis and to pique the interest of non-Ahmadi attendants who may not have access to an equivalent communal spiritual experience in their current faiths. The undercurrent of repression that is required for a flawless projection of sublime community cohesion is hinted at in the small prints of adverts that appear in *Badr* in the weeks leading up to each *Jalsa Salana*. For example, the first condition of attendance is that 'no one has permission to ask questions' during the *Jalsa*.¹⁴

Because the Jama'at's activities are funded entirely by its members, Partition and its aftermath for Indian Ahmadis did not lead to a slackening of expectations that their financial obligations would be met. Mahmud Ahmad was especially uncompromising in his view of those Ahmadis who were not able or willing to continue their *chandās* in the face of financial hardship, and for the most part, this was reinforced by the Indian Jama'at. During Friday sermons in the early 1950s, Mahmud Ahmad often lamented the lack of appetite among his followers for financial sacrifice. In his view, there were two types of

¹¹ Ibid., 11 November 1965, p. 5.

¹² Ibid., 18 November 1965, p. 3.

¹³ Ibid., 11 November 1965, p. 5.

¹⁴ See for instance Ibid., 29 November 1962 and 25 November 1965.

poor people – the first, who like early converts to Islam in the seventh century, gave enthusiastically despite their impoverishment, and a second, more numerous group that avoided their religious duty ‘in the same way as a person runs from a rabid dog’.¹⁵ Mahmud Ahmad relayed a personal anecdote which suggested that habit formation was the solution to this lack of discipline and duty. His friend had told him to try *zardah* (processed chewing tobacco) for pain relief, and it was so effective that the Khalifa felt he had to stop taking it after a few days as he feared addiction. If this could happen so quickly with a substance, why could it not happen with the more powerful act of religious sacrifice? (*dīn ki qurbāni ki ‘ādat kyon nahīn parey gi?*)¹⁶ Despite this attempt at encouragement, Mahmud Ahmad more often used a stick rather than a carrot. He often threatened to purge the Jama’at of members that were falling short in their commitment.¹⁷ This was a way of signalling the seriousness of his message; but more importantly, it was to remind Ahmadis that they were part of an elite group that was not open to just anyone - rather, permission for them to be part of the chosen sect was conditional on proving they were deserving of it. In one example, he stated that Ahmadi leaders would not hesitate in removing those people who were ‘cheating’ the Jama’at by making financial promises they had no intention of keeping.¹⁸ If they were not dedicated enough to send in their *chandas*, they ‘could join the rest of the world as living corpses’ rather than remaining Ahmadis.¹⁹ These contributions were not a favour to him or the Jama’at but were to serve the religion of God. Thus, if these obligations were not met, after death, God would tell them ‘to make up the arrears in hell’.²⁰

¹⁵ Ibid., 14 August 1953, p. 3.

¹⁶ Ibid., 21 March 1954, p. 5.

¹⁷ See for instance Ibid., 7 February 1953, pp. 3-5; and Ibid., 7 February 1954, pp. 3-6.

¹⁸ Ibid., 7 April 1954, p. 10.

¹⁹ Ibid., 14 August 1953, p. 5.

²⁰ Ibid., 7 April 1954, p. 10

The Indian Jama'at was initially more lenient in its approach to Ahmadis who were falling short of financial expectations. In August 1953, the Ahmadi leadership council had decided that they would give a few months leeway for word to spread that those short on their *chanda* 'aam without permission would face punishment. After that, however, their names would be passed on to the Khalifa for his judgement.²¹ Indian Ahmadis were reminded that it was Mirza Ghulam Ahmad himself who decreed that members would be cut if they did not pay in their compulsory donations for more than 3 months running.²² The Treasury Secretary conducted tours of regional Jama'ats to audit their accounts and check receipts of donations received as part of an effort to reinforce the seriousness with which this should be taken.²³ National emergencies provided only limited respite. Less than a month after the ceasefire was declared in the Second Kashmir War, *Badr* reminded its readers that banks and telegram and postal services had returned to normal, so there was no need to delay in sending in *chandas*, including wartime arrears.²⁴ Indeed, in the edition of the paper published on the day that war between India and Pakistan ended in 1971, social embarrassment was used as a prompt as a list was published of those whose subscriptions to *Badr* would lapse during the following month unless they sent in their *chanda*.²⁵

The Jama'at's vast bureaucratic apparatus was necessary not just to support its global ambitions but also to inculcate a sense of separateness from outsiders amongst Ahmadis. Fostering internal cohesion was necessary at the national level after the upheaval of Partition created a sense of aimlessness for India's Ahmadis. Furthermore, its

²¹ Ibid., 21 August 1953, p. 11.

²² Ibid., 30 September 1965, p. 7.

²³ See for instance accounts of tours by the Treasury Secretary in South India in Ibid., 11 November 1965, p. 11, as well as Bengal and Orissa in Ibid., 30 December 1965, p. 11.

²⁴ Ibid., 14 October 1965, p. 12.

²⁵ Ibid., 16 December 1971, p. 4.

standardised infrastructure replicated across countries and continents also helped to reinforce the idea that despite the Ahmadiyya's strong roots in India, its territorialisation was of secondary importance to its status as a transnational movement. This is why it is not entirely accurate to claim that large communities of Ahmadis from South Asia established in other areas of the world are 'diasporic'.²⁶ National and local contexts had to be considered and could even be celebrated, and connections with other Muslims made in service of 'political Islam', as explained in the last chapter. But the primary kinship and loyalty of Ahmadis regardless of how scattered across borders they were was with other Ahmadis.²⁷ Furthermore, in addition to the financial demands placed on members, the involvement of ordinary Ahmadis in this bureaucratic apparatus served to strengthen their sectarian identity as it deepened the sense of having a real and tangible stake in the Jama'at and blurred distinctions between material and spiritual realms by having multiple aspects of one's life enmeshed in the Ahmadiyya. In this, the Ahmadiyya can be compared to the Daudi Bohras²⁸ and the Ismailis, though a critical difference is the comparative accessibility and omnipotence of the Khalifa compared to the Aga Khan.²⁹

'With pride, we can say that the sun never sets on the Jama'at': *Tabligh* as a transnational project

The missionary zeal of Ahmadis in the face of increasing hostility, and indeed, persecution, is one of the most remarkable things about the Jama'at. *Tabligh* is seen by

²⁶ T.S. Moles, *The evolution of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in the UK, 1913-2003* (Ph.D. thesis, Royal Holloway University of London, 2009), p. 29.

²⁷ This of course has given rise to accusations that Ahmadis are exclusivist and, as described below, has given their opponents ammunition to render them as outside the *ummah*.

²⁸ J. Blank, *Mullahs on the mainframe. Islam and modernity among the Daudi Bohras* (Chicago, 2001), passim.

²⁹ F. Devji, 'The Idea of Ismailism', *Critical Muslim*, 10 (April-June 2014), pp. 56-58.

members as one of the main reasons that the Ahmadiyya was established and so to neglect it in order to avoid potentially harsh personal consequences would be a dereliction of duty. Preliminary moves towards creating a global missionary programme began under the First Khalifa, Hakim Nuruddin. He was instrumental in sending missionaries to the UK, beginning with Khwaja Kamaluddin, who would become the leader of the Lahori faction after Nuruddin's death in 1914. Mahmud Ahmad continued this project with enthusiasm, establishing an organisation for missionary work, the *Tehrik-i-Jadid* (The New Movement), in 1934. As well as opening new missions, through this scheme he sought to establish an obvious physical presence of Ahmadi communities across the world by fundraising for the building of purpose-built mosques. During a Friday sermon in 1953 centred on the importance of ordinary members donating to the *Tehrik-i-Jadid*, he used the language of advertising to explain why a physical presence was so important. In non-Muslim countries, he argued, 'the mosque is the best advert' for Islam.³⁰ It should be thought of as a novelty that would attract people's curiosity, much like a circus.³¹ If 100 people think this way, and ten people actually visit, and one person converts, then the 'mosque becomes a missionary'.³² An added bonus of *tabligh* in non-Muslim countries was that it was more likely to succeed because Ahmadi missionaries did not have to compete with established Maulvis for people's attention.³³ Thus Mahmud Ahmad expected members to donate at least a quarter of their income to *Tehrik-i-Jadid* if they earned over Rs. 100 per month.³⁴

³⁰ *al-Badr*, 14 August 1953, p. 5.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

³³ *Ibid.*, 7 February 1954, p. 4.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

As described in Chapter 1, the focus of initial missionary efforts was on Christianity, and while European missionaries were no longer a pressing threat in the subcontinent after Partition, this foundational feature was not forgotten in *Badr* because it still had implications for the Jama'at's transnational *tabligh* aims. Ghulam Ahmad is described as having been appointed by God not just for the reform of Islam, but to destroy 'Christian temptation' (*salibi fitnah*), which is why Ghulam Ahmad was named the Promised Messiah.³⁵ Reports that East Pakistan was considering restricting Christian missionary activity there due to a number of recent conversions were met with disappointment both for impeding religious freedom and for accepting defeat by Christians so easily.³⁶ Ahmadis were instructed not just to seek for people to turn away from Christianity, as the void left by secularisation in the West meant that people were increasingly leaving religion for Satan worship, black magic, or communism.³⁷ Instead, it was imperative that Christians had Islam and Ahmadiyyat presented as an attractive alternative option before giving up the religion of their birth.

Conversion to Islam was believed to be necessary not just for the spiritual wellbeing of humankind, but on an existential level as well. The UN was commended for its efforts in working for world peace. However, clearly with an eye towards the Cold War and the concomitant nuclear threat, it was argued that peace could not prevail until spiritual science caught up with material science.³⁸ This gap between scientific and religious progress meant that 'humanity' was being 'stolen from humans' as without spirituality, a living human was the same as a corpse.³⁹ The way this could be rectified was through the

³⁵ Ibid., 14 June 1953, p. 6.

³⁶ Ibid., 30 September 1965, p. 3.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 6.

³⁸ Though the quotations in this paragraph are from *Badr*, Zafarullah Khan also makes this argument in M.Z. Khan, *Islam and Human Rights* (London, 1970), pp. 13-14.

³⁹ *al-Badr*, 18 November 1965, p. 10. See also Ibid., Qadian: 10 October 1974, p. 2.

work of ‘leading religious personalities’, not ‘ordinary politicians’.⁴⁰ The Ahmadiyya Jama’at was the only *zindah* (living) Jama’at presenting a proper example of Islam and embodying the humanity and ethics needed for the spiritual unity and development of humankind.⁴¹

As explored below, explicit statements about the number of Ahmadis in any given location are difficult to come by and to verify. However, in an obituary in *Badr* after Mahmud Ahmad’s death, Mirza Waseem Ahmad stated that the Jama’at had grown from 2-3 lakhs at the start of his Khilafat in 1914 to 25 lakhs across the world by the time of his death in 1965.⁴² Consequently, he added, ‘with pride, we can say that the sun never sets on the Jama’at’.⁴³ The following section will provide an overview of four of the Jama’at’s most significant transnational *tabligh* campaigns – in the US, West Africa, Indonesia, and the UK. This is to contextualise Indian missionary efforts as part of a transnational project and to gesture towards the ambitious scope of the Jama’at’s aims. It is also to demonstrate that despite the rigidity of its organisational structure outlined above, this did not mean the Ahmadis were inflexible in how their message would be spread. Indeed, it could be argued that the rigidity of its foundation gave it a stable base from which Ahmadis could depart from established norms and exercise greater freedom in how they attracted new converts according to local conditions. Following this, attempts to restart missionary activity in India almost immediately after Partition will be explored. With advice from their Khalifa after some false starts in Tripura, the Jama’at were able to put a more sustainable *tabligh* strategy into practice, though it will be argued that it is difficult to judge whether this endeavour could be called a success.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 28 October 1965, p. 2.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., 11 November 1965, p. 5.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 12.

Mufti Muhammad Sadiq was the first Ahmadi missionary to the United States. He arrived in 1920, initially setting up a headquarters in New York City but moving to Chicago later that year for its more central location as well as the presence of a larger community of Muslims, mainly from Syria and Lebanon. For existing Muslims, he put forward rules for living in the US that, if followed, would solidify their presence in the country and create the infrastructure needed for missionary work. Muslims were to retain their Muslim names; say their daily prayers; read, write, and speak Arabic; teach their children to be good Muslims; donate the interest gained from their bank accounts to the propagation of Islam; build mosques in every town; and join the Ahmadiyya Jama'at.⁴⁴ In July 1921, he established a quarterly journal, *The Moslem Sunrise*, aimed at countering increasing misrepresentations of Muslims in the American press. Due to this hostility, he also decided it was prudent to focus his conversion efforts on African-Americans rather than the majority white community.

Many of the 1,025 converts gained in the Midwest between 1921-25 were African-American.⁴⁵ Several became missionaries, leading to interest in the Jama'at from members of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). These members believed they should ally with the 'darker races of the world' as they increasingly came to see Christianity as a 'clan [sic] religion'.⁴⁶ Muhammad Sadiq gave a series of lectures to the UNIA in 1923, leading to 40 converts from the organisation as a result. Articles in *The Moslem Sunrise* reflected this new direction. These asked how brotherhood could be regarded as an American virtue in the face of segregation and

⁴⁴ R. B. Turner, 'The Ahmadiyya Mission to Blacks in the United States in the 1920s', *Journal of Religious Thought*, 44, 2 (1988), p. 55.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 58.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 60.

suggested that Islam could be used as a ‘political religion’ to fulfil the transnational aims of the UNIA and unite Africans.⁴⁷ This in some ways prefigured some of the principles that would come to be identified with the Nation of Islam in the 1930s. Muhammad Sadiq left the US at the end of 1923, and *The Moslem Sunrise* suspended publication from 1924-30 – a period coinciding with Garvey’s trial, imprisonment, and deportation, suggesting that the period of difficulty for the American Jama’at may also have been due to a shortage of resources gained from the UNIA.⁴⁸

Rather than stressing a sense of racial commonality as in the United States, the Jama’at made inroads in West Africa via education, drawing in converts by being the first Muslim group to establish schools that combined both religious and secular education in the region.⁴⁹ This was particularly effective in Nigeria, especially after the Anglican Synod resolved in 1922 that Muslim children be excluded from Christian schools in Lagos.⁵⁰ Humphrey Fisher describes how this meant that the nature of conversion was superficial, which led to many splits and theological disputes that were exacerbated by attempts by Qadian to impose order.⁵¹ This culminated in Qadian disaffiliating all Nigerian Ahmadis in 1939 and requiring them to pledge individual oaths, resulting in far fewer adherents at the end of the interwar period than the 10,000 converts that had been reported at the beginning of it.⁵² Its presence has arguably been sustained by the support of influential Ahmadis. For instance, Adeniji Adele II, King of Lagos 1949-64, was a foundational member of the Jama’at in Nigeria.⁵³ Education was also crucial to the establishment of

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 60-61.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 63.

