The Ahmadiyya Quest for Religious Progress

Missionizing Europe 1900-1965

Gerdien Jonker

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Muslim Minorities

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Missionizing Europe 1900–1965

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Cover illustration: Islam lesson in the Berlin mission house in 1935. The text on the blackboard is a line from the Persian poet Nasir Din al-Shah: "A (good) friend will never complain about his friend." Photograph taken from the Album "Mosque & Friends", PA Oettinger, courtesy Suhail Ahmad.

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Berlin, October 2015

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AA	*Archiv des Auswärtiges Amt Berlin* (Archive of the Foreign Office in Berlin)
AAII	*Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-i-Islam*
AAIIL	*Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-i-Islam Lahore*
AMA	Ahmadiyya mosque archive Berlin
AMC	US television channel
AMJ	*Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat*
BA	*Bundesarchiv* (*Federal Archive Germany*)
BLA	*Berliner Lokal Zeitung* (Berlin Local Paper)
BT	*Berliner Tageblatt* (Berlin Daily)
CV	*Central-Verein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens* (Central Association of German Citizens of Jewish Faith)
DAZ	*Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (German General Paper)
DGI	*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Islamkunde* (German Society for the Knowledge of Islam)
DIG	*Die Islamische Gegenwart* (The Islamic Presence)
DMG	*Deutsch–Moslemische Gesellschaft* (German-Muslim Society)
GIG	*Gesellschaft für Islamische Gottesverehrung e.V.* (Society for Islamic Piety)
GR	*German Reichsmark*
IE	*Islam Echo*
IGB	*Islamische Gemeinde zu Berlin* (Islamic Community of Berlin)
IIB	*Islam-Institut zu Berlin* (Islam-Institute Berlin)
IR	*Islamic Revue*
IWC	*Islamic World Conference*
IZI	*Islamisches Zentral Institut* (Islamic Central Institute)
LA	*Landesarchiv Berlin–Brandenburg* (State Archive of Berlin–Brandenburg)
LMC	London Mosque Cultural Centre
MR	*Moslemische Revue*
MS	*Moslem Sunrise*
NN	Anonymus
NSDAP	*National–Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (National Socialist German Democratic Workers Party)
PA	Private archives
POW	Prisoner of war
RR	*The Review of Religions*
RSHA	*Reichssicherheitshauptamt* ("The Central Security Office" = The War Ministry)

SS *Schutzstaffel der NSDAP* (Protective Arm of the Nazi Party)
VR *Vereinsregister* (Register Office)
VZ *Vossische Zeitung* (*The Vossian Paper*)
ZIIAD *Zentrales Islam–Institut Deutschland* (Central Islam-Institute Germany)

Note on Spelling

The Ahmadiyya publications that were consulted for this book employed Urdu spellings that were not uniform. In the 1920s and 1930s especially, with a view to the task at hand to missionize among the Europeans, it seems to have been a rule of thumb to avoid spellings that were foreign to the European eye. In line with this, Urdu proper names and religious terms of Arabic origin were rendered in Turkish and other spellings that were often grammatically incorrect.

On the pages of this book, this original spelling practice has been respected as much as possible, not the least because it beautifully illustrates the mission intention of getting as close as possible to the mission object. Nonetheless, wherever the Ahmadiyya writers produced inconsistencies among themselves, we settled upon the most frequently used spelling, for instance *Ahmadiyya* (not: *Ahmadiyye*), and *Mevlana* (not: *Mawlana*), – except of course when spelled differently in quotations and titles.

The same goes for the spelling of Urdu names. Wherever we encountered different spellings of the same name (i.e. *Sadr Uddin*, *Sadr Ud-din* and *Sadr-ud-din*), we settled upon the one that occurred most often (*Sadr-ud-din*).

In the "Glossary of Islamic Terms" correct spellings have been added in brackets according to the valid academic convention wherever necessary. But in the body of the text we refrained from doing so in order not to disrupt the flow.

Glossary of German Terms

Aliyah	"Ascent": German Zionist Youth Movement
Bruderhof	"Brother farm": A Christian youth movement of the 1920s that wanted to re-enact the Sermon on the Mount
Christliches Abendland	"Christian Occident": an ideological term used for border making between "Europe" and its Muslim neighbours
Das tausendjährige Reich	"The thousand-year reign": the Nazi conception of the long-livety of their government
Der Blaue Reiter	"The Blue Rider": the famous exhibition, in Munich in 1911, of expressionist painters
Deutschheit	"German-ness": a variety of approaches to being German, modern and anti-modern visions included
Doppelgänger	"Twin brother": The curious alliance between Nazism and Modernity
Fliegenglas	"Fly glass": a glass with a small opening, filled with vinegar to catch mosquitos. Philosophical term, introduced by Ludwig von Wittgenstein to express the phenomenon of thought blanks
Fremdstämmigenkartei	"Index of persons of alien race" or "Jew index": The infamous Nazi file in which Jewish genealogies as far back as 1665 were collected
Gemeinde	"Community": short for the Islamic Community Berlin
Gestalt Therapie	"'Gestalt' therapy": An experiental form of psychoanalysis footing in a person's ability to take personal responsibility
Generation 1902	"The generation born in 1902": The age group that was despised for being born too late to experience the trenches of WW1
Gesellschaft	"Society": short for The German-Muslim Society
Heil Hitler	"Hail Hitler": The official greeting in Nazi Germany
Kaiserreich	The period of the German Empire 1871–1918
Kulturträger	"Upholders of Culture": Germans who were thought to incorporate German culture
Lebensreform	"Life Reform": German youth movement around 1900 that experimented with modern life styles; *Lebensreformer:* followers of the *Lebensreform* movement
Lichtbringer	"Carriers of Light": spiritual concept of the *Lebensreform* movement

Leitstellen	"Central Offices": Nazi units, which organized the inclusion of Muslim prisoners of war into the Wehrmacht and SS
Mensch	"Man"; *Der neue Mensch:* "New Man" – a topic of speculation in the interwar period; *Übermensch:* man rising above himself (Nietzschian term); *Untermensch:* racial inferior man (Nazi term)
Muselgermane	"Muslim-German": an upgrading term for Muslim soldiers in German armies
Mysterium Tremendum	"The mystery that causes fear and trembling": The book by Scholar of Religion Rudolf Otto that offered an expression of contemporary religious sentiment
Reichsmark	German Mark in the interwar period
Stunde Null	"Zero hour": German term indicating a fresh start after 1945
Ur-	German concept that pre-supposes an original state. *Ur-Gemeinde:* The original (mythical) community; *Ur-Heimat:* the original (mythical) home country
Wandervögel	"Wandering birds": German hiking movement in the romantic tradition, and part of the *Lebensreform* concept
"Wehr Dich!"	"Defend Yourself": Motto of the Central Association of German Citizens of Jewish Faith to fight anti-Semitism
Wehrmacht	The German regular army during the Nazi Reign

Glossary of Islamic Terms

Anjuman Taraqqi-i-Islam	"Society for the advancement of Islam"
Bai'at (Ar. baiʿa)	"Pledge": an oath given to a religious leader; Sufi terminology
Dajjal (Ar. dajjāl)	"The Anti-Christ", a concept deriving from Islamic eschatology; term to designate Europe
Da'wa (Ar. daʿwa)	Muslim duty to strengthen other Muslims in their faith
Fatiha (Ar. fātiḥa)	Opening verse of the Quran, also used in the rite of conversion to Islam
Hadith + *Sahih* (Ar. ḥadīth; Ar. ṣaḥīḥ, "sound", a qualification for a most trustworthy ḥadīth)	Oral traditions of the Prophet of Islam
Eid-ul-Adha (Ar. ʿīd al-aḍḥā)	Muslim festival of the sacrifice
Eid-ul-Fitr (Ar. ʿīd al-fitr)	Muslim festival at the end of Ramadan, the fasting month
Iftar (Ar. iftār)	"Breaking fast": Meal after sundown during the month of Ramadan
Ishaat-i-Islam	Highschool for the training of Muslim missionaries
Jamia Millia Islamia	Muslim National University near Delhi
Jihad (Ar. jihād)	(For Ahmadiyya and other peace traditions in Islam): To propagate Islam, not by force but by appeal to intellect and rationality; refining the inner self (For Muslim revolutionaries and Nazis): Legitimized violence in the name of Islam
Kafir (Ar. kāfir)	Muslim unbeliever; Kufr: "State of unbelieving"
Kismet (Ar. qisma)	Islamic concept of fate
Khalif (Ar. khalīfa)	Head of the Muslim community in the Ottoman Empire; Khalifate: The institution of the Khalif; Khilafate Movement: Movement which strove to unite Muslims around the world under the leadership of the Ottoman Khalif
Medrese (Ar. madrasa)	Muslim highschool
Minnaratul Masih (Ar. manārat al-masīḥ)	"The minaret of the Messiah", concept deriving from Islamic eschatology
Muhaddath (Ar. muḥaddath)	A person through whom God chooses to speak
Mujaddid (Ar. mujaddid)	"The Reformer of the Age", Islamic concept of regular returning reform

Sadr Anjuman	Organisation dedicated to the propagation of Islam
Sharia (Ar. sharīʿa)	Islamic Law; Sharia court: Court that applies Islamic Law while regulating questions of religion and daily life
Shura (Ar. shūra)	Islamic council
Sirat al-Nabiy (Ar. sīrat al-nabīy)	Biographies of the Prophet of Islam
Tabligh (Ar. tablīgh)	Spreading Islamic knowledge through lectures
Ta'lim (Ar. taʿlīm)	Learning about Islam
Tehrik-e-Jadid	"The New Mission Scheme", a form of money collecting within the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat
Takrim (Ar. takrīm)	Sociable gatherings in the religious realm
Taqdir (Ar. taqdīr)	Islamic concept of subjection before God
Tefsir (Ar. tafsīr)	Quran commentaries
Ulema (Ar. ʿulamāʾ)	The Muslim scholarly elite"
Wahy (Ar. waḥy)	"Divine revelation"
Waqf (Ar. waqf)	"Islamic endownment"
Zilli Nabi (Urdu, Zill-i Nabi)	"Shadow of the Prophet"

Introduction

The cover of *The Great Reformer*, the momentous biography of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian (1837–1908), 'Promised Messiah' of the Ahmadiyya movement, shows an artist's rendering of a lighthouse rising from a map of the world.[1] The base displays the reformer's central message of the return of Jesus. The tower carries the titles of the 88 books he wrote. The lamp on top is fashioned like an open book emanating powerful rays. The map they illuminate is the world as his missionaries perceived it. This is the Ahmadiyya mission map depicting the colonial world in the interwar period. It forms the starting point for the narrative that is told in this book (Fig. 1).

A closer look reveals that the lighthouse towers above the Asian colonies of the British Empire, almost entirely covering them with its foundation. Marked in Arabic script, the reader perceives *Asia* and *China* to the right, *Hindustan* (British India), *Siam* (the Malay Peninsula) below, and *Arabia*, *Syria*, *Iraq* and *Turkey* to the left of the foundation. Further to the south are the mission fields of the *Dutch Indies*, *Australia* and *Africa* respectively. Further to the left stretches the mission field of *Urup* (Europe), with the capitals *Berlin* and *London* and the countries *Germany*, *Alliant* (the Netherlands), *Frans* (France) and *Spen* (Spain) marked in bold letters over the continent. By contrast, the Americas are hardly allowed a space on the map and almost disappear from view.

Doing missionary work is an expression of the determination to preach one's own religion to people who do not share it with a view to changing their beliefs. The concept of a mission is rooted in the Christian and not the Islamic tradition.[2] Accordingly, around 1900, which is the point of departure of this study, Christian missionaries were roaming around the colonial world trying 'to conquer the world for Christianity.'[3] Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's vision that the colonized people should beat the Christian missionaries at their own game, so to speak, was in fact a response to that objective. He urged them to embrace religious progress, copy the Christian missionary structures and go out into the

1 The map was first published in the *Mujaddid Azam* (1939), the Urdu original of the biography of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, and reprinted in Basharat Ahmad, *The Great Reformer: Biography of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian. Mujaddid* (*Reformer*) *of the Fourteenth century Hijri, Promised Messiah and Mahdi* (Dublin, USA: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam Lahore Inc., 2008) inside front and back cover and p. 911.

2 Hartmann Tyrell, 'Weltgesellschaft, Weltmission und religiöse Organisationen,' in *Weltmission und religiöse Organisationen*, ed. Artur Bogner et al. (Wuerzburg: Ergon, 2004), 29–30.

3 Tyrell, 'Weltgesellschaft,' 30.

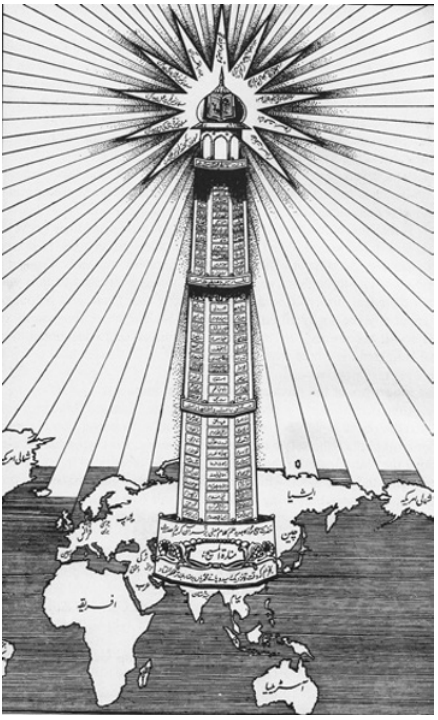

FIGURE 1 *Map of the world from the Ahmadiyya mission perspective (1939)* BASHARAT AHMAD, *THE GREAT REFORMER: BIOGRAPHY OF HAZRAT MIRZA GHULAM AHMAD OF QADIAN*, DUBLIN: OHIO: AAII (LAHORE) USA INC. (2008) INSIDE COVER AND P. 911. COURTESY AAII (LAHORE), USA INC.

world to spread their own message.[4] The drawing symbolizes that vision. Taking up a central symbol of Islamic eschatology, it depicts the *Minnaratul Masih*, the Messiah's heavenly minaret that is thought to receive Christ when he returns at the end of time. In the present, it is also a stone tower built in 1918 to commemorate the founder of the Ahmadiyya.[5] Its position on the map marks the village of Qadian, a rural place in the Punjab where Mirza Ghulam Ahmad lived and where, between 1889 and 1908, he assembled the first Ahmadiyya community. The map is a summary of the scope and width of the mission his followers envisioned after his death.

During his lifetime, Ahmad's ideas caused much controversy in the Muslim world, but he also attracted followers who were eager to realize his vision. When he died in 1908, two organizations emerged, one in Qadian, the other in

4 John C. B. Webster, 'Mission Sources of Nineteenth-Century Punjab History.' In: *Sources on Punjab History.* Edited by W. Eric Gustafson et al., New Delhi: Manohar Book Service (1975), 171–212.

5 Ahmad, *The Great Reformer*, 906–915; Zeki Saritoprak. 'The Eschatological Descent of Jesus: Muslim Views.' *The Fountain* 29 (2000). http://www.fountainmagazine.com/Issue/detail/The-Eschatological-Descent-of-Jesus-Muslim-Views.

nearby Lahore, which competed fiercely with one another over the heritage the founder had left behind. In due course, however, each organization settled down to its task of convincing the world of the value of progressive Islam, and of training and sending missionaries to India, as well as to the other continents on the mission map.

Ignoring the story of the Ahmadiyya mission in Asia, Africa and the Middle East, which is yet to be written,[6] in *Missionizing Europe* I focus exclusively on Europe, which includes Great Britain and continental Europe. Since the mission celebrated its largest successes in Berlin, in many of the chapters that focus was still further reduced to the German case as an example for the Ahmadiyya mission. In doing so, I measure tensions between the original vision and the reality 'on the ground' as claims became decidedly less grandiose when the missionaries actually entered the European arena. In tracing their experiences, the book opens a window onto the tangled histories of religious change in two very different contexts. Around 1900, we see a group of Indian Muslims on the subcontinent formulating a critique of Christianity in an attempt to fight back the European influence and widen its own traditional horizon. After the Great War, we see them in London and Berlin, already setting about the task of reaching out to the main European capitals. It soon becomes clear that their message is falling on fertile ground. The German-speaking countries in Europe were especially wary of the governments of their former adversaries in the war. Young people yearned for revolution or redemption, or both. Orientalists tried to pry Europe away from its past and graft on Eastern traditions. In this historical context, conversion more often than not served as a stick with which to strike out at the validity of European values.

Missionizing Europe opens in Chapter 1 with a discussion of the heritage the founder bequeathed on his followers and ends, in Chapter 8, with the reorganization of the mission organizations after the Second World War, when missionaries had to confront a post-colonial reality. The chapters in between show the missionaries preparing to go to Europe (Chapter 2) and confronting European realities (Chapter 3); Chapters 4 and 5 contain in-depth portrayals of different converts and 'Friends of Islam,' while Chapter 6 consists of an analysis of the mosque library in Berlin from the missionaries' perspective on

6 With the exception of Humphrey J. Fischer, *Ahmadiyya. A study in Contemporary Islam on the West African Coast.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963. Two recent studies address aspects of the contemporary Ahmadiyya mission in Israel and Indonesia respectively: E. C. Del Re, 'Approaching Conflict the Ahmadiyya Way,' *Contemporary Islam*, 8/2 (2014), 115–31; Ahmed Najib Burhani, 'Hating the Ahmadiyya: The place of "heretics" in contemporary Indonesian Muslim society,' *Cont Islam 8* (2014), 133–52.

religion, politics and peace-making; finally, in Chapter 7, there is a discussion of the missionaries' views about the Nazi regime, and involvement with it. In fact, numerous strands tied Muslim Indians to Europe during the interwar period and the book shows how the Ahmadi missionaries developed their focuses, what happened once they arrived, which Europeans entered into communication with them, and what kinds of dynamics evolved from the encounter.

The study covers the first 60 years of Ahmadiyya missions in Europe. The narrative picks up the thread in 1901, the year Mirza Ghulam Ahmad founded the first Ahmadiyya mission organization, the *Sadr Anjuman*, and ends in 1965 when a non-Ahmadi congregation took over the Woking mosque, which was then at the heart of progressive Islam in postwar Europe.

Although I cover the dynamics between the two mission organizations, in terms of pages I do not allow them equal space in the book. There is a very simple reason for this. When Kamal-ud-Din crossed over to England and appropriated the Woking mosque in 1912, he gave the Lahore mission a head start. While in these pages we shall still meet the young men from Qadian who studied in London during the war, the founding of a similar Qadian mission had to wait until its leader Mahmud Bashir-ud-Din himself travelled to London in 1924 (see Chapter 2). The phenomenon is repeated in interwar Berlin. Whereas the Lahore intellectuals were able to build a mosque and install intellectual networks across continental Europe, similar attempts by Qadiani missionaries failed (Chapter 3). In several of the chapters, the two mission organizations are juxtaposed, but the central part of the book, which addresses the interwar and war period, deals mainly with the Lahore mission and their successes in interwar Berlin.

While noting their different positions *vis-à-vis* the changing world as a starting point, in *Missionizing Europe* I take the reader on a journey from Northern India to London, from London to Berlin, from Berlin to Central and Southeast Europe, and back again to newly established Pakistan. The various challenges that confront the missionaries on their journey weave their way through the chapters like red threads in a tapestry.

Mission in Context

The different contexts in which the work of the Ahmadiyya unfolded primarily determined the conception of this book. In much the same way as the double influences of empire and globalization shaped the context in which Mirza

Ghulam Ahmad operated, so too did the contexts in which the missionaries worked leave their imprints on what they said or did. As I recount the story of the Ahmadiyya mission in Europe, the reader will come to realize that the Ahmadiyya missionaries were by no means alone. When they arrived on the European continent, Berlin and other German cities already hosted large and diverse Muslim communities, including among their ranks many important figures who were eager to engage in conversation with German 'moderns.' And, since mission was one of the global languages of the period, mission is what they offered them. There was also competition between the different Muslim missionaries who used Berlin as their platform. Besides the two Ahmadiyya missions, one of which (Qadian) promised exotic flair and the other (Lahore) staged intellectual fireworks, the Islamische Gemeinde Berlin promised world revolution and immediate salvation, along with the Sufi movement of Inayat Khan (a branch of Northern Indian Chistiyya), which promised the equality of all races and creeds and, in working towards achieving that aim, blended the Muslim message with theosophical lore. The description of Muslim Berlin in the interwar period thus lays bare an amalgam of Islamic flavoured modernity – pan-Islamic ideas, political strategies, intellectual adaptations, and reformist religious imagery (see Chapter 3). The reconstruction of the mosque library (Chapter 6) once again illustrated the complexities of that network.

The Interests of Muslim Elites

On another level, the Ahmadiyya mission in interwar Europe influenced the transnational Muslim elite trying to create new strongholds for itself in the globalizing world. Like the founder himself, the first generation of missionaries were sons of landowners, the descendants of the old Muslim elite of Northern India, as were their friends and many of their financial supporters. As I discuss in Chapters 2 and 3, proclaiming the idea of religious progress, pacifism and cooperation with the (colonial) government provided the basis for establishing European mission posts and contributed substantially to building intellectual networks between India and Europe. The missionaries' appearance in public, which contemporaries described as European with a dash of the Oriental, as well as their bearing in private, which seems to have wedded a pleasant appearance with good manners, eloquence and sports, certainly helped to convince European audiences of the legitimacy of their quest.

Religious Progress and Encounter

The missionaries frequently used terms like 'modern' and 'modernity' to express their belief in being able to change the world and to improve humankind, as did their audiences. They thought that encounters between people from different religious backgrounds who shared a belief in religious progress, i.e. the evolutionist theory of religion that was very much at the fore during the first half of the twentieth century, were essential for this quest. However, although the word was on everybody's lips, the concept of modernity eluded any single definition. Rather, the term constituted the perfect blank screen on which to place visions and projections from all parts of the world. 'An essential part of being modern,' as Christopher Bayly observes, 'is thinking that you are modern.'[7] Unsatisfying as this definition may be for some, it underlines the missionairies' understanding of modernity as a fluid process rather than a fixed definition. In their perspective, modernity dealt with a global world in the making to which each of its inhabitants still could add their own understanding.

A like fluidness may be detected in their employment of the term 'religious progress.' Indeed, through the identification of attitudes and expressions as making or not making part of the said progress, missionaries as well as converts defined their own approach to what they deemed was, or should be, the face of modern religion. It has been one of the aims of this book to describe this process character. We ask: What did the missionaries mean when they used words like 'modern' and 'progress'? What kind of religion did they have in mind that could fit such notions? And: What happened to them once the European interaction started?

As far as their European community was concerned, 'being modern' was the slogan of the day (Chapters 4 and 5) and, by the time the missionaries appeared on the European scene, already had a long history. In the course of the nineteenth century, the term 'modern' crystallized in the West to capture a general feeling of being part of an accelerating process, of experiencing a new kind of time in which the present only served as a passage between the past and future. The French revolution had proved that it was possible to mould that future and the poet Baudelaire described the breathlessness accompanying the realization that '*le modernité, c'est le transitoire, le fugitive, le contingent*.'[8] His European successors supposed nothing less than a global 'civilizing mission' intended to

7 Christopher Bayly. *The Birth of the Modern World 1780–1914*. Oxford: Blackwell (2004), 10.

8 Quote in Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, 'Modern, Modernität, Moderne,' in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland, Band 4*, edited by Otto Brunner et al. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta (1978), 101.

change the future of the world at large and they did not hesitate to employ the Western lead in communication techniques and Christian mission as their tools to reach that aim.[9]

In the following chapters, I discuss how Germans imagined modernity. Whereas Baudelaire's focus was on 100 years hence, theirs was on a world historical mission rooted in the embodiment of the 'philosophical nation *par excellence*' (Rabinbach quoted in Chapter 4). Going one step further, the philosopher Martin Heidegger (quoted in Chapter 7) claimed that 'the fundamental event of modernity is…that man fights for the position in which he can be that being who gives to every being the measure and draws up the guidelines.'[10] The war the Germans unleashed to achieve this position was part and parcel of that modernity discourse and it was against this threatening horizon that the missionaries and their community of converts experimented with religious progress.

Missionizing Europe discusses the place of religious progress in the Ahmadiyya mission in the first half of the twentieth century. In so doing, it aims to get to the heart of the mission movement the Ahmadiyya developed to counteract the West's will to civilize the world in its own image. Its regular use of words like 'modern' and 'religious progress' betrays its belief that instead it could and should change the world through a common religious quest. The frequent, but very different, uses its converts and 'Friends of Islam' employed to describe their own modernity supports the thesis that modernity, as perceived and lived in the first half of the twentieth century, was the meeting ground that made the European mission possible.

Claiming that the time had come for a single religion to take root, and acknowledging that it should be Islam (Chapter 2), Ahmadi missionaries from Lahore set out to find ways of combining intellectual debate and religious change. Roaming the European intellectual traditions, they and their audiences tried to shape the Islamic future with whatever European history held in

9 This passage derives from Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World*; Schmuel N. Eisenstadt, *Multiple Modernities*. New Brunswick, NY: Transaction Books, 2002; Gumbrecht, 'Modern, Modernität, Moderne,' 93–131; Hassan Hanafi, 'Tradition and Modernism between Continuity and Discontinuity. Possible Models and Historical Options,' in *Tradition und Traditionsbruch zwischen Skepsis und Dogmatik. Interkulturelle philosophische Perspektiven*, edited by Claudia Bickmann. Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi (2006), 527–38, and Juergen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014.

10 Martin Heidegger, 'The Age of the World Picture,' in Martin Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track*, ed. Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 85. I thank Alex Dougherty for drawing my attention to this text.

store to help religious progress on its way. Unique as this was, theirs was not the only religious quest taking place at the time. In Chapter 3, the reader will encounter a rich assortment of Indo–European approaches to modernity being advocated in Berlin in the interwar period. These ranged from revolution to pacifism, from violence to non-violence, and from secularism to reform of the Muslim tradition.

The context of the European 'moderns' in which the mission unfolded on the European continent provided an equally decisive guide to the book. The Europeans who most interested the missionaries belonged to the urban intellectual and artistic elite, a group deeply engaged in the modernist experiment that had taken hold of Europe since the turn of the century. For the missionaries, conversion signified an ideal contact zone with aspects of European modernity. For their part, converts to Islam imagined an amalgam of religious ideology and 'oriental' imagery, with the help of which they hoped to free themselves from the painful experience of war and to refine their individuality (Chapter 4).

The Jewish Angle

The tension between Jewish converts to Islam and the encroaching National Socialism offers the next determining context in which the mission unfolded. Drawing on a wide array of German sources in particular, in Chapter 5 I outline the biographies of German and Eastern European Jewish converts to Islam who, between them, cast light on the wide landscape of Jewish emancipation. Jewish converts, encompassing revolutionary anarchists, liberals and conservative nationalists, considered Islam a logical continuation of the Jewish tradition and extolled its rationality and modernity. The responses of the missionaries confirm that it was their education that cleared the path (Chapter 1). In Chapter 7 I describe what happened once the Nazi regime was in place and show that it was a former Jew who led the Berlin community until the middle of 1942. His endeavour to weld together the best of European thought with the cream of Muslim reform presents a vivid example of adaptive globalization in the context of war and threatening annihilation.

Competition versus Persecution

Ahmadiyya communities today are persecuted in the Muslim world. By reconstructing the tensions under which the missionaries set to work in Berlin, I seek

out the early sources of that persecution, namely competition over mission strategies, political differences and the need to win Europeans over to the mission's viewpoint. As described in Chapter 8, group persecution only started in the post-colonial period, when Pakistan was created and the nation-state became a reality to which religious majorities and minorities had to adjust. In the interwar period, however, we encounter prejudice, communication difficulties and competition between peace-mongering missionaries and pro-Moscow Muslim revolutionaries, between the pro-Muslim politics of German diplomats and a pro-British Ahmadiyya mission post. Nevertheless, as we see in Chapters 3 and 8, there were times when the Ahmadiyya and other Muslims still cooperated.

Mission in the Post-colonial Age

The period of post-colonialism and the Cold War are the last but not least important contexts in which, especially after the Second World War, the missionaries tried to pick up the threads of their project. Chapter 8 introduces the reader to the Muslim nation-state of Pakistan, where Ahmadis were reconceived as a religious minority and eventually made the target for exclusion from the Islamic faith. Here I describe how the Lahore mission, with its two-way channel for exchanging ideas, failed to make its mark on any postwar European agenda. The Qadiani branch, however, with its promise of salvation through charisma, benefited from the Lahore organization's declining influence and set up a series of competing mission posts. The direction in which this mission is now heading contrasts starkly with the topography of interwar Europe. While the Lahore mission's progressive Islam was in retreat, the charismatic millenarian mission started to conquer one European capital after another. From a modernity viewpoint, the intellectual curiosity of the Lahore mission fitted the Europe that emerged from the First World War better than the charismatic message of the Qadian mission. In the Cold War context of postwar Europe, however, characterized as it was by intense deglobalization and a retreat to behind the borders of European nation-states, Qadian proved more successful.

Towards a History of Muslims in Europe

These differences between interwar and postwar encounters raise questions that go straight to the heart of the present-day reception of Muslims in Europe.

Continental Europe served as the venue where it was acceptable for Indians and Germans, Muslims and Jews, and Arabs and Europeans to meet and think about religion together. It was there that the Ahmadiyya movement's mission from Lahore could start its quest to identify overlaps between the religions – the grey zones of thought and emotion that, when scrutinized together, suddenly appeared in a new light that promised a vision of global equality and the meeting of minds. These shared realizations in turn both strengthened the intellectual credibility of globalization and world society, and identified the individual as the *locus* for change. Such were the great thoughts of the time and, in hindsight, we know that that time was exceedingly short. All those experiments, all those novel thoughts and novel friendships in which they were embedded came to a stop in 1939 when the Germans engulfed the world in yet another war. There was no longer time to reflect on the many implications of thinking religion anew, let alone using it as a vehicle through which to bridge the gap between interwar and postwar Europe. Whereas the Second World War signalled 'the end of German–Indian entanglement,'[11] the German defeat in 1945 spawned 'zero hour,' a blank slate from which all memories of the past were miraculously erased. In the postwar period, this collective amnesia was superseded by a framework in which 'Third World peoples received one-way donations of Western development,' thereby obscuring the memory of 30 years of intercultural and inter-religious engagement in which all parties were equal.[12] In our attempts to combat such collective amnesia, the 'thick description' of that engagement is as relevant for scholars of religion in general as it is for the study of Muslims in Europe today.

Archival Materials

On their way to Europe, the two mission organizations never ceased to oppose one another, giving much of the source material for this book an apologetic spin. As I reflect in Chapter 1, each organization developed its own version of the history of the movement for use as a tool in the struggle. This resulted in a wealth of publications, including translations of the founder's writings, extensive biographies about his personal life, missionaries' biographies and numerous theological treatises. Over the course of 100 years, the language in which all this was written down moved from predominantly Urdu to predominantly

11 Kris Manjapra. *Age of Entanglement. German and Indian Intellectuals across Empire*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press (2014), 13.

12 Manjapra, *Age of Entanglement*, 13.

English, incidentally also documenting the Ahmadiyya's westward migration. While biographies, translations and treatises already fill many library shelves apiece, an even larger range of mission journals allowed me to follow the mission's progress on a monthly basis, at least in theory.

Another wealth of sources from the European capitals in which the mission unfolded throws light on the encounter between East and West. National, regional and private archives, letters, memoirs, photographs, novels and the eyewitness accounts of a few remaining survivors helped bring the story back to life. The missionaries' activities were recorded in registry files, foreign office archives and the scant remains of the archive of the Ahmadiyya mosque. It was more difficult to trace the biographies of converts. Some left only a name, whereas others added a photograph, a conversion narrative or both. Some wrote under a pseudonym and others replaced their Christian or Jewish surnames with Muslim ones, all of which made it extremely difficult to gain access to their lives. Where it was possible to establish an original name, I sometimes found traces in the national library, contemporary address books, memoirs, private archives, or sometimes also in Nazi membership files and the denazification procedures the Allies prescribed after the war.

Finally, I need to say a word about style. I have not written a master narrative that claims to reveal the truth in large capitals. Rather, I have tried to fashion an interpretation that mirrors my own encounter with the sources at a specific historical juncture. As a historian of religion, I was primarily interested in capturing the religious encounter between Muslim Indians on the one hand and Jewish and Christian Europeans on the other, an encounter that took place within the framework of modernity debates in the first half of the twentieth century. Future political scientists or global historians examining the same sources will single out other threads and their stories will no doubt be totally different. This manuscript came into being between 2012 and 2014 and, while it was underway, international politics taught the people of Europe that they had good reason to fear Muslims. Meanwhile, the historical perspective emerging from my sources was conveying a very different message. It became clear that, whether good or bad, encounters are historically rooted and that their imprint is liable to change in the future. This realization influenced my style of writing – it urged me to adopt a lighter tone and to avoid drawing too many conclusions.

CHAPTER 1

The Founder and His Vision

The second half of the nineteenth century saw European expansion on a hitherto unknown scale. The major factors behind the speed at which Western Europe took the lead were superior weapons, better communications, sophisticated transport systems and improved health care. Great Britain, the Netherlands and France occupied substantial territories on other continents. With the industrialization of the European heartlands, national economies grew rapidly.

The colonization of the world and large-scale globalization happened simultaneously. Across the colonies, Western schooling and dress became standard as the print media, telegraph, trains and steamships transported the latest news across the empires and created a public sphere in which everybody participated. Christian missionaries took advantage of the new communication structures to spread their faith as aggressively as they could, for they considered their work an essential part of the European *mission civilisatrice*.[1]

Across the Asian world, Hindus, Buddhists and Sikhs answered with reform through religion, depicting their traditions as 'corrupt' and urging the return to the 'pure faith.'[2] In combination with educational reform, religion served as a channel of upward mobility and as the basis for a new self-respect.[3] In his *Age of Entanglement*, Kris Manjapra sketches out the effects of colonization on the Hindu population.[4] Focusing on the Bengali national resistance that came to a head around 1900, he describes how protest against the aggressive suppression of local markets in favour of British exports took shape. Before the young generation started to throw bombs at British administrators, Bengali intellectuals had already founded universities, propagated reform of the Hindu tradition, formulated claims of political independence and occupied high positions in

1 Jeffrey Cox, *The British Missionary Enterprise since 1700* (London: Routledge, 2008); Hartmann Tyrell, 'Weltgesellschaft, Weltmission und religiöse Organisationen,' in *Weltmission und religiöse Organisationen*, ed. Artur Bogner et al. (Wuerzburg: Ergon, 2004), 13–137; Christopher Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World 1780–1914* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004); Juergen Osterhammel and Niels P. Petersson, *Globalization. A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

2 Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World*, 328. Antony Copley, ed., *Gurus and their Followers. New Religious Reform Movements in Colonial India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) offers some very instructive examples.

3 Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World*, 334.

4 Kris Manjapra, *Age of Entanglement. German and Indian Intellectuals across Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 41–55.

the British colonial administration. The entanglement with empire reveals moments of both adaptation and resistance.

After the Great Uprising of 1857, India's Muslims began to reform their traditions and, as I explain later, Aligarh became the country's first Western-style Muslim university, followed by the Punjab University in Lahore. At the same time, the Punjab-based reform movements of Deobandis, Barelwis, Ahl-i-Hadis and Nadwa, albeit in very different directions, were competing with one another to set up new religious schools and to restructure Islamic theology and the curriculum of the religious scholarly class (ulema).[5]

In a regional context, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, a descendant of the Muslim landowning gentry and independent religious scholar in rural Qadian in the Punjab, put himself forward as the *Mujaddid* (reformer) of the age. He proposed to defend Islam from the infamous attacks of Christian missionaries and, to that end, he founded his own mission organization, the *Sadr Anjuman*. Around 1900, his followers began to preach in places as far flung as Kenya, Afghanistan and the Fiji Islands. However, apart from a dream in which he saw himself 'standing on a pulpit in London and giving a sermon, while white birds flew into his hands,'[6] actual proselytizing in Europe seems not to have been on his agenda.[7]

Bearing in mind the British 'determination to civilize,' Mirza Ghulam Ahmad decided to examine what options the modern age offered. His answer was a Muslim mission organization modelled on the British mission in India and a Muslim theology that appropriated some of Christianity's most basic truths. Around 1900, this was a 'modern' answer, one that reconnected with the tradition yet responded to the contemporary situation. Nonetheless, as I pointed out in the Introduction, although the word was on everybody's lips, modernity eluded any single definition. Rather, it served as the perfect blank screen on which to project visions from all parts of the world. 'An essential part of being modern,' Bayly observes, 'is thinking that you are modern.'[8] This then was the global context in which Ahmad's followers established centres in Europe with a view to sharing their approaches to modernity and challenging Western ideas of their religion that the accounts of Christian missionaries had discredited.

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5 Barbara D. Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India. Deoband 1860–1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982/2007), 87–315. Dietrich Reetz, *'God's Kingdom on Earth' – The Contestation of the Public Sphere by Religious Groups in Colonial India 1900–1947* (Berlin: Free University, 2001), 85–91.

6 Sadr-ud-Din, *Muhammad the Modern Prophet* (Lahore: AAII, 1950), 20.

7 He rather thought that, 'instead of these missionaries, writings of an excellent and high standard should be sent to these countries.' Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Izala Auham*, (Qadian, 1891), 773. With thanks to Nasir Ahmad for alerting me to this text.

8 Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World*, 10.

In this chapter, I examine developments in the Ahmadiyya movement before the appearance of its mission in Europe. How was it possible that, from the start, there were two competing mission organizations, rather than one, and what kind of message or messages were their missionaries bringing in their luggage? Such questions compel us to reflect on the complicated transitional state of religions everywhere, for at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century they were all trying to adapt to their widening horizons. What role did Mirza Ghulam Ahmad play in this? To find some answers, I focus on his will, published two years before his death, which contains the essence of what he had to say and what he wanted his followers to do once he had died. What heritage did the founder bequeath to his followers? What was its scope and incentive? We shall see how his heirs received their heirloom and interpreted Ahmad's suggestions and how they thought it best to continue his mission.

If Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's ideas were one pillar on which the Ahmadiyya mission rested, class and education were the others. Through the eyes of two generations born into the nineteenth century, in this chapter I cast a glance at the deep changes the British colonial administrators brought to traditional Muslim education. Out of what class structure and set of beliefs did Mirza Ghulam Ahmad derive his vision? Where did the generation after him go to school and with what intellectual tools did they interpret his vision? Before looking at the actual mission, we need to answer these questions because, although the followers set the stage for the story of the mission to enfold, the founder provided the key words to go ahead.

1.1 Muslim Mission in Response to Christian Mission

The Islamic and Christian traditions each treat their missions quite differently. Whereas Christians receive their assignment directly from the New Testament,[9] the foundational texts of Islam contain no comparable summons.[10] *Da'wa*, the Muslim duty to admonish fellow Muslims to stay in the fold, only applies to internal communications, so usually has no in need of a special organization. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's idea to convert Muslims and Christians alike arose out

9 Math. 28: 19, *passim*. For an extensive overview of Christian mission see Hartmann Tyrell, 'Weltgesellschaft, Weltmission und religiöse Organisationen,' in: *Weltmission und religiöse Organisationen*, ed. Artur Bogner et al. (Würzburg: Ergon, 2004), 13–137.

10 This was already noted by C.H. Becker, 'Der Islam als Problem.' *Der Islam. Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kultur des islamischen Orients 1* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1910) 1–19.

of a context of expanding European power. Around 1880, when colonial rule, critical thinking and Christian mission had already penetrated the traditional Muslim world of North India, he embarked on a study of what Christian missionaries had written about Islam and he condemned their views. From the initial list of mistakes (of which he found no less than 3000), there grew an extensive opus of 88 books in which this Muslim scholar tried to find fitting answers for the new situation that had arisen.[11]

His focus was on Jesus. Fighting the Christian enemy with its own arguments and striving with all his might to revitalize Islam, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad reformulated the figure of the historical Jesus as an inspiration for immediate action. Pointing to Jesus' example, even claiming to be his embodiment, he denied jihad as a form of legitimized violence, urging Muslims to defend themselves with words and accept the colonial administration. Ahmad sided with the colonial power at a moment when Indian nationalism was going through a violent stage. Muslims and Hindus longed for 'Indian freedom and Asiatic freedom from the thraldom of Europe,'[12] a longing that Ahmad shared, but the possible roads to that freedom differed considerably. To express their independence claim, Hindu nationalists turned to armed resistance, to throwing bombs and killing British administrators.[13]

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, by contrast, sought to weaken the colonial power from within and, by criticizing and reformulating the foundation of Christianity, to deny the legitimacy of Western superiority. During a period of accelerated globalization, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad believed that he was the Promised Messiah, the embodiment of Christ and the recipient of a message through divine communication 'to overthrow the supremacy of Christianity and counter their attacks.'[14] He strove to show that Islam was nothing new and no more than a continuation of Christianity.

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11 Karl Gottlieb Pfander (1803–1865) engaged as a missionary in Northern India in Ghulam Ahmad's youth. He had a perfect command of Persian and Arabic and frequently participated in public debates, in which he refuted theological issues that were central to the Muslim orthodoxy. His *Mizan Ul-Haq* (The Balance of Truth) was translated in at least seven languages and widely read.

12 Jawaharlal Nehru quoted in Pankaj Mishra, *From the Ruins of Empire: The Revolt against the West and the Remaking of Asia* (London: Penguin, 2012), 2.

13 Kris Manjapra, *Age of Entanglement. German and Indian Intellectuals across Empire*. Cambridge (Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2014), 41–55.

14 Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Ainah Kamalaat-i Islam* (Qadian: 1893), 340, quoted in Muhammad Ali, *True Conception of the Ahmadiyya Movement* (Columbus, Ohio: AAII, 2006), 55. With thanks to Nasir Ahmad for alerting me to this text.

Like-minded admirers soon gathered around him to form a circle that in 1901 the British Census called the 'Ahmadiyya community.'[15] From this nucleus, his subversive peace mission was carried across British India and beyond. After his death, the community developed rational mission structures, which it acquired through copying and adapting various Christian fundraising methods, vocational training programmes and mission journals. The community eventually split over the question of leadership, as I explain below.

Although he did not speak English and never left his home in the Punjab, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad became the founding father of a novel form of global Muslim mission, the spearheads of which were the historical example of Jesus, the simplicity of the Muslim creed and persuasion through argument. In due course, although their messages differed, other Indian Muslim groups followed the road to Europe, *Tablighi Jama'at* and *Da'wat-e Islami* among them.[16]

The Ahmadiyya mission started as a form of global communication that observed critically, yet also adapted to, the achievements of the colonial power, clearly manifesting the oscillation between 'adaption and resistance, admiration and abhorrence' identified above. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad found his cue in the British regime's aggression in the Punjab, which he indeed abhorred. In addressing Europe, however, his missionaries encountered a series of unfamiliar historical situations and this experience in fact changed the face of the mission.

A short preview may clarify this. When they arrived in 1912, shortly after the discovery that Indian students in London had been fabricating bombs in a backyard shed and were planning terrorist acts, London only very grudgingly welcomed the peace-mongering missionaries.[17] As Kamal-ud-Din rather vividly described it to Muslim Indians back home, Islam had a bad press in England.[18] Nevertheless, this missionary came across British intellectuals who were critical of their government and who offered him their support, thus

15 *Census of India with Imperial Tables for the Punjab*. Vol. 17/1. Bombay: Government Central Press (1901), Surendra Nath Kaushik, *Ahmadiya Community in Pakistan* (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1996), 22 et pass.

16 Dietrich Reetz, 'Frömmigkeit in der Moderne: Die Laienprediger der *Tablighi Jama'at*,' in *Islam in Europa: Religiöses Leben heute*, ed. Dietrich Reetz (Münster: Waxmann, 2010), 19–52; Thomas K. Gugler, 'Moderne Standardisierung und traditionelle Frömmigkeit: Die pakistanische Missionsbewegung *Da'wat-e Islami*,' in *Islam in Europa: Religiöses Leben heute*, ed. Dietrich Reetz (Münster: Waxmann, 2010), 53–78.

17 Kris Manjapra, *M. N. Roy, Marxism and Colonial Cosmopolitanism* (London: Routledge, 2010); Peter Hopkirk, *Like hidden fire: The plot to bring down the British Empire* (New York: Kodansha, 1994), 41–55.

18 Kamal-ud-Din, 'Foreword,' IR 1 (1913), 1–4.

enabling him to set up a mosque community and to organize a mission journal.

The response from Berlin, however, was very different. After Germany lost the war, missionaries of all religions and denominations were given a hearty reception. Like the many others who came, Ahmadiyya missionaries found the room they needed to engage in peace-through-religion congresses and, as time progressed, they were able to carve out a niche for intellectual encounter and the defence of progressive Islam. When the National Socialists came to power, the missionary in residence kept the balance, although the influx of Nazi sympathizers forced him to go along with ideas that were far removed from his own. When a new war began, he had to leave Germany but, defying the ban on mail, still found ways to maintain contact with the Berlin community of converts. Postwar continental Europe, however, found the mission field destroyed. The war had dislocated old fixtures; former converts and friends had disappeared for good. The next generation was willing to receive the missionaries back, but by then the message was suffused with Nazi overtones. From the communications that ensued from these different and overlapping interactions, it is not always easy to make out who abhorred, who resisted, who admired, and who adapted to whom. In this book, the story of religious modernity addresses all sides – missionaries bringing Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's ideas in their luggage, communities of converts laying claim to sometimes outrageous scenarios, and their Muslim opponents in and out of Europe who argued against the creation of any hybridization between these two groups.

There are some important differences to consider between the Christian mission in British India and the Ahmadiyya mission in Europe. First, unlike the Christian missionaries, who served as a blueprint for Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Muslim missionaries in Europe had to adapt to political and societal frameworks without the benefit of a dominating colonial politics. For the understanding of their mission in Europe this offers an important clue. Although letters, reports, articles and travelling missionaries kept communications with the mother organization going, mission stations often remained isolated from one another. Closed in by the ideological struggle that increasingly dominated Europe, missionaries could not help but adapt to the new situation, if only to keep their mission station open.

Second, in Berlin, the city that received them with open arms, Ahmadiyya missionaries became acquainted with the ideological passions of the German Orientalists, who included men and women, artists, scholars and civil servants. What made the Berlin reception differ from its British counterpart was the friendship that political and intellectual Berlin offered local Muslims and, through them, the Muslim world at large. Interwar Berlin provided a platform

outside the British Empire where Muslims and other colonial subjects could voice their plans for the future of the colonial world and, to that aim, embark on common enterprises with German intellectuals. In Berlin, the Ahmadiyya mission was one among many.

To grasp and employ this local potential, a modern understanding of class came to the missionaries' aid, thus enabling them to move in elite circles whose rules and ethics were the same in both Lahore and Berlin.[19] Christopher Bayly notes that this differentiation of societies on a global scale created a new middle class with standardized social practices.[20] Such class recognition enabled smooth communication between sometimes very different actors, giving the business of convincing and conversion a stable basis.

Another dynamic of globalization that came to the missionaries' aid was the global rediscovery of Jesus. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was not the only one who claimed to be his successor. Arriving in Europe, his missionaries found that Jehovah's Witnesses and the followers of the Baha'ullah had staked the same claim.[21] But beyond just creating competition, the Ahmadiyya focus on the Messiah as the saviour of the modern age opened the door to communication with religious reform movements that embraced similar expectations.

Back in the 1850s, for instance, the German scholar and rabbi Abraham Geiger had already freed Jesus from his exclusively Christian appropriation and laid the foundation for a Jewish repossession. From then onwards, the Jewish Jesus served simultaneously as a model for Jewish reform and as a bridge for Jewish Orientalism.[22] In the Sudan of the 1870s, a charismatic leader announced himself the *Mahdi* (the imam who accompanies the returning Messiah).

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19 David Motadel, 'Islamische Bürgerlichkeit – Das soziokulturelle Milieu der muslimischen Minderheit in Berlin 1918–1938,' in *Juden und Muslime in Deutschland*, ed. José Brunner (Göttingen: Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für Deutsche Geschichte 37, 2009), 103–22.

20 Christopher A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World 1780–1914* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 12–19.

21 By the time Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was first entered in the British census, Baha'i already spread in the US and in Germany, where the first community settled in Stuttgart. In 1904, a Baha'i missionary arrived in Lahore to challenge MGA in public debate, but the latter refused to acknowledge him. In 1907 Mirza Ghulam Ahmad still dedicated three articles to the Baha'i movement in which he did not refer to any of the founding documents. For a scholar, who had been thoroughly trained in the Persian literatures, his readings betray little interest in them. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, 'The Babi or the Baha'i Religion,' RR (1907), 171–7; 314–25; 351–7.

22 Dirk Hartwig et al., '*Im vollen Licht der Geschichte.' Die Wissenschaft des Judentums und die Anfänge der kritischen Koranforschung* (Würzburg: Ergon, 2008); Susannah Heschel, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

Believing that the apocalypse was imminent, his army hit the British where it could.[23] Fritz Stern describes the widespread belief, in Germany around 1900, in a hidden emperor. Standing against the tide of modernity, either Rembrandt, or Christ, or a yet unknown *Führer* would soon inspire the rebirth of the Germans and their reintegration into a single mystical folk body.[24] In 1910, the theosopist 'Star of the East' Jiddu Krishnamurti embodied this religious movement's expectation of the Messiah. Projecting a Hindu incarnation with a Christian imprint, theosopists all around the world believed that 'at some point the holy ghost will use him as his receptacle.'[25] In Great Britain, rumours of prophets and saviours throughout the empire spoke to the public imagination to the extent that, in 1916, in the middle of the Great War, they greedily devoured John Buchan's novel *Greenmantle*. Amid a wild concoction of war propaganda, fear of Muslim insurgence and British public school imaginings, it describes the leader of the Muslim insurgence as none other than a British spy with the features of the Christian Messiah, in reality fighting the German enemy.[26]

In Galicia, the heartland of European Jewry, the Great War caused such indescribable destruction that one could only hope for divine intervention. Rabbis constantly lived in feverish expectation of the Messiah's imminent arrival: 'If the Messiah does not come now, when else will he come?' people kept repeating.[27] By contrast, once the war was lost, German churches and Christian splinter groups announced claims to an Aryan Jesus, whose authoritarian and racist aspects kept pace with the growth of National Socialism, eventually legitimizing the murder of that Jewish population.[28]

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23 Mishra, *From the Ruins of Empire*, 91.

24 Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of Germanic Ideology* (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1965), 180, 192, 208.

25 Hermann Graf Keyserling, *Das Reisetagebuch eines Philosophen* (Frankfurt/M: Ullstein, 1918), 159–167, quotation on p. 159. Cf. Mary Lutyens, *The Life and Death of Krishnamurti* (London: John Murray, 1990); Roland Vernon, *Star in the East: Krishnamurti: The Invention of a Messiah* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

26 John Buchan, *Greenmantle* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1916). The crude nationalism of this novel still reverberates in Hopkirk, *Like Hidden Fire*, which the author dedicated 'To the memory of my mother, who some fifty years ago read me John Buchan's *Greenmantle*, the true story I have told here.'

27 Manès Sperber, *Die Wasserträger Gottes. All das Vergangene…* (Wien: Europa-Verlag, 1974), 162, cf. Petra Ernst, 'Spuren des Ersten Weltkrieges in der deutschsprachigen jüdischen Literatur,' in *Jenseits des Schützengrabens. Der Erste Weltkrieg im Osten: Erfahrung – Wahrnehmung – Kontext*, ed. Bernard Bachinger et al. (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2013), 413–37.

28 Susannah Heschel, *The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

The process of globalization accelerated the closeness of political and educational reforms[29] and, in its wake, religious imagery and expectations. This is not to say that they merged. Rather, people were newly aware of the existence of global religions and behaved accordingly.[30] I suspect that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad took advantage of this emerging arena to articulate his own reform proposals, addressing not only the Punjab and colonial India but also the world beyond. The emergence of globalized religious reform created the precondition for the *rapprochement* between Indian Muslims and their future Jewish and Christian converts, despite their roots in very different fields of experience.

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad never played a part in the European mission. But whenever missionaries staked a claim, spoke in public, wrote in their mission journals, or even stored books in their library, his presence hovered in the background. In the following, a short sketch may help to form some idea of the texts and appeals this thinker left behind. Centring on his will, the document in which the reformer summarized his mission and formulated instructions on how to continue it, the sketch also serves to explain why two different heirs, who still bitterly opposed one other, claimed his heritage. In rethinking the contribution of the Muslim mission to modernity and religious progress, it is important to consider the different decisions taken by the two Ahmadiyya factions.

1.2 Embodying Jesus

The belief in Jesus' return at the end of time is an important oral tradition in Islam.[31] Anchored in the Isa and Mary stories of the Koran and Hadith, then

29 Hanna Schissler and Yasemin Nuhoglu Soysal, *The Nation, Europe, and the World. Textbooks and Curricula in Transition* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005), 1–12. Theresa Wobbe, *Weltgesellschaft* (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2000).

30 Tyrell explains how during the last part of the nineteenth century the term 'world religions' expanded across the world and was accepted in various religious traditions, Tyrell, *Weltgesellschaft*, 22 ff., cf. Peter Beyer, *Religion im Prozess der Globalisierung* (Würzburg: Ergon, 2001).

31 Oddbjörn Leirvik, *Images of Jesus Christ in Islam* (New York: Paul Weller, 2010), 148; cf. Don Wismer, *The Islamic Jesus: An annotated bibliography of sources in English and French* (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1977). With 26 entries, Wismer carries together the older literature on the Ahmadiyya Movement, much of which consists of contemptuous (sometimes insulting) Christian polemics. Another twenty entries refer to the writings of Ghulam Ahmad, his son Mahmud Bashir-ud-Din and some of their missionaries. Muhammad Ali is absent from this collection.

expanding into the polemics between the oriental churches and their new Muslim governments in late Antiquity, Jesus traditions made their way into Sunni, Shi'ite and Sufi religious lore.[32] Although addressing different aspects, the three agree that at the end of time Jesus will return to save the world.[33] According to one tradition, he will descend from the skies, make the Hajj, marry, have children and die after 40 years, after which the apocalypse is predicted. Another holds that he will descend when the Muslim world is in acute danger and immediately attack the Antichrist (*dajjal*).

With the expansion of European power in the Muslim world, images of the Muslim Jesus became charged with a new urgency. In British India, the Muslim reformer Syed Ahmad Khan (1817–1898) was the first to invoke the historical Jesus in the name of a critical reappraisal of the Muslim tradition.[34] By contrast, the Jesus who would return at the end of time and fight the *dajjal* formed the subject of many public debates between British missionaries and Muslim theologians. Missionaries like Karl Gottlieb Pfander (1803–1865) and Samuel Zwemer (1867–1952) undermined the Muslim expectation that Jesus' return was imminent, arguing that, rather than wait any longer, Muslims might as well embrace him right away: 'Your Muhammad is dead, our Jesus is alive,' so their argument ran.[35]

This is where Mirza Ghulam Ahmad made his entry, an entry that found concise expression in the mission map reproduced and commented on in the Introduction. Against the Sunni tradition he held that Jesus was not crucified but died a natural death, arguing that the story of his death on the cross was outrageous and unworthy of a Son of God.[36] Borrowing from the Shi'ite tradition, he further said that at the last minute Jesus was taken from the cross and cared for

32 Leirvik, *Images of Jesus*, 19–101.

33 Although offering Isa and Mary stories, the Koran remains silent on the subject of the second coming. The latter is derived exclusively from oral traditions.

34 Leirvik, *Images of Jesus*, 129.

35 Johanan Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous. Aspects of Ahmadi Religious Thought and its Medieval Background* (Oxford/New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), 111–13.

36 His main publications on Jesus include: *Jesus in India. Being an Account of Jesus' Escape from Death on the Cross and his Journey to India* (Rabwah: Ahmadiyya Foreign Mission Department, 1899, reprint 1962); *Fountain of Christianity* (Rabwah: Ahmadiyya Foreign Missions Office, 1906, reprint 1961); 'Islam versus Christianity.' *The Muslim world. A quarterly review of history, culture, religions, and the Christian mission in Islamdom* 10 (Hartford, Conn.: Hartford Seminary Foundation, 1920) 76–81.
'Christianity', *Muslim World 10* (1920), 76–81, as well as a series of texts in *The Revue of Religions*: 'An Important Discovery Regarding Jesus Christ' RR (1902, October); 'Jesus among the ten lost Israelite Tribes in the East' RR 1–6 (1903); 'The Tomb of Jesus in Srinagar'

until he was well again, after which he went to India and died in old age in Srinagar.[37] Correcting the traditional Sunni story, however, was only part of his strategy. To silence the Christian accusation that 'the Muslim God has not spoken since Arabia,'[38] he also proposed himself as the embodiment of Jesus. But the Jesus he had in mind was not the figure of the Muslim eschatological tradition. Jesus lay dead and buried, he said; it was his spirit that lived on. In other words, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad did not claim to be the historical Jesus but to be endowed with a divine calling *like* Jesus.

Throughout his life, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad received a constant flow of dreams and visions, the intensity of which convinced him that they could only come from God. Interpreting his dreams as part of his calling, he said that he was a *muhaddath*, a person through whom God chose to speak to his people.[39] Again, Christian accusations informed his argument, for example that the Prophet of Islam never died in a spiritual sense but continued to inspire divine revelation (*wahy*) in his community. A religion that lacked prophecy is lifeless, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad argued.[40] Thus, combining the example of Jesus with his own status of 'being spoken to,' he came to the conclusion that he was a *zilli nabi*, a prophet in the shadow of the Prophet of Islam.[41]

Not surprisingly, his claims met with vehement objections. Whereas British missionaries opposed him because of his insistence on Jesus' natural death, Indian Muslim scholars excommunicated him on the grounds that he contradicted the Koran (33:40), which describes Muhammad as the last or 'Seal' of the prophets. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's simultaneous attack on Christian superiority and Muslim traditionalism, however, reveals an original mind, one that was not afraid to leave the trodden path and to try to demolish his opponent's defences with unusual arguments. He was a man of contradictory qualities. His followers described him as radiant, sweet and saintly, as an 'old school' intellectual who could recite large portions of Persian literature, but also as a powerful speaker endowed with the intellectual ability to take his opponents' arguments apart. He impressed in public debate, but did not hesitate to curse his opponents after having defeated them with arguments, and waited

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RR 11–12 (1903); 'Christ's So-called Death on the Cross (discussed scientifically by a doctor)' RR 6 (1904).

37 Leirvik, *Images of Jesus*, 84–90; Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous*, 114.

38 *The Revue of Religions* 1927 (April) once again summarizes the arguments, quotation on p. 25.

39 Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous*, 109.

40 Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous*, 109–11.

41 Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous*, 119–46.

impatiently for his curses to come true.[42] Once he was on track, Ahmad did not easily give up.

In this era of Western globalization, a term unknown to him but one he exemplified in his exploitation of novel forms of communication with quickly expanding powers of influence,[43] Mirza Ghulam Ahmad struggled to formulate a language that could grasp the changes around him and images that were big enough to be perceived on the global stage. For the rest of his life, he also felt thoroughly misunderstood, so much so that he used his will and testament to explain his appeals one last time, in the hope that 'no source of disgrace will I leave behind.'[44] Neither did he attempt to tone down his rhetoric: 'I have appeared as the power of God upon Earth and I am the embodiment of Divine power,' he proclaimed.[45] Large parts of this document are dedicated to an explanation of the mission's origins. They stress Islam as a living religion over and against the Christian claims that 'our God is the God who is living as he was living before; who speaks now as he spoke before; who hears now as he heard before.'[46] Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's will offers us an important locus for understanding the Muslim mission's quest.

As the above quotation from his will revealed, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad aimed to revive Islam as a living religion and wanted followers to continue his mission. Against the Christian claims of the godhood of Jesus, the testator therefore asserts his own divine status, trusting an argument constructed in four steps. First, such a living god cannot but continue to send messengers, even when they are being laughed at.[47] Second, Muhammad was the perfect prophet, whereas he, Ahmad, was only the perfect follower.[48] Third, Jesus materialized in his person, thus fulfilling the prophecy of his return at the end of time.[49]

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42 Muhammad Ahmad, *A Mighty Striving. Life and Work of Maulana Muhammad Ali* (Ohio USA: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at-e Islam Lahore, 2004), 8; Ahmad, *The Great Reformer*, 176; Friedmann, *Prophecy continuous*, 9–10.

43 He amply used the possibilities of print media, not only through publishing books but also the spread of journals and magazines in at least two languages (Urdu and English). The missionaries' resolve to use the modern technique of photography will be discussed in later chapters.

44 In December 1905, the Urdu text of the will appeared in the community journal *Badr*. The English translation followed in the *Revue of Religions*. Quote from 'The Will of the Promised Messiah,' RR 1 (1906), 24–5, where it is repeated no less than three times.

45 Ahmad, 'The Will,' 27.

46 Ahmad, 'The Will,' 29.

47 Ahmad, 'The Will,' 26.

48 Ahmad, 'The Will,' 30.

49 Ahmad, 'The Will,' 31.

Consequently, fourth, he was 'a follower as well as a prophet.'[50] In sum, he concluded, 'signs have not come to an end.'[51] Indeed, with this chain of argument, the reformer turned his will into a summons proclaiming novel signs and calling the faithful to radical action. It pictures him as a daring thinker who combined rationalism with visionary insights, who possessed a fighter's mentality and was not afraid to borrow from the Christian foe to establish his claim.

Next, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad used his will to set up the first professional Muslim mission ever, the so-called *Sadr Anjuman*. It came about in ways that were as much indebted to the past as aimed at the future. To understand the reaction of his community, which was soon to split into two different mission organizations, it is helpful to analyse his instructions in some detail. Predicting his own death (which occurred two years later), the testator first bought a piece of land near Qadian to establish as a cemetery. This was well-trodden territory – a religious leader chooses his grave and appoints a place for his followers as he does so.[52] However, he then proceeded to ask his heirs to subscribe to a fund to maintain the cemetery, but also 'to be spent on the spread of Islam.'[53] Through this injunction, members of the community who wished to be buried near their founder were required to leave part of their property to the fund and fix this decision in their will.

For Punjabi Muslims, this was indeed new territory, introducing several inventions at a stroke. It was not only that Ahmad's heirs had to pay for the privilege of being buried near their founder, but the testator also fashioned an organization on the basis of those future payments, which 'should be entrusted with the expenditure of the money…in making the religion of Islam prevail in the world.'[54] In other words, the deaths of his followers determined the future Anjuman, which was again dedicated to the propagation of Islam, an activity the text explicitly called 'the Ahmadiyya mission.'[55] Contemplating his foundation, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad concluded that such an organization of necessity was to be 'a system' that 'shall have to be continued after the death of us all.'[56] In other words, the reformer looked for a way of anchoring his mission to ensure that it would outlive its initial followers. The instruction caused confusion.

50 Ahmad, 'The Will,' 32.
51 Ibid.
52 Ahmad, 'The Will,' 34–5.
53 Ahmad, 'The Will,' 35.
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid., 35.

The argument that ensued from the confusion centred on the question of the kind of leadership such a 'system' might require.

Another sentence in the will poured fuel on the fire, namely the instruction to 'take people into discipleship in my name':[57] although the disciples' task was clear enough, namely to collect 'the Orientals and the Occidentals…in one faith,'[58] a footnote addressing the question of how to select them set the dispute into full flame. Discussing the criteria for their appointment, the testator first suggested that 'such men' (the disciples) could be '*any one* about whom *forty faithful men* should agree that he is fit to accept *bai'at* (the pledge) in my name from *other people*' (my emphasis).[59] In other words, before seeking converts, at least forty members of the community needed to appoint each missionary. He then continued to state that God had also informed him 'that He would raise for my followers *a man from my own offspring* whom he would particularly favour with His nearness and revelation' (my emphasis).[60] Surprising as this must have been, the disclosure created the ground for the ensuing conflict. It centred on the question of authority. Who would be able to tread in the footsteps of the founder? Was this going to be anyone in the community or only 'my own offspring'? As the conflict progressed, it became a choice between democracy (the Anjuman as the final authority) and authoritarian rule (a single successor with the same status as the founder).

1.3 Charisma and Social Change

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's will is one of those rare texts that allows the reader to look over the Muslim scholar's shoulder and see him at work in his Punjabi rural surroundings. Remaining all his life in the village of Qadian, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad addressed his followers in traditional terms, yet refashioned that tradition into something wholly new. Just as the Jews in Germany were 'rethinking the map of Christian civilization,'[61] and the Baha'i in Persia were performing revolutionary acts 'for the whole of humanity,'[62] this reformer, in his turn,

57 Ahmad, 'The Will,' 27.

58 Ahmad, 'The Will,' 28.

59 Ahmad, 'The Will,' 27–8.

60 Ibid.

61 Susannah Heschel, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 99.

62 Sasha Dehghani, *Martyrium und Messianismu. Die Geburtsstunde des Baha'itums* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011), 121–2.

groped for images powerful enough to be 'read' on the other side of the world. In an age in which world religions already 'met' and observed each other across large distances, he could not avoid but enter into competition with the other universal messages.[63]

At this point in the narrative it is helpful once again to place Ahmad's actions against a backdrop of anti-colonial politics in India. He formulated his will at a time when a large catalogue of revolutionary attitudes to British occupation had already been compiled. The partition of Bengal drove Hindu radicals to adopt a heady mixture of yoga, sexual restraint and worship of the goddess Kali to qualify themselves for terrorist operations.[64] Indian Muslims preferred the instrument of the Khalifat movement, which strove to unite Muslims around the globe under the leadership of the Ottoman caliphate.[65] We will encounter them again in interwar Berlin, where they will throw their forces together to found communist and other liberation parties (Chapter 2).[66]

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's project was not to attack British colonial administrators with weapons but to attack their religion. To that end he did not hesitate to appropriate central Christian claims and widen the function of charisma as he went along. The sociologist Max Weber, observing the globalizing world from his corner of Germany, recognized charisma as a powerful means of overcoming alienation and envisioning new plans for the future.[67] Around 1900, facing the surge of globalization, charismatic personalities were highly in demand; in rural and urban spaces people needed their visionary power, the force of their inspiration and the personal relationship they encouraged.

63 The first meeting of the world religions during the Chicago World Exhibition in 1893 has been described by Dorothea Lüddeckens, *Das Weltparlament der Religionen von 1893. Strukturen interreligiöser Begegnung im 19. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2002); Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World*, 20. Tyrell, *Weltgesellschaft*, 28.

64 Manjapra, *M. N. Roy*, 3.

65 Muzaffar Ahmad, *Myself and the Communist Party of India 1920–1929* (Calcutta: National Book Agency, 1970), 14, cf. Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India* (Columbia University Press, 1982).

66 Ahmad, *Myself and the Communist Party of India*, 223–5.

67 Max Weber, 'Charisma and its Transformations.' In *Max Weber. Economy and Society. An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, edited by Günther Roth and Claus Wittich, 1111–58. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978; Benjamin Zablocki, *Authenticity as a Resource: The Management and Transmission of Charismatic Authentication Mechanisms in Religious Organizations*. Paper prepared for the Seminar in the Varieties of Religious Experience (Rutgers: Rutgers University. Centre for Historical Analysis, 1996), 1–39; Gerdien Jonker, *Eine Wellenlänge zu Gott. Der Verband der islamischen Kulturzentren in Europa* (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2002), 112–13.

A strong, charismatic leadership was required for people not only to rediscover their collective identity and to re-establish their traditions, but also to keep up with the times and to step out of the fold for the sake of progress.[68] This was the difficult double manoeuvre that, next to the Ahmadiyya, almost every religious community in the world was facing. Their solutions to such dilemmas differed widely.

One example may suffice. Only 12 years later, just after Germany lost the First World War, a disillusioned German youth went through the same phases of alienation and regrouping around a charismatic leader. As a witness later remembered, 'a great questioning began, mostly among the young people from all kinds of backgrounds, whether working class, artists' circles, atheists or Christians. It cannot go on like this. After all, what is the meaning of life?… What shall we do?'[69] Out came a group of young people who decided to live the vision of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, to go back to the roots of Christianity, share everything and leave the old ties behind. This was the *Bruderhof* community headed by Eberhard Arnold.[70] By the time the first Ahmadiyya missionaries arrived in Germany, youth groups were already roaming the woods of middle Germany, singing the famous lyrics that survived this movement:

> When we're striding side by side,
> And the songs of old are singing,
> Echoes from the woodlands ringing,
> Every heart in joy's believing,
> With us goes a new, new time.[71]

There is no record that the missionaries met any of the *Bruderhof*, but the German youths they soon attracted very much thought along the same lines. They too dearly wanted to rethink European civilization and create something wholly new.

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68 Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World*, 9–13.

69 Emmy Arnold, *Torches Together. The Story of the Bruderhof Communities. Their Life together, sharing all things in common* (New York: Plough, 1964), 23–4; cf. Benjamin Zablocki, *The Joyful Community. An account of the Bruderhof – a communal movement now in its third generation* (Baltimore: Pelican books, 1973).

