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**Narratives of Belonging: Aligarh Muslim University and the Partitioning of South Asia**

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**Narratives of Belonging: Aligarh Muslim University and the  
Partitioning of South Asia**

**by**

**Amber Heather Abbas, B.A., M.A.**

**Dissertation**

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## **Dedication**

For my many families, around the world, who made this possible.

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First, I must extend my gratitude to the seventy-two individuals whose narratives form the foundation of this analysis. They and their families invited me—a veritable stranger in most cases—into their homes, offering tea, snacks and stories. The interviews often blossomed into rich conversation that provided the comfort of family. I am grateful for their hospitality and their stories. Without them, this project would not be.

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# **Narratives of Belonging: Aligarh Muslim University and the Partitioning of South Asia**

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2012

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The partition of India that accompanied that nation's independence in 1947 created the additional state of Pakistan; by 1971, this Pakistan had fractured into the two independent states of Pakistan and Bangladesh. This dissertation seeks to expand our temporal and spatial understanding of the sub-continent's partitioning by examining the experiences of a group of South Asian Muslims across time and space. As this dissertation will show, South Asia's partitioning includes more than the official history of boundary creation and division of assets, and more than the people's history of unbridled violence. I have oriented my investigation around a single institution, the Aligarh Muslim University, and spoken to former students of the 1940s and 1950s, whose young lives were shaped by the independence and partition of India. The memories of these former students of Aligarh University offer a lens for examining the "multiple realities" of partition and the decolonized experiences of South Asian Muslims.

The educational institution at Aligarh, founded in 1875, had long been concerned with cultivating a sporting, activist, masculine identity among its students; Muslim League leaders further empowered that identity as they recruited students for election work in support of Pakistan. The students embraced the values of the demand for Pakistan that appeared to be consistent with the values engendered at Aligarh. This dissertation uncovers the history of these students throughout the 1947 partition and beyond. It explores unexpected histories of trauma among communities who "chose to stay" but later experienced a powerful discontinuity in independent India. It exposes contradictions evident in remembered histories from Pakistanis who express triumph and grief at the prospect of Pakistani independence. Finally, this dissertation assesses the position of Muslims after partition and how the "disturbances" that began in the late 1940s continue to affect them today in both lived and remembered experience.

As a site for examining the "disturbances" of partition, Aligarh University proves to be a hub of a community that was and remains deeply disturbed by the changes partition wrought.

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## Introduction

### Understanding a Long Partition

“The Partition of the Indian subcontinent was the single most traumatic experience in our recent history.” –Alok Bhalla<sup>1</sup>

“The collective subjects who supposedly remember [the past] did not exist as such at the time of the events they claim to remember. Rather, their constitution as subjects goes hand in hand with the continuous creation of the past.” –Michel Rolph-Trouillot<sup>2</sup>

The partition of India that accompanied that nation’s independence from British colonization in 1947 created the new state of Pakistan, initially divided into East and West wings. By 1971, this Pakistan had fractured into the two independent states of Pakistan and Bangladesh, and so the end of empire in India set off a chain of events that have had a profound effect on all of the citizens of South Asian states. This dissertation seeks to expand our temporal and spatial understanding of the sub-continent’s partitioning by deepening our understanding of the experience of a particular group of Muslim citizens across time and space. I have oriented my investigation around a single institution, the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), and spoken to former students of the 1940s and 1950s, whose young lives were affected by the independence and partition of India. This institution played a critical role in the development of South Asian Muslim identity long before the movements for independence and partition captured Indian

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<sup>1</sup> "Introduction" in Alok Bhalla, ed., *Stories on the Partition of India* (New Delhi: Indus, 1994), vii.

<sup>2</sup> Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 16.

imaginations, and was a hub of political activism in favor of Pakistan in the years just prior to 1947. In the wake of the 1947 partition, some of the students left for the opportunities that Pakistan presented, some were displaced by the violence that tore through Punjab, Delhi and Bengal, some chose to stay rooted in ancestral homes, and some pursued the dream of Muslim independence in East Pakistan, only to have that dream upended by a movement for a Bengali national identity that resulted in the independence of Bangladesh in 1971. I use the memories of these former students of Aligarh University as a lens for examining the “multiple realities” of partition and the decolonized experiences of South Asian Muslims.<sup>3</sup> Ultimately, I hope that this analysis will offer a new way of looking at the partitioning of the subcontinent that allows historians to broaden our understanding of what it has meant for the people who live in the three post-partition states.