⁴⁹ H.J. Fisher, *Ahmadiyyah: A study in contemporary Islam on the West African Coast* (London, 1963), p. 169.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 172.

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 92-114.

⁵² Ibid., p. 99.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 181.

the Jama'at in Sierra Leone, Gambia, and Liberia.⁵⁴ What is today Ghana proved the exception, where it grew as mainly an agricultural movement among Fante Muslims, who form the largest single community among West African Ahmadis.⁵⁵

During a Friday sermon in the summer of 1970, Nazir Ahmad argued that the Ahmadiyya was fighting a war on two fronts; against atheism and Christianity. The 'war against Christianity' would be 'decided on the soil of Africa', and money, doctors, and teachers were needed for victory.⁵⁶ *Tabligh* efforts in West Africa, therefore, focused on correcting beliefs that Jesus possessed messianic qualities rather than imparting knowledge about the life and times of Ghulam Ahmad. Ahmadi imams in the region did not necessarily expect Christians to convert, but still wanted them to accept that Jesus did not die on the cross,⁵⁷ though of course, the denial of Christ as the messiah would clear the path for acceptance of Ghulam Ahmad in that role instead. This is perhaps why Fisher observes that most Ahmadis in the region know that Ghulam Ahmad was from India and was not a law-bearing prophet, but otherwise know very little about who they refer to as Hazrat Mahdi.⁵⁸

Like Fisher, Ahmad Najib Burhani also argues in his study of Ahmadi conversion in Indonesia that in terms of theology, it was messianism rather than modernism that was the primary draw for converts.⁵⁹ However, the primary difference between the Jama'at's success in Indonesia compared to the other countries spotlighted here is that Indonesia is

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 121-130.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 119.

⁵⁶ *al-Badr*, 3 September 1970, p. 3.

⁵⁷ Fisher, *Ahmadiyyah*, p. 146.

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 137-40.

⁵⁹ A.N. Burhani, 'Conversion to Ahmadiyya in Indonesia: winning hearts through ethical and spiritual appeals', *Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia*, 29, 3 (2014), pp. 657-90.

a Muslim-majority country, and thus doctrinal differences were tackled more directly. The Ahmadiyya became established there after a visit from the Lahori leader Khwaja Kamaluddin in 1920. Following his visit, two Indonesian students decided to go to Lahore but ended up moving to Qadian as it offered more generous bursaries for their religious education. They requested that the Second Khalifa send missionaries to their home country. The *muballigheen* propagated Ahmadiyyat by stressing how Ahmadis differed from other Muslims, challenging other Muslims to debates, and drawing on messianic beliefs already present in Indonesian society. Burhani argues that they found success via their close-knit organisation, mysticism, behavioural discipline and the passion of their missionaries. Moreover, Mahmud Ahmad made Indonesians who often felt excluded from pan-Islamic movements feel included as part of a transnational community. For instance, he ordered Ahmadis around the world to fast for four days a week during September and October 1946 in support of Indonesian independence.⁶⁰

The UK was the target of the Ahmadiyya's first overseas *tabligh* mission. Khwaja Kamaluddin took over the UK's first purpose-built mosque, the Woking Mosque, in 1913, and the Ahmadiyya built London's first mosque in 1926. The community's presence in London was aided by Zafarullah Khan, whose activities on the Jama'at's behalf allowed it to gain more visibility and financial stability, demonstrating that despite the rigidity of the Jama'at's leadership structure, there was room for exceptions if they were profitable.⁶¹ It grew steadily and was ethnically heterogenous until the 1960s when the community almost doubled in size following the emigration of Urdu speaking Ahmadis from East

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 679.

⁶¹ T.S. Moles, *The evolution of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in the UK, 1913-2003* (Ph.D. thesis, Royal Holloway University of London, 2009), p. 140.

Africa.⁶² Unlike in the US, the first converts were middle class and highly educated, and the UK Jama'at has continued to be more socioeconomically homogenous since then.

In contrast to its approach in Indonesia, Ahmadi missionaries in the UK did not draw attention to doctrinal differences straight away. Despite this, the level of hostility towards the Ahmadiyya from other Muslims mirrored that of the subcontinent due to immigration from the region increasing in the mid-1930s. Thus Ahmadis have tended to focus their efforts on converting non-Muslim Britons instead.⁶³ In a comprehensive study of the history of the Ahmadiyya in the UK, Tarja Moles argues that community commitment has been fostered by three factors: social control in the form of religious education and moral training; cohesion as a minority within a minority that does not form close relations with outsiders; and continuance via financial investment.⁶⁴ The Conclusion of this thesis will briefly explore changes to the community in the UK after the headquarters of the Ahmadiyya shifted from Rabwah to London in 1984 following General Zia's promulgation of Ordinance XX.

Tabligh in India

Despite the difficulties faced by Ahmadis in Qadian described in Chapter 3, missionary work was restarted soon after Partition. Jama'ats from across India appealed to the government to remove obstacles to travel outside the state that were hindering *tabligh*. For instance, Abdul Ghafar Ahmadi, Secretary of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at in Jaipur, Rajasthan, said that relations between the headquarters and regional Jama'ats had still not

⁶² Ibid., p. 77; p. 160.

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 203-206.

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 141-156.

returned to normal two years after Partition. Consequently, no missionary could be sent out from Qadian and likewise, no Indian Ahmadi from outside Punjab could visit, portending ‘irreparable loss to the community’ if this continued. Appeals were made to the self-styled ‘secular Government’ that ‘protects every religion, caste and creed’.⁶⁵ However, the government of East Punjab informed the centre that the Ahmadiyya’s concern was unfounded. Muslims of all sects were able to travel around freely in Punjab and ‘except for a certain feeling of dislike for Muslims in general, there is no particular danger to a Muslim...there is no evidence of any preparation or intention to use violence against them’.⁶⁶

East Punjab intelligence files suggest that the Ahmadiyya dealt with their circumscribed capabilities in the immediate aftermath of Partition by confining their proselytising to Gurdaspur. However, these efforts were not well received. For instance, the Deputy Police Commissioner, Gurdaspur, was moved to advise the Ahmadiyya ‘not to indulge in any discussions...which might lead to communal controversies’ following arguments that had broken out after Ahmadis had initiated discussions about religious and political matters on public transport in Gurdaspur.⁶⁷ Further entries describe district authorities having ‘some cause for concern’ following a meeting where ‘objectionable references’ were allegedly made about the life of Guru Nanak.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ ‘Ahmadiya community – Request for the grant of certain facilities for their journey to Qadian and return of their property at Qadian’, Abdul Ghaar Ahmadi to J. Nehru, V. Patel, and C. Rajagopalachari, no date, Home Poll., NAI, File No. 57/54/49-Poll.

⁶⁶ Ibid., letter from Under Secretary Political for Chief Secretary to Government, East Punjab, to Assistant Secretary to the Ministry of Home Affairs, 5 July 1949.

⁶⁷ ‘Fortnightly reports from the Chief Secretary to the Government of Punjab’, first half of June 1949, Ministry of States, Political (A), NAI, File No. 9(45)-P/49

⁶⁸ ‘Fortnightly reports from the Chief Secretary to the Government of Punjab’, first half of April 1952, Ministry of States, Political (A), NAI, File No. 20(25)-PA/52.

This is not to suggest that the Jama'at's approach to proselytising was primarily adversarial, but rather that even non-confrontational religious propagation could generate hostile responses. In 1951, an Ahmadi missionary, Maulvi Osman Ali, was arrested in Dharamnagar, Tripura. Barkat Ahmad Rajeke, then Ahmadi Secretary for General Affairs, appealed for Osman Ali's release and argued that as the Ahmadiyya had a policy of never acting against the interests of the state, if Osman Ali had broken the law, it must have been 'through some inadvertence'.⁶⁹ It transpired that Osman Ali was held under the Preventative Detention Act (1950), a law retained from the colonial period ostensibly to quash anti-national activity, pending further enquiries by the Tripura Intelligence Branch. He had entered Dharamnagar from East Pakistan dressed as a village missionary with copies of a Bengali leaflet published by the Anjuman Ahmadiyya, Dacca. The leaflet stated that 'the objective of Islam' was to 'convert the whole world into Pakistan', and therefore, it was argued, Osman Ali had 'acted in a manner prejudicial to the security of the State and maintenance of public order'.⁷⁰ The central government concluded that the Tripura authorities had been 'unnecessarily panicky' in detaining Osman Ali, arguing that the pamphlet 'merely claims that members of the Ahmadiyya community are the best and purest Muslims'. Therefore, it was recommended that he be released and asked to leave Tripura.⁷¹

Despite the dismissive view of the centre, the Government of Tripura continued to hold a hostile stance towards the Ahmadiyya and refused to allow the Jama'at to open a

⁶⁹ 'Alleged arrested of one M Osman Ali, Preacher of the Ahmadiyya cult, in Tripura – released', B.A. Rajeke to C. Rajagopalachari, 24 April 1951, Ministry of States, Political (A), NAI, File No. 21(3)-PA/51.

⁷⁰ Ibid., Secretary to the Government of Tripura, Home (Political) Department to Gajinder Singh, Assistant Secretary to the Government of India, 16 July 1951.

⁷¹ Ibid., note by U.K. Ghosal, Deputy Secretary to Gajinder Singh, 23 July 1951 and letter from C. Ganesau to Chief Commissioner, Tripura, Agartala, 30 July 1951.

mission there a year after the release of Osman Ali. Rajeke once again appealed to the centre, suggesting the Tripura government's actions would 'create misgivings among the peaceful Muslim citizens of the State'.⁷² However, the Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Dharamnagar, argued that 'it appears that the Muslims of that locality strongly view with disfavour any religious preaching of the members of the Ahmadiya community'.⁷³ Although the Ahmadiyya argued that banning their missionary work in the state was unconstitutional, citing the freedom to propagate one's religion, public order concerns were deemed more important.⁷⁴ The Jama'at would continue to call attention to the discord between these two constitutional principles during the early 1950s. Criticising comments from then Home Minister K.N. Katju that conversion was subject to public peace restrictions, the editors of *Badr* asked how a secular government could effectively have the last word on matters of private belief. Such a restriction was 'absolutely contrary to freedom of religion, freedom of conscience, and freedom of speech, and against the Indian constitution of which we are rightly proud'.⁷⁵ It was argued that failing to respect conversions and differences in religious belief would create the same conditions in India that had led to the declaration of martial law in Pakistan in 1953.⁷⁶ Further, as will be explored below, it was also against Article 18 of the UDHR, which states that 'everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others

⁷² 'Request from Shri Nazir Umor Amma, Secretary, Ahmadiya Community, Quadian for permission to Moulvi Osman Ali to preach the cult in Tripura', B.A. Rajeke to Home Minister, 20 July 1952, Ministry of States, Political (A), NAI, File No. 12 (30)-PA/52.

⁷³ Ibid., Home Secretary to the Government of Tripura to Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of States, 29 October 1952.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ *al-Badr*, 21 April 1954, p. 4.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance'.⁷⁷

As described in Chapter 3, direct guidance from the Khalifa was published infrequently in *Badr*, both because communications were subject to the vagaries of Indo-Pakistan relations and to avoid detractors from accusing Indian Ahmadis of being under Pakistani influence. However, the importance of *tabligh* was one issue that Mahmud Ahmad was unequivocal about. A lengthy message from the Khalifa to the Indian Jama'at was published in *Badr*'s 7 January 1953 edition. In it, he asked them to remember that in declaring India a secular country that would not interfere in religious matters, the Indian government had implicitly declared itself bigger than God. As a result, idleness in missionary work and publishing would render them 'criminal' (*mujrim*) in the eyes of God.⁷⁸ Indian Ahmadis were criticised for not being courageous enough and were advised to model their attitude on Jesus. What had happened to Qadian during Partition 'was like the crucifixion' for them (*Qadiān mey jo inqilāb hua hey wo tumhārey liye bhi ek salīb jeyso hi wāqiya hey*).⁷⁹ However, only one person was saved from that cross, and thousands had been saved in 1947. Like Jesus, then, Ahmadis should reframe their missionary efforts as finding God's lost tribes in order to progress with their work. The state of flux following Partition meant that people from a variety of traditions would be open to approach. Muslims were 'broken-hearted' and full of the fear of God. And non-Muslims, having gained independence, had more capacity to attend to their spiritual lives. Practical strategies were suggested. The 10-12 Ahmadi 'ulema left in India should each

⁷⁷ United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (2015), p. 38, http://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr_booklet_en_web.pdf [last accessed 11 March 2019].

⁷⁸ *al-Badr*, 7 January 1953, pp. 3-4. As discussed in the previous chapter, this was similar to the advice Mawdudi gave to Indian members of the JEI in April 1947 before he left for Pakistan.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

supervise two boys, and within 7 years they would be trained up. Furthermore, the Jama'at should not delay in establishing printing presses in a variety of Indian languages, though an Urdu press had still not been set up at the time of his writing.⁸⁰

Thus, despite the false starts in missionary work that Indian Ahmadis experienced immediately after Partition, the Jama'at redoubled its efforts to rebuild its *tabligh* networks following Mahmud Ahmad's encouragement. The Khalifa would later give more specific advice about where to focus missionary activities. For instance, it was under his instruction that *tabligh* was started in Jammu and Kashmir in the mid-1950s.⁸¹ The government of East Punjab looked askance at such developments. Reporting that Qadian's Ahmadis were learning Hindi to facilitate their *tabligh* efforts, Bhim Sen Sachar, then Chief Minister of East Punjab, remarked ominously

it cannot be said that their object is altogether religious and cultural. They are a very clever lot and their working takes subtle and insidious forms. We cannot afford to let Qadian become, as before the Partition, a source of perpetual worry to us; and we would not hesitate to take appropriate measures if and when we feel that the Ahmadyas [sic] at Qadian are getting over active.⁸²

Despite this hostility, the Jama'at pressed ahead with their *tabligh* efforts in India. Qadian was essential to their endeavours. The town was so central to Ahmadi identity that the faith of those who had never visited was deemed suspect.⁸³ Indeed, during Mahmud Ahmad's funeral in November 1965, Nasir Ahmad vowed that one day, the coffins of the descendants of Ghulam Ahmad would be returned to Qadian from Rabwah.⁸⁴ The

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ 'Fortnightly reports from the Chief Secretary to the Government of Punjab', first half of August 1954, Ministry of States, Political (A), NAI, File No. 19(20)-PA/54.

⁸² Fortnightly intelligence report, B.S. Sachar to J. Nehru and V. Patel, 1 July 1949, NAI, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Papers.