70 Marcus Baum, *Eberhard Arnold. Ein Leben im Geist der Bergpredigt* (Schwarzenfeld: Neufeld Verlag, 2013).

71 Arnold, *Torches Together*, 33. German: 'Wann wir schreiten Seit' an Seit,' und die alten Lieder singen, und die Wälder widerklingen, fühlen wir, es muß gelingen, mit uns zieht die neue Zeit!' Emmy Arnold, *Gegen den Strom. Das Werden der Bruderhöfe* (Moers: Brendow, 1983), 32.

Something else connected the crisis in Qadian with the *Bruderhof*, namely the experience that the charisma of the founder is usually more than the system can digest. In the case of Qadian, the founder had been a saint as well as an organizer, inspired but also rational. His rich and sometimes contradictory heritage left enough room for more than one interpretation. In the case of the *Bruderhof*, the original charisma had been a communal experience and, once that group split up, interpretations multiplied. To face the crisis that inevitably followed, Qadian came up with the same answers as the *Bruderhof*. On both sides of the world, the memory was canonized, a routine was set up, and a system of rules took the place of the original inspiration.

If charisma is a means of overcoming alienation and charismatic people are invested with authority based on the shared belief that he or she is an embodiment of the collective self, then that self is indeed in trouble once the charismatic leader has gone.[72] The clamour it caused in Qadian echoed across the globalizing world. Inexorably, it was now the turn of the heirs to respond to the deep changes affecting their world. Seen from that angle, answers formulated in Qadian may serve as a model of how the predicament could possibly be handled.

1.4 Positioning Oneself on the Global Stage

In Qadian, in March 1914, three months before Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated at Sarajevo, Hakim Nur-ud-Din (b. 1841), Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's companion, appointed as chairman in the will, also died. In the six years he spent in office, he had guided the Ahmadiyya (which the British Census called 'a community of sweepers' because it predominantly attracted the poor)[73] and presided over the *Sadr Anjuman*, which was where the community's urban intellectuals gathered. He built a high school and public library, commissioned an English translation of the Koran, stepped up mission activities all over India, and sent a delegation to Egypt and the Middle East to explain and propagate the Ahmadiyya reform proposals. In his biography, he is depicted as moderate and wise. Nonetheless, he was unable to stop the leadership conflict that held the community in its grip.[74]

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72 Benjamin Zablocki, *Alienation and Charisma: A Study of Contemporary American Communes* (New York: The Free Press, 1980), 10–11.

73 *Census of India with Imperial Tables for the Punjab*. Bombay: Government Central Press (1901), Vol. 17/1; cf. Kaushik, *Ahmadiya Community*, pp. 31–5, *passim*.

74 The following account is based on the biographies of Nur-ud-Din, Muhammad Ali and Mahmud Bashir-ud-Din: Ahmad, *A Mighty Striving*, 85–112; Syed Hasanat Ahmad, *Hakeen*

The conflict highlights how difficult it is to venture into something new with the language and tools of tradition and, to face the challenge, the Ahmadiyya community separated into two factions. Kwaja Kamal-ud-Din (b. 1870) and *Mevlana* Muhammad Ali (b. 1874), executive board members of the *Sadr Anjuman* and leading intellectuals of the community, said that only members of this organization were entitled to office; with the Anjuman, they claimed, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had already established a form of democracy. Headed by an elected president and administered by a rotating board, it was therefore the best candidate to take responsibility for, and carry on, the mission. Facing the forces of empire and badly in need of fitting answers to encounter the surge of Western globalization, they considered democratic rule the only way to revive the religion of Islam.[75] 'This is an age of democracy,' even their opponents reported them as saying, 'and true to the spirit of the age…only the Anjuman has the final authority.'[76] In the modern world these intellectuals saw emerging, there could be no place for personified, authoritarian rule. In *From the Ruins of Empire*, Pankaj Mishra reconstructs the biographies of Jamal-al-Din al-Afghani, Liang Qichao and Rabindranath Tagore, as part of the intellectual profile that brought about the Asian renaissance. Groping for fitting responses to the surge of Western globalization, Muhammad Ali and Kamal-ud-Din very much fit that profile. Nonetheless, still needing the authority of the founder, Muhammad Ali claimed that it was Mirza Ghulam Ahmad who had eradicated 'the evil custom of blind obedience to spiritual leaders.'[77] With a view to the mission ahead, he also gradually toned down the differences that had distinguished Ahmadis from other Muslims. In fitting the founder's message to other Indian reform proposals, joining the Indian National Congress and cooperating with Mahatma Gandhi, Muhammad Ali took it as a matter of course that he should follow in the founder's footsteps.

Heading the opposite faction, Mahmud Bashir-ud-Din (b. 1889), Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's eldest son from his second marriage, suggested they intensify the web of personal relationships on which his father had founded the movement and hold onto what he called 'the life-giving days of the Promised

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Noor-ud-Deen. The Way of the Righteous. (Tilford, Surrey: Islam International Publications Limited, 2003), 9–145; Mujeebur Rahman, *Fazl-e Umar: The Life of Hadhrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Bashir-ud-Din Khalifatul Masih II* (Tilford, Surrey: Islam International Publications Limited, 2012), 110–41.

75 Muhammad Ahmad, *A Mighty Striving*, 85.

76 Rahman, *Fazl-e Umar*, 133.

77 Muhammad Ahmad, *A Mighty Striving*, 99.

Messiah.'[78] His start was feeble. When his father died, he was only 19 years' old, a mere boy with little formal training and no access to the Anjuman organization or funds. What he did possess was a close resemblance to his father.[79] Once he claimed his intention to 'breathe life into the community,'[80] rural followers who had felt alienated since the founder's death flocked to him and, in the process, convinced him that he would somehow soon be granted the inspired visions his father had so abundantly possessed. Pitting himself against democratic action, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad made it clear that he expected 'complete obedience.'[81] Against the universality of his opponents he even carved out an extreme form of particularity, declaring in public that 'each and every Muslim in the whole world who has not formally taken the *bai'at* (pledge) of the Promised Messiah is a *kafir* and outside the pale of Islam.'[82] The declaration turned his father's attempts to become accepted by the whole of the Muslim world on its head. Within the Ahmadiyya community it escalated the conflict considerably; throughout the Muslim world, the declaration caused a scandal that soon hardened into an attack that hit both Ahmadiyya factions.

When Nur-ud-Din died, the scales tipped in favour of Mahmud Bashir-ud-Din, so much so that Muhammad Ali and other leading intellectuals were forced to leave Qadian and resettle in Lahore. The story that unfolds in the ensuing chapters follows the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-i-Islam (AAII) in Lahore and the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat (AMJ) in Qadian. The first embraced a rational approach to religion, whereas the second propagated a charismatic, millenarian version. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's many ideas, visions and claims, as well as his plans for the future as laid down in the will, justified both choices.

1.5 The Imprint of Education

In the biographies of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and his followers there is a major stress on education. However, the sort of knowledge these men acquired

78 Rahman, *Fazl-e Umar*, 131. Further below it will still be explained how Mirza Ghulam Ahmad laid claim to this title.

79 When the missionary Walter visited Qadian in 1915, he brought away a picture of Mahmud Bashir-ud-Din on which the latter not only poses as his father but also looks like him; cf. Howard Walter, *The Ahmadiyya Movement* (Calcutta: Association Press, 1918), frontispiece.

80 Rahman, *Fazl-e Umar*, 136.

81 Rahman, *Fazl-e Umar*, 112.

82 Quoted in Muhammad Ahmad, *A Mighty Striving*, 101. The declaration originally appeared in *Tashhiz-ul Azhan* (April 1911).

differed considerably. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and Nur-ud-Din, both of the generation born around 1840, still grew up as members of the traditional Muslim nobility, their titles (*Mirza*, *Mevlana*) witnessing a classical indigenous Punjabi education. As boys, they had private tutors who trained them in Persian, Arabic, the Koran, grammar, logic and medicine. They spoke a classical Urdu and saw no need to learn English.[83] It was with such men in mind that the Budapest scholar Gottlieb Wilhelm Leitner (1840–1898), when publishing the outcome of the education commission appointed by the government of India, observed that 'Persian makes the gentleman and Arabic the scholar.'[84]

Leitner's report also spelled out a serious problem that this government was facing. Given that the Punjab boasted a classical background, a long cultural history, high respect for learning and numerous private endowments,[85] the reorganization of colonial India, especially the reforms to indigenous education, virtually destroyed that infrastructure and, within one generation, the educated Punjabi elite had almost disappeared. This was because, as Leitner never tired of pointing out, the British attempt to purify Urdu caused disaffection and the absence of religious teaching in government schools furthered the children's indifference. Consequently, pupil numbers collapsed, most notably because British administrators only funded English education.[86] Around 1870, the Punjab was in a drastic predicament. The two fathers of the Ahmadiyya movement only escaped that fate because of their privileged upbringing.

Their contemporary, Syed Ahmad Khan, claimed that Muslim Indians lagged behind their Hindu compatriots; in fact, he found them too traditional and narrow-minded. The northern regions had been the last to come under British rule and Khan saw their rejection of Western education as a failure to grasp the opportunities that the new structure of government had made available.[87] To remedy what he called 'Muslim degeneration,' Khan set up the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College in Aligarh, where he pragmatically combined Western

83 Ahmad, *The Great Reformer*, 29–34. S. Ahmad, *Hakeen Noor-ud-Deen*, 9–20.

84 G. W. Leitner, *History of Indigenous Education in the Panjab since Annexation and in 1882* (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, 1882), 62. Ahmadiyya historians preserved Leitner's biography. See: Muslim P. Salamat, *A Miracle at Woking. A History of the Shahjahan Mosque* (Chichester: Phillimore, 2008), 13–19. Nasir Ahmad, *Eid Sermons at the Shah Jehan Mosque Woking – England 1931–1940* (Lahore: Aftab-ud-Din Memorial Trust, 2002), iii–xiii.

85 Leitner, *History of Indigenous Education*, 1–16.

86 Leitner, *History of Indigenous Education*, 22.

87 Belkacem Belmekki, *Sir Sayyid Khan and the Muslim Case in British India* (Berlin: Claus Schwarz, 2010); Christian Troll, *Sayyid Ahmad Khan: A Reinterpretation of Muslim Theology* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1978).

education with Islamic teachings. Still, the majority of Indian Muslims considered him a Westernizer who ignored the Muslim tradition.[88]

In the vacuum, Leitner founded the University of the Punjab with a view to propping up Western education on a much broader basis of classical knowledge and he chose respect for indigenous learning as his key to success. Having mastered some 50 languages himself, Leitner encouraged his students to cover a wide array of subjects and to contribute to their own culture. Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit were on the curriculum and the art of translation was valued highly. Leitner intended to achieve

> not translations but adaptations. …We do not, for instance, require Mill's *Political Economy* translated, but the *subject* of political economy introduced into Urdu in a popular form. …The same holds good with regard to History, Metaphysics and Literature generally, where we want the *subjects* treated in a simple and idiomatic manner, and not the translations of writers *on* these subjects.[89]

It was no coincidence then that the young Muslim intellectuals who in the 1890s flocked to Qadian to assist Mirza Ghulam Ahmad set up his mission were graduates of Punjab University. Kamal-ud-Din and Muhammad Ali were among the first Punjabi Muslims who learned to bridge classical and modern knowledge. They not only studied the Arabic sources and excelled in translation, but also mastered the English subjects of mathematics and law (Muhammad Ali), and law and economics (Kamal-ud-Din). In contrast to the older generation, the titles they bore combined old (*Mevlana*, *Kwaja*) with new (Master of Arts, Bachelor of Arts).[90] In later life, these men came to stand for a modern, non-sectarian form of Islam, one that wanted to do away with uneasy heritages such as killing apostates or compulsory veiling. They used words like 'democracy' and 'individual freedom,' and championed familiarity with literature, music and sports. In the 1890s, however, they still needed Ghulam Ahmad's charisma to reassure them and create a spiritual horizon that could answer to change. During the long quarrel over Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's heritage, the two hesitated

88 Mishra, *From the Ruins of Empire*, 120.

89 Leitner, *History of Indigenous Education*, 50.

90 For Muhammad Ali, see Ahmad, *A Mighty Striving*, 10 ff. For Kamal-ud-Din, see Ahmad, *Eid Sermons*, XIII–XVI; Khizar Humayum Ansari, 'Kamal-ud-Din, Khwaja (1870–1932),' in *Oxford Dictionary of Biographies* (2012), OxfordDictionary.com, last accessed on 5 July 2014.

to cut themselves off from their spiritual foundation, initially offering their pledge to Ahmad's son and only trying to curb his power at a later stage.[91]

Gottlieb Leitner was not a Muslim. Rather, he belonged to that group of German-speaking Europeans who during the nineteenth century put their extensive knowledge to the service of the British Raj.[92] Irrespective of whether they were topographers, archaeologists, ethnographers, Indologists, Persianists or scholars of Islam, German scholars were welcomed in India to build institutions, catalogue texts and discover ancient cultural patterns. As in nineteenth-century Europe, Jewish scholars especially helped shape the field of Islamic studies. In her path-breaking article, Susannah Heschel recently portrayed these scholars as the bearers of a new intellectual movement. She saw them as seeking in Islam a rational religion, as stressing the affinities between Islam and Judaism, and as contemplating this religion as the natural continuation of Judaism.[93] Of Jewish descent himself, it was Leitner who prepared the intellectual network in which the Lahore missionaries moved. He built them a bridge to Europe, sympathizing with their endeavour to go with the times yet hold onto Islam; upon returning to England, he founded the Oriental Institute in Woking where the manuscripts of the classical languages of Islam were to be collected and studied. In Woking he also built a mosque for the benefit of his Muslim students. When, in 1912, on a visit to England, Kamal-ud-Din appropriated that mosque, which was closed down after Leitner's death, he followed a track that his teacher had carefully prepared.[94]

There still remains Ghulam Ahmad's son, nicknamed 'the boy,' whom his biographer lovingly describes as 'that selfsame ne'er-do-well who had not even a matriculation to his credit.'[95] Twenty years younger than his father's assistants, Mahmud Bashir-ud-Din dodged formal education wherever he could. He is known to have had a poor record of school attendance, poor handwriting and a complete disinterest in every subject that did not bear directly on his father.[96] His terrain was knowledge of the Koran and his father's lectures, which he knew by heart. Mahmud Bashir-ud-Din neither followed the example of the intellectual elite nor fitted in with his own generation, the future

91 Rahman, *Fazl-e Umar*, 107–14, 118–19; Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous*, 17–18. See also Chapter 7.

92 Manjapra, *Age of Entanglement*, 22–36.

93 Susannah Heschel, 'German–Jewish Scholarship on Islam as a Tool for de-Orientalizing Judaism,' *New German Critique* 117 (2012) 91–109.

94 The Jewish scholar Aurel Stein (b. 1862 in Budapest) succeeded Gottlieb Leitner as registrar of Punjab University in 1890. Manjapra, *Age of Entanglement*, 29.

95 Rahman, *Fazl-e Umar*, 131.

96 Rahman, *Fazl-e Umar*, 131, 41–92.

missionaries who wrote their dissertations in London or Berlin. What he acquired for his coming task was the love (and indulgence) of his father, from whom he inherited his build and tenaciousness and the trust of the common people that the charismatic relation would somehow continue. With a view to exploiting the novel situation of globalization, Mahmud Bashir-ud-Din staged a roll back. However, the fact that he resisted change, shooed his intellectual opponents away and was crowned with success tells us that the vacuum the founder left behind certainly had different opportunities in store.

1.6 Outlook on the Chapters Ahead

We have reached the end of the phase leading up to the European mission. Addressing adaptation versus withdrawal, the routinization of charisma versus spiritual communication, democratic versus authoritarian rule, the conflicts of accelerating globalization in religion grappled with much-discussed and largely undecided matters, in Qadian as elsewhere in the world. While the storm gathered, future converts in Berlin were still following the historical road of a general German individualism developing around 1900. We shall meet them in Chapter 4. At this point in the narrative, a glimpse of their life courses is invoked to familiarize the reader with their sheer otherness: Hugo Marcus (b. 1880), for instance, son of a German-Jewish industrialist and later president of the Deutsch–Moslemische Gesellschaft (German Muslim Society), shunned his family's expectations that he would follow in his father's footsteps and studied philosophy instead. Exploring his freedom, he wrote treatises on the aesthetics of music and nature, joined the German youth movement and ventured into homosexual circles.[97] Alfred Seiler-Chan (b. 1876) had just joined the Theosophical Society, embarking on a tour around the world religions gathered in Berlin. Emilie Oettinger (b. 1876), who 25 years later would befriend the missionary S. M. Abdullah and help build that same German Muslim Society, still dreamt of a career as a concert singer.[98] Rolf Ehrenfels (b. 1901), Egon Greifelt (b. 1905), Omar Schubert (b. 1905), Lisa Oettinger (b. 1908) and her sister Suse (b. 1910) were still taking their first steps and gathering school experiences. Between that far-away future in which they would enter the German–Indian intellectual encounter and their own childhood, there still lay

97 Private archive Hugo Marcus.

98 Private archive Oettinger Family.

the First World War, with all its grave consequences for the German rejection of European civilization once that war was lost. The war also brought together the lives of Muslims and Germans who until then had largely followed their separate courses. Muslim Indians were involved in that approximation and, when they finally met, Indian missionaries and German converts would be familiar with much the same problematic that modernity imposed on religious belonging.

CHAPTER 2

Preparing for Europe

Whereas in the previous chapter, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's vision was placed in a global context, in this chapter and the next I shall retrace the beginnings of the Ahmadiyya mission in interwar Europe. Viewing their endeavour as part of the quest for modernity, and describing the entanglement between India and Europe that they soon set in motion, we follow the missionaries on their track towards Europe. In London, they addressed the empire as British citizens with a message from the colonial periphery, while as foreigners in Berlin they established a node in the web of Muslim *émigré*s, appealing to a section of the German population that included bourgeois families and lower nobility. Once established in Berlin, they also formed a network among the indigenous Muslim communities in Central and Southeast Europe that were equally searching for modern answers. In Berlin especially, the missionaries tried to make sense of the European approach to modernity, which, in view of evolving German politics, was soon to take a dangerous turn. Caught in the struggle between liberals and nationalists, left- and right-wing sympathizers, Jews and Nazis, the missionaries nonetheless continued to invite a broad segment of German society to voice their very different visions of the future, including the future of religious progress. Invitation and discussion were the Ahmadiyya 'weapons' simultaneously to win over Europeans and to modernize Islam.

To clarify the nature of their engagement, the two chapters ahead address the approach with which the mission in Lahore and the mission in Qadian set out to convince Europeans of Islam. Chapter 2 recounts the arrival of their missionaries in the British capital, whereas Chapter 3 reconstructs their attempts to settle in Berlin. As success and failure line their paths in different proportions, the account will lay bare the different stages of preparation through which Lahore and Qadian progressed. The reconstruction of the mission organizations will offer some impression of the directions in which missionaries searched to communicate with European audiences. Recounting how this aim was achieved, the chapter illuminates on a micro level the interaction between Ahmadiyya religious reform and European realities.

In the contest between the two branches of the Ahmadiyya mission, the Lahore movement was the first to make an appearance in the British capital and conquer the most promising market of continental Europe. Consequently, missionaries from Lahore dominated the interwar period in Europe. By way of preparing for the next stage of this book, their biographies will be summarized

at the end of the chapter. What did these men perceive when they said 'Europe'? What did they mean by religious progress? What signals did they send to which segment of society?

2.1 Mission Approaches

As an outcome of the conflict that gripped the followers of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad on the eve of the Great War, two different mission organizations emerged. That of Lahore voiced the aim of ameliorating the image of Islam through intellectual encounter and of formulating a common quest for religious renewal. That of Qadian offered itself as a real alternative to the perceived backwardness in the Muslim world. Where the former toned down the doctrinal differences to fit in with the Islamic mainstream, the latter stressed those differences to the point of excommunicating all other Muslims. When the missionaries started on their mission, it was along these tracks that they moved.

Lahore: Establishing an Interface

In 1912, Kamal-ud-Din, secretary of the *Sadr Anjuman*, a distinguished figure with a distinguished ancestry and doubtlessly long habituated to his Lahore surroundings, decided to travel to England to 'plead the cause of Islam' and launch 'jihad by persuasion.'[1] This was a one-man action that initially landed him at Hyde Park Speakers' Corner.[2] One year later, we find him established at 158 Fleet Street, where he launched the *Islamic Review and Muslim India*, the monthly paper in which, in the years ahead, the British prejudice against Islam would be analysed and counteracted.[3] At the same time, he took over the Woking mosque. Eventually this would become 'the leading symbol of the British worldwide Muslim community,'[4] visited and supported by Muslim leaders from across the world, and a centre for interfaith meetings in Britain. Looking back in 1949, his friend Arslan Bohdanowicz, himself a Muslim

1 Humayun Khizar Ansari 'Kamal-ud-Din (1870–1932), Islamic scholar and missionary,' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2012, accessed 7 March 2013, www.oxforddnb.com/public/index.html; Arslan Bohdanowicz, 'To the Memory of Al-Hajj Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din (1870–1932). A Pioneer of the Rebirth of Islam,' IR 12, 1949, 5; Nasir Ahmad, *Eid Sermons in the Shah Jenan Mosque Woking – England 1931–1940* (Lahore: Aftab-ud-Din Memorial Trust, 2002), XIII–XVI.

2 Ansari, 'Kamal-ud-Din.'

3 Ahmad, *Eid Sermons*, XIV.

4 Ansari, 'Kamal-ud-Din.'

reformer who in 1930 had helped to set up *Przegląd Islamski*, the Polish equivalent of the *Islamic Revue* in Warsaw,[5] summarized Kamal-ud-Din's initiative thus: 'What the cause of Islam in 1912 had most need of was a direct link between the Muslim world…and Europe.'[6] Kamal-ud-Din forged that link.

From London, the barrister supported the Lahore faction at the time of the split, which incidentally gave him a novel impetus to counteract the bad image Islam had acquired in the West. In this, he was not the only one, but he was one of the earliest. In 1917, Sheikh Shekib Arslan (1869–1946), a Druze leader from the Lebanon, likewise migrated to Europe, moving from Berlin to Lausanne and Geneva, where he participated in Europe's intellectual and public life, simultaneously trying to overturn entrenched European images of Islam and to reform the inflexible Islamic tradition.[7] During the interwar years a whole chorus of Muslim voices from Eastern and Southeastern Europe strengthened their calls for reform.[8] Muslim leaders from Vilnius, Warsaw, Prague, Belgrade, Sarajevo and Tirana in search of religious renewal would later turn up on the pages of the *Moslemische Revue*, the Berlin equivalent of the *Islamic Revue*. Many also joined in 1935 in the first European Muslim Congress presided over by Arslan and pursuing the same double goal – amelioration of the image of Islam and the modernization of the religion itself.[9]

The conversion of Europeans to Islam was one route to this goal. Muhammad Ali, president of the Ahmadiyya mission organization in Lahore, who guided Kamal-ud-Din's path, considered the conversion of Europeans an essential building block. 'It goes without saying that the success of Islam goes hand-in-hand with its propagation. By its propagation in Europe we can convert the enemies of Islam, who have for centuries been spending all their energies to

5 *Przegląd Islamski* was published between 1930 and 1937, with Wassan Girej-Dżabagi as its chief editor (oral communication of Agata S. Nalborczyk); the journal is mentioned in *The Muslim Sunrise* 1931, inside cover, reverse.

6 Bohdanowicz, 'To the Memory,' 6.

7 Mehdi Sajib, *Shaikh Shakib Arslan*. Bonn, 2014 (Dissertation, 2014); Raja Adal, 'Shakib Arslans' Imagining of Europe: The Coloniser, the Inquisitor, the Islamic, the Virtuous, and the Friend,' in *Islam in Interwar Europe*, ed. Nathalie Clayer et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 156–83.

8 Xavier Bougarel, 'Farewell to the Ottoman Legacy? Islamic Reformism and Revivalism in Interwar Bosnia-Herzegovina,' in *Islam in Interwar Europe*, ed. Nathalie Clayer et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 313–44; Nathalie Clayer, 'Behind the Veil. The Reform of Islam in Interwar Albania or the Search for a 'Modern' and 'European' Islam,' in *Islam in Interwar Europe*, ed. Nathalie Clayer et al. (New York: Columbia University Press 2008), 128–56.

9 Adal, 'Shakib Arslan,' 171.

crush the Muslims, into its servants.'[10] However, Ali believed that the dispersal of European ignorance *vis-à-vis* Islam should in the first place be brought about through learning and intellectual exchange.

> The conversion of Europe to Islam is only a secondary question; our prime concern is to establish centres of Islamic learning in Europe, and the conversions will follow as a natural sequel. … Therefore, when we speak of Islamic missions in Europe we only mean the establishment of centres of Islamic learning there.[11]

It was here, in these centres of Islamic learning set up in London, Berlin and Vienna, that an important interface was established between European experiments with modernity and Muslim quests to modernize Islam. The exchange of ideas was not a coincidence but a prime target. When launching the *Moslemische Revue*, the Ahmadiyya missionary Sadr-ud-Din saw a straight line running from the *liberté, égalité and fraternité* of the French Revolution to the potential of Islam, which he sketched out as 'perfect democracy, freedom, total equality and true brotherhood.'[12] The missionary F. K. Khan Durrani enlarged upon the theme, stressing the lines running from Islam to Christianity, and describing Islam as 'progressive and exemplary.'[13] It was Durrani who reformulated the mission task as an intellectual endeavour. Seen through this lens, it was only natural for Europeans to join in the quest for religious progress, this missionary argued.[14]

Their mission approach was met with reciprocal interest. In the 1930s, the theme of yoking Islam to European progress, thereby creating the religious modernity that was to be the breeding ground for a 'New Man,' was taken up by a number of European converts, who argued in favour of Islam from the left and liberal wings and as far to the right as the fascist and National Socialist positions.

Qadian: Conquerors on the Coast

On the occasion of his first visit to London in 1924, where he participated in the Wembley Conference of Living Religions Within the empire, Mahmud Ahmad,

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10 Muhammad Ali, *Ahmadiyya Movement as the West sees it* (Lahore: AAII, 1937), 2.

11 Ali, *Ahmadiyya Movement*, 3.

12 'The Aim of the Journal,' MR 1 (1924) 2.

13 'What is Islam?,' MR 4 (1926) 187–90; quotation on p. 190; the article was reprinted in MR 1929.

14 'How to Become a Muslim,' MR 3 (1924) 151; MR 2 (1926) 92; etc. For the full text see Chapter 3.

spiritual leader of the Qadian mission stated in the *Revue of Religions*, 'I call God to witness…that he has showed me the way to a vision that I stood on the coast of England and that the spiritual conquest of England was to be achieved at my hands. Therefore, if not to-day then to-morrow, England shall answer to the call of the Promised Messiah and shall advance towards Islam.'[15] During that conference, Mahmud Ahmad and his entourage made a very good impression indeed. As the organizer William Loftus Hare remembers, upon their arrival at Victoria station the group drew the attention of the press and the general public. 'The green turbans of a dozen fine looking Indians immediately attracted the attention. … The central figure, in a white turban, was his Holiness, the *Khalifatul Masih* Alhajj Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, whom we very soon learned to love.'[16]

From these promising beginnings rose an atmosphere of high-spirited expectation. When Mahmud Ahmad, by now habitually spoken of as 'His Holiness' and '*Khalifatul Masih*' (successor of the Messiah), addressed the conference in Urdu, Loftus testified to his 'electric and spiritual personality. The sparkling eye, his manly voice, his rhythmic torrent of words, his beautiful gestures and scintillating humour captivated the audience.'[17] The hall rewarded him with 'loud applause and a roar of cheers.'[18]

High-spirited expectation may also account for the fact that the missionary Abdul Rahim Dard (1894–1955), arriving in London with Mahmud Ahmad and staying behind after the latter left, compared his master with no lesser figures than Saint Augustine and William the Conqueror. As Dard saw it, while these two had already 'caused remarkable changes' in Britain, the arrival of the Promised Messiah would soon cause 'a mysterious spiritual change in the minds of the British people.'[19]

British and Qadiani perspectives may have differed here. Nonetheless, the Qadiani group convinced many in London with a charismatic performance that satisfied the general expectation of 'otherness.' Mahmud Ahmad's embodiment of the visionary gave him an exotic flair, and his movement stood for 'distinct new statements of Islam.'[20] To the British clerical mind especially, he therefore represented 'an important sect' in a religion that had always been full of sects and divisions. Within this diversified religious landscape, Mahmud

15 RR 2 (1925) 1.

16 RR 3 (1925) 13.

17 RR 3 (1925) 14.

18 Ibid.

19 RR 1 (1925) 1.

20 Sir Theodor Morrison in RR 3 (1925) 14.

Ahmad's version of the founder's reform proposals was judged to be different from all other Muslim creeds in the empire, and for this he was applauded.

However, not only did Mahmud Ahmad's performance during the conference leave a lasting impression, but also throughout 1925 letters to the editor of the *Revue of Religions* gave testimony of continued British sympathy with the Ahmadiyya cause.[21] What had happened? Two Ahmadis had been stoned to death in Afghanistan, and thirty more were interned in Kabul awaiting execution. Among others writing on this matter, Sir Conan Doyle and Sir Oliver Lodge employed terms such as 'barbarous outrage,' 'atrocity,' and 'tyranny,' which as a matter of course they ascribed to the backwardness of the Muslim religion.[22] The letter writers professed sympathy with the (Qadiani) Ahmadiyya cause, whom they understood to be modernizing Islam against the will of their coreligionists. It was a cause with which the Church of England felt familiarity; as one English observer wrote, 'noble sacrifice on the part of a reformer is never in vain.'[23] From the British perspective, the killing once more confirmed the necessity of the British civilizing mission. From the perspective of the Ahmadiyya organization in Qadian, however, which had been at odds with mainstream Islam ever since their leader declared non-Ahmadi Muslims *kafir* and outside the pale of Islam, the Kabul killings were proof of their status as martyrs for the cause of Islam.[24] From this point on, Qadian adopted a language in which 'our martyrs' was central,[25] and in the course of the twentieth century, martyrdom would become a pillar on which this organization rested.

From the above it should have become clear how the two mission organizations forged their entry into London. Lahore promoted networking within the empire and among reform-minded Muslims in and out Europe with a view to renewing global Islam. The renewal of the image of Islam in Europe constituted another aspect of its strategy. For this it enlisted the help of the Europeans, with whom it would soon engage in intellectual exchange.

Qadian, for its part, drew on the sympathy of the British public. Stressing difference at several levels – cultural difference, religious difference and difference from other Muslims – it proceeded to employ a terminology of martyrdom to bridge the cultural gap. In his presentation at the Conference of Religions, Mahmud Ahmad communicated a mixture of the civilized and the

21 The *Revue of Religions* is still the mouthpiece of the Qadian Movement. It started in 1902 in Qadian and was transferred to London in 1925.

22 RR 2–6 (1925), letters to the editor.

23 RR 4 (1925) 3.

24 RR 3 (1925) 5; 5 (1925) 5.

25 RR 5 (1925) 5f.

exotic, the victim and the martyr, which promptly aroused British sympathy. Emphasizing his radical difference from mainstream Islam, he and his missionaries could thus offer themselves as an alternative to the perceived backwardness of the Muslim masses. The dramatic death of two Ahmadis in Afghanistan brought them sympathy from all layers of British society. The atrocity convinced both British and Qadianis that they were not only following the right path but also that their paths could join – the British on their civilizing mission and the Qadianis as martyrs for the cause of Islam. An outcome of the initial conflict over leadership, the different manner in which the two Ahmadiyya movements entered Great Britain set the terms for very different interactions, supported by their respective mission organizations.

2.2 Mission Structures

Of the many Muslim reform movements, the Ahmadiyya was the only one to organize its mission on a model copied from the Christian missionary societies in British India.[26] As I recount in the next chapter, other Muslim organizations in Europe, notably the *Islamische Gemeinde Berlin* (Muslim Community of Berlin), also attempted to address Europeans but, as the protagonists were neither trained nor financially supported by a mission organization, they were unable to consolidate the responses. In this section, I show how central that organizational model was to consolidating the success of the Ahmadiyya mission. Although both Ahmadiyya factions copied Christian mission structures, the framework within which missionaries from Lahore and Qadian thought and moved still differed considerably. Enquiring into who paid for their travel and set in train a fund-raising machine to finance the costly enterprise of erecting mosques, publishing journals and spreading literature in Europe, we encounter a basic difference.

Before going into detail, let me just explain that, taking a rational view, the Lahore faction replaced the intimate web of relations on which the movement had rested with the impersonal structures of a transnational institution. It thereby produced its own version of the phenomenon for which Max Weber

26 The founding fathers of the Ahmadiyya reform movement were most familiar with the Christian mission stations in the Punjab. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad regularly visited the missionaries in Sialkot (Yohanan Friedman, *Prophecy Continuous. Aspects of Ahmadi Religious Thought and Its Medieval Background* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), 26); Kamal-ud-Din almost became a Christian (Ansari, 'Kamal-ud-Din').

coined the phrase, 'the routinization of charisma.'[27] The founder's son Mahmud Ahmad, by contrast, continued to believe in personified, emotional bonds and saw his own role as answering 'the dire need of the community…to rouse it, to charge it with electricity, to shake it into life, to make it pitch its aims high.'[28] Where Lahore gathered the intellectuals and stressed rationality and the democratic vote, Qadian attracted the poor, stressing the intimacy of personal relationships. These were the conditions from which mission structures for Europe were to emerge.

Qadian: A Matter of Obedience

When missionary Howard Walter visited Qadian in 1916, he found a town almost breathless with activity.[29] All signs pointed in the direction of upward mobility, the centre of activity being an English high school with about four hundred pupils, to which new buildings had recently been added. The school already had an affiliation with Punjab University, for 21 of its students had just passed the entrance examination. The education of women was underway.[30] A Koran translation in English in 31 instalments was being prepared, with the first instalment already published. Apart from the *Review of Religions*, the town produced and consumed a large range of vernacular dailies, weeklies and quarterlies, vouching for the rapid spread of literacy. Also, a society for the advancement of Islam (*Anjuman Taraqqi-i-Islam*)[31] had been newly founded, which supported 12 paid missionaries in different parts of India, Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and Mauritius.[32] Although plans were underway to send out more missionaries to other parts of the world, for the moment, untrained villagers are 'sent on preaching tours whenever the occasions arise.'[33]

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27 See Introduction.

28 Mujeebur Rahman, *Fazl-e Umar. The Life of Hadhrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad Khalifatul II* (UK: Islam International Publications, 2012), 132.

29 Howard Walter, *The Ahmadiyya Movement* (Calcutta: Association Press, 1918), 117–18, *passim*.

30 Avril A. Powell, '"Duties of Ahmadi Women": Educational Processes in the Early Stages of the Ahmadiyya Movement,' in *Gurus and their Followers. New Religious Movements in Colonial India*, ed. Antony Copley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 128–59.

31 The name clearly invokes that of the *Anjuman Taraqqi-i Urdu*, 'the organization working for the promotion and dissemination of Urdu language and culture.' Set up by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan in 1886 in Aligarh, its objective was to encourage Indian Muslims to adopt modern education and establish schools.

32 The *Revue of Religions* of 1915 and 1916, keeping track of the missionary activities, mentions a second training college in Ceylon. Cf. Friedmann, *Prophecy*, 269–76.

33 Walter, *The Ahmadiyya Movement*, 118.

At this stage, Walter had not yet heard about Qadian plans to carry out its own mission in London, although some Qadianis were already pursuing their studies there. At least we know the names of Mufti Muhammad Sadiq, Mubarik Ali, and Chaudhary Fateh Muhammad Sial, in all probability the sons of wealthy landowners who had joined the Qadian movement and who, like all rich landowners in colonial India, sent their sons to London to complete their studies. After having finished his dissertation, Muhammad Sadiq would carry out his mission in Chicago, while Mubarik Ali would later surface in Berlin.[34] It is thanks to Sadiq's mission journal, the *Muslim Sunrise*, appearing in Chicago from 1921 onwards, that we catch a glimpse of Qadiani mission activity in London before the arrival of Mahmud Ahmad.

Under the heading 'Ahmadiyya Muslim News Abroad,' this journal enthusiastically kept track of the progress the mission was making. By 1921, its branches had spread 'all over India, Burma, Ceylon, China, Australia, Mesopotamia, Persia, Arabia, Egypt, East Africa, Mauritius, West Africa, England and the United States.'[35] 'England' stood for the mission post at 63 Melrose Road in the London suburb of Southfield. Photos in the *Revue of Religions* reveal a detached house with a garden, which probably served the students as a boarding house while offering a separate prayer room.[36] While in London, Mahmud Ahmad laid the foundation stone for the Fazl mosque built on the premises of this mission post, which opened its doors in 1926.[37] Before that the students had to make do. In 1921, the journal observes, 'our missionaries in London make good progress in securing new converts and spreading the truth in lectures in their mosque, city branch and parks.'[38] In 1922, it states, 'the celebration of the *Eid-ul-Adha* in our London mosque was a great success. Photos and accounts have been published in the leading London papers. New converts are joining our faith.'[39] What we observe here are the small beginnings of a religious organization that, after the Second World War, would acquire a truly global reach. In 1916, though, Qadian was still in need of everything, but most of all organizational structures and educated members of the elite to fill its vacant posts. Resettling the *Sadr Anjuman* in

34 Their photographs were printed in *Khilafat Centenary. Ahmadiyya Muslim Mosques around the World. A Pictorial Presentation* (Silver Spring: USA, 2008), 197, 252, 281.

35 MS 7 (1921) inside cover.

36 RR 2 (1925) 1 carries a photograph of the back of the house, where an Eid congregation has gathered in the garden.

37 *Khilafat Centenary*, 257.

38 MS 7 (1921) 20.

39 Letter of Mubarik Ali in MS 1 (1922) 67.

Lahore had created a brain drain for the Qadiani movement from which, when Walter visited, it was only just starting to recover.

It takes time to educate young people and organize institutional structures, including the vocational training of missionaries and financing their work. In Qadian, it took a generation before a new mission scheme, the *Tehrik-e-Jadid*, could be introduced. In 1934, harking back to that section in Ghulam Ahmad's will in which the founder had urged his followers to invest their money in the cemetery and spend these funds on the spread of Islam, Mahmud Ahmad suggested implementing a forerunner to that scheme. The time, he is cited to have said, was 'not yet ripe for the dominance of Islam.'[40] Indeed, as recounted in Chapter 3, his community was neither making progress in Europe, nor was it particularly wealthy. The *Tehrik-e-Jadid* (New Scheme) made use of every intricate opportunity that an upwardly mobile family could possibly exploit. Among other things, its adherents had to hand over a sizeable part of their income and property (one-fifth); devote their seasonal vacations to the service of Islam; offer their children 'for life-long *waqf*' (service); include pensioners in that service; continue donations after the death of their parents, and build houses in Qadian. 'Not a single member of the Jamaat should absent himself' this leader urged his community.[41]

Some 5000 members answered Mahmud Ahmad's summons. Their names were listed in a register and they were henceforth called *Mujahid* (holy warriors). We cannot now estimate how much money was amassed in this way, but in the decades that followed the New Scheme was regularly subjected to creative enlargement. As late as 2004, Ahmadiyya communities across the world were summoned to enlist 50 per cent of their members to buy a plot in the Qadian cemetery and, in 2006, all those holding office in the Ahmadiyya organization were expected to spend between one-tenth and one-thirteenth of their monthly income on the scheme.[42]

The *Tehrik-e-Jadid* is the pride of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, the worldwide organization that grew from its roots, just as it is the hate object of all those who left the community for fear of suffocation. It is described, extolled, revered and reviled in hundreds of entries on the Internet. It bears witness to a great willingness to make sacrifices for the cause of Islam. It also reveals that the money for the mission had to be sacrificed from small incomes.

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40 Quotation from 'Tehrik-e-Jadid,' in Ahmadiyya Youth Association: YouTube, 2011, accessed 8 March 2014, www.Tehrik-e-Jadid, Youtube.com.

41 'Tehrik-e-Jadid.'

42 'Tehrik-e-Jadid,' Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya UK, accessed 8 March 2014, www.khuddam.org.

Browsing through those entries, it becomes abundantly clear that, for three successive generations, members were asked, pleaded with, morally pressured, maybe even cajoled (as ex-Ahmadis do not tire to stress), into emptying their pockets for the great cause.

Above all, the *Tehrik-e-Jadid* is the scheme of a charismatic leader demanding complete obedience from his followers the moment he knew they were behind him. Even if those words had once been uttered in the heat of an emotional argument, this had been Mahmud Ahmad's proposal for religious leadership in a globalizing world. It is what his followers expected of him. For the rest of his life, until 1965, he kept true to his word, building a religious empire that in the end would reverse the Lahore lead.

Lahore: The Democratic Principle

When intellectual elites were forced to leave Qadian in 1914, Muhammad Ali took the *Sadr Anjuman*, of whom he was the president, with him.[43] Thus, when the Ahmadi *émigrés* re-evaluated their position with a view to the mission ahead, they started from a ready and functioning organization. Within three years, the mission organization became well established in its new surroundings. Apart from supporting the Woking mission and the completion of the translation of the Koran into English, which Muhammad Ali had started 13 years before, the Anjuman constructed a series of buildings to relocate it and opened a Muslim high school and a centre for training missionaries, the *Ishaat-i-Islam*. Branches were established in different towns and cities, and a new community was constituted, adopting the name by which it is still known, Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-i-Islam (AAII). A steady flow of donations accompanied these initiatives. Muhammad Ali's biographer mentions the vague sum of 'hundreds and thousands of rupees.'[44]

Before he left for London, Kamal-ud-Din had already toured British India to lecture on Muslim renewal, the response to which had been overwhelming.[45] It was he who started to tone down the differences within the Ahmadiyya movement in favour of a global, modernized Islam. Once the Woking mosque was secured, he began publishing the *Islamic Review* at his own expense, and,

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43 Yakub Baig, Basharat Ahmad, Muhammad Shafi, and Shaikh Ramatullah served the organization in different functions. Muhammad Ahmad, *A Mighty Striving. Life and Work of Mauvlana Muhammad Ali.* (Ohio: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at-i-Islam Lahore, 2004), 141–64.

44 Ahmad, *A Mighty Striving*, 155.

45 Ansari, 'Kamal-ud-Din.'

together with Lord Headley, a prominent British convert, founded the Muslim Society of Great Britain.[46]

From these two centres in the empire, Lahore and Woking, the AAIIL networked among reform-minded Muslims and Europeans. For Islam to prosper in the West they were convinced it had first to shed its alien and exotic image.[47] As a consequence, their publications toned down not only the difference between Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's reform and mainstream Islam, but also the differences between Islam and Christianity. Stressing freedom of religion and individual conscience, condemning the persecution of apostasy, seeking to cooperate with the political forces trying to find a peaceful solution to India's independence and developing non-violent tools towards that aim, Kamal-ud-Din and Muhammad Ali became well known public figures. The following example throws light on the breadth of that cooperation, just as it illuminates the social and political circles in which Ahmadis from Lahore moved.

While still a student at Aligarh University, Zakir Husain, later president of India, invited Muhammad Ali (not the president of the Lahore movement but of the Khalifat movement) and Mahatma Gandhi to come to Aligarh and together address the students on non-violent resistance.[48] Both accepted the invitation but the event was a disaster. Those were the days when students preferred independence through immediate action or even armed revolution and the two speakers were received with catcalls and derisive laughter. Disappointing as the attempt at discussing non-violence had been, and maybe because of that experience, it was the beginning of a network and the start of a common project, namely Muslim–Hindu cooperation under the leadership of Gandhi and the founding of the Muslim National University of India (Jamia Millia Islamia). As a matter of course, the leaders of the Lahore movement engaged in the network and the missionary Sadr-ud-Din was appointed senator at the university.[49]

While a student at Berlin University, Zakir Husain in his turn supported the Ahmadiyya mission from Lahore. He wrote for the mission journal, recited during the religious festivals,[50] translated Gandhi into German,[51] and supported

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.

48 Muhammad Mujeeb, *Dr Zakir Husain* (New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1972), 22–6.

49 Sadr-ud-Din, 'Der 9. Oktober 1924.' MR 1–3 (1924) 114–15.

50 Zakir Husain, 'Die Zakat Steuer.' MR 1–2 (1924) 73–9.

51 Zakir Husain and Alfred Ehrenreich, *Die Botschaft des Mahatma Gandhi.* Berlin: Volkserzieher-Verlag, 1924. See Chapter 6 for Gandhi and other literature on non-violent resistance in the mosque library.

Sadr-ud-Din when the latter was attacked on account of his pro-British attitude.[52] The two incidents, one in Aligarh in 1920, the other in Berlin in 1924, offer a glimpse of the quickly expanding politics of non-violence to resist colonial rule. For the European missionaries, their engagement offered the rationale to ban revolutionary politics from their mosque and to engage actively in European peace conferences. In Chapter 6, where the mosque library will be discussed, we shall see that this course left considerable traces in the collection.

As in Qadian, raising funds was central to the organization's success. But unlike the AMJ, the Lahore mission was already fully professionalized. In the Annual Report of 1929, this is described in the following way. 'The propagation of Islam is the real work of the Anjuman. … To have a proper view of it, it may be at once subdivided under two headings: (1) Propagation through Missionaries, and (2) Propagation through literature.'[53] To realize these aims, two offices managed the proceedings: (a) the Secretary's Office, headed by a general secretary who, together with his assistants, clerks and cashier, were responsible for correspondence, the publishing and printing of Islamic literature and its dissemination, the collection of books for the library and, in general, the control of the mission both in British India and abroad,[54] and (b) the Financial Secretary's Office including the Collection of Funds Office. Fundraising was a professional business and managed as transparently as possible.

The annual reports provide an important source of information on the fund-raising system.[55] By nature, these are true progress reports: they optimistically present the mission state of affairs in its best aspect, thanking the donors for their generosity, while simultaneously indicating where money might still be needed. Lecture tours through India, the Dutch Indies and the Far East served to reach out to sympathetic Muslim audiences; the names, addresses and professions of the donors were published in the mission journals together with the amount of money spent.[56] Mission-building in the West undoubtedly

52 Sadr-ud-Din, 'Der 9. Oktober,' 115. See Chapter 4.

53 Sheikh Muhammad Din Jan, ed., *Annual Report for the Year 1928–29 of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman-i-isha'at-Islam* (Lahore: AAII, 1929), 8.

54 Sheikh Muhammad *Annual Report* (1928–1929), 1–5.

55 Starting 1916, reports were written in Urdu (65 pp.) and summarized in English (15 pp.). Of these, only the 1928–1938 reports survived. Page numbers refer to the English summaries, accessed 8 March 2014, http://aaiil.org/urdu/books/others/aaiil/annualreports/.

56 In 1926, *The Light* mentions Yakub Baig on tour through Bengal, where he enlisted 23 sponsors who spent 683, 50 US dollars (16 July, p. 6). In Hong Kong, Peer Shamsuddin could enlist 186 donors with a net result of 459,95 US dollars (16 Dec., p. 2). The money was raised with a view to the Berlin Mosque.

fired the Islamic imagination and encouraged Muslims across the globe to spend from one rupee to, sometimes, extraordinary amounts of money.[57]

The annual reports convinced members of the Ahmadiyya community that they needed to spend substantial parts of their monthly incomes on a mission that was often abroad and that the donors would never see. One might, therefore, expect the readers to peruse the pages for evidence that the furtherance of Islam in the West was really underway. Indeed, the reports accurately documented funds raised, money spent, number of converts made and scope of media attention achieved. Subjects of equal interest were the production of Islamic literature and its dissemination, the publication of mission journals, and the progress of Koranic translations. Examining a decade's worth of reports, one learns that Islamic literature was translated into 13 Indian and 14 European languages. For Europe, the Lahore printing presses produced English, Dutch, German, Albanian, Hungarian, Italian and French literature.[58] The mother organization also financed four mission journals, two in English (*The Light*, *Muslim Revival*), one in German (*Moslemische Revue*) and one in Urdu (*Paigham-i-Sulh*).[59] English, German and Dutch translations of the Koran were in progress. The German one was undertaken as early as 1924 but could not appear before summer 1939, just before the Second World War halted the German mission.[60]

A large part of the funds was spent on building and maintaining mission posts, and on educating missionaries and sending them abroad. From the Lahore perspective, one that did not differ substantially from any of the Christian missions, this was also the more uncontrollable part of the mission work.[61] Financial planning, under pressure to present donors with success stories, sometimes proved to be too optimistic. Far from their mother organization, missionaries faced problems entangled in local factors that were difficult to mediate. What seemed like a sound enterprise from a central perspective could appear to be a disaster locally.

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57 In the Punjab, donations ranged from one to 5000 rupees, to which the wives of wealthy Ahmadiyya members often gave up their jewellery, cf. Nasir Ahmad, *A Brief History of the Berlin Mosque and Mission* (*1922–1988*) (Lahore: the AAIIL, 2006), 18–20. In Hong Kong, audiences spent between one and hundred US dollars (s. FN 59). In Berlin, the Muslim ambassadors raised 1,500 pounds sterling, to which the foreign office added another 6000 Reichsmarks, AA/1 (28 December 1927).

58 *Annual Report* (1935–1936), 4.

59 *Annual Report* (1933–1934), 2. *Paigham-i-Sulh* = Message of Peace.

60 *Annual Report* (1928–1929), 10–11. 'The AAII Tract Series of 1936,' p. 3 mentions their completion.

61 Tyrell, 'Weltgesellschaft,' 13–137.

Next to fund raising, the reports kept minute track of geographical spread. In 1929 and 1930, the mission stations at Woking and Berlin are presented as ready and functioning. Both reports also mention promising contacts in Albania and the Netherlands.[62] The 1932 report adds a mission post in Vienna.[63] The 1933 report recounts progress in Woking, Berlin and Vienna, adding that a Spanish mission was now in the making, a fund of 3000 rupees already collected. There is also mention of promising contacts in Poland.[64]

The 1935 report offers more news from Woking, Vienna and Berlin, but the Spanish mission was still in a preparatory phase. Although a fund of 75,000 rupees was made available, the civil war left Lahore no opportunity to begin its work. Albania and Poland are not mentioned, neither is the Netherlands. The 1936 report basically repeats this pattern, with the addition that the mission in Albania would be arranged 'as soon as the Albanian students now being prepared as missionaries by the Anjuman are ready for work.'[65] The report also recounts that the Berlin missionary Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had travelled to Vienna, Prague, Zagreb, Tuzla and Sarajevo with a view to establishing a network between Berlin and these cities.

Notwithstanding the energy with which the Lahore mission organization prepared for further centres, the mission on the continent did not extend beyond Vienna and Berlin. Albania was the exception. Situated on the threshold between Asia and Europe, Lahore did not consider Albania a mission target but treated this country almost as a future branch. In 1932, and again in 1935, absolves from the Tirana *madrasah* were offered scholarships to finish their studies in the Lahore mission school. Nevertheless, the actual influence of the Anjuman remained very modest.[66]

In Spain, Poland and the Netherlands, countries that year after year are mentioned in the reports, the mission did not succeed. Between the civil war and the Second World War Spain remained inaccessible. As for the Netherlands, in 1939, on the eve of the German invasion, the missionary Wali Beg, who had been active in the Dutch Indies since 1924, set up a mission post in The Hague.

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62 Albania: *Annual Report* (1928–1929), 13; (1929–1930), 21; the Netherlands: *Annual Report* (1928–1929), 10; (1929–1930), 21.

63 *Annual Report* (1931–1932), 9–10.

64 *Annual Report* (1932–1933), 14.

65 Sheikh Muhammad Din Jan, 'Our Activities,' *The AAII Tract Series* (1939–1940), 6.

66 Nathalie Clayer, 'The Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement and the Reform of Albanian Islam in the Interwar Period,' in *From Arabia to the Himalayas. Crossing Paths in honour of Marc Gaborieau*, ed. Véronique Bouillier et al. (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 2004), 1–12.

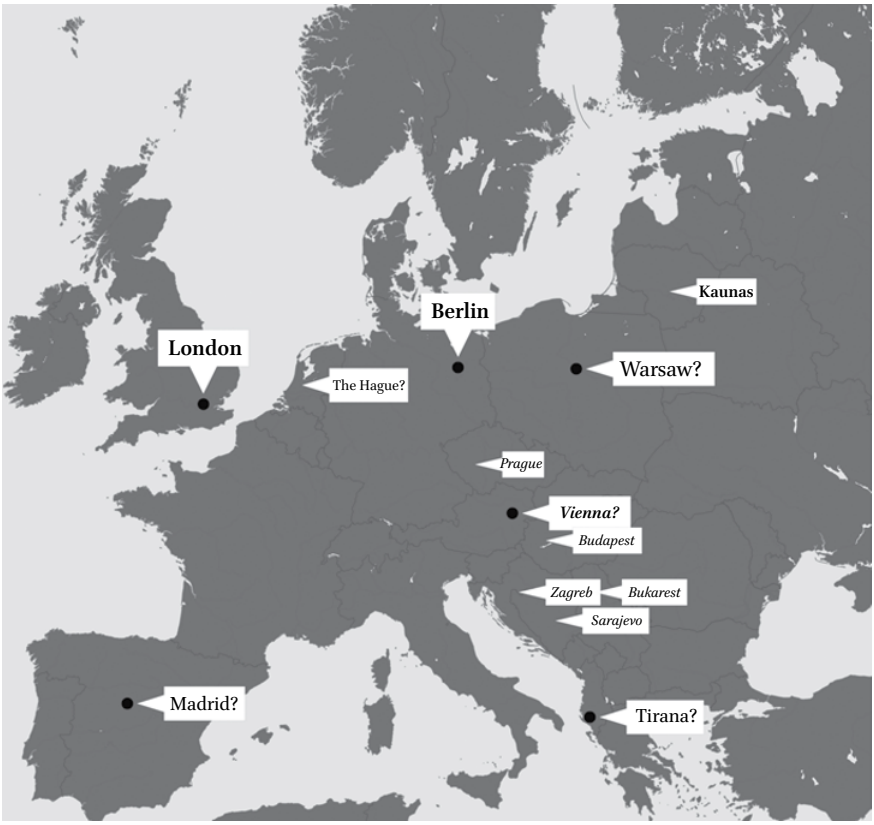

FIGURE 2 *Map of Europe with achieved and attempted mission posts* (c. *1939*)
© GJ 2014

It was active for only a few months. Between 1940 and 1945, Wali Beg was imprisoned in Scheveningen, from which he returned a broken man.[67]

Figure 2 maps the many attempts the Ahmadiyya mother organization in Lahore undertook to set foot in interwar Europe. By 1939, it could call two mosques and mission posts its own – one near London (Woking) and one in Berlin. Although Tirana and Vienna both saw a promising start in the 1930s, the

67 O. S. M. A. Shukrula, *De Ahmadiyya in Nederland. Een interpretatie van de belijders van Surinaamse/hindustaanse moslims inzake De Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam ontstaan in 1880 te Kadiyan* (*India*) *door Hazrat Mirza Gulam Ahmad* (Amsterdam: UvA, 2000), 23–39; Umar Ryad, 'Te gast in den Haag – discussies moskeebouw in Nederland vóór de Tweede Wereldoorlog.' *Tijdschrift voor Religie, Recht en Beleid:* 53–65.

war soon cut off whatever had been achieved. The attempted mission posts in Warsaw, The Hague and Madrid never materialized. What the missionaries did achieve was an intellectual network across the indigenous Muslim communities in Central and Southeast Europe, for which the *Moslemische Revue* served as a communication tool. Between the vision of the founder and the experience on the ground, this was the reality of doing mission work in Europe.

Financial Challenges

The financing of the Berlin mosque, the so-called Wilmersdorfer mosque, offers a good example of the kind of practical difficulties with which the mission organization had to contend. In 1923, Muhammad Ali still calculated the cost to be in the region of 40,000 rupees, or 20,000 *German Reichsmarks* (GR). Owing to the crisis facing the GR, or so he argued, houses and plots in Berlin could be purchased at moderate prices.[68]

What followed was a veritable fund-raising marathon throughout British India and during 1924 delegates visited Ahmadiyya communities in various parts of the country. People spent lavishly but in 1925 the organization was compelled to ask for another 40,000 rupees: snow and bad weather had delayed the work; local prices were on the rise. Once again, the community gave its support.[69] But once the shell of the mosque was completed, annual subscriptions dwindled to a mere 4000 rupees.[70]

A shell is not a functioning mosque. The Berlin mosque could not yet house the yearly celebrations, let alone the Friday prayers. The building was left unfinished and in need of practically all facilities. Whereas the mother organization considered the first part of the mission accomplished and called back the founding missionary, locally the situation was estimated to be an emergency. In July 1927, Muslim ambassadors in Berlin wrote a letter to the German foreign ministry, requesting assistance to finance the mosque's completion.[71] Simultaneously, they placed a call in *El-Islah* to raise £1500 for the minarets, the garden and a fence around the plot.[72] Although the foreign office assisted by raising GR 6000,[73] the missionary responsible, F. K. Khan Durrani, had already

68 Muhammad Ali, 'Dear Brother.' *The Light*: 61.

69 Ahmad, *Die Berliner Moschee*, 22.

70 Annual Report, 1927–28, 7.

71 AA/1 (25 July 1927).

72 VR/GIG, 7.

73 AA/1 (28 December 1927).

lost confidence and taken out a loan of GR 16,000 on the mosque, doubtless to meet the most pressing expenses.[74]

The annual report of 1928/9 does not mention this, but the seizure seems to have seriously jeopardized the mission. The *Moslemische Revue*, appearing in January 1929 after a hiatus of one and a half years, felt compelled to give an explanation to its Berlin readers, many of whom had become Muslims under the auspices of Sadr-ud-Din. From this we learn that during much of 1927 and 1928 both the quarterly and the monthly lectures had to be discontinued for lack of money. When in September 1928 Muhammad Ali, the famous leader of the Khalifat movement, paid a visit to the mission mosque in Berlin-Wilmersdorf, his visit was played down, apparently because prayer mats were still missing. But the editors confess that during the crisis even the membership lists were lost.[75] Much later, when the Berlin mission post had become the centre of a promising European mission network, President Muhammad Ali brought the total cost of the Berlin mosque up to 300,000 rupees, with an upkeep of 15,000 rupees a year.[76] Contrary to the original calculation, it cost the mother organization almost fifteen times more than had been planned for.

The 1928 report, however, played down the crisis. It simply stated that Khan Durrani was dismissed for disobedience. However, the text continues, the Berlin mission also received a new missionary, S. M. Abdullah, and 'work continued as usual.' Money was still required for 'want of a carpet for the mosque floor, for which some donors [have] already spent generously. But the matter still needs a helping hand.'[77] The low-key formulations betray some of the strain under which the mission organization laboured in its attempt to turn the European enterprise into the success it had promised.

The local mission posts in the European communities buzzed with ideas on whatever experiment with religious modernity Europe had to offer; yet, the reports nevertheless remain silent on this topic. President Muhammad Ali regularly toured the European mission field, stressing the progressive potential of Islam and supporting his missionaries,[78] but the reports sidestep the topic. Although it is difficult from our perspective to gain a clear picture, it seems that the leaders in Lahore thought it best not to overload their Indian communities with too many novel ideas.

74 Ahmad, *Die Berliner Moschee*, 29.

75 MR 1 (1929) 1.

76 Ali, *The Ahmadiyya Movement*, 7.

77 All references in *Annual Report 1928–1929*, 11.

78 See for instance MR 2 (1929) 45–6.

2.3 From Lahore to Berlin: Four Missionaries

The Ahmadiyya Lahore mission thrived not only during the so-called golden years but also after the Nazi Party conquered the streets and parliament. With the backing of a global Muslim leadership, which included Muslim ambassadors and German diplomats, between 1924 and 1939 their mosque managed to attract a considerable number of German and Muslim intellectuals. With the help of lectures, museum outings, Islamic celebrations, informal afternoon teas, Friday sermons and publications in the *Moslemische Revue*, the organizers encouraged an open-minded search for religious modernity. The agenda combined European and Islamic visions and permitted a broad political spectrum of left-wing, liberal and fascist approaches.

Before turning to the stage on which the missionaries appeared in Berlin, a short biography of each of them may set the scene. What strategies did they develop to pursue the double aim of ameliorating the image of Islam and simultaneously reforming that religion in reality? What did they say, what did they do to attract the attention of the European public? The liberal democrats who initially received them after 1930 gave way to the authoritarian, persecutory Nazi regime. What politics did the missionaries adopt to cope with this development?

Sadr-ud-Din (1881–1981)

The man who was sent ahead to establish a mission station in Berlin and to attract the attention of the German public, Sadr-ud-Din, set about making Islam a major presence on the public stage.[79] To this end, he presented in his texts a grand vision of what Islam is or should be about. When launching the *Moslemische Revue*, he presented himself linking arms with German converts, while the subtitle proclaimed, 'East and West united in Islam.' This represents his programme in a nutshell. Between April 1924, when the first issue appeared, and May 1926, when he left Berlin again, Sadr-ud-Din unfolded his vision in four steps. Taking the ideals of the French Revolution as a point of departure, he claimed that the time was ripe for one universal religion to unite the world ('the International Religion'). Since the founders of Judaism, Christianity and Islam were brothers, he argued, it was only logical that the worldwide faith should be Islam ('Moses, Jesus and Muhammad are brothers'). At this moment,

79 Apart from an obituary in *The Light* (December 1981) 47–50, and a short entry in Nasir Ahmad, *Eid Sermons at the Shah Jehan Mosque Woking – England 1931–1940* (Lahore: Aftab-ud-Din Memorial Benevolent Trust, 2002), XVI–XVII, there is not much information on this missionary.

he stressed, what humanity really needed was a common bond that would enable mankind to have the same rights, the same duties and the same options ('what did Islam bring to humanity?'). Finally, addressing Europeans directly, he argued that, whereas Europe was still pursuing the petty, small-minded aim of nationalism, Islam offered a model of universal mankind that accommodated brotherhood, justice, equality and democracy ('the World Mission of Islam').[80]

Against the many purely salvationist promises of his day, Sadr-ud-Din undertook to reunite religion and politics on a worldwide scale, thereby asserting Islam's claim to be part of modernity. To counter the strivings of Christian missionaries for religious world dominance, he proposed placing all the global religions under one 'world government.' He drops the word without further explanation, but surely must have had in mind some kind of government in which the religious and the political blended. Against European nationalism he urged Europeans to embrace a universal Islam – again a blending of the political and religious levels. His promise of equality in the framework of Islam served as an alternative to world communism. As with all the contemporary salvationist missions, the Islam he envisaged was yet to be created. He invited all Europeans to join in this venture.

Fazlul Karim Khan Durrani (1894–1946)

After Sadr-ud-Din left, Fazlul Karim Khan Durrani took his place. Not much is known about this missionary, but his articles show him to have been a clear-sighted man with outspoken opinions.[81] Cautiously moving away from Sadr-ud-Din's high ideals, Khan Durrani undertook to adhere to the European reality, indicating what steps the mission would need to take to make the necessary connections. His argument targeted intellectual adaptation. How did he do that?

Writing for an Indian public, Khan Durrani first cleared away two common mistakes. One was the image his readers had of Europe: 'We in the East always describe Europe as the continent destined to dominate other continents. But there is no such thing as one united Europe. Instead, there are different races

80 MR 1 (1924) 1–2, 3–11, 14–22; MR 1 (1925) 2–11; 2 (1925) 2–17.

81 'F. K. Khan Durrani: A Political Genius,' accessed 24 July 2014, www.durranidreams.com. Among others, the website offers his pedigree, tracing this missionary to an Afghan landowner family from Kandahar. See also: Nasir Ahmad, 'Mr Fazlul Karim Durrani (Bio-Sketch),' unpublished manuscript (2014).

and nations.'[82] The other mistake was the common image of Christianity: 'It is true, European nations are firmly anchored in Christianity. But likewise they are convinced that the Gospel is not authentic and churches are irrational. In its stead, they clothe Christianity in delicate examples and high ideals, an approach in which Germany is leading.'[83] From this Khan Durrani concluded that the Muslim mission in Europe needed an intellectual approach, in which missionaries should try to learn from their opposites: 'German research and knowledge transfer will soon be leading in the world. To meet this challenge, we will have to familiarize ourselves with German thought and German perspectives.'[84]

In this external communication about Europe, Khan Durrani set the switches for the mission to conduct an intellectual conversation. What Sadr-ud-Din had performed in an implicit way, namely borrowing from and adapting to the salvation theories of his age in order to place Islam on the modern map, he handled explicitly. Rather than deal in grand visions, however, he focused on implementation, suggesting that his co-workers study and adapt to European intellectual approaches to religion. When regarded in terms of the fundamental necessity to erect costly mosques and the high level of fund raising that needed, it was also a very daring approach, one that not every sponsor appreciated.

Khan Durrani had little time to put his ideas into practice. The 1926 volume of the *Moslemische Revue* carries the (often reprinted) article in which he explains Islam to be a collection of universal values and declares that becoming a Muslim is a wholly unobtrusive step:

> To become a Muslim, a ceremony is not required. Islam is not only a rational, widely spread and practical religion, it is also in full harmony with the natural human disposition. Every child is born with it. This is why becoming a Muslim does not require a transformation. One can be a Muslim without telling anybody. To confess to Islam is only a matter of form for the organization. The basic creed of Islamic belief runs: there is no God but God, Muhammad is His messenger.[85]

Downplaying the religious differences between Christianity and Islam, and downplaying the entry rules, Khan Durrani turned conversion into a matter of

82 F. Khan Durrani, 'The Legitimization of Islam in Europe,' quoted in Manfred Backhausen, *Die Ahmadiyya – Lahore – Bewegung in Europa* (Lahore: AAII, 2008), quote on p. 74.

83 Backhausen, *Ahmadiyya*, quote on p. 75.

84 Ibid.

85 MR 2 (1926) 92.

private consciousness, with no need to be expressed. The many autobiographies of German converts give witness that this appealed to them (Chapter 3). Through adapting European thought, Khan Durrani found a key that fitted the lock. It became the task of his successor to consolidate the result.[86]

Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah (1898–1956)

Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah soon replaced Khan Durrani. When he arrived he had just become a widower.[87] Abdullah was doubtlessly an attractive man and many women in his parish considered him eligible. But this was not his course. While on leave in Lahore in 1933, he remarried, this time to his first wife's sister, Mahmuda. She quickly learned German and actively participated in the mission activities alongside her husband. They manned the mission post until the outbreak of war in 1939 forced them to leave. Of the four missionaries, Abdullah's service lasted the longest, giving him and his wife ample opportunity to make friends and to adjust to the country, to its quickly changing politics and to the interests of their parish.

Abdullah was neither a visionary like Sadr-ud-Din nor an intellectual like his predecessor. Rather, he seems to have been a hard working, meticulous organizer. In the mosque archive there is a small note attached to a lecture he delivered in 1932 in which he described himself as follows:

> I am an Indian, 34 years old. From 1923 to 1928 I was professor at Punjab University in Lahore (India). I came to Germany in 1928 to do duty as 'Imam of the mosque.' I publish a quarterly '*Die Moslemische Revue*.' I am Secretary General of the Deutsch–Moslemische Gesellschaft (German-Muslim Society) in Berlin.[88]

86 F. K. Khan Durrani seems to have occupied an uneasy position in the Lahore mother organization. Apart from his financial blunderings, he published a booklet on the Ahmadiyya Movement, in which he coined the Holy Communion as 'blasphemous cannibalistic.' He also embraced the view that *Dajjal*, or the Antichrist was in fact 'corrupted Christianity.' F. K. Khan Durrani, *The Ahmadiyya Movement*. Lahore: Dar-ul-Kutub Islamiah, 1926. Although he was careful enough not to publish such views in Berlin, the *Anjuman* dismissed him in 1928.

87 Obituaries, condolence messages and letters in *The Light* (24 August 1956) 2–19, among them a personal note on her husband by Mahmuda Abdullah (pp. 6–7). In the private archive of Hugo Marcus, a handwritten letter in German survives, in which Mahmuda recounts Abdullah's last moments to her old friend Marcus.

88 AMA/Interwar, 49.

The text is written in slightly faulty German and conveys an *émigré* who has just learned the language and is determined to use it. It sums up this missionary very well.

A range of sources enables us to reconstruct Abdullah's Berlin years. The remains of his mosque library give us a major clue and will be treated in a separate chapter. There is also the *Moslemische Revue*, as well as a smattering of texts and letters both in the mosque and Foreign Office archives. All these contain important information on how he realized his double mission of improving the image of Islam while simultaneously reforming the religion on the ground.