The independence and partition of India have typically been narrated through a restricted geography and set of images. The enduring picture is of Punjab, and sometimes of Delhi wracked by “senseless” violence, train massacres, abduction and rape, betrayal and disbelief. As in the epigraph above, partition is frequently characterized as a *moment* of violence in which communal passions overwrote the idealized history of peaceful coexistence between communities. I argue that to examine partition merely as a moment in history is to deny it historical continuity, to place it outside the pale of South Asian history, and to deny communities of survivors the

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<sup>3</sup> David Gilmartin, "Partition, Pakistan and South Asian History: In Search of a Narrative," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 57, no. 4 (Nov. 1998).

possibility of a future.<sup>4</sup> If partition “occurred” on August 14-15, 1947, then that history ended with the striking of the clock, and everything that has come afterward, including the 1971 independence of Bangladesh, belongs to a different historical story.<sup>5</sup> A reconceptualization of partition with attention to its continuities and not just its cleavages can create space for historians to speak about the experiences of communities throughout what historian Vazira Zamindar has called a “long partition,” one still being lived in communities throughout the region.<sup>6</sup>

My analysis similarly examines a broad timeframe, but rather than examining a long, singular Partition experience, I prefer to think of a long process of “partitioning.” The process of partitioning differs from the events subsumed under the heading Partition by leaving space for the changes in perception between communities within neighborhoods and across borders. As this dissertation will show, partitioning includes more than the official history of boundary creation and division of assets, and more than the history of unbridled violence. The history of the sub-continent’s partitioning must include the implications of the creation of Pakistan for all South Asians and especially

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<sup>4</sup> Tan and Kudaisya note the difficulty that both the Indian and Pakistani states have in trying to incorporate partition and its violence into a continuous national history. In this context it seems fitting that that during the fiftieth anniversary of partition, the dead were honored with a moment of silence. Tai Yong Tan and Gyanesh Kudaisya, *The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia* (London: Routledge, 2000), 2-3.

<sup>5</sup> Even as a practical consideration, it is important to remember that partition’s migrations carried on in earnest through 1947 and 1948 (my own family left Aligarh, India in October, 1947) and up through the 1950s, and even into the 1960s in response to communal riots in both East (Pakistan) and West (India) Bengal. Willem van Schendel, *A History of Bangladesh* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 132. Vazira Fazila- Yacoobali Zamindar, *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007). Sarmila Bose’s new work on the 1971 Bangladesh War demonstrates the danger of disconnecting the history of the war from its political antecedents. Sarmila Bose, *Dead Reckoning: Memories of the 1971 Bangladesh War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

<sup>6</sup> Most recently, Vazira Zamindar has used a similar strategy by examining the experience of “divided families.” Zamindar, *The Long Partition*.

Muslims (and not just the violence that has been termed the “birth pangs” of the nation<sup>7</sup>), a history of the Muslim nationalist movement that inspired young, elite Muslims to fight elections for Muslim candidates “even if they be lamp posts.”<sup>8</sup> In addition, it is critical to interpret the students’ activism historically—that is, to separate the activism from its outcome, the creation of Pakistan. This history of partitioning considers the aspirations of those seeking independence as much as the experience of citizens in post-partition states. I have used the shifting boundaries of memory as a gateway into this longer history. The memories of partition survivors reveal the complexities of partitioning. Memory presents a dynamic interaction of past and present, telling us much about both even as it is further complicated by the passage of time.

The production of personal history is a process that is both deeply rooted in past experience and reflective of present circumstances. Lewis A. Coser describes this twofold process in terms of its “cumulative and presentist aspects.”<sup>9</sup> The refashioning of the past is continuous with it and constructive of it. The many perspectives visible here, and the important impact of personal experience on memory formation seems to belie the existence of collective memory, but in fact, it is the presence of the collectivity that undergirds each of these narratives. At the moment the narrators incorporate themselves

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<sup>7</sup> Tan and Kudaisya, *The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia*, 29.