⁸³ *al-Badr*, 21-28 December 1952, p. 22.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 30 December 1965, p. 4.

darweyshan were tasked with the responsibility for making Qadian the ‘living centre’ of ‘*tabligh-e-Islam*’ in India and with protecting it for the good of members worldwide.⁸⁵ Mahmud Ahmad offered them a 10 point plan for how to do this, which involved living parsimoniously and piously. They were to safeguard sites of religious importance to protect Ahmadi history; eat, speak, and sleep less; fast a couple of times a week and make *tahajjud* (night prayer) a habit as prayers from Qadian were essential for the protection of other Jama’ats; and tolerate cruelty stoically whilst trying to end it. In sum, the *darweyshan* were to ‘keep [their] eyes down but [their] gaze towards the sky’.⁸⁶ Ahmadi leaders expected Indian Ahmadis to contribute to this through the *Darweysh* Fund, a voluntary monthly *chanda* for the living costs of the 313 men who had remained in Qadian after Partition. Participation in this was found wanting,⁸⁷ despite reminders they would be denied *sawab* (spiritual reward) if they did not make one-off donations at least.⁸⁸ Despite such rebukes, *Badr* proudly described Qadian’s progress towards regaining and building on its pre-1947 status, which it felt was shown by its hosting of international missionaries from Borneo,⁸⁹ West Africa,⁹⁰ and Mauritius⁹¹ amongst other countries. The paper declared that the town’s redevelopment had allowed ‘God’s light’ to ‘reach India’s edges again’.⁹²

As well as the *darweyshan* and trained *muballigheen*, all Ahmadis were expected to take part in *tabligh* efforts. As Mahmud Ahmad put it, each person was to work for the Jama’at’s growth as if he alone were responsible for it.⁹³ As in the case of the Tablighi

⁸⁵ Ibid., 11 November 1965, p. 3.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 14 November 1952, p. 2.

⁸⁷ See for instance Ibid., 7 August 1953, p. 11; and 28 June 1954, p. 11.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 21 March 1953, p. 11.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 21 October 1953, p. 1.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 7 November 1953, p. 1.

⁹¹ Ibid., 25 November 1965, pp. 5-6, p. 11; and 2 December 1965, pp. 10-11.

⁹² Ibid., 13 January 1966, p. 9.

⁹³ Ibid., 21 November 1952, pp. 10-11.

Jama'at, *tabligh* not only garnered new adherents to one's faith but strengthened the faith of the *muballigh* as well.⁹⁴ Ideas for how this could be done varied in intensity. For instance, on the less onerous side, ordinary Ahmadis could spend Rs. 6 per year for a subscription to *Badr* for non-Ahmadis to consult in a public place, such as a library or a waiting room, as a way of participating in missionary work all year round.⁹⁵ However, suggestions were more often bolder than this. For example, Indian Ahmadis were told to use the curiosity about the Ahmadiyya shown by their fellow citizens because of the Lahore disturbances to remedy their neglect of their missionary duties. They ought to devote one month a year purely to *tabligh* and to organise local processions and *jalsas* to capitalise on this interest. At the very least, they should attempt to convert their non-Ahmadi friends, or send Qadian lists of those people who had shown an interest in the Ahmadiyya and were members of the 'serious class', i.e. people of power or influence, so the headquarters could target with them Ahmadi literature.⁹⁶ As described below, a suggestion to find the silver lining in the community's misfortune would resurface during subsequent times of hardship as well.

For both ordinary Ahmadis and *muballigheen*, it was said that the way one lived their everyday life was more effective than argumentation or reasoning (*dalā'il*).⁹⁷ Superficially, this echoed the approach of the Tablighi Jama'at, which prioritised practice over critical engagement. However, while Yoginder Sikand argues that this was a stipulation and not just a preference for the Tablighi Jama'at, which was 'explicitly hostile to the use of reason and science in religious matters',⁹⁸ previous chapters have

⁹⁴ H. Iqtidar, 'How long is life? Neoliberalism and Islamic piety', *Critical Inquiry*, 43 (2017), p. 796.

⁹⁵ *al-Badr*, 7 April 1953, p. 2.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 14 May 1953, p. 3.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 23 December 1965, p. 7.

⁹⁸ Y. Sikand, *The origins and development of the Tablighi Jama'at (1920-2000)* (New Delhi, 2002), p. 4.

demonstrated this was not true of the Ahmadiyya. Mahmud Ahmad in particular appeared aghast at the credulousness of both his followers and society in general. In a Friday sermon of autumn 1952, he called on Ahmadis to rely less on his advice and to learn to think for themselves to understand why their enemies had the courage to move against them.⁹⁹ Soon after the Lahore riots, the Khalifa tried to be more direct, complaining that most people did not understand what Islam was and would commit un-Islamic acts in the religion's name. Only the words 'Islam in danger' were needed for religious leaders to incite a Muslim to action,¹⁰⁰ perhaps an inadvertent dig at a prominent slogan of the project he had supported quite fulsomely 6 years previously as Pakistan was signalling it had less space for his Jama'at than he had anticipated. By the next year, Mahmud Ahmad began to indicate that he hoped that things were changing, a hope that came from an unlikely source. He saw more and more people questioning what religious leaders had to tell them – 'people call this irreligion and materialism. But I think this is curiosity for the truth' (*log is ka nām bedīni aur dehrīat rakhtey heyn. Leykin mey samajhta hun keh yeh sachā 'ai ki justuju hey*).¹⁰¹

This emphasis on reason and disputation was not entirely absent from on the ground *tabligh* efforts in postcolonial India, and evidence of the Socratic method can be found in reports from missionaries reprinted in *Badr*.¹⁰² However, in the main, in-person missionary efforts in India during this period were fairly meek and inoffensive compared to the rhetoric found in print about *tabligh* and how it should be carried out. Rather than theological debate and argumentation, missionaries focused on increasing their visibility in local communities by attending fairs and festivals to hand out literature. For the same

⁹⁹ *al-Badr*, 14 November 1952, p. 3.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 7 August 1953, p. 5.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 7 February 1954, p. 6.

¹⁰² See for instance *Ibid.*, 21 April 1954, p. 10.

reason, they sent politicians letters of congratulations when they were elected and included Ahmadi pamphlets in their correspondence.¹⁰³ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's teachings were framed as being centred on love, unity, and tolerance; many speeches focused on the Prophet being *khatim-un-nabiyyin* and the Jama'at's efforts in translating the Qur'an into regional languages, as well as railing against the Ahmadiyya's bugbear, communism.¹⁰⁴

Interfaith gatherings were similarly centred on raising awareness of the Jama'at and engendering harmonious relations between communities rather than the often more direct and sometimes combative exchanges favoured during the colonial period. In both 1952 and 1955, the *TOI* wrote about that respective year's 'All Prophets' Day' organised by the Ahmadiyya Jama'at in Bombay. Syed Basharat Ahmed Amir from the Hyderabad Jama'at presided over the first of these which brought together more than 12 speakers from a range of religious traditions to expound on their beliefs. Ahmed Amir told the *TOI* that the paths chosen for the 'ultimate realisation of truth' were different and that 'no one could claim that only his approach was right'.¹⁰⁵ Similar accounts of interfaith gatherings, particularly those taking place in Qadian, frequently featured in Ahmadi journals. These accounts demonstrated the fraternity of Ahmadis and the Sikh community in particular,¹⁰⁶ fostered by acts of service on the part of the Jama'at. Both Ahmadi high schools in the town, for instance, were open to all 'irrespective of caste and creed' and 25% of students

¹⁰³ Ibid., 21 May 1952, p. 5, p. 12.

¹⁰⁴ Reports from an extensive tour of South India in spring 1952 are indicative of general trends in how missionary activities were carried out in this period. Ibid., 7 May 1952, pp. 9-10 and 14 May 1952, pp. 5-6.

¹⁰⁵ *TOI*, 19 May 1952, p. 7. See also *TOI*, 11 April 1955, p. 3 for similar account.

¹⁰⁶ *al-Badr*, 28 August 1953, p. 1.

were non-Muslim.¹⁰⁷ Smaller gestures of goodwill were also reported as being a cause for immense gratitude in *Badr*.¹⁰⁸

Fostering inter- and intra-communal harmony as a primary goal was of course in large part due to safety concerns. The violence of Partition and the Jama'at's reduced numbers and dispersal across India meant that it felt physically and socially vulnerable. However, it was also seen as an effective method of *tabligh*, even if this did not result in immediate conversion. The head of Qadian's Pilgrimage Office wrote that five years since its establishment in November 1948, c.10,000 tracts in various languages had been distributed to non-Muslim visitors who were passing through the town for other reasons. These visitors were encouraged to visit Ahmadi holy sites, and around 55 people had been 'informed of Islam and the Ahmadiyya's unique perspective' in this way.¹⁰⁹ Interfaith gatherings usually ended with the distribution of Ahmadi literature even when the occasion was not religious, such as when local non-Muslims, including politicians, visited the Jama'at in Qadian to express their sorrow over the NAP's decision to declare them non-Muslim in September 1974.¹¹⁰ *Tabligh* needs to be seen not just in terms of an outcome of conversion, but a process by which the Ahmadiyya disseminated its message.

This does not mean that fundamental areas of disagreement with other religions were glossed over entirely. The Jama'at could afford to strike a more contentious tone in print when it addressed such topics because its vulnerability was less of a hindrance. As *shirk* (polytheism) violated the foundational and inalienable principle of *tawheed*

¹⁰⁷ B.A. Rajeke, *Ahmadiyya movement in India* (Qadian, 1975), p. 26.

¹⁰⁸ For instance, the Jama'at arranged the delivery of copies of the Guru Granth Sahib from Pakistan to Qadian. *al-Badr*, 7 February 1953, p. 1.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 28 December 1953, p. 6.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 19 September 1974, p. 12.

(monotheism) in Islam, it was Hinduism that came in for the most theological criticism. For instance, an article written by the Principal of Jamia Ahmadiyya, Ahmadnagar (Pakistan) in the 21 April 1952 edition of *Badr* decried *shirk* as a disgrace of God.¹¹¹ There was no capacity for tolerance of *shirk* in Islam, he argued, much like a father could not witness his son poisoning himself without using the strongest words possible to condemn it. Continuing with the metaphor of the family and bringing the patriarchal nature of Abrahamic conceptions of God to the forefront, he argued that God should be thought of in the same way that one thinks of their father; that is, someone who the child can never aspire to equal or come close to equalling in status. A man will be happy to report that he has many brothers, but if someone asks how many fathers he has, he will become furious.¹¹²

Hinduism ‘was almost finished’ because ‘the principles on which it was established have either ended’ or were ending, proclaimed Shiekh Yacoob Ali Sahib Irfani al-Assad of the Hyderabad (Deccan) Jama’at.¹¹³ Following Islam’s example of promoting equality, untouchability had been outlawed, and Hindus were increasingly moving away from idol worship.¹¹⁴ This was not just a recent development but had been centuries in the making; for instance, Sikhism had been established as a reaction against idol worship and to affirm the oneness of God.¹¹⁵ This was not simply theoretical criticism. As Yacoob Ali’s words indicate, the emphasis on equality under one God formed the basis of the Jama’at’s *tabligh* outreach to Dalits. Whilst the abolition of untouchability was to be applauded, *Badr* argued that laws could not change hearts and minds and so atrocities would

¹¹¹ Ibid., 21 April 1952, p. 3.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid., 21 June 1953, p. 5.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. See also 7 February 1954, p. 1.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 21 June 1953, p. 5.

continue. In contrast, the lessons Islam taught about equality were ingrained in Muslims because they were practiced five times a day – everyone stood in a row with equal status when they prayed.¹¹⁶ Remarking on B.R. Ambedkar's championing of Buddhism as the only way for Dalits to gain equality, the Jama'at appealed to Dalits to choose Islam instead. It was argued that the only religion worth converting to was one that commanded high status internationally, and Buddhism did not meet or aspire to meet this standard. In contrast, all the freedoms that Europeans enjoyed were due to the influence of Islam.¹¹⁷ In this way, Islam was framed as both entwined in the social fabric of India and global in its scope.

It is difficult to know the precise geographical spread of the Jama'at in India and the rate at which it grew after 1947 as such details were not collated and presented in *Badr* and were not made available by the leadership in Qadian during my research. Very broad sketches are the best that can be attempted by piecing together snippets and glances from the newspaper. For instance, in the 28 June 1953 edition, local missionaries were instructed to report to their supervisors in Bengal and Orissa, Bihar, Delhi and UP, Hyderabad, Malabar, and Bombay.¹¹⁸ From this, it can be gleaned that the Jama'at had substantial enough a presence in these areas for a supervisor to have been appointed in the first place. Similarly, the aforementioned accounting tour of Bengal and Orissa, and less specifically, South India, by Qadian's Treasury Secretary suggests the presence of large communities in those areas, though their precise concentrations are not available.¹¹⁹ Even when lists were published, such as the places from which Qadian received telegrams

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 21 April 1954, p. 4.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 7 February 1954, p. 1.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 28 June 1953, p. 7.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 11 November 1965, p. 11 and 30 December 1965, p. 11.

from Ahmadi after Mahmud Ahmad's death and Nasir Ahmad's succession, these cannot be used to determine numerical strength.¹²⁰

Where possible, the Jama'at used the obvious metric of persons converted as a result of *tabligh* tours to define success. However, this definition was expanded due to the problem of how to appear triumphant and encouraging when these numbers were lacking. The types of people that attended Ahmadi events thus became a common way to signal progress. One missionary conference in Srinagar was described as 'very successful' because of 'the expression of extraordinary interest in Ahmadiyyat' by the area's 'educated class'.¹²¹ Similar pride was taken in the participation of people of higher socioeconomic status.¹²² The positive impact on a person's mood or the atmosphere at the end of a conference was also used to describe a successful engagement.¹²³

This is not to suggest that the Jama'at inflated their achievements or hid the difficulties their missionaries experienced from their ordinary members. Much was made in particular of the financial obstacles to *tabligh* efforts. As well as sacrificing their time, missionaries were having to spend their own money on travel and accommodation in the early 1950s, and the centre could not keep up with demand in printing Ahmadi tracts for distribution to interested parties.¹²⁴ Such was the shortage of funds that missionaries were even told to save money by only entering into correspondence with the centre when there were many things to report, or to at least send postcards instead of letters.¹²⁵ This advice

¹²⁰ Ibid., 11 November 1965, p. 12; 18 November 1965, p. 7, pp. 9-10; 25 November 1965 p. 7-10; 2 December 1965 pp. 7-8.

¹²¹ Ibid., 24 September 1970, p. 7. See also a similar description of the success of a missionary conference in Hyderabad reported in Ibid., 7 May 1952, pp. 9-10.

¹²² See for instance an account of a missionary conference in Bangalore in Ibid., 14 May 1952, pp. 5-6.