Let us look first at his attempts to improve the image of Islam. When Abdullah took over the mission post, he established an attractive community life. Although the mosque was not yet ready, he managed to lend public visibility to the yearly celebrations. The *Moslemische Revue* regularly reports on public conversions during those celebrations,[89] on truly international programmes with recitations in Urdu, Farsi, Turkish and Arabic,[90] on full houses and on guests sitting at long festive tables in the mosque garden.[91] Starting in 1930, he read his sermons from German translations. In 1931 they were aired on the radio and reproduced on gramophone records.[92]

Abdullah was also a regular contributor to European peace conferences, for which he drew up a questionnaire called 'Peace Potentials of Religions.'[93] In Berlin, he addressed different religious audiences and engaged in cross-religious debate with Buddhists and Jews.[94] He was not a prolific writer. In print were only the sermons he gave on celebration days and some of his lectures.[95] Only twice did he produce a more substantial text.[96] Abdullah's focus was on the community, for which he organized prayers, sermons, Sunday classes and Arabic lessons.[97] Between his parishioners, however, ideas about Islam took very different forms. Moreover, as we shall discuss later on, the many

89 MR 3 (1931) 1.

90 MR 1 (1930) 2 (1931).

91 MR 4 (1933) 95, and below.

92 MR 2 (1931) 35; 'Das Echo unserer Arbeit,' cf. MR 4 (1934) 89–98; MR 1 (1935) 42–5.

93 AMA/Interwar, 5, 55, 56, 57 (Questionnaire).

94 The Jewish Reform Community (AMA/Interwar, 4), the Buddhist House, and some of the theosopical lodges in Berlin repeatedly invited him to give a lecture, see 'Jahresberichte,' MR 1931, 1933, 1934.

95 MR 2 (1929) 1, 3 (1929) 1, 1 (1931) 1, 3 (1931) 51.

96 Sheikh M. Abdullah, 'Die Stellung der Frau im Islam,' MR (1929/4) 113–32; Sheikh M. Abdullah, 'Der Islam und das Schwert,' MR (1932/3) 49–91.

97 MR 1 (1929) 1, 2 (1931) 1.

cross-cultural marriages in his parish forced him to articulate his views on women and Islam, a topic of great relevance because many of the women considered themselves emancipated. Through inviting lecturers to the mosque, Abdullah provided a stage on which, between 1930 and 1939, a wide range of ideas on religion, politics, gender relations and the role of the individual were scrutinized and passionately discussed.

A look at the agenda corroborates this. In 1930 we come across 'War and Islam'; 'Pathways and Aims of Muslim Man'; 'Renaissance of Islam'; Islam as Expression of True Christianity,' and others.[98] The year 1933 witnesses the entry of Hosseyn Kazemzadeh Iranshär, a former revolutionary who during the crisis embraced theosophy, producing a cross between Sufism and Christian mysticism.[99] Through Abdullah's personal invitation, he spoke to the Gesellschaft on several occasions. The 1934 agenda features the popular Nazi writer Faruq Fischer speaking on 'Future Man' next to a first generation expert on theosophy, the Countess Margarethe von Stein. There is also a lecture on 'Islam and National-Socialism' and one entitled 'Does Islam have a Future?'[100] But after 1936, the year in which the Nazi regime issued the Nurnberg Laws and started to persecute German Jews in earnest, the agenda becomes more conservative and shallow. Still listed are guided tours in the Museum of Islamic Art, some historical lectures, something on 'The Relationship between Orient and Occident'; but during the immediate prewar years, the lectures seem to have been discontinued altogether.

Whereas Sadr-ud-Din articulated a grand modern vision, and Khan Durrani urged adaptation to European intellectual thought, the missionary Abdullah, building on the achievements of his predecessors, made an effort to put their ideas into practice. His politics of intensive intellectual exchange was rooted in a common enterprise in which the whole of the Gesellschaft joined. Addressing a wide range of examples of religious modernization, the exchange also focused a sharper vision of the non-Islamic world. In the chapters ahead, we shall see that their specific approach attracted and held together practitioners of very different approaches to modernization – liberal and Jewish, right-wing and Nazi. Abdullah's perspective of religious modernization poses us riddles to which we shall time and again return.

98 MR 4 (1931) 111.

99 Jamshid Behnam, 'Iranshär' and 'Iranshär, Hosayn Kazemzada,' in *Encyclopaedia Iranica vol. XIII*, ed. Ehshan Yarshater (Ann Arbor: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 535–9.

100 AMA/Interwar, 17–40.

Azeez ur-Rahman Mirza (*1905–1937*)

Azeez Mirza was not a trained missionary.[101] Raised in a family of landowners who associated with the Lahore mission, he was originally sent to Berlin in 1932 to finish his dissertation. On arrival, he stood in for S. M. Abdullah while the latter was on leave, performing the prayer and Friday services on his behalf. Like Abdullah, Azeez specialized in chemistry, engaged in sports, made German friends and was frequently included in parties and outings. The two men became friends and, instead of the projected six months, Azeez remained assistant imam for five years, during which time he became an indispensible member of the Deutsch–Moslemische Gesellschaft and a driving force behind many of the lectures. In August and December 1933 he spoke twice on 'The Spirit of Islam.' However, although announced in the lecture series, the text was never published and, reading through the thin-papered carbon copies that have been preserved in the Oettinger archive, it becomes abundantly clear why. Writing during those months in which the Nazi terror became a constant feature of everyday life, encroaching as it did on Jewish lives like that of president Marcus and his own fiancée Lisa Oettinger, and chasing communist friends such as Mr and Mrs Faruqhi out of the Gesellschaft, Azeez went to the core of an important aspect of modern Western thought, its scientism, which had just found an apotheosis in the Nazi takeover. After a discussion on the continuity of religious progress, and sketching the spirit of Islam as a result of that continuity, he writes:

> The essence of all this [religious progress] is live and make others live. Let the Darwins of Europe cry out 'survival of the fittest.' It may be true, but the point is are you going to allow the unfit to die and wither away? Nietzsche may forcibly declare, 'survival of the strongest.' Most surely, this idea is also imperfect, because you are not going to destroy the weak. A child, when he takes his birth is quite unfit to live an independent life. He is too weak to make his way through the world. Do you then propose to let him alone and let him die? … Live and make others live – this is what Islam teaches us.[102]

In the autumn of 1933, it had become dangerous to say things like that, let alone print them on paper. But apart from the outside danger, the search into

101 The following account bases on a range of photograph albums and the two texts under discussion, all of which survived in the Oettinger archive.

102 Azeez ur-Rahman Mirza, *The Spirit of Islam.* Unpublished manuscript in two parts, dated 23 August and 10 December 1933. Oettinger archive. Quotation taken from Part 1, pp. 8–9.

the mentality of the Deutsch–Moslemische Gesellschaft, which the next chapters will unfold, brings to light strong sympathies with Darwinist and Nietzschean thought especially. The straightforwardness of the missionaries' approach to religious modernization finds its equivalent in the questions this convert group posed.

2.4 Between Vision and Reality

During the interwar period, Ahmadiyya Muslims from Lahore tried, with a view to fertilizing and reforming both Christianity and Islam, to build bridges between the different cultural traditions, a practice that at that time was considered the hallmark of religious modernity. Acting in a political constellation in which missionaries and converts embraced progress as the essence of modernity, conversion itself became a two-way process. And here lies the significance of their activity for European cultural and transcultural history: in their attempt to cross the gulf between east and west, missionaries smoothed the way, borrowing from, and adapting to, Western thought wherever it was of use. Paralleling religious and intellectual exchange, missionaries allowed their converts to adapt foreign knowledge, rituals and moral traditions to more familiar patterns. What they shared, their common ground, so to speak, was a taste for experiment. In a joint effort, missionaries and converts created a totally different image of Islam, one at which Germans marvelled and in which they were able to find consolation. The width and depth of their intellectual adaptation to Western thought set them apart from their charismatic brethren in Qadian. It enabled them to dominate the mission field.

The missionaries adapted to their European habitat at different levels. Common projects, intellectual exchanges and participating in peace conferences constituted one form of adaptation, befriending Europeans and marrying European women another. Fazlul Karim Khan Durrani married Haleema Gardener, an Englishwoman in the Woking community. Azeez ur-Rahman Mirza married Lisa Oettinger, a Berlin painter and active member in the Gesellschaft. Sadr-ud-Din befriended President Hugo Marcus and when Marcus ran into insurmountable difficulties because of his Jewish descent, he went out of his way to support him. S. M. Abdullah and his wife Mahmuda formed a lifelong friendship with Emilie Oettinger and her daughters Lisa and Suse. In the chapters ahead, such connections will be recounted in greater detail. At this place in the narrative it may be noted that the missionaries were not only willing to be absorbed into their new surroundings for the sake of learning and intellectual sharing, but also to engage with them on an emotional level.

But before this can be recounted, in the next chapter we shall return to the 1920s and first address those heady years when Muslim intellectuals from all parts of the world streamed into Berlin. Germans were hungry for salvation and welcomed soothsayers, fortune tellers and people on a mission from the East; the Foreign Office supported each and every initiative for independence from the British. This was the local stage on which the missionaries made their stand.

CHAPTER 3

Muslim Missions in Interwar Berlin

In May 1922, the Indian revolutionary Abdul Sattar Kheiri, stranded in Berlin since the end of the First World War, made the following observation:

> Among all the countries of Europe, there does not appear to be as much scope for the propagation of Islam as there is in Germany. She suffered defeat in the War and now she is seriously thinking of rebuilding her future course in order to usher in a new era of peace and prosperity. Everyone here is convinced that rebirth is not possible without following true religion.[1]

During the war, Germany had adopted a politics of supporting and manipulating the pan-Islamic movement as a means of undermining the British.[2] Not surprisingly, it made a good name for itself among Indian and other Muslim nationalists to the extent that 'Muhammadans say that the welfare of Islam is bound up with the welfare of Germany.'[3] After the war, Berlin quickly became a centre for Indian, Arabic and Tatar independence movements. Students from Tunis to Calcutta and from Tirana to Tashkent registered at one of the Berlin universities and were made welcome by the Germans, for attracting international students was now considered an important foreign policy strategy to remedy Germany's loss of face.[4] While students prepared for the task of assuming leadership in their home countries, Sattar and his brother Abdul Jabbar Kheiri, who during the war had worked for the German war intelligence,[5] saw

1 Abdul Sattar Kheiri, 'The Need for the Propagation of Islam in Germany,' in: *The Mohammedan* (May 1922), accessed 5 August 2012, aaiil.org/text/articles/others/briefhistoryberlinmuslim-missiongermany.shtml.

2 Heike Liebau, 'The German Foreign Office, Indian Emigrants and Propaganda Efforts Among the Sepoys,' in: *When the War Began We Heard of Several Kings. South Asian Prisoners in World War I Germany* ed. Fransziska Roy et al. (New Delhi: Social Science Press, 2011), 96–130; Horst Krüger, 'Har Dayal in Deutschland.' *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung* 1 (1964) 141–69.

3 Majid Hayat Siddiqui, 'Bluff, Doubt and Fear: The Kheiri Brothers and the Colonial State, 1904–1945,' *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 24/3 (1987) 258.

4 Mitteilungen 1 (1922) 1; Gerhard Höpp, 'Zwischen Moschee und Demonstration. Muslime in Berlin, 1922–1930' (Teil 1–3), MR 3 (1990) 135–46, 230–3; MR 4 (1991) 12–19.

5 Liebau, 'The German Foreign Office,' 104–7.

their chance to take leadership of the nascent Muslim community in Berlin. Winning over the Germans for Islam seemed to sit well with this plan. As Sattar put it, 'I feel that I would be disloyal to Islam if I did not inform the Indian Muslims of this great opportunity for propagating Islam in this country.'[6]

Following their own suggestion, the Kheiris proceeded to set up a mission organization and to approach the Germans in the name of their cause, making an appeal in which religious redemption and global liberation politics were inextricably entwined. Unluckily for them, two teams of Ahmadi missionaries simultaneously arrived in Berlin. Their arrival not only signalled a very different kind of mission from the one the Kheiris had in mind, but also within a few years the Ahmadiyyas dominated the mission field. They put forward a daring suggestion to reform the Islamic tradition, one the majority of Sunni believers was quick to dismiss as sectarian but which Christian converts experienced as closer to their expectation. Adding insult to injury, instead of the world revolution that the Kheiris were trying to foment, the Ahmadiyyas embraced a non-political, sympathetic approach to the British. In the previous chapter, I explained that the Lahore branch stressed intellectual exchange and cooperation within the empire, whereas the Qadian branch stressed its martyr status. On the following pages we enquire into the dynamics evolving from the different mission concepts, observing not only the two Ahmadiyya organizations, but also the Muslim mission of their politically minded compatriots. Some 15,000 Muslims conditioned the emergence of a diversified religious community, counting at least ten religious organizations and very many headstrong players. The competition they engendered and the frictions this caused within the Muslim community of Berlin helps to place the Ahmadiyya mission in its proper perspective.

The mission we encounter in Weimar Berlin may be considered yet another step towards adjusting and reversing Western domination. Here, I address the local embedding of the missionary enterprise and enquire into the dynamics that ensued between the Indians and the local Muslim population. The reader will meet the above-quoted Abdul Sattar Kheiri (b. 1885) and his brother Abdul Jabbar Kheiri (b. 1880) who in 1922 founded the Islamische Gemeinde zu Berlin e.V. (Islamic Community of Berlin); Mubarik Ali (no dates), the Ahmadiyya missionary of the Qadiani branch who tried to cater to the Islamische Gemeinde but failed to build the required mosque; and his competitor Sadr-ud-Din, the Ahmadiyya missionary of the Lahore branch who actually managed to build a mosque in 1924. Equipped with very different ideas, these men

6 Kheiri, 'The Need for Propagation.'

all originated from British India. A fast growing Muslim community from all parts of the Muslim world surrounded them.

As an illustration of the sort of dynamics the Ahmadiyya mission introduced to this community, I shall contrast the message of revolution with that of the Ahmadiyyas. Throughout the Weimar period, competition dominated the religious arena. Only in 1932 did the former competitors link hands to set up the Berlin branch of the Islamic Conference in Jerusalem. The ups and downs of collaboration between the different Muslim organizations serve to illuminate the complicated ethnic and political context in which the missionaries moved.

3.1 Why Berlin?

For the Ahmadiyya missionaries Berlin was alien territory, not just because it was outside the empire but also because for British citizens this was very emphatically the enemy, the foe of the allied forces, the guilty party that had started the Great War and was supposed to pay for it for the rest of the twentieth century. It took the better part of that century before Christopher Clark could establish that all parties had in fact been guilty of that war, indeed Russia and England somewhat more so than the others.[7] But when the war ended, the British and their allies thought differently.

During the war, the Ottoman Empire took up arms with the Germans, while the indigenous populations of the British and French colonies also supported Germany.[8] Thus, Persians, Chechens, Tatars, Egyptians, Syrians and Indians found themselves in the service of the German intelligence, organizing revolt behind the enemy lines while working towards their own independence. As Stefan Reichmuth realized, the First World War was a watershed for newly emerging national arenas, in which secular nationalists and Islamic reformists worked hand in hand.[9] The dismantling of the Russian Empire (1917) and the

7 Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers. How Europe went to War in 1914* (London: Penguin books, 2013), 555–63.

8 Fritz Fischer, *Griff nach der Weltmacht. Die Kriegspolitik des kaiserlichen Deutschland 1914/18* (Königstein: Athenäum, 1977), 109–32; Liebau, 'The German Foreign Office'; Kris Manjapra, *Age of Entanglement. German and Indian Intellectuals across Empire*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 56–88.

9 Stefan Reichmuth, 'The Orient Perspective,' lecture held during the symposium 'The World during the First World War: Perceptions, Experiences, Consequences' (Hanover, 28 October–1 November 2013).

Ottoman Empire (1925) caused further reshuffling, as the result of which the Crimea, Buchara, Azerbaidjan, Iran, the Arabic speaking nations and Afghanistan all turned to Berlin for help, networking and cooperation. For these revolutionaries, siding with the Germans was equivalent to strengthening Islam. While the war was still raging, their leaders constantly urged Muslims to offer Germany their support; the Muslim world loved the Germans. As the Lebanese Druze leader Shekib Arslan phrased it, 'as long as the British and the French exercise oppression against the Islamic countries…(they) will not succeed in extinguishing the fire of love in the breasts of both the Muslims and the Germans.'[10]

By marked contrast, the Ahmadiyyas sided with the British. Their founder Ghulam Ahmad, broadcasting loyalty to the British on several occasions, had told his followers not to use force against the colonial administration.[11] When the war began, Kamal-ud-Din and the Woking mosque community went one step further and sided with the empire *as Muslims*. With a view to the conscription of hundreds and thousands of Indian Muslims into the British army, Woking adopted the following resolution:

> We desire to offer our wholehearted congratulations to our eastern brethren now at the front, and to express our delight to find that our coreligionists in Islam are fighting on the side of honour, truth, and justice, and are carrying into effect the principles of Islam as inculcated by the holy prophet Mohammad.[12]

Incidentally, the British were not the only ones to impose subscription on their colonial subjects. On the side of the allied forces, 3.5 million 'coloured soldiers' fought and died on European battlefields, among them *c.* 1.5 million Muslims.[13]

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10 Shekib Arslan, 'Der Islam und das deutsche Reich' *Die Islamische Welt* (1917) 416–17, quoted in Abdul-Raoul Sinno, 'The role of Islam in German Propaganda in the Arab East during the First World War: Aims, Means, Results, and Local Reactions,' in *The First World War as Remembered in the Countries of the Eastern Mediterranean*, edited by Olaf Farschid et al. (Würzburg: Ergon, 2006), 401.

11 Ghulam Ahmad, 'A Proposal for the Extinction of Jehad,' RR 1 (1902); 'A Christian Government and the Muhammadans,' RR 3 (1905); 'A Muslim's Views of the British Government,' RR 1 (1907); 'Muhammedans and Jehad,' RR 7 (1907).

12 NN, 'A Resolution,' RR 10 (1914) 421. See also Kamal-ud-Din, 'The Present War and the Prophet of Islam,' RR 9 (1914) 384–6, and Ibid, 'Europe's Debt to Islam,' RR 7 (1914) 327.

13 Gerhard Höpp, 'Die Privilegien der Verlierer. Über Status und Schicksal muslimischer Kriegsgefangener und Deserteure in Deutschland während des Ersten Weltkrieges und

For Muslim nationalists siding with the Germans, to support this colonial practice signalled betrayal and they abhorred the Ahmadiyya for doing so. Why then did the missionaries go to Berlin after the war, thereby venturing into such politically thorny territory?

Once the war was lost, Berlin became a major centre for Muslim independence and pan-Islamist activity. For some time, the financial crash produced low rents and a low cost of living, which made university study in Berlin attractive. Thus, Berlin became the stage for a nascent Muslim community, offering a local setting that favoured the development of global, pan-Islamic ideas.[14] They were voiced in a large range of Arabic, Persian, Tatar, French and German periodicals, papers and books, which were predominantly written, printed and published in Berlin.[15]

But Muslim students not only flocked to Berlin because it functioned as 'a catalyst for politics' or a place to lobby for independence.[16] In *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire*, Suzanne Marchand argues that Germany had 'a special connotation and a special appeal' in the perception of the colonized peoples.[17] Germany stood for the humanities and the sciences, for profundity and efficiency, for traditional authority and proof that 'one could modernize without too much democratization or erosion of the elite culture.'[18] As the biographer of Zakir Husain, who between 1922 and 1925 studied in Berlin and after the Second World War became the third president of India, noted, 'if one

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der Zwischenweltkriegszeit,' in *Erfahrungen. Afrikaner und Asiaten in Deutschland bis 1945*, edited by Gerhard Höpp (Berlin: Das Arabische Buch, 1994), 185–210; Gerhard Höpp, *Muslime in der Mark. Als Kriegsgefangene und Internierte in Wunsdorf und Zossen 1914–1924* (Berlin: Das arabische Buch, 1997), 19–33; Friedrich Naumann, 'Das Schicksal der Naturvölker im Zivilisationskriege.' *Koloniale Rundschau* (Berlin: Reimers, 1918) 320–8; Albrecht Wirth, *Die Geschichte des Weltkriegs*, Bd. 1 (Stuttgart: Metzner, 1917–1919), 85.

14 Gerhard Höpp, 'Zwischen Moschee und Demonstration,' MR 3 (1990) 135–46, 4 (1990) 230–1; (1991) 12–19; Gerhard Höpp, *'Die Sache ist von immenser Wichtigkeit …' Arabische Studenten in Berlin* (unpubl. ms. in *Höpp Archive*, *c.* 1990), accessed 12 August 2012. zmo.de/biblio/nachlass/hoepp; Iskander Giljazov, *Muslime in Deutschland: Von den zwanziger Jahren zum ‚Islamische Faktor' während des 2. Weltkrieges* (unpubl. ms. in *Höpp Archive*, 1989), accessed 12 August 2012. zmo.de/biblio/nachlass/hoepp/1_21_2.pdf.

15 For the Arab publications, see: Gerhard Höpp, 'Muslim Periodicals as Information Sources about Islamic Life in Germany, 1915–1945,' in *Symposium Research Papers* (Riyad: As Shams University, 1999). For Tatar and Persian publications, see: Chapter 6.

16 Manjapra, *Age of Entanglement*, 91.

17 Suzanne L. Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race, and Scholarship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 432.

18 Marchand, *German Orientalism*, 432.

wanted to know the secret of success and greatness, he would surely think of Germany.'[19] In Weimar Berlin especially, Muslims thought to encounter values they recognized as their own. Zakir Husain's experience may stand for many others. 'The enlightened circle with which Zakir Husain came in contact convinced him that there was remarkable identity of thought between what was currently in the mind of these progressive Germans and what had been earlier preached by the prophets of the east.'[20] What he and other foreign students noticed was a bourgeois class of Germans, who, in search of ultimate truth in an age in which they experienced ultimate despair, seemed wholeheartedly to embrace the wisdom of the East.[21]

Germans had been open to foreign religions already before the war. Buddhism, theosophy, Hinduism, Baha'i and Islam offered exciting options, provided it fitted one's societal status and individual development.[22] To this openness, the experience of the First World War added a special urgency; a general sense of confusion, of having lost compass and of personal guilt, led to the passionate desire for redemption after the entanglement in a very dirty war. Sattar Kheiri, who took time to make sundry observations, grasped this mood as 'everyone here is convinced that rebirth is not possible without following true religion.'[23]

Indeed, fashionable Berlin willingly received the oriental newcomers as their neighbours. The two mosque builders were applauded, the papers marvelling that 'the exotic flair of Berlin is now in evidence.' Their meeting point was the street of Kurfürstendamm and its adjacent boroughs. Here, alongside the Muslim population, often in the same house or even the same apartment, lived the German writers, artists, journalists and theatre folk who had made Weimar Berlin so famous. Mission strategies were tailored to these inhabitants who were generally of rich cultural accomplishments, both Jews and Christians – intellectuals, artists, journalists, the well-to-do and widely-travelled, Orientalists and adventurers, who could afford to live in the newly built neighbourhood of Wilmersdorf. These Berliners embraced the experiment of modernity, which

19 B. Sheikh Ali, *Zakir Husain: Life and Times* (Goa: Vikas Publishing House, 1991), 70.

20 Ali, *Zakir Husain*, 81.

21 Suzanne L. Marchand, 'Eastern Wisdom in an Era of Western Despair. Orientalism in 1920s Central Europe,' in *Weimar Thought: A Contested Legacy*, ed. Peter E. Gordon et al., 341–60 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).

22 Kai Buchholz et al., *Die Lebensreform. Entwürfe zur Neugestaltung von Leben und Kunst um 1900* (Darmstadt: Verlag Häusser, 2001).

23 Kheiri, 'The Need for Propagation.'

had gripped Europe since the turn of the century. Originally a youth movement, Germans baptized it *Lebensreform* (life reform), a label that now described the fashionable new experiment with the private and personal steadily moulding life according to different principles.[24] German *Lebensreformer*s were seekers of a renewed sense of well-being; *Lebensreform* offered a multitude of avenues for their quest – love of nature, love of the body, 'Greek love' (a mixture of homosexuality and Platonic male friendship), revolution, secularism, atheism, Eastern mysticism, infatuation with everything oriental, expressionism, Dadaism and African art. What they had in common was a yearning for redemption from the Wilhelmine German way of life dominated by military and professional drill; the *Lebensreformer*s simply felt exasperated with their parents' generation.[25]

Embedded in this social stratum, in 1922, the Muslim population of Berlin had reached a critical mass that demanded the proper organization of new religious structures. In addition, Sattar Kheiri broadcasted that those structures would provide for Germans too. The news must have reached the shores of the British Empire swiftly because, almost overnight, both Ahmadiyya factions decided not to leave this promising mission field to others. Notwithstanding the difficulties ahead, Qadian sent Mubarik Ali, whereas Lahore settled on Sadr-ud-Din to take stock of the situation. This was by no means too early: upon their arrival, they found that the activities of the Kheiri brothers were already in full swing.

3.2 The Message of Revolution

Descending from a Muslim noble family in Old Delhi, having graduated from the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College in Aligarh, and having pursued extensive studies in Cairo (Al-Azhar) and Beirut (American Mission College), the Kheiri brothers were destined to engage in anti-colonial activity during the war.[26] In this field of opportunity, they carved out their careers as Indian revolutionaries, attempting to fuse Islam and Marxism into an alternative to the Russian Revolution. Working steadily towards the 'Islamic World *Shura*' as a way

24 Buchholz et al., *Die Lebensreform.*

25 Joachim Radkau, 'Die Verheißungen der Morgenfrühe. Die Lebensreform in der neuen Moderne,' in *Die Lebensreform. Entwürfe zur Neugestaltung von Leben und Kunst um 1900*, ed. Kai Buchholz et al. (Darmstadt: Verlag Häusser, 2001), 55–61.

26 Liebau, 'The German Foreign Office,' 103, 256.

of delivering the Muslim world from colonial oppression,[27] they spread propaganda for the Germans, encouraged revolutionary movements in Egypt and worked for the Turkish–German axis, especially in Germany and Northern Europe.[28] In 1918 they travelled to Moscow to meet Lenin, Sverdlov and Trotsky. The brothers' suggestion, however, that the struggle of the masses should be united with an Islamic impetus, was not appreciated and the journey ended in failure.[29] By 1919, they had left the stage of world politics: the British saw the brothers as Bolshevik emissaries, pimps, revolutionaries and undesirables';[30] the Russians had turned down their offer of cooperation, while to the Germans, the brothers seemed useful, but since the war was over, of no urgent interest. Once in Berlin, they eked out an existence as private tutors. One of their old acquaintances was Georg Kampffmeyer, professor of Arab studies at the Seminar for Oriental Languages in Berlin and leader of the Deutsche Gesellschaft (German Society for the Knowledge of Islam or DGI). During the war, Kampffmeyer had served as liaison officer between the foreign office and the two prisoners of war camps outside Berlin in which Muslims had been gathered together.[31] In 1920, he rekindled the DGI with a view to remaining in touch with the Foreign Office Information Services and to establish 'a constant personal contact with orientals in Berlin.'[32]

The Birth of the Islamische Gemeinde zu Berlin

Our narrative starts early in 1922 when the brothers, tired of language tuition, turn to Kampffmeyer for financial support and the latter sends out a circular on their behalf appealing for help. What exactly the donation entailed has not been archived, but Siddiqui notes that the brothers received explicit encouragement from the German government to become part of the political Islamic movement in Germany.[33]

Progress was rapid. Sometime in May Sattar published his appeal for a mission in Germany and, on 29 May, during the festival of *Eid-ul-Fitr*, Jabbar took action. In the protocol preparing for the creation of the Gemeinde, the move is

27 Jabbar Kheiri and Mansur M. Rifat, *Die Verschwörung der Kemalisten gegen den Islam. Die wahre Bedeutung des Khalifats. Erklärung der 'Shura' und Vertreter anderer organisierter Körperschaften* (Berlin: Morgen-und Abendland Verlag, 1924), 15.

28 Siddiqui, 'Bluff, Doubt and Fear,' 234.

29 Siddiqui, 'Bluff, Doubt and Fear,' 240.

30 Siddiqui, 'Bluff, Doubt and Fear,' 241.

31 Höpp, *Muslime in der Mark*, 20f.

32 VR/DGI, 18.

33 Siddiqui, 'Bluff, Doubt and Fear,' 241, 246.

related in detail.[34] Four years after the war, with no central mosque in Berlin, resident Muslims were still in the habit of travelling to the former POW camp in Wunsdorf for their celebrations, some 35 kilometres outside Berlin. The camp had been erected especially for Muslim prisoners of war from British, Russian and French armies. Although it had been shut down and the inmates sent home, a wooden mosque, which former Tatar combatants living in the grounds had taken in their care, still stood.[35] There, following the service, Jabbar addressed a rallying cry to 'the whole of the Muslim community of Berlin and surroundings.'[36] Gathered together were some two hundred Tartars and their families,[37] diplomats and their personnel from at least five different embassies,[38] revolutionaries in exile,[39] students and businessmen from North Africa, the Middle East, the Caucasus, Russia, and India,[40] representing, as Jabbar Kheiri would claim later, no less than 'forty-two different Muslim nations.'[41]

Jabbar told this audience that it was time to lay the foundation for an officially registered community that would serve Muslims in Berlin and further

34 VR/IGB, 7.

35 Giljazov, *Muslime in Deutschland*, 3f.

36 VR/IGB, 7.

37 Giljazov, *Muslime in Deutschland*, 5.

38 Höpp, *Zwischen Moschee und Demonstration*. The Ottoman, Persian, Afghan, Arabian (Hidjaz) and Egyptian embassies in Berlin counted among the more prominent and influential representations.

39 Within the orbit of the Ahmadiyya mission in Berlin we meet with Abdul Jabbar and Abdul Sattar Kheiri, Mansur Rifat, Zeki Kiram, Hosseyn Kazemzadeh 'Iranschär,' Alimcan Idris, and Jakub Zcinkíevicz. A systematic study of stranded revolutionaries, how many they were, and what role they played in reorganizing Muslim and revolutionary life in postwar Germany has not yet been undertaken.

40 It is difficult to establish their number. Starting in 1921, Gerhard Höpp counted in each year some four hundred Egyptian students. They were joined by an unknown number of Indian, Iranian, Turkish, Syrian, Palestinian, and North African students, as well as Tatar students from Middle Asia, Eastern Russia and the Caucasus. While Höpp recounts the story of Arab students in Berlin, Görz Nordbruch and Umar Ryad relate to Muslim activists and thinkers, and Kris Manjapra scrutinizes the Hindu student community, similar studies on Tatar, Persian and Muslim Indian students are still lacking. Cf. Höpp, *'Die Sache ist von immenser Wichtigkeit …'* Manjapra, *Age of Entanglement*; Götz Nordbruch et al. *Transnational Islam in Interwar Europe. Muslim Activists and Thinkers. New* York: Palgrave, 2014.

41 Kheiri and Rifat, *Die Verschwörung*, 15f. The authors arrange the 'representatives of the Nations in our archive' (that is the IGB) according to linguistic and geographical classifications. Under 'Arabian Groups' we read for instance: 'Hedjas, Palestine, Syria, Beirut, Lebanon, Aleppo, Mesopotamia and Kurdistan,' that is, not every 'nation' strived to be an independent nation-state. The count served as a polemical weapon in the first split.

Islamic interests. His suggestion was well received. A delegation was appointed on the spot, with the assignment to formulate a statute. On 4 August, when the community gathered once more to celebrate *Eid-ul-Adha*, the delegates could present results. The statute was read out loud and accepted by acclamation, a *Shura* (council) was appointed, and Kheiri made its leader. Some months later, the printed statute plus a handwritten protocol of the meetings were presented to the registry office with the request that it be inscribed in the association register. This was acknowledged soon after.[42]

What makes the protocol historically significant is the list of signatures.[43] The reader meets 16 signatories appointed delegates for the preparatory stage, 16 appointed as the managing committee and delegates to the committee, plus another 16 who serve as their substitutes. There is also an attendance list, naming the members who assisted in the election process. In the years to come, many of these names would emerge in different corners of Muslim Berlin, their switch from one organization to the next documenting the process of internal differentiation in which this group would soon engage. For now, however, differentiation is not the issue. On the contrary, the founding act united all of Berlin, including well-known diplomats, businessmen, students and later politicians, women and men, old and new Muslims. What was created here was the symbolic centre of a local community with global implications ('42 nations'),[44] to which a truly international audience would give its support. Their quest for unity helps us to understand the bitterness with which members would soon quarrel over questions of ownership.

For the moment, however, all was well. The community had acquired a centre, if not a municipal mosque. Administrative headquarters were established in the Kheiri home, Hannoversche Strasse 1. Their apartment, which the brothers hired while stranded and penniless, is situated in the poor part of town. The *Jamaat*, however, and this too is of crucial importance for later developments, preferred to live in the modern part of town, among the German bohemia in the boroughs of Wilmersdorf and Charlottenburg.

Winning Over the Germans

Parallel with the founding proceedings, in October 1922 the Kheiris published the first issue of the community organ *Der Islam: Ein Wegweiser zur Rettung*

42 VR/IGB, 3, 5.

43 VR/IGB, 7–8. The Prussian Register Office requested signatories of founding documents to add their full address and profession.

44 Kheiri and Rifat, *Die Verschwörung*, 15.

und Wiederaufbau (Islam: A Guide for Rescue and Restoring). The journal was written in German and addressed an exclusively German audience. On the first page the reader encounters the announcement of an *Islamischer Dienst* (Islamic Service) offering *Tabligh*: *Bekanntmachung des Islams durch Reden, Schriften usw.* (Spreading the Knowledge of Islam through Lectures, Writings, etc.), *Ta'lim*: *Kostenloser Unterricht über den Islam* (Free Courses about Islam) and *Takrim*: *Gesellige Veranstaltungen* (Sociable Gatherings). On the following pages, the editors explained their mission.[45]

That the brothers had already had time to discover the discontent with which *Lebensreformer*s viewed their elder contemporaries paid off: reflecting that mood, the text opens with a critique of modern Western civilization. The war, it argues, has reduced any legitimate form of government to nil. Europe's societal framework is faltering. Justice has become injustice because the working classes are still oppressed and criminality is steadily mounting.

In a next step, the readers are invited to embrace 'true religion' as a way to overcome their problems.[46] Christianity, however, cannot fill the gap, the text warns, because clearly this is a concoction of fantasy and lies, full of disdain for women. In view of the many *Lebensreform* women, this is a significant touch. The authors then proceed to argue that 'Islam is the only true religion,' unfolding a string of reasoning for why this could be so. Three arguments in traditional Islamic phrasing set the tone: 'Islam has rescued the integrity of the revelation' (p. 15), it has 'introduced its founder as an example for the whole of mankind,' and 'Islam is rational and useful.'[47] Having established this, the authors then adapt popular *Lebensreform* vocabulary. Seen from this angle, Islam also offers a history of *Lichtbringer* (Carriers of Light), *Kulturträger* (Upholders of Civilization), and *Bringer allerlei Segens für die Menschheit* (Performers of all kinds of blessings for mankind), thus holding the key to the main concerns of the day: 'world peace,' 'global freedom,' 'justice,' 'happiness,' 'development' and 'progress.'[48] The chosen terminology leans heavily towards the mission of the League of Nations after the war.[49] The argument climaxes in

45 Jabbar Kheiri and Sattar Kheiri, eds., *Der Islam. Ein Wegweiser zur Rettung und zum Wiederaufbau*, (Berlin: Kaviani, 1922), 2–17.

46 Der Islam, 16.

47 Der Islam, 16.

48 Der Islam, 17.

49 Social progress, social justice and reconstruction were the keywords with which this international body tried to re-create the European continent. Cf. Erez Manela, 'Die Morgenröte einer neuen Ära: Der 'Wilsonsche' Augenblick und die Transformation der kolonialen Ordnung der Welt, 1917–1920,' in Sebastian Conrad et al., *Globalgeschichte. Theorien, Ansätze, Themen* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2007), 282–313.

a passionate summons to embrace Islam. The authors now address their readership as 'the whole organized spirit of scholarship and philosophy, next to all lovers of humanity,' asking them 'to cooperate energetically with us towards the General Good, and to once again reconstitute the world in decline on a solid basis.'[50]

Incidentally, this line managed to convince many readers, not all of them German. In 1927, at the height of his quarrel with the Islamia student organization, Jabbar Kheiri released a list of 'active members' of the Gemeinde, in which he enumerates 50 converts.[51] Next to well-known Berlin family names, the list also contains Russian, Ukrainian and Polish names, allowing for the conclusion that converts were recruited both from the *Lebensreform* quarters and from the ranks of Eastern European fugitives, many of whom were known to foster revolutionary ideas. This guess is corroborated by the observation of a British attaché who, in 1933, observed one of Kheiri's most prominent converts, Leopold Weiss. Weiss had come to Berlin from Lemberg/Lvov as a fugitive, becoming a Muslim in 1926. The attaché suspected him and other Berlin converts of 'communist attachments; such that Dr Jabbar Khair (*sic*) himself later came to the conclusion that his converts were Communists turned Moslem in order to penetrate Moslem Communities.'[52]

To sum up, during 1922 a twofold process was set in motion. On the one hand, Muslims were gathered under the umbrella of an officially registered organization, taking great care that 'all the nations' were represented. On the other hand, Germans were invited to join the religion of Islam with arguments ranging from revolution to revelation while adopting the *Lebensreform* vocabulary. Converts were won over, although it seemed a somewhat different section of the population from the one the brothers targeted. Taken together, these steps revealed the contours of a strategy that surpassed local community interests. We may assume that the Kheiri brothers imagined themselves once again on their way to the global political stage.

The First Split

But by early 1924 things took a different turn. In the midst of the Turkish revolution, Mustafa Kemal, later Kemal Atatürk, abolished the caliphate and banished the last caliph from Istanbul. Until now, the very idea of the caliphate

50 Der Islam, 17.

51 VR/IGB, 59–64. The total number of 'active members' can be established as 200. In Chapters Four and Five the converts in the list will once more come under discussion.

52 Ryan quoted in Günther Windhager, *Leopold Weiss alias Muhammad Assad* (Wien: Böhlau, 2003), 179.

had served as a cornerstone for pan-Islamic politics, its sudden removal robbing Muslim liberation movements across the globe of their unifying principle. Furthermore, the influential Turkish embassy in Berlin endorsed the banishment. The Kheiris, who saw their vision threatened, organized protest meetings and wrote inflammatory speeches against the Kemalists and their Berlin proponents. April saw a manifesto published by a number of revolutionary organizations in Berlin, among them the Islamische Gemeinde, the National-Radical Egyptians, the Egyptian Organization of National Defence, the Arabic Union and the Sudanese Liberation Movement.[53] It stated outright that the Turks did not have the right to abolish the caliphate, as this was not a national but a global institution. It also presented this statement as the opinion of the *Shura*, the body of delegates of the Gemeinde, and accused the Turkish embassy of deceiving the 'German public sphere with their talk of reform and their Europeanization of Turkey.'[54] After this was made public, the Turkish ambassador and his allies, the ambassadors of Persia, Afghanistan and Egypt, left the Gemeinde and set up their own Islamic organization, the Mai'at Scha'a'iv Islamiya or Gesellschaft für Islamische Gottesverehrung.[55] Two former revolutionaries, Alimcan Idris (b. 1887), a wartime member of the German war intelligence, presently imam of the Tartar community in Wunsdorf,[56] and Zeki Kiram (1886–1946), likewise member of the German war intelligence, wartime weapon dealer,[57] peacetime director of the highly ideological Morgen und Abendland Verlag (Orient and Occident Publishing House), undertook to set up the organization for them. For the Islamische Gemeinde Berlin, this was a heavy loss. In the following years, except when financially supporting the Ahmadiyya mosque in an aborted attempt to take over this institution, the Mai'at Scha'a'iv Islamiya did not play any role in the competition over converts. A far-reaching result of their exit, however, was Jabbar Kheiri's refusal to summon a general meeting again.

The Second Split

In the years following the split, another vicious struggle paralysed the community, in which Jabbar Kheiri was challenged by a growing section of the

53 Kheiri and Rifat, *Die Verschwörung.*

54 Kheiri and Rifat, *Die Verschwörung.*

55 VR/GIG, 7.

56 Giljazov, *Muslime in Deutschland.*

57 Umar Ryad, *Documents on the German Arms Trade in the Arabian Peninsula: Readings in the Archive of Zeki Kiram* (Cairo: National archives of Egypt, 2011).

Gemeinde, including his own brother. The register file amply documents the struggle.[58] The student organization Islamiya, dissatisfied with Kheiri's passivity, made an effort to revive the organization. Letters were written to the registration office demanding that this body force him into cooperation. A pastry shop on the Kurfürstendamm witnessed an extraordinary general meeting that aimed do dispose of Kheiri as leader. When he refused to acknowledge his opponents as Gemeinde members, a law case was prepared to prove the contrary. But all these actions were to no avail. The record office judged the students 'non-authorized'[59] and Kheiri was able to keep his position. When in December 1928 he finally resigned, Abdul Jabbar still possessed the power to establish his brother Sattar as 'Interim Leader' in his stead.[60]

Students regrouped in the Islamia Student Association as early as 1924, remaining under the aegis of the Gemeinde for some time. Once the controversy with Kheiri reached an irrevocable stage, the Syrian student Nafi Tschelebi, supported by Georg Kampffmeyer, several university institutes and a range of German and Arabic politicians, launched *Das Islam Institut.*[61] The institute was accommodated in the *Humboldt-Haus*, a *fin-de-siècle* villa just off the Kurfürstendamm, which included a library, an archive, editorial offices for several periodicals and a *Wakf* to enable religious duties.[62] Its large range of academic, religious and educational assignments signalled that the Islam Institute had been designed as an alternative to the Gemeinde. In the years to come, the two organizations would aggressively compete with one another, until the Berlin branch of the Islamic Congress in Jerusalem managed to unite the warring parties.

3.3 The Message of Non-violence

During all these manoeuvrings, the two Ahmadiyya organizations, the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-i-Islam (AAII) in Lahore and the Ahmadiyya

58 VR/IGB, 20–111.

59 VR/IGB, 30.

60 VR/IGB, 111–46. During the interim leaderships of Sattar Kheiri (from 1929 to 1931) and Wassel Rasslan (from 1931 to 1936), the IGB largely existed on paper.

61 Die Islamische Gegenwart: Monatsschrift für die Zeitgeschichte des Islam. Mit ständiger Beilage 'Der islamische Student,' edited by M. Hassan Hoffmann und M. Nafi Tschelebi (Berlin, 1927–1929). Of the Islam Institute, no record file exists. To all probability, it was not registered at the time. Only when re-founded in 1939, and again in 1942, the institute began to leave a paper trail in the registration office. See below Chapter 6.

62 Today, this is the premise of the famous *Literaturhaus*.

Muslim Jamaat in Qadian, set up mission stations in Berlin. Unlike the Kheiris who began their mission in Berlin more or less from scratch and certainly without financial help from India, the Ahmadiyya missionaries came well prepared. As recounted in Chapter One, while countering the global wave of Christian mission, around 1900 the Ahmadiyya adopted British missionary techniques with the aim of *disproving* Christianity.[63] Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's message always carried a subversive component. In addition, Lahore missionaries adopted reason as the right method of advance: 'Just as Christian missionaries had been penetrating the nooks and corners of the earth, Ahmadi Muslim missionaries should roll the tide back and carry the fight into the homelands of the Christians themselves.'[64] Instead of independence from colonial rule, they set store in good tidings based on convincing arguments 'to help Islam on its way to victory.'[65] Travelling from the periphery to the centre of the European empires, it was with this message that the missionaries arrived.

At the time of their arrival, the two organizations still pictured Europe as *dajjal*, the Antichrist: a stage on which the Europeans themselves embodied the peoples of the Apocalypse, sinful but ready to be saved by the Messiah.[66] In line with this imagery, a stream of pamphlets and books spread the argument that Christ had not died on the cross but in the North Indian city of Srinagar, where he had since been buried, and that, to free the people of the earth from their chains, he had taken possession of (in the Qadiani view), or inspired (in the Lahore view) their founder and Promised Messiah.[67] Grounded as it was in the struggle for religious equality within the empire, the idea of a Promised Messiah was very much tuned to the European ear. In the following chapters we shall still meet converts who based their decision to embrace Islam on the basis of this message.

However, when crossing from London to Berlin, the missionaries felt challenged to rephrase their message. When arriving on the continent, the missionaries did not consider it appropriate any more to employ the *dajjal* imagery.

63 Spencer Lavan, 'Sources for Ahmadiyyah History,' in *Sources for Punjab History*, ed. W. Eric Gustafson (Delhi: Manohar Book Service, 1975), 90.

64 Mirza Mubarak Ahmad, *Our Foreign Missions. A Brief Account of the Ahmadiyya Work to Push Islam in Various Parts of the World* (Rabwah: Ahmadiyya Foreign Missions, 1965), xi.

65 Muhammad Ali, *Der Begründer der Ahmadiyya Bewegung. Eine Kurzstudie* (Berlin: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Jamaat, 1952), 50 (www.AAIIL.org).

66 Yohanan Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous. Aspects of Ahmadi Religious Thought and Its Medieval Background* (Oxford/New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), 105f, and Introduction to this book.

67 Muhammad Ali, *The Anti-Christ and Gog and Magog* (Ohio: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Jamaat, 1992); cf. Ali, *Der Begründer*, 46.

In the 17 years of its existence, the *Moslemische Revue*, mouthpiece of the Lahore missionaries in Berlin, not once treated the subject. Instead, it too joined the chorus of German admirers, employing arguments that sat well with the discourse on modernity of its continental listeners. Still, with a founder claiming prophethood, and loyalty to the British in their baggage, the Ahmadiyya missionaries did not easily make friends among the local Muslim population. In the following, we watch them arrive, retrace their attempts to find avenues of opportunity and reconstruct their progress with German audiences.

Ahmadiyya Qadian: 'The Exotic Flair of Berlin is now in Evidence'

Of the missionary Mubarik Ali, neither his place and date of birth nor his whereabouts after he fled from Berlin are known. All we know is that in 1922 the Qadiani branch sent him there. There is also a photograph of him, published in the centenary festival edition of *Ahmadiyya Mosques around the World*, as a young man in his thirties with regular features, beard and turban.[68] The caption reads: 'Maulana Mubarik Ali, the first missionary sent to Germany (1922–1924).' Local sources help to elucidate his story further. They cover his activities between November 1922 and July 1924, during which he regularly appeared in the daily papers and attracted a hate campaign instigated by his fellow Muslims.

The first time we meet Mubarik Ali is in the register file of the Islamische Gemeinde, where, on 4 November 1922, he appears as one of the signatories acknowledging the managing committee: 'Mubarik Ali, Dahlmannstrasse 9.'[69] The find suggests that he looked for opportunities in the nascent Berlin community, even became a founding member, rallying support for his plan to erect the missing central mosque. In July 1923, we once again find his signature under the protocol of the only general meeting Kheiri ever summoned, giving witness to continued communication.[70] By then he had already acquired 'a piece of farmland' in Charlottenburg, northeast of the Kurfürstendamm, where Berlin's fashionable western suburb was still under construction, and asked planning permission for the erection of a large building, to be built by Berlin architect K. A. Herman.[71] The architectural drawings that accompany the construction plan reveal a spectacular mosque with a large dome and four high minarets.

68 *Ahmadiyya Muslim Mosques Around the World*, (Silver Spring: AMC/US, 2008), 197.

69 VR/IGB, 8.

70 VR/IGB, 16.

71 VR/AQ, 1–39.

Permission was granted on 27 July and ten days later, on 6 August, the foundation stone was officially laid. Accounts of the building ceremony appeared in all the daily papers. In the articles, Mubarik Ali is described as a millionaire, elegant, modest and sympathetic. Journalists marvel that 'the exotic flair of Berlin is now in evidence.'[72] Expectations are indeed high. The papers announce leisure grounds, a hotel, clubrooms, a restaurant and a Turkish café, as well as a home for Persian, Indian and Ottoman students (alternatively: single student women).[73]

However, some days prior to the ceremony, the Foreign Office issued an internal circular warning the ministries not to accept Mubarik Ali's invitation. 'The Muslims of Berlin,' it states, 'suspect him to act on behalf of the British Government.' Moreover, it had become known that 'they will rally against the Ahmadiyya during the building ceremony.'[74] In the summer of 1923, the Egyptian medical doctor Mansur Rifat (1883–1926), leader of the National Radical Egyptians, composed a pamphlet against the Ahmadiyya.[75] It featured an interview with Jabbar Kheiri, explaining to the general public why Ahmadis cannot be Muslims because they (1) refuse to pray behind a non-Ahmadi imam, (2) do not partake in non-Ahmadi funerals, and (3) do not marry non-Ahmadis. During the ceremony, this pamphlet was spread among the public and Rifat himself was reported to have yelled at the top of his voice: 'It is all a lie! This is not a mosque, these are English barracks, erected with English money!'[76] Other papers report him as having screamed: 'Spies! English Mercenaries! This mosque is the tomb of the Islamic movement!'[77] Scuffles broke out until the police removed the rioters.

Both testimonies, the imam's explanation and Rifat's public rioting, disclose that from the perspective of Muslim nationalists and freedom fighters, Ahmadis kept themselves apart from mainstream Islam in ways that were not acceptable to pan-Islamists. Ahmadis were considered separatists and a threat to Muslim unity. Moreover, their acceptance of the British did not sit well with the revolutionary spirit of the day, which had adopted the British as its main enemy.

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72 DAZ, 7 August.

73 BT, 7 August.

74 'Eilt sehr!' in: VR/AQ.

75 Mansur M. Rifat, *The Ahmadiyya Sect/Pamphlet 1: vanguard of British imperialism and the greatest danger to Islam; convincing evidence of their duplicity* (Berlin: Morgen und Abendland Verlag, August 1923).

76 DAZ, 7 August.

77 VZ, 7 August.

In autumn 1923 the campaign widened. Further pamphlets display a scathing tone towards everything Ahmadiyya, an entity endowed with ever more unacceptable features: Ahmadis helped the British quell the uprising of the Moplas;[78] Ahmadis are against the caliphate; Ahmadis are hypocrites. In addition, letters were written to the local papers, the ministries and important Germans explaining again and again why the Ahmadiyya present the wrong kind of Islam.[79] Even the imam of the Ottoman embassy, Shukri Bey, a well-known and respected public figure, wrote an article entitled 'Indian Missionaries in Europe: Their Anti-Islamic Activities,' which was published in London.[80]

This feverish activity betrays the nascent community's need to enlist German support in 1923, a time when Germany's conversion is still thought imminent and considered indispensable towards the world *Shura* plan. However, with the arrival of the Ahmadiyya, the suspicion is kindled, not entirely unjustifiably, that Germans might choose the 'wrong' kind of Islam. Georg Kampffmeyer supported the campaign with a contribution of his own, warning against Ahmadis as agents of the British government.[81] For the rest, Berlin did not seem all that impressed. From the perspective of the average Berliner, exotic millionaires willing to erect oriental-looking buildings in their city were news, whereas political positions for or against the British, or, worse, obscure religious differences, were definitely not.

In December, the Qadiani missionary Ghulam Farid Malik joined Mubarik Ali, who, until this moment, had resisted the tempest on his own. Together, they wrote a pamphlet in defence of the Ahmadiyya cause.[82] But their worries were soon drawn in an entirely different direction. December brought the notorious German bank crash, followed by hyper-inflation. For Mubarik Ali, the event meant the loss of his entire capital. On the building site, where walls

78 An Arabic merchant colony on the Malabar coast, in 1921, Moplas rose against the British colonial administration, trying to install an off-shoot of the *Khilafat*. The uprising was bloodily suppressed.

79 Reprinted in Mansur M. Rifat, *The Ahmadia Sect/Pamphlet 2: Ahmadis' betrayal of country and religion : a supplement to the pamphlet 'The Amadia Sect' vanguard of British Imperialism and the greatest danger to Islam* (Berlin: Morgen- und Abendland Verlag, September 1923).

80 Rifat, *The Ahmadia Sect* (*Pamphlet 2*), 5.

81 Rifat, *The Ahmadia Sect* (*Pamphlet 2*), 4.

82 Mubarik Ali and Ghulam Farid, *Zurückweisung der Anschuldigung, die Anhänger der Ahmadiyya Bewegung seien Vorkämpfer des englischen Imperialismus* (Berlin: Kaviani Verlag, Januar, 1924), quoted in Rifat, *The Ahmadia Sect* (*Pamphlet 2*).

already had begun to appear, work stopped and the project was abandoned. Half a year later, a small entry in one of the papers mentions that 'the millionaire Mubarik Ali,' who had begun to build 'a mosque in Indian-Muhammedan style,' lost his capital in the crash and meanwhile left town.[83] In summer the plot was sold to a housing company. The last document in the file is a neighbour's letter complaining that the still remaining hoarding inhibits his business and his view.[84]

Mubarik Ali did not have much time to advocate his particular method of advance. In fact, the ceremony of 6 August seems to have been his only opportunity. Papers covering the riot also mention Ali's speech in which he extemporized about his reasons for erecting a mosque at all. Before the speech was interrupted, he seems to have said that the mosque was to offer a place of worship for Muslims of each and every persuasion, that it was intended to be a house of learning for adherents of all other religions, and that it aimed at becoming the centre for spreading the pure religion of Islam in Europe and the world. Germany as the centre of Protestantism, and Berlin as the heart of Germany and Europe, he is reported to have said, were worthy contexts for this peace message.[85] Although the journalistic coverage varies, the ubiquity of terms like 'centre,' 'peace message,' 'Europe,' 'world,' 'all Muslims' and 'all religions' give testimony to the fact that Mubarik Ali, and through him Ahmadiyya Qadiani, were propagating global change through the meeting of the world religions.

Ahmadiyya Lahore: 'How to become a Muslim'

At about the time that Mubarik Ali's star was fading, journalists and political pamphleteers picked up the scent of yet another mission, that of Ahmadiyya Lahore. In early 1924, under the caption 'Sadrud-Din,' Rifat branded Sadr-ud-Din 'a hypocrite' because he was rumoured to have supported anti-German politics in London. The author thought it 'odd that this man, who repeatedly set himself against Muslim community feeling, now proposes the task of representing "Muslim man" and creating an Islamic centre in Germany.'[86] It is no wonder, Rifat fumed, that 'Ahmadis now cunningly and sneakingly shelter themselves…

83 VZ, 3 June 1924.

84 VR/AQ, 39.

85 DAZ, BLA, and VZ of 7 August 1923.

86 Mansur M. Rifat, *Ahmadiyya Sect* (*Pamphlet 3*)*:Total Demoralisation of the Ahmadiyya Sect. Further Evidence in Regard to Their Activities as British Agents and Menace to Islam* (Berlin: Morgen- und Abendland, February 1924), 4.

by appealing to Christians and Jews.'[87] The unpleasant phrasing betrays that Rifat could not bear the thought of sharing Berlin with somebody who, in his perception, threatened Muslim unity. It also shows that the Lahore mission was already well under way.

In his obituary, Sadr-ud-Din is praised as a man with outstanding social skills. 'He dressed well, talked well, was humorous, hospitable and endowed with manly beauty as well.'[88] Originally a schoolmaster in Qadian, he followed the liberal faction to Lahore in 1913, received training as a missionary and was sent to London during the war. For the Ahmadiyya community in Lahore, his name is irrevocably connected with Berlin, where he set up a successful and widely visible mission post, erected a mosque that still stands today, and translated the Koran into German.

After his arrival in June 1923, Sadr-ud-Din began his reports, describing to his Lahore readership the strength of the Berlin Muslim community, which he estimated to embrace 15,000 persons,[89] that year's celebration of *Eid-ul-Adha* in the Wunsdorf mosque, the 'bad corner' into which Germans had been 'driven,' and the urgent need to present them with a mosque.[90] As these reports sought to collect money to build the mosque, Sadr-ud-Din took great care to describe Germany's desolate situation, analysing the mission's chances as he went along:

> Germany's case is very pathetic. Its pangs are unbearable. But England and France are too callous to be moved. Christianity has proved an utter failure in the West. It has shown that it has no such thing as even a semblance of brotherhood. To these forlorn nations of the West the Muslim demonstration of the real, practical and universal brotherhood, is an object lesson. It is a wonder of wonders how Islam can weld together different nations and climes.[91]

As they prepared for their task, the missionaries of Ahmadiyya Lahore moved stealthily. We do not meet their names in any of the signatory lists. When Mubarik Ali was targeted, they are barely mentioned. Only in spring 1924, when a building plot had already been found in Wilmersdorf and the first issue

87 Rifat, *Ahmadiyya Sect* (*Pamphlet 3*), 5, 8.

88 The Light 61 (1981) 48.

89 This estimation is definitely too high and probably due to the euphoria of the moment.

90 The articles appeared in The Light (Lahore), clippings of which have been saved in AA/1 (1924–1928).

91 *The Light* 7 (1924) 61.

of *Moslemische Revue* was about to appear, do they surface in a public space. By all appearances, it seemed that the Lahore branch saw a propitious inauguration. The anti-Ahmadiyya hate campaign, followed by the dispute over the caliphate question, cost the Islamische Gemeinde much of its public favour.

The best source for Sadr-ud-Din is his own quarterly. In the first two issues, published in 1924, we see him in several photographs, looking like the benign intellectual he is reported to have been, surrounded by 'some German Muslim Gentlemen' as one of the captions reads, or linking arms with well-known converts in a picture described as 'East and West United in Islam.'[92] In his journal, Sadr-ud-Din also professed that he, too, admired the Germans:

> As one of the outcomes of the World War, Germany today attracts a larger number of Orientals than ever before. Understandably so! Because Orientals have recognized that the German public speaks honestly and straightforwardly in their favour; that Germany sympathizes with them without any prejudice; that Germans possess real understanding for the old cultural values of the Orient. Those are characteristics that simply must appeal to Orientals.[93]

Such phrases were not able to stop the hate campaign, but soon Sadr-ud-Din became a highly visible personality to whom many Germans felt attracted.

The advance of Sadr-ud-Din's mission was very straightforward. It included an open invitation, reprinted in every issue of the *Moslemische Revue*, explaining 'How to Become a Muslim':

> To become a Muslim, a ceremony is not required. Islam is not only a rational, widely spread and practical religion, it is also in full harmony with the natural human disposition. Every child is born with it. This is why becoming a Muslim does not require a transformation. One can be a Muslim without telling anybody. To confess to Islam is only a matter of form for the organization. The basic creed of Islamic belief runs: There is no God but God, Muhammad is His messenger.[94]

Equalling the religion of Islam to the human disposition allowed for a very liberal approach concerning the status of converts. 'One can be a Muslim without

92 MR 1 (1924) 1–2.

93 MR 3 (1924) 1.

94 'Wie wird man Moslem?,' MR 3 (1924) 151.

telling anybody' did not directly cater to the *Lebensreform* vocabulary as the Kheiri mission did. Rather, it offered a pathway for a wide range of individual approaches and digressions, ranging from declarations in public, to declaring oneself a 'friend of Islam,' to receiving the mission journal.[95]

In his articles, he adopted a fatherly, almost soothing tone: 'Germany may have lost the war,' he told his readers, 'but it won the hearts of the nations of the East.'[96] 'The mosque is a vital sign of the friendship that has come into existence between the German people in their darkest moment and the Orient.'[97] This approach, in combination with the openness and intellectual atmosphere that surrounded the missionaries, appealed to Berliners. The Wilmersdorfer mosque attracted a good deal of converts, and, as will still be demonstrated in the next chapters, a very different crowd from those who went to Kheiri and his Islamische Gemeinde.

From Rifat's last pamphlet, written shortly before the authorities refused to renew his residence permit, we learn that the foundation stone ceremony for the Wilmersdorfer mosque, planned for October 1924, was violently disrupted, forcing a postponement of the construction work.[98] After this incident, the Ahmadiyya missionaries went straight to the police, who proceeded to threaten Rifat and eventually to deport him.[99]

In the following years, public opinion turned in favour of the Ahmadiyya. Politicians, ambassadors and journalists gathered background information and discovered a philosophy that was much to their liking. The foreign office, for example, enquiring at the German embassies in London and Calcutta, received letters and documents that put their minds at rest:

> The sect has recently split into two sections, of which one considers the founder Ahmad as their prophet and founder of a new religion, while the other accepts him as a reformer only. Both sections are nearer to Christianity, in so far as they preach universal love and abhor Islamic

95 'An unsere Abonnenten und Freunde!,' MR 1 (1929) 1, *passim*. See also Chapter 7.

96 MR 3 (1924) 1.

97 MR 2 (1925) 1.

98 Mansur R. Rifat, *Die Ahmadiyya-Agenten. Ein Rätsel. Werden Sie tatsächlich von den deutschen Behörden unterstützt und beschützt?* (Berlin: Ägyptisch-national-radikale Gruppe, November 1924).

99 Gerhard Höpp, 'Zwischen alle Fronten. Der ägyptische Nationalist Mansur Mustafa Rif'at (1883–1926) in Deutschland,' in *A'mal nadwat Misr wa Almaniya fi'l-qarnain at-tasi' 'ashar wa'l-ishrin fi dau' al-wathaiq*, ed. Wajih 'Abd as-Sadiq 'Atiq and Wolfgang Schwanitz (Cairo: Dar ath-Thaqafa al-'Arabiya, 1998), 53–64, 263–73.

> fanaticism. Like early Christianity, they avoid political dispute and declare themselves subject to the authorities.[100]

Once the relationship was normalized, the mosque became a well-visited place, receiving, like the Woking mosque, leaders from the Muslim world and Muslim reformers with great regularity. One of them, the Lebanese reformer Sheikh Shekib Arslan, repeatedly defended the Ahmadiyya against slander and misconceptions, adopting the viewpoint that a modern Muslim mission should learn from Christian missions and adapt to ameliorate the image of Islam in the West. As far as he could see, however, 'the only Muslim group, which cares about the issue of Islamic missionary work and defends the Islamic doctrine is called Ahmadiyya, with headquarters in Lahore, India. … This group does not deviate from the correct Muslim doctrine, and tries to spread Islam in every possible way it can.'[101] According to Arslan, 'Ahmadiyya ought to be considered an example to follow.'[102]

Sadr-ud-Din also managed to make friends among the Muslim *émigrés*. In the summer of 1927 the Muslim ambassadors, who three years earlier had fallen out with the Gemeinde, wrote a letter to the Foreign Office asking it to support the Wilmersdorfer mosque financially. Simultaneously, a 'committee of Ambassadors of Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan and Egypt in Berlin' placed a series of advertisements calling for donations to erect the minarets, lay out the garden and build a fence ('1.500 Pound Sterling').[103] That same year, the ambassadors also organized and paid for the *Eid-ul-Fitr* ceremony in the mosque.[104] Gradually, the Ahmadiyya mosque gained acceptance.

3.4 Unity or Diversity?

On the 1930 Berlin city map are marked two spots on the outskirts of Wilmersdorf, where, in their usual sharp competition to each other, each Ahmadiyya mission society purchased a plot with the prospect of building a mosque near to the Muslim population. As we already saw, Sadr-ud-Din estimated their number at no less than fifteen thousand. Even if that number was

100 AA/1: Freiherr von Rüdt on 31 January 1925.

101 Shakib Arslan in *Al Fath* Nr. 161 (22 August 1929) 3 (Cairo: *Dar Al-Matbaa Al-Salafiya*), with thanks to Mehdi Mejib for bringing this text to my attention.

102 Arslan, *Al Fath*, 4.

103 VR/GIG, 1.

104 VR/GIG, 2.

exaggerated, Wilmersdorf was their neighbourhood and the streets around Kurfürstendamm surely harboured a dense web of political and religious organizations. Across the available literature, we counted at least twenty political initiatives and five student-oriented Muslim organizations.[105] Alongside pre-war initiatives such as the Turkish Club, the Turkish Colony and the Orient Club, we find that a range of political exile organizations from Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Iran, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Kazan, the Middle Asia ('Tatarstan') and India established themselves here. Once the student presence was established, the *Verein zur Unterstützung Russisch-Mohammedanischer Studenten* (Association for the Support of Russian Muslim Students), the Islamia Student Association (*Studentenverein Islamia*) and the *Vereinigung Arabischer Studierender Al-Arabiya* (Al-Arabiya Society of Arabic Students) became their neighbours.

The two Ahmadiyyas did not just compete with one another. Muslim Berlin provided them with a whole range of other competitors bent on getting their missionary message across. Figure 3 and Table 1 offer an overview of their religious organizations and the interaction that ensued. Indeed, from 1922 onwards, almost every year of the Weimar era saw a new religious initiative arising from the Muslim population of Berlin. While retracing the activities of the Ahmadiyya missionaries, we encountered no less than ten Muslim religious organizations, which left a paper trail in various register files, correspondence and publications. Apart from the Qadiani missionary, who became antagonistic at an early stage, every one of these organizations at some point cooperated with the Ahmadiyya mission post, despite their political and ideological differences. The – admittedly short – intermezzo of the *Lagnat Mahallija lil Mutamar ul-Islamija*, the Berlin branch of the Islamic World Conference in Jerusalem (IWC) may illustrate this cooperation.

Possibilities for meeting, or just spotting other Muslims in the street, were numerous. Mubarik Ali and Sadr-ud-Din both lodged on the right side of the Kurfürstendamm, Sadr-ud-Din lived on Giesebrechtstrasse 5, and Mubarik Ali on Dahlmannstrasse 9, all a mere five minutes' walk from one another. Like the Muslim intellectuals who arrived between 1921 and 1922, they took up rooms near Kurfürstendamm. As advertisements in *Die Islamische Gegenwart* show,

105 The following organizations were gleaned from Giljazov, Muslime in Deutschland; Höpp, *Die Sache ist von immenser Wichtigkeit*; Höpp, 'Zwischen Moschee und Demonstration'; Höpp, *Muslime in der Mark*; Gerhard Höpp, 'Muslime unterm Hakenkreuz. Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Islamischen Zentralinstituts zu Berlin e.V,' *Moslemische Revue* 14/1 (1994) 16–27; Ingeborg Böer et al., *Türken in Berlin 1871–1945* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2002).

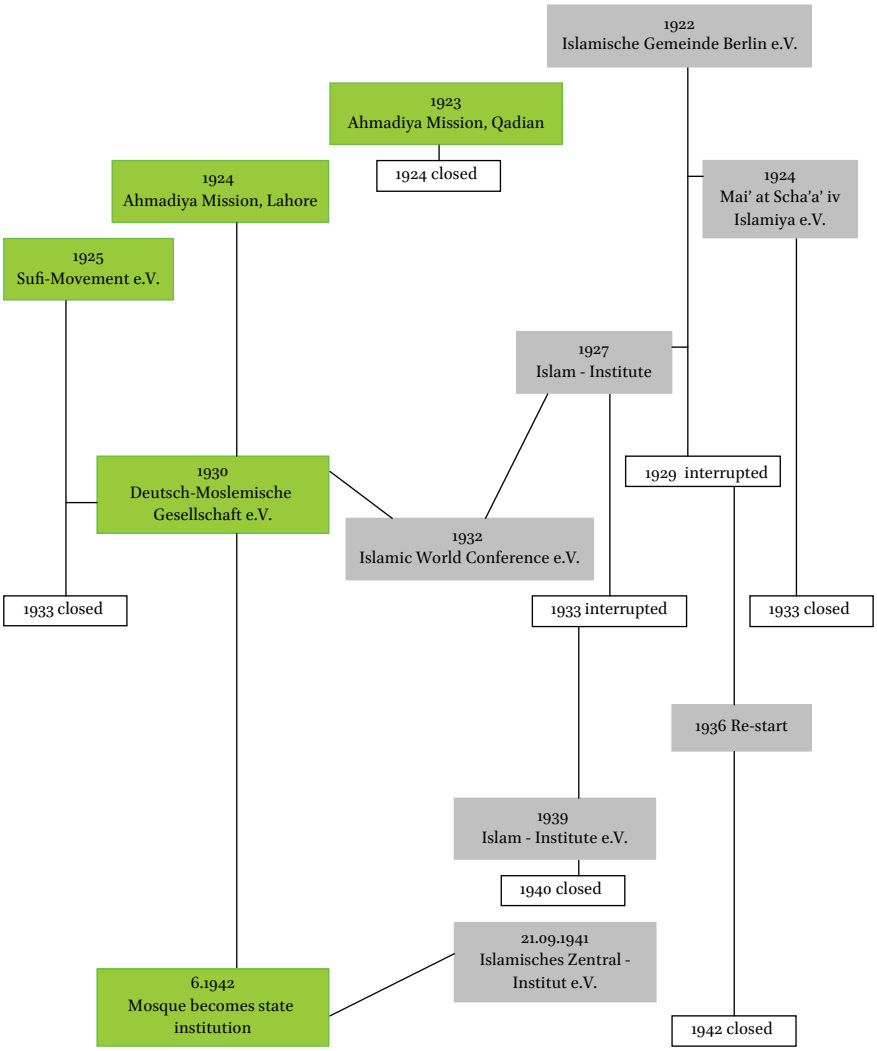

FIGURE 3 *Interactions between the Muslim organizations*
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Arab, Afghan and Persian entrepreneurs opened businesses like 'Mossul – Mesopotamian Import – Export' or 'Pension Tempo' on that street. We trace the Islam Institute to Fasanenstrasse 23; the Hindustan House to Uhlandstrasse 179; Café Orient to Grollmanstrasse and Restaurant Shark again to Uhlandstrasse. Left and right of the Kurfürstendamm, in the most fashionable part of town, a 'Little Orient' sprang into existence – bourgeois, moneyed, optimistic and very intellectually minded.