<sup>8</sup> Iqbal Shafi, "Brigadier Iqbal Shafi (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 9, 2010," (Rawalpindi: May 9, 2010). M.A. Jinnah, "Message to the Musalmans of the Frontier Province, November 27, 1945," in Jamil-ud-din Ahmad, ed., *Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah*, 2 vols., vol. 2 (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1964), 247.

<sup>9</sup> Lewis A. Coser, introduction to *On Collective Memory* by Maurice Halbwachs, trans. and ed. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 26.

and their experience into a group, they form self-justifying narratives based on that group and begin to use its memories and language to define their outlook.

The case of Muslims is unique as they are now spread among three states, two of which were founded on an expectation of Muslim solidarity, and one of which was arguably founded in opposition to it. To examine these experiences, this study examines the stories of dozens of narrators who share the formative experience of having been educated in Aligarh—in the Aligarh Muslim University and/or Aligarh Women’s College—and whose experiences diverged after 1947 as they made life choices that determined their futures as citizens of India or Pakistan and later Bangladesh. My analysis of India’s partitioning incorporates oral narratives I have collected in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh from men and women whose communities were affected by the departure of Muslims from North India for the freshly minted “Muslim homeland.”

Whereas Gyanendra Pandey and others have written on “high profile” and “disturbed” places like Delhi and Punjab, my own research seeks to look at places that may not have been as dramatically wracked by violence, but whose inhabitants nonetheless faced significant choices about belonging.<sup>10</sup> The question about whether a place was “disturbed” is, to me, not only about physical violence but also about the rearrangement of community patterns and the introduction of new forces and new faces

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<sup>10</sup> Gyanendra Pandey, "Partition and Independence in Delhi: 1947-48," *Economic and Political Weekly* Sep. 6-12, 1997, 2261, 71. For other studies of “high profile” sites see Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000). Veena Das, ed., *Mirrors of Violence: Communities, Riots and Survivors in South Asia* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990). Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, *Borders & Boundaries: Women in India's Partition* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1998).



into communities that changed the ways in which they operated. These kinds of changes are obvious in places like Amritsar, Lahore and Delhi,<sup>11</sup> but we see them also in Aligarh and the towns in the United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh) from which many Aligarians came. As Mushirul Hasan remarked at the 2002 Indian History Conference, “A major lacuna in existing accounts is the absence of major studies on the United Provinces (UP), a region that nurtured the ideology of Muslim nationalism.”<sup>12</sup> The interviews I have conducted with former Aligarh students address this lacuna by looking at their approach to Muslim nationalism within the university, what changes they experienced in the University itself and in their hometowns and villages throughout North India, particularly in UP and Eastern Punjab. Finally, it looks at the position of Muslims after partition and how the “disturbances” that began in the late 1940s continue to affect them today in both their lived and remembered experience. Aligarh itself remains “high profile” as a site of Muslim organization, but has not previously been examined as a critical site of partition, in part because, as every former student of that era will tell you, there was no violence at Aligarh University in 1947.<sup>13</sup> This has not limited partition’s impact, for Bangladeshi scholar Meghna Guha Thakurta has suggested that the “the fear of being dispossessed,

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<sup>11</sup> Ian Talbot, *Divided Cities: Partition and Its Aftermath in Lahore and Amritsar 1947-1957* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>12</sup> Mushirul Hasan, "Partition Narratives: Presidential Address at the 31st Indian History Congress, Bhopal 28-30 December, 2001," *Social Scientist* 30, no. 7/8 (July- August 2002). This lacuna has also been addressed in recent work by Venkat Dhulipala. Venkat Dhulipala, "Rallying the Qaum: The Muslim League in the United Provinces, 1937-1939," *Modern Asian Studies* 44, no. 3 (2010).