¹²³ See for instance Ibid., 7 May 1952, pp. 9-10 and 21 May 1952, p. 5, p. 12.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 21 May 1952, p. 5, p. 12.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 7 July 1953, p. 12.

is especially significant given how closely the leadership usually tried to keep abreast of the activities of its members. If money could not be parted with, Ahmadi parents were asked to dedicate their children who had passed matriculation or its equivalent as *waqf* for this cause,¹²⁶ a call that would eventually be formalised into the *Waqf-e-Nau* scheme in 1987. *Badr* also appealed to Ahmadi youth directly. Youngsters during the Prophet's time ensured that his enemies would not be able to reach him unless they walked over their dead bodies first. The Jama'at was not asking for them to lay down their lives, but to be inspired by that history and dedicate themselves to the Ahmadiyya with the same passion (*dewāngi*).¹²⁷ They were the Jama'at's 'backbone' and would deliver its salvation if they came together with vigour and sincerity.¹²⁸

The National Assembly of Pakistan's resolution (1974)

Whilst the previous section dealt with how the Ahmadiyya maintained a distinct sectarian identity on its own terms for *tabligh*, the next section will look at how the Jama'at responded to attempts to foist a sense of difference upon it against its will. The decision of the NAP to declare the Ahmadiyya a non-Muslim minority in 1974 provides a case study for this broader issue. After examining how the Jama'at reacted to the declaration itself, its consequences for how Indian Ahmadis saw themselves as members of the chosen sect and representatives of True Islam will be examined.

In May 1974, a skirmish between medical students from Multan and local Ahmadis at a train station in Rabwah catalysed anti-Ahmadiyya action, though what exactly happened

¹²⁶ Ibid., 21 May 1952, p. 5, p. 12.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 14 June 1953, p.2.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

is still unclear.¹²⁹ Soon afterwards, trade unionists, public intellectuals, and opposition parties called for the Ahmadiyya to be excommunicated from Islam. The Speaker of the NAP initially refused to consider their demands, arguing that it was merely a law and order issue for provincial legislatures to deal with. However, with the threat of a general strike and after the opposition staged a walkout, the NAP was converted into a Special Committee to deal with this matter. Just over three months after the incident at the train station, the Ahmadiyya was declared a non-Muslim minority on 7 September 1974. The Second Amendment to the 1973 Constitution said that those who did not agree that no prophet came after Muhammad, however they defined 'Prophet', were not Muslims under the law.¹³⁰ *Badr* printed many articles detailing the violence, murder, and social and economic damage Pakistani Ahmadis experienced throughout 1974, including their ongoing victimisation even after the resolution. This was corroborated by reports in the Indian national press.¹³¹

Ali Usman Qasmi has been able to go beyond a simple narration of these events by exploring the record of the proceedings of the NAP's Special Committee, which were declassified in 2012. The closing speech of Attorney General Yahya Bakhtiyar provides a summary of the salient points of the proceedings. In his testimony, Mirza Nasir Ahmad strenuously argued that the Ahmadiyya did believe that Muhammad was the last of the prophets, but the Attorney General was unconvinced. Bakhtiyar also placed the responsibility for exclusion squarely on the Ahmadiyya, arguing that it was the Jama'at

¹²⁹ A.U. Qasmi., *The Ahmadis and the politics of religious exclusion in Pakistan* (London, 2014), p. 177.

¹³⁰ The full text reads 'A person who does not believe in the absolute and unqualified finality of the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) the last of the Prophets, or claims to be a prophet, in any sense of the word or of any description whatsoever, after Muhammad (peace be upon him), or recognizes such a claimant as a prophet or a religious reformer, is not a Muslim for the purposes of the Constitution or law'. Ibid., p. 212.

¹³¹ See for instance *Hindustan Times* (Sunday magazine), Delhi: 22 September 1974, p. 5.

that had pushed to be thought of as separate from Islam in the colonial period and noting their requirement of endogamous marriage and parallel political and administrative institutions.¹³²

How did Indian Muslims respond to this declaration? Some echoed the predominant reaction towards the 1953 Lahore riots and considered it a politically rather than religiously motivated campaign. For instance, Zohar Baksh in the Kanpur Daily *Action* explained that Ahmadis were being made into an enemy that Pakistanis could rally around to engender national unity.¹³³ This is an analysis some scholars have since advanced as well.¹³⁴ However, the general tenor of reaction was quite different to 1953. The *Hindustan Times* reported that among New Delhi's Muslims, there was a 'general satisfaction' about the decision, but that not many were willing to speak about it publicly.¹³⁵ Khurshid Alam Khan, a Congress MP who would later become Governor of Goa and then Karnataka, argued that it was correct to treat the Ahmadiyya as non-Muslim. However, it was 'highly improper' for a political body to make a pronouncement on a religious matter, especially because it opened up the possibility that similar demands would be made against other Muslim groups.¹³⁶ Among Muslim religious leaders, the JIH President Maulana Muhammad Yusuf said that the JIH agreed Ahmadis were not Muslim but did not approve of any maltreatment they were being subject to.¹³⁷ Both the JIH and JUH condemned criticism of the decision by the Indian national press as a religious matter that should not be dissected by the non-Muslim commentariat. They disapproved of the framing of it as

¹³² Qasmi, *The Ahmadis and the politics of religious exclusion in Pakistan*, pp. 204-09.

¹³³ Excerpted in *al-Badr*, 7 November 1974, p. 14.

¹³⁴ For instance, see F. Shaikh, *Making sense of Pakistan* (New York, 2009), pp. 94-98; also C. Jaffrelot, *A history of Pakistan and its origins* (London, 2004), p. 245

¹³⁵ *Hindustan Times*, Delhi: 14 September 1974, p. 3.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ *TOI*, 12 November 1974, p. 9.

a push from ‘orthodox’ Muslims, arguing that term implied theirs was a marginal position rather than one shared by the majority of Muslims worldwide.¹³⁸

Unlike the Jama’at in Bangladesh, who argued that the NAP’s decision even made a ‘kafir’ out of the Prophet Muhammad,¹³⁹ it does not appear that the leadership in Qadian issued an equivalent public statement on the issue, much less one that was so provocative. However, in *Badr*, the Jama’at struck a defiant tone against those Indian Muslims that welcomed the decision taken across the border. This section will analyse the many aspects of this defiance by examining the internal conversation among Ahmadis that the NAP’s decision generated. As well as looking at how the paper sought to quell its readers’ acute anxieties, it will seek to place the Jama’at’s response in the context of long-standing narratives about the inevitable and noble suffering that members of God’s chosen sect needed to endure in service of their religion and ultimate truth.

The Jama’at responded to positive assessments of Pakistan’s declaration in India by contrasting the social and political contexts of both countries. An Ahmadi based in Madras wrote a letter to the editor of *The Hindu* condemning the Hyderabad Muslim League President’s statement in support of the NAP’s decision. The letter writer invoked the spectre of Partition by arguing that the Muslim League had not only caused the division of India in 1947, but it also sought to ‘import the bigotry of Pakistan into India which is a land of religious tolerance’.¹⁴⁰ Framing the issue in this way made being anti-Ahmadi anti-national. Meanwhile, *Badr* quoted extensively from an editorial of 19 August in the JUH journal *al-Jamiat*, which had changed its view of anti-Ahmadi action

¹³⁸ *Hindustan Times*, 14 September 1974, p. 3.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 11 September 1974, p. 5.

¹⁴⁰ *The Hindu*, Madras: 17 September 1974, p. 6.

in Pakistan since its condemnation of the Lahore riots in 1953. The paper proclaimed that the revival of the Ahmadiyya in India, having been left ‘half-dead’ after Partition, had the potential to ‘poison every corner of the Muslim community’s religious, social and collective life’.¹⁴¹ The Jama’at branded this and similar proclamations elsewhere in the Muslim press as part of a pitiful propaganda campaign that could not succeed in India because the country was secular. This meant that permission would not be given for such ‘inhumane action’, and nor was ‘the government machinery so weak that it would play into the hands of religious fanatics’ as it had in Pakistan.¹⁴² *Badr* frequently published summaries of the support they received from Muslims and non-Muslims, or as the newspaper put it, ‘Indian intellectuals who favoured the truth’¹⁴³ to counterbalance negative coverage and announced that the Jama’at would simply pray that ‘God banishes the darkness in their hearts soon’ so that the ‘*ulema* would be saved ‘from a bad outcome which they are fast advancing towards due to their ignorance’.¹⁴⁴ Indian Ahmadis were advised to continue their *tabligh* efforts with patience and tenderness, to exercise control in the face of ‘poisonous name-calling and provocation’, and to present themselves as ‘the perfect example of Islam and Ahmadiyyat’.¹⁴⁵ It is this stoicism in the face of attack that Burhani describes as being part of the reason the Jama’at found converts in Indonesia as well. He argues that the Ahmadi missionaries’ ability to remain phlegmatic ‘in the face of abusive treatment and humiliation’ at the hands of their opponents proved attractive.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴¹ *al-Badr*, 5 September 1974, p. 2.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ See for instance *Ibid.*, 19 September 1974, pp. 7-8; 26 September 1974, pp. 9-11; and 21 November 1974, pp. 9-10.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 5 September 1974, p. 2.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 12 September 1974, p. 8.

¹⁴⁶ Burhani, ‘Conversion to Ahmadiyya in Indonesia...’, p. 667.

Despite these relatively serene responses, *Badr* allowed room for the fear and frustration of the Jama'at to be expressed, albeit in a more limited way. Maulvi Muhammad Umar Malabari, a missionary stationed in Madras, wrote a two-part essay deconstructing the 'ulema's criticism of the Ahmadiyya for the latter's proscription of *jihad* during colonial rule.¹⁴⁷ It was written that the Jama'at had not responded to general anti-Ahmadi sentiment from the JIH and JUH but had to respond to this point of fact. He contended that the 'ulema wanted to 'play Holi with the blood of Ahmadis', but as they could not physically attack the Jama'at in India, they decided to describe the contents of their 'rancorous and prejudiced hearts' instead.¹⁴⁸ Whilst those associated with Deoband, Nadwa, Aligarh, the Ahrar and other organisations had been in cahoots with the British during colonial rule, today they had 'shed their skin like a snake' and were pretending they had been anti-imperial from the start when they had benefitted from British patronage more than the Ahmadiyya. The Jama'at was being targeted for its honesty, as it had never hidden the fact that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had supported the British because they allowed 'freedom of conscience' in India and did not put restrictions on *tabligh*.¹⁴⁹

The phrasing of this response points to the many concerns that the Ahmadiyya were attempting to respond to. Firstly, contrasting their own transparency with the apparent hypocrisy and mendacity of their critics allowed them to subvert the terms on which groups labelled heretics are often condemned by the Sunni majority. This form of attack is most associated with anti-Shi'a sentiment but has also been used against the Jama'at and other Muslim minority groups. The imagery of the snake, an established anthropomorphised metaphor for cunning and duplicity, is especially evocative in this

¹⁴⁷ *al-Badr*, 12 September 1974, pp. 5-7 and 19 September 1974, p. 9.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 12 September 1974, p. 5.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

regard. Secondly, the use of the phrase ‘freedom of conscience’ reveals a familiarity with liberal political terminology in general, and the increasingly normative language of individual human rights in particular, to explain cooperation with the British in terms understandable to an audience in the 1970s.

As explored above, especially in their missionary activities towards societally oppressed groups, the Jama’at pointed to the ways that Islam championed and enabled the conditions necessary for equality among humankind to prevail. In one 1954 article, *Badr*’s editors argued that ‘from the start, Islam prepared the way for the human rights Charter [i.e. the UDHR] in every way’.¹⁵⁰ In his work *Islam and Human Rights* (1970), Zafarullah Khan, who had been Pakistan’s representative to the United Nations in the early 1960s, also pointed to the overlaps between the UDHR and Islamic ethics. Furthermore, Khan’s belief that the free trade of ideas was the fairest way to determine the correct path towards salvation, and his faith in competition as a mechanism for revealing the truth, suggests the influence of economic liberalism on his viewpoint as well. He felt that as ‘in essence every religion possesses a missionary character’, freedom of religion should be embraced by every religion as otherwise it would ‘create barriers in the path of its own objectives’.¹⁵¹ Further, he argued for freedom of conscience, as the Qur’an stipulated that there was to be no compulsion in faith. This did not mean that all creeds were correct – the person on the wrong path would be ‘among the losers’ in ‘the Hereafter’ – but that apostasy did not deserve a ‘temporal penalty’.¹⁵² Severe punishment for apostasy in Khan’s estimation stemmed from the early days of Islam when it often went hand in hand

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 21 April 1954, p. 4. See also in M.Z. Khan, *Islam and Human Rights* (London, 1970), pp. 140-141.

¹⁵¹ Khan, *Islam and Human Rights*, pp. 112-113.

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 116.

with treason; now, harsh treatment was being meted out simply for differences of opinion.¹⁵³

However, the framework of human rights was not applied to the Ahmadiyya's plight in 1953. Indeed, in his first message to the Jama'at in India since becoming the third Khalifa, Mirza Nasir Ahmad proclaimed in English 'may you never feel need knocking [sic] other doors than of the Beneficent Lord'¹⁵⁴, suggesting a discomfort with asking the outside world for help, especially as doing so could be used by their detractors as more evidence of a closeness between the Jama'at and the West. Furthermore, a reluctance to appeal to human rights may have been because the 1953 Lahore riots did not have legal or constitutional implications for the Jama'at, and Ahmadis at the time had the support of both the establishment and, in general, of other Muslims. Or, it could have been because a post-World War II understanding of human rights had not had time to be embedded into Indian political discourse.¹⁵⁵ However, the situation facing Pakistani Ahmadis in 1974 meant that direct references to human rights and the international institutions that upheld them began to be made more frequently, both for practical purposes and for expressing why the declaration was morally and politically unsound.

The President of the Jama'at in Cannanore had appealed to the UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim for the deputation of a UN observer to Pakistan during the summer of 1974 to safeguard the 'religious rites [sic] and civil liberties of minorities'.¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, Zafarullah Khan appealed to the Human Rights Commission, the Red Cross,

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 137.

¹⁵⁴ *al-Badr*, 23 December 1965, p. 2.

¹⁵⁵ There has been little work on the history of the concept of human rights in India. Works such as M. Bhagavan, *India and the quest for one world: the peacemakers* (Basingstoke, 2013) focus on India's role in shaping the United Nations, rather than the UN's contribution to Indian political norms.

¹⁵⁶ *TOI*, 10 June 1974, p. 5.