TABLE 1 *Muslim organizations in interwar Berlin*

	What?	Who?	Where?
1922	Islamische Gemeinde zu Berlin e.V.	Abdul Jabbar Kheiri	Hannoversche Strasse 1, Mitte
1923	Ahmadiyya Mission from Qadian	Mubarek Ali	Charlottenburg: c/o American Express
1924	Gesellschaft für islamische Gottesverehrung / Mai'at Sha'a'iv Islamiya e.V.	Ahmed Shukri Bey Alimcan Idris	Turkish Embassy, Tiergartenstrasse, Schöneberg
1924	Ahmadiyya Mission from Lahore	Sadr-ud-Din	Brienner Strasse 7, Wilmersdorf
1925	Sufi-Bewegung e.V.	Johannes Steindamm	Kaiserdamm 115, Charlottenburg
1927	Islam Institut zu Berlin	M. Nafi Tschelebi	Fasanenstrasse 23, Wilmersdorf
1930	Die Deutsch – Moslemische Gesellschaft e.V.	Sheikh M. Abdullah Hugo Marcus	Briennerstrasse 7–8, Wilmersdorf
1932	Islamic World Conference, Berlin Branch e.V.	Hosseyn Danesch	Zehlendorferstrasse 63, Lichterfelde – West Briennerstrasse 7–8, Wilmersdorf
1939	Islam Institut zu Berlin / Ma'ahad-ul-Islam e.V.	Riad Muhamed	Paulsbornerstr. 20, Wilmersdorf
1942	Islamisches Zentral-Institut zu Berlin e.V.	Kamal E. Galal	Joachim-Friedrichstrasse 17, Halensee

Besides being close neighbours, Muslim *émigrés* experienced a familiarity that David Motadel rightly recognized as bourgeois, drawing attention to the fact that the Muslim bourgeois attitude was not acquired in Berlin but imported from developing Muslim societies in which modernity and global urban culture were equally prevalent.[106] Indeed, the Ahmads, Khans, Durranis, Mirzas, Faruqhis and other

106 David Motadel, 'Islamische Bürgerlichkeit – das soziokulturelle Milieu der muslimischen Minderheit 1918–1939, in' *Juden und Muslime in Deutschland,* ed. José Brunner and Shai Lavi (Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte 37. Göttingen, 2009), 100–3.

Muslim Indian families that supported the Ahmadiyya reform and whose sons turned up in the Ahmadiyya mosque whenever they continued their studies in Berlin, all belonged to the landed Muslim gentry of Northern India.

The same applied to the revolutionaries from India, Persia and Tatarstan. Their political views may have differed, but that did not stop the protagonists from recognizing each other as belonging to the same urban, bourgeois class. While confronting Europeans with intellectual challenges, Muslim missionaries thus also embraced a form of globalization that was neither religious nor political, but a feature of modern urban experience.[107] It presented a decisive factor for the creation of a hybrid middle ground in which the Lahore mission at one point almost became the centre of Muslim endeavour.

On 31 October 1932, three months before the Nazi regime assumed power, Iranian nationalist journalist Hosseyn Danesch (b. 1897) managed to gather together a representative group of Muslim intellectuals.[108] His aim was to found the Berlin branch of the Islamic World Congress, which had met in Jerusalem in 1931, and through this body to strengthen the unity between Muslims and promote Muslim interests in Berlin.[109] All the religious organizations were invited, and the Ahmadiyya mission house offered itself as the venue. Between October 1932 and June 1933 (for the twenty times the branch came together), we meet well-known Tatar, Indian, Arab and Iranian personalities, every one of them an intellectual who left an imprint on Muslim life in Berlin. For the mosque, assistant imam Mirza Azeez, and new Muslims Hugo Hamid Marcus, Georg Mustafa Konieczny and Werner Omar Schubert were engaged (before going on leave to Lahore, Imam Abdullah participated only once). Zeki Kiram and Alimcan Idris represented the ambassador organization of the Mai'at Scha'a'iv Islamiya; Hassan Rasslan and Habibur Rahman represented the Islamische Gemeinde Berlin, and Nafi Tschelebi the Islam Institute.

The participating men (one looks in vain for women in the records) did their best to contact other Berlin-based Muslims and, from their reports during the meetings, they seem to have been quite successful.[110] Centring the religious festivals in the Ahmadiyya mosque was pinpointed as the most important aim.[111] Other recurrent subjects were the organization of religious education

107 Christopher A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World 1780–1914* (Oxford: Blackwell), 194f.

108 The following account bases on protocols and correspondences of the Berlin branch of the Islamic World Conference (VR/IWC), dated between 31 October 1932 and 24 May 1933, copies of which were found in the *Zentral Institut des Islam Archiv* (Soest).

109 VR/IWC, Statute (12 December 1932).

110 VR/IWC, Protocol Nr. 6 (19 December 1932); Protocol Nr. 7 (2 January 1932); Protocol Nr. 9 (6 February 1933).

111 VR/IWC, Protocol Nr. 13 (27 March 1933).

for children and converts, attracting various religious teachers, and the appointment of a reader with basic religious knowledge.

Between the protagonists differences continued to exist, but plenty of attempts were made to mediate them – for instance, by offering an office to a difficult member,[112] through good diplomatic behaviour (twice the protocol mentions an apology),[113] or, in the case of Nafi Tschelebi (who seems to have embraced a different view of IWC activities), through lengthy discussion.[114] We witness how dissatisfaction with the convert group was voiced and a solution mediated, as on the occasion of Abdullah's leave-taking when chairs had been put up in the mosque and the audience allowed to enter in their street shoes (Fig. 4).[115] Even the heating of the mosque on high festival days, always a costly affair, was shared in a brotherly manner.[116]

The attempt to create unity among Muslims in Berlin and gather them together in the only mosque the city had to offer seems to have had a civilizing effect. It enabled the mediation of differences that had previously caused great emotional disturbances (and would soon do again). For the first time since the Kheiri attempt, participants seemed ready to treat each other as equals and to form a single community. When the untimely death of Hugo Marcus's brother became known,[117] the board sent him a message of condolence, for which Marcus thanked them in return.[118]

The effort of the branch to settle down in the Ahmadiyya mosque and to build one big community seemed to have been crowned with success. However, after May 1933 all activities came to a halt. The sources remain silent about what exactly happened; outside observers did not detect any difficulties. In spring, the Berlin secret police only noted that, 'from a political viewpoint, nothing speaks against this organization.'[119] Some time later, the Foreign Office filed an article describing a joint activity of the Islamische Gemeinde and the

112 VR/IWC, Protocol Nr. 14 (20 March 1933); Protocol Nr. 19 (15 May 1933).

113 VR/IWC, Protocol Nr. 16 (12 April 1933); Protocol Nr. 17 (15 May 1933).

114 VR/IWC, Protocol Nr. 7 (20 March 1933); Protocol Nr. 16 (12 April 1933).

115 VR/IWC, Protocol Nr. 4 (28 November 1932). Apart from this entry in the protocol and some photographs documenting the event, not much has been left to reconstruct the quarrel. But we may assume that it presents yet another attempt of the missionaries to reach out to their European audience.

116 VR/IWC, Protocol Nr. 14 (20 March 1933).

117 His brother Dr Richard Marcus occupied a high governmental position in Leipzig. Being of Jewish descent, he was sacked immediately after the Nazis came to power and driven to his death. PA Marcus, box 1, handwritten autobiographical note, 1954.

118 VR/IWC, Protocol Nr. 19 (15 May 1933); Protocol Nr. 20 (29 May 1933).

119 LA/1 (Beobachtung IWC durch geheime Staatspolizei).

FIGURE 4 *The shoe incident: The DMG community gathered on the occasion of Imam Abdullah's leave-taking (1932). First row from left to right: Azeez Mirza, Sheikh Abdullah, Rolf von Ehrenfels, NN.*
IN: PHOTO ALBUM 'MOSQUE & FRIENDS,' *OETTINGER ARCHIVE*. COURTESY SUHAIL AHMAD

Islam Institute during which Habibur Rahman and Nafi Tschelebi rallied for the freedom of Palestine.[120] On the surface, nothing was wrong.

In the autumn of 1933, however, on his return from India, Imam Abdullah found himself confronted with letters from different Muslim embassies raising questions about the financing of the mosque, while Arabic dailies accused him of not being the legitimate proprietor.[121] An indirect answer to the most intrusive decisions of the local branch of the Islamic World Conference, taken during his absence (namely the appointment of rotating Friday preachers and different religious teachers), came in the form of this imam's emphatic invitation to the popular Sufi master Hosseyn Kazemzadeh to lecture in his mosque.[122] In the next chapters, where we address a number of converts' viewpoints, it becomes clear that the esoterically hybrid nature of this preacher's teachings

120 AA/3: Paper cutting from 'Der Tag' (12 July 1933).

121 AMA/Interwar 6, 8, 9. See Chapter 4 for a fuller account of the conflict.

122 AMA/Interwar 26 (7 November 1933).

was much to the liking of the convert community, whereas the austere (and male) viewpoints of the IWC branch were less popular.

However that may be, when we try to pick up the scent of the actors involved in the branch activities, it is evident that there had been a major fallout. The shoe incident had been photographed and continued to stir unrest. Within the year, many participants swapped their position and were seriously involved in a media campaign against the Ahmadiyya. Take for instance the converts Georg Mustafa Konieczny and Werner Omar Schubert, who until that moment had been loyal board members of the Ahmadiyya convert organization. In 1934, we find that Konieczny left the Ahmadiyya to become a board member of the Islamische Gemeinde, in which position he supported Habibur Rahman in his infamous Ahmadiyya hate campaign.[123] For his part, Schubert remained with the Ahmadiyya but nonetheless joined that same campaign in 1935.[124] As for Habibur Rahman himself, his first letters to the Arabic and Urdu press seem to have appeared towards the end of 1933, as a result of which the Foreign Office in Berlin received letters from all parts of the world asking for legal proof of the Ahmadiyya property.[125] In the next chapter, once the viewpoints of the converts have been placed on the map, we shall return to his mission.

Against the Muslim community's self-understanding of being united in essence, the Ahmadiyya missionaries dared to propose an agenda in which religious experiment was central. It was their very mission to conduct and orchestrate religious experiment, the result of which they hoped to elaborate for Muslim religious progress at home. Surely, rotating preachers did not fit that aim. However, this proved to be a viewpoint that other Muslims in Berlin failed to grasp. Once they were thrown out of the mosque, a considerable part of the Berlin Muslim community rallied against Ahmadiyya causes. Under these circumstances, it is something of a miracle that the missionaries could persist. As long as it lasted, they even dominated the face of Islam in Berlin.

How was that possible? During the interwar period, Berlin was the venue for many different Muslim reform activities and discussions about modernization. It does not come as a surprise that attempts to streamline that diversity into one single community utterly failed. In a way, installing rotating preachers and different religious teachers was an attempt to return to business as usual, a state of affairs in which anyone Muslim could do the job of preaching and

123 VR/IGB, 134–83.

124 Umar Ryad, 'Salafiyya, Ahmadiyya and European Converts to Islam in the Interwar Period.' In Umar Ryad et al., *Islam in Interwar Europe. A Transcultural Historical Perspective*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2015.

125 AA/3 (1935).

teaching. Urbanity, social class, and modernity made up the framework in which reformers, nationalists and intellectuals from across the Muslim world established political and religious centres in Berlin. Their purpose was to share a global political approach, to seek ideas and support for the modernization of the Muslim world, as well as to challenge Western ideas of their religion, which the accounts of Christian missionaries had discredited. As a matter of course, their modernity eluded one single definition. Rather, it constituted the perfect field for visions and projections from all corners of the world. To repeat Bayly's observation, 'an essential part of being modern is thinking that you are modern.'[126] In this theatre of possibilities, Tatar, Persian and Arab political leaders could lobby for German support. The Kheiris could promote world revolution as the means to free the oppressed Muslim nations, while freeing the Germans at the same time. The Ahmadiyya could present the Germans with a reformed version of Islam.

It was Abdullah who understood that not only Muslims searched for change. Between the Great War and the mass annihilation in which the Nazis engulfed the world beginning in 1939, many Germans also desperately groped for ideas that would allow them to help shape the future in ways they deemed appropriate and in which pacifism, progress, the bridging of east and west, the meeting of minds, personal well-being and spirituality played a considerable part. Borrowing from, even transgressing to other religions was only one means to this end. Such Germans considered 'modern' a personal way of progress and a shield against all those who wanted to turn back the clock and re-establish the frozen traditions and power structures of a bygone age. In the next two chapters we will address the experimental arena that constituted the Deutsch–Moslemische Gesellschaft and more closely examine the protagonists within it.

126 Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World*, 10.

CHAPTER 4

Converts in Search of Religious Progress

> When the hope for a victorious end of the war, which had upheld the people, finally was shattered, a great sadness, a hopelessness and despair took hold of the masses. Before my eyes I can still see the people standing in groups in front of the posters proclaiming the conditions of the armistice. They cried out, '*Wir sind kaputt!*' (We are finished).[1]

Shortly after making this observation in Berlin, Emmy Arnold left to create the *Bruderhof*, the Christian youth movement that tried to live according to the Sermon on the Mount.[2] In their desperation, Germans embraced religious alternatives – from visionary Christian youth movements like the *Bruderhof* to theosophy, astrology, metaphysics, yoga, magnetism, Bo Yin Ra, healing, monism, the Germanic Faith Community, Wotan cults, and other mystical *völkische* movements that harked back to real or imagined pre-Christian religious origins.[3] Besides, every wisdom and religion the east could muster had a representative in Berlin or Germany.[4] By the time of the Parliament of Religions, held during the World Fair in Chicago in 1893, Buddhists, Brahmans and Hindus, many of whom were also members of the Indian Theosophical Society, had already conquered the international stage. Missionaries from the Theosophical Society, Ramakrishna Math and Mission, the Buddhist Propagation Society, the Baha'i movement and universal Sufism had all made their presence felt in London and on the European continent.[5] When after the Great War, Ahmadiyya missionaries

1 Emmy Arnold, *Torches Together* (New York: Plough, 1964), 20.

2 For a more detailed account, see Chapter 1. Emmy was married to Eberhard Arnold and they started the Bruderhof together.

3 Rita Panesar, *Medien religiöser Sinnstiftung. Der 'Volkserzieher.' Die Zeitschriften des 'Deutschen Monistenbundes' und die 'Neue Metaphysische Rundschau' 1897–1936.* Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 2006; Helmut Zander, 'Theosophie.' In *Anthropologie in Deutschland.* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, (2007), 25–32.

4 Suzanne L. Marchand, 'Eastern Wisdom in an Era of Western Despair. Orientalism in 1920s Central Europe,' in *Weimar Thought: A Contested Legacy*, ed. Peter E. Gordon et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 341–60.

5 World Parliament of Religions: Dorothea Lüddeckens, *Das Weltparlament der Religionen von 1893. Strukturen interreligiöser Begegnung im 19. Jahrhundert.* Berlin: De Gruyter, 2002; Indian Theosophy: Marc Bevir, 'Theosophy as a political Movement,' in *Gurus and their Followers. New Religious Reform Movements in Colonial India*, edited by Antony Copley. Oxford: University

presented themselves in Berlin, a dense net of theosophist and anthroposophist lodges covered the inner-city boroughs, while to the north of the metropolis the Buddhist House was already in the making.[6]

This chapter and the next address Germans who during these turbulent years chose to become Muslims. Starting in 1922, when the first Muslim mission commenced, it ends at the moment Germany entered the next war and the last missionary left the country. Within these limits, the chapters map the different responses to the Muslim missionary activities. Our assumption is that the missionary field and that of modernity created various interfaces in the religious domain in which experimenting with religion played a decisive role. In other words, the interaction of the missionary effort and the energies of modernity created a domain of religious experimentation. Among Muslims in Berlin, this taste for experiment challenged traditional notions to a breaking point.

Mansur Rifat's observation that Ahmadis appealed to both Christians and Jews points to a central feature of the chapters ahead. Not only the Ahmadiyya and their Deutsch–Moslemische Gesellschaft, but also the Islamische Gemeinde Berlin dealt with a range of Jewish and a range of Christian converts, and Muslim *émigrés* in Berlin carefully registered the difference. As for the converts themselves, during the Weimar years, distinctions between their different ethnic and religious roots were of little importance. German intellectuals and artists had been intermarrying for two generations, and many Jews converted to Christianity. The postwar generation was largely the product of interethnic mixtures. What counted for them was contempt of the European traditions and the freedom to choose one's religion, if religion was an option at all. When the Nazis took over and started to 'cleanse' family roots, many Germans were confronted with an unknown 'Jewish grandmother' for the first time in their lives. Others identified with Judaism only after they had been reconfigured a Jew by the Nazi bureaucracy.

For the writing of the chapters ahead, this posed a conceptual difficulty. Some converts composed a conversion narrative that was clearly and explicitly

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Press 2000, 159–180; Buddhism: Brian Bocking et al., 'The First Buddhist Mission to the West: Charles Pfoundes and the London Buddhist mission of 1889–1892.' *Diskus* 16.3 (2014), 1–33; Martin Baumann, 'Importierte Religionen: das Beispiel Buddhismus,' in *Handbuch der deutschen Reformbewegungen 1880–1933*, edited by Diethart Kerbs Wuppertal: Peter Hammer Verlag 1998. Hinduism: Hiltrud Rüstau, 'The Ramakrishna Mission: Its Female Aspect,' in *Gurus and their Followers. New Religious Reform Movements in Colonial India*, edited by Antony Copley. Oxford: University Press 2000, 83–107, and Lüddeckens op cit.

6 After a short phase on the island of Sylt, the house opened its doors in 1924 in Berlin – Frohnau. http://das-buddhistische-haus.de/pages/de/geschichte/kurzgeschichte-des-hauses.

rooted in Christian themes. Others employed the specifically Jewish approach to Islam that was developed in the nineteenth century. But many converts counteracted such patterns. Emile Oettinger for instance was of Lutheran descent but a declared atheist when she met her future husband, Friedrich, who for his part happened to be a converted Jew. To their surprise, their two daughters found themselves redefined as Jewish in the 1930s, with frightening consequences. Another example, Hugo Marcus, the main theorist of European Islam, suppressed his Jewish roots. It was his persecution that made him a Jew, in his own eyes and in those of his Muslim friends. A third example is the case of Elsa Schiemann who married Leopold Weiss and together with him converted to Islam. Although it is difficult to trace her roots at all, evidence points in the direction of a Jewish secular background, but she died too young for the Nazis to establish her descent for her.

As a rule of thumb, samples of Christian approaches to Islam are collected in this chapter and samples of Jewish approaches in the next. However, the often obscure complications mentioned above made it difficult at times to discern sharply between the two. As a consequence, Hugo Marcus appears in both chapters, whereas Emilie Oettinger and her daughters receive a collective portrayal in Chapter 4. Should we rip their story apart? As in Bosnia in the 1990s, the ethnic cleansing of the 1930s disrupted a successful track of intercultural cohabitation. If we do not want to fall prey to the perspective of its Nazi executors, we will have to leave some borders blurred.

While introducing the reader to a range of convert biographies, I try to find some common ground between their different ideas of, and searches for, modernity. In the interwar period, experiments with man's progress in the name of modernity were at the heart of the mission and, for very different reasons, converting to Islam was one of these. Germans who opted for Islam came from a wide social and political spectrum, from revolutionaries and avant-garde artists to conservative Orientalists and, after 1933, Nazi sympathizers. Their imaginative conceptions of Islam differed accordingly, ranging from personal progress and global togetherness to a soldier's religion. Apart from two of those actors, Lev Nussimbaum and Leopold Weiss, this group has not yet been subjected to academic research. The two chapters therefore promise to cover a good deal of new ground.

4.1 A Fragile Equilibrium

Just as it began to affect the furthest reaches of the empire, the accelerating process of globalization also altered European society. Not only did the horizon

of European knowledge expand, but also some countries, notably Great Britain and Germany, grew extraordinarily rich. A new middle class arose, with enough money and leisure to take an interest in the world beyond Europe's borders and to express dissatisfaction with Western civilization. Intellectuals and artists contrasted East and West as binary opposites, a duality in which Asia was perceived to incorporate indolence and spirituality, while Europe was ascribed a vital and dynamic culture that had, alas, fallen victim to materialism and a consequent loss of values.

Around 1900, scepticism concerning European culture took hold among the urban middle classes, 'modernity' serving as the catchword both to celebrate and criticize the speed with which change had occurred. Modernity was considered 'everything that regarded the future and was liable to change in the future,'[7] including technological progress, politics and personal well-being. Whether in St Petersburg, Vienna, London or The Hague, young people experimented with alternatives to the established order and looked for stages on which to play out their convictions. In Germany, *Lebensreformer* emphasized individual happiness. Its scope encompassed health foods (biodynamic farming), body culture (sunbathing, gymnastics, loose dress), life styles (communitarianism, free love, pastoral living), architecture (the Bauhaus) the arts (expressionism, Cubism), and, of course, religion. German modernists were curious about Eastern philosophies, to which they ascribed the spirituality Europe had supposedly lost and that would remedy European materialism.[8]

After the Great War, the global conflict that forms the starting point for the following observations, Berlin experienced in exemplary fashion the devastating effects of increasing globalization. It found itself in the aftermath of a war it had not started but for which it nonetheless had to pay the costs. Towards the end of that war, which involved loss of life on a hitherto unknown scale, the Prussian, Ottoman, Habsburg and Russian empires were abolished, creating a political chaos comparable to the current turmoil in the Muslim world. Russia

7 Christoph Butler, *Modernism. A very short introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, 'Modern, Modernitaet, Moderne,' in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch – sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, ed. Otto Brunner et al. (München: Klett, 1978), 126.

8 Joachim Radkau, 'Die Verheissungen der Morgenfruehe. Die Lebensreform in der neuen moderne,' in *Die Lebensreform. Entwuerfe der Neugestaltung von Leben und Kunst um 1900*, ed. Kai Buchholz et al. (Darmstadt: Häusser Media, 2001), 55–61; Ulrich Linse, 'Lebensreform und Reformreligionen,' in *Die Lebensreform. Entwuerfe der Neugestaltung von Leben und Kunst um 1900*, ed. Kai Buchholz et al. (Darmstadt: Häusser Media, 2001), 193–199; Martin Baumann, 'Importierte Religionen: das Beispiel Buddhismus,' in *Handbuch der deutschen Reformbewegungen 1880–1933*, ed. Diethart Kerbs (Wuppertal: Peter Hammer Verlag 1998), 513–23.

went through a revolution that changed the political topography of Eastern Europe and inspired dreams of revolution elsewhere; Hungary was occupied and forcibly turned communist. Poland drew new borders, with deadly implications for the border populations; while the former Habsburg Empire was cut down to miniscule proportions. France, the country in which a large part of the war had been fought, came out horribly mutilated.[9]

After armistice was declared, Germany lived through a period of serious political destabilization. Most Germans failed to comprehend why the war had ended with their defeat, and it did not help that the political classes refused to acknowledge this.[10] National pride was at stake. Returning divisions formed paramilitary organizations, terrorizing Germany for at least four years. Between 1918 and 1922 the ultra-right created havoc in the Rhine area, the Baltic countries and Schlesien. In Munich, a communist regime took power. In Kiel, Hamburg and Berlin, socialist uprisings and uncontrolled street fighting created high political tension.[11] From the far right to the far left, the country groped for a return to its 'original' state, inventing as it went along a *Deutschheit* (Germanness) that resulted in visions of 'anti-modern modernity'[12] and vehemently opposed the democratic but feeble Weimar government.

A spiritual vacuum accompanied the political crisis. Official religion, both in its Lutheran and Catholic forms, quickly lost authority. The *Kaiser* had been a symbol for Protestantism and when he left the country the Lutheran church was widely felt to be devoid of meaning. Likewise, the occupation of the Rhineland and the refusal of the victorious powers to unite Germany with Austria contradicted the traditional German Catholic self-understanding as the *Christliches Abendland* (Christian Occident).[13] As a result, many people turned their backs on the German churches and went in search of

9 Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, 'War and Revolution in a World of Empires: 1914–1945,' in *Empires in World History*, ed. Jane Burbank et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 369–413.

10 John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities. A History of Denial* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 327–400; Eric Hobsbawn, *The Age of Extremes. A History of the World 1914–1991* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994).

11 Vanessa Conze, *Das Europa der Deutschen: Ideen von Europa in Deutschland zwischen Reichstradition und Westorientierung 1920–1970* (Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2005), 25–100.

12 Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, 'Suchbewegungen in der Moderne. Religion im politischen Feld der Weimarer Republik,' in *Religion und Gesellschaft. Europa im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Friedrich Graf et al. (Köln–Weimar–Wien: Böhlau, 2007), 177.

13 Doering-Manteuffel, 'Suchbewegungen,' 179.

spiritual alternatives;[14] the globalization trends of the end of the nineteenth century had already enhanced the level of knowledge and respect for other belief systems. In the age of modernity, the awareness of other religions not only meant enhancement of knowledge, but also implied the freedom to choose between them. Along with the study of religious texts, theosophy especially encouraged the study of religions through encounter, experience and conversion.[15] In the aftermath of the war, all these elements joined to create a fertile ground for religious experiment. Foreign missionaries with a fresh message were welcomed, turning the Weimar Republic into a stage for Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim and alternative Christian missions.

After 1922, when a fragile equilibrium came into being, Berlin quickly became the cultural capital of continental Europe. A magnet for artists, writers, filmmakers and actors, it became the avant-garde center of European modernity. Journalists representing the main dailies across Europe and the USA joined ranks to report on revolutionary progress and its backlashes.[16] Some 500,000 refugees from Russia flooded into Berlin on their way to the Americas, among them the Russian-Jewish intelligentsia and revolutionary artists the revolution had betrayed.[17] This amalgam of people created an extraordinarily creative potential. For some time, a floating bohemia inhabited Berlin's big apartment houses and these people were critical of European civilization, sympathized with revolution and wrote the books, produced the films and created the art that today are among the classics of modern European art. Proponents of anti-modern modernity, conservative elites, National Socialists and the right-winged paramilitary despised and hated them.[18] This constellation served as the local setting in which students, writers, missionaries and revolutionaries from Muslim countries, constituting the Muslim community in interwar Berlin, interacted with their host society.

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14 Michael Klöckner and Udo Tworuschka, *Religionen in Deutschland. Kirchen, Glaubensgemeinschaften, Sekten* (München: Olzog Verlag, 1994).

15 Linse, 'Lebensreform und Reformreligionen,' 193–9; Helmut Zander, 'Die Theosophie im Kontext weltanschaulicher Pluralisierung im 19. Jahrhundert,' in *Anthroposophie in Deutschland. Theosophische Weltanschauung und gesellschaftliche Praxis 1884–1945*, ed. Helmut Zander (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 33–51.

16 Sigrid Bauschinger, 'The Berlin Moderns: Else Lasker-Schüler and ‚Café Culture,' in *Berlin Metropolis*, ed. Emily D. Bilsky (New York: Jewish Museum, 2000), 58–102.

17 Karl Schlögel, *Das russische Berlin. Ostbahnhof Europas* (München: Panthon, 2007); Verena Dohrn and Gertrud Pickhan, *Transit und Transformation. Osteuropäisch-jüdische Migranten in Berlin 1918–1939* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2012).

18 Werner Maser, *Adolf Hitler. Mein Kampf. Geschichte. Auszüge. Kommentare* (Rastatt: Moewig, 1981); Ernst von Salomon, *Der Fragebogen* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1961).

For ten years, from 1922 to January 1933, all these people turned Berlin into a melting pot in which extremes prevailed – extreme financial crises, extreme political instability, extreme outpourings of creativity, and extreme missionary activity. On 30 January 1933, when the fascist National Socialists came to power, the pluralistic society, which the Weimar Republic had produced, was scattered. The new regime forged political stability through the persecution of anybody who did not conform to its idea of Germanness; it targeted communists, socialists, artists, homosexuals, people who ridiculed its politics, gypsies and Jews alike. Any remaining opponents left the country. The rest of the population conformed politically, joining the Nazi Party or becoming active in one of the many Nazi sub-organizations.[19] The influx of migrants was stopped. Foreigners were scrutinized and refused a residence permit unless they fitted the Nazi profile. Alternative religious groups were closed down or at least controlled. Muslim organizations in Berlin faced the same choices as their German neighbours: Muslim communists fled the country; the rest had to be silent or cooperate with the prevailing regime.

4.2 The Attractions of Muslim Missionaries

As I explained in the last chapter, a heady mixture of anti-colonialism, communist sympathy and the breakthrough of pan-Islamism in 1922 was the matrix from which the Kheiris initiated the Islamische Gemeinde Berlin. When the Ahmadiyya founded the Deutsch–Moslemische Gesellschaft in 1930, however, the country was quickly moving towards National Socialism, and intellectuals of right and left signalled a new atmosphere of 'no-nonsense';[20] this meant that the chaotic market of ideas was given up in favour of a single solution. While the Gemeinde in the early 1920s had attracted revolutionaries, during the 1930s it did its best to be acknowledged by the Nazi regime as representative of the Muslim nations in Berlin. By contrast, the Ahmadiyya and its Gesellschaft attracted a peculiar segment of Berlin society, among which conservative intellectuals and Nazi sympathizers freely mingled in search of a religious modernity. Judging from their contributions to the *Moslemische Revue*,

19 In 1933, when the NSDAP came to power, this party already counted 2.5 million members. To avoid the influx of members paying lip service, the regime put a stop on new memberships until 1937. Once this was removed, membership mounted to 11.5 million in a total population of 66 million inhabitants. (http://www.bundesarchiv.de/oeffentlichkeitsarbeit/bilder_dokumente/00757/index-11.html.de).

20 Salomon, *Der Fragebogen*, 242.

the search seemed to have been truly open-minded, including Orientalism, the meeting of 'East' and 'West,' pacifism, gestalt psychology, life reform, rational conduct, different outlines for a 'future man,' and sympathy with some Nazi reforms, notably hygiene and body culture (see below). Until 1933, the Gesellschaft also met with a wide public reception. An inter-religious entrepreneur, missionary S. M. Abdullah was repeatedly invited to speak to Buddhist, theosophist and Jewish audiences.[21] As an active pacifist, he visited international peace conferences and drew up questionnaires to investigate the peace potential of the different world religions.[22]

The Kheiri brothers and Ahmadiyya each drew a very different crowd, a difference that deepened as the political constellation changed. Only three of Kheiri's converts (Alfred Seiler-Chan, Khalid Banning and Maria Hesselbach) switched to the Ahmadiyya, while only one new Muslim from the ranks of Ahmadiyya (Georg Konieczny) joined the Islamische Gemeinde Berlin. For the rest, the two circles of converts kept their distance. As we saw, the main distinction between the two missions was in their global vision, each of which had different implications for the modernization of the world and the place of German Muslims in it. To this, converts added their own distinctions. Whereas the Gemeinde attracted the student generation born after 1900, the Ahmadiyya appealed to members of the upper middle class, many of whom were born in the last decades of the nineteenth century. In the aftermath of the war, the former age group was branded *Generation 1902* because it had been too young to experience the front line and consequently could not claim heroic deeds; while the latter had fought in the trenches of Northern France and Galicia, an experience that utterly destabilized their lives. In the following pages we shall encounter the two groups at several stages along the line, as we try to understand how they experimented with religion to satisfy their need to accommodate modernity.

To the Islamische Gemeinde Berlin

Among the young who felt attracted to Kheiri's revolutionary message we meet students and artists trying to avoid the isolation that was closing in on Germany; they were critical of western civilization, dared to articulate anti-war views and, to all appearances, were thrilled to join a non-European international movement. From the scant biographies that remain, one gains the impression that for them, joining Islam first of all implied joining the anti-colonial struggle in support of the liberation movements in North Africa and British India. Some 50 students from Middle and Eastern Europe, flanked by a few of the

21 AMA/Interwar, 4.

22 AMA/Interwar, 5; Ib. 12–13.

older generation, first joined the Gemeinde, then regrouped in the student organization Islamia, finally to break away from Kheiri in 1927 by setting up the Islam Institute. Who were they?

At the height of Jabbar Kheiri's quarrel with Islamia, he released a list of active members in his Gemeinde,[23] accusing German Muslims of communism and 'frequent contacts to Moscow.'[24] The list enumerates 163 members, one-quarter of which have European names. In the ensuing correspondence ten more European Muslims could be established; there must have been more. Some members we know about from other sources, notably the female halves of converted couples, are never mentioned.

In the list, the reader encounters a string of German Muslims – Dr H. Khalid Banning, Ewald Brendel, Helene Bosner, Anton Dybe, Adelheid Cappelle, Albert Fischer, Dr Käthe Göritz, Friedrich Hassan Heinze, Erna Hedije Hoeftmann, Walther Hassan Hoffmann, Bruno Kramer, Hans Ali Knofke, Erwin Hosseyn Neumann, Bruno Richter, Elsa Schiemann-Specht, Hermann Schulz, Alfred Chalid Seiler-Chan, Werner Voigt, Ulla Westermann, and others.[25] Across the sources, we can count at least two artists and painters (Bruno Richter and Elsa Schiemann-Specht), two publishers and art printers (Anton Dybe and Alfred Seiler-Chan) and a string of dissertation students. Käthe Göritz, Werner Voigt and Erwin Neumann deposited their dissertations in the Berlin National Library. Erna Hoeftmann, Alfred Seiler-Chan and Bruno Richter secured placements at the university Institute of Oriental Studies.[26] Some can be traced throughout the records of interwar Islam, notably Walther Hassan Hoffmann, Bruno Richter, Georg Konieczny and Alfred Seiler-Chan, who never tired of novel attempts to reshape Muslim community life. Others, like the Austrian Wilhelm Hintersatz (b. 1886), whose adopted name was Harun al-Rashid, soon disappear from the files, but turn up again in the next world war, where he was liaison officer between the Mufti and the main security office, the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (RSHA), and served as a commander of the East-Turkish SS regiment on the Balkans.[27] Of this circle, only Anton Dybe and Georg Konieczny re-emerge after the war to help restore Muslim life in Germany.[28]

23 VR/IGB, 159–64.

24 AA/2 (17 December 1928).

25 After Kheiri quarrelled with Islamia, he wrote adopted Muslim names in parentheses only.

26 VR/DGI, 53, 57.

27 Roland Pfeiffer, 'Der Osttürkische Waffen-Verband der SS,' *Lexikon der Wehrmacht* (2007), accessed 12 December 2013, http://www.lexikonderwehrmacht.de/.

28 Mohammed A. Hobohm, *Neuanfänge muslimischen Gemeindelebens nach dem Krieg* (2000), accessed 30 May 2014, http://web.archive.org/web/20070129062534, http://members.aol.com/dmlbonn/archiv/hobohm2.html.

The list features only two well-known names, that of Leopold Weiss and Lev Nussimbaum (Esad Bey).[29] Raised in very different Jewish milieux – Weiss in a family of rabbis in Lemberg, Nussimbaum in the Jewish revolutionary milieu of Kiev – both had arrived in Berlin with the first waves of Russian refugees. Both embraced Islam, but it seems for very different reasons. Some 30 years later, Weiss describes in his autobiography his conversion experience as an intense moment of rejection of Western civilization.[30] In very different fashion, Nussimbaum experimented with an exotic-sounding name, oriental garb and stories from the *One Thousand and One Nights*, weaving a fable of his oriental origin as he went along.[31] Their biographies will be treated in more detail in the next chapter.

Weiss (Asad) and Nussimbaum (Esad Bey) were Jewish fugitives from Eastern Europe. Scrutinizing Kheiri's list, it seems that other Eastern Europeans accompanied them. The reader meets with Helene Adas, Ewald Brendel, Albert Ceasar Czernikow, Viktor Glikin, Leon Jekelzewitz, Arpad Jerenzz, Diodor Kopinski, Leowar Mirimanian, Melly Podleschewsky, Paul Warkoicz, and Eugenie Woranoff, whose lives, however, could not be reconstructed. A small consolation: many of these family names can be traced to the passenger lists of the steamers that left for the United States every week. A survey of the North and South American Jewish communities suggests that some of the Eastern Europeans on Kheiri's list had Jewish roots as well.

Kheiri's high-flying plans finally came to nothing. Isolated after a nasty dispute over the abolition of the *khalifate*, he discontinued not only the mission journal but also the yearly gatherings of the Gemeinde.[32] In the end, Nafi Tschelebi dethroned him. Tschelebi's idea of Muslim modernization was not world revolution, but the laying of foundations for future Muslim nation-states. Although accused of receiving money from Moscow,[33] he nonetheless acquired the trust and cooperation of important German institutions and, in only a short period of time, created the Islam Institute, the Islam archive, two periodicals and a dense local network. Tschelebi managed to give a different thrust to the development of Muslim modernity in Berlin. In its estimate of the

29 Günther Windhager, *Leopold Weiss* (Wien: Böhlau, 2003); Tom Reiss, *Der Orientalist. Auf den Spuren von Esad Bey* (Berlin: Osburg Verlag, 2008); Gerhard Höpp, *Mohammed Esad Bey: Nur Orient für Europäer?* (unpubl. ms., 1995), accessed 30 May 2014, zmo.de/biblio/nachlass_hoepp_web.pdf; Gerhard Höpp, 'Noussimbaum wird Essad Bey. Annäherung an eine Biographie zwischen den Kulturen,' *Moslemische Revue* (1996) 18–26.

30 Muhammad Asad, *The Road to Mecca* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 174–7.

31 Reiss, *Der Orientalist*, 256.

32 See Chapter 3.

33 AA/2 (17 October 1928), 3.

political situation, the Foreign Office judged his circle 'to have completely distanced itself from the 'world revolutionaries' and their political-military illusions, which dominated the war and the postwar period,' deciding that the time had come 'to begin a fruitful cooperation.'[34]

The Islam Institute indeed became an attractive place for many different people. Director of the university Institute of Oriental Studies, Professor Kampffmeier, and MP Julius Bachem sat on the board; Walther Hoffmann, Bruno Richter and Georg Konieczny served as authors, editors and printers of its periodicals. From the Middle East, Weiss (Asad) and Nussimbaum (Esad Bey) contributed articles; Erna Hedije Hoeftmann and Alfred Chalid Seiler-Chan were commissioned to run a register of converts and to 'rethink the relationship between old and new Muslims.'[35] With a view to an influx of converts, this was a novel policy and it pointed towards restriction: 'Inscribed in the register may be those who are able to give proof of exit from their former religious community and proof of entry to Islam.'[36] The phrase dips into the sensitive subject of religious belonging, revealing that many new Muslims did not deem it necessary to exit from their former religious communities. Rather, as will be discussed in the next section, German religious seekers preferred to move from one religious station to the next, without binding themselves.

Nonetheless, whereas many of the Muslim *émigré*s only lasted for the duration of their university studies, German Muslims guaranteed continuity and durability for the community. There is no doubt that the impact of this circle was in anchoring Islam in Germany. Adopting the roles of navigator, cultural translator and interpreter in the local framework, the transfer they enabled was in the field of local knowledge. In contrast to Muslim *émigré*s, local Muslims knew all about the legal requirements and the political and societal expectations surrounding the founding of migrant organizations. Khalid Banning for instance navigated the proceedings, which led to the foundation of the Gemeinde.[37] Hoffmann, his wife Emina Hoffmann, Erna Hoeftmann, and Albert Seiler-Chan supported Nafi Tschelebi in breaking away from it.[38] Hoffmann even took it upon himself to file a complaint against Kheiri.[39]

34 AA/2 (17 October 1928), 1.

35 DIG, 1.

36 DIG, 1.

37 VR/IGB, 8.

38 VR/IGB, 20.

39 VR/IGB, 58, 66–70, 79, 94–5, 104.

In the 1930s, Hoffmann and Konieczny joined the Nazi Party, were active in various Nazi sub-organizations and supported the revival of the Gemeinde.[40] Hoffmann, a former communist, sat on the board. Secretary Konieczny signed his letters with *'Heil Hitler!'*[41] Seiler-Chan, by then head of the Deutsch–Moslemische Gesellschaft but equally supportive of the Gemeinde and the Islam Institute, pleaded unification with the Gemeinde, a suggestion the board of the Gesellschaft utterly rejected.[42] When the war began, the Gesellschaft was reduced to a handful of members who during the war met in private homes (see Chapter 7). Choosing a different approach, the Gemeinde twice tried to merge with the Islam Institute. The *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (RSHA), the war ministry responsible, among others, for the annihilation of the Jews, the concentration camps, Muslim war propaganda and Muslim SS regiments, supported the second attempt, thus creating a platform for Muslim interests in Nazi Germany. At this stage of recognition, however, no German Muslims were invited to participate.[43]

To the Ahmadiyya

How can one recognize a convert? The answer to this question very much depends on how the act of conversion is defined. Over the last hundred years, sociologists of religion came up with many definitions, from 'a radical change of consciousness in which the individual changes both his world view and his identity,' to 'socially embedded happenings which are communicated through group belonging, narrations of the self and demonstrative acts.'[44] For some, conversion is a communicative act, for others, it signals deep psychic change. For scholars who occupy themselves with boundary making, converts are radical transgressors of cultural borders: they quit their traditional (religious) habitat in order to adopt the space of the other.[45] Seen through this lens, bodily signs that broadcast one's new solidarity seem to be a necessity: otherwise, how can the adopted community recognize that the newcomer is one of them?

Turning the pages of the *Moslemische Revue*, the question becomes acute. Many Germans accepting Islam with the help of the Ahmadiyya missionaries

40 VR/IGB, 134–85.

41 VR/IGB, 183.

42 VR/DMG (September 1938).

43 VR/IGB, 200–17; VR/IIB; VR/IZI.

44 Detlev Pollack, 'Was ist Konversion?' in *Treten Sie ein! Treten Sie aus! Warum Menschen ihre Religion wechseln*, ed. Regina Laudage-Kleeberg et al. (Berlin: Parthas, 2012), 44.

45 Michele Lamont, 'The Study of Boundaries across the Social Sciences,' *Annual Review of Sociology* 28 (2002) 167–95.

FIGURE 5 *'Our Eid-ul-Fitr Festival.' The DMG community gathered on the occasion of the festival at the end of Ramadan (1929).*
IN: *MOSLEMISCHE REVUE* 1 (1930) 1. COURTESY AAII LAHORE

published a photograph in this journal, which they labelled with their real or adopted name. Some added a conversion narrative, others a learned article on aspects of Islam, in which autobiographical traces can easily be detected. Some of the portrayed appear alone, others with Sadr-ud-Din. Two newly-wed couples pose in front of the mosque. One photograph shows a whole family. In addition, the journal published photographs of the community, standing in front of the mosque or gathered in prayer on the occasion of the yearly Islamic festivals (Fig. 5).

The remarkable aspect of these photographs is that the portrayed do not stress the transgression made by those portrayed. Rather, they appear to remain as they were. They are neither adorned with Islamic elements, nor do they dress up in any other special way. 'Dr H. Khalid Banning,' for instance, very much looks like the public prosecutor he probably was.[46] Banning posed with 'Muhammed Taufiq Killenger,' a military-looking gentleman whom an undated Ahmadiyya pamphlet from the 1930s describes as an adventurer who

46 MR 1 (1924) 1. There is a Dr H. Banning in the 1924 Berlin address book who lives in Wilmersdorf and practices as a public persecutor. Most visitors of the Wilmersdorfer mosque lived within walking distance.

has served in the different armies of the world – the Hungarian, Austrian, Swiss, Dutch colonial, Venezuelan and Ottoman.[47] In 1938, he will surface again as M. T. Killinger, enthusiastically welcoming the Nazi occupation of Sudetenland.[48] During the Second World War, an old man already, Killinger repeatedly offers his service to the SS, which eventually employs him as director of the SS Mullah-training in Dresden.[49]

In the next issue, we meet very different characters. One, who names himself 'Konrad Giesel,' is holding a book in his hands on which is written 'With Islam, 1.X.1924.' In fact, we identified him as Konrad Algermissen, in ordinary life a Roman-Catholic priest who during the 1920s published a series of sociological studies on different religious 'sects' with *Giesel Verlag*. His photograph evokes the German intellectual; in the accompanying analysis 'Thoughts on Community,' Algermissen enthused about the community potential of Islam.[50] Hanns Lobauer's photograph, by contrast, corroborates his self-description as a tormented Prussian officer who lost his sanity in the trenches.[51]

Alfred Chalid Seiler-Chan's photograph only appeared in his obituary. He died in 1940, and was commemorated in the very last issue of the *Moslemische Revue* under Ahmadiyya editorship.[52] When he died, he had been a Muslim for 17 years. His conversion narrative, which the *Moslemische Revue* published in 1933, is an exemplary account of the religious quest of his generation and for that reason is related here in some detail.[53] Born in 1876 in Berlin to a Lutheran middle-class family, young Alfred discovered his love for other religions through the slide shows on Christian mission, which his Church organization for Christian Young Men organized with great regularity. To satisfy his curiosity, he decided to join the Theosophical Society, where he was encouraged to learn through his own experience, which he did, going through as many religious experiments as the *Kaiserreich* would allow him. In the course of about fifteen years, he partook in Roman Catholic, Greek-Orthodox and Jewish congregations. He prayed with Baptists, Methodists, Mennonites and the Salvation Army; he attended the performances of the 'Jewish–Christian Testimony to Israel,' and listened to the lectures of the Christian Scientists, Serious Bible

47 AA/5.

48 M. T. Killinger, *'Endlich sind wir im Reich!'* (Finally we are in the Reich!), MR 3 (1938) 94.

49 Pieter Sjoerd van Koningsveld, 'The Training of Imams by the Third Reich,' in *The Study of Religion and the Training of Muslim Clergy in Europe. Academic and Religious Freedom in the 21sh Century*, ed. Willem B. Drees et al. (Leiden: University Press, 2008), 348–68.

50 MR 1 (1925) 25–8.

51 MR 2 (1926) 34–8.

52 MR 1 (1940) 1.

53 Chalid Albert Seiler-Chan, 'Bekenntnis zum Islam,' MR 1 (1933) 29–39.

Scholars, Buddhists, Mazda Nan, Baha'i, Freethinkers and the Society of Monists. In 1911, he became a member of the newly founded theosophical order Star of the East, which he only left after Krishnamurti declared its dissolution in 1930. In 1912, he also joined the Mormons who proceeded to re-baptize him, a ceremony in which he was submerged in the river Spree three times over. In 1913, he became a member of the German Society for the Knowledge of Islam, where, in future years, he would serve as a link between government institutions and the emerging Muslim community in Berlin.[54]

The Great War sent him to the trenches of Flanders, France and Galicia. What he experienced there he does not report, only that it strengthened him in his decision to become a Muslim. In 1923, in the midst of the commotion that the founding of the Islamische Gemeinde Berlin stirred, he finally converted at the hands of Jabbar Kheiri. Once he had opted for Islam, he put his considerable energies into its service. In the last 17 years of his life, Seiler-Chan would act as a manager of the Gemeinde, support the Islam Institute, sit on the board of the Gesellschaft and also act as its secretary general. In 1937, he will plead for the merging of the Gesellschaft with the Islamische Gemeinde, and in 1939 finally help to revive the Islam Institute. Remaining a bachelor and living with his sister throughout his life, he lived for the community and the community loved him for that. Incidentally, among the men in the Deutsch–Moslemische Gesellschaft this seems to have been an accepted way of living. Hugo Marcus, Amin Boosfeld and Hans Ellenberger lived with their mothers. Conservative as they were, remaining a bachelor and living with one's relatives seem to have offered them enough freedom to experiment with religion, ethics and *eros*, yet remain a respected member of German society.

Chalid Alfred Seiler-Chan was the kind of religious activist his time and generation permitted, and a pillar of Muslim life in interwar Berlin. He was an open-minded searcher after truth, and whether that came from east or west did not matter, as long as it satisfied his curiosity and fitted his Prussian-Lutheran perception of what religion should be about. It is telling that he considered Islam to be the 'earliest Protestantism,' a way of being that reduced religious complexity to a simple 'love of God,' a 'love of humankind,' and a few acts of devotion.[55] The final words that Bruno Hiller, the author of his obituary, records for him still breathe the old Prussian spirit: *'Pflichtbewusstsein und treue Kameradschaft'* (Loyalty and sincere comradeship). It shows that for all their longing to break the fetters of the Prussian tradition, these German Muslims were very much bound to their own roots. It took a philosopher of the

54 VR/DGI.

55 Seiler-Chan, 'Bekenntnis zum Islam,' 35.

stature of Hugo Marcus, co-founder and main theorist of the Gesellschaft, to formulate the specificity of that connection.

Hugo Marcus and his Quest for the 'inner child'

In 1931, one year after the foundation of the Gesellschaft, the *Moslemische Revue* featured an oil painting of 'Dr Hugo Hamid Marcus, President of the Deutsch–Moslemische Gesellschaft.' We behold him in a typical thinker's posture, outstretched fingers against his temple, books in the background, and a furrow between his brows. Hugo Marcus (1880–1966) was, and perhaps remains, the most important theorist of European Islam; he forged an intellectual construct in which the rationality of the Islamic tradition was blended with European philosophy's most outstanding rational traditions. In the scant remains of the interwar mosque archive his hand-written conversion narrative, dating from 1931, survived, and corroborates his self-conception as 'thinker.'[56] Studies on conversion often stress that the blueprint of any conversion narrative is the transformation from crisis to salvation, followed by the urge to give witness.[57] In a different fashion, but much in line with Ahmadiyya philosophy, Marcus stated that his journey to Islam was neither governed by crisis (like Lohbauer and other front soldiers), nor by a spiritual journey (like Seiler-Chan and others who used theosophy as a vehicle) but by *continuation*. As a philosophy student, he had embraced Kant, Nietzsche and Spinoza and developed a philosophy of mono-pluralism, creating the foundation of a severe kind of monotheism as he progressed.[58] In this self-portrait he could therefore rightly stress that, while encountering Islam in the person of Sadr-ud-Din, he only rediscovered his philosophical roots.

In the manner in which he positioned himself in the German tradition, Hugo Hamid Marcus was a conservative. He did not embrace Orientalism. He did not study oriental languages; he did not undertake oriental travels. He did not dress up in oriental garb, nor did he let himself be seduced by oriental

56 AMA/Interwar, 7.

57 Andreas B. Kilcher, 'Konversion als Erzählung,' in Treten Sie ein! Treten Sie aus! Warum Menschen ihre Religion wechseln, ed. Regina Laudage-Kleeberg et al. (Berlin: Parthas, 2012), 50–64.

58 The biography of Hugo Marcus still remains to be written. An indepth analysis of his philosophical readings and writings will certainly further our knowledge of the inroads this philosopher forged between the European and Islamic thought traditions. Within the context of this book, we will more fully address his conversion (Chapter 5) and his role in the community during the Nazi period (Chapter 7). On the latter, see also: Marc David Baer, „Muslim Encounters with Nazism and the Holocaust: The Ahmadi of Berlin and Jewish Convert to Islam Hugo Marcus". The American Historical Review (2015) 120 (1): 140–171.

poetry and Egyptian cigarettes. Quite the contrary, he embraced Kantian philosophy and studied the roots of European rational thought. And when he accepted Islam, it was for its outstanding rationalism alone.

Nonetheless, he was a Romantic. Beginning with his infatuation with the *Wandervögel* movement, his many books and articles revolved around a heady mixture of law and metaphysics, religion and ethics, love of nature and aesthetics, and the cult of the 'inner child': that child in man that safeguards his genius, energy and imagination throughout life.[59] In *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of the Germanic Thought*, Fritz Stern depicts Paul de Lagarde and Julius Langbehn, the deeply conservative forerunners of the *Wandervögel* movement, the German youth movement at the turn of the century.[60] Langbehn especially voiced ideas and images that we can trace to Marcus's early writings.[61] The subjects that Marcus introduced between 1924 and 1933 in the *Moslemische Revue*, among them the origins of Western civilization, the reasons for its decline, the search for heroes, the new generation and its budding promise for a 'Future Man,' even the search for a new religion, were variations on a theme that Lagarde and Langbehn introduced, which gave the *Wandervögel* movement its key words and inspired the conservative revolution that came after it.[62]

Langbehn, as Lagarde before him, was also a staunch anti-Semite, a variety of ethnic hatred, which Marcus of necessity could not follow. But as we shall see in the next chapter, it may have silenced him on the topic of his Jewish roots for the better part of his life. Marcus's biography still remains to be written, but from his many contributions to the *Moslemische Revue* it already becomes clear that this philosopher searched for a modern religious foundation that would supersede the old religions, and from the soil of which could grow up a 'Future Man.'

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59 Amongst others: *Das Frühlingsglück* (1901); *Meditationen* (1904); *Musikästhetische Betrachtungen* (1906).

60 Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A study in the Rise of the Germanic Thought*. (New York: Doubleday Anchor Book, 1961).

61 Langbehn in Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair*, 166–8 ('child' imagery); 224–6 (back to nature and male bonding); 172f (the decline of civilization).

62 Hugo Marcus, 'Das Wesen der Religion' MR 1 (1924) 79–84; 'Islam und die Philosophie Europas' MR 2 (1924) 84–88; 'Islam und Protestantismus' MR 1 (1925) 17–22; 'Naturgesetz, Rechtsgesetz und Sittengesetz' MR 3 (1925) 13–23; 'Der Begriff der Heiligkeit im Islam' MR 3 (1925) 49–53; 'Nietzsche und Islam' MR 1 (1926) 79–88; 'Spinoza und Islam' MR 1 (1929) 8–25; 'Die Religion und der Mensch der Zukunft' MR 3–4 (1930) 65–75, 94–8; 'Der Gottesbegriff im Islam' MR 1 (1932) 3–10; 'Moslemischer Schicksalglaube' MR 1 (1936) 6–27.

He preferred male company. *Wandervögel* and male bonding often went together and Marcus too had an outspoken preference for young men. A friend of his youth, Romain, kept loyal to him throughout his life. When Marcus turned 75, Romain composed him a hymn, which he subtitled *'Vor Deinem Bilde'* (In front of your image). Addressing a photograph of young Hugo that was taken in 1900, he praised his 'brilliant eyes' and 'intelligent goodness' and thanked him for keeping loyal to the image of his youth.[63] Marcus believed in his own 'inner child' just as he believed in the transcending power of friendship and the innovative potential of the young. 'Where and who are the people for whom it is worth to (re-)shape the world into a paradise? Where are these people to whom belongs the future as we want it?' he asks in 'Religion and Future Man,' to which he answers himself: 'We will not find them, we will have to create them first.'[64]

In the last years of the Weimar Republic, Marcus certainly was not the only one who raised this question. 'New Man,' 'new leadership,' and 'people of the future' were the catchwords that governed the politics of the day; they appeared in a multitude of book titles and stood for visions of the future that ranged from modern to anti-modern, from liberal to conservative, from far left to far right.[65] Creating 'Future Man' was still very much work in progress, its result open-ended. For the moment it led to very different profiles. Returning to the photograph gallery displayed on the pages of the *Moslemische Revue*, two men of that young and up-and-coming generation still need to be highlighted. At the time, they seemed to incorporate the ideal Marcus envisioned.

One year after Marcus's publication, Rolf von Ehrenfels, born in 1901 in Prague, son of the *gestalt* therapist Christian Baron von Ehrenfels and at home in the literary and bohemian circles of Vienna, Prague and Budapest, answered with 'Islam and the Young Generation in Europe.'[66] Portraying himself as a man of the future, Ehrenfels drew a parallel between Islam and certain aspects of the European *Lebensreform* (life reform). Among other things, he addressed erotic relationships, respect for the earth, ways in which people should greet each other, dress themselves, and shape their house interiors, thereby creating a framework in which they could live and communicate in new ways. Islam, he concluded, is modern because it possesses the potential to shape life in ways

63 PA Marcus, Box 1.

64 MR 3 (1930) 66.

65 Friedbert Aspetsberger, *Arnolt Bronnen. Biografie* (Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1995), 412; Maser, *Adolf Hitler*, 315–16; Kurt Hiller, *Leben gegen die Zeit. Erinnerungen* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1969), 218 f.

66 MR 4 (1931) 81–91.

that would be recognized as progressive in Europe. In 1931 Ehrenfels was still to become an anthropologist but the theory behind the article points to the future; it was already his conjecture that material frameworks shape and direct human communication and experience. Typically, Ehrenfels's own encounter, which made him decide to embrace Islam in the first place, was an intensive experience of mosque architecture, resulting in a thick description that betrays the influence of *gestalt* therapy.[67]

Some years later, the editors of the *Moslemische Revue* thought to recognize another 'Future Man' in the popular author Faruq H. Fischer. Invited to present a piece on the occasion of the ten-year celebration, they announced him as 'the well-known author, one of the youngest Europeans to have gladly embraced Islam'[68] The accompanying photograph bears the traits of a sleek and calculating Nazi youth, and his name can be traced to Hans Fischer who, in 1932 and 1933, was one of the up and coming young men of popular Nazi ideology. Born around 1910 and making part of the Nazi youth movement, his many theatre plays, advertised with titles like *Jung Deutschland voran* (Young Germany to the Fore), *Deutschland's Morgenroth entflammt!* (Germany's dawn ignites!), or *Heb' deine Flügel, deutscher Adler...* (Raise your wings, German eagle...) are full of blood-and-earth symbols and ugly instances of anti-Semitism, which he employed for comic effect.

What did this 'Future Man' write for the *Moslemische Revue*? He called his contribution 'Does Islam 'lack modernity'? A parallel between the old religion and Europe of the present.'[69] On its pages, Fischer, like Ehrenfels, sets off to find parallels between Islam and examples of modern Europeanness, but unlike Ehrenfels, in Fischer's world 'modern' is everything that Nazi ideology stands for. Islam forbids alcohol? No problem! 'The *Führer* of the German people does not take one single drop!'[70] Or, does Islam lack progress? Certainly not! 'Europe adopts more and more Islamic thought.'[71] Instead of intellect and liberalism, Fischer writes, Nazism propagates hygiene, sports and attachment to the earth; instead of individualism, it cultivates group experience.[72] To Fischer, this is what Islam is all about. 'Not modern? Never! Not civilized?

67 MR 4 (1930) 98–105.

68 MR 3 (1934) 62. For 1934, we find Fischer's name on the DMG board, proof that for some time at least he was an active member.

69 MR 3 (1934) 62–73.

70 MR 3 (1934) 67.

71 MR 3 (1934) 71.

72 MR 3 (1934) 71.

Never! Otherwise, our statesmen would not act in an Islamic way. Are you not modern? Am I perhaps not modern?'[73]

In *The Aftermath: Reflections on the Culture and Ideology of National Socialism*, Anson Rabinbach reflects on the curious alliance between the educated elite and the mob that National Socialism produced, concluding that it arose from 'the same aesthetic and philosophical concept, from a deep cultural, intellectual, ritual, liturgical, and ceremonial repertoire firmly established in the nineteenth century.'[74] In accordance, Nazis and non-Nazis, German Christians and German Jews, imagined their world-historical mission to be rooted in the embodiment of the 'philosophical nation *par excellence*,' a mixture of intellectual sources and primordial myth, charging the everyday with religious awe. In that sense, Nazism was no antithesis to modernity but its dialectical *'Doppelgänger,'* Rabinbach writes.[75] The Deutsch–Moslemische Gesellschaft did not escape that curious alliance.

The difference between Marcus's vision, as laid down in his writings for the *Moslemische Revue*, and the solution that in 1933 forced its way to political power, however, must be sought in the peaceful open-mindedness with which this philosopher tried to bridge not only east and west, Christianity and Islam, but also left- and right-wing ideologies. Marcus believed in the creative powers of a young generation, which had been moulded by a religion that embraced rationality as well as modernity, practical humanitarianism as well as spirituality. For him, this could only be Islam, and he challenged young men to take up the quest.

The Women of the Deutsch–Moslemische Gesellschaft

During that same *Eid-ul-Fitr* in 1923, where he noticed Alimcan Idris surrounded by his Uzbek pupils, Sadr-ud-Din also made note of the women participating in the event. But, apart from some female students from Buchara, he only saw two German Muslim women, one of whom was the wife of Abdul Sattar Kheiri,[76] while the other was married to Hadayat Ahmad (*sic*), a gentleman from India like Sattar and himself.[77] With this observation, made a year

73 MR 3 (1934) 73.

74 Anson Rabinbach, 'The Aftermath. Reflections on the Culture and Ideology of National Socialism,' in *Weimar Thought: A Contested Legacy*, ed. Peter E. Gordon (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 394.

75 Rabinbach, 'The Aftermath,' 396.

76 'Frau Fatima Kheiri' appears only once, in the list of members who seek to exclude Jabbar Kheiri from the Islamische Gemeinde: next to Sattar Kheiri (VR/IGB (1928), 46, Nr. 1 + 2).

77 This is Hidayet Ahmed Khan who figures on the first membership list of the *Islamische Gemeinde* as Nr. 14. (4 November 1922). The address he gave was Berlin N.W., Tile-Wardenbergstrasse 10, and so did the only woman on the list, Adelheid Capelle-Khan

before he himself began preaching, Sadr-ud-Din captured the main difference between male and female converts to Islam. Whereas the men in the Gesellschaft often lived with their mothers, creating a space in which they could realize their individuality yet uphold a conservative appearance, German women who felt attracted to Islam often embodied the 'modern woman.' They were emancipated, attended university or an art school and were ready to cross the cultural divide in ways that went beyond the purely rational approach of the male converts.

Among the earliest photographs in the *Moslemische Revue*, there is a Fräulein Fröhlich, Fräulein Maria Hesselbach and Fräulein Graf Wolf de Georg, three unmarried upper-class young women, each posing as 'a German Moslem lady' as their labels read. Only one has wrapped herself in a kind of oriental cloth: the other two present an upper-middle-class image – short hair, well dressed and wearing pearls.[78] Obviously, among the many functions that the Ahmadiyya meeting served, there was also that of mingling between the sexes. Indian males and German females teamed up in circles of friends. They went to concerts and the theatre, organized Sunday outings, played tennis and went sailing on the Gesellschaft; they also had love affairs, disrupted the romantic entanglements of others and sometimes married. Kris Manjapra notes that in the 1930s, Aligarh University counted at least six professors who ten years earlier had completed their doctorates in Berlin and married German women.[79] Abdul Sattar Kheiri, Babar Mirza and Hidayet Ahmed Khan all returned to India with their German wives. Zakir Husain formed a deep friendship with Gerda Philipsborn, a German-Jewish woman ten years older than him, whom he would shelter after 1933 when she fled from Germany.[80] Assistant imam Azeez Mirza married Lisa Oettinger, and from the photograph albums in her family archive it is clear that there were many more German–Indian couples in the Gesellschaft.

(Nr. 6). She must have been his wife. Khan belonged to the dissenters who in 1927 switched to the Islam Institute, thereby undermining Kheiris's power. In 1926, in a document written for the Foreign Office, the latter insinuates that he is a 'communist' and somebody who 'through his immoral behaviour brought several German ladies in serious trouble.' Jabbar Kheiri, 'Akademisch-Islamische Vereinigung (Islamia) und die Islam-Universität in Deutschland' (unpublished document dated 17 December 1926 in AA/1).

78 MR, photographs preceding the 1924 and 1925 issues.

79 Kris Manjapra, *Age of Entanglement. German and Indian Intellectuals across Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 97.

80 Muhammad Mujeeb, *Dr Zakir Husain* (New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1972), 36–9.

The register file of the Gesellschaft lists 24 women who regularly attended the yearly gatherings and were active in the community.[81] Of these, only two women were of non-German descent, namely Mahmuda, wife of Imam S. M. Abdullah, and Lie Mat-Ty-Sen, a Chinese student. The others carry German names. Next to the three *Fräuleins* mentioned above, we know the names of Irma Safiah Göhl, Hildegard Rahel Scharf, Johanna Hudah Schneider, Latifa Roessler, Dorothea Abd-al-Gawad Schumacher, Chadidja Schubert, Fatima Beyer, Countess Margarethe von Stein, Emilie Oettinger and her daughters Lisa Zubaidah and Suse, Tahira Klose, Fatima Ulbrich, Sigrid Heine, Alexandrina Amina Mosler, Miss Jurgeleit, Miss Moerke, Mrs Peter and Mrs Bender. The group portraits taken on the occasion of *Ud-ul-Fitr* in the years 1929, 1930 and 1931 confirm the participation of many young women, looking as if they are having the time of their lives.[82] But, apart from Emilie, Lisa and Suse Oettinger, who marked the group photos with pencil crosses and their own names, we have no way of knowing who is who.

Still, this much can be said. During the 1920s, Johanna Hudah Schneider, Dorothea Abd-al-Gawad Schumacher, Latifa A. Roessler, Hildegard Rahel Scharf and Irma Safiah Göhl completed extensive university studies, during which they met their future Arab husbands.[83] Their conversion narratives stress intellectual equality and friendship between the partners. Johanna Schneider met a man from the Egyptian elite, who first became her 'friend and brother,' then her 'bridge to Islam' and, finally, her husband. She is one who explicitly mentioned the role of Jesus in her conversion narrative – 'understanding Jesus and to follow his example means: to become a Muslim!'[84] Irma Göhl, who commissioned an art photograph in which she poses as a modern German woman, exposing long, elegant hands and a flowery band in her short hair, describes her religious quest as 'a journey,' past Buddha, Zoroaster and Confucius, through the cliffs of Egyptology, oriental studies and Arab literature, until she, too, finally encountered the Egyptian Muhammed Sayyed Abd-Eldal who would become her spiritual mentor and eventually her husband.[85] In 1944, the two of them will direct an inflammatory protest to the League of Nations, describing in detail the 'havoc and ruin' caused by the Italian armies

81 VR/DMG (1930).

82 The photographs preceding the 1929, 1930 and 1931 issues of MR display *c.* 60 women.

83 'Drei Europäerinnen bekennen sich zum Islam,' MR 3 (1931) 53–60.

84 MR 3 (1931) 55.

85 MR 3 (1931) 56–9.

in Tripolis.[86] Of all the German converts, she is one of the few who engaged in resistance to the Nazi regime.

Alexandrina Amina Mosler, who will lead the Gesellschaft through the war and safeguard the mosque, will be given a portrait in Chapter 7. Of necessity, Tahira Klose, Fatima Ulbrich, Sigrid Heine, Miss Jurgeleit, Miss Moerke, Mrs Peter and Mrs Bender have to remain mere names until new sources are discovered. Of course, there were also German women in the Gesellschaft who neither studied nor sought friendship with foreign students, but married upright Germanic men who became Nazi Party members and, in that function, sat on the board of the Gesellschaft. But although they married in the mosque and were honoured with a wedding photograph in the *Moslemische Revue*, Chadidja Schubert and Fatima Beyer remain the exceptions.[87]

Compared with the latter, Emilie Oettinger and her daughters play a role in the history of the Gesellschaft that is at the heart of Ahmadiyya community life in interwar Germany. United in a lifelong friendship with the Abdullah family and connected to the Mirzas and Ahmads through marriage, the Oettinger family mirrors *par excellence* the newly found freedom of German women and their sense of an era of rich cultural interaction. The many photograph albums they left behind tell a story of friendship and marriage across the German–Indian divide. For that reason, we finish our portrait gallery with a glimpse at their collection.[88]

Born in 1876 and in the same age group as Alfred Seiler-Chan and Hugo Marcus, Anne Sophie Emilie Oettinger (born Läwen) grew up in the optimistic atmosphere of the *Kaiserreich*. This was when the economy rapidly expanded, German riches accumulated and politicians were trying to secure a claim for the nation in the Western race for colonial territories. Oettinger belonged to that first generation of German women who gained the right to vote and access to higher education. Blessed with a beautiful voice, her parents sent her to the music academy in Munich where she sang Schubert *Lieder* and dreamt of a concert hall career. Still, in imperial Germany, it was not deemed appropriate for a young woman to seek a life in public and the Läwen family, exhibiting black dresses and rigid northern faces in their photographs, forbade her to

86 AMA/Postwar: 2.

87 See the photographs preceding the 1934 issue (Mr and Mrs Schubert) and the 1935 issue of MR (Mr and Mrs Beyer).

88 PA Oettinger family, with thanks to Mr S. Ahmad and Mrs A. R. Cooper for making the photos and documents available to me. A biography of this family and their transreligious and transnational relationships is in progress and will be published shortly.

proceed. At the beginning of the century, we find her designing *Jugendstil* lampshades instead. This is in the factory of Friedrich Oettinger and shortly after she marries him.

Friedrich (b. 1873) was a converted Jew. He was baptized in 1889, left the Jewish community in 1901, and married Emilie in 1907, out of which bond two daughters were born – Anne Sophie Louise (Lisa) in 1908 and Susannah Adelheid (Suse) in 1910. His business thrived and they lived accordingly. One of the earliest photographs depicts the young couple in their new home behind the breakfast table, well dressed, surrounded by heavy furniture and leather bound books. Other snapshots show the girls growing up, Sunday outings in the *Grunewald* and playing the piano. All goes well until, in 1922, Friedrich loses his business in the bank crash. Some years later he also contracts an incurable nervous disease; he spends his remaining years in a psychiatric clinic, where he dies in 1934. At home, Emilie has to reorganize the family. Lisa, blessed with creativity, is sent to art school to become a painter, while Suse, who has her father's talent for business, leaves school to teach German to foreign students and to find a job as a stenotypist. She soon follows in the footsteps of her father and becomes the family breadwinner. Emilie refurnishes one room in the apartment with a view to accepting boarders. And who knocks on the door? Sheikh Muhammed Abdullah freshly arrived from India to become imam of the Wilmersdorfer mosque. His arrival upsets their routines. Abdullah is a good-looking man and the daughters, 20 and 18 years old, are clearly infatuated. We perceive them sitting on the couch together, beaming at the camera. When he organizes his first *Eid-ul-Fitr* in Berlin, the Oettinger women are in the audience. When Abdullah proceeds to found the Deutsch–Moslemische Gesellschaft in 1930, Emilie is a founding member. In the years to come, they will assist in every festival and every gathering; the Gesellschaft becomes their lodestar and a second home.

In the mosque, a band of young people quickly comes together, with Lisa, Suse, Abdullah, his wife Mahmuda and assistant imam Azeez Mirza at the core. We see them having picnics in the Grunewald, Suse with a boomerang, Mahmuda freezing in her fur coat, Azeez playing the clown, Lisa distant, with mother Emilie watchful in the background. Other German – Indian couples join their picnics, boat tours, visits to historical buildings, or whatever Berlin's immediate surroundings have to offer. In 1934, Lisa and Azeez declare their official engagement. A year previously, she has already embraced Islam and become Lisa Zubaida. Her mother and sister, however, although active in the mosque community (Suse does the bookkeeping and Emilie runs for the board) prefer to remain without religion.

Rather than Jewish women, the Oettingers present the case of modern, emancipated individuals. Of Jewish and Christian descent, but adhering to neither religion, the Gesellschaft offered them a stage on which to act out a novel dimension, in which their mixed descent was allowed to blend with Islam. Lisa was an independent painter, Suse the family breadwinner; both felt free to experiment, not only with religion but also with relationships across the cultural divide and they were ready to live with the consequences. In his memoire *Two Lives*, the Indian writer Vikram Seth asks himself why his great uncle Shanti, one of the many who came to study in Berlin in the 1920s, got along so well with his wife Henny, a German Jewish woman whom he wooed while lodging with her family. What they shared, Seth concludes, was 'something in common between the bourgeois middle-class Indian ethos and that of middle-class Germany, perhaps more particularly middle-class Jewish Germany, in respect for the professions, for education, for savings, for house and home.'[89] In other words, in the midst of a labyrinth of religions, wisdoms, schools of thought and cultures, in the midst also of friendships, love affairs, marriages and break-ups, there existed a global middle class that recognized one another across the cultural divide. It lent the experiment the stability it needed and when National Socialism set an end to the creative confusion, there was enough stability left in the system for the former Muslim students to help their former Berlin friends when the latter came as fugitives to Lahore, Bombay and Tehran.[90]

The growing persecution of German Jews threatened their existence in ways we can only fathom. With a Jewish father, Lisa cannot marry Azeez; and Azeez, who is not a Semite but a 'Hamit' according to the Nazi book, is forbidden to marry a German woman. Abdullah finds a solution. He sends the couple on a lecturing tour of the Muslim communities of Southeast Europe. When they arrive in Sarajevo, they marry in the great mosque. Issued by the Bosnian muftiate, the German consulate cannot but confirm the marriage document, after which she is inscribed in his British passport and becomes Mrs Lisa Zubaida Mirza.

Suse is not that lucky. When she falls pregnant, her Indian fiancé abandons her, leaving her and her mother with the consequences. The desertion adds another dimension to her fragile existence in Nazi Germany. Apart from the danger of having a Jewish father, she is now stigmatized as unmarried with an illegitimate child. Again, Abdullah helps. We see the families getting together, sunbathing in the garden of the mosque, their children romping around. Also,

89 Vikram Seth, *Two Lives* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 401.

90 See Chapter 8.

the Sunday outings continue. However, when the war begins, the Abdullah family must leave the country. For three whole years, Abdullah, writing to him from Lahore, asks Marcus to find out how the Oettinger women are faring,[91] but Marcus has fled to Basel and at some point their correspondence too is discontinued (see Chapter 7).

The survival of Emilie, Suse and her little girl in wartime Germany is a story that in its wretchedness mirrors thousands of other survival stories, except that it encapsulates an ongoing Jewish–Muslim relationship. We do not know how Suse managed to keep up the family apartment, whether she hid her Jewish descent or was forced to work in the war industry, whether she remained in contact with her diminishing circle of Muslim friends in the Gesellschaft, or whether Abdullah's enquiries ever reached her. Of this period, only the memories of a little child remain. From her we know that Suse sent her mother and daughter to the countryside, that she visited them regularly, that Lisa in faraway India sent Red Cross parcels, that somehow the relationship was maintained. Then, in 1947, with Lisa as his secretary, Abdullah returned to Berlin to claim them from the Russians – another religious leader reclaiming his war-scattered parish. It marks the moment when Emilie, Suse and the child adopt Islam as their future religion.

The photograph that documents their reunion displays the deep changes the war forced on them.[92] We see Abdullah, an elderly gentleman with a stoop and religious headgear, surrounded by the Oettinger women: Emilie now shrunken, hollow-eyed, emaciated, an old woman holding onto her lost daughter Lisa, the lady in the Indian dress. The child has grown. Dark hair braided, legs sticking out, she keeps close to her beloved aunt, whereas Suse, the secret heroine of this story, stands bold upright against Abdullah's shoulder. Life can begin again, but the happy experiment that was the Deutsch–Moslemische Gesellschaft definitely belongs to the past.

4.3 The Campaign against the Ahmadiyya

From our visit to the photograph gallery it becomes clear that new Muslims did not adopt any visible Islamic attributes because, to them, entry to this religion necessitated a whole range of further changes, not only for themselves but for Islam as well. For the circle of Sunni Muslims who gathered in the Islamische

91 PA Marcus, Box 11 and 12.

92 The photograph was reprinted in Backhausen, *Die Lahore – Ahmadiyya-Bewegung in Europa* (Lahore: AAII, 2008), 91, with a wrong date and subscription.

Gemeinde Berlin and the Islam Institute, the German enthusiasm to join Islam acquired an uncomfortable edge. In their view, the way converts in the Gesellschaft communicated about Islam and their suggestions about how to proceed were not only unrecognizable to Muslims but also ought to be downright rejected.

Once established, the Nazi regime set the scene for a very different kind of Muslim leadership, although some years passed before the face of Islam in Berlin started to change. Between 1928 and 1936, the Ahmadiyya missionary Abdullah dominated mission activity; Jabbar Kheiri left the city in 1930 and Tschelebi drowned in the summer of 1933 while swimming in a nearby lake. January 1933 saw the Nazi takeover, but that summer Muhammed Ali, then president of the Ahmadiyya movement in Lahore, assessing the political landslide in Germany, still came up with a positive result:

> We welcome the new regime in Germany as it favours the simpler principles of life which Islam inculcates. Islam's great contribution to the civilization of the world is its solution of the wealth problem and the sex problem. … So far we can see, Germany under the new regime is tackling both the wealth and the sex problem in an Islamic spirit, and there is every hope that in the future the whole of Europe would follow in its wake.[93]

Thus fortified, the Gesellschaft continued to study and to single out aspects of European modernity. On the surface, nothing changed.

However, in 1935, with Nazism gathering strength, the Gesellschaft shed the last of its liberal and pacifist members, among them the philosopher Marcus who had played a major role in shaping the intellectual exchange. Having repeatedly received accusations from members of the Islamische Gemeinde Berlin that his Gesellschaft would 'shelter communists and Jews,' Abdullah wrote to the Foreign Office to introduce a new board. His enumeration of party memberships reads like a directory of the main Nazi organizations: 'Our president Mr Boosfeld is member in the *Opfer-Kreis für die National-socialistische Partei*; our second secretary Dr Klopp vom Hofe is member of the *NSDAP* and the *SS*; the treasurer Mr Schubert is member of the *Arbeitsfront*, and the first assessor, Mr Beier is member of the *NSDAP*.'[94]

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93 AMA/Interwar, 5.

94 AA/3 (31 August 1936). *Opfer-Kreis für die National–Sozialistische Deutsche Partei* = 'Circle of Victims of the National–Socialist German Party.' The NSDAP was founded in 1920, engaged in anti-Semitism and street terror, and soon attempted a coup under the leader-

About the same time, Habibur Rahman claimed the Ahmadiyya mosque for his Gemeinde. Profiting from a political atmosphere that encouraged denunciation, Rahman made ample use of it to reach his goals. To voice his claims he wrote hundreds of letters to Arabic and Indian journals against the Ahmadiyya and its community of converts in Berlin. Rahman also wrote letters and reports to the Foreign Office, the ministry of propaganda and the Gestapo, the secret police, accusing the Gesellschaft of 'Jewish and communist agitation.'[95] On several occasions he discredited Imam Abdullah in person, implying he would take 'Jewish money,' sell pork and entertain an illicit relationship with a German woman. The 'Islam' file of the foreign office covering the years 1936 to 1939 is filled with his writings and their echoes.[96]

The Nazi regime reacted to Habibur Rahman's accusations with various voices. Diplomats repeatedly professed their antipathy, judging the Gemeinde 'a trouble maker' and Rahman 'a schemer.'[97] The Orient-Verein, a government-subsidized organization until the outbreak of war in charge of economic and cultural relations between Germany and the Muslim world,[98] repeatedly backed the Gemeinde, claiming it had a right to the mosque and should receive financial support.[99] These letters too are invariably signed with *'Heil Hitler!'* reminding us that not only the Gemeinde but also its German friends stood in the camp of Nazi sympathizers. Notwithstanding, after an extensive investigation lasting from 1936 to 1939, the Gestapo wrote to the Foreign Office that none of the accusations against the Gesellschaft could be sustained. The only Jew, Hugo Marcus, had retreated in 1936, it stated, and the communist members, in their majority foreign Muslims, had already left the country in 1933. Moreover, in this letter, German members of the Gesellschaft were described as 'politically harmless.'[100] Thus it came to pass that the Ahmadiyya mosque, although a British–Indian enterprise and so enemy property and the Gesellschaft, though smeared on innumerable occasions, were both left in peace, whereas the Gemeinde, ostensibly professing sympathy with the regime, found itself in a corner.

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ship of Adolf Hitler. Members who were imprisoned on account of this coup later acquired the status of victim; SS = *Schutzstaffel der NSDAP* = 'Protective Arm of the NSDAP'; (*Deutsche*) *Arbeitsfront* = 'German Work Front.' The latter was founded in 1933, a few days after the annihilation of the trade unions.

95 AA/3 (22 March 1937).

96 AA/3 (1936, 1937).

97 AA/3 (10 July 1936), AA/5 'Indien' (16 October 1942).

98 AA/6 'Deutscher Orient-Verein' (1937, 1939).

99 AA/3 (25 September 1936, 28 August 1937).

100 AA/3 (11 February 1939).

Habibur Rahman strove for possession of the Ahmadiyya mosque and acknowledgement as the main Muslim representative in Germany, but in this he was unsuccessful. The Nazi Party and the Foreign Office knew him as a trouble maker and after the war began he was forced to leave the floor to the Mufti of Jerusalem Amin al-Husseini. His own role in the war remained minor.[101] Politically, Rahman seems to have embraced a mix of nationalist and pan-Islamist positions, swapping, like so many others around him, communism for fascism in response to the Nazi regime.

In early 1937, Habibur Rahman sent a ten-page paper to the foreign office in which he again summarized his grievances against the Ahmadiyya.[102] He accused the movement of causing a serious disturbance in Berlin not only because it owned the only mosque but also because its interpretation of Islam forced the Gemeinde to preclude Muslims from praying there. 'Disturbing,' he writes, is the 'shameless, indiscriminate mission activity,' attracting 'criminal elements such as Jewish and communist agitators.'[103] By way of a solution, Rahman suggested placing severe controls over the converts, the rules for which had already been laid down in the Gemeinde's renewed founding protocol.[104] This document stipulated that converts should not only give written proof of their departure from their former community and their entry into the Muslim one, as Tschelebi had already decreed, but that they should also have to prove 'flawless conduct for a period of two years,' give 'written consent to adopt a Muslim name' and show that they had made 'serious attempts to acquire one of the oriental languages.'[105]

Why did Rahman bear down on new Muslims in a manner that seems designed to prevent them from becoming one at all? Despite the hate tirade with which the author attacked his opponent, despite his obvious greed to obtain the mosque, there is an element in this text that touches on the very nature of religious renewal itself. In an article headed 'We Require a Mosque in Berlin,' appearing some weeks later in *The Star of India*, he or one of his circle explained the rationale behind his statement. Becoming explicit, the author deplores a feeling of foreignness when visiting the discussion circle of the

101 In 1936, Hafiz Abdul Rahman Peshawari, leader of the Afghan pan-Islamist movement, warned the Foreign Office against him, stating that Rahman was 'a Luna park dancer and a communist' (AA/4: 20 March 1936). Spotting him as a troublemaker and denunciator, the Foreign Office kept its distance (AA/4: 1936, *passim*). He ended up working in the war propaganda department.

102 AA/4 (22 March 1937), 1.

103 AA/4 (22 March 1937), 7–8.

104 AA/4 (10 July 1936, protocol in attachment).

105 Ibid.

Deutsch–Moslemische Gesellschaft, and when participating in prayer even detects something decidedly un-Islamic:

> If…a Muslim pays a visit to one of the conferences which are held on Friday evening in the mosque or in the house of the Imam, he will probably find there a Christian lady or gentleman delivering a speech about beautiful landscapes in foreign countries, about the political situation in India, about Persian Poets and all sorts and kinds of subjects of more or less general interest. Real Islamic instructions and information are hardly ever given and if so, the subject will mostly serve to cover up the difference between Islam and Christianity.[106]

Back in 1932, the prospect of street shoes on prayer mats had enraged the IWC branch's participants. Now, in 1937, the anger addressed the ritual behaviour of the converts themselves. Participation in the Friday prayer, the writer continues, presents orthodox Muslims with a shock. 'To take part at the congregational Friday-Prayer is impossible for an orthodox Muslim. … The few Muslims see themselves, during the prayer, surrounded by a crowd of non-Muslims, sitting on benches and watching "the performance".'[107] This, the author concludes, cannot be true Islam. These performances give a very wrong impression of what real Islam is about: 'Under those circumstances, the Berlin mosque… can never be the centre of the Muslim community.'[108]

Whoever wrote this article certainly had been an intimate observer of the comings and goings in the Ahmadiyya mosque and mission house. However, against the move toward modernization, which both Europe *and* the Muslim world overwhelmingly wanted, Habibur Rahman and those around him seem to have held up a frozen, timeless image of Islam, which they 'knew' by right of birth. Acting along lines of *purity and danger* (Mary Douglas), this circle set out to redraw its borders without as much as putting their views forward for discussion. At least, among the many lectures held in the mosque we do not find any offers in that direction. Rahman's rhetoric of hate, of which many instances survive, was his main form of communication. Unfortunately, the times were propitious for him. Muslim *émigrés* in Berlin who suspected converts of eroding 'their' religion expected Nazis to support them. Their wilful cooperation during the war will be treated in Chapter 7.

106 AA/4 (21 April 1937, newspaper clipping in attachment).

107 Ibid.

108 Ibid.

FIGURE 6 *Watching the performance? The DMG community gathered to listen to Azeez Mirza on the occasion of the festival at the end of Ramadan (1936).* IN: *MOSLEMISCHE REVUE* 1 (1930) 1. COURTESY AAII LAHORE

There is a group photograph in the *Moslemische Revue* dating from 1936 in which we see the convert community of the Gesellschaft listening to a sermon in the mosque. What the viewer beholds are European men and women sitting on wooden chairs in close proximity to one another. Although it seems to be cold and the congregation huddles in winter coats, many of the women are bare headed, as are the men. In front of the pulpit one catches a glimpse of two men in Arab headgear sitting on the floor. Is this what our author is talking about? On close inspection, the congregation creates a vaguely Lutheran impression but there is also no doubt that these are Muslims celebrating the annual *Eid* festival (Fig. 6).

What we see here is an example of modern Muslim ritual communication. It is but one instance of the social creativity with which Ahmadiyya tried to connect East and West, Christianity and Islam, building between the need for modernization in the Muslim world and European visions of progress and of the 'Future Man.' Sociologists of religion like to say that religion is not a primordial entity thrown into the world from outer space. In the eyes of its adherents it may be inspired, even ruled by divine power, but the ways in which this

inspiration takes form is entirely a matter of human creativity. In the framework of this book, I argue that the knife of adaptive globalization cuts both ways. Once Islam found a footing in the specific social setting of interwar Germany, Germans in return started to leave their very own imprint.

The interaction between Muslim missionaries and their host society engendered fresh ideas and knowledge transfers in many different directions. Modernization and progress were the key words around which communication circulated; converts who had surmounted cultural borders simply continued to pursue these central notions on their own track towards salvation. Muslims like Habibur Rahman, who clung to a primordial image of religion, probably never noticed the momentum and urgency of their quest.

CHAPTER 5

Jews into Muslims

> You have the sad courage to utter the charge that Judaism does not offer you anything? Judaism with its festive consecration; Judaism with its rich, magnificent history; Judaism with the intimacy of its family life; Judaism with its compassionate heart; Judaism with its pure belief in God; Judaism with its powerful energy to endure – it does not offer anything?[1]

During the crisis years that accompanied the birth of the Weimar Republic, the CV (Central-Verein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens, Central Association of German Citizens of Jewish Faith), the German Jewish organization with the largest membership, reprinted Abraham Geiger's famous pamphlet *Über den Austritt aus dem Judentum: Ein Briefwechsel* (About Leaving Judaism: An Exchange of Letters), from which the above quotation has been taken. In the Preface, Ludwig Holländer stated: 'Although many recommendations to press a particular book on every adolescent have proven unwise, I believe that in this case my claim is right: this *Exchange of Letters* belongs in every Jewish household.'[2]

With its motto *Wehr Dich!* (defend yourself), the CV aimed, first and foremost, to combat anti-Semitism. This Jewish organization stressed the Germanness of its members, defended their rights as citizens, became involved in law cases against anti-Semitism and generally worked towards the realization of the Jewish–German synthesis.[3] Religion, whether liberal or orthodox in outlook, was not its major concern. It was the constant trickle of members defecting from the Jewish community, a trickle that during the 1920s became a steady stream that encouraged the Central-Verein to reprint the Geiger manifesto.[4] In the disastrous aftermath of the Great War, amid the general uproar and many revolutionaries pushing Germany to the brink of civil war, all Germans, whether Jewish, Christian or otherwise, developed a deep scepticism towards

1 Abraham Geiger, *Über den Austritt aus dem Judentum. Ein Briefwechsel* (Berlin: Philo-Verlag, 1854/1924) 10; cf. Susannah Heschel, *Der jüdische Jesus und das Christentum. Abraham Geigers Herausforderung an die chistliche Theologie* (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlagsanstalt, 2001), 87–8.

2 Geiger, *Über den Austritt*, 1.

3 Avraham Barkai, *'Wehr dich!' Der Central-Verein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens (CV) 1893–1938* (München: Beck, 2002).

4 Christopher M. Clark, *The Politics of Conversion: Missionary Protestantism and the Jews in Prussia 1728–1941* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 156, 249, 285.

Western civilization. Germans reacted by defecting from their faith communities in droves. At the height of the crisis, as many as 225,000 to 300,000 Christians were leaving the Church each year.[5] In the Jewish community, the number rose from 100 to 200.[6] Compared with the losses from other faiths, this seemed minimal, but for the Jewish community, with a total of 550,000, the yearly departure of 200 members was equally severe.

In Prussia, a relative high number of Jews converted to Christianity[7] in the nineteenth century and, as with other faiths, the Prussian state introduced a standardized exit procedure. To become a non-member, a person had to make a declaration before the local court and observe a rigid time schedule. The writer Kurt Tucholski, for instance, living under the laws of the *Kaiserreich* and applying in 1914 to leave the Jewish community, was first required to make a declaration of intent before a local court. Next, he observed a four-week probationary period. During the interval the community was allowed to try to convince him to remain. Only when this effort failed did he receive the official declaration of departure. Finally, the departure was registered on a pre-printed index card and published in the community's paper.[8]

While Geiger's generation tended to leave Judaism to gain upward mobility and social acceptance,[9] around the turn of the century very different motivations took precedence, for once having left Judaism, the leave takers could now contemplate a growing number of religious or spiritual options. Some remained without religion; others embraced Christianity; whereas others still immersed themselves in non-European thought systems, such as Buddhism and Hinduism. The Jewish renaissance movement especially, which strove to renew both the religious and cultural roots of Judaism, offered space for artists and writers to rediscover their Jewish roots outside the religious tradition. Some Jews visited Eastern Europe to partake in the charismatic movements of Galicia. Others, like Martin Buber, explored 'folk' Judaism and mystical traditions before making them available to German speakers.[10]

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5 Clark, *The Politics of Conversion*, 285, n. 12.

6 Leo Motzkin, *Das Schwarzbuch: Tatsachen und Dokumente. Die Lage der Juden in Deutschland 1933* (Paris: Comité des Délégations Juives, 1934), 74–8.

7 Clark, *The Politics of Conversion*, 156; Deborah Hertz, *Wie Juden Deutsche wurden. Die Welt jüdischer Konvertiten vom 17. Bis zum 19. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2010), 17–38.

8 Michael Hepp, *Kurt Tucholski. Biographische Annäherungen* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1993), 126, 420–1.

9 Geiger, *Über den Austritt*, 2.

10 Between 1933 and 1938, many of these finds appeared in Buber's publishing house in Berlin, *Schocken Verlag*, including novels, memoires, histories of Jewish communities, liturgical and mystical traditions.

Besides, since Geiger's time, the German and Jewish spheres had been progressively overlapping. Education and full citizenship encouraged the emancipation of German Jews begun during the Age of Enlightenment. Germany's booming industry set the scene for the development of a wealthy Jewish bourgeois class[11] and a growing anti-Semitism accompanied that particular Jewish–German synthesis. Nonetheless, by contrast with their parents and grandparents, who still faced a multitude of constraints, the generation born after 1871 was freer to choose a life career that fitted their individuality.[12] Both sexes thus embarked on university studies, joined artistic circles in which painters and writers of different religious backgrounds met and experimented with all kinds of life models propagated by the *Lebensreform* movement. As Chapter 4 demonstrated, adhering to the religion of one's parents, or to religion in any form, was considered anathema in those circles. A significant proportion of those who departed from their faith community remained without religion.

Incidentally, Tucholski became a Protestant in 1918, thereby joining the quickly growing group of Jewish converts who embraced Christianity after the war. The reason why he made this particular choice is unknown. His many publications reveal that he was not much of a believer; in fact, he focused mainly on writing for amusing or satirical magazines and never showed much enthusiasm for pleasing his opponents. To the contrary, his scathing jokes about anti-Semitism and the Nazi movement made Tucholski an object of public hatred.[13] Religious longing, upward mobility or social acceptance cannot therefore have been among his primary motivations. As Josef Heid recently observed for other Jewish converts to Christianity, in the context of a changed societal framework, it seems more likely that Tucholski considered entering the Church a necessary step towards incorporating (and embodying) Western civilization.[14]

How many Jews embraced Christianity would have remained unknown had it not been for the criminal energy of the Nazi regime to uncover the 'racial' roots of each and every German citizen. In 1933, the SS dominated Office for Genealogical Research set up the so-called *Fremdstämmigenkartei*, or *Judenkartei* (Index of Persons of Alien Race, or Jew Index). Reaching back into the past as far as 1645, this body collected the dates of every converted and baptized person it could find and, in the course of only four years, filed one million index cards.

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11 Andreas Nachama et al. *Juden in Berlin* (Berlin: Henschel, 2002), 53–89.

12 Nachama et al., *Juden in Berlin*, 89–137.

13 Hepp, *Kurt Tucholski*, 291–315.

14 L. Joseph Heid, 'Das Taufverhalten der deutschen Juden. Ein Entréebillet zur europäischen Kultur,' *Jüdische Zeitung* (24 December 2012), accessed 12 April 2013, http://www.j-zeit.de/search/?q=2 December2012; Hertz, *Wie Juden Deutsche wurden*, 221ff.

A working group within the Lutheran Church of Berlin-Brandenburg, recently investigating the fate of 'Protestants of Jewish Descent' in its parish, counted some 500,000 cards alone of bygone members with parents, grandparents, great-grandparents or great-great-grandparents who had once made their departure from Judaism.[15]

5.1 Different Motives

In this chapter, I present a series of biographical sketches of Jews who, during the Weimar period, converted to Islam. Whereas Christian life reformers, living the triangle of 'life–art–experience,' considered Islam part of the wisdom of the East, Jewish life reformers considered this religion as part of their oriental roots. How many decided to embrace Islam is difficult to trace. In the previous chapter, while discussing Jabbar Kheiri's membership list of the Islamische Gemeinde Berlin, I noted that his list contained a string of Eastern European names that could well have belonged to Jewish converts. However, as none of them left any hint of themselves in Berlin, it also proved impossible to trace Viktor Glikin, Leon Jekelzewitz, Arpad Jerenzz or Melly Podleschewsky in the national library, university matriculation register or Berlin address book. The Oettinger women were a different case. Because their father had nominally converted to Christianity and their mother was a professed Darwinist, the daughters were raised without religion. More than the others, their story shows an absence of Jewish ties.

During the early days of Nazi terror, the Islamische Gemeinde Berlin reported that whole Jewish families were taking refuge in the Ahmadiyya mosque, but sifting through the sources, I found no evidence of that. In 1934, the *Moslemische Revue* published a photograph of the Timer family, exhibiting a dark-headed and faintly oriental-looking father, mother and child.[16] The photograph may well have fed such rumours, which were tenacious enough to reappear in the defamatory writings of Habibur Rahman four years later. A small note in the archive of the Foreign Office, also dated 1934, reveals that

15 Hildegard Frisius et al., *Evangelisch getauft – als Juden verfolgt. Spurensuche Berliner Kirchengemeinden* (Berlin: im Auftrag des Arbeitskreises Christen jüdischer Herkunft im Nationalsozialismus in der Evangelischen Kirche Berlin–Brandenburg–schlesische Oberlausitz, 2008); Heid, *Das Taufverhalten*, 3; Deborah Hertz recounts how she discovered the index in the Lutheran Central Archive. Hertz, *Wie Juden Deutsche wurden*, 17–30.

16 The caption runs: 'A whole family embraces Islam: Mr Ahmed Mahdi Timer – Ms Djamile Timer – Mrs Fatimah Timer,' MR 2 (1934), 32.

German diplomats too were on the alert. As ambassador von Blucher wrote from Tehran:

> After a study of the different religions, four Germans decided to embrace Islam and took the necessary steps. It concerns the Sussmann family in Tehran, including the father, the mother and two children. Until now, Mr Sussmann was a Jew. After his conversion he adopted the classical and ancient Persian name of Shapur.[17]

The finds provide evidence of a tense and dangerous era in which people did what they could to escape persecution and extinction. As for the Islamische Gemeinde, every Jewish connection they could lay their hands on served as weapons in their fight against the Deutsch–Moslemische Gesellschaft, 'criminals and Jews' being a turn of phrase that was daily employed to imply Jewish danger. The topic will be revisited once more in Chapter 6, when I analysr the interwar mosque library in Berlin.

The first quartet presented here consists of Lev Nussimbaum (1905–1942), Leopold Weiss (1900–1992), Hugo Marcus (1880–1966) and Elsa Schiemann-Specht (1878–1927). In addition, we look into the biography of Alexander Waldman (b. 1870), who migrated from Lemberg to Jerusalem and converted to Islam to forge a Jewish–Muslim synthesis. Collectively, they mirror the wide landscape of Jewish emancipation in interwar continental Europe. Against the horizon of the Christian converts to Islam who made their entry in the previous chapter, in this chapter I seek to unravel what they held in common.

To this end, I have selected several approaches. In Chapter 3, the interwar topography of Berlin offered a first glance at the interface between religious and intellectual dynamics in this city.[18] In this chapter, we revisit the part of town where the converts lived, thus reconstructing a topography of the meeting points where intellectual exchange occurred and of the Jewish and Muslim infrastructures. I shall illustrate how closely transnational migration, urban expansion and experiments with art and religion affected their conversion. Taking this urban topography as a point of departure, we look at the converts' narratives from different angles. Notwithstanding their previous and very different life experiences, between 1922 and 1926 (the dates framing their conversions), Nussimbaum, Weiss, Marcus and Schiemann-Specht were part of the same urban bohemia, participating in a network of intellectuals and artists in

17 AA/3 (10 April 1934).

18 Irene Becci et al., *Topographies of Faith. Religion in Urban Spaces* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), ii–xii.

which Christians, former Christians, Jews and ex-Jews mingled. Their shared social world poses the question of whether this crowd also shared common ideas about religion. A comparison between the narratives of Jewish, Lutheran and Catholic converts to Islam helps to provide an answer. Finally, I have asked with what arguments they embraced Islam. These steps helped to narrow down the central question of this chapter, namely whether Esad Bey, Muhammad Asad, Aziza Asad and Hugo Hamid Marcus in Berlin, and Muhammad El-Muhtadi Iskandar Waldman in Jerusalem, were linked by something that could be called their Jewish legacy. I will return to this issue in the last section.

5.2 The Interwar Topography Revisited

In the crisis years, the streets of Berlin were crowded with prophets and missionaries. Yvan Goll, the expressionist novelist who came from Paris to Berlin early in the 1920s to study the Germans, takes a satiric snapshot of their many demands and supplies. In his novel *Sodom* Berlin, Odemar, a German soldier on the front, invites the different religious, metaphysical and mystical political currents that 'shoot up like weeds along the large, neglected streets' to become 'shareholders in the Society of Universal Brotherhood.'[19] Poking fun at them, he claims that:

> A few handfuls of Buddhist rice, three teaspoons of Christian holy water, a drop of Muslim rose oil, a Jewish garlic clove, to which a grain of Plato has been added, produces a pie that tastes much better than the daily army-supply bread wrapped up in a cantankerous leading article.[20]

Goll's place of action was Kurfürstendamm, the street in West Berlin famous for its theatres, cabarets and street cafés; it is also a focal point for artists, writers, Muslim *émigré*s, Jewish revolutionaries from Russia and German intellectuals. The missionaries Sadr-ud-Din and Mubarek Ali lived on the right side of that street and built their mosques within walking distance. Also, many of the Muslim *émigré*s' political, religious and student organizations were established in one of the intersecting streets such as Uhlandstrasse, Grolmanstrasse, Fasanenstrasse and Meineckestrasse. Here, in this 'centre of the centre' they are virtually next door to the main Jewish organizations, the Central-Verein on

19 Yvan Goll, *Sodom Berlin. Roman* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1929/1988), 58.

20 Goll, *Sodom Berlin*, 59.

Ludwig-Kirchplatz, the Zionist organizations on Meineckestrasse and the liberal synagogue on Fasanenstrasse 79. Built only a decade prior to their arrival, the huge apartment houses and broad streets of Wilmersdorf offered an ideal location for any well-to-do newcomer able to afford the rent or invest in its social and religious infrastructure. In no time at all, Muslim *émigré*s, Jewish liberals, theosophists, Buddhists, Jehovah's Witnesses and other Christian sects supplied a religious infrastructure that was entirely new to Berlin.

It comes as no surprise then that Nussimbaum, Weiss, Marcus and Schiemann-Specht can be traced to this part of town. Their meeting place, their point of intersection so to speak, was neither the Ahmadiyya mosque nor the Islam Institute in the Humboldt villa, but two coffee houses – the Café des Westens on the corner of Kurfürstendamm and Joachimsthalerstrasse and the Romanisches Café just opposite. Much has been written about these cafés.[21] One was nicknamed Café Megalomania, the other derided in the press as 'a swamp.'[22] Among their regular visitors were such celebrities as poetess Else Lasker-Schüler, journalists Joseph Roth and Kurt Tucholski, philosopher Walter Benjamin, anarchist Erich Mühsam, writers Bertolt Brecht and Alfred Döblin and many others.[23] Members of the Eastern European 'literati' established their regular tables at the back, some reserved for Hebrew speakers, others for Yiddish ones.[24] Erich Mühsam, who after 30 January 1933 was among the first to be imprisoned and beaten to death by the new regime, noted that the area around the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche, the church that towered above both establishments, was 'the industrial zone of the Berlin intelligentsia' and that its personnel lived within walking distance, in a wide arc cutting through Wilmersdorf and Charlottenburg.[25]

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21 Christian Jäger et al., *Glänzender Asphalt. Berlin im Feuilleton der Weimarer Republik* (Berlin: Fannei & Walz Verlag, 1994); Alfred Rath, 'Berliner Caféhäuser (1890–1933),' in *Literarische Kaffeehäuser*, ed. Michael Rössner 108–25 (Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1999); Emily D. Bilsky, 'Images of Identity and Urban Life: Jewish Artists in turn-of-the-century Berlin' and Sigrid Bauschinger, 'The Berlin Moderns: Else Lasker-Schüler and ‚Café Culture,' in *Berlin Metropolis. Jews and the New Culture 1890–1918*, ed. Emily D. Bilsky (New York: Jewish Museum, 2000), 103–45 and 58–102; Verena Dohrn et al., *Transit und Transformation. Osteuropäisch-jüdische Migranten in Berlin 1918–1939* (Göttingen, Wallstein: 2010); Gennady Estraikh et al., *Yiddish in Weimar Berlin. At the Crossroads of Diaspora Politics and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2010).

22 Bauschinger, 'The Berlin Moderns,' 81.

23 Rath, 'Berliner Caféhäuser'; Bilsky, 'Images of Identity'; Bauschinger, 'The Berlin Moderns.'

24 Rath, 'Berliner Caféhäuser,' 108; Estraikh, *Yiddish in Weimar Berlin*, 81–2.

25 Erich Mühsam, *Namen und Menschen. Unpolitische Erinnerungen* (Leipzig: Volk und Buch, 1949), 42.

We know that Elsa Schiemann-Specht and Hugo Marcus regularly visited, and that, upon arriving in Berlin, both Lev Nussimbaum and Leopold Weiss first made their way there to look for an entry into the world of journalists and writers and to find a job. It was in the Romanisches Café that Lev made money as a storyteller in oriental garb and Elsa started a love affair with Leopold.[26] Before they converted to Islam, the four were practically neighbours, living as they did in close vicinity. At least for a while, Nussimbaum lived at Fasanenstrasse 72, in an apartment facing the Humboldt villa.[27] Marcus was housed some streets further down at Fürtherstrasse 11a, barely five minutes from the café, but also only a 20-minute walk from the Ahmadiyya mosque behind Fehrberlinerplatz.[28] Elsa Schiemann-Specht seems to have moved between the ateliers of her Dadaist friends, the painter Georg Schrimpf on Nassauische Strasse, the psychoanalyst Otto Gross on Holsteinische Strasse, and the writer Franz Jung, a bit further away on Steglitzer Damm.[29]

After they became Muslims, Muhammad and Aziza left Berlin for Mecca, thereby leaving the framework of this investigation as well. Esad Bey and Hamid Marcus stayed on, the former until 1932, the latter as late as September 1939. In Chapter 7, the chapter that deals with the war, it is therefore Marcus's story that will guide us through the pitfalls of living as a Jewish Muslim in Nazi Berlin.

5.3 Parallel Life Courses

At first glance, apart from sharing a very special topography, the four impending converts seem to have little in common. In fact, their generation and place of origin suggested very different life courses. Leopold Weiss and Lev Nussimbaum were of the generation born around 1900 and their birthplace was not Germany but Eastern Europe. They arrived in Berlin together with the big wave of Jewish fugitives expelled by the Russian Revolution. As a result, around 1920,

26 Tom Reiss, *Der Orientalist. Auf den Spuren von Essad Bey* (Berlin: Osburg Verlag, 2008), 360 (Photo); Günther Windhager, *Leopold Weiss alias Muhammad Asad. Von Galizien nach Arabien* (Wien: Böhlau, 2008), 103.

27 VR/IGB, 20 (1928).

28 PA Hugo Marcus, box 1.

29 Raimund Dehmlow, 'Otto Gross und Franz Jung,' www.dehmlow.de (2000); Wolfgang Storch, *Georg Schrimpf und Maria Uhden. Leben und Werk* (Berlin: Charlottenpresse, 1985), 37, 46. Where Leopold Weiss found a bed to sleep when he arrived in Berlin has not been discovered, but with a view to his love relation, it is not difficult to imagine him in one of Elsa's places.

Germany temporarily harboured, along with these two young men, 70,000 Jewish asylum seekers from East and Southeast Europe.[30]

As an essential part of the myth he wove around himself, Nussimbaum claimed he was born in Baku, but in 1935 the German secret police established Kiev as his birthplace.[31] At several points he also hints that his mother was a communist, whereas his father chose the side of the nationalists. In *The Jewish Century*, Yuri Slezkine reconstructs the drama of Jewish loyalties during the Russian revolution, a drama that tore whole families apart.[32] The Kiev area was made part of the Pale of Settlement, a region stretching between the Baltic and the Black Sea, where Russian Jews had been forced to live for over a hundred years. When the Kiev area was ravaged by pogroms in 1919, the Jewish population was massacred and the remaining part forced to leave. What became of the Nussimbaum family remains in the dark, but it is likely that it was wrenched apart by different loyalties. In any case, the boy fled westwards with his father, whereas the mother, a communist, went east. When he arrived in Berlin at the age of 16, Lev seems right away to have started to reinvent his past, weaving a tale in which a Caucasian warrior, Russian revolutionary, wealthy oil magnate and noble Muslim gradually merged. In his first book, *Oil and Blood in the Orient* (1928), he poses as the heir to an old Azerbaidjani oil dynasty in Baku. Six years after his entry into the Muslim community, he flatly denied his conversion, claiming to be the offspring of a Muslim oil millionaire and a Russian bolshevist mother who happened to be imprisoned in that city at the time of marriage. The resulting myth he wove around his person doubtlessly allowed him a better start than presenting himself as one of the many poor and unwanted fugitives.[33]

By contrast, Weiss was born into a noble Lemberg/Lvov dynasty of rabbis. In 1914, when the war engulfed their hometown, he fled with his parents to Vienna. After finishing high school in Czernowitz and spending some years in Vienna, where he read Nietzsche and listened to the psychoanalyst Otto Gross

30 Jochen Oltmer, 'Prekäre Duldung und aktive Intoleranz. Das Schicksal jüdischer Flüchtlinge in der Weimarer Republik,' in Jüdisches Museum Berlin (ed.), *Berlin Transit. Jüdische Flüchtlinge aus Osteuropa in den 1920er Jahren* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2012), 34–6.

31 Wilfried Fuhrmann published the original report on www.essadbey.de.

32 Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

33 Fuhrmann claims to be in the possession of Nussimbaum's birth certificate from a Kiev synagogue but he did not publish this document. What Fuhrmann did publish, though, is the internal report of the German secret service (Gestapo). After an investigation, this body concluded that Nussimbaum was born on 10 October 1905 in Kiev. Wilfried Fuhrmann, 'Plagiat, Lüge oder Vetrauen? Wo ist Esad Bey?' accessed 24 July 2014 (internal report dated 3 April 1935 at the end of the article).

in the coffee houses, at the age of 20 he tried his luck in the unquiet frontier capital of the Weimar Republic, already functioning as a magnet for journalists from abroad.

In their foreign surroundings and without financial resources, both young men had to build their lives from scratch. For some years, Weiss accepted occasional odd jobs as a switchboard telephonist and film extra. Following an invitation from his uncle in Jerusalem, he travelled to the Middle East in 1922. In Jerusalem and Cairo, the young man was filled with enthusiasm for Arab ways and the Islamic religion, which to his European mind offered the chance of a simpler and purer life. In 1924, he published his first book, *Unromantisches Morgenland* (Unromantic Morning Land), which contained lively descriptions of the Arab world, but also an angry and bitter critique of Zionism, which he described as 'sick' and 'the illness of Judaism itself.'[34] With this book, Weiss made a name for himself and the *Frankfurter Zeitung* offered him a contract to contribute travel accounts from the Middle East.

Meanwhile, Nussimbaum walked long distances daily, dividing his time between his Russian high school in Charlottenburg, from which he graduated in 1923, the oriental seminar of the Friedrich-Wilhelm University in Mitte, where he devoured great quantities of oriental literature, and the Romanische Café, where he earned his money as a teller of tales as if learnt from a modern update of the *One Thousand and One Nights*. His first book, appearing in 1928 and announced as his biography, offers a string of scintillating Caucasian and oriental stories, each of which is short enough to be recited within five to fifteen minutes.[35] The reader meets wild Jews biting Muslims in the throat, Muslims who swing their scimitars at Jewish heads, Russian revolutionaries, Caucasian highroad men, German generals and Ottoman soldiers, in fact any one in the mood for a good massacre. It is a history of the survival of the fittest disguised as fairy tales. In between, the reader catches glimpses of Lev's life on the streets of Berlin, telling a tale of hunger and holes in his shoes.[36] The East, stretching from Russia to Afghanistan, offered him the landscape on which he gradually formed his identity and worldview, and about which he wrote no fewer than 141 articles for *Die literarische Welt*, which discovered him in 1926.

Once in Berlin, Weiss and Nussimbaum largely shared a common destiny. Besides their position as outsiders, their many journalistic engagements and

34 Leopold Weiss, *Unromantisches Morgenland. Aus dem Tagebuch einer Reise* (Frankfurt am Main: Frankfurter Societät Druckerei, 1924), 36; Windhager, *Leopold Weiss*, 125.

35 Essad Bey, *Öl und Blut im Orient. Meine Kindheit in Baku und meine haarsträubende Flucht durch den Kaukasus* (*1928*) (München: H. J. Maurer, 2008).

36 Reiss, *The Orientalist*, 231–2.

the books that made them famous, they both wrote autobiographies.[37] Academics continue to dedicate research to them and biographers have uncovered their life stories.[38] In 2008, a commemorative plaque in memory of Essad Bey was installed in Berlin[39] and in 2013, one for Muhammad Asad.[40] In a modest way and without becoming part of the Jewish–German synthesis, Muhammad Asad and Essad Bey have thus found a place in European history. The two, however, seem to have had very different temperaments. A comparison of the few remaining photographs reveals their main difference – Lev always has a mischievous twinkle in the eye, whereas Leopold never smiles.[41]

Leopold Weiss and Lev Nussimbaum came to Berlin from towns in Eastern Europe. In childhood, they suffered war and pogroms; then they endured exile, an experience they shared with very many Jewish fugitives. They came to Berlin as strangers, without money, and there they sought to make something of their lives through their access to Berlin bohemia. While not being part of the Jewish–German synthesis, they just happened to be catapulted into its

37 Essad Bey, *Öl und Blut im Orient*, *The Road to Mecca* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1954/1980). Of Asad's books, *Islam at the Crossroads* (1934) and *The Message of the Qur'an* (1980) especially received a wide support in the Muslim world. On his part, Lev Nussimbaum published 14 books, of which the autobiography caused a scandal, was translated into many languages, and turned him into a media star.

38 For Lev Nussimbaum see: Gerhard Höpp, 'Noussimbaum wird Essad Bey. Annäherung an eine Biographie zwischen den Kulturen,' *Moslemische Revue* (1996) 18–26; Gerhard Höpp, 'Zwischen-Aufenthalt: Mohammed Essad Bey in Deutschland. Rekonstruktion eines Lebenslaufs,' *Berliner LeseZeichen* 4 (1996) 55–60; Gerhard Höpp, 'Mohammed Essad Bey: Nur Orient für Europäer?,' *Asien, Afrika, Lateinamerika* 25 (1997) 70–91; Wilfried Fuhrmann, www.esadbey.de, 2006–2009; Farid Hafez, 'Der Gottesstaat des Esad Bey. Eine Muhammad – Biographie aus der Sicht eines jüdischen Konvertiten zum Islam unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Dimension des Politischen,' *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies* 13 (2013) 1–21; Tom Reiss, *The Orientalist.* For Leopold Weiss see: Martin Kramer, 'The Road from Mecca: Muhammad Asad (born Leopold Weiss),' in *The Jewish Discovery of Islam. Studies in Honour of Bernard Lewis*, Martin Kramer (Tell Aviv: Moshe Dayan Centre for Middle Eastern and African Studies, 1999), 225–49; Jörg Tiedjen, 'Asad: Die Botschaft des Koran', *Inamo* 64/16 (2010) 66–70; Talal Asad, 'Muhammad Asad between Religion and Politics,' *Interactive* (10 April 2013), accessed 10 April 2013, www.Islaminteractive.info; Windhager, *Leopold Weiss*; Günther Windhager, 'Vom Journalisten zum islamischen Denker und pakistanischen Diplomaten. Muhammad Asad (geb. Leopold Weiss) in Indien und Pakistan 1932–1952,' in *Going East – Going South. Österreichisches Asyl in Asien und Afrika*, ed. Margit Franz et al. (Graz: Clio, 2014), 433–75.

39 Fasanenstrasse 72, Berlin, accessed 11 April 2013, www.berlin.de/ba-charlottenburg-wilmersdorf/bezirk/gedenktafeln/bey.html.

40 Hannoversche Strasse 1, Berlin, accessed 10 April 2014, www.islam.de/23040.

41 Reiss, *The Orientalist*, 357–61; Asad, *The Road to Mecca*, appendix.

midst. By contrast, Elsa Schiemann-Specht and Hugo Marcus were German citizens. Born shortly after the start of the *Kaiserreich*, they grew up in wealthy families. Apart from the daily anti-Semitism, which they never mention, they led sheltered lives, were able to study the subjects of their choice and experimented with whatever the youth movement of 1900 had to offer – personal life reform, the back to nature movement, pacifism and expressionism.

On first surveying the meagre remains of Elsa Schiemann-Specht's biography, I deduced that she must have had a Jewish upbringing. Born near Hamburg, her maiden name appeared in the membership list of the Hamburg Jewish community and her parents made sure that all eight of their children went to university. An older brother became a psychoanalyst, a younger sister chose to engage in educational reform and Elsa decided to become a painter. She spent her adult life in the Jewish–German bohemia of Munich. She married a Jewish man and later had a Jewish lover. Although few traces were left to reconstruct her biography, I decided to include her in my quartet. However, when I visited the private archive of her sister Minna, I was overcome by doubt. Minna left the Lutheran Church in 1919.[42] Moreover, Mathilde, another of Elsa's sisters, wrote a little booklet about her happy youth, which included happy Christmas gatherings.[43]

By the time Elsa Schiemann-Specht came of age, the Jewish–German synthesis had taken on complex forms. My doubt arises from my difficulty in understanding it. It is quite possible that the Specht family was of straight Lutheran descent, but it is equally possible that they converted to Protestantism – readers must judge this for themselves. More than the other three, Elsa's family mirrors the key issue in Jewish–German history.

The facts of Elsa's life are that, after a youth her sister Mathilde describes as carefree and happy, she proceeded to study the arts in Munich. Soon she became part of the circle surrounding the psychoanalyst Otto Gross, who argued in favour of an erotic revolution to achieve equality between the sexes. With Wassili Kandinski, Franz Marc, Paul Klee, Else Lasker-Schüler, Gabriele Münter, Marianne von Werefkin and her husband Eduard Schiemann, in 1911 she participated in an exhibition entitled *Der Blaue Reiter* (The Blue Rider).[44]

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42 PA Minna Specht, box 1.

43 Mathilde Weisse-Rinck, *Kindertage in Reinbek* (Hamburg: Verlag Hamburgische Bücherei, 1948).

44 'Groteske I and II,' in *'Der blaue Reiter.' Aquarelle, Zeichnungen und Druckgraphik aus dem Lehnbachhaus. Ein Tanz in Farben*, ed. Helmut Friedel et al. (München: Hirmer Verlag, 2011), 318–23. Whereas the participating male artists were celebrated as pioneers of modernity, the pioneer achievement of the participating women artists never received

In 1916, when she was 38 and pregnant with her son Heinrich, Elsa moved to Berlin, where Franz Jung, an expressionist writer and one of the initiators of the anarchistic Dada movement, welcomed her.[45] The same year, two of her paintings appeared in *Die Freie Strasse* (The Liberated Street), the main Dada and vehemently anti-war journal.[46]

Apart from these paintings and drawings, there is not much left of Elsa Schiemann-Specht that could give us a clue to her life; there is no biography, no university research, not even a letter in her sister Minna's archive. Its bare contours must be gathered from other biographies, where she is mentioned only in passing. One small find helped to lift a corner of the veil. There is a photograph of her from 1916, exhibiting a gaunt person in artistic clothing, a child on her hip, posing against the coulisse of the newly built Wilmersdorf.[47] The letter that accompanies the photograph gives us a glimpse of a woman who quite seriously experimented with free love, or what Otto Gross described as being able to conquer deep-seated power differences.

In 1922, when she was 44, she began a love affair with 22-year-old Leopold Weiss. Muhammad Asad, reminiscing about their initial encounter in his biography, describes her as intuitive, melancholic and beautiful.[48] Although he wrote these lines 32 years after they had met, Asad's memory of Elsa (Aziza) was still vivid and loving. It is therefore difficult to understand why he failed to mention that, from that moment, Elsa and Leopold undertook everything together.[49] Together they left for Jerusalem, on the invitation of Weiss's uncle. Together they travelled from Egypt to Afghanistan for the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. Together they experienced a growing feeling of unease and revulsion against Western civilization. Together, as I recount in the next section, they decided to embrace Islam.

On the other side of the *Kaiserreich*, Hugo Marcus grew up in a family of Jewish industrialists and attended the gymnasium in Posen. When the Great War ended in what must have been a period of disorientation and despair, he published a series of expressionistic essays in which he explained his younger

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the same attention. Only in recent years, Marianne von Werefkin and Gabriele Münter have been rediscovered as the driving forces. The work of Elsa Schiemann still awaits discovery.

45 Storch, *Georg Schrimpf und Maria Uhden*, 37.

46 'No title I and II,' in *Verantwortung zum fremden Zwang. Fünfte Folge der Vorarbeit*, ed. Franz Jung et al. (Berlin: Verlag Freie Strasse, 1916), 7–8.

47 Storch, *Georg Schrimpf und Maria Uhden*, 46.

48 Asad, *The Road to Mecca*, 172–5.

49 Tiedjen, *Muhammad Asad*, 67.

self to his lover.[50] The texts portray a person struggling to combine shy romanticism with critical enquiry. They recount how his younger self adored an older boy in school without ever finding the courage to disclose his infatuation; how he immersed himself in the study of antiquity and discovered Plato; how he started to doubt the existence of God and embraced atheism; and how philosophy and male friendship eventually combined to overcome his fear of life.[51] Growing up, Hugo joined the *Wandervögel* (the German youth movement in the Romantic tradition) and, at the age of 20, he published his first novel, *Frühlingsglück* (Spring Happiness).[52]

Hugo Marcus came from a Jewish family. But it is only from his later confrontations with the Nazi regime that we know about this. Except on one occasion (see below), it did not leave any trace in his life. He portrays his father as a leading industrialist of the *Kaiserreich*, a railroad entrepreneur and an investment banker.[53] Hugo was destined to follow in his footsteps, so was sent to Berlin to serve an apprenticeship. We do not know if there was a conflict between father and son about his career, but in 1903 we know that he entered Berlin University to study philosophy and that he eventually became a productive philosopher, well established in the leading professional journals.

The war uprooted his life. A diary note, dated 1917 and written on leave in Berlin, displays revulsion and a fear of returning to the front.[54] When at last the armistice was signed, the new Polish republic nationalized his father's business. For the first time in his life, Hugo had to earn a living. Because his essays and criticisms hardly provided an income, he set himself up as a teacher of the German language and Western civilization, in which function he happened especially to cater to students from Muslim countries. His students eventually brought him into contact with Sadr-ud-Din, who promptly offered him a lifetime job as manager of the mosque. The assignment served to combine his many capacities, from organizing courses and lectures, to serving as a reader

50 Hugo Marcus, 'Ich hole mein Führungszeugnis fuer den Dienst im besetzten Gebiet. Ein Tagebuchblatt aus dem Vorjahr, Robert Walser gewidmet,' *Das junge Deutschland* (1918) 116–18; 'Mein toter Freund erzählt sich selbst seine Knabenzeit,' *Das junge Deutschland* (1918) 222–4; 'Aus einem stillen Buche,' *Das junge Deutschland* (1919) 350–1; (1920) 20–4; 65–6; 105–9; 159–64; 'Dialog vom Sinn der Güte,' *Der Feuerreiter* 1 (1923) 83–6; 'Drei Begegnungen,' *Der Feuerreiter* 4 (1923) 14–16.

51 Marcus, 'Aus einem stillen Buche,' 105–9.

52 The book could could not be traced.

53 Hugo Marcus, *Three Autobiographical Sketches* (1957). PA Marcus, Box 1. A short version appeared in *Islam Our Choice*, ed. S. A. Khulusi et al. 115–16. Woking: Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust, The Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, Surrey, 1961.

54 Hugo Marcus, 'Ich hole mein Führungszeugnis,' 116–18.

and editor of the *Moslemische Revue*, to rethinking European culture.[55] The encounter with Sadr-ud-Din reoriented his life. Accepting Islam in 1925 during the opening ceremony of the mosque, Marcus defended his step as being in continuity with his upbringing and philosophical thinking.[56]

As yet, no academic research has been published that sheds light on Hugo Marcus's life's work. Nonetheless, prior to his conversion he had already written seven books, two novels and five philosophical works. His dissertation was dedicated to the problems of mono-pluralism, the philosophy that treats the plural forms in which the world manifests itself as an expression of unity, and unity as the representation of plurality. For Marcus, the world was a compromise.[57] This text earned him a title and respect in the academic community. He had also written numerous contributions for philosophical journals, expressionist magazines and the main German papers.[58] As can be concluded from the many paper clippings in his archive, all of his work was well received. In 1925, the year his life was changed, Marcus was 45 years old and a much-respected publicist.

5.4 Four Passages from Judaism to Islam

Lev Nussimbaum, Leopold Weiss, Elsa Schiemann-Specht and Hugo Marcus might have been of Jewish origin, but they did not define themselves as Jews. Their life stories reveal either weak ties to Judaism or none at all. Weiss remembers that, although his parents were not very religious, they were still faithful to the Jewish cultural heritage and took care to ensure that their son received Hebrew tuition.[59] The other three do not appear to have received such an education. There is no mention of Jewish history or of intimate family gatherings on *Pesach* and *Sukoth*. Only once, when disclosing himself to his lover, Marcus made an allusion to his Jewishness, the context of which, however, was his loyalty to Germany. At the age of 19, he recounts, when wandering through

55 Marcus, *Three Autobiographical Sketches*, 1–2.

56 'Great German scholar won. Dr Marcus declares Islam,' *The Light* 5 (1925) 1.

57 Hugo Marcus, *Die Philosophie des Monopluralismus. Grundzüge einer analytischen Naturphilosophie und eines A B C der Begriffe im Versuch* (Berlin: Concordia. Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1907).

58 His prewar books, which were repeatedly reviewed, are: *Das Frühlingsglück* (1900); *Die allgemeine Bildung in Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft* (1903); *Meditationen* (1904); *Musikästhetische Probleme* (1906); *Die Philosophie des Monopluralismus* (1907); *Die ornamentale Schönheit der Landschaft* (1912) and *Das Tor dröhnt zu* (1915).

59 Windhager, *Leopold Weiss*, 45–7.

central Germany, the beauty of the landscape provoked an overwhelming patriotism in his heart. Although feeling innately proud, he also remembers immediately suppressing that feeling, because he was all too aware that patriotism was something to which Jews were not entitled.[60]

What was it that attracted these 'non-Jewish Jews' – to borrow the famous expression from Isaac Deutscher – to Islam? Why did they turn to religion at all? A tentative answer can be gleaned from their conversion narratives. In the case of Nussimbaum, who apparently did not draw up such a document, the answer must be sought in the traces he left in the registers and lists of names of the Muslim organizations and university studies in which he engaged.

From Lev Nussimbaum to Esad Bey

To start with the youngest, Lev was 16 when his name first appeared on the list of delegates supporting the founding of the Islamische Gemeinde zu Berlin (IGB). Although he managed to be in the thick of things when the Gemeinde was founded, he did not convert with Jabbar Kheiri, but in the Ottoman embassy, where Imam Shukri Bey listened to his recitation of the *Fatiha* on 4 August 1922. This is an indication that, rather than a member of a faith, Lev yearned to be part of a glorious tradition. Later that day, he was also elected deputy to the head of the delegation of the Gemeinde. In the protocol dated 4 November 1922, he is back again, appearing as No. 3 on the list of delegates – 'Esad Bey, Wilmersdorf, Fregestrasse 8b.'[61] This is the nucleus of Lev's search for identity, showing him at the moment of a *rite de passage*. In later documents he sticks to it, but feels free still to add numerous variations, such as Essad Bey Nusseirbaum, Assad Bey Nussenbaum, and so on.[62] The same process of decision-making can be observed in the way the boy settles on his proper place of birth. When, in October 1922, he registered at the Seminar for Oriental Languages, he stated that he came from Georgia.[63] In 1925, this was changed to Russia. Finally, in 1928, Lev decided in favour of the place that will offer the topography for his biography, Azerbaijan.[64]

60 Marcus, 'Aus einem stillen Buche,' 109.

61 VR/IGB, 4, 8 (1922).

62 Höpp, 'Nur Orient für Europäer,' 77; Höpp, 'Mohammed Essad Bey,' epilogue; Reiss, *Der Orientalist*, 242.

63 His father, Abram Nussenbaum, originated from Tiflis. Wilfried Fuhrmann, 'Biographie Essad-Bey,' www.essadbey.de, 6.

64 VR/IGB, 20 (1922); Höpp, 'Nur Orient für Europäer,' 77; Höpp, 'Mohammed Essad Bey,' epilogue; Reiss, *Der Orientalist*, 242.

For years Lev continued to grope for a fitting identity and regularly appeared in the Romanische Café to recite his oriental stories dressed in loose garments, with earrings and a turban on his head.[65] The poetess Else Lasker-Schüler (1869–1945), who in her enchanting poetry transformed herself into Yusuf the flute-playing oriental, seems to have taken him under her wing. Ernst Ginsberg, her first biographer, mentions that Lev helped her to make choices in her poetry.[66]

All these fragments join to reveal that Lev Nussimbaum's passage to Islam was firmly embedded in the Romantic tradition of Jewish Orientalism. His creativity and the fairytale aura of his approach even brought him close to Germany's greatest expressionist poetess Lasker-Schüler, who revitalized her Jewish roots in much the same manner, impersonating Yusuf, and writing short prose texts like 'I Dance in the Mosque' to express Judaism's affinity to Islam.[67] Likewise, rather than choosing an intellectual entry, Lev became a performer who appropriated and embodied the Orient. However, instead of revitalizing the Jewish tradition, he embraced the religion that many of his Jewish contemporaries considered a logical continuation of Judaism. When discussing the conversion narratives of Leopold Weiss and Hugo Marcus, it will appear that they acted upon a similar conviction.

From Leopold Weiss and Elsa Schiemann-Specht to Muhammad and Aziza Asad

The passage that describes Elsa's and Leopold's entry into Islam starts in the following manner:

> One day – it was in September 1926 – Elsa and I found ourselves travelling in the Berlin subway. It was an upper-class compartment. My eye fell casually on a well-dressed man opposite me, apparently a well-to-do business man, with a beautiful brief-case on his knee and a large diamond on his hand.[68]

65 Höpp, 'Noussimbaum wird Essad Bey,' 18; Reiner Schulze, 'Schauspiel oder Nachahmung? Zum Theaterbegriff arabischer Reiseschriftsteller im 19. Jh.' *Die Welt des Islams* 34 (1994) 83ff.

66 Ernst Ginsberg, ed., *Else Lasker-Schüler. Dichtungen und Dokumente. Gedichte. Prosa. Schauspiele. Briefe. Zeugnis und Erinnerung* (München: Kösel, 1951), epilogue.

67 Else Lasker-Schüler, 'Ich tanze in der Moschee,' in Else Lasker-Schüler, *Die Nächte von Tino von Bagdad* (Berlin: Paul Cassirer, 1919) 7–8; Bauschinger, 'The Berlin Moderns.'

68 Asad, *The Road to Mecca*, 308.

The couple had just returned from their second journey through the Middle East, which had lasted two whole years. Once back in Berlin they felt like strangers, looking at the once familiar urban reality with different eyes and complaining about the asphalt under their feet. For Leopold, the sight of this businessman clicked into place a long-predicted change of worldview. Now that it came to pass, everything around him suddenly appeared in a different light. Studying the other passengers, he realized that his co-travellers somehow look worried, 'as if in pain.' 'I had never before seen so many unhappy faces around me.'[69] When he mentioned this to Elsa, she corroborated his impression. The decisive revelation came after they returned home. Weiss picked up a Koran that still laying open on his desk and chanced upon the following lines, 'You are obsessed by greed for more and more/until you go down to your graves.'[70] From these lines he jumped to those wealthy Berliners out there, equipped with everything money could buy. 'For a moment I was speechless. I think the book shook in my hands. Then I handed it to Elsa. "Read this". Is it not an answer of what we saw in the subway?'[71]

The vision in the subway and the force of the Koran text joined to clear the way for an overwhelming experience that shook the roots of their identities. It took the form of a *mysterium tremendum*, which the scholar of religion Rudolph Otto described in 1917 as the essence of religion.[72] The shared nature of this experience must have increased the shock. Elsa and Leopold decided to embrace Islam because they longed to leave Europe behind and immerse themselves in the desert of Arabia, a landscape they thought would engender a truer and purer approach to reality than that of decadent urban Europe. Some years later, while contemplating the sight of camels kneeling, Leopold would think of the biblical scene of Abraham beholding Rebecca by the well and, like Lev Nussimbaum and Hugo Marcus, perceive a *continuum*: his journey through Arabia brought him under the very sky that once arched above his ancestors. For that reason it was like coming home, he wrote, a 'homecoming of the blood.'[73] On the day after the subway experience, Leopold went to the

69 Asad, *The Road to Mecca*, 309.

70 Asad, *The Road to Mecca*, 309–10.

71 Asad, *The Road to Mecca*, 310. This is quite similar to St Augustine's conversion in the Milan garden where he picks up the Bible and reads 'Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, in concupiscence.' (*Confessions* Book VIII, xii). I thank Alex Dougherty for alerting me to this passage.

72 Rudolph Otto, *Das Heilige: Über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen* (Breslau: Trewendt & Granier, 1917).

73 Asad, *The Road to Mecca*, 43; Windhager, *Leopold Weiss*, 198.

missionary Jabbar Kheiri to declare his faith and become Muhammad Asad. Two weeks later, Elsa became Aziza. The couple soon left Berlin to perform the hadj, arriving in Mecca in February 1927. There, Aziza unexpectedly died, leaving it to Muhammad to make his discoveries on his own.[74]

From Hugo to Hamid Marcus

Unlike the lively, straightforward German of his contemporaries, Hugo Marcus chose the slightly formal language of the nineteenth century to describe the circumstances that led to his conversion. In a short document directed to his employer, Imam S. M. Abdullah, he describes this decision as being in harmony with his philosophy, the one he developed during his university years and in which he continued the tradition of mono-pluralism. In this manner, he puts his conversion into a temporal continuum. In Marcus's own words:

> From an early age, H.M., the now 51-year-old scholar, developed a many-faceted sphere of activities in which he worked as a researcher and an author. Among his many books, *The Philosophy of Mono-Pluralism* counts as the most outstanding in his *oeuvre*. In this work, he prepares the scientific ground for a severe monotheism, very much like the one he will later encounter in Islam.[75]

These lines were written in 1931, after a period of eight years in which Marcus slowly adjusted his philosophy to the new horizon the missionaries had opened up for him. He admits that, before this encounter, his life had been thoroughly fractured. The war, which he calls 'a catastrophe of humanity,' caused irreparable damage not only to the world at large but also to his private life: 'Upon returning home, he found shattered what had begun with so much hope.' In the darkness that followed, his encounter with Sadr-ud-Din, five years after the armistice had been signed, presented 'the first bright spot on the horizon.' After his appointment as manager of the mosque, Marcus writes, Islam started to exert a lively and ever stronger attraction. It was not only the rational character of this religion he appreciated but also its total practicality. In 1925, he recited the *Fatiha* in the newly opened Ahmadiyya mosque in Wilmersdorf, with Sadr-ud-Din as his witness.[76]

For Marcus, the conversion to Islam was connected neither to the embodiment of otherness nor to a 'more true' geography; also, he did not describe his

74 Windhager, *Leopold Weiss*, 45–7.

75 All quotations in this section are from AMA/Interwar, 7.

76 The conversion document survived in his archive, PA Marcus, Box 1.

decision as a dramatic rupture. Whatever his co-converts may have experienced, Marcus preferred to see his own conversion as the rational outcome of a logical calculation. Going back and forth between Fürtherstrasse, where he lived with his ageing mother, and the Ahmadiyya mosque, his passage to Islam was marked by a growing recognition of the continuation, even enhancement, of the Jewish–Christian tradition. Being the good logician he was, he set out to explain this in rigid little steps.

At first, Marcus identified Spinoza as Europe's representative of severe monotheism, Kant as the promoter of the categorical imperative and Nietzsche as the person who discovered and enhanced the genius of man.[77] In this genealogy, 'Europe' signalled unity amid plurality, a consequent ethics and a belief in being able to grow above oneself. In the next step, comparing his genealogy with the main tenets of the Muslim faith, Marcus declared that the development of the 'New Man' – a notion with which every ideologist in his time was toying – could only result from an operation in which European civilization was grafted onto Islam.[78] Finally, when the Gestapo put pressure on prominent members of the Deutsch–Moslemische Gesellschaft either to dismiss 'the Jew' or lose their job,[79] defying all the prohibitions of the Nazi regime, he once again published a large article in the *Moslemische Revue* in which he summarized the Jewish–Christian–Muslim evolution as the only workable synthesis.[80] Embracing Islam without letting go of the European heritage was his alternative to the terror of National Socialism. We shall return to him once more in the war chapter.

5.5 Limits of Religious Adaptation

If one ignores for a moment the religious and oriental imagery with which both Christian and Jewish converts described their passage to Islam, what is it that they do exactly? Why the wavering, the shattering revelation, the drawn-out decision? Why afterwards the need to explain? With hindsight, it seems that not only the Jewish seekers introduced in this chapter, but all the converts

77 Hugo Marcus, 'Das Wesen der Religion,' MR (1924) 79–84; 'Der Islam und die Philosophie Europas,' MR (1924) 84–8; 'Islam und Protestantismus,' MR (1925) 17–22; 'Nietzsche und der Islam,' MR (1926) 79–88, 'Spinoza und der Islam,' MR (1929) 8–24.

78 Hugo Marcus, 'Die Religion und der Mensch der Zukunft,' MR (1930) 65–72.

79 Marcus, *Three Autobiographical Sketches*, 2–3. PA Marcus, Box 1.

80 Hugo Marcus, 'Moslemischer Schicksalglaube,' MR (1936) 6–27. The text will receive a discussion in Chapter 7.

so far discussed in this book were adapting to wholly new possibilities of dealing with the world from a global perspective.

Religion transcends national borders. As did their colleagues the Buddhist and Hindu missionaries, Muslim missionaries imported a perspective that was largely unknown in central Europe, thereby opening a highway into a different world. Arriving at a time of severe crisis, in which a great many ideologies had already sprung into existence, they pointed a way out of the morass of Europe's many nationalistic solutions, offering a tool with which to address the severe doubts about Western civilization that the war had planted in the European mind. If this assumption is corrrect, what all converts to Islam 'did' was to start on a path that eventually broke away from their deep-seated ties to Europe. What this move was intended to remedy was the experience of homelessness that the Great War had brought about. The narrative in which their pain was moulded took multiple forms, oscillating between romanticising oriental otherness, to bitter abhorrence of everything European, to the discovery of a continuum between East and West. Seen through this lens, embracing Islam was a way to escape the mousetrap of nationalist ideologies that threatened Europe.

The central question of this chapter is did Muhammad Asad, Esad Bey, Aziza Asad and Hamid Marcus share a specifically Jewish perspective on the problems they were facing? At the end of this chapter, a short recapitulation of the conversion narratives of Lutherans and Catholics, discussed in the earlier chapter, helps to bring this question into perspective.

In Chapter 4, I stated that Lutheran conversions took the shape of a spiritual journey. Irma Safiah Göhl for instance was raised in a Lutheran family and was a confirmed member of that church. Feeling dissatisfied, however, she first 'journeyed' to Buddha, Zoroaster and Confucius; she even studied Egyptology before entering the Arab realm and discovering Islam. Another Lutheran, Alfred Chalid Seiler-Chan spent his life exploring different religions, those of the Catholics, Jews, Baptists, Salvation Army, Christian Scientists, Buddhists and Baha'i. He became a member of the Star of the East, and was baptized a second time by the Mormons. Only after his experience as a front line soldier in the trenches did he also embrace Islam. To Safiah and Chalid and other Lutheran converts, theosophy offered a vehicle for their spiritual journey, for visiting the different religious universes before making their final choice. The image of Jesus who was also a Muslim prophet, whom the Muslim reformer Ghulam Ahmad had imbued with new meaning, further served to bridge the gap between Christianity and Islam.