Amnesty International, and the International Commission of Jurists to ‘investigate the situation at first hand and provide succour and relief to the beleaguered community’.¹⁵⁷ In *Badr*’s first editorial after the NAP’s declaration, explicit reference was made to these norms and institutions in the international order of which Pakistan was part. It was argued that ‘freedom of religious belief is that foundational right for all human beings. Regardless of what region they live in, it is accepted as their birthright. This is why it is present in the UNO’s human rights charter’, to which Pakistan was a signatory.¹⁵⁸ The danger of majoritarianism was folded into the broader defence of individual agency that was being articulated. Why was the will of the majority being cited as a justification by Bhutto when it had no relevance to individual religious belief? And was it sensible to hand over power to the majority, especially as the Qur’an also cast this as a dubious way to exercise leadership?¹⁵⁹

As outlined above, the Ahmadiyya saw Islamic ethics as compatible with, and even laying the foundation for contemporary ideas about individual human rights. Thus, the two need not be mutually exclusive in analysing the language used by the Indian Jama’at to articulate how it saw events in Pakistan. However, one can point to differences in emphasis without falling into a false liberal/religious binary. Despite referring to the UN and acknowledging the currency of individual human rights in international law, it was the idea that the NAP’s declaration was against Islam that formed the crux of *Badr*’s response to it. The *khatm-e-nabuwwat* issue, central to justifications of anti-Ahmadiyya action, was of course dealt with comprehensively in *Badr* to demonstrate that adversaries of the Jama’at were basing their opposition on a misunderstanding of the Ahmadi

¹⁵⁷ *Hindustan Times*, 10 September 1974, p. 5.

¹⁵⁸ *al-Badr*, 12 September 1974, p. 2.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

position. For months after 7 September, the paper's front pages were dominated by excerpts from the writings of Ghulam Ahmad that affirmed that Muhammad was *khatim-un-nabiyyin*.¹⁶⁰ Moreover, a 36-page special issue devoted to *khatm-e-nabuwwat* was published in October 1974.¹⁶¹ Alongside this, the Jama'at argued not just that those hostile to them had misunderstood Ahmadi theology, but that they also had a faulty understanding of Islamic theology more broadly. To this end, *Badr* did more than simply point out that Ahmadis believed that Muhammad was the final law-bearing Prophet; they also pointed out that belief in this was not and had never been part of the *shahada*, a point that was usually left out of defences of their beliefs in the wake of previous anti-Ahmadi action.¹⁶²

Similarly, the Jama'at dealt with calls from amongst the Indian 'ulema that Ahmadis be treated as heretics and thus be similarly ostracised by questioning the theological basis of that call rather than defending themselves specifically from deserving such categorisation. The aforementioned announcement in *al-Jamiat* on 19 August 1974 prohibited contact with Ahmadis and proclaimed that it was the responsibility of every Muslim 'to think of Qadianiyat as *irtidād* [(apostasy)] and *kufr* and believe they are outside the pale of Islam' and to make 'every type of legitimate and constitutional effort' to halt their spread'.¹⁶³ In response, *Badr* wondered what type of Islam it was an announcement of since it was against Islam to order the cutting of ties with *kafirs* and *murtids* (apostates). No individual could decide matters of belief or unbelief as this was between a person and their God.¹⁶⁴ Instead, it was the responsibility of the JUH, as per

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., September-December 1974, passim.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 31 October 1974.

¹⁶² Ibid., 12 September 1974, p. 11.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 5 September 1974, p. 2, p. 11.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 3 October 1974, p. 2.

Islamic teachings, to convince those that they thought of as on the wrong path through loving argumentation.¹⁶⁵ As seen in the discussion of sectarianism in the previous chapter, the Ahmadiyya were using the tenets of economic liberalism to suggest that a fair contest could be held via disputation in the marketplace of ideas.

As even some of those who otherwise agreed with the substance of NAP's decision did, the Ahmadiyya questioned the NAP's right to make this a political pronouncement at all. The Indian Jama'at's leadership does not appear to have made official statements on this matter to the national press. The scant evidence that can be found of public comment in such a forum was from the Property Secretary A. Hamid Ajiz. He wrote a letter to the editor of the *Hindustan Times* on behalf of the Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya to say that the NAP had no authority to declare Ahmadis non-Muslim.¹⁶⁶ Even if the question of authority was ignored, *Badr* argued, how could Pakistan call itself an Islamic democracy when it was making decisions that ran contrary to the religion's fundamentals? Muhammad himself had stated that there were only three conditions that needed to be fulfilled for someone to call themselves a Muslim: that they said *namaz*, faced the Ka'ba when doing so, and ate *zabihah* meat (a specific method of animal slaughter). How could the NAP ignore this boundary and try to impose a new one in determining who was beyond the pale?¹⁶⁷ Moreover, in denying that a reformer (*musleh*) could come after Muhammad, they were denying the latter's prediction that a person would appear every 100 years to guide the *ummah* until such a time that deviating from the right path was no longer a human weakness. In the absence of this, there was nothing to distinguish Islam

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 5 September 1974, p. 11.

¹⁶⁶ *Hindustan Times*, 25 September 1974.

¹⁶⁷ *al-Badr*, 12 September 1974, p. 2.

from other religions,¹⁶⁸ again calling to mind the Ahmadiyya's belief that they were the only group representing a form of 'living' Islam.

It was argued that the decision was not only against Islam, but that it undermined the reason that Pakistan was founded, meaning it was 'dangerous' for the country and represented an 'open rebellion' against Jinnah. Jinnah had asked for Partition on the basis of two nation theory, which Congress agreed to in order to unshackle the region from British rule. The right time to have tackled the 'Ahmadiyya problem' was in 1947, but no one broached the subject even when Zafarullah Khan was the person representing the Muslim League before the Boundary Commission. The reason no one did was that it would have brought the entire concept of Muslims and Hindus constituting two separate communities into disrepute, meaning that Pakistan would not look like it did in 1974, if it had come into existence at all.¹⁶⁹ The Indian Jama'at questioning how well the NAP's decision accorded with Pakistan's founding myths is significant for the boldness of its approach and demonstrates an attempt to try and deconstruct the intellectual and rational basis of the decision from as many conceivable angles as possible.

The noble suffering of God's 'chosen people'

Whilst the previous section examined how the Indian Jama'at responded to the decision to declare Ahmadis non-Muslim in Pakistan, this section will look at the way that it contextualised the decision and processed its longer-term implications. It will show that

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. While it appears that *Badr* were demoting Ghulam Ahmad in status to a mere reformer rather than the Promised Messiah, a note on terminology is needed here. The term *mujaddid* is usually used to denote the person predicted to revive Islam every century, taken from the word *tajdid* (revival, renewal). *Musleh*, from the word *islah*, describes a reformer and is used much less frequently. When it is used in the contemporary period, it is frequently associated with the Ahmadiyya.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 3 October 1974, p. 2.

the declaration served to cement the idea that Ahmadis were predestined to suffer and that their suffering would affirm their status as ‘members of the chosen and godly spiritual Jama’at’.¹⁷⁰ It will also suggest ways that the Ahmadiyya’s linkage of proselytisation and persecution can be seen to be informed by capitalist principles.

Mirza Waseem Ahmad comforted Indian Ahmadis by explaining that while no one could say with certainty what the consequences of the NAP’s decision would be, intense suffering was the route through which all important Jama’ats advanced towards their destination. It was this misery that allowed ‘beliefs to mature, so that they become like *kundan* [(highly refined gold)] and shine’.¹⁷¹ Moreover, Ahmadis had been forewarned of great suffering both by the Qur’an and by Ghulam Ahmad. The latter had predicted suffering would befall them so that God could test who was true (*sādiq*) in their prayers and who was not (*kāzib*).¹⁷² Speeches given by Mahmud Ahmad around the time of Partition that called for members to stay true to the fact that they were part of a Jama’at based on ‘religion, ethics, and justice’ were reprinted in *Badr* after the NAP’s declaration, perhaps to remind Ahmadis that they had been able to withstand other traumatic events in their recent past.¹⁷³ Elsewhere, Mirza Bashir Ahmad explained that whilst God ‘declares at the outset the triumph and ascendancy of His Messengers, He simultaneously reminds them of the grave dangers that they have to face’.¹⁷⁴

Explaining trauma in a way that sustains the identity and fortitude of their members is a common way that minority groups have processed experiences that might otherwise wear

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 11 November 1965, p. 1.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 12 September 1974, p. 1.

¹⁷² Ibid. See also M.G. Ahmad, *The philosophy of the teachings of Islam*, M.Z. Khan (trans.) (London, 1979; repr. Tilford, Surrey, 2010), pp. 16-17.

¹⁷³ *al-Badr*, 19 September 1974, p. 5.

¹⁷⁴ B. Ahmad, *Future of Ahmadiyya Movement* (Qadian, 1970), p. 9.

down the resolve and commitment of their followers. Though this is not limited to sects within Islam, the Shi'a provide another prominent example of this. The martyrdom of the third Shi'a Imam, Husayn ibn 'Ali, and his family by the forces of the Umayyad Caliph Yazid at the Battle of Karbala (680) is central to Shi'a identity, exemplified by commemorations of the tragedy during Muharram, culminating in ritualised public expressions of grief during Ashura.¹⁷⁵ Toby Howarth shows that this is reinforced by Shi'a sermons, which are all focused around tragedy and suffering, with the *Ahl-e-Bayt* (People of the House, i.e. the Prophet and his family) having proved their worth to God through the agony they had been subjected to.¹⁷⁶ A sense of powerlessness is an important component of this suffering and is compounded by the continued experience of Shi'as as a frequently persecuted minority Muslim group.¹⁷⁷ The suffering of Shi'as cements the belief that they are on the righteous path, demonstrated by how they refer to themselves as *mu'min* (those who believe) rather than *Muslims* (those that submit).¹⁷⁸

The experience of suffering and trauma is also key to the way Ahmadis think about their own history and identity. However, there are distinct differences between how the Ahmadiyya and the Shi'a conceptualise suffering. The most obvious is that Ahmadis do not ritually commemorate suffering in the same way, and indeed, although emphasising its constitutive nature, treat it as if it were almost prosaic.

Badr was suffused with references to *qurbāni* (sacrifice) and *sabar* (forbearance; patience) during 1974. However, the place of suffering as a formative part of the

¹⁷⁵ For more on this see for instance D. Pinault, *Horse of Karbala. Muslim devotional life in India* (New York, 2001).

¹⁷⁶ T.M. Howarth, *The Twelver Shi'a as a Muslim minority in India: Pulpit of tears* (London, 2005), pp. 156-159.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

Jama'at's experience was not a sudden development in response to the events of that year. As described earlier, frequent mention was made of the sacrifice necessary for the Ahmadiyya to prosper in their missionary efforts, most often in the context of financial or temporal sacrifice. Further, it emerged during other times of crisis for the Jama'at. For Mahmud Ahmad, suffering was not something to ruminate over and run from but was to be faced directly with courage. During the Lahore disturbances, he told his followers to remember that it was better to die fighting than to leave, and he would have no sympathy for those Ahmadis facing trouble if they tried to flee their locality during the disturbances.¹⁷⁹ This was a form of almost masochistic honesty in contrast with how he described their opponents. In language mirroring terms used against the Ahmadiyya, Mahmud Ahmad accused his opponents of being cowards (*darpok*) and hypocrites (*munāfiq*) for using rhetorical bait to get their followers to do their bidding rather than outright asking for Ahmadis to be killed unless they were declared a minority.¹⁸⁰

After the Lahore disturbances had been brought under control, Mahmud Ahmad provided scant words of consolation and affirmation for what Pakistani Ahmadis had been through. Instead, he told them that those before them had been victims of far greater adversity and did not complain, and their courage had only grown as a result.¹⁸¹ A 1957 tract by Mirza Bashir Ahmad, *Future of the Ahmadiyya Movement*, described in more detail the reasons why stoicism in the face of adversity was so important. Despair was attributed to four factors. Firstly, an exaggerated sense of danger and a 'lack of trust in Divine promises'.¹⁸² Secondly, a 'material out look [sic] combined to merely visible factors',¹⁸³ again

¹⁷⁹ *al-Badr*, 28 February 1953, p. 6.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 28 February 1953, p. 5. See also *Ibid.*, 21 July 1952, p. 4.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 14 July 1953, p. 6. See also *Ibid.*, 28 March 1953, p. 2.

¹⁸² B. Ahmad, *Future of Ahmadiyya Movement*, p. 17.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

signalling an undue emphasis on this-worldly affairs. Both these points allude to the fact that for the Ahmadiyya, the Messiah has already come, meaning that suffering is not supposed to be seen as an existential threat for the Jama'at itself. Even if it poses a deadly risk to individual Ahmadis, it is not to be avoided as they are supposed to be working for the reform of humankind so that peace on earth can be established, thus their path to salvation would be guaranteed in death. Thirdly, 'looking at the seed in one cause [sic] and at the tree in the other';¹⁸⁴ in other words, the Ahmadiyya Jama'at was in its infancy and was being compared to longer established and thus more powerful sects and religions. And fourthly, not 'appreciating the difference between Jalal and Jamal', with 'Jalal' being defined as 'majesty', and 'Jamal' as 'beauty'.¹⁸⁵ Bashir Ahmad applied these adjectives to types of reformers. Whilst Jalali reformers such as Moses and Muhammad brought new laws, Jamali reformers were sent to serve and consolidate existing laws, like Jesus and Ghulam Ahmad who were 'sent to serve the Mosaic and Islamic Sharia, respectively'.¹⁸⁶ Jalali reformers could use war as a method of propagation, whereas Jamali reformers were to work peacefully and use 'reason, argument and heavenly signs, with humility'.¹⁸⁷ Bearing these four factors in mind, Ahmadis were admonished for complaining, especially as God had granted them faster success in *tabligh* and the quelling of opposition than he did the followers of Jesus.¹⁸⁸

Both the Second Khalifa and Bashir Ahmad pointed to the fact that the Ahmadiyya Jama'at had been established relatively recently and that initial allies of all prophets had faced victimisation and hardship. Just as Jewish people had opposed Jesus and Christians

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 24.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 27.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 29.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., pp. 30-31.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. 36-38.

opposed Muhammad, the ‘*ulema*’s opposition to Ghulam Ahmad was natural.¹⁸⁹ It is significant to note that the writer chose to say ‘the ‘ulema’ rather than ‘Muslims’ as would be expected given the way that the rest of the sentence is constructed around Prophets being opposed by followers of the older Abrahamic religions. Mahmud Ahmad called on his followers to see the Jama’at’s newness as a strength rather than a weakness, as it was for Muawiyah I, the first Khalifa of the Umayyad Khilafat (661-680) in his confrontations with the Romans.¹⁹⁰ He tried to put this point more simply by saying that the Ahmadiyya would be able to withstand more than their opponents in the same way that a young person’s stomach can digest things more easily than an elderly person’s.¹⁹¹ Comparisons were made to the early history of Islam in other contexts as well. For instance, after the Second Khalifa’s death, Ahmadis were called upon to overcome their grief by looking to the example of Abu Bakr,¹⁹² here suggesting a comparison between Mahmud Ahmad and Muhammad rather than between the Prophet and Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as was more usual.