Catholic converts seem to have taken a different approach. Saladin Schütz, Bruno Hiller and Hans Ellenberger, three converts not yet discussed, travelled extensively in the Middle East before being overcome by a yearning to become

like its inhabitants, or, as Schütz phrased it, to *orientalize*. Travelling offered them the chance to experience a wholly different geography from that of central Europe; in the East they found beauty, happiness, closeness to nature and (Schütz again) the fairytales of the *One Thousand and One Nights* come true.[81]

The four Jewish converts to Islam so far introduced in this chapter do not seem to have experimented with religion very much. Coming from a secular background and equipped with a set of weak Jewish ties, an extended exploration of the different religions was not part of their agenda. But we saw that, prior to their conversion, Elsa and Leopold took journeys to the Middle East and that Lev travelled in his mind, feeding his imagination with whatever he could read from Seminar for Oriental Languages. His very first entry as a delegate of the Islamic community in Berlin goes hand in hand with an interest in Ottoman history as a way of reconstructing identity. Travelling in and 'romanticising' about the Orient were the features these Jews shared with their Christian co-converts.

Not many Jews left their religion to embrace Islam. If they deserted Judaism for another religion, the majority adopted Christianity. The example of Kurt Tucholski reveals that this was part of the conventional practice towards realizing the Jewish–German synthesis. Why then did Nussimbaum, Weiss, Marcus and Schiemann-Specht embrace a religion perceived to be non-European? The analysis of their conversions highlights that, in some way or another, the four discovered a continuum between Judaism and Islam. This is an approach to Islam that one searches for in vain in any Christian conversion narrative. Their choice of this road places the Jewish converts in a long and venerable tradition of German–Jewish Orientalism and of German–Jewish scholarship on Islam. It was the German–Jewish Orientalism that drew Nussimbaum into the circle of Else Lasker-Schüler, whereas Weiss's and Marcus's perspectives on Islam are embedded in German–Jewish scholarship on Islam.

In her study on German–Jewish scholarship on Islam, Susannah Heschel backs up this conclusion.[82] A hundred years of Jewish–German scholarship on Islam, she argues, led to a positive approach to this religion. Famous scholars like Abraham Geiger, Gustav Weil, Ignaz Goldziher and Joseph Horovitz all admired Islam and stressed its affinity to Judaism and, long before Marcus and Weiss, had already noted the continuum. 'For Geiger, Islam was a branch of Judaism…, in Weil's account, Islam was a purified version of both Judaism

81 Saladin Schütz, 'Wie ich Moslem wurde,' MR (1929) 37.

82 Susannah Heschel, 'German Jewish Scholarship on Islam as a Tool for De-Orientalizing Judaism,' *New German Critique* 117 (2012) 91–107.

and Christianity'[83] and there are many more parallels. Ignaz Goldziher, for instance, stressed that, 'Islam, like Judaism, has a receptive nature, a capacity to assimilate foreign ideas and to adapt itself to changing circumstances.'[84] The phrasing anticipates Marcus's discovery of Islam as a rational and highly adaptive tradition of thought. A contemporary of Leopold Weiss, Fritz Goitein, had recently graduated from Frankfurt University with a dissertation entitled *Das Gebet im Koran* (Prayer in the Koran), when he travelled to Palestine in 1922 to study an old Jewish tribe that still spoke Arabic.[85] Incidentally, they could have travelled on the same boat, these two young Jewish men in search of their roots in Arabia. Nonetheless, whereas Goitein became a Zionist, Weiss condemned Zionism as 'sick.'

5.6 The Jewish–Muslim Synthesis of Alexander Waldman

Jerusalem is not Berlin or Frankfurt. What in Germany could still be formulated as the scientific search for a truer Jewish identity, in Palestine was challenged by the reality of Arabs and Jews living next door to each other. Once they arrived, Weiss and Goitein encountered a furious debate on the 'right' kind of Zionism. The positions they imported from Germany mirrored established positions in the debate. Goitein was in search of a Judaism that had its rightful place in the Orient. For that reason he compared forms of prayer in Judaism and Islam, and for the same reason he visited a Jewish–Arabic community in Yemen. Disgusted with the Jewish colonial attitude he encountered, Asad furiously rejected Zionism and instead embraced the Arab way of living in the desert, the home of Islam. Between those two positions, there still was enough space to accommodate others. The case of Alexander Waldman illuminates the breadth and complexity of the interwar Jewish–Muslim cross fertilization. It also questions the uses and limits of adaptive globalization.

Dr Muhammad el-Muhtadi Iskandar Waldman was born in Lemberg in 1870 into an agnostic, even atheist, Jewish family, or so he disclosed in the opening lines of the letter he sent to the Ahmadiyya in 1927.[86] It was a familiar start to contemporary convert narratives. In his youth, he stated, he experienced a

83 Heschel, *German Jewish Scholarship*, 96.

84 Heschel, *German Jewish Scholarship*, 100.

85 S. D. F. Goitein, *Von den Juden Jemens. Eine Anthologie* (Berlin: Bücherei des Schocken Verlags, 1934), 13.

86 Muhammad el-Muhtadi Iskandar Waldman, 'A Modern Zionist's Way to Islam and the Ahmadiyya Movement,' RR 3 (1927) 20–4.

religious episode in which he converted to Catholicism, but his infatuation was rather short lived. Three years later he met Christian Unitarians, felt suddenly cured of the Church and turned his back on it again. This was in the 1890s and it was a long time before religious fervour stirred again within him. Waldman became an advocate for the Austrian government and, having had placements in Sarajevo, New York and Germany, he settled in Jerusalem after the war. Palestine served as the setting in which his particular approach to Islam occurred.

Like Goitein, Waldman fervidly identified with Judaism, which he called his 'racial oriental mentality.' He wanted to reform it and imbue it with new life. Like Asad, he was vehemently against a Jewish state in Palestine dominating the Arabs. In Jerusalem, Waldman developed a position between the two and, when the German Templars in Jaffa invited him to give a lecture, he disclosed a plan of how to reconcile Jews and Arabs. Outwardly, Palestine should mould itself on Switzerland and provide a home for both peoples, he said. After all, if Switzerland managed three different language groups as well as two different confessions, reconciling these two in Palestine should be possible. Inwardly, a spiritual centre should create unity between Muslims and Jews (Waldman discounted the Christian Arabs), and for that he suggested they focus on Jesus.

What makes his plan so interesting is that Waldman drew on the results of Jewish scholarship on Islam to emphasize his argument. Great Jewish scholars of Islam such as Vambery and Goldziher understood the essence of Islam and its culture, he argued, and one professor had already gone to the Islamic university of Aligarh to teach.[87] Grafting Jewish scholarship onto Zionist politics, he urged progressive Jews in Palestine to forge a link with Islam, to recognize that Islam was the religion of the Jewish prophets and to entwine Jewish and Arab spiritual ties. Instead of fighting each other, Jewish and Muslim reformers should cooperate, or so he argued.

The plan did not go down well. His audience called him a national traitor and a Christian missionary and, for some days after the lecture, he was well advised to keep to his rooms. This was spring 1923. In June he applied at the sharia court to become a Muslim and for some time lived in a small *madrasah* outside Jaffa to adjust to his new status. But because he did not speak Arabic and his hosts did not understand European languages, communication was difficult. In 1924 Waldman returned to Jerusalem where he tried to create a 'Hebrew–Catholic Church' with Hebrew ritual and Hebrew festivals. In 1926 he

87 Waldman, 'A Modern Zionist,' 23. Joseph Horovitz taught at Aligarh University between 1908 and 1914. Back in Germany, he taught Arabic and Islamic culture at Frankfurt University. Fritz Goitein was his absolve.

wrote to the leaders of Jewish reform communities in Germany, England and the United States to put forward his plan to create 'a scientific religious centre in Jerusalem' to forge a link between Judaism and Islam. In 1927 he sent a letter to the *Revue of Religions* in London (from which this story was gleaned), confirming that, by stressing the role of Jesus, the Ahmadiyya movement offered a helpful means of religious reform.[88]

Waldman's reform consisted of linking Judaism with Islam and, to that end, he stumbled on the same figure that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian had introduced 50 years earlier to alleviate the stagnation he perceived in Islam, namely the historical Jesus. For Ghulam Ahmad, a Muslim Jesus stood for progressive Islam. Imitating Jesus was his way of fighting the British mission and at the same time revitalizing Islam. Ghulam Ahmad took the whole world in his stride and the world turned him into a symbol of renewal, concrete yet vague enough for all kinds of people to project their own ideas onto; they were, as either missionaries or converts, inspired to go through the process of adaptive globalization.

Waldman's case illustrates that the proto-national position of Judaism in Palestine in the 1920s differed considerably from the framework in which the Ahmadiyya mission came about. Still, their paths crossed at unexpected moments. Waldman's Jewish Jesus stood for modern Judaism, and he used modern Jewish scholarship on Islam as a foundation for a next step. His personal solution was to convert to Islam without relinquishing his Jewish identity. However, the practical difficulties he encountered serve to demonstrate that, apart from adhering to different religious traditions, Arabic-speaking Palestinians and German-speaking Europeans were still miles apart. Waldman may have prescribed the fusion of their spiritual force as a tool to achieve a political solution. In the turmoil in which world Judaism found itself in the 1920s, his summons fell on deaf ears.

Instead of the strengths of Judaism that Abraham Geiger once enumerated and with which this chapter opened, namely the festive consecration, rich history, intimacy of family life, compassion and capacity to endure, it seems to have been Jewish Orientalism that mostly guided the converts' passage from Judaism to Islam. Leopold Weiss, Lev Nussimbaum, Elsa Schiemann-Specht, Hugo Marcus and Alexander Waldman were not the first to discover the oriental link between the two religions, but their conversion surely made them the most consequential of all the German–Jewish admirers of Islam.

What they shared, the common ground on which they stood, was the perception of a *continuum*. With his denial to have converted at all, Lev

88 Waldman, 'A Modern Zionist,' 24.

Nussimbaum gave it vehement expression. Leopold Weiss perceived it in camels kneeling, a sight that reminded him of Abraham beholding Rebecca by the well. What Elsa experienced remains hidden from view, but we may assume that her feelings ran in a parallel direction. Hugo Marcus offered the most elaborate underpinning. His continuum was a severe monotheism with rigid ethical consequences. His European genealogy of Spinoza, Kant and Nietzsche, whose philosophies he grafted onto Islam as the logical consequence of rational religion, complete the circle of those Jewish scholars of Islam who saw in this religion a logical continuation of their own.

CHAPTER 6

The Berlin Mosque Library as a Site of Religious Exchange

In December 1930, S. M. Abdullah, a citizen of British India, Ahmadiyya missionary and imam of the Wilmersdorfer mosque since 1928, announced 19 new acquisitions for the mosque library. The list counted one Italian translation of the Koran and 18 religious and scientific periodicals from across the globe.[1] Among the acquisitions were the *Islamic Review* (London), *Die neue Erziehung* (Reform Education, Jena), *'Scientia.' Rivisti internationale di sintesi scientifica* ('Scientia.' International Journal for Scientific Synthesis, Milan), *Oriente Moderno* (Modern Orient, Rome), *Il Progresso Religioso* (Religious Progress, Rome), *Zali Bul* (Be Brave,[2] Warsaw), *Novi Vrijeme* (New Times, Sarajevo), *Zani I Nalte* (Visions of Excellence, Tirana), *Bildiris* (Announcement, Istanbul), *Kirjath Sepher* (National Bibliography, Jerusalem), *Islamic Culture* (Hyderabad), *Dewan* (Council, Jakarta), and *Pembela Islam* (Defence of Islam, Bandung).

The purchase of a series of international journals marks a novel phase in the work of the mission, namely the organization of a library encompassing no less than twenty languages, offering the latest books and journals on Islam, the science of religion, Muslim modernity, and religious reform. A closer look at this collection will allow the reader to form some idea of how Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah picked his way through the many publications on religion and modernity that were published in the 1930s in Europe and beyond. The analysis serves to illuminate the manner in which this missionary adapted core Ahmadiyya reform proposals for religious progress and grafted them onto European modernity discourses in the 1930s in Berlin.

By 1930, Germany had seen enough crises to make people clamour for stability and, during that year, the catastrophe continued to unfold. In January, war reparations were calculated to last until as late as 1988. During spring, street fighting between the left and right increased, while National Socialist groups provoked street terror. During the September elections, Hitler's party, the National Socialist German Democratic Workers' Party (NSDAP or Nazi Party),

1 MR 4 (1930) 111.

2 Zali Bul is a Tatar journal edited by A. Ishaki in Warsaw. As the title is written in Latin characters, the reading may have several meanings: 'Be Brave,' but also 'Be National.' With thanks to Marat Gibatdinow from the Tatar Academy of Sciences in Kazan for his comments.

jumped from 12 to 107 seats, overtaking the communists and gaining second place in parliament.[3] Tired of the never-ending crisis, novelists and artists, from right to left, praised the new 'no-nonsense' attitude that was finally meeting expectations.[4]

It was not only in Germany that people considered politics of the 'iron fist' a real alternative; 1930 marked a decisive year for all of Europe. In *Dark Continent*, Mark Mazower recounts how in that year a whole range of European countries moved to the right.[5] Some 12 years after the fall of the European empires, the parliamentary system was experiencing a real crisis. Everywhere in Europe (with the exception of the Nordic countries), cabinets sat for an average of only four to eight months, while short-tempered deputies hurled chairs and insults at each other. In each country, as many as 16, 19, or more parties came to represent ever-smaller sections of the population.[6] Mazower's famous argument was that the crisis of the left in Germany was not an isolated political phenomenon – once the Great Depression of 1929 had added its weight to the mounting political unrest, one European government after another turned to right-wing solutions. As a consequence, as in Germany, authoritarian or fascist regimes assumed power in Italy, Spain, Poland, Romania, Greece and Hungary.[7]

Outside Europe political unrest left its mark as well. The Russian government for instance, wielding an iron fist in a communist glove, closed down churches, mosques and synagogues; the country's large farming territories were also dispossessed, thereby robbing Russian citizens of their most basic supplies. In Palestine, anti-Jewish riots impelled the British government to issue a series of 'white papers' closing Palestine to Jewish immigration. This again encouraged the Mufti of Jerusalem, a global player who will make his entry in the next chapter, to start rallying for the pan-Islamic congress that eventually took place in Jerusalem the following year. In British India, Mahatma Gandhi's party repeatedly clashed with the colonial administration, undermining British certainties as the unrest continued.

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3 'Chronik 1930,' *Deutsches Historisches Museum*, accessed 14 July 2014, www.dhm.de/lemo/html/1930.

4 Ernst von Salomon, *Der Fragebogen* (Reinbeck: Rowohlt, 1999), 186. Cf. Anton Martin Lindner, *Leben in der Krise. Zeitromane der Neuen Sachlichkeit und die intellektuelle Mentalität der klassischen Moderne. Mit einer exemplarischen Analyse des Romanwerks von Arnolt Bronnen, Ernst Glaeser, Ernst von Salomon und Ernst Erich Noth* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1994); Anton Kaes, ed., *Weimarer Republik, 1918–1933* (= Manifeste und Dokumente zur deutschen Literatur), (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1983).

5 Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent. Europe's Twentieth Century* (London: Penguin Books, 1998), 1–39.

6 Mazower, *Dark Continent*, 16–18.

7 Mazower, *Dark Continent*, 28–31.

The founding of the library in 1930, with bibliographical choices reflecting not only the goals and ideological scope of the mission but also the European crisis, was not the Ahmadiyya mission's only success at the time. The collection also reveals that the mission was hugely successful in establishing local and international structures, raising membership numbers and attracting ever more sympathizers. One cannot escape the impression that the more the crisis deepened the more the mission thrived.

From a European perspective, it is useful to remember that in 1930 the print media still dominated the movement and exchange of knowledge. Some years later, the Nazi regime would broadcast radio propaganda into every household, centralizing the media and heavily censuring the production of books and journals.[8] However, Abdullah started his collection in a world still dominated by a myriad of uncensored printing houses. As the analysis of the mosque library will amply demonstrate, the ongoing process of globalization not only caused media transfers from West to East;[9] it also caused a flow of print from East to West. This is shown very clearly by the very many foreign-language journals – the library catalogue records as many as 90 – that this library once possessed; the thin-papered pamphlets and brochures whose cheap production allowed for wide distribution; and the great number of small publishing houses that have long since disappeared. However, as many acquisitions were only published in the mid-1930s, the library also mirrors the scope and limits of book purchase in an age of censure.

The Berlin mosque library was first and foremost a mission library. In other words, it served as a resource for the missionaries to do what they had to do, namely further progressive Islam and convince non-Muslim Europeans to join their quest, or, to repeat Khan Durrani's dictum,[10] to enter into an 'intellectual conversation' with Europeans. This central aspect of their work compelled the missionaries to acquire a range of European books on modernity. Although as a matter of course the library housed large handwritten copies of the Koran, as well as commentaries and records on the oral tradition, the items Abdullah picked from the range of books available allowed him to study not only the Muslim tradition, but also the contemporary discourses in Germany and the Muslim world on renewal and reform.

I now recount how the library was recovered for my recent research. Only a third of the original collection remained, but that was sufficient to reconstruct

8 Frank Bösch, *Mediengeschichte. Vom asiatischen Buchdruck zum Fernsehen* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2011), 170–88; Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt* (München: Beck, 2009), 67–76.

9 Bösch, *Mediengeschichte*, 136–40.

10 See Chapter 3.

the catalogue and form a picture of its scope and contents. After a tour of the library and an inventory of its special features, I turn to the subjects that seem to have especially drawn the collectors' attention, namely international peacekeeping, global polity and religious progress.

No book collector in the mid-1930s in Berlin could have escaped the deep political and societal rifts that cut through this city and we see how Abdullah faced the consequences. My findings allow me to reconstruct the imam's view of his surroundings, which resulted in a collection that helped him make sense of his community and perform the work to which he had been assigned, namely missionizing.

Every mosque library collection will contain a section dedicated to interpreting the world outside the mosque. In other times and places, this may have focused on mysticism, historical research, cartography or basic religious education. In Berlin in the 1930s, by contrast, the hope for societal change through religious *progress* was the pivot around which the acquisitions revolved. To fulfil this task the collector did not hesitate to add sensitive topics that dominated Nazi thought. Towards the close of the chapter, we shall glance at some of these, in particular at Zionism, Christian fascism and Aryanism, which serve to sharpen the peculiar originality of his choices.

6.1 Reconstructing the Berlin Mosque Library

Abdullah's announcement of the new acquisitions in the *Moslemische Revue* triggered my curiosity. From visiting the mosque, I knew that leatherbound handwritten copies of the Koran in Urdu and Arabic, which the first missionaries had brought from India, were kept in a locked room. Also in the locked room were Koran translations, ample rows of commentaries (*tefsir*), the Prophet's oral traditions (*hadith* and *sahih*) and biographies (*sirat al-Nabiy*) in a number of languages, some 100 books in all. However, there was no trace either of the collection of 18 periodicals mentioned at the start of this chapter, or of any of the other books the library had once contained.[11]

Anyone in charge of a library will know that periodicals claim a lot of space on the shelves. I imagined the stacks that must have filled the mosque library and wondered where all those volumes had gone. Ignoring the fate of so many libraries in Berlin, which during the war had either been bombed or evacuated, ignoring too the quite reasonable suggestion that postwar imams had thrown

11 In 1931, the mosque entered into a regular exchange of books with the Royal Library of Uppsala. MR 1 (1931) 37. Finds corroborate this.

out everything not related to the Koran (as in fact the locked room seemed to suggest), in summer 2012 I decided to try and search the mosque and the mission house for possible remains.

The imam and the elders of the community reacted graciously to my unexpected query. They let me delve into the cellar of the mission house, open up the cupboards in the drawing room, peruse the upstairs office, empty card boxes full of dust and paper that were standing ready to be discarded, and even look in the bedrooms. What I found was a large stack of dirty, sometimes waterlogged books and brochures, magazines, single issues of journals, mission pamphlets, and even programmes of the lectures, all dating from the interwar period. Not only the researcher, but also the community took a great interest in these finds. I remember in particular one Sunday afternoon when we sat in the drawing room together and no less than four dignitaries opened books I randomly assembled on the coffee table to search for signs of cataloguing.

My search produced 276 library books from a collection that originally must have contained 849 or more catalogued entries and an unknown number of uncatalogued books. We had stumbled upon a small library, but one with some noteworthy features, which, before turning to the main topics of the collection, I would like to describe.

The first feature that catches the eye is the cataloguing system itself. Incoming books were embossed with a little round stamp featuring a star, a half moon and the words *Moschee Berlin* (Berlin mosque) and marked with a double number in pencil. With this, the collector applied the usual recording method of European special libraries, one that seems to have been new to mosque libraries. Nasir Ahmad, son of the imam of the Woking mosque Aftab ud-Din Ahmad (1901–1956), and life-long history keeper of the community, explained to me that he had never seen it before (Table 2).

TABLE 2 *The cataloguing system*

I / 1–83	Quran and Tefsir
II / 1–22	Hadith and Sahih
III / 1–76	Sirat al-Nabiy; Khalifat History; Pan – Islamism
IV / 1–75	Islamic polity and – civilization
V / 1–33	Dictionaries
VI / 1–90	Journals and Periodicals
VII / 1–237	Muslim Modernisation
VIII / 1–233	Modern Trends in Religion

Once the surviving titles and catalogue numbering were ordered, it became possible to count the missing books and weigh the finds against the losses. Although many of the original titles (two-thirds) had disappeared, those we found helped to clarify the main collecting principles. In fact, the catalogue combined two library traditions. The first number acknowledged the age-old mosque library tradition of storing special subjects together, the second made a running count of incoming books. Thus, Abdullah employed the Roman numbers I to VIII to mark thematic sections, whereas the numbers 1, 2, 3 and so forth were used to number the books within those sections. Table 2 nicely illustrates that the thematic sections by and large followed the custom of traditional mosque libraries.[12]

At this point it may be helpful to know that every mosque library starts with Korans and commentaries (Section I). Books on tradition usually follow (Section II), after which come the biographies of Muhammad (Section III). Having established this cornerstone for the maintenance of religious life, mosque library collections may then strike out in very different directions[13] and, as I show below, so did Abdullah's library.

The second outstanding feature is the multilingual character of this library. Indeed, a prejudice against foreign languages was not part of Abdullah's character. Books we came across were written in as many as 20 languages, some of them very rare (Table 3).

To facilitate the use of this form of collection, Section V was dedicated to dictionaries. A glimpse at the rationale of other mosque libraries tells us that, although including very many languages used to be part of the collecting

12 Houari Touati, 'L'ordre des livres,' in *L'armoire à sagesse. Bibliothèques et collections en Islam. Collection historique*, ed. Alain Corbin and Jean-Claude Schmitt (Paris: Éditions Flammarion, 2003), 291–300; Mohamed Taher, 'Mosque Libraries: A Bibliographical Essay,' *Libraries & Culture* 27/1 (1992) 43–8; Mohsen E. El-Arini, 'Al-Azhar University Library,' *Pakistan Library Bulletin* 20/1 (1989) 33–45, and 'The Azhar Library: State of the Art,' *Pakistan Library Bulletin* 25, 3–4 (1994) 10–22; Muhamed Makki Sibai, *Mosque Libraries: A Historical Study* (Libraries and Librarianship in the Muslim World), (London: Mansell Publishing, 1987), 100–4; Youssef Eche, *Les bibliothèques arabes. Publiques et semi-publiques en Mésopotamie, en Syrie et en Égypte au moyen Age* (Damas: Institut arabe en Damas, 1967); William M. Randall, 'Some Libraries in Cairo,' *The Muslim World* 28/7 (July 1938) 223–30; Roger Garaudy, *Bibliothèques et culture du livre en Islam* (Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, n.d.).

13 Because of their commitment to collecting all the knowledge of the known world, the first mosque libraries did not hesitate to include mathematics, physics, astronomy, medicine, agronomy, geography, cartography, philosophy, history and biography. See Touati, 'L'Ordre des Livres,' 294–329; Sibai, *Mosque Libraries*, 97–99; Garaudy, *Bibliothèques*, 5–17.

TABLE 3 *Languages of the mosque library*

· Albanian	· Danish	· Hebrew	· Serbo-Croatian
· Anazeh	· Dutch	· Italian	· Turkish
· Arabic	· English	· Ottoman	· Tatar
· Azeri	· French	· Persian	· Urdu
· Bahasa	· German	· Polish	· Volapük

strategy at the start of Islamic civilization, contemporary collections usually address no more than a handful.[14]

With 33 entries, the dictionary section supported the librarian's need at least to read the titles of the new acquisitions. Surviving dictionaries were written in French, Arabic, Urdu, German, English, Anazeh, and the world language of Volapük, an artificial language in which the Ahmadiyya invested some energy.[15] Half of the original dictionaries could not be retrieved, but it is not difficult to imagine them to have found a necessary place in this multi-language collection.

A third characteristic is hidden in Section VI, the section dedicated to journals. The original mosque library seems to have received as many as 90 of them, covering at least 15 languages. Of this lost treasure we could establish 34 journal titles, and were able to retrieve (some or all) issues of 18. They serve to confirm that rare mixture of scientific interest, missionary concern, an interwoven occupation with modernity and progress, and an eye for Muslim independence, which marks the missionaries' every move since they set foot on the continent (Table 4).

14 Not all mosque library collections can be found on the Internet, but those that do offer themselves for comparison. Thus, the *Lakhtokia Masjid Nr. 1* (Assam) offers English, Arabic, Urdu, Hindi and Assamese (Lakhtokia.org); the *Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque* (Abu Dhabi) stores '3000 major knowledge resources in more than eleven living languages' (http://www.szgmc.ae/en/about-the-library); the *Al-Raudhah Mosque Library* (Singapore) collects books in English, Arabic and Malay (http://www.arraudhahmosque.org/); The LMC Library in East London specializes in English, Bangla and Arabic (http://www.east-londonmosque.org.uk/content/library), whereas the London Central Mosque collects, next to Arabic, 'a range of European and Indic languages' (iccuk.org).

15 Volapük (from 'Vol,' world, and 'Pük,' speak) was a predecessor of Esperanto and an early attempt at creating a world language. Launched by Johann Martin Schleier in 1879, its basis of Latin, English and German proved to be easily accessible for European speakers, but less so for speakers from outside Europe. The *Moslemische Revue* promoted its command and even published a short Koran translation in this language. MR 3 (1931) 65.

TABLE 4 *Journals in the mosque library*

Al-Hikmat. Revue Scientifique Sociale et Médicale	French, Arabic	Beirut	1936, 1937
Al-Hilal	Arabic	Cairo	1936, 1937
Annali. Instituto Superiore Orientale di Napoli	Italian	Napoli	1935
Bulletin de la Banque Mellie Iran	French, Persian	Teheran	1937, 1938
En terre Islam. La revue francaise du monde musulman	French	Lyon	1938
Islamic Revue	English	London	1930–1939
Jeune Asie. Organe de la conféderation des étudiants orientaux	French	Rom	1934
Journal Iranschär	Persian	Berlin	1926, 1927
Kirjath Sefer	Hebrew	Jerusalem	1935
Kurtulush. Azerbaycan Milli Kurtulush Hareketinin Organi	Azerbadjani	Berlin	1938
Maandblad Moslimse Réveil. Orgaan van de Studenten Islam Studieclub	Dutch	Buitenzorg (Dutch Indies)	1938
Moslemische Revue	German	Berlin	1929–1938
Research and Progress. Quarterly Review of German Science	English	Berlin	1935
Review of Religions	English	New York	1939
The Moslem World. A Christian Quarterly of current events, literature and thought among Mohammedans	English	New Jersey	1935–1938
Theosophisches Leben	German	Leipzig	1914
Yash Turkestan. Organe de la lutte nationale pour l'indépendence de Turkestan	French. Tatar	Nogent sur Marne	1930–1939
Yana Milli Yul	Tatar	Berlin	1930–1939

Table 4 amply illustrates the large scope of interests. In that period, Europe was still full of Muslim independence groups, only some of which deposited their publications in the mosque.[16] Tatar periodicals were well represented. Apart from *Zali Bul*, the journal announced at the start of the chapter, we found complete editions of *Yash Turkestan* (New Turkistan), *Yana Milli Yul* (The New National Way), and *Kurtulush* (Freedom), representing the Tatar publication strategy of *Promethée*, the European network for Tatar independence, with its headquarters in Paris. Editors like Ajaz Ishaki, Rashid Ramati and Hilal Münschi stood for liberal, social-revolutionary options. Their names can be found across the membership lists of the Berlin Muslim communities. Others such as Mustafa Tshokaioglu, Ali Kantemir and Veli Kayum-Khan were right wing oriented.[17] During the war they became partner to the Nazi regime and were inserted into the ministry of eastern affairs (see Chapter 7).

Whereas Tatars discuss different political options, the Persian journal *Iranshär*, edited by Hosseyn Kazemzadeh before he became a Sufi, informs the Persian reader about German and European progress from school reform, sporting events and modern rail factories to Goethe's *West–East Divan*. *Annali*, *Al Hikmat* and *Research and Progress*, by contrast, offer a range of academic studies from Orientalism, to social, political and medical studies.

Rather than as a scientific journal, *The Moslem World*, edited by the Christian missionary Samuel Zwemer, served the missionaries as an *object* of scientific study. Its existence in the mosque library bears witness to the deep interest Ahmadiyya missionaries took in the views and ideas of their Christian counterparts. Three Ahmadiyya mission journals, *Review of Religions*, *Islamic Review* and *Moslemische Revue*, reveal how this knowledge was adapted to Muslim visions and applied to European subjects.

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16 Gerhard Höpp discusses as many as 20 German and Arabic periodicals published in interwar Berlin. We did not find them in this library. By contrast, the Tatar, Persian and Urdu journals we did find have so far escaped scholarly attention. Cf. Gerhard Höpp, *Muslim Periodicals as Information Sources about Islamic Life in Germany, 1915–1945* (1999) http://www.zmo.de/biblio/nachlass/hoepp/1_21_42.pdf; Gerhard Höpp, *Arabische und islamische Periodika in Berlin und Brandenburg 1915–1945. Geschichtlicher Abriß und Bibliographie* (Berlin: Das Arabische Buch, 1994).

17 A. Bennigsen and C. Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Sultan Galiev: Le père de la révolution tiers-mondiste.* Paris: Fayard, 1986; Stéphane A. Dudoignon, 'Qadimiya as a Historiographical Category: The Question of Social and Ideological Cleavages between "Reformists" and "Traditionalists" among the Muslims of Russia and Central Asia in the Early 20th Century,' in *Reform Movements and Revolutions in Turkistan: 1900–1924*, ed. Timur Kocaoğlu, 159–79 (Haarlem: SOTA, 2001).

In a different manner, *Theosophisches Leben*, *En Terre Islam* and *Jeune Asie* point to the vivid interest in religious reform, a subject that will receive more discussion below. At this place in the text it must be stressed that, considering that many journals were obtained in exchange for the *Moslemische Revue*, Section VI not only points to a broad scope of scientific and religious interests and the ability to digest very many languages, but also testifies to the existence of a wide international network.

A fourth outstanding feature of this mosque library is the collectors' handwriting, of which the collection bears ample imprint. In a number of books, Abdullah left his signature and date of purchase as well as pencil markings on the pages. One example is a copy of Benito Mussolini's *Fascism: Doctrine and Institutions* (Rome, 1935, purchased on 8 September 1935). His jottings help form some idea of how this book was read (see below).

Other books contain handwritten dedications to Abdullah, of which two examples must be mentioned. A regular visitor to the lectures, Margarethe von Oppel made him a present of her dissertation on *Mutterrecht* (Matriarchy, Leipzig 1930). A co-author of *The Causes of War as Submitted for Presentation to the World Conference for International Peace through Religion*, Henry A. Atkinson wrote: 'To my good friend S. M. Abdullah from Henry A. Atkinson, Geneva August 18, 1932.' Incidentally, Abdullah, whom we have already met before as an indefatigable worker for peace, was present at that conference, as was the cream of the peace-seeking world. Among others, the list of visitors mentions Yusuf Ali, Martin Buber, and Rabindranath Tagore.[18]

Finally, a last characteristic was detected in a remarkable omission, for which a stack of books outside the catalogue gave the decisive clue. These had originally come from another library (the Ahmadiyya library in Lahore) and bore a printed label, which stated the donating library, the receiving library, and a pencilled number (for instance: No. 618). In case the latter kept track of the number of donations, books outside the catalogue once must have constituted a second collection. Maybe they were returned to the original owner after the war, or maybe they were burned to ashes in the shootout of March 1945, when the mosque was destroyed between the fronts (see Chapter 8). In either case, only a handful survived.

Interestingly, the Lahore donations betray something about the way in which the Ahmadiyya missionaries dealt with the heritage of their founder. Except for two volumes of the *Mujaddid Azam* (Great Reformer), the biography of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian discussed in the Introduction, books

18 Arthur Porritt, ed., *The Causes of War as Submitted for Presentation to the World Conference for International Peace through Religion* (London: Macmillan, 1932), vii.

about, or written by, the founder of the Ahmadiyya seem to have been utterly absent from this mosque library. Given that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad wrote 88 of them and that his writings constituted the basis for the religious reform that the missionaries were preaching, this is a noteworthy detail.

A visit across town to the Khadija mosque belonging to the Ahmadiyya Qadiani branch in Berlin gives a fuller picture of the omission. Although the Qadiani library appears to follow the traditional mosque library order that places Korans, commentaries and tradition first, it carries a full collection of books by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in Section II, namely between the Koran and the Hadith. As I explained in the Introduction, unlike their intellectual brothers in the Lahore branch, the Ahmadis of the Qadiani branch decided to give their founder the status of a new prophet of Islam and did their utmost to retain his charismatic presence in the organization. Not surprisingly, the order of books in their library marks a clear break with the mosque library tradition, thus mirroring the status of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, which still causes dissent among Muslims.

When asked why Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was absent from their mosque library, the librarian in the Lahore branch explained that their organization saw no reason to stress the role of the founder any more than that of other religious reformers. By contrast, books by the foremost thinkers of their mission organization, notably Muhammad Ali and Kamal-ud-Din, but also the missionaries Abdul Majid, Sadr-ud-Din and Sheikh Abdullah, engaging with modernity discourses in Europe, had been duly catalogued and could be retrieved in numbers.

The cataloguing method, the many languages, the wide scope of international journals, the handwriting of the collector and the absence of books by the founder of the Ahmadiyya reform organization already come together to turn what first looked like a heap of damaged books into a highly interesting find. However, as will be detailed in the following, of more interest still has been the reconstruction of the subject specializations this library once collected.

6.2 Promoting Muslim Reform in Nazi Germany

Three priorities in the collection betray this mosque library's perspective on contemporary development, namely suggestions for global politics, the Islamic tradition of peacekeeping and progressive Islam.[19] The way in which they were

19 The mosque library of the Grande Mosquée de Paris the main collection of which stems from the same period, developed a very different perspective. Cupboard 8 (in this library

collected and catalogued allows one to retrace some of the attempts to introduce Indian core reform ideas into Europe and to graft them onto discourses about European modernity. To understand the acumen with which this task was performed one should keep in mind that acquisitions were predominantly made in Berlin in the 1930s, in other words in the capital of a country that had embraced authoritarianism and was preparing for war. Keeping this in mind, it is not surprising to find the Islamic priorities sometimes flanked by subjects that dip into those political hotspots that held prewar Nazi society in their grip, namely Zionism, Christian fascism and Aryanism. Books we found in this sector will be dealt with after the priorities have been discussed.

The three priorities did not appear in this library by accident. They were already at the centre of the Ahmadiyya reform launched around 1880 in Northern India, which spread across the eastern Muslim world around 1900 and reached England shortly before the Great War. A short look at the original Indian reform proposals may therefore help to explain some of the rationale with which books were chosen and stored in Berlin.

As mentioned in the Introduction, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad opposed any political claim that advocated the use of violence legitimized by jihad. Instead, the founder urged his followers to counter the arguments of and write books disputing the 'infamous accusations' of the Christian missionaries in British India: for the Ahmadiyya movement, jihad was turned into the effort 'to propagate Islam, not by force but by appeal to intellect and rationality.'[20] Because of his claim to prophethood, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was already a highly questionable and controversial public figure. His position on jihad only sharpened the conflict.

Ever since the 1857 revolt, jihad with weapons had been an option for Muslim Indians. Ahmad, however, forbade violence against the British. Not

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only the cupboards received numbers) holds the results of the effort to present the fruit of the culture of Algeria, then a French province, and other North African regions, through poetry, literature, travel descriptions, and even tourist brochures. The cupboard also reveals publications dealing with Muslim independence movements around the Mediterranean. Except for photograph albums of yearly celebrations of the Great War, books on France are absent, as are publications of other religious communities. The Egyptian king Fuad Ali sponsored the library. Stored behind glass panels, it survived until today (visit on September 11, 2013). For the history of this mosque, see Naomi Davidson, 'La Mosquée de Paris et ses satellites: L'architecture de l'Islam français et l'Islam en France, 1926–1945,' *Revue des Mondes Musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 125 (2012) 197–215; Randall, 'Some Libraries in Cairo,' 223–30.

20 Basharat Ahmad, *The Great Reformer. The Biography of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian*. Vol. 1. (Dublin (Mass.): Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam, 2007), 277.

only did he instruct his followers to wage jihad exclusively through writing books and voicing arguments, but he also urged them to show loyalty to the British administration. This attracted the prolonged hatred of Indian revolutionaries preparing for independence from colonial rule.[21] Once the First World War had necessitated the transport of human resources on a global scale, causing the deaths of millions of colonial subjects on the battlefields of Europe, Indians, Arabs, Persians, Afghans and Tatars came to regard jihad as the instrument *par excellence* for revolutionizing the masses and creating or re-creating Muslim independence on a worldwide scale.[22] And, as we saw in Chapter 3, the echoes of this conflict reverberated in interwar Muslim Berlin.

Nonetheless, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's plea spurred a generation of gifted polemicists to transform his directive into a large mission programme. It helped them to resist the thrust of globalization from West to East, to adapt and turn around the advances of the Christian missionaries and to import a fresh set of ideas from East to West. In this manner they looked for ways to establish a durable world peace, not through politics but through religious progress and, to this end, they made links with other reform-minded religious communities in the West. Incidentally, the missionaries' peace mission also explains their unwillingness to get involved in politics, a subject to which we shall turn in the next chapter.

Although they did their best not to quote him, Ahmad's heritage provided the Lahore Ahmadiyya missionaries in Berlin with a blueprint from which to formulate solutions to the world's religious problems. His heritage shines through the lectures and discussions published in the *Moslemische Revue*. It is equally apparent in the manner in which Abdullah fashioned his mosque library. Sections VII and VIII especially seem to illuminate that elusive vanishing point at which globalization, peacekeeping, divine inspiration and Muslim progress converge. In retrospect, it is sometimes difficult to perceive the finer shades of that logic, but during the crisis shaking Germany and Europe in the 1930s it seems to have offered at least some people an acceptable option.

Section VII once contained 237 titles on religious progress in the Muslim world, of which 52 could be retrieved. Likewise, Section VIII once contained 233

21 Mirza Ghulam Ahmed, 'A proposal for the utter Extinction of Jehad,' RR 1 (1902, no page number).

22 Rudolph Peters, 'Jihād,' *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World* (17 October 2013), accessed 20 May 2014, www.oxfordislamicstudies.com; John Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 93. Cf. Sohail H. Hashami, ed., *Just Wars, Holy Wars, and Jihads: Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Encounters and Exchanges* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

titles dealing with progress in other religions, but only 65 survived. Although it is obviously not possible to replicate the full picture, the finds serve as a barometer for the general direction of interests. For a start, the number of books on Muslim modernity and Muslim modern religious thought outstrip the earlier sections by far. Sections VII and VIII harboured half the collection and, for that reason alone, must be considered the library's core. To help the reader keep track of the many titles, each section is presented with a table. In this way, we hope to make the scope and direction of acquisitions more transparent and to discover the collector's rationale in the placement and storage of the items.

Pan-Islamism and Global Polity

Collecting books and brochures on the origin, philosophy and creation of a Muslim-based global polity seems to have been a high priority. This was a very timely subject and it received a lot of attention in Berlin. From the perspective of the German foreign office, Muslim community builders in Berlin and pan-Islamic movements worldwide belonged together. The foreign office not only stayed in close contact with local Muslims, but it also received reports about pan-Islamic congresses from across the world on a regular basis. The archive still covers the All-Islamic Indian Congress in Surabaya, the Tatar Conference in Vilnius, and the Pan-Islamic Congress in Cairo (all in 1924); the Khalifat Congress in Cairo, the Islamic Conference in Mecca, the All-Islam Hindia in Bandung, and the pan-European/pan-Islamic movement in Vienna (all in 1926); the Pan-Islamic Congress in Jerusalem (1931), the Congrès Islamo-Européen in Geneva (1933), and the Congrès Musulman d'Europe, also in Geneva (1935).[23] On their part, Muslims in Berlin not only participated in those conferences, but they also published at least five different periodicals promoting this form of global politics.[24]

The finds in the mosque library teach us that the Ahmadiyya missionaries went along with the pan-Islamic endeavours, albeit critically. As Table 5 shows, publications were stored in three different sections, depending on what kind of contribution they were able to make to Muslim progress. Thus, we find a glowing defence of Khalifat[25] and pamphlets of the pan-Islamic conference in

23 AA/1–AA/3 (1924–1936), cf. Kemal Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam. Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

24 Höpp mentions Liwa-el-Islam, Azadi-1 Sharq, The Crescent, The Muslim Standard, and El-Islah. See: Höpp, *Arabische und islamische Periodika*, 25–32.

25 The subtext on the front cover contains the story in a nutshell. It reads: 'When the Khilafet was perverted Islam was corrupted and the Moslems were ruined. And when the Khilafet will be reformed Islam will be purified and the Faithful will prosper.'

TABLE 5 *Publications on Islamic polity*

III	Muhammad Barakatullah	*The Khilafet*	London	1925
III	NN	*Dustur al mu'tamar al islamiy al`ama* (Constitution of the General Islamic Conference)	Jerusalem	1932
III	NN	*Risala al mu'tamar al islamiy al`ama* (Letter to the General Muslim Conference)	Jerusalem	1932
III	NN	*Muqarrarat al mu'tamar al islamiy al`ama* (Decisions of the General Muslim Conference)	Jerusalem	1932
III	NN	*Natidjat al hukamah al nisriyah* (The results of the Egyptian Government ort he Year 1358)	Cairo	1936
III	NN	*The Results of the All-India Muslim Conference, special session Calcutta*	Calcutta	1932
IV	Kamal-du-Din	*Islam and Civilization*	Lahore	1932
IV	A. Islam	*Annoubowa fi'l Islam* (Prophecy in Islam)	?	1915
IV	NN	*Haqiqat ad-Din al-Islami* (The truth of the Islamic religion)	Lahore	1934
IV	M. A. Siddiqui	*Spiritual Culture in Islam*		1934
IV	Abdu'l Majid	*Islam and Christianity*	London	1932
IV	Harun K. Sherwani	*The Origin of Islamic Polity. Studies in the History of Islamic Political Philosophy* (No. 6).	Hyderabad / Deccan	1936
IV	Sadr-ud-Din	*Muhammad the Modern Prophet*	Lahore	ND
IV	Sheikh Kidwai	*Polygamy*	Lahore	1927
VII	Iqbal Ali Shah	*Kamal: Maker of Modern Turkey*	London	1934
VII	Mehmed Begovitch	*Législation relative à l'organisation des affaires religieuses des Musulmans en Yougoslavie*	Belgrade / Paris	1934

Jerusalem in Section III, where they once complemented the collection of biographies on the Prophet of Islam. This detail implicitly tells us that Muhammad's political reform in Medina was the blueprint against which all political endeavours were measured.

Section IV, by contrast, contained different philosophical approaches to the formation of a global Islamic polity. We found in this section a wide range of historical, philosophical and religious titles to which the missionaries themselves contributed. These included *The Origin of Islamic Polity*, *Islam and Civilization*, *Prophecy in Islam*, *Spiritual Culture in Islam*, *Islam and Christianity*, and – a hot potato back then – *Polygamy*.[26]

Section VII, the section that threw a wide and searching light on contemporary Muslim modernization, held a few concrete examples, namely a book on Atatürk called *Kemal: The Maker of Modern Turkey* and a proposition to modernize *shari'a* law entitled *Législation relative à l'organisation des affaires religieuses des Musulmans en Yougoslavie*.

Even a quick glance at how these books were catalogued betrays the missionaries' conviction that a true Muslim global polity could not do otherwise than follow in the footsteps of the Prophet. As recounted in Chapter 3, the Islamic World Conference of 1931 in Jerusalem was the only Islamic political endeavour with which the mosque ever engaged. On the initiative of the Persian Hosseyn Danesch, in 1932 a representative circle of Muslim intellectuals founded a local branch in Berlin and, for some time, regularly met in the Ahmadiyya mosque. What they wanted was unity and for that they needed the mosque. The board declared its intention 'to forget whatever happened in earlier years that led to the estrangement of the Muslim organizations.'[27] However, when it started to appoint rotating Friday preachers and religious teachers, the missionaries stopped attending. Thereafter, they contented themselves by adding their writings to the wide range of philosophical and religious considerations that accompanied the construction of a global polity. Stressing the example of the Prophet, the necessity for prophecy and spirituality, and the need to bridge the gap between Islam and Christianity, they betray their own perspective on the matter.

The Islamic Tradition of Peacekeeping

Taking the heritage of the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement as a blueprint also helps to decipher publications on Islam and war. They were stored in

26 Rana von Mende-Altaylı, *Die Polygamiedebatte in der Spätphase des Osmanischen Reichs. Kontroversen und Reformen* (Berlin: Das Arabische Buch, 2013).

27 VR/IWC, Protocol Nr. 13 (27 March 1933), see Chapter 4.

TABLE 6 *Publications on Islam and war*

Shaikh Kidwai	*The War and God*	Lahore	+/– 1930
Haridas Muzumdar	*Peshawar: Men versus Machine Guns. Ghandi's companion on the march to the sea*	NY	1931
S. M. Abdullah	*Der Islam und das Schwert* (Islam and the Sword)	Berlin	1932
Arthur Porritt	*The Causes of the War, as submitted for presentation to the World Conference for International Peace through Religion*	London	1932
NN	*Study Outline based on The Causes of the War. Report of Commission No. 1 of the World Conference forInternational Peace Through Religion*	London	1932
Paul Schmitz	*Al-Islam! Weltmacht von Morgen?* (Al-Islam. The World Power of Tomorrow?)	Leipzig	1937
Othmar Krainz	*Das Schwert des Islam* (The Sword of Islam)	Bayern	1938
NN	*Harakatu al Salam* (Principles of the peace movement).	Alger	1938

Section VII, where they rubbed backs with books on Muslim modernization. Their positioning on the shelf hints at how to 'read' this collection. 'Islam and war' books were stacked alongside books on Islamic reform polities, historical discussions of Jesus and a number of publications in defence of the Ahmadiyya cause. This contextualization literally places the topic at the core of the Ahmadiyya reform. If the mosque library in Berlin makes one thing clear, it is that the Ahmadiyya rallied for peace, but in a country veering towards war, this could be problematic. Viewing the titles in order of their year of appearance, one can but imagine what kind of difficulties the community must have encountered (Table 6).

Although again the remains are scanty, the chronology shows that (and how) this collection became caught up in the political turmoil of the 1930s. As the titles show, at the start of the decennium a liberal and international approach to peacekeeping still prevailed. Far away in India, Gandhi launched

his politics of non-violent resistance, which was noticed in Berlin and catalogued in the library. In Europe, representatives of different religions regularly met at pan-European or international peace conferences.[28] Incidentally, peace was scoring high on the agenda of the educated public. In the 1920s, Germany went through a 'Tagore craze' and a 'Gandhi craze.'[29] In this context, and before an audience of Christians, Jews and Hindus, Abdullah developed his own peacekeeping perspective, which enlarged upon the founder's 'jihad is peace' approach.

In fact, two titles in the collection set out the Ahmadiyya view on what course to take in the event of open aggression. Sheikh Kidwai's book, *The War and God*, emphasizes the Islamic principles of non-violence, restraint in the face of threat and controlled defence in the case of attack. In 1932, Abdullah added *Der Islam und das Schwert*, a booklet based on a wide series of lectures he gave in the mosque and before other religious reform audiences. In this text, harking back to the time of the Prophet, he analysed the old battles and skirmishes around Medina and described how that experience caused the Prophet of Islam to formulate a precise set of rules and regulations to be observed in case of war. Publications such as these and others illustrate how Ahmadiyya missionaries negotiated a form of peacekeeping that observed the Islamic jihad tradition of inner effort, yet nonetheless fell short of embracing peace at any cost. Rather, their proposal aimed at peace through a form of controlled defence, for which the Prophet Muhammad had laid down the rules.

Among the remains of the mosque library, we stumbled across some papers by the German journalists Paul Schmitz and Othmar Krainz, who each depicted Islam as an aggressive warrior religion. There views, however, differed from the jihad discussion that had electrified British India 30 years earlier and from the way Nazi ideologues perceived Islam. Instead of playing on the well-known register of fear and abhorrence, these authors idealized Islamic 'world power.' Othmar Kraintz, a former communist, but now adopting an anti-communist line in his life reports from Palestine, found himself in a tricky position trying to manoeuvre between the Nazi politics in support of Zionism, and the totally

28 In almost every year of the interwar period, several international conferences simultaneously addressed peace, arms limitation and/or the role of religions in global peace keeping. International celebrities like Albert Einstein, Martin Buber, and Rabindranath Tagore engaged in this. Pankaj Mishra, *From the Ruins of Empires. The Revolt Against the West and the Remaking of Asia* (London: Penguin Books, 2013), 216–42; Martin Kämpchen, *Rabindranath Tagore and Germany* (Calcutta: Max Müller, 1991).

29 Kris Majapra, *Age of Entanglement. German and Indian Intellectuals across Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 98–102.

different Nazi politics in favour of a strong Muslim partner.[30] As both political endeavours left their traces in the library, we shall revisit them later in the book. In a different manner, Paul Schmitz focused on the future role of political Islam[31] and, especially during the war when in the service of the propaganda department, seems to have been a popular and much translated author. The Berlin National Library still has copies of his books in French, English, Italian, Serbo-Croatian, Polish and Greek.

Although the two authors differed in their approaches, their writings prepared the German people for the Nazi embrace of Islam during the war when Muslim regiments came to reinforce the SS battalions and Heinrich Himmler, head of the war ministry, idolized Islam as 'a very practical and attractive religion for soldiers' (see Chapter 7).[32] Curiosity, or the need to keep abreast of his community's interests, could explain why Abdullah acquired these Nazi publications. Another reason could be that, by the mid-1930s, German censorship had begun to affect acquisition policies to the extent that the liberal peace movement simply disappeared from print.

Religious Progress

Religious debate in public, whether with North Indian ulema or representatives of other Indian religions, had been at the core of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's work.[33] Ahmad's life was dedicated to the study of religions; he took them seriously but did not hesitate to make scathing remarks whenever he thought their foundations wanting. Thus, in the *Review of Religions*, the journal that summarizes his

30 Othmar Kraintz, *Ein deutscher Kommunist erlebt die Sowjet-Union* (Herrsching/Oberbayern: Deutscher Hort Verlag, 1936); *Jagt die Deutschen! Das Buch vom Verzweiflungskampf der 3.5 Mio. Sudetendeutschen um Glaube, Recht, Wahrheit, Gut, Leben, und Freiheit* (Herrsching/Oberbayern: Deutscher Hort Verlag, 1937).

31 Paul Schmitz, *Neubau der Islamischen Welt* (Leipzig: Goldmann, 1937); *Ägyptens Weg zur Freiheit* (Leipzig: Goldmann, 1937); *Moskau und die islamische Welt* (München: Eher, 1938); *Frankreich in Nordafrika* (Leipzig: Goldmann, 1938); *Englands Gewaltpolitik am Nil* (Berlin: Informationsstelle, 1940); *Die arabische Revolution* (Leipzig: Goldmann, 1942); *Al-Islam! Weltmacht von Morgen?* (Leipzig: Goldmann, 1937), 2. Print 1942.

32 'Fundstelle des Tages: 'Islam und National-Sozialismus sehr ähnlich' (Himmler),' Michael Mannheimer Blog, Aug 10, 2012, http//: michael-mannheimer.info/2012/08/10/fundstelle-des-tages-islam-und-national-sozialismus-sehr-ahnlich-himmler/; cf. Volker Koop, *Hitlers Muslime. Die Geschichte einer unheiligen Allianz* (Berlin: Bebra Verlag, 2012), 71–3.

33 The biography of Muhammad Ali, who after his death became president of the Lahore branch, preserves a lively description of the proceedings: Muhammad Ahmad, *A Mighty Striving. Life and Work of Mevlana Muhammad Ali* (Ohio: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore inc., 2004), 6–7.

main findings in English, he repeatedly criticized the Sikh movement, Arya Samaj, Brahmo Samaj, Krishna, Brahmin institutions, the religion of the Veda, Christians, theosophists and the Baha'i religion.[34]

Whereas Ahmad refused to learn English and never left his home in Northern India, after his death in 1908 the intellectuals of the next generation continued to examine other religions, but of necessity adopted a very different outlook. Muhammad Ali, Kamal-ud-Din and Sadr-ud-Din studied in English Muslim colleges, attended university, travelled to England and saw at first hand the global implications of the Great War in which millions of colonial subjects died in the European trenches. Through these and other experiences they acquired a grasp of the need for a truly global religious reform. These men set up the European mission and built a mosque in Berlin to promote a reformed version of Islam, using terms like 'East meets West' and 'intellectual conversation' to describe their vision.

S. M. Abdullah was of a younger generation still. A photograph dating from 1925, which still hangs in the office of the Berlin mission house, shows him as a teacher with his hockey team in Lahore. Abdullah was a dedicated sportsman and his appointment as imam of Berlin did not stop him from continuing to engage in sports. In 1936, he was a keen visitor to the Olympic Games and, to the annoyance of other Muslim Indians, even played tennis with his wife. Many private snapshots depict him as a man of the modern generation, adopting a lifestyle that came close to that of his European contemporaries.[35]

As a missionary too, Abdullah differed. He neither threw himself into polemical debates nor tried to convince Europeans of the superiority of Islam. Looking at his library, it seems that he first of all observed his community and tried to make do with whatever was there.

Section VIII of the mosque library catalogue is dedicated to books on religion, but, on closer inspection, there are no European experts on the history and science of religion who were influential in the 1920s and 1930s among the remains. There are no books by Rudolph Otto, Friedrich J. W. Hauer, Gustav Mensching, or Gerardus van der Leeuw – all of whom placed religious

34 See for instance: Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, 'The Discovery of the Chola of Nanak,' RR 1 (1903); 'The Teachings of Christianity, Arya Samaj and Islam,' RR 3–4 (1903); 'The Teachings of Krishna,' RR 12 (1904); 'The Feeling Fostered by the Arya Samaj,' RR 3 (1905); 'The Arya Samaj Conception of Marriage,' RR 5 (1905); 'Practical Theosophy,' RR 12 (1906); 'The Brahmavadin,' RR 12 (1906); 'The Religion of the Veda [as interpreted by the Arya Samaj],' RR 2 (1907); 'The Babi or the Bahai Religion,' RR 5–10 (1907).

35 PA Oettinger, photograph albums 1–3.

experience at the heart of understanding other religions.[36] There are also none of the 88 booklets on modern Jewish religious thought that appeared in the Schocken Library in Berlin between 1933 and 1938.[37] As far as we can see, not even Martin Buber, the most eminent thinker on German Judaism and Abdullah's co-discussant in the European peace conferences, was represented.

What Abdullah did collect stayed close to his perspective on and expectations of his flock. For example, he kept a fat four-volume biblical encyclopaedia that addressed any question a Muslim missionary might have on matters to do with the Bible.[38] The presence of issues of *The Moslem World*, the Christian mission journal dedicated to Islam, bear further witness to his interest in Christian perspectives, which his wide range of contemporary novels, poetry and plays expressing Christian and secular views confirms. As they are all in English, they probably formed part of Abdullah's personal reading.

Also, Abdullah chose from the publications of non-Christian religious communities. However, if what remains may once again serve as a barometer, he only considered the newest fruits of religious reform, theosophy and Baha'i. In fact, theosophy stood high on the agenda of this community. We saw that the Lutheran converts in the Berlin mosque, with Alfred Seiler-Chan as their spokesman, had embraced theosophy before Islam. From the remnants of the library and the lectures these converts gave, we must conclude that after becoming Muslim they continued to revere certain theosophist teachers such as Krishnamurti, Kazemzadeh and Siddiqui (Table 7).

Some short introductions may help place these men on the community's mental map. As a boy, the leaders of the Theosophical Society in Adyar chose Krishnamurti (1896–1986) to be their future world teacher and, to support him, they established the Order of the Star to which Alfred Seiler-Chan and other community figures in Berlin had belonged before they embraced Islam. Krishnamurti publications in the library date from the period during and after he dissolved the order and broke with the movement. Hitherto expressing a certain distance from theosophist orthodoxy, the focus of this spiritual leader was on the value of spirituality and individual happiness. In 1927, the Indian

36 Volkard Krech, *Wissenschaft als Religion. Studien zur Geschichte der Religionsforschung in Deutschland 1871 bis 1933* (Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 2002), 60–80; Rainer Flasche, 'Religionsmodelle und Erkenntnisprinzipien der Religionswissenschaft in der Weimarer Zeit,' in *Religions- und Geistesgeschichte der Weimarer Republik*, ed. Hubert Cancik (Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1982), 261–77.

37 Volker Dahm, *Geschichte des jüdischen Buches* (München: Beck, 1993).

38 T. K. Cheyne and J. Sutherland Black, *Encyclopedia Biblica: A critical dictionary of the literary, political and religious history, the archeological geography and natural history of the bible* Vol. I–IV. London, Adam and Charles Black, 1918.

TABLE 7 *Books on theosophy in the mosque library*

Theosophisches Leben	Nr. 1, 1914
J. Krishnamurti, *Leben in Freiheit* (Life in Freedom)	Berlin: Stern-Verlag Neubabelsberg, 1928
J. Krishnamurti, *Verständnis sei Gesetz* (Understanding is Law)	Würzburg, 1929
J. Krishnamurti, *Jetzt* (Now)	Berlin: Stern-Verlag Neubabelsberg, 1930
H. Kazemzadeh Iranschär, *Wie sollen wir meditieren? Sieben Vorträge gehalten in Berlin* (How shall we meditate? 7 lectures in Berlin)	Berlin: Orientalischer Zeitschriften-Verlag Iranschär, 1932
H. Kazemzadeh Iranschär, *Der Weg zur Lebensweisheit und Glückseligkeit* (The road to life wisdom and happiness)	Zürich, 1938
Moh. Abdul Aleem Siddiqui, *Spiritual Culture in Islam. Lecture held before the theosophical society in South Africa*	Lahore, 1934

based mission journal *The Light* dedicated a few words to Krishnamurti's withdrawal from the theosophical movement:

> The other day, Krishnamurti, the Promised Messiah of Mrs Besant, said that he had "found the happiness and liberation which the world is seeking". "Get away from all creeds and beliefs", he urged his audience, "and approach life's problem, which is search for happiness with a mind in revolt from tradition".[39]

While discussing this 'Promised Messiah,' *The Light* adopted an ironical tone of voice, considering his withdrawal as more proof that 'the world is gradually drawing nearer to Islam.'[40] However, whether or not they knew it at the time, Krishnamurti's message aptly replicated the ideals of the Deutsch–Moslemische Gesellschaft in faraway Berlin.[41]

39 *The Light* 12 (1927) 2.

40 Ibid.

41 Mary Lutyens, *The Life and Death of Krishnamurti* (London: John Murray, 1990); Roland Vernon, *Star in the East: Krishnamurti: The Invention of a Messiah* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

From 1933 onwards, former Persian revolutionary Hosseyn Kazemzadeh (1884–1962), whom I have already mentioned several times and will do so again in Chapter 7, became a regular and much celebrated speaker in the mosque. Some of his more exclusively Muslim lectures also appeared in the *Moslemische Revue*. It is no surprise that his more theosophical musings (on meditation and the pursuit of happiness) became part of the mosque library.

Another eccentric figure was Muhamed Abdul Aleem Siddiqui (1892–1954), a Muslim scholar, Sufi master and missionary who took it upon himself to tour the world carrying a message that condemned Western globalization and supported spirituality. Although it emerged from the West, Siddiqui did not condemn theosophy but praised it as a possible way of enhancing Muslim spirituality. The pamphlet we found in the library is the only evidence of a possible exchange, for the sources do not convey whether or not regular contact existed between him and the Ahmadiyya movement.

All three lecturers were very popular in the mosque because they knew how to speak to the heart of their audience; they embodied exemplary individualism, reached out at the global level and, each in his own way, helped to bridge the gap between theosophy and Islam. It may be telling that we found no traces of either Elena Blavatski, the founder of the theosophical movement, or of Annie Besant, her successor and the founder of the Adyar section in Germany. This absence suggests that the Berlin converts did not actively embrace theosophy as such, but that theosophy had a part to play in satisfying their desire to experiment with modern forms of Islam.

Incidentally, this form of religious adaptation has not hitherto attracted much scholarly attention. Helmut Zander, who in his leading publication on anthroposophy was able to follow theosophy's influence on freemasonry, theatre, architecture, dance, politics, pedagogy, medicine, farming and health foods in Germany, does not mention it.[42] For the study of religious *praxis* in interwar Europe, a focus on religious adaptation and the creation of hybrids within existing religious traditions seems to offer a little explored but promising field of study.[43]

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42 Helmut Zander, *Anthroposophie in Deutschland. Theosophische Weltanschauung und gesellschaftliche Praxis 1884–1945.* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007).

43 In her article on the *Darmstadt Schule* of Oriental Wisdom, Suzanne Marchand already pointed to the unstudied field of Orientalist scholarship in the Interwar period, with its many attempts 'to find a cure to what ailed the West.' Suzanne L. Marchand, 'Eastern Wisdom in an Era of Western Despair. Orientalism in 1920s Central Europe,' in *Weimar Thought: A Contested Legacy*, ed. Peter E. Gordon et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 352.

TABLE 8 *Books on Baha'i in the mosque library*

Geschichte und Wahrheitsbeweise der Bahai-Religion / Ktab'ul hudschadsch'du Bahayyeh (History and Proof of the Bahai-Religion)	Stuttgart: Verlag des Deutschen Bahai-Bundes GmbH, 1919
Abdulbaha`wal Baha`iya (Abdul Baha and Baha'i)	No place and date
Ansprachen von Abdul Baha Abbas. Gehalten in Herbst 1911 in Paris (Abdul Baha's Speeches in Paris, 1911)	Stuttgart: 2. revidierte Auflage. Verlag des Deutschen Bahaibundes, 1921
Frohe Botschaften. Worte des Paradieses. Tablett Tarast. Tablett Taschalliat. Tablett Ischrakat. Geoffenbart von Baha'O'lah in Akka (Glad Messages. Words from Paradise. Tablet Tarast. Tablet Tashalliat. Tablet Ishrakat. Revealed by Baha'ullah of Akka)	Stuttgart: Verlag des Deutschen Bahai-Bundes, 1921
Baha'ullahs Verborgene Worte. Worte der Weisheit. (Baha'ullahs hidden words. Words of Wisdom)	Stuttgart, 1924

Second, we found a series of Baha'i core texts published by the Baha'i community in Germany. Whereas books by theosophists were promoted during the regular lectures in the mosque, the writers of Baha'i publications received no such honour. Clearly, this religion occupied a different place in the community's mind (Table 8).

Why Mirza Ghulam Ahmad invested time and interest in the Baha'i movement has been explained in the Introduction. What this reformer perceived was another Muslim reform movement that sadly failed to become accepted as such. Quite the contrary, the Bab was brutally killed and his followers persecuted until they left the Islamic tradition to form a wholly new religion. Ahmad wanted to learn from such mishaps.[44] After all, Baha'i presented an attempt at religious reform that was not far removed from the Ahmadiyya reform, drawing as it did upon Shi'a Sufi sources and addressing both East and West in its endeavour to formulate a contemporary universal message.[45]

Whether the community members in Berlin took a similar interest in Baha'i has not been recorded. Like all the religious reform movements that came from

44 Ahmad, 'The Babi or Bahai Religion.' RR 5–10 (1907).

45 Sasha Dehghani, *Martyrium und Messianismus: Die Geburtsstunde des Bahai'tums* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011); Manfred Hutter, *Handbuch Bahai. Geschichte–Theologie–Gesellschaftsbezug* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2009).

TABLE 9 *Zionist books in the mosque library*

Rudolf Melitz (ed.), *Jeruschalaim. Briefe junger Menschen schildern Eretz Jisrael* (Jeruschalaim. Letters of young people describe *Eretz Israel*)	Berlin: Verlag, Atid,' 1936.
Rudolf Levy, *Palästina ABC* (The ABC of Palestine)	

Persia and India in the nineteenth century, the Baha'i movement reached Europe before the First World War, established itself in Esslingen near Stuttgart and managed to acquire a fair number of converts. After the war, a second community was established in Hamburg.[46] Although the mosque lecture announcements contained no evidence of any talks on Baha'i, at some point there do seem to have been some private connections, of which the marriage of Rolf von Ehrenfels and Elfriede von Bodmershof is a telling example: when he embraced Islam in Berlin, it so happened that she joined the Baha'i movement in Esslingen.[47]

'Hot' Topics

Before finishing this review of library books, some findings still deserve separate mention here. They address Zionism, Christian fascism and Aryanism, three topics that for different reasons were considered politically 'hot' in pre-war Nazi Germany – namely what to do with the Jews, how to control the churches, and how to justify German superiority.

The first find concerns two books brought out in the mid-1930s by a Berlin-based Zionist publishing house (Verlag 'Atid'), which urged members of the German Zionist youth movement, Aliyah, to travel to Palestine to study possible immigration options (Table 9).

The letters collected in *Jeruschalaim* contain the emotional outpourings of very young people who for a moment had escaped their German wardens.

46 *Star of the West: Bahai News Series Published 19 Times a Year* (1910–1935). In the September Issue of 1913, photographs witness the visit of Abdul-Baha to Esslingen, where he addressed an audience of some 250 persons. Letters of Baha'i community members in that same issue give a vivid picture of the young community. http://staroftheWest.info. Accessed 14 July 2014. For Hamburg see Iris Groschek, 'Wilhelm Heydorn und die Anfänge der Baha'i in Hamburg,' *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Hamburgische Geschichte* 84 (1998) 102–27.

47 The biography of Rolf von Ehrenfels still waits to be written. A short account of his conversion appeared in Rolf von Ehrenfels, 'The How and Why of Conversion to Islam,' *Islamic Review* 6 (1961) 23–5. http://www.wokingmuslim.org/work/islamic-review/index.htm.

Palästina ABC is a small dictionary containing useful words – ranging from *Abessinische Kirche* (Abyssinian Church) to *Zucker* (Sugar) – designed for use by young German Zionists travelling in Palestine. Since the mosque library was in the habit of receiving *Kiryat Sefer*, the Hebrew national bibliography published in Jerusalem, some connection must have existed with Zionism and/or Palestine. In *The Third Reich and the Palestine Question*, Francis Nicosia explains how the Hitler government supported the German Zionist movement through the organization of youth training camps and preparatory trips to Palestine.[48] The roots of this support go way back to the First World War when the Prussian war cabinet embraced Zionism as a political weapon and pushed for Zionist settlement in Palestine 'to propagate German *Kultur* and commerce in the Orient.'[49] In a faint echo of those times, some government departments still supported emigration to Palestine all through the 1930s, while others opposed it, a situation that lasted until 1941 when the 'Final Solution' was decided. The Verlag 'Atid' publications might well have supported the pro-migration policy, but the situation escapes from view, as does the question of why they found a place in this library.[50]

The second find addresses books on the compatibility of Christianity with fascism. Probably, they can be categorized as just another of Abdullah's attempts to understand 'what Christians think' (Table 10).

The publications of the Oxford professor H. G. Wells and the Italian dictator Mussolini, contradictory as they are, indeed say a great deal about Christian values. They vehemently argue against liberalism, speak up in favour of authoritarianism, or, as the authors circumscribe their political preference, in favour of the needs of a more collective age. In *Dark Continent*, Mazower narrates that H. G. Wells urged his students to become 'Liberal Fascists' and 'Enlighted Nazis.'[51] For his part, Mussolini was the first ultra right-wing dictator in Europe to redefine authoritarianism as true Christianity and to conclude Lateran contracts with the Catholic Church to that effect.[52]

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48 Francis R. Nikosia, *The Third Reich and the Palestine Question* (London: I.B.Tauris), 1985.

49 Hansjörg Eiff, 'Die jüdische Heimatstätte in Palästina in der Außenpolitik der Weimarer Republik,' *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 61/12 (2013) 205–17; Isaiah Friedmann, *Germany, Turkey, and Zionism, 1897–1918* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1998), 253; cf. Fritz Fischer, *Griff nach der Weltmacht. Die Kriegszielpolitik des kaiserlichen Deutschland 1914/18* (Königstein: Atheneum Verlag 1977), 109–132.

50 Other books published by Verlag 'Atid' are: Herbert Friedenthal (Freeden), *Die unsichtbare Kette. Roman eines Juden.* (1936); Martha Wertheimer [ed.], *Das jüdische Sportbuch: Weg, Kampf und Sieg* (1937). Friedenthal's novel will be dealt with in the next chapter.

51 Mazower, *Dark Continent*, 21.

52 Matthias Damm, *Die Rezeption des italienischen Faschismus in der Weimarer Republik* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag, 2013).

TABLE 10 *Christian fascist books in the mosque library*

B. Mussolini, *Fascism: Doctrine and Institutions*	Rom: Ardita Publishers, 1935
H. G. Wells, *Men like Gods*. London	ND
H. G. Wells, *The Salvaging of Civilisation*	London, 1919
H. G. Wells, *Marriage*	London, 1920

What is it that attracted the Muslim peacemaker S. M. Abdullah to the Italian fascist Mussolini? What made him scribble his signature on the front page and underline sentences throughout the book? Mussolini writes (and Abdullah underlined) that fascism is above all a spiritual concept, 'a reaction against nineteenth-century positivism that once again places the centre of life outside man' (p. 8); that 'life as conceived by the fascist is serious, austere, religious' (p. 9); that it rejects 'the teleological notion that in some future the human family will secure a final settlement of all its difficulties' (p. 10). Fascism, Mussolini writes (and Abdullah underlines), is 'anti-individualistic' and opposed to any form of liberalism. 'In fascism, group interests prevail' (p. 11). In the rest of the book, the author proceeds to offer a detailed plan for the construction of a polity resting upon such austere principles. Religion pervades the pages, but dictatorship and war are clearly legitimate means to reach the ultimate aim.

An answer to the question at the beginning of the above paragraph cannot be gleaned from the underlining alone. But what we can see is a keen mind venturing on new territory, trying to conceive of a Christianity that walks in the footsteps of authoritarianism. Looking at the speed with which Germany in 1935 was heading towards war, we may safely conclude that Abdullah, peacemaker on a global mission, tried to assess what aspects of the Christian tradition could still be used to bridge the growing distance between the Nazi sympathies surging in his community and the Ahmadiyya mission to defend jihad as a route to peace.[53]

The third find brings into focus two collective book reviews in the *Moslemische Revue* in which 11 books printed in 1936 on the reception of Aryan ideology in Europe are given thorough scrutiny.[54] There were also reviews of a

53 Damm portrays a series of Germans who were against Hitler but embraced Mussolini's positions, not while they admired him but to underline their resistance to National Socialism. Damm, *Italienischer Fascismus*.

54 MR 1 (1936) 29–30; MR 4 (1936) 93–8. Next to S. M. Abdullah (initials: S. A.) and Rolf Omar Ehrenfels (initial: R.), ex-president Hugo Marcus (initials: H.M.) participated in the writing.

new translation of the Vedas,[55] a book by the French novelist Romain Rolland on Ramakrishna and Vivekananda,[56] another by the Nazi ideologue and Tübingen professor J. W. Hauer on the German *Vision of God*,[57] and Kurt Zuckschwerdt's popular children's book, *A Hitler Pimp Travels to India*.[58]

From this collection only the children's book survived.[59] A quick summary betrays its pro-Nazi thrust (two boys travel to India with nothing but their guitar; they learn about the strangeness of life south of Vienna and beyond, manage to make friends and, after many adventures, reach Indian soil; in the end, they are glad to return to Nazi Germany). The book draws attention to the existence of a young generation, born into the mosque community as a result of the many intercultural marriages between Indian men and German women (Chapter 4). Growing up in the 1930s, these children apparently familiarized themselves with Aryan ideology as a way of bridging the gap between Germany and India, the possibilities or impossibilities of which crystallized in the very relationship to which their parents tried to give shape. What they made of this heritage, however, how they positioned themselves in Nazi Germany and how that experience is remembered today, goes beyond the framework of this book. Some of this youth will return in the next chapter, when the mission in the war will be discussed, just as some of their voices will be heard in the last chapter when we address the subject of memory (Fig. 7).

6.3 Cosmopolitanism from the Periphery

We have reached the end of our library tour, which at times resembled a *tour de force*. The choice of books that had made their way onto the shelves gave us some idea of how S. M. Abdullah scrutinized the world outside the mosque. The tour showed that, with its handwritten Korans, books on global polity,

55 J. J. Meyer, *Das altindische Buch vom Welt- und Staatsleben*, ins Deutsche übertragen von J. J. Meyer (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1926); J. J. Meyer, *Über das Wesen der Altindischen Rechtsschriften* (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1927).

56 Romain Rolland, 1. *Das Leben des Ramakrishna*. 2. *Vivekananda*. 3. *Ramakrishna und Vivekanandas universales Evangelium* (Zürich: Rotapfel Verlag, 1929–1930); Emma von Pelet, *Worte des Ramakrishnas* Mit Geleitwort von Romain Rolland (Zürich: Rotapfel Verlag, 1930).

57 Jakob Wilhelm Hauer, *Deutsche Gottschau* (Stuttgart: Gutbrod, 1934).

58 Kurt Zuckschwerdt, *Indienfahrt eines Hitlerjungen* (Berlin: Steuben Verlag, 1934).

59 Section VIII still harboured Romain Rolland, *Mahatma Gandhi: The man who became one with the universal being* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1924). For reasons unknown, the review does not address this book.

FIGURE 7 *Abdullah's childrens' class (1935). Moslemische Revue 3 (1935) 1*
COURTESY AAIIL

reform and peacekeeping, not to mention the 20 languages and 90 journals, the Berlin mosque library was an important community resource in the 1930s. The discovery of 18 international journals at the start of the tour pointed to a wide network of global connections. Towards the end, it was a children's book that pointed to an Aryan dream with narrow nationalistic implications. Thus, the Berlin mosque library revealed not only the splits between two different worlds and two different religions, but it tried to encompass very different ideologies and worldviews. Between the extremes, we encountered helpful Ahmadiyya suggestions about peacekeeping, spirituality, connections between East and West and a deep interest in how other religious reform movements answered the main problems of the time. As a result, we now have a mental map of how the collector and his community thought. It seems that more often than not the two looked in different directions. But what else could be expected?

What shines from these endeavours is a high level of cosmopolitanism. Before being forced into a rigid Western colonial mission to civilize underdeveloped 'others,' cosmopolitanism, originally an offshoot of the European Enlightenment, meant 'eternal peace,' recognizing others and respecting them

as equals, whatever they happened to be doing at the moment of encounter.[60] It is no accident that intellectuals from the European periphery were starting to question European civilization at the start of the twentieth century.[61] Carrying the ideals of cosmopolitanism back to the European stage, they implemented a form of globalization via adaption that found a particular resonance in the missionary élan of the Ahmadiyya reformers.

The missionary S. M. Abdullah seems to have made good use of his library to gain entry into a world that was not his own. He was a cosmopolitan from the periphery who, as an intellectual with a global peace mission, was willing to see others as his equals. In prewar Nazi Germany, this meant a meeting of extremes, a journey that was able to cover some ground, find some stability and even bear fruit as long as war was not declared.

For their part, the members of the mosque built bridges to meaningful others on many levels – they promoted spiritual unity and intellectual encounters; they also formed personal friendships, entered intercultural marriages and created offspring. The mosque library supported their endeavours with foundational texts, suggestions for Muslim reform, and novel Christian, theosophist and Baha'i proposals. From this melting-pot emerged a *mélange* with a dash of Nazi thinking. For its readers, the library may have offered an escape from the narrowing framework of nationalistic ideology, a tool with which to create a brand of cosmopolitanism that, although it did not abandon its familiar surroundings, embraced Islam in an attempt to relate to a wholly different world.

60 Pauline Kleingeld, *The Philosophical Ideal of World Citizenship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

61 Mishra, *From the Ruins of Empires*, offers the examples of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Liang Qichao and Rabindranath Tagore; cf. Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt*, 1098–1104.

CHAPTER 7

The Mission in Nazi Germany

In 1942, when invited with other journalists to tour the Third Reich and admire its greatness, the French journalist Jacques Chardonne (1884–1968) was overcome by religious awe:

> The feeling I experience when I observe the German people as a whole is a feeling of…moral aesthetics: mass meetings full of dignity and taste, ardour and fervour, the solemn mood, the tone of religiousness, the scrupulousness, the deep thankfulness. This [country]…has again found itself and clothed itself in a holiness that is beyond the ordinary.[1]

A soprano boys' choir somewhere along the journey, performing a Bach motet on the occasion of the harvest festival, made him exclaim: 'National Socialism enlarges our notion of the holy without distorting it; this country is pervaded by religion.'[2]

Millions of people greeted the war that engulfed Europe in misery and destruction, a war in which Germany occupied the West, colonized Eastern Europe and murdered more than twenty million people, with semi-religious awe. The overwhelming majority of Germans felt convinced that it was morally 'right' not only to 'cleanse' their own country of all the elements that could dilute their precious 'Nordic blood' – Jews, gypsies, homosexuals, the psychologically disturbed and socially unwanted – but also forcibly to take control of other European countries, wipe out European Jewry and murder Slavs merely to create space for German colonists. Even beyond this, it was felt that they, of all people, had been chosen by history to perform these deeds as the very consequence of modernity. The result of this operation would be, or so they thought, the establishment of a long-lasting reign and enduring peace. Accordingly, the public mood was pompous and solemn.

1 Jacques Chardonne, 'Der Himmel von Nieflheim,' in *Reisen ins Reich 1933 bis 1945. Ausländische Autoren berichten aus Deutschland*, ed. Oliver Lubrich (München: btb Verlag, 2009), 319–20. The editor collected 50 European and American journalists who between 1933 and 1945 visited Nazi Germany and described their impressions. Most of them sympathized with what they saw in Nazi Germany. Cf. Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent. Europe's Twentieth Century* (London: Penguin Books, 1998).

2 Chardonne, 'Der Himmel von Nieflheim,' 321.

This sentiment pervaded the schoolbooks, the public propaganda machinery, novels, academic texts and journalists' impressions. At stake was an interpretation of modernity that, at the time, Germany shared with many of its European neighbours. In his prescient 1938 essay, 'The Age of the World Picture,' the philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) ambivalently analysed this modernity as characterized by competing yet basically similar ideologies rushing into a confrontation. 'For what is happening now is the melting down of the self-completing essence of modernity into the obvious.'[3] Seen from this angle, modernity was ideological conquest: 'The fundamental event of modernity is…that man fights for the position in which he can be that being who gives to every being the measure and draws up the guidelines.'[4] A battle was imminent in which humanity would shortly reach a new level: 'With a speed unrecognized to those who are involved, modernity races towards the fulfilment of its essence. With this battle of worldviews, modernity first enters the decisive period of its history, and probably the one most capable of enduring.'[5]

Heidegger's observations were of a general nature, that is, he did not speak of Germany alone. Nonetheless, the feeling of speed and urgency in the nation, of Germany standing on the crossroads of history and of Germans bringing about its fulfilment, is evident in the words of Alfred-Ingemar Berndt (1902–1945), writer in the service of propaganda minister Goebbels:

> Never before was a period in the development of the history of our people for every German so rich in experiment as is our time. Never before was the fullness of history so abundant, and never before was the individual so deeply involved in the multitude of daily happenings. Today there is no person in Germany who could stand aside indifferent and untouched, without at least noticing what happens in our country on a daily basis.[6]

This passage was published in 1942 when the murder of the European Jewry was underway and German armies were still victorious on the battlefield, thus

3 Martin Heidegger, 'The Age of the World Picture,' in Martin Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track*, ed. Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 85.

4 Heidegger, 'The Age of the World Picture,' 71.

5 Ibid.

6 Alfred-Ingemar Berndt, *Meilensteine des Dritten Reiches* (München: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1942), 9. For a lucid analysis of the ways in which the sacred and the profane were fused, see Anson Rabinbach, 'The Aftermath. Reflections on the Culture and Ideology of National Socialism,' in *Weimar Thought: A Contested Legacy*, ed. Peter E. Gordon et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 394–406.

corroborating the self-righteousness with which Germany strove for mastery of Europe. Recent historians have placed the German quest in the context of empire building, linking it with colonialism and genocide.

Shelley Baranowski, for instance, typified the Second World War as 'the imperialist expansion of a latecomer,' which perceived its natural imperial enlargement to the east, 'acquiring space at the expense of Slavs and Jews' and 'making place through ethnic cleansing in combination with the ideology of ethnic homogeneity' as all for the good and survival of the German people.[7] Some years previously, Philipp Ther had already described how Germany's expansion to the east was rooted in almost a thousand years of German settlement in Poland and the Baltic countries. According to Ther, the loss of the historical settlements at the end of the First World War had left a 'phantom pain' that, at least in the minds of the German people, could only be remedied by 'taking back' what 'righteously' belonged to them.[8] It explains much of the semi-religious zeal with which the country soon committed large-scale extermination.

In this chapter I address the Ahmadiyya mission in Berlin in the period leading up to, and during the Second World War. During the 12 years of the Millennial Kingdom (*Tausendjähriges Reich*), the Muslim community struggled to present a single face that would not threaten the German national interest. Here, amid harsh competition, the Ahmadi missionaries made little headway other than to appear deviant. Indeed, unlike other Muslim organizations in Berlin, they failed to fit into the framework of a future independent nation-state. They had come to Berlin as cosmopolitans with a mission, namely to raise sympathy and support for their religion and initiate intellectual debates on reform. Politically, they were of no importance, but they were nonetheless *there*. The Ahmadiyya missionaries, but in particular the Deutsch–Moslemische Gesellschaft, which represented the converts, found themselves having to tread a fine line between their Nazi sympathies on the one hand and their loyalty to their former president, Hugo Marcus on the other. Although humiliated and forced to leave the country because of his Jewish origins, Marcus nonetheless continued to guide the mosque until the summer of 1942.

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7 Shelley Baranowski, *Nazi Empire. German Colonialism and Imperialism from Bismarck to Hitler* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 3.

8 Philipp Ther, 'Deutsche Geschichte als imperiale Geschichte. Polen, slawophone Minderheiten und das Kaiserreich als kontinentales Empire,' in *Das Kaiserreich Interkontinental. Deutschland in der Welt 1871–1914*, ed. S. Conrad and J. Osterhammel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 2006), 137.

Whereas the mission was of minor importance to the regime, the partnership between the Nazi regime and Muslim leaders fitted the world picture of the day. In the preparatory phase leading up to the war, Muslim people were not perceived to live in Europe. Therefore, although the German regime regarded them as belonging to an inferior race, it did not target them for extermination. Rather, in line with the policies of the *Kaiserreich*, which had persistently supported the Muslim people of the Middle East and British India against the British colonizers, the Nazi regime identified Arabs and Indians as their allies. Muslim representatives from these world regions, some of whom had been in Berlin since the end of the First World War, were thus given a privileged status as future partners of the Third Reich.

What tied them together was their hatred of the Jews, but each side pursued very different aims: the Germans strove to colonize Europe and to that end employed inhuman death technologies, including mass deportations, mass shootings, mass starvations and 'death factories.' Leaders in the Muslim world worked to liberate their countries from colonialism and to achieve that goal they tried to keep their partnership with Germany intact. However, although admirers could certainly be found, Arab intellectuals were also critical of the Nazi regime.[9] As a result, Arabs in Berlin who collaborated with the regime were ambivalent. Some actively cooperated in propaganda initiatives by helping to form Muslim regiments and training army imams, whereas others did not collaborate at all.

In addressing the different forms of collaboration during the war, I introduce the notion of adaptive globalization. As we have seen, Indians, Arabs and Germans had been interacting in the context of modernity, but from the German perspective modernity had reached a decisive stage, which philosophers termed 'the completion of history'; this called for a bloody task for which Germany had destined itself as the chosen executor. Berlin's Muslim representatives, on their part, were less outspoken about their views on modernity and tended on the whole to operate quietly in the shadow of the dominant power in Germany. The Ahmadiyya missionaries, however, continued to follow their policy of modernizing Islam through cultural adaptation without political involvement. The fate of the Gesellschaft in wartime Berlin aptly illustrated the limits of that approach.

9 Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski, *Confronting Fascism in Egypt. Dictatorship Versus Democracy in the 1930s* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010); Götz Nordbruch, *Nazism in Syria and Lebanon. The Ambivalence of the German Option, 1933–1945* (London: Routledge, 2009); Peter Wien, *Iraqi Arab Nationalism. Authoritarianism, Totalitarianism and pro-Fascist Inclinations, 1932–1941* (London: Routledge, 2006).

7.1 Privileged Muslims in Nazi Berlin

In 1936, the Indian journalist Habibur Rahman rekindled the Islamische Gemeinde zu Berlin. Acting as its secretary general and backed by 100 members of the Indian community in Berlin, he co-opted the converts Walther Hassan Hoffmann and Georg Konieczny, whom we previously met as members of the Islam Institute (Hoffmann) and the Deutsch–Moslemische Gesellschaft (Konieczny) respectively, to take care of the workflow. As an organization, the Gemeinde never overlooked an occasion to profess its admiration for the Nazi regime. As a member of the party and a staunch Nazi, Konieczny always concluded his letters with a '*Heil Hitler!*'[10]

As mentioned in Chapter 4, Habibur Rahman vehemently insisted that the Ahmadiyya mosque was public property, but as the leader of a religious organization he never developed a noteworthy profile. During major festivals, however, he enjoyed organizing afternoon teas[11] and, during *Eid-ul-Fitr* in 1940, and again in 1941, he led a party of Indian Muslims to occupy the mosque by force to perform the festival prayers. This furore was only put to an end in 1942 when the caretaker of the mosque, Mrs Amina Mosler, turned to Amin al-Husseini, the Mufti of Jerusalem then resident in Berlin, to place the supervision of prayers and sermons in his care.[12]

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10 VR/IGB, 183–220 (1938–1942); AA/4 (10 July 1936).

11 AA/9.

12 AA/5 (29 August September 1942, 16 October 1942). Amin El-Husseini (1893–1974) became Mufti of Jerusalem in 1921. He used his position to work for the liberation of the Middle East and against Jewish immigration to Palestine. A prime enemy of the British, El-Husseini fled from Jerusalem in 1937. After stations in Beirut, Bagdad and Rom, he contacted Hitler in 1941, demanding support to install a purely Arab Palestine. In response, the Nazi Regime offered him a contract in Berlin to organize Arabic propaganda for Nazi Germany, although the response in the Arab world was almost zero. The Mufti stayed in Berlin from 1942 to 1945. Cf. Joseph B. Schechtman, *The Mufti and the Führer. The Rise and Fall of Haj Amin El-Husseini* (New York: Barnes and Co, 1965); Gerhard Höpp, ed., *Mufti-Papiere. Briefe, Memoranden, Reden und Aufrufe. Amin al-Husianis aus dem Exil, 1940–1945* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2004); Klaus-Michael Mallmann and Martin Cüppers, *Halbmond und Hakenkreuz. Das Dritte Reich, die Araber und Palästina* (Darmstadt: WB, 2006); Klaus Gensicke, *Der Mufti von Jerusalem und die Nationalsozialisten. Eine politische Biographie Amin El-Husseinis* (Darmstadt: WB, 2007); Wolfgang G. Schwanitz, 'The bellicose birth of Euro-Islam in Berlin,' in *Islam and Muslims in Germany*, ed. Ala Al-Hamarneh and Jörn Thielmann (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 183–212; Heinrich Billstein, *Turban und Hakenkreuz. Der Großmufti und die Nazis* (ARTE Documentary on 9 December2009), accessed 30 May 2014, youtube.com; Sean McMeekin, *The Berlin–Baghdad Express. The Ottoman Empire and Germany's Bid for World Power* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, an

It was probably significant that, until 1942, the Nazi regime was indecisive about the role Muslims in Berlin were to play during the war. Insurgent leaders from the British colonies, including Muslim leaders, were given a royal reception. But since Hitler considered them 'at best lacquered half-apes,'[13] any decision about the manner in which the unequal partners would cooperate in the future was invariably postponed until after the final victory.[14]

Meanwhile, of the many Indians who originally came to Berlin to study, only 53 remained in Nazi Germany.[15] Most found work in one or other ministry as spies, translators, or newsreaders in propaganda broadcastings. A list of 'foreigners in the foreign office' drawn up during the winter of 1942/3, reveals, next to nine Europeans, the names, birthdays and addresses of 33 employees from British India, two Egyptians and one Iranian.[16] The low number of Arabs is explained by the Mufti having his own propaganda department in Berlin, *Amt Mufti*, not in the foreign office but in the RSHA, where he seems to have employed no fewer than 60 men and women.[17]

Some on the list, notably Tarachand Roy and Alimcan Idris, belonged to an older generation of revolutionaries who had been in Berlin since the end of the First World War.[18] But Habibur Rahman, Abdul Qudus Faroqhi, Abdul Rauf Malik, Aziz Domet, or Abdul Hakim, to name but a few, were born around 1900

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imprint of Harvard University Press, 2011), 340–66; Jeffrey Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

13 Quotation in Schwanitz, 'Euro-Islam in Berlin,' 203, footnote 49.

14 'The present concession towards the Mufti is only a means towards our aim. Once we can take drastic action, it is wholly thinkable that we once more reduce the Middle Eastern dwarf state of Palestine to its components'; Schellenberg to Luther, AA/9 (20 October 1942). By 1944, the Mufti was internally referred to as 'the Mufti problem'; AA/9 (18 July 1944).

15 List of Indians in Europe in Diethelm Weidemann, 'Indische Emigranten in Deutschland während des Zweiten Weltkrieges,' in *Fremde Erfahrungen. Asiaten und Afrikaner in Deutschland, Österreich und in der Schweiz bis 1945*, ed. Gerhard Höpp (Berlin: Das Arabische Buch, 1996), 241, 244, 255.

16 List of collaborators in AA/7. Muhammed El Safty and Abdel-Halim El Naggar both appear in this list with their code and clear names (Najib Quaras and Bashir Sufian).

17 List of collaborators in the *Höpp Papers*, Zentrum Moderner Orient Berlin, 1.27 (uncatalogued box): Gesandschaftsrat Dr Granow an AA (14 April 1942).

18 Tarachand Roy was one of the 100 Indians whom the German Intelligence contracted during the First World War, cf. Heike Liebau, 'The German Foreign Office, Indian Emigrants and Propaganda Efforts Among the Sepoys,' in *When the War began We Heard of Several Kings'–South Asian Prisoners in World War I Germany*, ed. Franziska Roy et al. (New Delhi: Social Science Press, 2011), 106 and footnote 39; Joachim Oesterheld, 'Indische Präsenz in Deutschland,' in *Fremde Erfahrungen. Asiaten und Afrikaner in Deutschland,*

and arrived in Berlin around 1920. Following in the footsteps of former Muslim students, they still lived on Kurfürstendamm and in the adjoining streets stretching into Wilmersdorf and Charlottenburg.

Whereas former students easily found lodgings in the newly built neighbourhood, in the 1940s this pattern changed. During the war, or until winter 1943 when the allied bombing of Berlin began in earnest, the area around Kurfürstendamm continued to attract interest, in fact so much interest that anyone in Berlin of name and rank in the Nazi hierarchy would try to get a foot in. Their work could very well have paved the way for the Indians, since the ministries competed fiercely over apartments that stood empty as a result of the deportation of the Jewish population during 1941 and 1942.[19] Indeed, many of the addresses mentioned on the list, such as Mommsenstrasse 6, Mommsenstrasse 14 and Kurfürstendamm 59/60, had only a few months earlier been used as centres in which to house Jewish families prior to deportation.[20] Needless to say, none of the Indian and Arab employees were influential enough to claim such an apartment. Only the Mufti, in 1943 still treated as the future leader of the Arab world, could throw his weight around and demand one of the 'bigger Jewish apartments' for himself and his staff.[21] The list aptly demonstrates what it meant to belong to the privileged class.

Members of the Islam Institute were in a similar position. Founded in 1927 as an offshoot of the Gemeinde, the institute decayed after the death of Nafi Tschelebi. Until 1939, the yearly reports to the registration office tell a tale of internal competition, long absences from Germany and a general lack of interest.[22] But on the eve of the war its politics changed. After 1933, around 170 Arab students remained in Nazi Germany; by 1939, most were working as Arab tutors in the Berlin Seminar for Oriental Languages, or for the German propaganda department. When the Mufti settled in Berlin, many reappeared in his entourage. Remaining ambivalent, they admired Nazi Germany because of its 'militarism and humanism,' and because of its solution to 'the Jewish problem.'[23]

Österreich und in der Schweiz bis 1945, ed. Gerhard Höpp (Berlin: Das Arabische Buch, 1996), 333.

19 Susanne Willems, *Der entsiedelte Jude. Albert Speers Wohnungsmarktpolitik für den Berliner Hauptstadtbau* (Berlin: Edition Hentrich, 2000), 71–104.

20 *Juden in Charlottenburg. Ein Gedenkbuch*. Berlin: Text Verlag (2009), 226–447.

21 AA/9 (May 1943).

22 VR/IIB (1934–1938). For an overview of these developments see Figure 2 (p.51).

23 Peter Wien, 'The Culpability of Exile. Arabs in Nazi Germany.' *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 37 (2011) 347.

In February 1939, the Egyptian Ahmed Muhamed Riad, backed by German converts (Georg Konieczny, Walther Hassan Hoffmann, Chalid Seiler-Chan and Bruno Richter), a handful of Tatars (Alimcan Idris, Muhammed Kazakoff and somebody Dawletschurin) and a couple of Indians (Habibur Rahman and Tarachand Roy) attempted a new start.[24] However, when in May 1940 Habibur Rahman secured the presidency of the Islam Institute and filled the board with Indians only, the general assembly closed down the organization for good.[25]

Finally, in September 1941, the Egyptian journalist Kamal Eldin Galal with his co-patriots Abdel-Hakim El-Naggar and Ahmed Al-Safty founded the Islamic Central Institute, which was to be its new incarnation. Again, the three were well situated. Galal was employed in the ministry of propaganda and Naggar and Safty in the foreign office. Galal also served as a close adviser to propaganda minister Goebbels.[26]

With the foundation of the Islamic Central Institute, the die was cast. Whereas Indians dominated the Gemeinde, the Islam Institute was in Arab hands. When Amin al-Husseini settled in Berlin, he established a variety of working relationships with the institute, but not with the Gemeinde. When it became known that the Mufti planned an official launch of the institute on 18 December 1942, in the presence of 200 guests, of whom many were high state officials, the foreign office put pressure on the Gemeinde and Habibur Rahman to cooperate.[27] For the rest of the war, the two organizations remained at loggerheads.[28] The Mufti's eminence elevated the Islamic Institute. In return, the latter organized regular propaganda broadcastings in Arabic and assisted in the creation of Muslim regiments.

In one other aspect Arabs and Indians differed. The Islam Institute and its successor, the Islamic Central Institute, maintained an attitude towards the Ahmadiyya mosque and its converts' organization that was more or less cooperative. When Azeez Mirza travelled to India in 1937 with his bride, the Mufti gave the couple a reception in Jerusalem.[29] In 1939, before he left Berlin, Sheikh Abdullah asked Dr Ahmad Galwash, a religious scholar from Al-Azhar

24 VR/IIB (2 February 1939).

25 VR/IIB (27 May 1940).

26 Gerhard Höpp, 'Muslime unterm Hakenkreuz. Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Islamischen Zentralinstituts zu Berlin e.V.' *Moslemische Revue* (1997) 57–67. For a little portrait of Galal: Wien, 'The Culpability of Exile,' 339–40.

27 AA/9, cf. Höpp, 'Muslime unterm Hakenkreuz,' 61.

28 AA/5 (16 October 1942).

29 P A Oettinger, Lisa Oettinger's letters to her mother, June 1937.

University and member of the Islam Institute, to lead in prayer and give sermons in his stead.[30] When in June 1942 Habibur Rahman and his party attempted to occupy the mosque, which was when the caretaker Amina Mosler turned to the Mufti for help, she therebye strengthened a relationship that already had some history.

7.2 Muslim Soldiers in German Armies

The Indians and Arabs were privileged compared with a third Muslim group in Germany. When the tide turned and German armies were smashed in North Africa and Russia in the winter of 1942/3, hundreds of thousands of German soldiers were killed or taken prisoner. To replenish the ranks and continue the war, a very different kind of Muslim appeared on the scene, namely Russians and the inhabitants of Southeast Europe. The *Wehrmacht* already had a huge number of Russian Muslim prisoners of war by June 1941 and, because Stalin treated his minorities so badly, tens of thousands defected to the enemy as soon as the armies clashed.[31] In response, the ministry of eastern affairs in Berlin set up a number of control centres (*Leitstellen*) to organize their entry into the German army. The Russian Muslims included Crimeans, Tatars, Caucasians and Middle Eastern Asians and the ministry put Veli Kayum-Khan (1904–1993) in charge of them. Kayum-Khan was an 'old migrant' from Tashkent who had come to Berlin to study in 1922, married a German woman and had worked for the NSDAP in the 1930s.[32] With his boss, Gerhard von Mende, Kayum-Khan visited the Russian POW camps at an early stage to select prisoners for training for the German army.[33] To support this task, the ministry in Berlin employed a staff of no less than 112 Tatar collaborators to carry out a wide range of services covering health, military matters, prisoners of war, civil care, propaganda, culture and religious service.[34]

30 Manfred Backhausen, *Die Lahore–Ahmadiyya–Bewegung in Europa* (Lahore: AAII, 2008), 97.

31 Alexander Dallin, *German Rule in Russia 1941–1945. A Study of Occupation Politics* (New York: Macmillan, 1957); Patrik von zur Mühlen, *Zwischen Hakenkreuz und Sowjetstern. Der Nationalismus der sowjetischen Orientvölker im 2. Weltkrieg* (Düsseldorf: Droste-Verlag, 1971), 68–81; Ian Johnson, *Die vierte Moschee. Nazis, CIA und der islamische Fundamentalismus* (München: Klett-Cotta, 2011), 21–54; Stefan Meining, *Eine Moschee in Deutschland. Nazi, Geheimdienste und der Aufstieg des politischen Islam im Westen* (München: C. H. Beck, 2011), 13–56.

32 Meining, *Eine Moschee in Deutschland*, 42–44; Johnson, *Die vierte Moschee*, 21–54.

33 Von zur Mühlen, *Zwischen Hakenkreuz und Sowjetstern*, 81, 94.

34 Meining, *Eine Moschee in Deutschland*, 42.

By 1943, there were already between 200,000 and 300,000 Muslim Soviets in the German army. By the end of the war, their total number had reached one million.[35] The Allied forces handed those who survived the war, of whom there were not many, to the Soviets, well aware of the certain death that awaited them.[36] The 2000 to 3000 men who were able to escape found their way to a displaced persons camp, from where they gradually managed to build an existence in postwar Germany.[37]

Huge as this group was, despite having served in the German army, wartime Berlin denied the Russian Muslims religious representation and ignored their presence in their propaganda[38] – the transformation of the communist *Untermensch* (inferior race) into a military partner on an equal footing proved to be impossible for the Nazis to sell to the public.[39] Although the SS dropped its Aryan concept, introduced the prospect of 'Islam as a secret weapon' and even used the word 'Muslim German,'[40] the deep-seated conviction that Germans were destined to be super heroes and the 'inferior races' of the East slaves, simply was stronger. The army reacted with bias. Russian POWs lodged in concentration camps near Berlin were regularly driven to the Wilmersdorfer mosque to receive a collective prayer or sermon; Hitler continued to speak of 'cannibals.'[41] As we shall see, this bias shaped the German postwar understanding of Islam. All in all, the position of Russian Muslims in Nazi Germany was fragile and fraught with danger.

Given the competition between Arab and Indian, the mounting political pressure and the sort of colonial bias and racism that drew a distinction between privileged and 'inferior' Muslims, how did the Ahmadiyya missionaries in Lahore and their community of converts in Berlin defend their particular approach? Where did they place the Tatar regiments that received their training outside Berlin? And, once the war began, how did they survive?

35 Johnson, *Die vierte Moschee*, 29, 46. In addition, the German foreign office negotiated with countries in South East Europe in order to recruit their Muslim inhabitants for the so-called *Iskandar* and other Muslim regiments. In summer 1944, when the front situation began to look grim, the RSHA formed the notorious all-Muslim SS *Osttürkischer Waffenverband* (East-Turkish Battalion), ordering it to suppress the Warsaw revolt. Dallin, *German Rule*, 615f. Cf. BA/ZZS 31, 26–60.

36 Meining, *Eine Moschee*, 52–56.

37 Meining, *Eine Moschee*, 57f; Johnson, *Die vierte Moschee*, 57f.

38 Von zur Mühlen, *Zwischen Hakenkreuz und Sowjetstern*, 81.

39 Dallin, *German Rule*, 614.

40 'Muselgermane'. Dallin, *German Rule*, 615–20.

41 Dallin, *German Rule*, 422–39.

7.3 The Aryan Bias: The Deutsch–Moslemische Gesellschaft during the Rise of Nazi Power

In July 1939, just before the outbreak of war, Sadr-ud-Din's translation of the Koran into German, begun in 1924, finally rolled from the presses. To celebrate the event and because he expected to sell many copies, Sheikh Abdullah bought a fat, gold-rimmed register in which to write the names and addresses of every buyer.[42] Exuberance, meticulous bookkeeping, or a combination of both, moved him also to note down whether the purchaser came in person, who had been present to receive the money, who ordered more than one book, and to whom the Koran was presented. Through private distribution, 108 copies soon found their way into the households of the community and beyond. Journals and booksellers ordered a few dozen.[43] When Abdullah fled the country on 1 November, another 2800 Korans were still awaiting distribution.

This register gives us a glimpse of the community in action, as well as some idea of the scope and breadth of the Ahmadiyya network on the eve of the war. The yearly reports of the meetings of the Gesellschaft sent to the registry office since 1931 also tell us something about the community, which, in keeping with Ahmadiyya philosophy, always embraced both converts and 'Friends of Islam.'[44]

Nine copies were sent to Ahmadiyya missionaries in Lahore, Jakarta, London and The Hague,[45] and ten were presented as gifts to religious leaders across Europe and the Middle East.[46] Muslims in Berlin purchased another ten copies. But except for Tarachand Roy, none of them seems to have belonged to either the Islam Institute or the IGB.[47] Some interested parties came by in person to purchase a copy without leaving their name. For the rest, the register offers the names and addresses of 71 Germans, 52 of whom appear to have been from Berlin.

These data form the basis of the following observations. Half the names cannot be traced to an earlier list. They are neither well-known Germans nor

42 In 2012, the author recovered the register in the cellar and restored it to the mosque library.

43 *Harrasowitz* (Leipzig), *Anthropos* (Wien), the *Mitteldeutsche Zeitung* (Erfurt), *Gabler* Verlag (Wiesbaden), *Deutsche Verlagsanstalt* (Berlin), and *Verlagsbuchhandlung Bundlack* (Bielefeld).

44 VR/DMG (1931–1938).

45 Mirza Ali Baig had just arrived from Indonesia in Den Haag; see Chapter 2.

46 See Chapter 2.

47 The IGB sent reports to the Register Office since 1922, the Islam Institute registered as late as 1939. Still, the available material offers hundreds of names for comparison.

do they appear in the *Moslemische Revue*. Their owners were probably 'Friends of Islam,' simple visitors to the Islam evenings. If nothing else, the register gives the names of 37 of them; 21 names match the participant lists of one or all the yearly DMG meetings. We find ex-presidents Hugo Marcus and Alfred Chalid Seiler-Chan, board members Werner Omar Schubert and Fritz Hikmat Beyer, long-time members Frau Peter, Frau Bender, Fräulein Hillebrandt, Saladin H. Schütz and Anton Dybe, new board members Dr S. B. Hiller and Dr Ernst Klopp vom Hofe, as well as a group of recent converts to Islam, including Amina Mosler and her son Ahmed, Abdullah Weißer, A. R. Barthelemes, Abdullah Hospelt, Hassan Kossow, R. Raßler, B. Freund, Dr Devrient and Alfred Bach. Clearly, the convert community had maintained continuity and to all appearances was still expanding. No fewer than five people – Schubert, mother and son Mosler, Weißer and Barthelemes – lent a helping hand in the distribution of the Koran, which bears witness to a high degree of involvement.[48]

On second inspection, the comparison between the yearly reports and this Koran register reveals a curious bias. Take the 1932 report, the last one written before the Nazi regime came to power. Of those present at that meeting in 1939, five have already left or are about to leave the country because they are considered politically unwanted (Mr and Mrs Faruqhi, Mr and Mrs Abdullah and Hugo Marcus). In 1932, two have already joined the Nazi Party (Georg Konieczny and Omar Schubert), and three will soon become active in one of the party organizations (Alfred Chalid Seiler-Chan, Fritz Hikmat Beyer and Amin F. Boosfeld).[49] A look through the later protocols corroborates this bias. In 1934, the Nazi ideologue Faruq Hans Fischer joined the board; in 1936 the Iranist Klopp vom Hofe presented the first SS member.[50] In fact, when Abdullah writes to the foreign office in 1936, 'Our President Mr Boosfeld is member of the victims' circle (*Opfer-Kreis*) of the NSDAP; our second secretary Dr Klopp vom Hofe is member of the NSDAP and SS; the treasurer Mr Schubert is member of the Labour Front, and the first assessor, Mr Beyer is member of the NSDAP,'[51] this reflects a long-since established personal Nazi involvement.

Returning to the Koran register, one discovers that they were not alone. Some 13 purchasers held chairs at the German Seminar for Oriental Studies, predominantly covering Turkic, Iranian and religious studies – the professors Gotthard Jäschke, Richard Hartmann, R. H. Grützmacher, Hans-Heinrich

48 They sold and delivered ordered Korans. Different handwritings in the register suggest a schedule.

49 VR/DMG (1932). For individual biographies of the converts, see Chapter 4 and 5.

50 AA/4 (31 August 1936).

51 Ibid.

Schaeder, and Ernst Kühnel from Berlin, Professor Hermans from Budapest and Professor Anton Spies from Breslau. Their names are flanked by the lower academic ranks – Dr O. Meyer, Dr Ernst Klopp vom Hofe, Dr E. Locker, Dr Helmut C. Heusmer, Dr Devrient, Dr Gerhard Klinge, Dr Bruno Hiller, and Dr Ungnad, all from Berlin. In the years before, many of these names regularly appeared in overviews of the monthly lectures, and some of them, notably Grützmacher, Spies, Hiller, Klopp vom Hofe and Klinge, subsequently published their lectures in the *Moslemische Revue*.

The high number of academics in the Koran register suggests a large intellectual network between the mosque and academe. The engagement of men like Jäschke, Hartmann, Kühnel and Schaeder in the mosque also betrays a link between the mosque and the Berlin Orientalists.[52] Those who are missing are the more politicized oriental scholars, such as Gerhard von Mende, Rainer Olzscha, Dr Benzing, Professor Schittau, Annemarie von Gabain, or Bertold Spuler.[53] In fact, if one lists the names of all the Orientalists who in 1939 lectured in the mosque, published in the *Moslemische Revue*, or bought a Koran it seems that the missionaries collected all the religious aesthetes of the day. As a matter of course, these scholars embraced racist, Aryan dogma and were highly supportive of the regime. A year later, in the summer of 1940, the young men will be at the front whereas the older generation (mainly professors) will volunteer in the war effort by offering work to task forces behind the frontline.[54]

One wonders how and where these academics fitted in with the Muslim missionaries. How could they help the mission forward? The answer must lie in the mission's wish to engage in 'an intellectual conversation' about religion (Sadr-ud-Din), not with communists, liberals, or fascists, but with the German intelligentsia regardless of who happened to present them. Missionaries usually go out of their way to reach their audience and to develop a common language. Ahmadiyya missionaries pursued a double aim. They sought not only to

52 Ekkehard Ellinger, *Deutsche Orientalistik zur Zeit des Nationalsozialismus 1933–1945* (Edingen-Neckarhausen: deux mondes Verlag, 2006); cf. Stefan Wild, 'Wissenschaft im Zwielicht. Orientalisten im Dritten Reich,' *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 103 (2008) 478–83.

53 In the whitewash account of his wartime duties, probably written for the Allied Forces in 1945, Olzscha portrays several of his former colleagues. Undated document, reprinted in Willem B. Drees et al., *The Study of Religion and the Training of Muslim Clergy in Europe* (Leiden: University Press, 2008), 348–68; cf. Burchard Brentjes, ed., *60 Jahre nationale Sowjetrepubliken in Mittelasien im Spiegel der Wissenschaft* (Halle: Martin-Luther Universität Wiss. Beiträge, 1985), 127–50, 151–72.

54 Frank-Rutger Hausmann, *Deutsche Geisteswissenschaft im zweiten Weltkrieg. Die 'Aktion Ritterbusch' (1940–1945)* (Heidelberg: Synchron, 2007), 214.

convince Germans of Islam but also, as a result of the encounter, to renew Islam. In the face of this enormous task, they steered away from political involvement, but nonetheless remained open to every person, theory and worldview that could help religious renewal forward and establish a common basis. In the 'age of the world picture' this was akin to tightrope walking. They invited whoever seemed able to bridge Eastern and Western traditions. But instead of finding the 'right' measure of modernity, it landed them in a seething cauldron of ideology production into which Nazi dogma, racial theory, modernity discourses and religious rejuvenation had all been tipped.

Hosseyn Kazemzadeh 'Iranshär,' the Iranian expert on Eastern mysticism, was just such a bridge maker and, after his meteoric rise in the early 1930s, he became a regular speaker in the lecture series. Kazemzadeh introduced the community to a wholly different set of ancestors, namely the ancient Iranian heroes Zarathustra and Ahura Mazda, whom he connected to Vedic lore and Christian mysticism. In other words, adding spice to the myth of Indo–Iranian–German *Übermenschen*, Kazemzadeh catered to the general infatuation with the idea of belonging to a superior race.

Kazemzadeh was a Persian Shi'ite Muslim and theosophist posing as a pure Aryan, uniting in his person the Shia tradition and the German desire to remedy his feelings of guilt. His reception in the Gesellschaft was enthusiastic: the *Moslemische Revue* praised his speeches and the mosque library still keeps his books. The community, always on the lookout for a spiritual escape from Europe, had little difficulty incorporating his Aryan worldview into their quest. In Chapters 4 and 5 we saw how converts turned to theosophy in an attempt to free themselves of their embarrassing European heritage. Before deciding to embrace Islam, Alfred Chalid Seiler-Chan, Irma Safiah Göhl and others learned ancient languages, immersed themselves in different religious communities and compared Mormonism with Baha'i, Buddhism with Vedanta, and everything with Christianity. Other converts, notably Hugo Marcus, Rolf von Ehrenfels and Faruq Fischer, examined the newest theories on modernity and developed them further with a view to applying them to Islam. Their common aim was the creation of a 'New Man' whom they projected would emerge from a fusion of European and Islamic thought.

To some of this audience, Kazemzadeh must have promised a gateway to the mystical East through which to escape the 'guilt' of European civilization. For others, his Zarathustra mysticism would have complemented Nietzsche's popular views on the *Übermensch*, in offering them the figure of an ancient yet modern man who would finally rise above himself to acquire superhuman qualities with which to change the world for the better. This is where the academics came in. The educated audience enjoyed hearing theories on an

Islamic–European synthesis for the same reason they liked Kazemzadeh: it helped them to transcend the European Christian tradition. In looking through their contributions to the *Moslemische Revue*, one finds a pot-pourri of propositions about the links between Islam, theosophy, the theory of Aryanism and, through the latter, Nazi ideology.

For example, in 'The Wisdom of the Derwishes,' Turcologist Anton Hartmann turns Islam into a theosophical sounding 'ancient wisdom faith that gathers all the nations into one big family.'[55] His urge to 'wake up and transcend egocentrism and love of the self'[56] snugly fits the Nazi ideology. Approached from a different angle, in 'Spiritual Relationships Between the Orient and Occident' theologian Gerhard Klinge revisits Zarathustra and Ahura Mazda[57] and envisages their heroic fight with the gods of darkness as the foundational act that connects Germans to Iranians to make them superior to all other peoples. Klinge freely employed the racial theory on the superiority of German, Indo–German or Aryan descent.[58]

Language specialists place the origin of this ancient race in India, from where it migrated to Iran, Sumeria and the Hittite Empire, before flowering in ancient Greece and then crossing to Europe. Nazi ideologues turned the migration route around. They claimed that the Aryan race originated in Northern Europe and that the blond-haired, blue-eyed Nordic look, which Germans

55 Anton Hartmann, 'Die Weisheit der Derwische,' MR 1 (1934) 25–32. Quotation on p. 27. Anton Hartmann (not in the Koran register) regularly published in the MR, notably in 1933, 1934, and 1939. His topics invariably deal with Derwishes, mysticism and wisdom. This author is not to be confused with Richard Hartmann, professor in *Orientalistik* and during the war teacher at the Dresden Mullah School (s. below, footnote 59).

56 Hartmann, 'Derwische,' 32.

57 Gerhard Klinge, 'Die geistigen Beziehungen zwischen Orient und Okzident,' MR 4 (1937) 91–99.

58 Whereas, around 1800, Friedrich Schlegel had introduced the term 'to forge a bond between Indians and Englishmen,' German scholars around 1900 used it to fantasize about an Aryan blood bond running from Indians through the Greeks to the Germans, see: Suzanne L. Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire. Religion, Race, and Scholarship* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 124–30; 190–94, 199; 292–321, quotation on p. 296; cf. Alireza Asgharzadeh, *Iran and the Challenge of Diversity. Islamic Fundamentalism, Aryanist Racism and Democratic Struggles* (New York: Palgrave, 2007); Klaus von See: 'Der Arier-Mythos,' in *Der Krieg in den Gründungsmythen europäischer Nationen und der USA* ed. Nikolaus Buschmann et al. (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2003), 56–84; Werner Ende, 'Wahn und Wissenschaft. Zur Wirkungsgeschichte westlicher Rassentheorien im Nahen und Mittleren Osten,' in *Hossohbet. Erika Glassen zu Ehre* ed. Börte Sagaster (Würzburg: Ergon -Verlag, 2001), 265–91; Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *Hitler's Priestess: Savitri Devi, the Hindu-Aryan Myth, and Neo-Nazism* (New York: NYU, 1998).

especially encapsulate, characterize its features. Either way, besides 'proving' the superiority of the German race, the racial theory also opened a bridge between Indians and Iranians on the one hand, and Germans and North Europeans on the other. It attracted philologists, historians of religion, theosophists and East–West theorists. Incidentally, it offered them a genealogy, which they used to bypass the Semitic Middle East, thus blocking the Jews and Old Testament from view. As Klinge concluded, 'liberalism cannot succeed. One has to face one's fate.'[59] In Nazi parlance this signalled the need to finish what the gods had begun – to fight the powers of darkness (the Jews) and unleash a heroic, superhuman battle so that the 'New Man' could finally appear.

From these two contributions to the *Moslemische Revue* in the 1930s we see that the links forged between Germany and Europe on the one hand and India and Asia on the other were much the same as those that existed during the period of the Weimar Republic. However, this time, with the help of scholars from university faculties of religion and oriental studies, a branch of Nazi ideology was incorporated in an attempt to overcome the apparent disorder between 'inferior' and 'superior' races by depicting 'Islam' as the ideal warrior religion.[60]

The Koran register tells us several things about the Deutsch–Moslemische Gesellschaft on the eve of war. First, there is the perspective of the missionaries to consider. For Sadr-ud-Din and all who helped him, the publication of the German translation was a major feat. Spreading the Koran to non-Muslims was a high priority for the mission organization and a time-consuming one at that, for it took up many thousands of man hours and no doubt several fund-raising initiatives in Indian communities to pay the printer.[61] The many entries in the register with *'frei'* (for free) marked beside them suggest a sense of pride and gratitude. If the missionaries nurtured any political views of their own, they were careful not to broadcast them. In 1934, President Muhammad Ali still saw a future for the mission in Nazi Germany 'because it favours the simple principles of life which Islam imprints.'[62] In later years, however, they kept silent

59 Klinge, 'Orient und Okzident,' 55.

60 Rabinbach, 'The Aftermath,' 395–97; Ludmilla Hanisch, 'Akzentverschiebung. Zur Geschichte der Semitistik und Islamwissenschaft während des "Dritten Reichs."' *Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte* 18/4 (1995) 207–26.

61 In the preface to the 1964 edition, Sadr-ud-Din thanks five major sponsors in Wazirabad and Rawalpindi; cf. *Der Koran Arabisch-Deutsch. Übersetzung, Einleitung und Erklärung von Mauvlana Sadr- ud-Din* (Berlin: Die Moschee/die Muslimische Mission, Berlin-Wilmersdorf, 1964).

62 Muhammad Ali, 'Glückwünsche,' MR 2 (1934) 45.

on the topic of politics.[63] Records of the gifted copies of the Koran incidentally reveal a missionary network stretching from London and The Hague to Prague, Belgrade, Sarajevo, Istanbul, Cairo, Baghdad and Lahore.

Second, except for the missionaries, this was basically a German community with precious few 'foreign' Muslims in its ranks. At least, the known Muslims from India and the Middle East in Berlin do not appear in the register and indeed seem not to have been interested in owning a copy of the Koran in German. Those who came were predominantly German and their names testify to continuity. Next to a range of new converts, we meet quite a few activists of old, those who founded the DMG in 1930 and had steered its path all through the dangerous 1930s. Putting together what we know about these people from other sources showed their strong leaning to, even active participation in, the Nazi Party. But this is not what bound them to the Ahmadiyya mosque. Their infatuation with Islam seems to have been fired by a common search to create a particular brand of (religious) modernity, maybe even produce, as Marcus and others time and again suggested, an alternative to the kind of 'New Man' the Nazi ideologues had already tried to mould through youth movements and school education.

Finally, the register drew our attention to the 'Friends of Islam.' Members of this group may have bought the Koran through scholarly interest, support for the endeavour, or just personal curiosity. The appearance of university scholars shows that the mission organization had links with oriental institutes, but the texts they published in the *Moslemische Revue* reveal a distance from the aims of the missionaries and an affinity with Nazi ideology. Gotthard Jäschke (1894–1984) and Richard Hartmann (1881–1965) appear in the files as pillars of that ideology. Jäschke attracts attention as one of the inventors of 'Turanistan,' which was designed to recruit Tatar Russians into the army.[64] Hartmann busied himself as a teacher and adviser at the Dresden Mullah School, which catered to those Tatars.[65] In her recent book on German Orientalism, Suzanne

63 When leaving Berlin in 1937, Sadr-ud-Din praised the German character for its 'warm honesty' and 'truthfulness.' It is likely that he thought of his Berlin parish. MR 3 (1937) 73.

64 AA/6 (1936–1945), cf. Gotthard Jäschke, 'Der Turanismus und die Jungtürken,' *Welt des Islams* 13 (1941) 1–69.

65 In November 1944, RSHA/VI 'Forschungsstelle Orient' started the first course of the *Ostturkistanische Mullah-Schule* at Lothringerweg 2 in Dresden with 21 pupils. Administrator: Reiner Olzscha. Director: Major D. Killinger. Engaged German Orientalists: Richard Hartmann, Kurt Erdmann, Bertold Spuler. Native speakers: Alimcan Idris, Reza Stambuli. The two female cooks, the secretary and the pupils themselves were recruited from among the Russian (Tatar) prisoners in concentration camps in and around Berlin. BA/ZZS 31: Mullah Schule Dresden (1944–1945).

Marchand drew our attention to the fact that Hitler's rise to power occasioned a heavy purge on oriental institutes. Once the Nazi opponents had fled abroad and the Jewish professors forced into early retirement, she notes, the faculties were filled with enthusiastic supporters of the regime who embraced the racial, especially Aryan, philosophy.[66] If anything, the majority of scholars and overviews we meet on the pages of the *Moslemische Revue* corroborate this observation.

7.4 A Jew among the Aryans: Hugo Marcus's Vision

How, with a full-blooded Jew as its leader could the Gesellschaft develop an affinity with the new regime, continue to attract new Nazi sympathizers and flirt with the Aryan myth? To put it mildly, it created a highly unpleasant situation. A non-Jewish organization headed by a Jew brought the secret police to the front door and put everybody involved under unbearable pressure. In his restitution claim, written in 1957, Hugo Marcus recounts that throughout 1934 and 1935 'the more prominent members of the Deutsch–Moslemische Gesellschaft, whose president I was, were pressured either to give up their membership in an organization that still tolerated Jews in its ranks, or, if they chose to remain, carry the political and personal consequences.'[67] It was because of this pressure, he notes, that he retreated from the presidency, 'to clear the road for them and save the Gesellschaft from further difficulties.'[68] Clear the road for whom exactly? The protocol of the meeting at which Marcus announced his departure, stipulated that it was he who should proposed Boosfeld as his successor and Klopp vom Hofe as non-Muslim board member.[69]

After his last appearance at the 1936 meeting, Marcus gave up his membership altogether. The Nuremberg Laws of 1935 had robbed him, as they had all other German Jews, of his citizenship and excluded him from society in every possible way. Jews were now, among many other restrictions, forbidden to seek employment, own a business, use public transport, have a bicycle, walk in the park, sit on a bench, buy tobacco or use a razor blade.[70] Non-Jewish citizens were discouraged from communicating with Jews; if they did, neighbours were

66 Marchand, *German Orientalism*, 487–95.

67 P A Marcus, Box 1, Restitution Claim 1957, 3.

68 Ibid.

69 VR/DMG (21 August September 1935).

70 Cornelia Essner, *Die 'Nürnberger Gesetze' oder Die Verwaltung des Rassenwahns 1933–1945* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2002).

quick to report 'suspicious' behaviour to the police. The novel *Die unsichtbare Kette* (*The Invisible Chain*),[71] written in 1936 and set in Berlin in the area around Kurfürstendamm, describes the isolation of the main character who describes how 'one stands by and observes how these well-known names, streets, underground stations – how this whole city slips out of one's hands like a foreign cloth.'[72] Isolation so robs him of his bearings that even his beloved neighbourhood threatens him: 'House fronts loom up on both sides, steep and high, one cannot see their roof. … The streets have become deep trenches; we go into them as in a shaft. Berlin has become a stranger, foreign and unknown.'[73]

Did Hugo Marcus have the same experience? In 1936, he was 56 years old, lived in his parents' apartment and had been mosque manager for 13 years. He too must have avoided speaking to anyone in the street for fear of compromising the neighbours. He too could not buy a book, visit a library, or indulge in whatever little pleasures he must have had. However, notwithstanding the pressured, he remained in the service of the mission and continued to perform his role. There is no record of whether he still helped organize the monthly lectures, but he continued to write for the *Moslemische Revue* and assisted Sadr-ud-Din with the Koran translation. The Ahmadiyya headquarters in Lahore continued to honour his contract as if nothing had happened and when the situation became unbearable, they issued invitation after invitation. Then, when Marcus finally fled to Switzerland, they continued to pay his salary. In fact, the last cheque, a final settlement for his assistance in the Koran translation, was paid on 2 August 1957.[74]

Marcus's next step was to visit the Jewish community to initiate exit procedures.[75] Then, defying the racial laws that had been in force since 1933, he once again began to speak in the DMG lecture series and continued to write for the *Moslemische Revue*.[76] The publication that resulted, *Moslemischer Schicksalsglaube* (*Muslim Fatalism*) was probably Marcus's best philosophical exposition.[77] In fact, he himself, in a reappraisal of his work towards the end of his life, thought so.[78]

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71 Herbert Friedenthal, *Die unsichtbare Kette* (Berlin: 'Atid'-Verlag, 1936).

72 Friedenthal, *Die unsichtbare Kette*, 41.

73 Friedenthal, *Die unsichtbare Kette*, 41–42.

74 P A Marcus, Box 12.1, Sadr-ud-Din to Marcus (20 August 1957).

75 P A Marcus, Box 1, Exit document from the Jewish Community of Berlin (18 May 1936).

76 In April 1933, German-Jewish writers were refused entry to the *Reichsschrifttumskammer* (Department of National Literature), the prerequisite for publishing in the Third Reich.

77 Hugo Marcus, 'Moslemischer Schicksalsglaube,' MR 1 (1936) 6–27. Under the pseudonym of H. J. Schneider, he summarized this text in 'Gesetz und Freiheit im Islam' (Law and Freedom in Islam), MR 2 (1939) 55–61.

78 P A Marcus, Boxes 3 and 9.

Nowhere in the papers and letters Marcus left behind does he comment on what happened in Berlin in those years. The only clue lies in this philosophical and at times highly enigmatic text in which he never addresses the present. Instead, drawing on European, Arabic and Muslim philosophy, he questions the pillars on which it rests. *Muslim Fatalism* is a masterpiece of systematic critical thinking with two central focuses – fate (*Kismet*) and subjection (*Taqdir*).

In the Weimar Republic, fate was used as one possible explanation for why the Germans lost the war. In his influential *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (*The Decline of the West*) (1918), Oswald Spengler adopted a fatalistic view of history. In an interpretation of the recent past that obscured German responsibility, he argued that European civilization was doomed to die. Consequently, when the Nazi regime took power in January 1933, many understood Hitler's political success as a judgement of history, a decree of fate.[79] 'History has spoken' many German university scholars said, and openly declared their solidarity with the regime.[80]

Against this Marcus held that fate by no means signalled passivity. On the contrary, it is a drive that surges to become active, to start making something new: 'Life is short, death is certain, and in the face of everything one has to say, the shortness of time stimulates the utmost activity.'[81] Once one accepts that one's destiny is determined, 'one does not worry about oneself anymore.' Rather, 'in the face of danger, the real fatalist becomes unbending, strong, courageous, and full of activity.'[82] Fate is a key to action and therefore an escape from the trap of an apathetic present: 'keep your calm,' the author urges, 'be quietly courageous' and, on one occasion, as Nietzsche put it, 'forge your pain into wings.'[83]

Subjection (*Taqdir*) comes as close to a criticism of the semi-religious awe with which German people accepted the Nazi crimes as the author could get. Against the tide of *Führer* obeisance, Marcus places the God of the Koran in the centre and explains that subjection does not mean retreating into passivity but following His moral law, which has validity for all time. At this point, the

79 John Michael Krois, '*Kulturphilosophie* in Weimar Modernism,' in *Weimar Thought. A Contested Legacy*, ed. Peter E. Gordon et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 101–14.

80 *Bekenntnis der Professoren an den deutschen Universitäten und Hochschulen zu Adolf Hitler und dem nationalsozialistischen Staat* (Dresden: NS Lehrerbund Deutschland, 1933).

81 Marcus, 'Schicksalsglaube,' 7.

82 Marcus, 'Schicksalsglaube,' 10.

83 Marcus, 'Schicksalsglaube,' 20, 22.

author harks back once more to the initial crisis of modernity, which in his view was the cause of everything that followed – the First World War, the chaos and libertarianism of the 1920s, the search for the 'New Man,' up until the unmentionable present: '*Taqdir* moulds technical-ethical man, and those who have witnessed the rupture between technology and ethics will appreciate what that means. It is a feature of the younger past that technology and ethics did not match any more, and that people believed that mere technology sufficed.'[84]

For those able to read between the lines, this passage came closest to a critique of the kind of 'moulding' the Nazi ideologues had set in motion. Their solution was a school education that trickled racist worldviews into the children's minds, mass youth organizations that stopped them thinking independent thoughts and an elite education that prepared them for war. As August Heißmeier, inspector of the National Political Institutes of Education (*Napolas*) in which the Nazi elite was educated, stated in 1938: 'We live in a time in which the worry about one's personal salvation does not preoccupy us day and night any more. We have only one concern: What becomes of Germany?'[85] 'Our youth,' this pedagogue declared, 'is destined to become the political soldiers of their people and their *Führer*, independent of their profession.'[86] Against this avalanche, Marcus holds that 'technical knowledge without a moral attitude leads to destruction. Technology and ethics, technology and religion belong together!'[87]

In *Muslim Fatalism*, Marcus develops his vision of the European Muslim hero one step further. In his mind, only a fusion of European and Islamic civilizations can meet the needs of the moment and help modernity 'towards the fulfilment of its essence,' to repeat Heidegger's phrase.[88] Like Heidegger, Marcus challenged the Nazi ideology, yet remained close to its central tenets. Like theirs, his was a Nietzschean struggle with the powers of old that keep the world in thrall. Like them, he fought for the birth of a superhuman race that would be able to remedy the world's weaknesses. But unlike his Nazi opponents,

84 Marcus, 'Schicksalsglaube,' 12.

85 August Heißmeier, *Die Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten*. Vortrag im Oberkommando der Wehrmacht. (Berlin: Als Handschrift gedruckt, 1938), 17.

86 Heißmeier, *Erziehungsanstalten*, 4.

87 Marcus, 'Schicksalsglaube,' 13.

88 Regrettably, the author nowhere mentions the sources from which he drew his thoughts. The comparison with Heidegger is wholly mine and drawn to lend his text at least some contemporary context. Future indepth research of Marcus' philosophical publications can clarify questions that pertain to the pertinent philosophical traditions he had in mind.

Marcus's only weapon was scholarship. In view of the almost insurmountable difficulties, if they ever wanted to reach their aim, Marcus therefore stressed that scholars should resort to 'honourable cunning.'[89] To him, this was the deepest sense of subjection (*Taqdir*). Only cunningly employed scholarship could find a way out, 'exactly because it concerns a giant struggle in aid of a giant child, in which humanity itself is questioned.'[90]

Viewed from this angle, *Muslim Fatalism* makes captivating reading. It reveals a courageous thinker between different worlds, one who fights to keep his bearings and, against all odds, cunningly clears himself a space for action. The main character in *Die unsichtbare Kette* observed that 'we sit in the dark, all we need is a hole in the wall.'[91] Marcus went further than that. He opened up a space to act, in which he groped for an Islamic alternative to the political soldier of the Nazi ideology. Towards this aim, the Islamic terms *Kismet* (fate) and *Taqdir* (subjection) empowered him to do what was still within his reach, namely keep his bearings and employ scholarly reason. In the way he phrases his argument, his single-minded preoccupation with the 'giant child' (man who still must learn to grow up and use his hidden capacities), Marcus was very much a man of his time. But, unlike many, he apparently trusted himself to create an alternative to the prevailing ideology. It was this task that made him stay in Berlin, and, after he was finally forced to go, to support those who stayed behind.

He must have struck the right chord because, in the turmoil that followed, both the missionaries and the community members remained faithful to their ex-president and supported him wherever they could. Early in 1938, the situation worsened. Humiliated by the latest anti-Jewish legislation, Hugo Marcus was registered by the police like a common criminal. The new identity card, which survives in his archive, bears a big J for Jew on the front. From the back the face of a haggard man with sunken eyes stares out. 'Hugo Israel Marcus' runs the new signature underneath, obeying the legal requirement that all Jews bear the same name, Israel for men, Sarah for women.[92] Then, on the night of 9 November, in a concerted nocturnal action, Marcus was taken from his bed and, along with 26,000 other Jewish men, imprisoned in the concentration camp of Oranienburg-Sachsenhausen. Following a series of arson attacks on Germany's synagogues, the action was intended to frighten Jewish heads of

89 Marcus, 'Schicksalsglaube,' 27.

90 '...handelt es sich doch für sie um Riesenkämpfe zugunsten eines Riesenkindes, als welche die Menschheit selbst im Frage steht.' Marcus, 'Schicksalsglaube,' 27.

91 Friedenthal, *Die unsichtbare Kette*, 39.

92 P A Marcus, Box 1, Deutsches Reich J Kennkarte.

households into emigration. In the months following the internment, families were allowed to buy their husbands, grandfathers and fathers free on condition they could produce a visa and travelling ticket.[93]

It was the Gesellschaft that bought Marcus his freedom. In his restitution claim he writes: 'Due to the collected efforts of Superintendent Ungnad, Crown Prince of Saxony Pater Georg – both gentlemen visited our Islam evenings – and our Dr Abdullah, I was already released within a month.'[94] After this experience, he went through the complicated procedure of leaving Nazi Germany. Because he insisted on bringing his 85-year old mother, it cost him a lot of time and energy. In December 1938, the Lahore mission sent him a letter of invitation. A visa for British India and one for Albania followed some months later, but because of his mother's fragile health, Marcus never used them.[95] Instead, he tried the impossible and opted for Switzerland. In the middle of his proceedings, in April 1939, he travelled to his hometown Poznan, where he gave away the remains of the family capital, no less than 63,000 *Reichsmark*.[96] He was clearly determined not to give anything to an administration that so hugely enriched itself from the forced migrations.

The Koran register keeps track of what must have been one of his last visits to the mosque. On 28 July Marcus came to collect a copy and received one for free. On 23 August 1939, a week before the German armies overran Poland, he crossed the border to Switzerland and his mother followed four months later.[97] He left one brother behind. His younger brother Richard had been so terrorized that he committed suicide. The eldest, Alfred, had been forced to give up practising as a barrister but he continued to live in Berlin until 17 May 1943, when he and his wife were deported to Theresienstadt concentration camp.[98] In the archive remain two coarse grey-brown postcards dated November 1943 and stamped *'Kommandantur Theresienstadt.'* It is his sister-in-law who writes to him: 'Dear Hugo, this is to let you know that we are fine. Last May, Alfred passed away in peace.'[99] The coded message told Marcus that his brother had been murdered immediately upon arrival.

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93 Barbara Distel, "Die letzte ernste Warnung vor der Vernichtung.' Zur Verschleppung der ‚Aktionsjuden' in die Konzentrationslager nach dem 9. November 1938,' *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 46/11 (1998) 385–90.

94 P A Marcus, Box 1, Restitution Claim 1957, 3.

95 P A Marcus, Box 1, Box 12/1.

96 L A/2.

97 P A Marcus, Box 1, Restitution Claim 1957, 4.

98 Last address in Berlin: Mommsenstrasse 50. P A Marcus, box 1, Restitution Claim 1957, 4.

99 P A Marcus, Box 12.1. For propaganda reasons, the commander of the concentration camp Theresienstadt forced the inmates to write innocent postcards. Memoirs of survivors tell

7.5 The Workflow between Lahore, Basel and Berlin (1939–1942)

As soon as Abdullah reached Lahore on 7 December 1939, he wrote to his employee Hugo Marcus in Basel. This was the beginning of a correspondence that restored the working relationship and continued until May 1942. '*Mein lieber Herr Doktor*, Abdullah writes, did you hear from the mosque?'[100] 'Can you ask Mrs Mosler how things are going?' 'Please greet all the friends there.'[101] From the answers that have been saved it is clear that Marcus immediately passed on Abdullah's queries to the Berlin mosque and received answers in return. From now on, Alfred Bach, Dr Devrient, Superintendent Ungnad, caretaker Amina Mosler, and manager Gaedicke wrote to Marcus, who passed the news on to Lahore. With the exception of one, Marcus's letters were not saved, but from the dates mentioned by the correspondents one may conclude that he wrote to them every week, sometimes every day.[102]

Abdullah was exceedingly worried about the remaining German Korans still awaiting distribution in Berlin because, upon returning to Lahore, he learned from Sadr-ud-Din that the latter did not recognize part of the introduction as his own writing, especially pages 35 to 37, headed 'Foreign Sources of Islam.' How had these pages found their way into the manuscript? Abdullah said that the mission organization was 'angry and disappointed' and that under the circumstances would no longer pay for the *Moslemische Revue*.[103] Clearly, Berlin was seen as the guilty party. However, the collective attribution had conveniently forgotten that Sadr-ud-Din had not sufficiently mastered the German language and that Marcus had been his major interpreter. Consequently, Abdullah wrote to Marcus who then told the DMG not to sell any more Korans[104] and to 'let everybody who bought a Koran send their copy back.'[105]

A decision to rewrite the introduction was quickly taken and, for two whole years, a manuscript in progress moved back and forth between Lahore and Basel. In 1941, work had progressed far enough for Lahore to suggest that Berlin

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a wholly different story. Cf. Margot Friedlander, *Versuche, Dein Leben zu machen. Als Jüdin versteckt in Berlin* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2011).

100 A formal, yet intimate way of addressing friends and family members with a university degree; a translation would come close to 'My dear doctor sir.'

101 P A Marcus, Box 12.1 (7 December 1939, 4 January 1940, 20 March 1940, *passim*).

102 As soon as the war began, German citizens were forbidden to communicate with the enemy. The mail exchange that unfolded between Lahore and Berlin via Basel was a breach of war regulations.

103 P A Marcus, Box 12.1, Abdullah to Marcus (13 May 1940).

104 P A Marcus, Box 12.1, Abdullah to Marcus (12 February 1940).

105 P A Marcus, Box 12.1, Abdullah to Marcus (30 March 1940).

rip out the appropriate pages from the 300 bound copies and paste the new ones in; in the still unbound copies, the pages could simply be swapped[106] and the community meekly obliged. In her last letter to Marcus, dated April 1942, Amina Mosler said that Anton Dybe was now ready to print the new version. In his last letter to Marcus, dated May 1942, Abdullah again calculated the printing costs, instructing 'our Berlin friends' from where they could take the money. After that, the correspondence breaks off.[107]

Meanwhile, the Gesellschaft, or what was left of it, focused on its own problems. When the payments stopped, so too did the *Moslemische Revue*. For lack of heating, the mosque only opened on festival days, which again enraged the Islamische Gemeinde. For practical reasons, the community decided to move the Islam evenings to Mrs Mosler's home, where they still attracted 'a fair number of visitors' twice a month.[108] Friday prayers took place in the mission house, which, as of old, had become the community's new gathering place.