As described in the previous chapter, the *hadith* that Muslims would be divided into 73 sects with only one being saved gave Ahmadis a way to understand their oppression.¹⁹³ The growth of the Jama’at despite opposition was heralded as evidence that they were recipients of God’s favour as his ‘chosen people’ (*barguzedah insān*).¹⁹⁴ As seen with the advice to ordinary members to capitalise on the publicity garnered after the Lahore riots for *tabligh*, this growth was not left to chance. Similarly, the attempted murder of

¹⁸⁹ *al-Badr*, 18 November 1965, p. 8.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 21 July 1952, p. 4.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 5. For a comparison between the experience of the Ahmadiyya and the opponents of the Abbasid Khilafat, see also *Ibid.*, 10 October 1974, p. 6.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 11 November 1965, p. 2.

¹⁹³ See for instance *Ibid.*, 23 January 1975, p. 5; and 21 March 1953, p. 5.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 21 March 1953, p. 5.

Mahmud Ahmad in March 1954 was described as having done ‘the work of thousands of missionaries’.¹⁹⁵ Four elite families in Srinagar had converted as a result, and calls were made to send in donations to build on this, especially because of the threat of Christianity and communism in Kashmir.¹⁹⁶

Max Weber called attention to how religion influenced capitalism by theorising that the Calvinist belief that productivity would lead to salvation fuelled the emergence of modern capitalism.¹⁹⁷ At certain points in this chapter, we can see that this effect can go in the opposite direction as well. In other words, we can detect the ways that capitalism potentially influenced the Ahmadiyya. The belief that productivity signals one’s moral worth and contribution to society is reflected in the Jama’at’s belief that industry in *tabligh* is the path to salvation. This is reinforced by the definition of success being amassing as many new adherents as quickly as possible, though this would be amended in later years, as explored in the Conclusion. While it is of course not the only factor in the desire of Ahmadis to spread the word of God, this capitalist logic of conversion can be seen as a contributing factor to the Jama’at’s missionary zeal in the face of hostility in contrast to other Muslim minority groups, such as the Shi’as.

Where Weber’s work has arguably more resonance is in how persecution and proselytisation are connected by the Jama’at. Weber’s idea of disenchantment, i.e. the rationalisation of the sacred, has been shown throughout this thesis to be part of the Jama’at’s theology and philosophy by its emphasis on reason and bureaucracy often in place of emotion and the esoteric. However, this exists alongside the belief that the

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 21 June 1953, p. 10.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ M. Weber, *The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism*, (2nd edn, London, 1976).

Messiah has already arrived. The way this apparent paradox works in practice is that while Ahmadis work to reform the spiritual practices of humankind to establish peace on earth before the Day of Judgement, they seek the most efficient way of doing so. The call to take advantage of one's persecution to gain new converts reframes suffering so that as well as being a marker of predestination, which is important for one's inner consolation, it becomes almost routinised. Suffering is rationalised into a recruiting advertisement for the Jama'at rather than commemorated as a grave infliction of physical and psychic pain that is almost epigenetic in nature. This again contrasts with the Shi'as; because their Messianic Age has yet to begin, suffering and the threat of persecution cannot be dismissed or compartmentalised if it can still prove to be an existential threat to the community itself.

Thus in 1974, Indian Ahmadis were told not to fear the NAP's decision as extremism against them had previously led to their 'extraordinary progress',¹⁹⁸ and because theirs was a living God that at every opportunity had punished their oppressors.¹⁹⁹ Indeed, after asking Ahmadi missionaries about the NAP's declaration, 18 Sunni Muslims in Poonch apparently decided to convert.²⁰⁰ Furthermore, the Jama'at declared itself vindicated by record numbers of attendees at Rabwah and Qadian's respective *Jalsa Salanas* in December 1974, asking 'if this is not a shining example of the authenticity of Ahmadiyyat, what else is it?'²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ *al-Badr*, 5 September 1974, p. 2.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 19 September 1974, p. 5.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 16 January 1975, p. 6.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Conclusion

K.N. Sud, a correspondent for the *Hindustan Times*, profiled ‘The Ahmadiyyas of Qadian’ for the paper’s Sunday edition soon after the NAP’s declaration.²⁰² He marvelled at the missionary zeal, orthopraxy, and behavioural discipline of Ahmadis in Qadian. Sud wrote of the area’s remarkable growth since Partition, and how profitable it was to invest in the area as buyers could be sure the Ahmadiyya would eventually buy their property to secure their domination of the town. Ahmadis told him that those persecuting the Ahmadiyya in Pakistan would themselves be initiated into the Jama’at soon enough. As Mirza Waseem Ahmad said,

We are better Muslims than Sunnis. We fully believe in the Holy Quran and other Islamic laws. It is not for politicians to decide our or anybody else’s faith. Today the meaning of religious freedom is that every man has the right to decide for himself whether he is a Muslim, a Christian, a Hindu or a follower of any other religion. How can anyone arrogate to himself the right to define another person’s faith?²⁰³

Sud’s profile points to the major themes explored in this chapter. The highly centralised organisational, administrative, and financial infrastructure of the Jama’at allowed it to regain its footing in India after Partition. Further, it allowed for an internal cohesion between Ahmadis that spanned borders and was part of a transnational *tabligh* project to spread Mirza Ghulam Ahmad’s message as widely as possible. For this, it was necessary for Ahmadis to emphasise what made them distinctive. This existed concurrently with other aspects of identity projection discussed in previous chapters. The Ahmadiyya attempted to regain control of the narrative when a sense of difference was imposed upon them by their detractors on terms they could not define for themselves. It did this by

²⁰² *Hindustan Times* (Sunday magazine), Delhi: 13 October 1974, p. 6.

²⁰³ Ibid.

outlining the ways the Jama'at's victimisation was against secularism, against international law in the context of the UDHR, and above all, against Islam. Furthermore, it described suffering as something all noble Jama'ats were destined to go through; thus, suffering was a mechanism to become, and proof of already being, God's chosen sect. To engage non-Ahmadis and to sustain Ahmadis in the belief they inhabited True Islam, a mixture of logic and argumentation, emotion and messianism, and scripture and modern technology was used to drive the Jama'at's efforts, demonstrating again that in many ways, the outlook of the Ahmadiyya defies binary categorisation.

Conclusion

This thesis has investigated and documented the history of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at in India during a time of immense social and political upheaval. It has explored how the Ahmadiyya negotiated belonging at the margins of nation and religion during the early postcolonial period. In the context of a historiography that otherwise tends to deny them agency as actors in their own story, by focusing on their newspaper, *Badr*, this study has centred the voice of Ahmadis themselves in how they navigated their changed circumstances in India and presented the multiple sites of their identity.

While scholars can make convincing arguments about the centrality of nineteenth-century controversies and theological disputes to explain the course of their history in Pakistan, it was Partition that transformed the trajectory of the Ahmadiyya's history and belonging in India. Without it, the experiences of the Jama'at, both in terms of how it had to rebuild itself after the majority of North Indian Ahmadis migrated to Pakistan, and the self-presentation of the Ahmadiyya in the decades since, are incomprehensible. More broadly, the Jama'at's experience adds nuance to the Muslim experience of Partition in doctrinal, political, and existential ways. Gyanendra Pandey's definition of Partition, that Partition in fact encompassed three different partitions, has been used in making this argument. These were the creation of Pakistan; the splitting of Punjab and Bengal; and the division of families and local communities.¹

Tackling the second of Pandey's partitions first, this thesis has presented new research on the experience of the splitting of Punjab for Indian Ahmadis. The trauma of this partition

¹ G. Pandey, *Remembering partition: violence, nationalism and history in India* (New Delhi, 2003), p. 14.

suffuses their sense of belonging in India throughout the early postcolonial period. Despite the active role played by Ahmadi leaders in trying to control the outcome of decolonisation for their community, intense confusion and lack of choice marked the decision for the majority of the Punjabi Jama'at and the Khalifa to leave for Pakistan in November 1947. The remaining 313 men were a tiny community of Muslims left in East Punjab after the transfer of populations was complete, and Qadian's location only some 85 miles away from the border meant that, especially during wars with Pakistan, they were viewed with suspicion arguably more intense than other Indian Muslims experienced, resulting in Ahmadis emphasising their exceptionalism. The *darweyshan*'s efforts to restore some sense of normality for their lives in Qadian were frustrated by official policies such as the dictates of the state's refugee rehabilitation programme and the tightening of border regimes.

In terms of the first of Pandey's partitions, the mere existence of Pakistan meant that doubts about the loyalty of Ahmadis and Indian Muslims in general continued well after the violence and disorder that had marked the splitting of Punjab had passed. Though this suspicion did not prevent *tabligh*, missionary campaigns were conducted with considerably less alacrity than before Partition or in other countries during the early postcolonial period. Having allied with the Muslim League before 1947, Indian Ahmadis were unable to point to their involvement in anti-colonial campaigns to demonstrate continuities in their loyalty after Independence and so emphasised their general theological commitment to the ruling power of the day instead. Moreover, like other Muslims, they stressed the autonomy of Indian Islam to emphasise the roots of Muslims in the country. This proved especially useful in creating solidarity during the 1953 Lahore riots, which was framed as a political problem specific to Pakistan. However, the

discourse around anti-Ahmadi activity began to shift, and by the time of the NAP's 1974 decision, it was clear that Indian Muslims were not as impervious to sectarian acrimony across the border as had initially been thought. In addition, through its impact on the Constitution of India, the creation of Pakistan has had more indirect effects on the Jama'at as well, such as what conception of rights Ahmadis were governed by. Furthermore, postcolonial legal authorities displayed continuities with colonial ideas for the governing of minorities. This has been shown by the privileging of the language of scriptural authenticity and rationality, wrapped in state paternalism, which have arguably been critical in the retention of the Muslim status of Ahmadis in India.

Of the last of Pandey's partitions, a key reason that the Punjabi Jama'at had to remake itself after 1947 was because the local Ahmadi community's division had been so lopsided. This had immense repercussions not just for the *darweyshan*, who would not be reunited with their wives and children for years after Partition, but more importantly for a sense of community and purpose amongst Indian Ahmadis in general. The suspicion with which Qadian's Ahmadis were viewed meant that physical distance was not the only thing that would separate them from their kin in Pakistan. It was felt that there needed to be a severing of ties between the Indian and Pakistani branches to safeguard their claim to their spiritual centre and to temper accusations that politics aside, the *darweyshan* had other reasons to be secretly loyal to Pakistan. This left Indian Ahmadi leaders adrift with very minimal access to their Khalifa's guidance. For this reason, *Badr* is seen to be vital in generating community cohesion amongst Ahmadis scattered throughout India.

At the beginning of this dissertation, I posed a series of questions about Ahmadi identity in India in the postcolonial period that I have sought to answer during its course: how did

Indian Ahmadis present themselves at once as loyal Indian citizens, as part of a wider Muslim world that they were increasingly being excluded from, and as members of a proselytising movement with global aspirations? Here, I will provide a summary of the answers offered in this study and suggest that their interlocking and compounding nature demonstrates the importance of conducting intersectional analyses.

Since the Jama'at was established, its leaders and members have been steadfast in seeing it as a transnational Muslim movement. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's purpose as the Promised Messiah was to revive and reform what he believed to be the most authentic and correct manifestation of Islam for the benefit of the *ummah*. Thus, despite the example of the Baha'is given by their erstwhile ally Muhammad Iqbal, Ahmadis cannot countenance identifying as non-Muslim as is their opponents' desire. This has held true even in the face of increasing persecution. In fact, heightened hostility has only served to strengthen the faith of Ahmadis that they are on the right path as they have drawn on narratives about the noble suffering of God's chosen people prevalent in the early days of Islam. Ahmadis also believe that these same narratives will help to illustrate their righteousness to non-Ahmadis. Thus, paradoxically, their claims to universality can be found in their exclusivity. Rather than seeking to keep others outside of the chosen sect out of the 73 groups Islam was foretold to split into, the Ahmadiyya seek to extend membership of those that will be saved on the Day of Judgement to as many people as possible. It is for the same reason that *tabligh*, in India and the wider world, is seen as a victory both for the Jama'at and for Islam, as authentic versions of both are regarded as synonymous. Thus, the history of the Ahmadiyya in South Asia in terms of the extant scholarship on sectarianism described in the Introduction does not entirely accord with the idea that the Jama'at was simply one voice amongst many advocating a general sense of Muslim

renewal in the late colonial period. Nor does it demonstrate congruence with work on Indian Shi'as by Justin Jones, who suggests that Shi'as conceive of themselves not as a sect, but as a *qaum*. Furthermore, their self-presentation as both Muslims and as Ahmadis challenges binary separation/solidarity categorisations.

Similarly, the Ahmadiyya fall neither into a resistance nor a submission paradigm when it comes to their involvement in politics. Pledging loyalty to the ruling power of the day, whether as subjects or as citizens, has not meant that Ahmadis have been as uninterested in active political participation as either they or their opponents have claimed. This has been demonstrated through interventions on behalf of what are seen as Indian Muslim interests, such as the Second Khalifa's leadership of the AIKC in the 1930s, the Jama'at's support of the Muslim League and movement for Pakistan, the campaign to defend Urdu, and in criticising the Congress governments' inaction with regard to communalism. In the postcolonial period, couching such discussions in the language of secularism allowed Ahmadis to show how the state was falling short of the national values it purported to serve. It also allowed Ahmadis to emphasise a constitutional and normative commitment to seeing Indian Muslims as part of the nation, thereby making such a challenge itself a display of patriotism.

Indian Ahmadis initially presented animosity towards them from other Muslims as an internal conversation that did not need the involvement of non-Muslim outsiders, especially as intra-Muslim disputation was part of established Islamic tradition to establish the *nāji firqah*. Thus, they thought that reason and argumentation would win over naysayers, shown in the practices of prayer duels and public debates and later, the publishing of literature in multiple languages and the holding of educational *jalsas*.

Bearing this in mind, the Indian Jama'at championed its own vision of unity in diversity amongst Indian Muslims. It suggested that political unity (*siyāsi etihād*) could allow Indian Muslims to thrive in the face of potential threats from living as a minority in a Hindu-majority country while leaving them free to engage in a tradition of religious disputation that advanced all Muslims towards their ultimate purpose of identifying the true path to salvation. This was an articulation of the pride in one's own specific sectarian identity that was separate from the dominant narrative wherein sectarian differences inevitably led to a descent into sectarianism. Faith was expressed that Ahmadis would be vindicated in the marketplace of ideas until it became increasingly clear that should such a space exist, access to it was not fair or equal. Thus, *Badr* only invoked outside help when the Jama'at felt it had lost control of the narrative about the factors that made Ahmadis unique. For instance, *Badr* only began referring to their treatment in terms of a breach of human rights when opposition against them had escalated in 1974. Similarly, the Jama'at only described itself in official settings as meaningfully distinct from other Indian Muslims when facing an existential threat. This is demonstrated by recourse to the Jama'at's exceptionalism during times of conflict, especially when it came to defending Qadian.

Each element described above creates a point of divergence in how belonging is conceived of and experienced. Between 1947-74, an Ahmadi's nationality could determine whether they were members of the world's first state to be established in the name of Islam or a religious minority within a minority. It also would come to determine whether they could legally identify as Muslim or not. Furthermore, what it meant to be an Indian Muslim depended very much on sect, with a Sunni Muslim's experience, for example, differing from an Ahmadi Muslim's. This dissertation therefore has

implications for the study of South Asian Muslim identities after 1947, which has tended to ignore the role of doctrinal affiliation in the lives of Indian Muslims. It also suggests ways of thinking about sectarian identity without reflexively confirming narratives of difference leading to animosity, violence, and exclusion. However, this is not to say that these elements of nation, religion, and sect are additive. Instead, they coalesce and converge, leading to a distinct identity for Indian Ahmadis that is more than the sum of its parts.

‘Love for all, hatred for none’: the Ahmadiyya after 1974

This thesis has argued that the trajectories of Indian and Pakistani Jama’ats after Partition need to be considered in their specific historical contexts rather than seeing the issues impacting the Indian Jama’at as a watered-down version of the challenges facing the Pakistani Jama’at. The contemporary situation of Indian Ahmadis will now be considered bearing this need for specificity in mind. However, it also acknowledges the closer mirroring of the discourse of anti-Ahmadi actors in both countries than had existed in the first decades of postcolonial India and Pakistan. Thus, this section will begin by providing an overview of policies enacted against the Ahmadiyya in Pakistan and their experiences after the decision made by the NAP in 1974. The Jama’at’s international activities will also be outlined to place South Asian developments in their broader setting as a distinct part of a transnational story.

The NAP’s decision in 1974 rendered Ahmadis legally and constitutionally non-Muslim. However, socially, Ahmadis could and did continue to refer to themselves and their practices as Muslim or Islamic, much to the chagrin of the religious right. The

promulgation of Ordinance XX by General Zia al-Huq in 1984 can be seen as a response to this dissatisfaction. Additions were made to the Pakistani Penal Code which meant that Ahmadis were prohibited from using Muslim names, titles, or addresses, and those found in breach of this were subject to three years in prison and a fine. Unable to lead his followers in such conditions without the risk of imprisonment, the Fourth Khalifa Mirza Tahir Ahmad went into exile and moved the Jama'at's headquarters to London.² This was reinforced by Zia introducing another Ordinance in 1986 that built on colonial-era blasphemy laws and could see anyone convicted of disparaging the Prophet sentenced to life imprisonment or death.³ There have been scant attempts to make changes to the status of Ahmadis in Pakistan in the years following 1984,⁴ and Pakistani politicians are reluctant to protest the injustices perpetrated as a consequence of the blasphemy laws because of the heavy costs involved in doing so. Salmaan Taseer, Governor of Punjab, and Shahbaz Bhatti, Federal Minister for Minorities Affairs, were both assassinated in 2011 after speaking out.⁵

The deadliest violence faced by the Ahmadiyya in Pakistan occurred on 28 May 2010 when two of the community's mosques were targeted simultaneously in gun and bomb

² For the full text of Sections 298-B and C introduced by Ordinance XX, see A.A. Ahmed, *Adjudicating Muslims: law, religion and the state in colonial India and post-colonial Pakistan* (Ph.D thesis, University of Chicago, 2006), p. 263. For an analysis of this action by Zia, see S. Saeed, *Politics of exclusion: Muslim nationalism, state formation and legal representations of the Ahmadiyya Community in Pakistan* (Ph.D. thesis, University of Michigan, 2010), chapter 5.

³ For the full text, see Ahmed, *Adjudicating Muslims*, p. 263.

⁴ The only prominent example of attempts to roll back rather than increase restrictions on Ahmadis came in 2004. Most likely by accident rather than design, the religious identification column in Pakistani passports, a tool used to facilitate anti-Ahmadi discrimination, was removed by General Pervez Musharraf's administration after it introduced machine readable passports; however, it was reinstated mere months later after protests from the religious right. See A.A. Khan, 'Passports and religion in political mix', *BBC News*, 24 December 2004, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/4121899.stm [last accessed 04 July 2019].

⁵ A.A. Ahmed, 'A brief history of the anti-blasphemy laws', *Herald*, 31 October 2018, <https://herald.dawn.com/news/1154036> [last accessed 10 July 2019]; B. Adams, 'Pakistan's Aasia Bibi finally gets justice', *Human Rights Watch*, 31 October 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/10/31/pakistans-aasia-bibi-finally-gets-justice> [last accessed 10 July 2019].

attacks in Lahore. The Punjabi Taliban claimed responsibility for the attacks that resulted in almost 100 people dead and scores injured.⁶ The Jama'at's response echoed their stance during the anti-Ahmadi action of 1974. In a Friday Sermon following the attacks, the Fifth Khalifa Mirza Masroor Ahmad spoke of the extraordinarily serene reaction of the victims of the attacks, as well as the families of those that were killed.⁷ His references to the need to remain phlegmatic and to show emotions only to God suggest that this was a speech act designed to instruct as well as console. Further, he reiterated that the Ahmadiyya's suffering contained proof of their authenticity and nobility: 'Our task is to be patient; not only are the others amazed at our steadfastness rather they are inclined towards Ahmadiyyat and have expressed the wish to take *bai'at*. Thus their brutality has resulted in blessings for us'.⁸ Again, their persecution and their prosperity were linked in this framing.

As mentioned in the Introduction, during my research in Qadian, Ahmadi leaders were somewhat bemused at the era of the Jama'at's history in which I was interested. They regarded the colonial period or post-1991 period as the only comprehensible targets of researchers working on the Ahmadiyya in India as they were the periods of marked and consistent growth in new adherents. What changed in 1991? It was both the 100th anniversary of the first person pledging allegiance to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and the first time a Khalifa had visited Qadian since Partition. Mirza Tahir Ahmad took the opportunity of his visit to implore Indian Jama'at leaders to intensify their *tabligh* efforts,

⁶ 'Pakistan: Prosecute Ahmadi massacre suspects', *Human Rights Watch*, 27 May 2012, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2012/05/27/pakistan-prosecute-ahmadi-massacre-suspects> [last accessed 10 July 2019].

⁷ *Al Islam*, English summary of Friday Sermon delivered by M.M. Ahmad, 'Patience and prayers on great sacrifices of the Lahore martyrs', 4 June 2010, <https://www.alislam.org/friday-sermon/2010-06-04.html> [last accessed 8 August 2019].

⁸ *Ibid.*

beginning with Punjab. As described in Chapter 6, the offer of free education was a significant draw for new converts. However, this led to what was described by Ahmadi leaders as an ‘unnatural’ growth between 1992 and 2002 because of the rate of attrition after conversion. One representative explained it to me using the metaphor of a mango tree. At the start of spring, many flowers bloom, and one can assume that there will be an abundance of mangos that season. However, not all flowers will produce harvest-ready fruits. Some will be spoilt by the weather; some will fall during storms; some will be eaten by animals. Therefore, the number of viable fruits will fall far short of preliminary indications.

Two main factors were given to explain why figures from the post-1991 growth spurt needed to be revised down. Firstly, that promises were made that did not materialise. For instance, a *sarpanch* (the head of a village) may have sworn the entrance of his residents into the Jama’at but did not end up following through on this. Secondly, when news began to spread of the Ahmadiyya’s growth in India, so too did anti-Ahmadi opposition. It was alleged that Maulvis funded by Saudi Arabia were sent to reconvert nascent Ahmadi communities, and the Jama’at did not have the equivalent resources to combat this. However, this was described to me as a blessing in disguise. During his visit to Qadian in 2005, the Fifth Khalifa, Mirza Masroor Ahmad, instructed the Indian Jama’at to focus on the quality, and not the quantity of believers, going against the capitalist logic of conversion that had previously been adhered to. Since then, missionaries encourage those they approach not to convert straight away but to learn about the Ahmadiyya and its principles first. This has resulted in fewer, but more committed members, and as one leader put it, has prevented the kind of apostasy that flourished after the Prophet died

when people became Muslims in name only and were not deeply knowledgeable about their faith.

When asked about opposition to the Jama'at before 1991, Ahmadi representatives explained that it was not that there was no hostility before that time, but it was much less frequent and not as well organised because of the Jama'at's low profile. As one person put it, 'when we went to sleep, so did our enemies' (*jab hum sogae, to dushman bhi sogae*). Moreover, the neutrality of the police in India compared to Muslim majority states like Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Indonesia was described as key to preventing the escalation of animosity. Since then, the Jama'at's increasing visibility and events in Pakistan had impacted the type of opposition they faced, especially by Deoband-affiliated groups: there was no longer any room for debate or an acknowledgement of shared ground, just a chorus of opprobrium with which it was impossible to engage.

The rise in opposition to the Jama'at has received some press attention in India in recent years. Through his analysis of the contemporary Urdu press, C.M. Naim's contributions in *Outlook India* between 2010 and 2014 are especially revealing of the tenor of anti-Ahmadi activity and its perpetrators and his work bears out the coarsening of the rhetoric towards the Jama'at mentioned above. He describes a report in the daily *Humāra Maqsad* (New Delhi) of 12 April 2011 about the conclusion of a month-long effort in Punjab by the Majlis-i-Tahaffuz-i-Khatm-e-Nabuwat, (MTKN). Meaning the Movement to Protect the Finality of Prophethood, the MTKN originated as Pakistan's main anti-Ahmadi organisation and successor to the Majlis-i-Ahrar and now has branches in several countries. This effort in Indian Punjab was led by Habibur Rahman Sani Ludhianvi, who styles himself as the 'Shahi Imam of Ludhiana', and his brother, Atiqur Rahman

Ludhianvi. Both are grandsons of one of the founders of the Ahrar, Maulana Habibur Rahman Ludhianvi. According to conflicting estimates, several thousand to over one million people attended the closing rally in Ludhiana. Six resolutions against the Ahmadiyya were passed at this rally, including a demand that the Government of India ‘remove the Qadianis from the category of Muslims’; that all Indian Muslims, but especially the ‘*ulema*, needed to use their power ‘to protect the masses from the evil menace of Qadianiat’; and that the Jama’at were involved in terrorist activities thus no visas to Pakistani Ahmadis should be issued and the ‘filthy activities of the Qadianis’ ought to be investigated by the Central Bureau of Investigation.⁹ The last resolution demonstrates a concern that their demands not be dismissed by the government as an unfortunate aping of anti-Ahmadi obloquy from Pakistan, but be thought of instead as explicitly rooted in India and a concern for its national security. Indeed, in recent years, familiar accusations of disloyalty and collusion with the British have been made not just by members of the ‘*ulema* but by Indian academics as well. The Jama’at was a ‘colonial design’ according to comments made in 2012 by then Jamia Milia Islamia Professor Akhtarul Wasey. It was established not just to undermine Islam but the anti-colonial movement as well. Thus, according to Wasey, Ahmadis are ‘not just anti-Islam, they are anti-India in their hearts’.¹⁰

⁹ C.M. Naim, ‘Learn from Pakistan’, *Outlook India*, 26 April 2011, <http://www.outlookindia.com/article.aspx?271564> [last accessed 8 December 2014].

¹⁰ S. Manish, ‘The minority’s minority’, *Tehelka*, 28 July 2012, http://archive.tehelka.com/story_main53.asp?filename=Ne280712Minority.asp [last accessed 04 December 2014]. The accusation that the Jama’at are colluding with the British is one frequently made by opponents of the Ahmadiyya in Pakistan too, with India, the US, and Israel usually described as part of the conspiracy as well. See for instance responses in two of Pakistan’s foremost Urdu newspapers, *Nawa-i-Waqt* and *Jang*, to the 2010 Lahore attacks on Ahmadi mosques analysed by C.M. Naim in ‘Spinning the conspiracy wheel’, *Outlook India*, 31 May 2010, <http://www.outlookindia.com/article.aspx?265622> [last accessed 8 December 2014].

However, in the main, Naim's work shows that contemporary discourse about the Ahmadiyya in India is much more focused on the theological controversies that have ravaged the Jama'at in Pakistan than had been the case between 1947-74. Furthermore, the MTKN rally was not the first significant manifestation of coordinated anti-Ahmadi activity in India. Naim describes a major anti-Ahmadi convention held at Nadwa almost 15 years earlier in 1997, organised by its rector at the time Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi and attended by the Imam of Ka'ba.¹¹ Also that year, according to their website, the JUH organised a conference in defence of *khatm-e-nabuwwat* outside Delhi's Jama Masjid to 'counter Qadiani blasphemous activities in India'.¹² In the summer of 2010, the inclusion of Ahmadis as a Muslim sect in some official textbooks in UP was condemned by figures such as the President of the JUH, Qari Syed Muhammad Usman Mansurpuri; the General Secretary of the AIMPLB, Maulana Nizamuddin; the General Secretary of the All India Majlis-e-Mushawarat, Maulana Umeduzzaman Kairanvi; and Deoband's Maulana Abdul Khaliq Sambhali, who demanded that the textbook committee be 'cleansed' of Muslims who were 'enemies of Islam in the disguise of Muslims'.¹³ A year later, an exhibition about the Qur'an at New Delhi's Constitution Club that had been organised by the Ahmadiyya was closed early amid protests by local Muslim organisations. The Chairman of the National Minorities Commission, Wajahat Habibullah, came in for particular criticism in the Urdu press. For instance, *Sahāfat* (New Delhi) condemned him for providing 'the proof of his enmity of Islam and Muslims' by attending the exhibition's opening.¹⁴

¹¹ Naim, 'Learn from Pakistan', *Outlook India*.

¹² 'Role in the Independence', *Jami'at 'Ulema-i-Hind*, <https://www.jamiatulama.in/role-in-independence> [last accessed 12 August 2019].

¹³ C.M. Naim, 'Anti-Ahmadism in India', *Outlook India*, 31 August 2010, <http://www.outlookindia.com/article.aspx?266910> [last accessed 8 December 2014].

¹⁴ Naim, 'The deadening silence of good intentions', *Outlook India*, 18 November 2011, <http://www.outlookindia.com/article.aspx?279021> [last accessed 8 December 2014].