Marcus backed them up where he could. 'I will read your dear letter on Friday,' Mrs Mosler wrote to him.[109] In March 1942, Gaedicke reported that 'here in the house and the mosque everything is in best order. … Last Sunday we had our yearly Open Day of the mosque with Dr Lederer. Ca. 150 persons came.'[110] And Mrs Mosler trustingly added: 'The whole community sends its heartfelt greetings. We all think and talk a lot about you and the Abdullah family.'[111] Between the lines, however, things were not as rosy as reported. 'The young men are where they have to be these days,' Mrs Mosler remarked, adding, 'I worry about my Ahmed.'[112] 'Mrs M. still has a lot of trouble with the supporters of H. Rahman,' Bach signalled on several occasions.[113] When in June 1942, she went to the Mufti to place the Ahmadiyya property under his protection, the mosque moved into foreign hands. It is difficult to imagine this step without the usual deliberations along the Berlin–Basel–Lahore line. But the Marcus archive is silent on the subject, and other sources could not be traced.

106 P A Marcus, Box 12.1, Abdullah to Marcus (3 June 1941).

107 The printer's workshop burned down during one the allied carpet bombings. None of the Koran copies survived. Mohammad Aman Hobohm, 'Neuanfänge muslimischen Gemeindelebens in Berlin nach dem Krieg,' accessed 15 July 2014. http://members.aol.com/dmlbonn/archiv/hobohm2.html (2000), 13.

108 P A Marcus, Box 12.1, Bach to Marcus (4 February 1940).

109 P A Marcus, Box 12.1, Amina Mosler to Marcus (4 February 1940).

110 P A Marcus, Box 12.1, Gaedicke to Marcus (11 March 1942).

111 P A Marcus, Box 12.1, Amina Mosler to Marcus (19 April 1942).

112 Ibid.

113 P A Marcus, Box 12.1, Bach to Marcus (7 March 1940).

7.6 The Berlin Mosque as a State Institution (1942–1945)

What followed is also part of Ahmadiyya history. Once the Mufti took charge, the mosque and mission house were turned into a state institution for the reception of Russian Muslim soldiers. Reading the scarce sources together, it seems that the mosque remained open for daily prayer and regularly received Muslim regiments, that a Nazi flag waved on the premises and that whenever official receptions occurred, a Muslim *Wehrmacht* battalion would march up the street to greet the guests.[114] The mission journal *Paigham-i-Sulh* quoted Amina Mosler in 1945 saying that they received 6000 visitors on a regular basis.[115] Among the many men who have made their appearance in this chapter, Amina Mosler's is the only female voice. Although little is known about her, her portrayal can throw some light on what happened in those days.[116]

Alexandrina Beine (1895–1963) first appeared at the yearly meeting in August 1937. Born in Berlin, where she was raised a Catholic, she married the dentist Carl Mosler in 1917. One year later, the only son from this marriage, Rolf-Dietrich, was born. In 1927, the dentist died, leaving a widow with a young child whom Alexandrina then placed in a Catholic convent school. In 1935, when he was 17, Rolf became Ahmed in the Ahmadiyya mosque, with Abdullah as his witness. His mother followed some time later. In 1939, mother and son engaged in the distribution of the Koran. The trust she inspired must have been considerable because, in November that same year, Abdullah left the property in her care. She took her job very seriously, shooing Habibur Rahman and his party away and welcoming the visitors to the Islam evenings in her own home on Hauptstrasse 83 in Friedenau.

In June 1942, she turned to the Mufti for support. For the Gesellschaft, the Mufti hardly played a role but he did leave some traces. Between his arrival in Berlin in November 1942 and departure to South Germany in February 1945, he celebrated the cycle of high Islamic festivals in the mosque and used the Ahmadiyya property as a place for official receptions and, though brief, these functions had an impact. In Nazi Germany, al-Husseini was a star. Whenever and wherever he made an appearance, he attracted numerous film and photo shoots, for which the mosque and mission house offered a picturesque 'oriental'

114 Hobohm, 'Neuanfänge'; Mohammad Aman Hobohm, 'Islam in Germany,' *The Islamic Review* 8 (1951) 11–17; Backhausen, *Die Lahore-Ahmadiyya Bewegung*, 97–110.

115 Backhausen, *Die Lahore-Ahmadiyya Bewegung*, 103.

116 The following summarizes VR/DMG (1935–1939); S. A. Khulusi, *Islam Our Choice* (Lahore: AAIIL, 1961), 154; Hobohm, 'Neuanfänge,' and Backhausen, *Die Lahore-Ahmadiyya Bewegung*, 103–10; 142–46.

background. Mufti appearances in newsreels invariably signalled Muslim solidarity with the Nazi cause and, because the mosque was somewhere in the background, it gained a positive place in the minds of hundreds and thousands of Germans. In 2009, the French–German television channel ARTE made a documentary that included some of these newsreels were inserted.[117] Thus, we perceive al-Husseini in conference with Hitler, at the opening ceremony of the Islamic Central Institute, giving a sermon in, or exiting from, the mosque. Some of the DMG community must have been present. In one of these shots we see Mrs Mosler at his side.[118]

In one other respect, the Mufti left his mark in the Gesellschaft. When in autumn 1942 Mrs Mosler's son Ahmed came home on leave, he founded the Muslim brotherhood *Tariqat Mohammediyya* with eight other adolescents – Hassan Kossow, Abdul Qadir Mohr, Scherif Neubauer, K. Mueller, H. M. Richter, Ahmed Said Nowak, Amin Wolf and the later interim imam Herbert Mohammed Aman Hobohm. Hobohm wrote: 'We, young and active Muslims, want to join in a work and battle community that fights for Islam in Germany and the Orient, and pledge that we will live and die for this religion.'[119] In 1942 Hobohm who, with the exception of the organizer, was the only one to survive the *Tariqat*, was 16 years old. Since German men were conscripted at the age of 18, Kossow, Mohr, Neubauer and the others cannot have been much older than him. Joining the *Wehrmacht* as volunteers, they died within months.[120]

This little episode highlights the Mufti's attempts to convince European Muslims that joining the German army was equal to fighting for Islam.[121] The Mufti and his staff served as their ambassadors, preaching to recruits a blend of Muslim heroism and religious duty. In the above-mentioned newsreels, we hear the part of the Mufti's speeches in which hatred of Jews combined with religious orthodoxy served to justify the annihilation of the European Jewry.

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117 Billstein, *Turban und Hakenkreuz*.

118 Billstein, *Turban und Hakenkreuz*, 32:12 min.

119 Hobohm, 'Neuanfänge,' 2.

120 Hobohm, 'Neuanfänge' 3; Backhausen, *Die Lahore–Ahmadiyya–Bewegung*, 129.

121 The following is a summary of AA/4 ('Zusammenarbeit Waffen-SS und AA'); Dallin, *German Rule*; Camilla Dawletschin-Linder, 'Die turko-tatarischen sowjetischen Kriegsgefangenen im Zweiten Weltkrieg im Dreiecksverhältnis zwischen deutscher Politik, turanistischen Aspirationen und türkischer Außenpolitik,' *Der Islam* 80/1 (2003) 1–29; Roland Pfeiffer, 'Der Osttürkische Waffen-Verband der SS,' *Lexikon der Wehrmacht* (2007) 1–24, accessed 12 July 2012, www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht.de/Zusatz/SS/SSOsttuerkei.htm; Iskander Giljazow, 'Muslime in Deutschland. Von den zwanziger Jahren bis zum ‚islamische Faktor' während dem zweiten Weltkrieg' (1989), *Nachlass Höpp*, accessed 30 April 2014, http://zmo.de/biblio/nachlass_hoepp_web.pdf.

Early 1942, Adolf Eichmann seems to have initiated al-Husseini into the secret of the death camps and talked him through the 'solution of the Jewish question in Europe.'[122] In the summer of that same year, on the personal invitation of *ss Reichsführer* Himmler, the Mufti sent his close collaborators to Sachsenhausen concentration camp to study different death technologies.[123] On the eve of the German offensive in North Africa, the Mufti left no doubt that it was his intention to kill the Jews of Palestine in like manner as soon as the country was freed from British domination.[124] As we know, history took a different course. Once it became clear that Palestine would remain British, the Mufti focused his attention on the 'liberation' of Europe, rousing European Muslims into action with the help of anti-Semitic sentiment. In this way, he helped set up Muslim regiments, advised the army on Muslim rules regarding food, fasting, prayer and burial, and gave sermons in the field. His staff prepared his trips and appearances, and organized a Mufti training course in Guben (Saxony) to help fill army posts for mullahs and head mullahs.

When Russian recruits started training in the vicinity of Berlin, they were sent to the mosque as a 'proof' of German good faith. Surviving foreign office correspondence shows that the strategy worked well and, through a strange twist in the war logic, the mosque became 'Russian.' When early 1945 Russian bombers dived towards it, Mrs Mosler hung out a red flag to signal that, at last, here was friendly territory.[125] But by then, Muslim divisions stationed in the Balkans and France had already left the sinking ship and run over to the enemy.

7.7 The End

> In those days, Berlin was covered with wooden huts as far as the eye could see. In even the smallest gap of this mammoth city some pine-wood, tar-covered huts were squeezed. Greater Berlin, that is Berlin with the suburbs included, formed one big concentration camp. Miles and miles of

122 Schwanitz, 'Euro-Islam in Berlin,' 211–12, footnote 60. This is an issue of controversial debate. During the Nuremberg trials, Dieter Wisliceny, a close collaborator of Eichmann, accused the Mufti as the 'initiator' of the Mass murder of the Jews. He was trying to establish an alibi for himself. Clearly, the Mufti was a fanatical anti-Semite, and he functioned as the mouthpiece of Nazi Germany in the Middle East, but the Nazi perpetrators had nothing to learn from him.

123 Billstein, *Turban und Hakenkreuz*, 30:00–34:00 min.

124 Billstein, *Turban und Hakenkreuz*, 26:00–27:15 min., 36:00–37:00 min.

125 Hobohm, 'Neuanfänge'; Backhausen, *Die Lahore–Ahmadiyya–Bewegung*, 98.

> camp, lodging as chance would have it between the solid houses, the monuments, the offices, train stations, factories.[126]

Early in 1945, the young Frenchman François Cavanna was stationed in Berlin as part of the huge army of forced labourers from all over Europe. Ten million French, Belgian, Dutch, Polish and Russian workers were abused as slaves in the German war industry, 250,000 of them in Berlin alone. Cavanna's impression of one big forced labour camp stretching across the city has later been corroborated: we now know that Berlin accommodated 3000 such camps.[127]

As the allied bombs reduced the city to ruins, forced labourers were employed to clear away the rubble. Cavanna was part of a team that cleaned up streets after bombings. His account of the S-Bahn stations on his way to a location in West Berlin reads like a journey through a lost world. 'The further you travel westward, the more the disaster hits you. Jannowitz Bridge, Alexander Square, the Bourse – this is where the better quarters start – and the horror. Friedrichstrasse, Zoologischer Garten, the stump that once was the Gedächtniskirche sticking out like a rotten tooth where once Kurfürstendamm began, Charlottenburg' and so he goes on.[128]

Over the period of five years, Berliners witnessed changes that altered their city for good. In the early years of the war, tens of thousands of Jewish Germans were forced to migrate. Of those who remained, the overwhelming majority got deported to death camps in the east. Towards the end of the war, hundreds and thousands of POWs and foreign labourers – more often than not they were both – were transported to Berlin to keep the war industry going and the city running. All these comings and goings took place quite openly, visible for all who cared to look. One cannot help but wonder what the converts, university scholars, privileged Arabs and Indians mentioned in this chapter saw. Did any

126 François Cavanna, *Das Lied der Baba* (Berlin: Georg Müller Verlag, 1988), 228. Original: *Les Russkoffs* (Paris: Pierre Belfond, 1979).

127 Numbers: Mazower, *Dark Continent*, 154–56. Treatment: Cord Pagenstecher, 'We were treated like slaves. Remembering forced labour for Nazi Germany,' in *Human Bondage in the Cultural Contact Zone: Transdisciplinary Perspectives on Slavery and Its Discourses*, ed. Gesa Mackenthun, Raphael Hörmann (Münster: Waxmann, 2010), 275–91; Leonore Scholze-Irrlitz and Caroline Noack, ed., *Arbeit für den Feind. Zwangsarbeiteralltag in Berlin-Brandenburg 1939–1945* (Berlin: Bebra Verlag, 1998); Hans Gräfer, "Die Sklaven sollen für uns arbeiten.' Zwangsarbeiter in Berlin-Wilmersdorf,' in *Wilmersdorfer Bruchstücke. Beiträge zur Geschichte des Bezirks Wilmersdorf*, ed. A G Geschichte Wilmersdorf (Berlin: Selbstverlag, 1997) 125–35.

128 Cavanna, *Das Lied der Baba*, 238.

of them ever comment on these abused and enslaved people who were exposed so visibly before their eyes?

The deportations of the Berlin Jews are never mentioned in the threeway Berlin–Basel–Lahore correspondence. Perhaps 'Berlin' knew that Marcus knew. At the Lahore end, the fact is also never commented on, either in the correspondence or in summaries about the fate of the mosque, which appeared after the war. With help from the foreign office, the Mufti fled to Switzerland with some of his staff. Habibur Rahman and other collaborators fled to South Germany, where a special unit of the Allied Forces arrested them. If any wrote memoirs of their Berlin exile, they have not yet surfaced.

Jäschke, Hartmann and the other university professors who survived the war preferred to keep silent afterwards. What happened to the 'world pictures' they once so urgently constructed? There must be some truth in the observation that more often than not we forget our misdeeds. The memoirs quoted in this chapter all belonged to victims, leaving the viewpoints of the main aggressors in the dark. Their silence leaves a void that future research should fill.

These were some of the people through whom, in Heidegger's words, 'the completion of the modern age affirms the ruthlessness of its own greatness.'[129] To achieve that completion, the perpetrators relied on technology and a passionate 'religiosity' in which 'the relation to the gods' was 'transformed into religious experience.'[130] Although Heidegger himself was dangerously involved in these dark developments, it was he who rightly observed that 'when this happens, the gods have fled.'[131]

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129 Heidegger, 'The Age of the World Picture,' 58.

130 Ibid.

131 Ibid.

CHAPTER 8

Reconfigurations within a Post-colonial World

The Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust commemorated its founder and beacon Kwaja Kamal-ud-Din with the publication, in 1961, of *Islam Our Choice*, for which the editor had gathered 122 narratives from European converts to Islam.[1] While most of the authors were British, there were also some contributions from converts in the Netherlands, Poland, France, Italy, Hungary, Norway and Germany.[2] With a few exceptions, the entries were collected from the *Islamic Review*, the mission journal that Kamal-ud-Din started in 1913 and that recorded European conversions over a period of 50 years. The choice of source material may explain why the contributors were overwhelmingly British and living at the time of the British Commonwealth and its predecessor the British Empire, which ceased to exist in 1947 when British India and other parts of the colonized world declared independence.

In this chapter, the reader will for the last time meet the interwar and immediate postwar scholars, writers, diplomats, peers, war-damaged officers and intellectual women in search of alternatives to European civilization. Some had travelled widely in the Muslim world, whereas others had chanced upon a pamphlet issued by the Lahore mission in their home country. Some converted from Christianity, others from Judaism. Some explained themselves in lengthy articles, others in only a few lines. However, all the contributors made observations about Islam that are no longer heard in Europe today. To capture its essence, they employed words like 'simple,' 'practical,' 'broadminded,' 'constructive' and 'democratic.' To describe its qualities they used phrases like 'good sense,' 'free of dogma,' 'founded on reason,' 'rational and modern,' 'congenial to the mind,' 'extreme simplicity coupled with extreme sincerity,' 'a religion of social equality' and 'applicable to the world today.'[3]

1 S. A. Khulusi, ed., *Islam Our Choice* (Woking: Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust, Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, Surrey, 1961). The contributions very clearly demonstrate that most converts came to Islam through Ahmadiyya Lahore. But in a reprint of the book by the Muslim World League in Mecca all connections to Ahmadiyya were deleted, s. 'Ahmadiyya connections removed from converts' stories in edition of *Islam our choice*,' accessed 28 June 2014, Wokingmuslim.org/personalities. For a wider discussion of British converts to Islam during Empire s. Jamie Gilham, *Loyal Enemies. British Converts to Islam, 1850–1950* (London: Hurst, 2014).

2 Plus one from Malaysia, one from Japan and one from the USA.

3 Although each entry may speak for itself, some striking examples can be found on pp. 126, 133, 150, 159, 164, 169, 185, and 201.

These testimonies again reflect the collective understanding of Islam usual in interwar Europe and immediately after the war. From the perspective of Europeans living in the shadow of two devastating wars, Islam offered the modernity, rationality, practicality and broadmindedness that Christianity had failed to provide. It must have been for this reason that, in the introduction to *Islam Our Choice*, the editor observed that his collection brought 'a better understanding of Islam *to Muslims*' (my emphasis) and that it should therefore be 'translated into as many languages as possible.'[4] This observation came from S. Muhammad Tufail, the last Lahore missionary in the Woking mosque, and it summarizes the energy with which the Lahore missionaries had set out to 'conquer' Europe 50 years earlier; they were seeking intellectual exchange on equal terms with a view to furthering the worldwide progress of Islam. However, their mission was formulated in a wholly different global context. Tufail's summons to learn from the European experience stood at odds with postwar realities, so was destined to go largely unheard.

This last chapter addresses the huge changes that occurred after the Second World War. Once Germany was defeated, decolonization, the partition of Europe and the Cold War followed. As a result, the prewar map of the world changed, making place for rival superpowers and a host of newly-founded nation-states struggling to establish themselves. This world map offered a framework for the mission that was very different from that of the colonial order. Hitherto, instead of colonial administrations overseeing 'subalterns,' and colonial subjects seeking allies in the West, global fault lines now divided the 'First' from the 'Third' world, a new stage on which 'interactions increasingly took the form of one-way donations of Western development aid to Third World peoples.'[5] As a consequence, the Ahmadiyya mission was reconfigured. Ahmadiyya missionaries from Qadian were now able to make progress in the European capitals, whereas Ahmadiyya missionaries from Lahore withdrew from the continent.

The chapter picks up the narrative at 'zero hour,' that moment when the war was lost and Germany, guilty of genocide, mass murder and the utter destruction of Europe, needed to start again from a *tabula rasa* and miraculously 'rise from the ashes,' an operation that would be driven by the desire to forget the past. Simultaneously, on the other side of the world, in what was going to be India and Pakistan, we find the two Ahmadiyya movements

4 Khulusi, *Islam Our Choice*, 1.

5 Kris Manjapra, *Age of Entanglement. German and Indian Intellectuals across Empire* (Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 2014), 13.

facing another genocide, one in which a million Hindus and Muslims died for the sake of partition, and, once the borders were established, when part of the Pakistani orthodoxy continued to riot against the (equally Pakistani) Ahmadiyya. Within these very different contexts, both the missionaries and the missionized staged a restart and tried to make sense of their historical legacy. However, in the postwar context, the interwar history could no longer be understood and memory of it quickly receded into the past. Not by accident, it was when narrating that past and trying to define 'Islam in Europe' that the postwar actors ran into confusion. To borrow Kris Manjapra's phrase, 'the new normative paradigm was so powerful that it obscured the memory of the previous half-century of volatile entanglement and interdependence borne of late nineteenth-century transnational encounter, while also reconstructing the ideals of the Enlightenment, and the dialectics of Western-ness as the engines of modern history.'[6]

I devote the following pages to the attempts by the two Ahmadiyya movements to resettle in Pakistan and their ensuing return to Western Europe. I ask what was retained from the past in their renewal and how, once the Second World War was at a safe historical distance, decolonization created the conditions for a totally new East–West encounter, as a result of which the conditions for adaptive globalization were irrevocably fractured.

8.1 Zero Hour

When the war had ended, the defeated aggressor was humiliated and occupied; in the course of only six years the Nazis had maimed, deported or killed 60 million Europeans. After armistice, the seven million forced labourers who still remained in Germany were officially coined 'displaced persons' and transported home. In exchange, 13 million ethnic Germans, expelled from their homes in East and Southeast Europe, flocked into Germany's ruined cities and villages. As a result, within a very short time, Europe was no longer a cultural melting pot. It had lost its colonies so shrank back to its European nuclei; it had been partitioned into a communist East and 'free' West, now confronting each other in a sinister Cold War; it was in the process of separating its populations into homogeneous language groups, which now kept to themselves behind the borders of their homogenous nation-states.[7] Postwar

6 Manjapra, *Age of Entanglement*, 13.

7 Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent. Europe's Twentieth Century* (London: Penguin, 1998), 215–53; Tony Judt, *Post-war. A History of Europe since 1945* (London: Random House, 2005), 10–40.

Europe, as the historian Hartmut Kaelble put it, went through a period of deglobalization.[8]

The Germany of 1945 was very different from that of 1919. This time, there was no willingness to receive foreigners with a religious mission, no search for a global meeting of minds, no explosion of creativity, no dreams of a 'New Man.'[9] Instead, there was 'zero hour,' or *Stunde Null* as the Germans called it, a myth born on the ruins of European civilization. Zero hour was 'the grandest of all Europe's illusions,'[10] a self-congratulatory lie that served not to question and analyse the past, but to erase and supersede it, staging the 'phoenix miracle' of a continent rising from its own ashes.

A 1950 German newsreel aptly illustrates the projected magic trick.[11] A martial voice, not unlike that of the Nazi newsreaders five years earlier, accompanied by the heroic sound of American film music, talks the viewer through a series of black-and-white shots of the devastated country with its ruins, mountains of rubble, bridges sunk into rivers, overcrowded trains and fugitives sitting on their belongings. The narrator observes: 'The war was finished. The heritage from the Hitler period meant total destruction – demolition everywhere. But step by step the chaos could be unravelled and the enormous task of rebuilding begun.'[12] The narrator continues by extolling the newest German achievements: new life is stirring; every day the people expect something new; the first native German prisoners of war have returned to a peaceful existence. Even steel helmets have been turned into pots and sieves. In this new narrative, the miracle is unstoppable. There is no looking back, no word of regret, no modesty.

When allied forces reached Berlin, the remaining Indian and Arab collaborators were taken into custody.[13] In the south of Germany, British and American soldiers arrested thousands of Tatar combatants who had marched back from Italy to seek refuge and amnesty. Despite desperate attempts to withstand repatriation, they were handed over to the Soviet Union where a certain death

8 Hartmut Kaelble, 'Eine europäische Geschichte der Repräsentationen des Eigenen und des Anderen,' in *Selbstbilder und Fernbilder. Repräsentation sozialer Ordnungen im Wandel*, ed. Jörg Baberowski et al. (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2008), 67–85.

9 Mazower, *Dark Continent*, 256.

10 Judt, *Postwar*, 5.

11 *Die Stunde Null – Deutschland 1945*, accessed 18 June 2014, www.youtube.com/watch?v=LKQjhayHRMs.

12 *Die Stunde Null*, 0,56 min.

13 A description of the arrest of Habibur Rahman can be found in: Jan Kuhlmann, *Subha Chandras Bose und die Politik der Achsenmächte* (Berlin: Schiler, 2003), 343.

awaited them.[14] In the last days of the war, the Wilmersdorfer mosque was demolished when Russian soldiers stationed in a nearby cemetery fired on the German soldiers who had set up a defence in its minarets. In the ensuing battle, the mosque was heavily shelled, its dome collapsed and the minarets reduced to stumps.[15] During the summer, Russian soldiers gave Amina Mosler some help clearing away the rubble, but for some years the mosque remained inaccessible.

Only a handful of German members survived the once buzzing war community.[16] Many had died, while others had left the country for good. With no Muslim regiments to minister and no Muslim *émigré*s left, collective Friday prayers took place in the mission house next to the mosque for which the participants, never more than ten or fifteen people, each brought a piece of coal to heat the room. Ramadan was kept within the family and collective *Iftar* meals were cancelled, since travel through the city took too much time. The first festival of *Eid-ul-Fitr* also presented a problem because the date was finalized at the last possible moment, making it difficult to get time off work or school. Amidst the shock of capitulation, 'each had enough to do with oneself,'[17] and among the returnees, a self-pitying note crept in. As Herbert Hobohm who was appointed imam in 1949 put it, 'the aftermath of the war was even worse than the war itself.'[18]

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During this difficult time in Europe, British India prepared for partition, the separation of Hindu-dominated India from the Muslim state of Pakistan. Involving large population transfers, the separation was painstakingly prepared. But on 14 August 1947, the day on which both states declared their independence, large-scale genocide engulfed the Punjab, the state through which

14 Stefan Meining, *Eine Moschee in Deutschland. Nazis, Geheimdienste und der Aufstieg des politischen Islams im Westen* (Muenchen: CH Beck, 2011), 52–6.

15 Muhammad Aman Hobohm, 'Islam in Germany.' IR 8 (1951) 11–17; Muhammad Aman Hobohm, 'Neuanfänge muslimischen Gemeindelebens in Berlin nach dem Krieg' (Lecture at Koeln University, Winter 2000), accessed 18 June 2014, www.muslim-liga.de/islam-in-deutschland/texte-zur-geschichte; Manfred Backhausen, *Die Lahore–Ahmadiyya–Bewegung in Europa* (Lahore: AAII, 2008), 130–1.

16 The following description bases on: Backhausen, *Die Lahore–Ahmadiyya–Bewegung*, 140–2.

17 Backhausen, *Die Lahore–Ahmadiyya–Bewegung*, 140: 'Ein jeder hatte zunächst einmal genug mit sich selbst zu tun.'

18 Hobohm, 'Islam in Germany,' 15.

the main border was drawn. Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims robbed their neighbours of their possessions and slaughtered them with indescribable atrocity. Fleeing families were killed on the road, fugitive trains arrived in Lahore and Delhi loaded with mutilated bodies, with only the driver left alive. Search parties crossed the border daily in both directions to look for so called 'abducted' women, a term that played down the fate of 100,000 women who had been mass raped and taken along as booty. Heavy rains and numerous gangs only worsened the situation. Within a few months, one million people lost their lives, many more were uprooted and forced to restart their lives from scratch.[19]

The two Ahmadiyya organizations found themselves caught in the violence. Mahmud Bashir-ud-Din, Khalif of the Ahmadiyya community in Qadian, destined to be part of future India, at first tried to get an assurance from the Indian National Congress that his town would be exempted from the population exchange and receive protection. But such an assurance could not be obtained.[20] He also negotiated with the Muslim League, demanding protection, equality of treatment and the right to continue the mission in Pakistan. But again, an agreement could not be reached.[21] As the date of independence neared, local Sikhs started to attack Ahmadis in an attempt to force them out. Towards the end of August, the Khalif and some of his family were finally brought to safety in Pakistan, signalling the start of the town's evacuation. In normal times, it had harboured 20,000 people, but Ahmadi refugee families from the surrounding villages augmented the number of evacuees to 80,000.[22] By the middle of November, there were only 313 men and their families left. It became their task to keep the presses running and the mission school open. Their vigil started on 16 November 1947 until finally an agreement was concluded with the Indian government. While the evacuation was in progress,

19 Hassan Manto, *Mottled Dawn. Fifty Sketches and Stories of Partition* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1997); Penderel Moon, *Divide and Quit*: *An Eyewitness Account of the Partition of India* (New Edition. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998); Paul R. Brass, 'The partition of India and the retributive genocide in the Punjab 1946–1947: means, methods and purposes,' *Journal of Genocide Research* 5/1 (2003) 71–101.

20 *Report of the Court of Inquiry constituted under Punjab Act II of 1954 to inquire into the Punjab disturbances of 1953* (Lahore: Superintendent of the Government, 1954), accessed 16 July 2014, aaiil.org/text/books/…/munirreport/munirreport.pdf; 'Qadiani Intrigues in Pakistan,' accessed 16 July 2014, *Anti Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam*, Alhafeez.org/Rashid/; 'Von Qadian nach Rabwah,' accessed 16 July 2014, www.Ahmadiyya.de/Ahmadiyya/geschichte/von-qadian-nach-rabwah.

21 Ali Usman Qasmi, *The Ahmadis and the Politics of Religious Exclusion in Pakistan* (London: Anthem Press, 2014), 41–2.

22 'Von Qadian nach Rabwah.'

Hindu and Sikh refugees from Pakistan occupied the vacated houses, shops and lands. The three Ahmadiyya colleges were turned into Sikh educational institutions. The state government took over the Nur hospital to run as a civil infirmary.[23] On the other side of the border, the community made a restart on a barren stretch of land. Affluent and well educated, they started out camping in tents and mud huts until they managed to erect a new town, Rabwah.[24]

Muhammad Ali, president of the Lahore movement, did not approach the Muslim League to plead special conditions for *his* Ahmadi community. The Lahore movement was smaller than the group from Qadian, but its approximately five thousand members wholeheartedly supported the Muslim League and did not consider themselves in need of special protection. On the contrary, in the years leading up to independence, their influence in mainstream politics was considerable. Jakub Khan, editor of *The Light*, went to jail for supporting the Muslim League. Other Lahore Ahmadis lent the Muslim League their voice in public through the liberal newspaper *Pax and Times*, for example, which Ahmad Faiz edited, or through the *Military and Civil Gazette* edited by Kwaja Nazir Ahmad, a relative of Kwaja Kamal-ud-Din.[25]

Nasir Ahmad, survivor and eyewitness of the events, summarizes the Ahmadiyya movement in Lahore as a reformist movement that defended Islam and did away with misconceptions about the religion, nothing more.[26] As a boy of 12 living with his parents in the Ahmadiyya buildings in Lahore, he remembers the frightening processions that filed past the buildings every day. But the police to some extent were able to provide security and, although there was no water and electricity, they were not attacked, nor did the movement come under attack in the Ahrar–Ahmadiyya controversy that followed (see below).[27] On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of Pakistan, the editor of the *Islamic Revue* once more stressed the Lahore position:

> It was the blind spot of the leadership of the sister community [namely Hindus in India] which left the Muslims no alternative but to demand a separate homeland of their own. ... Pakistan's first line of defence lies, ever more than armaments and pacts, in keeping alive this twin heritage

23 'Qadiani Intrigues.'

24 Myra MacDonald, 'In Ahmadis' Desert City, Pakistan Closes In,' accessed 14 June 2014, www.Reuters.com (15 July 2011).

25 Qasmi, *The Ahmadis*, 96, and email exchange (8 June 2014); oral communication Nasir Ahmad (18 June 014).

26 Email exchange with Nasir Ahmad (18 June 2014).

27 Email exchange with Nasir Ahmad (18 June 2014).

> – the justness of the Pakistan ideology and the consummate leadership and self-dedication of the late Qaid-I-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.[28]

Through partition, however, despite their dedication to Pakistan, the Lahore movement lost considerable manpower as well as financial resources from prominent Muslims in other parts of the world.[29]

From these very different footholds, both Ahmadiyya movements attempted to restart their European missions, though the context in which to do so had changed considerably. The thrust of adaptive globalization, of offering novel ideas to further and enhance a common global horizon now belonged to the past. Moreover, missionaries faced a situation in which Europe had all but closed its doors to non-European foreigners and turned inwards. Consequently, between sender and receiver the pattern of communication changed. Below, we examine the consequences this had for the mission.

8.2 Picking Up the Threads in Pakistan and Western Europe

Shortly after the war, the two Ahmadiyya movements picked up different mission threads in order to return to Europe. The restart was fraught with difficulties. While the civil unrest preceding partition threatened their lifelines, and the emergent iron curtain rendered contact with the Muslim communities in East and Southeast Europe impossible, they set about their task in ways that could not have been more different. Whereas the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat (AMJ) in Rabwah pushed as hard as it could to establish a network of mosques in the main capitals of Western Europe, the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-I-Islam (AAII) in Lahore decided against novel mission endeavours and focused its manpower and resources on the Woking mosque. From these different conditions and decisions a picture emerged in which the AMJ dominated the European mission field and the Lahore mission of the interwar years was eclipsed.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat (AMJ)

In autumn 1946, Qadian sent two teams of missionaries to Europe.[30] Whereas Shaikh Nasir Ahmad (not to be confused with the Nasir Ahmad mentioned

28 That is, Pakistans' first president. IR 8 (1957) 3–4.

29 Email exchange with Nasir Ahmad (18 June 2014).

30 *Khilafat Centenary. Ahmadiyya Muslim Mosques around the World. A Pictorial Presentation* (California: The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, USA, 2008), 221, 237, 249.

above), Abdul Latif Chaudhry and Ghulam Ahmad Bashir were destined for Germany, Karam Ilahi Zafer and Muhammad Saqi had been appointed to settle in Spain. But instead of landing in Berlin, visa difficulties forced the first team to fly to Zürich, from where two of the missionaries went on to the Netherlands, whereas Shaikh Nasir Ahmad stayed behind. The second team was also unlucky. Due to events at home, the mission was discontinued soon after their arrival and Muhammad Saqi was sent on to Trinidad. Karam Ilahi Zafer remained behind, surviving the 30 years of Franco's dictatorship by selling perfume in the local markets of Madrid.[31] The German team fared better. They adapted to their new surroundings, learned the language (German in Switzerland, Dutch in the Netherlands), and undertook to translate the Koran. In these countries, it took 17 years before a mosque could open its doors; Spain had to wait 34 years.[32]

These first postwar outposts of the AMJ on the European continent bear witness to the enormous effort it took to gain a footing and then progress from immigration to established mosque. Soon, more arrivals followed. The first missionary was allowed to enter Germany in 1950, and the first mosque was established there in 1958. Sweden allowed a missionary to come in 1956 and saw its first mosque in 1976. Norway's first missionary came in 1958 and the mosque in 1979, followed by Denmark in 1959 with its mosque built in 1962. Progress was slow but in 1965 the *Tahriq-i-Jadid* report could proudly present the first photographs of the Swiss mosque, 'the first ever built in the heart of Europe,' as the caption read, and of those in Hamburg and Frankfurt.[33] Added to the exhibition was the Fazl mosque in London, which the Qadian movement built before the war and which, in retrospect, was proudly proclaimed 'the first ever built in the stronghold of Christianity.'[34]

Through perseverance, AMJ missionaries set up a whole network of mission posts and mosques across Western Europe. In the Protestant countries of the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden and Norway they set up mission infrastructures and, for 25 years, also represented Islam in interreligious communications with churches and governments, for which they were much appreciated.[35] The captions in the report therefore betray a deserved

31 *Khilafat Centenary*, 240.

32 *Khilafat Centenary*, 221, 237, 249.

33 Mirza Mubarrak Ahmad, *Our Foreign Missions: A Brief Account of the Ahmadiyya Work to push Islam in Various Parts of the World.* (Rabwah: Ahmadiyya Foreign Missions, 1965), 51–2, 68.

34 Ahmad, *Our Foreign Missions*, 41. See Chapter 2.

35 H. Mintjes, 'De Ahmadiyya beweging,' in *Religieuze bewegingen in Nederland: feiten en visies*, ed. H. Mintjes (Amsterdam: Bakker: 1985), 58–77; Andrea Lathan, 'Reform, Glauben

pride, albeit with a certain amount of boastfulness. The AMJ missionaries were by no means the first mosque builders in Europe, for there were hundreds of historical mosques in East and Southeast Europe. Western Europe housed the prewar mosques of Woking and Berlin, the *Grande Mosquée de Paris* and the postwar Shi'ite mosque in Hamburg (1953) and large mosques were already at the planning phase in Aachen, Munich and Brussels.[36] The editor of the report was possibly unaware of the latter, but the jibe in the direction of his Ahmadi twin in Lahore cannot be overlooked. To all appearances, the AMJ did not want to recognize Lahore's previous engagement in Europe and, for that reason, refused the AAII a place in its mosque genealogy. Given that they were accused of being heretics and non-Muslims in Pakistan and faced competition from the Ahmadiyya in Lahore (see below), in stressing the 'first ever' statuses of their European mosques might well have been a pawn in the chess game at home.

A key player in both regions, West and East, was Zafrullah Khan (1893–1985). He was the most prominent member of the Qadiani movement, first foreign minister of Pakistan, high representative of Pakistan at the United Nations and, since 1958, a judge at the International Court of Justice in The Hague. His proximity to the centres of power must have helped the cause, just as his excellent reputation at both the United Nations and the International Court may account for much of the goodwill with which Ahmadis were received in the European capitals. Where missionaries worked hard to build networks on the ground, Zafrullah Khan could open diplomatic doors for them.[37] Although Mahmud Bashir-ud-Din came over from Pakistan on numerous occasions to support his missionaries, it was Zafrullah Khan who laid the majority of the foundation stones and inaugurated most of the buildings. In the European mission he was a well-respected figure, but in Pakistan he found himself under continuous duress.

The mission in Europe was planned, financed and prepared despite ever-growing aggression and acts of violence back home. The violence over partition, flight to Pakistan and resettlement in a strip of desert had required most, if not all, the energy, manpower and financial resources the community could muster. However, once in Pakistan, the AMJ came under threat from the so-called Ahmadiyya–Ahrar controversy, a countrywide agitation that culminated

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und Entwicklung: Die Herausforderungen für die Ahmadiyya-Gemeinden,' in *Islam in Europa: Religiöses Leben heute*, ed. Dietrich Reetz (Münster: Waxmann: 2010), 79–109.

36 'List of mosques.' Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, accessed 21 June 1014, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_mosques.

37 'Brief Life Sketch of Chaudhry Sir Muhammad Zafarullah Khan,' accessed 21 June 2014, https://www.alislam.org/library/zafar1.html; cf. Qasmi, *The Ahmadis*, 47–8.

in 1953 in the first anti-Ahmadi riots. Thus, the *Tahriq-i-Jadid* report of 1965 brings two disparate events of contemporary history into context, namely the violent animosity against the mission in Pakistan and its benevolent reception in Western Europe.

What was at stake? Back in 1941, when negotiating conditions for his group, Mahmud Bashir-ud-Din asked the Muslim League if it could receive protection and continue its mission in Pakistan, to which the general secretary answered evasively.[38] Once in Pakistan, the AMJ continued to send missionaries to the villages and, according to the Court of Inquiry, which investigated the facts after the riots had been suppressed, this is how the first incidents occurred: travelling preachers were waylaid and their faces blackened. Men with short beards, suspected of being Ahmadi, were in danger of being killed. There were several efforts to break up Ahmadi meetings, and in 1951, the first Ahmadiyya mosque was burned to the ground.[39] Behind these riots were a small group of orthodox ulema, the Ahrar, who rallied against the Ahmadiyya and, according to the Court of Inquiry report, in pursuit of their political and aims did not hesitate to foment a state of frenzy in the local population by provoking hatred and whipping up hostile religious sentiment.[40] Ahrar accused Ahmadis of being heretics who deserved death and of spying for the British government; Mahmud Bashir-ud-Din was accused of being opposed to the formation of Pakistan, but most of all Zafrullah Khan of being disloyal to Pakistan on account of his 'having sold Kashmir to the government of India for the sake of Pakistan,' and being 'guilty of the genocide in Eastern Punjab.'[41]

Those accusations betray a deep jealousy of refugee Ahmadis who, because of their high level of education, were able to make quick social progress. In the new Pakistan there was a dearth of manpower in every possible sector of society and, consequently, educated citizens were in high demand. Some Ahmadis became high-ranking officers in the army, whereas others found posts in the government and other bureaucratic institutions. Many young Ahmadis took on the new and glamorous profession of airline pilot.[42] Doing what everybody tried to do, namely get on with their lives, they involuntarily became the visible tokens of a minority. Even more so, Zafrullah Khan served as a hate object *par excellence*.[43] Although occupying high government posts, he continued to

38 Qasmi, *The Ahmadis*, 40.

39 *Report of the Court of Inquiry*, 54–5; Qasmi, *The Ahmadis*, 93–168.

40 *Report of the Court of Inquiry*, 10–13; Qasmi, *The Ahmadis*, 52–8.

41 *Report of the Court of Inquiry*, 36–7.

42 Qasmi, *The Ahmadis*, 41–5.

43 Qasmi, *The Ahmadis*, 45.

engage in AMJ mission activities in Pakistan in a very visible manner. It made him vulnerable to accusations of corruption and so enraged the Ahrar that they envisaged paranoid scenarios in which the Ahmadiyya would highjack the military-bureaucratic structure and eventually seize control of Pakistan.[44]

In the end, the government, wishing to create a secular, democratic state for all Muslims whatever their theological convictions, dispersed the riots and installed an independent commission to enquire into their causes.[45] But hatred lingered in sections of the orthodoxy and, in 1954, Zafrullah Khan was forced to step down from his post and eventually withdrew to The Hague.[46] When religious parties moved into parliament in 1971, which the Bangladesh split had occasioned, they began to demand self-definition as an Islamic state, thus turning the 'Ahmadi question' into a problem causing the demarcation between 'Muslim' and 'non-Muslim' to be redrawn. It resulted in the parliamentary decision, made in 1974, to expel all Ahmadis – the provocative AMJ as well as the compliant AAII – from Islam.[47]

Their different receptions in Pakistan and Europe are important to the history of the AMJ mission in Europe and point to what German historian Reinhart Koselleck called the simultaneity of the non-simultaneous.[48] In Pakistan, as in Europe, AMJ missionaries, convinced that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad encapsulated the Islamic tradition, spread a message that differed greatly from mainstream Sunni orthodoxy. As explained in the Introduction to this book, the founder of the Ahmadiyya claimed to be the reformer of the age as well as the Messiah, whose imminent return many religions of the world expected. Protesting against the belligerence of the Christian mission, he also called on his followers to follow the Christian example and become missionaries for Islam, but his heritage, which the AAII defined as setting right misconceptions about Islam, proved ambivalent. The AMJ, on its part, set out to spread the novel message of a Messiah who brought salvation, on the strength of which its members claimed to be the better Muslims and, for some time at

44 Qasmi, *The Ahmadis*, 44–5.

45 Qasmi, *The Ahmadis*, 119–67.

46 This had been one of the political claims the Ahrar staked. Others demanded that Ahmadis should be removed from all key posts, be declared non-Muslims, and be declared a minority. The latter claim would limit their access to governmental posts in proportion to their number, which was 0.22 per cent only. *Report of the Court of Inquiry*, 127; Sadia Saeed, 'Political Fields and Religious Movements: The Exclusion of the Ahmadiyya Community in Pakistan.' *Political Power and Social Theory* 23 (2012) 195.

47 Qasmi, *The Ahmadis*, 113–14; Saeed, 'Political Fields,' 195–210.

48 Reinhart Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft: Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985), 20.

least, branded all other Muslims *kafir*, non-Muslims.[49] In the new configuration of Muslim nation-states, the AMJ missionaries' claim enraged their fellow Muslims. In Western Europe, however, where governments, churches and the general public were unaware that a theological difference existed, the message was received with goodwill and understanding. In the long run, the two reference systems with their different reception modes functioned as oscillating receptacles. The more the persecution in Pakistan intensified, the more European governments saw the AMJ as a victim. In that sense, the unexpected constellation that Koselleck coined 'the simultaneity of the non-simultaneous' served to strengthen both ends.

The Messiah–salvation message suited the postwar gloom into which Europe had fallen. As an approach, it did not require the high intellectual discourse of the interwar period, but left ample room for reinterpretation in different, less elevated, cultural contexts. Paul-Gerhard Hadayatullah Hübsch (1946–2011), the best-known postwar convert in Germany, tried to reframe that message from his own perspective, namely that of a Beat poet of the hippy generation with left-wing revolutionary leanings. For a children's radio broadcast about the messianic age he wrote that 'there would be no conflict any more between man and nature, man and man.'[50] This was because Hübsch, high on hashish and LSD, had dreamt of swords turned into ploughs, wolves and lambs resting together and seriously considered fasting to cleanse himself before going in search of his utopian vision.

During the 'miracle years' that followed zero hour, labour migrants from Turkey, Yugoslavia and North Africa settled in Germany and Muslim festivals featured in the news. In 1969, reading in the paper that it was the month of Ramadan, Hübsch made his way to the Nur mosque in Frankfurt where he exchanged a volume of his Beat songs *Mach was Du willst* (*Do What You Want*) for Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's booklet, *Our Faith*. The message he absorbed was that, finally, here was the Messiah he had been seeking. A year and many drug sessions later, after a failed attempt to hitchhike to Mecca, Hübsch returned in time to meet Mahmud Bashir-ud-Din on a visit to the Frankfurt mosque. The meeting signalled the end of his hippy existence, for now, as he put it, there was no time for trips. Paul-Gerhard Hübsch, hippy rebel in search of unrealizable dreams, had successfully reframed the mission message and calmed his discontent.[51]

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49 At the height of the riots, Mahmud Bashir-ud-Din revised his position, claiming that his organization had refrained from *Kufr* accusations since 1922 already. Qasmi, *The Ahmadis*, 51.

50 Hadayatullah Hübsch, *Keine Zeit für Trips. Autobiographischer Bericht*. (Frankfurt am Main: Koren & Debesch, 1991), 167.

51 Hübsch, *Keine Zeit für Trips*, 168–80.

The Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-I-Islam (*AAII*)

The bloodshed over partition only partly disrupted the AAII's work in Lahore. When refugees in need of everything swarmed into Lahore, the board made a refugee fund of 40,000 rupees available at short notice.[52] Otherwise, business carried on as usual, although the street violence meant postponing the yearly board meeting for a few months. When it finally took place in March 1948, the board decided to focus the European mission on the Woking mosque from then on and to support it with 50,000 rupees. The members of the board agreed to spend the same amount on buying a property in San Francisco.[53] The mission was on its way again. However, a new urgency characterized President Muhammad Ali's speeches.

Until Pakistan was created, Lahore was home to the AAII where it was free of competition from Qadian and had no opponents in continental Europe. While only five thousand of Lahore's two million inhabitants had joined the AAII, the movement and its well-knit network of supporters had made a good name for itself. It backed the Muslim League whenever possible and had secured a respectable place in Lahore society. That situation changed drastically with the construction of Rabwah 166 kilometres west of Lahore. Refugee Ahmadis from Qadian flooded into the area, partly because many were looking for connections and jobs, but even more so through the agency of the AMJ mission in the villages. They began to attract negative reports in the press and Ahmadiyyat became a bone of public contention. Muhammad Ali now needed 'to clarify the *real* beliefs and work of the Ahmadiyya movement' (my emphasis).[54]

In 1948, Mevlana Muhammad Ali was 74 years old. He had spent a lifetime working for the mission to spread the word of the Koran, preserve Islamic tradition and renew the Islamic message. He had supported mission posts in Indonesia, Trinidad, Guyana and Surinam and backed the experiment with intellectuals in continental Europe. His dedication and sincerity lent respectability to his organization, but now the bad reputation of his Ahmadi competitor threatened to overshadow his work.

At the next board meeting, in December 1948, he was ready with an answer to the threat. This was a daring plan to send a gift of seven books to each of 5000 libraries across the world, half for distribution in Europe and the USA.[55]

52 Muhammad Ahmad, *A Mighty Striving. Life and Work of Maulana Muhammad Ali* (Ohio (USA): Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at-e Islam Lahore, 2004), 349.

53 Ahmad, *A Mighty Striving*, 350.

54 Ahmad, *A Mighty Striving*, 365.

55 Ahmad, *A Mighty Striving*, 358–9, 371–3, 380–1.

Each package would contain a Koran, the *Life of the Prophet*, a history of the early Khalifat, and a book on oral tradition. As these were the acknowledged core texts of Islam, the plan was so far orthodox. However, Ali also proposed adding three books of his own, doubtless to convey the moderate AAII message.[56] As the plan involved a large sum of money – an estimated 100,000 rupees but in the end it cost two-and-a-half times as much – the delegates protested. Some argued that the money would be better spent on a school, college, or orphanage.[57] Others said that, compared with the classical works of Islam, 'our literary work is nothing special' and that 'next to Ghazali, Ibn Tamiyya, Razi' and others, 'we have produced nothing to be proud of.'[58]

It speaks for the modesty of the Lahore movement that it refused to stand on the shoulders of giants. Muhammad Ali's suggestion caused a crisis in the organization and eventually even his leadership was being questioned. It equally does credit to the democratic style of the movement that Ali's biographer repeated all the different arguments in full. In the end, the president convinced the dissenters by arguing that 'if anyone has fulfilled the wishes of the Promised Messiah and carried out his mission, it is *only* the Lahore Ahmadiyya Jama'at' (my emphasis).[59]

While the AMJ claimed to produce better Muslims, the president of the AAII claimed to have the better *Ahmadiyyat*, or idea of reform, for his organization. This was his conviction and he continued to defend it in dozens of speeches before government officials, businessmen, industrialists and students, as well as in numerous meetings with ambassadors of other Muslim countries.[60] Muhammad Ali also told the press that the West still had a negative image of Islam and that this affected its relationship with Pakistan. If Pakistan wanted to command respect in the world, he said, this image needed to change. His own movement had proved that it was possible.[61]

Although Ali's biographer is careful never to mention the word 'crisis,' his 'thick description' of the book gift plan mirrors the graveness of the situation. When Muhammad Ali died in October 1951, the crisis was surmounted and the books were sent on their way. For the moment, he had convinced parts of the Pakistani elite that the cause of the AAII was also the cause of Pakistan. When

56 His choice comprised *The Religion of Islam* (1936), *Living Thoughts on the Prophet Muhammad* (1948), and *The New World Order* (1942).

57 Ahmad, *A Mighty Striving*, 360–1.

58 Ahmad, *A Mighty Striving*, 375.

59 Ahmad, *A Mighty Striving*, 376–7.

60 Ahmad, *A Mighty Striving*, 360–1, 370–1.

61 Ahmad, *A Mighty Striving*, 357–8.

in 1953 the riots erupted, the AAII member Kwaja Nazir Ahmad mediated between the Ahrar leaders and Mahmud Bashir-ud-Din, as well as between the governor and the latter, asking him to issue a statement that would soften his key declarations, especially the question of *Kufr*.[62] Incidentally, Bashir-ud-Din refused to do so, thus allowing the hostility to the Ahmadiyya to simmer. Some 20 years later, when the religious parties forced parliament to declare Ahmadis *kafir* and outside the pale of Islam, the AAII was caught in the maelstrom of anti-AMJ sentiment and excluded from Islam as well.

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The Ahmadiyya focus on Woking proved a felicitous decision. After the war, Berlin found itself in the role of a frontier city and the place where the Cold War was most tangibly felt, but in terms of international relations it was reduced to a provincial backwater. Woking, on the contrary, developed into an international junction between the interests of the AAII, Pakistan and the young Muslim nation-states on the one side and the newly founded British Commonwealth on the other. For the next 20 years, the Woking mosque and mission became the symbolic and diplomatic centre of Islam in the West. It provided a venue for all sorts of meetings and functions and a warm reception to any Muslim visitor to Europe.

The *Islamic Review*, edited in the Woking mission house, loyally supported the mosque's position. It was basically a 'cultural, non-political journal' that advocated the establishment of new Muslim nation-states with a focus on the 'regeneration of the Muslim world' and the 'reorientation of Islamic thought.'[63] The journal provided informed background information on the issues of the day such as the 'Muslim Renaissance,' social revolution, democracy, industrial development, Islam, socialism, the separation of religion and the state, 'Muslim women on the march' and Islamic feminism. It also critically commented on the Western powers' hunger for oil, their attitude to Islamic states, the Suez crisis, 'the rebirth of Egypt' and the Jewish–Palestinian question.

When Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah was appointed imam in the Woking mosque in 1946, he saw his role as that of a 'foreign minister in the service of progressive Islam.'[64] The AAII board decided he was the best choice because he

62 Qasmi, *The Ahmadis*, 96, 113–14.

63 The following offers a broad sweep through 20 years of publishing (1946–1965); quotations in the January issue of 1955, *passim*.

64 Iqbal Ahmad, 'A successful death,' *The Light* 35 (1956) 13.

knew both English and German and was familiar with Europeans through his long experience in Berlin. His assistants admired him for his punctuality, organizational talents and utter trustworthiness, as well as for the pleasant relationship he and his wife maintained.[65] His wife loved him for his meekness.[66] Abdullah himself saw the diplomatic possibilities of his new function. A homely man, he used to rise at five in the morning to pray, exercise and set the breakfast table before moving to his office for a long days' work.[67] He ran children's classes and information sessions on Islam; organized a country-wide lecture series; edited the *Islamic Review*; participated in peace and disarmament congresses; received a never-ending flow of official guests; held open-house sessions on Sundays for which he and Mahmuda baked the cakes themselves; prepared Id festivals, which regularly attracted some 2000 guests; and, last but not least, took responsibility for the Berlin mosque.[68]

After his arrival in Woking, Abdullah crossed to Berlin at the first opportunity to estimate the war damage. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the occupying forces gave him the title of 'Religious Leader,' on the strength of which he was able to retrieve the Oettinger women from the Soviet zone and bring them to England. To all appearances, it remained the only happy reunion with his former parish. Rolf von Ehrenfels was in India, Hugo Marcus in Switzerland, Irma Göhl – the only one who vehemently protested against the fascist atrocities[69] – in Egypt. Few returned, but those who did come back were either entangled in longwinded denazification procedures[70] or imprisoned for black-market activities.[71] The few items of correspondence that survive from this period do not exactly leave a happy impression.[72] There are

65 Ahmad, 'A successful death,' 13.

66 *The Light* 35 (1956) 6.

67 *The Light* 35 (1956) 6, 9.

68 IR 11 (1948) 387–8; *The Light* 35 (1956) 9, 13, *passim*.

69 Mohamed Sayed Abd Eldal and Irma Safia Göhl, *Rapport sur la politique destructive et anéantissante de l'Italie en Tripolis: L Égypte á la Societé des Nations dans l'intéret de l'humanité* (unpublished typescript in French and in German, 1944), AMA/Postwar, 4.

70 LA/3: Georg Konieczny, Fritz Beyer.

71 The story of Rolf Mosler, the misguided youth leader who sent eight minors to the front lines to 'fight for Islam,' has never wholly been clarified. He himself survived, was arrested by the Russians for transporting carpets, and spent the postwar years in prison, Backhausen, *Die Ahmadiyya Bewegung*, 142–6.

72 In the mosque archive (AMA) covering the period 1945–1949, no more than thirteen letters and texts addressed to Abdullah survived. There must have been more. By contrast, Herbert Hobohm's correspondence, Imam in the mosque between 1949 and 1952, contains some 380 items.

coarse printed cards in Russian script sent from some faraway POW camp in Russia.[73] There is a letter from one Günther Neuhaus, a recent convert with the AMJ missionary in Switzerland, who had written to the Khalifa in Rabwah and then, on failing to receive an answer, accused Abdullah of not giving him enough support.[74] There is a handwritten pencilled note on the back of the 1948 *Eid-ul-Adha* invitation from one Mohamed, accusing Abdullah of being a false imam who had turned the mosque into a business, and saying that he, Mohamed, would write to the whole Muslim world to reveal the truth about the Berlin mosque.[75] As such items show, not only the mosque *per se*, but also the spiritual community of converts was in ruins. Abdullah dutifully returned the next year to administer the festival of *Eid-ul-Fitr*, but his heart was clearly in Woking. As one of his obituaries aptly formulated, 'Berlin's loss…proved Woking's gain.'[76]

The *Islamic Review* reflects this relationship. When Abdullah reorganized the journal, he gave ample space to East and Southeast European Muslim communities, but hardly ever mentioned Germany.[77] Apparently, for some years at least, he was able to revive his prewar contacts in central Europe.[78] When that was no longer possible, the journal tried to attract the best international scholars on Islam, including, among others,[79] the famous A. Bennigsen on Russia,[80] Ismail Balic on Bosnia and Greece,[81] Albert Hourani on Islam and the West[82] and Arslan Bohdanowicz on Eastern Europe.[83] When, in 1954, the journal published an overview on the 'Distribution of Muslims in the World,' Muslims were no longer counted as living on the continent other than in Russia, Poland, Finland and the Balkans.[84]

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73 AMA/Postwar, 11 (10 November 1948).

74 AMA/Postwar, 12 (10 December 1948).

75 AMA/Postwar, 13 (undated).

76 *The Light* 35 (1956) 18.

77 In the course of 20 years of publishing, 'Berlin' is mentioned only three times, that is IR 11 (1948); IR 9 (1949); and IR 8 (1951).

78 See IR 10, 12 (1948); IR 4, 7, 11, 12 (1949); IR 1, 11, 12 (1950).

79 See for instance Ahund Agha Ali Zeyde on Sovjet Muslims, IR 12 (1948); Zahur Tahir on Finland, IR 6 (1956); or Jean-Paul Roux on Turkey, IR 9 (1957). Annemarie Schimmel makes her appearance as well, not with an Eastern European subject but with Rumi, IR 4 (1955) and IR 2 (1956).

80 IR 4–7 (1955).

81 IR 8 (1952), IR 7 (1955).

82 IR 1 (1953).

83 IR 1 (1950).

84 'Distribution of Muslims in the World.' IR 11 (1954) 18–19.

A complicated relationship developed with the home country, Pakistan. From lead articles, miscellaneous items and advertisements in the journal, as well as from the very many signatures in the mosque's guestbook, it becomes clear that the network of relations with private people and institutions in Pakistan was strong. Among the signatories in the guestbook were visitors from the Pakistan army, navy and air force, as well as high officials.[85] In 1949 alone, lead articles on Pakistan featured its role in world affairs, its progress, education and political structure, as well as profiles on President Muhammad Ali Jinnah and 'founder' Muhammad Iqbal; elsewhere in the journal are articles on Pakistan's handicrafts, steel surveys, telephone equipment, oil fields and ship building.

For the sake of Pakistan, the editors achieved the impossible and twice published an article by Zafrullah Khan.[86] In the 1950s, the pages were crowded with advertisements for the textile mills of Karachi and Islamabad, the Pan-Islamic Steamship Company and the National Bank of Pakistan. Whatever was new happened in Pakistan was of interest to the Woking mosque and mission. When the riots exploded in 1953, however, the journal remained reticent on the matter – 'none of our business' the silence seems to imply. Instead, it featured an article on 'Iqbal and the Separation of Religion and State' (August 1953) and invited Hector Bolito, the biographer of President Ali Jinnah, to give his impressions of the young country (September 1953).

Woking mirrored and supported the 'reawakening' of the Muslim world while at the same time assisting the advancement of religious progress at home. The mosque and mission represented the good that happened 'out there.' It became the calling card of the British *vis-à-vis* their former colonies and, in the eyes of the very many visitors participating in Sunday receptions and high Islamic festivals, the 'shrine' of the mission in the West.[87] Once again, Ahmadiyya mission in the perception of Lahore, with S. M. Abdullah as its representative, succeeded in assembling a glamorous, global society within its orbit. As one of his obituaries noted, 'when the history of the Islamization of Europe comes to be written, Abdullah's name will figure among the pioneers who…embarked upon the great historic adventure.'[88]

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85 'Woking Mosque Visitors Book, 1948–1954,' accessed 28 June 2014, http://www.woking-muslim.org/pers/vbook.htm.

86 IR 9 (1955); IR 7 (1956).

87 *The Light* 35 (1956) 5.

88 Yakoob Khan, 'Keep the Torch Burning. Dr Abdullah Died so that Islam may Live,' *The Light* 8 (1956) 18.

Phrased in a different manner, Abdullah's life work gathered together two very different global constellations. Weimar and Nazi Germany provided him with a large circle of European intellectuals in search of global engagement through religious renewal. In Woking, he worked within the very different configuration of post-colonial Muslim nation-states, attracting intellectuals and policy makers who believed in creating an alternative to the Western superpowers. In both theatres, his mission remained the same. As the entries in *Islam Our Choice* showed, the circle of European admirers of Islam perceived a rationality, practicality and broadmindedness in this religion of which Abdullah and his fellow missionaries must have provided the model.

Although they attracted their fair share of romantics and zealots, the German interwar experiments with Islam all point in the same direction. As we have seen, such different approaches to Islam as the scholarly vision of Muslim continuity with Judaism, the rational philosophy of Hugo Marcus, or the *Gestalt* therapy approach of Rolf von Ehrenfels, all give witness to a horizon of global expectation in which the empirical encounter serves as a litmus test. Only the interaction between them allowed for conclusions such as those summarized at the start of this chapter.

8.3 The Woking Mission in Retrospect

The birth of Pakistan inaugurated a new constellation of state and religion, with consequences that had yet to unfold. For the Ahmadi actors involved, the AMJ and the AAII, this was something quite new to which they still had to adapt. The ensuing fight over 'Muslimness' and the relationship between religion and state enveloped the young country in a storm, the epicentre of which became the 'Ahmadiyya question.' Yet, in forging that relationship, Ahmadis were not just passive victims; they were among the actors as well.

In 1947, as in 1953, everything was still open. Muhammad Ali's decision to accept the AMJ challenge to defend *Ahmadiyyat* as a Muslim reform spoke of his lifelong loyalty to the founder. Mahmud Bashir-ud-Din's decision not to tune down his *Kufr* accusations also spoke of his loyalty to a father in whose footsteps he had trod. Once again, the actors ventured into something new with the language and tools of tradition. What in 1912 had still been the 'democratic action' versus the 'complete obedience' of two missions in the making, were now decisions that set the stage for their future organization in the context of the nation-state.

Incidentally, a blending of the two ended the Woking mission. In the aftermath of decolonization, the migrants and transnational workers who came to

England from Pakistan strengthened the local Muslim population of Greater London, which included Woking, and by the mid-1960s had grown strong enough to express dissatisfaction at the Ahmadi leadership of the mosque. What exactly happened remains a matter of perspective. Already in 1956, the dome of the mosque was in danger of caving in,[89] but funds needed for the necessary repairs failed to materialize. On the part of the AAII, once Abdullah had gone, a range of short-term imams served in the Woking mosque, the last of whom, a certain B. A. Masri, seemed to have been in favour of cooperating with the local population.[90] The newcomers formed the Woking Mosque Regeneration Committee with a view to cleansing the mosque of its Ahmadi heritage, which incidentally they thought to be Qadiani, and to take control.[91]

The sources do not disclose what happened in detail, but at some point the last editor of the *Islamic Review*, Abdul Majid, withdrew to London, leaving the mosque and mission house in the hands of the local congregation.[92] The Woking mission thus ended as it had begun, with a peaceful takeover. It signalled the end of a most successful mission that had used religious adaptation as a vehicle with which to create a common global horizon and to proclaim progressive Islam, setting the stage for creative encounters between East and West on many different levels. The vision of a common global horizon in which that mission had come about, which had enabled its protagonists to think about a common world and to try and create it, now definitely belonged to the past.

89 *The Light* 35 (1956) 15.

90 Muslim P. Salamat, *A Miracle at Woking. A History of the Shahjahan Mosque* (Chichester: Phillimore, 2008), 63–64.

91 'Aims and Objectives of the Woking Mosque Regeneration Committee,' in Salamat, *A Miracle at Woking*, 65.

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- Die beim Auswärtigen Amt tätigen Ausländer 1942–1943 R 100.690
- Zusammenarbeit Waffen – SS und AA 1943–1944 R 100.680, R 100.981, R 101.101

AA/8 = Akten R (RZ 505)

Akten der Kulturabteilung

- Eigentumsverhältnisse der Moschee am Fehlberliner Platz (8 December 1942) R 60.675
- Islamisches Zentral-Institut in Berlin (June 1941–April 1943) R 60.60

AA/9 = Ref. VII (RZ 211) 'Orient'

- Mufti R 27.324, R 27.325, R 27.326, R.27.328
- Zentralinstitut R 27.327

AMA* = *Ahmadiyya Mosque archive Berlin

- AMA/Interwar: 1–16 (Various correspondences 1928–1936)
- AMA/Interwar: 17–41 (Koran Quotations to accompany the lectures 1933–1937)
- AMA/Interwar: 42–62 (S. M. Abdullah's sermons, lectures and articles 1929–1934)
- AMA/Interwar: 63–72 (Typescripts of Marcus, Ehrenfels and Iranshär 1931–1934)
- AMA/Post-war: 1–14 (Various correspondences 1944–1948)

***BA* = *Bundesarchiv* (*Federal archive Germany*)**

ZZS 31 D (Amtsgruppe D–Oststelle):

- 'Arbeitsgemeinschaft Turkestan' Nr. 40
- 'Mullah-Schule Dresden' Nr. 60

***LA* = *Landesarchiv Berlin–Brandenburg* (*State archive of Berlin–Brandenburg*)**

LA/1 = Polizeipräsidium Berlin/Vereine (Secret Police) A Pr. Br. Rep. 030–04

- Beobachtung Islamische Gemeinde *Berlin*, 1936 Nr. 513, 8769
- Beobachtung *Deutsch–Moslemische Gesellschaft*, 1933–1941 Nr. 8769
- Beobachtung *Islam–Institut*, 1939–1940 Nr. 12354
- Beobachtung *Islamisches Zentralinstitut*, 1942–1943 Nr. 2840
- Beobachtung *IWC/Berlin*, 1933–1941 Nr. 1523

LA/2 = Oberfinanzpräsident Berlin–Brandenburg

- Vermögensverzeichnis Hugo Marcus Rep. 36 A/ Nr. 25289

LA/3 = Vermögensverzeichnisse Aktiver Nationalsozialisten

- Georg Konieczny C Rep. 105/ Nr. 14349
- Fritz Beyer C Rep. 105/ Nr. 14322

PA** = **Private Archives

PA Marcus, Zürich
Nachlass Hugo Marcus im Nachlass Walter Robert Corti, Zürich: Zentralbibliothek

- Box 1 (Private papers)
- Box 2 (Bibliography)
- Box 12.1 (Letters to Hugo Marcus)
- Box 12.2 (Letters to Hugo Marcus)
- Box 13 (Publications)

PA Oettinger, GB
- Several family collections with objects, photograph albums and private papers

PA Minna Specht, Bonn
- Nachlass Minna Specht, Archiv der Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung, Bonn

***VR** = **Vereinsregister** (**register office**)*

VR/AL = Ahmadiyya Lahore
Amtsgericht Berlin–Charlottenburg: VR 3295 ZZZ – 1 2006 (1962–)
VR/AQ = Ahmadiyya Qadiani Copy VR in Zentrales Islam Institut Deutschland (ZIIAD), Soest
VR/DGI = Deutsche Gesellschaft für Islamkunde e.V.
Amtsgericht Berlin-Charlottenburg: VR 26349 (1912–)
VR/DMG = Die Deutsch–Moslemische Gesellschaft e. V. Amtsgericht Berlin–Charlottenburg: VR 8769 (1930–1955)
VR/GIG = Gesellschaft für Islamische Gottesverehrung e.V./*Mai'at Scha'a'iv Islamiya.* Copy VR in Zentrales Islam Institut Deutschland (ZIIAD), Soest
VR/IGB = Die Islamische Gemeinde zu Berlin e.V.
Amtsgericht Berlin–Charlottenburg: VR B Rep. 042/Nr. 26590 (1922–1955)
VR/IIB = Islam-Institut zu Berlin e.V.
Amtsgericht Berlin–Charlottenburg: VR 12354 (1939–1942)
VR/IZI = Islamisches Zentral institut e.V.
Amtsgericht Berlin–Charlottenburg: 95 VR 12941 (1942–1945)
VR/IWC = Islamic World Congress, Berlin branch

Amtsgericht Berlin–Charlottenburg: 95 VR 9828 + 56 (1933–1956) Protocols 4–20: Zentrales Islam–Institut Deutschland (ZIIAD), Soest (1932–1933)
VR/Sufi = Sufi-Bewegung e.V.
Amtsgericht Berlin–Mitte: 95 VR 4635 (1925–1933)

Periodicals

BLA = *Berliner Lokal Zeitung*.
BT = *Berliner Tageblatt*.
DAZ = *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*.
Der Islam = *Der Islam: Ein Wegweiser zur Rettung und zum Wiederaufbau*, edited by Professor Jabbar Kheiri and Professor Sattar Kheiri, Berlin, 1922–1923.
DIG = *Die Islamische Gegenwart*: Monatsschrift für die Zeitgeschichte des Islam. Mit ständiger Beilage 'Der islamische Student', edited by M. Hassan Hoffmann and M. Nafi Tschelebi. Berlin, 1927–1929
IE = *Islam Echo*: wöchentlichen Nachrichtendienst über Politik, Wirtschaft und Kulturfragen in den ges. Ländern des Islam/Sadā 'l-islām. Berlin, 1927–1929.
IR = Islamic Revue (and Muslim India), edited by Kwaja Kamal-ud-Din and Maulvi Sadr-ud-Din. London, 1913–.
MR = *Moslemische Revue.* 1–4 edited by Maulvi Sadr Uddin and Maulvi F. K. Khan
Durrani. Berlin-Wilmersdorf: Moschee, 1924–1927; 5–15 edited by Maulvi Sadr Uddin and S. M. Abdullah. Berlin-Wilmersdorf: Moschee, 1929–1939.
MS = *The Moslem Sunrise*. Edited by Dr Mufti Muhammad Sadiq. Chicago, 1921–1923.
RR = *Review of Religions*, a monthly magazine devoted to the cause of Islam; organ of the Ahmadiyya Movement. Qadian, 1902–1923; London, 1924–.
The Light = *The Light*. Lahore: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-i Islam, 1921–.
Mitteilungen = Mitteilungen des deutschen Instituts für Ausländer, 1–19. Jg. Berlin, 1922–1941.
VZ = *Vossische Zeitung*.

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