The 1970 High Court judgement upholding the right of Ahmadis to identify as Muslim in India that Chapter 4 examined has not been challenged, but there are signs that this opposition has begun to make itself felt at the level of local and state politics and affiliated institutions. In 2012, the Grand Mufti of Jammu and Kashmir demanded that the State Assembly declare Ahmadis non-Muslim. ‘There has been a significant rise in the influence of Qadaniat [sic] in Kashmir’, he said. ‘The Islamic Sharia Council has made it clear all across the world that Qadianis are non-Muslim. Designating Qadianis as non-Muslims will address the concerns of the people of Kashmir’.¹⁵

More sustained agitation has been taking place in Hyderabad. The daily newspaper *Munsif* (Hyderabad) reported in October 2011 that a delegation of the Confederation of Islamic Organisations had met with the President of the Waqf Board and demanded the removal of the Ahmadi representative from the Board’s membership, the revocation of *waqf* property held by Ahmadis, and that Ahmadis should not be allowed to bury their dead in Muslim graveyards.¹⁶ By the following year, the Andhra Pradesh Waqf Board had conceded to these demands, resolving to take possession of the Qutub Shahi Mosque and graveyard in Hyderabad’s Old City that had been cared for by an Ahmadi family for over 100 years. In its order, the Board stated they were taking it ‘from the custody of the Qadianis’ because ‘Sunni or Shia mosques cannot be administered by non-Muslims’.¹⁷ Deobandi leaders such as Abul Qasim Nomani lauded the move, and Waqf Boards in other states were urged to follow suit.¹⁸ Elsewhere in the city, Ahmadi mosques have been

¹⁵ Manish, ‘The minority’s minority’, *Tehelka*.

¹⁶ Naim, ‘The deadening silence of good intentions’, *Outlook India*.

¹⁷ Manish, ‘The minority’s minority’, *Tehelka*.

¹⁸ *Ibid*.

subject to stone-pelting attacks and threatened with worse, and members of the Jama'at allege being subject to a social and economic boycott.

Politicians such as All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (MIM) President and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi are supporting this movement.¹⁹ Speaking to *Tehelka* in 2012, Owaisi said of the Ahmadiyya 'If I use the name of TEHELKA [sic] and print my own magazine with that name, how would you feel? Does it not violate copyright laws?'.²⁰ This analogy where identity becomes property is redolent of the Pakistani Supreme Court's response to an Ahmadi challenge to Ordinance XX. Signs of Muslim-ness, but particularly references to Muhammad, were described in the context of copyright law: '...the Coca Cola Company will not permit anyone to sell, even a few ounces of his own product in bottles or other receptacles marked Coca Cola...the principles involved are; do not deceive and do not violate the property rights of others'.²¹

The Ahmadiyya have continued to stand by the government of the day, regardless of its political complexion. Compared with the indifference with which the government received this support as described in Chapter 3, the Jama'at has garnered comparatively more favourable attention for this stance in recent years. Indeed, even under the rule of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and arguably India's most aggressively Hindu nationalist Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, the Jama'at has not just accepted but has actively supported the government's policies and initiatives. However, as has been described throughout this thesis, the Ahmadiyya legitimise such gestures by self-consciously

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Quoted in Ibid.

²¹ Cited in A.A. Ahmed, 'The paradoxes of Ahmadiyya Identity: legal appropriation of Muslim-ness and the construction of Ahmadiyya difference' in Naveeda Khan (ed.), *Beyond crisis: re-evaluating Pakistan* (London, 2010), p. 303

referring to their religion, both as a defence and as a form of quiet resistance. This can take the form of rooting their actions in theological guidance, such as supporting a Universal Civil Code and the abolition of triple *talaq* by arguing that *shari'ah* is liberal enough that there would not be a clash between it and such policies.²² Alternatively, it can be as simple as holding an event to mark the first International Yoga Day (2015) with the Vice-President of the BJP in attendance and inaugurating it with a recitation of the Qur'an.²³

The latter example shows that the BJP is eager to reciprocate such gestures. Modi himself has publicly recognised the Ahmadiyya, sharing a stage with the local Jama'at President during an election rally in Poonch and referring to the Ahmadiyya by name during his speech,²⁴ sharing photos on social media of his meetings with Ahmadi leaders about transport in Gurdaspur,²⁵ and wishing the Jama'at success in their Khilafat Centenary celebrations in December 2015 having not issued an equivalent message on Eid during the course of his premiership up to that date, irritating Hyderabad non-Ahmadis such as the Telangana branch of the JUH.²⁶ There is a tradition of the BJP courting smaller minority groups, arguably in order to contrast them as model minorities compared to Sunni Muslims and win their support for electoral purposes. For instance, Jesse Buck has

²² V. Shukla, 'Ban on triple talaq: Ahmadiyya Muslims welcome SC verdict, raise pitch for Universal Civil Code', *Firstpost*, <https://www.firstpost.com/india/ban-on-triple-talaq-ahmadiyya-muslims-welcome-sc-verdict-raise-pitch-for-uniform-civil-code-3961417.html> [last accessed 31 August 2017].

²³ C. Maqbool Ahmad, 'India: International Yoga Day observed in Qadian', *Ahmadiyya Times*, <http://ahmadiyyatimes.blogspot.com/2015/06/india-international-yoga-day-observed.html> [last accessed 30 October 2015].

²⁴ Ibid., 'India: Prime Minister Modi meets Ahmadiyya Muslim leader of Poonch, J&K', *Ahmadiyya Times*, <http://ahmadiyyatimes.blogspot.co.uk/2014/12/india-prime-minster-modi-meets.html> [last accessed 8 December 2014].

²⁵ Ibid., 'Qadian, India: Ahmadiyya delegation meets PM Narendra Modi, lobbies for Qadian-Beas railway line extension', *Ahmadiyya Times*, <http://ahmadiyyatimes.blogspot.com/2015/04/qadian-india-ahmadiyya-delegation-meets.html> [last accessed 18 June 2015].

²⁶ 'PM Modi's "Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya Centenary" letter irks Indian Muslims', *Ummid*, <http://www.ummid.com/news/2015/December/23.12.2015/pm-modi-letter-to-qadianis-irk-muslim-body.html> [last accessed 13 January 2016].

explored the use of the Parsi community for this purpose by Hindu nationalists from Golwalkar to Modi,²⁷ and Jones mentions the support of the BJS and later, the BJP, of the right of Shi'as in Lucknow to *ta'ziyadari* (an effigy of the tomb of Imam Husayn, sometimes buried during Muharram) after the Congress won the support of Sunnis in that city in part by banning such practices.²⁸

The most impactful innovation for the Ahmadiyya in the decades since 1974 has been the democratisation of access to the media. Television in particular has been key to the Jama'at's increased visibility and to its proselytisation efforts. Muslim Television Ahmadiyya is a subscription-free satellite channel that was established in 1994. The Khalifa's sermons and footage of Ahmadi events have been broadcast around the world in multiple languages, with the Friday Sermon being translated live simultaneously in upwards of eight languages.²⁹ The employment of a range of languages in addition to this visibility ensures coherence in its messaging as well as facilitating a sense of community solidarity among Ahmadi scattered across the world. In this, as in the other aspects, the Ahmadi have been pioneers of globalised missionary movements, and, indeed, the globalisation of Islam, whether their opponents would credit them with this or not.

Chapter 6 noted the preponderance of African-Americans among early converts to the Jama'at in the US. However, racial, class, and cultural differences after Pakistani immigration increased in 1974 meant many African-Americans left the Ahmadiyya.

²⁷ J. Buck, "The world's best minority": Parsis and Hindutva's ethnic nationalism in India', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 40, 15 (2017), pp. 2806-2822.

²⁸ J. Jones, *Shi'a Islam in colonial India. Religion, community and sectarianism* (Delhi, 2012), p. 233.

²⁹ T.S. Moles, *The evolution of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in the UK, 1913-2003* (Ph.D. thesis, Royal Holloway University of London, 2009), pp. 148-49; K. Zirvi, *Welcome to Ahmadiyyat, the True Islam* (2nd edition, Silver Spring, Maryland, 2003), pp. 355-357; 'About us', MTA, <https://www.mta.tv/aboutus> [last accessed 16 August 2019]; 'A collection of multimedia content', *Al Islam*, <https://www.alislam.org/multimedia/> [last accessed 16 August 2019].

According to surveys carried out by Linda Walbridge and Fatimah Haneef, African-American men began to see Pakistani men ‘not as men of color like themselves, but as substitutes for the American whites who had traditionally deprived them of power’,³⁰ a point that appeared to be underlined by the unwillingness of Pakistani Ahmadis to agree to intermarriage between the two groups.³¹ This was exacerbated by the economic disparities between the two communities leading to the relocation of mosques to middle-class neighbourhoods, and the enforcement of South Asian cultural norms, particularly concerning gender.³² Though tensions have been easier to manage where the balance of numbers between South Asians and African-Americans has been more equal, the movement has grown much slower in the US by way of new converts since the arrival of South Asian immigrants.³³ Immigration changed the character of the Jama’at in the UK as well. Ahmadis from East Africa began arriving in the early 1960s and were better educated and comparatively better off than their Pakistani Ahmadi counterparts. Their arrival more than doubled the membership of the Jama’at in the UK. Though Pakistani Ahmadi immigrants that arrived in the UK after 1974 were comparatively better educated than early arrivals from Pakistan, the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act meant that this wave did not impact numbers much.³⁴

Various UK Muslim umbrella organisations do not recognise Ahmadis as Muslim. For instance, the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) explicitly excludes the Jama’at.³⁵ Until

³⁰ L.S. Walbridge and F. Haneef, ‘Inter-ethnic relations within the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in the United States’ in C. Petievich (ed.), *The expanding landscape: South Asians and the diaspora* (New Delhi, 1999), p. 131.

³¹ Ibid., p. 135.

³² Ibid., pp. 131-32.

³³ Ibid., p. 135-138.

³⁴ Moles, *The evolution of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in the UK*, pp. 76-78.

³⁵ ‘Position statement: the Muslim Council of Britain and Ahmadis’, *The Muslim Council of Britain*, <https://mcb.org.uk/mcb-updates/position-statement-the-muslim-council-of-britain-and-ahmadis/> [last accessed 15 August 2019].

recently, the MCB was affiliated with the British arm of the MTKN. Though the MTKN had its affiliation suspended after it was alleged that it was behind leaflets calling for the death of Ahmadis displayed at Stockwell Green mosque in 2016,³⁶ the MCB still had been associated with an organisation that had virulent opposition to the Ahmadiyya as its defining characteristic. In South London, where the Khalifa resides, the community has experienced incidents that suggest ostracism, ranging from a boycott of Ahmadi businesses³⁷ and protest against an Ahmadi Liberal Democrat candidate, Nasser Butt, that led to a hustling being shut down in 2010.³⁸

The rise of terrorist attacks associated with militant Islam from the end of the 1970s and the rhetoric of the so-called War on Terror since the turn of the twenty-first century has provided ground for the Ahmadiyya to reiterate their presentation as an internationally-minded, non-violent Muslim movement. It is not just that the Jama'at has distanced itself from moves such as the Ayatollah Khomeini's *fatwa* against Salman Rushdie after the publication of *The Satanic Verses*, or from acts of terrorism such as the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Centre or the 2005 London bombings;³⁹ denunciations of incitements to violence and terrorism are of course not unusual. What is more significant about the stance of the Ahmadiyya is the extent to which they distance themselves from looking at the broader causes of extremism and disengage with conversations about the appropriateness of the political and cultural responses to militant Islam given their effects on ordinary Muslims. For instance, the Jama'at has disagreed with any attempts to suggest

³⁶ 'Independent inquiry on Aalami Majlise Tahaffuze Khatme Nabuwwat', *The Muslim Council of Britain*, <https://mcb.org.uk/mcb-updates/amtkn-april-2016/> [last accessed 15 August 2019].

³⁷ O. Oakes, 'Worshippers told at Tooting Islamic Centre to boycott Ahmadiyya shops', *Wimbledon Times*, <https://www.wimbledonguardian.co.uk/news/8451539.worshippers-told-at-tooting-islamic-centre-to-boycott-ahmadiyya-shops/> [last accessed 10 March 2017].

³⁸ O. Oakes, 'Tooting election race infected by anti-Ahmadiyya hate campaign', *Wimbledon Times*, <https://www.wimbledonguardian.co.uk/news/8451614.tooting-election-race-infected-by-anti-ahmadiyya-hate-campaign/> [last accessed 10 March 2017].

³⁹ Moles, *The evolution of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in the UK*, p. 96.

that the UK government's foreign policy may have contributed to the radicalisation of the young men involved in the London bombings.⁴⁰ Further, Ahmadis hold that clearing up misconceptions about the place of violence in Islam is the responsibility of all Muslims rather than a result of faulty thinking on the part of Islam's detractors. As one Indian Ahmadi put it in conversation with the journalist Sourodipto Sanyal, it was 'understandable' that non-Muslims would question Islam because violent acts had been committed in its name, and thus it is 'incumbent on [Muslims] to be put into scrutiny [sic] and answer those questions and clarify this is not what real Islam is'.⁴¹

Such acts are congruent with the theme of respectability politics that has run throughout this thesis. The politics of respectability is, of course, partly a method of maintaining safety in uncertain circumstances. As the Ahmadiyya has become more known through such public presentations, their hardships will be more difficult for the international community to ignore. However, again, respectability politics is not, or at least, not always, about the scapegoating of members of one's own broader community for a sense of advantage for oneself or one's immediate kin. It can also include resistance; outsized displays of a refutation of mainstream narratives about Islam can be seen as acts of defiance as much as a refusal to engage with the mainstream narrative can be. Both

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ S. Sanyal, 'The unheard story of Delhi's Ahmadis, Islam's most marginalised community', *Youth ki Awaaz*, <https://www.youthkiawaaz.com/2017/07/ahmadi-muslims-in-delhi/> [last accessed 12 July 2017]. See also P. Lion, 'More than 30,000 Muslims converge for Britain's biggest annual Islamic gathering to reject violence and extremism', *Daily Mail*, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3740211/amp/More-30-000-Muslims-converge-Britain-s-biggest-annual-Islamic-gathering-reject-violence-extremism.html> [last accessed 15 August 2019]; S. Khan, 'More than 20,000 Ahmadiyya Muslims attended a three-day Canada convention denouncing Islamist terrorism', *Independent*, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/ahmadiyya-muslims-20000-canada-convention-islamist-terrorism-denounce-islamic-global-community-a7837426.html> [last accessed 15 August 2019]; A. Radford, 'Young Muslims travelling across rural Australia to challenge misconceptions about Islam', *SBS News*, <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/young-muslims-travelling-across-rural-australia-to-challenge-misconceptions-about-islam> [last accessed 30 August 2019].

actions are informed by a concern for the preservation of the *ummah* in the face of an onslaught, though they may differ on how best that can be achieved.

The Ahmadiyya adopted the slogan ‘Love for all, hatred for none’ in 1980, which can be interpreted in several ways, all of which encapsulate the Ahmadiyya’s global priorities since 1974. It can be thought of as a plea to their opponents about the needlessness of their hostility towards a self-described benevolent organisation; it can be looked at as a way of highlighting the unfairness of the treatment meted out to them by other Muslims in order to invite outside intervention on their behalf; it can be viewed as a message to Western nations and NGOs about Islam in general; and it can be seen as part of their mission to bring True Islam to all the world’s inhabitants.

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