<sup>13</sup> Paul Brass’ work on riots in Aligarh argues that violence became more frequent in Aligarh city after 1947 (and as a result of it), but notes the absence of violence there during partition. Paul R. Brass, *The Production of Hindu- Muslim Violence in Contemporary India* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003).

the fear of not belonging” caused people to flee even if they had not witnessed a single act of violence.<sup>14</sup> As a site for examining the “disturbances” of partition, Aligarh can provide a useful entry-point by identifying a group of Muslims whose community was and remains deeply disturbed by the changes partition wrought.

The disruptions of partition were caused not only by violence, but also by changing patterns within communities of Muslims and Hindus that were reconfigured by partition’s migrations. Historian Gyan Pandey has addressed the necessity of understanding the multiple faces of what he considers the singular event of Partition. He describes several conceptions of “partition:” the demand for Pakistan, the partition of Bengal and Punjab, the partition of families and communities, and the partition caused by migration and displacement of individuals and families from homes. The question of how we name and identify these partitions, he argues “determines not only the images we construct but also the questions we ask.”<sup>15</sup> The initial investigations of partition indeed asked different questions than we ask now, some sixty-five years on.<sup>16</sup>

The earliest responses from professional historians documented the negotiations, the formal processes of Britain’s Transfer of Power to the new states. They revealed the complexity of the political landscape, but their investigations concluded on August 15,

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<sup>14</sup> Meghna Guha Thakurta, "Uprooted and Divided," *Seminar: Porous Bodies, Divided Selves*, no. 510 (February 2002).

<sup>15</sup> Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism, and History in India* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 15.

<sup>16</sup> H. V. Hodson, *The Great Divide: Britain-India-Pakistan*, Jubilee series ed. (Karachi; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), Penderel Moon, *Divide and Quit: An Eye-Witness Account of the Partition of India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998 [1961]). R. J. Moore, *Escape from Empire: The Attlee Government and the Indian Problem* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983). G. D. Khosla, *Stern Reckoning; a Survey of the Events Leading up to and Following the Partition of India* (New Delhi: Bhawnani, 1949).

1947 when that work was officially complete.<sup>17</sup> As such, the early literature focused on “causes,” to an extent, “the birth pangs of the nation,” and the difficulty of official administration, but incorporated few stories of Indians’ lived experience. Simultaneously, poets and literati struggled with the meaning of partition for people on the ground; they captured the fears and anxieties of people caught in the upheavals of partition, and their writing defined the tropes through which partition is often defined.<sup>18</sup> Decades later, as the fiftieth anniversary of the independence of India and creation of Pakistan approached, scholars redoubled their efforts to understand partition’s meaning. For the first time, the domain of history and the domain of stories came together as historians sought personal histories of partition from those affected by the violence that, Pandey argues, “was Partition.”<sup>19</sup> The questions that I ask of partition build on this prodigious literature, but seek to expose the complications of the entities that have been accepted as the logical outcomes of partition, namely the two states of India and Pakistan. I present an investigation of a group caught in the middle of the vociferous state-making at the heart of the partition drama: the Muslims. The “Muslim Question” presented the central conflict of the independence movement, and the stumbling block that forced the partition. How should the state deal with a substantial minority population, linked at least nominally by their shared faith, who felt entitled to a share of power, but who would

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<sup>17</sup> Nicholas Mansergh, ed., *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Transfer of Power (London: H.M.S.O., 1970-1982).

<sup>18</sup> The All India Progressive Writers’ Association including: Sadaat Hasan Manto (“*Khol Do*,” “*Toba Tek Singh*”), Ismat Chughtai (“*Roots*”), Krishan Chander (“*Amritsar: Azadi se Pehle*,” “*Amritsar: Azadi ke Bad*”), Faiz Ahmad Faiz (“*Freedom’s Dawn*”) and Josh Malihabadi was particularly active.

<sup>19</sup> Pandey, *Remembering Partition*, 5, Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*, Menon and Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries*.

largely be excluded from a legislative role in a parliamentary democracy? The solution of this conflict was the creation of Pakistan, but, this dissertation argues, that solution not only failed to solve the Muslim Question, it spawned a whole new set of Muslim questions. As a result, the questions I ask seek to expose those post-partition questions through an investigation of partition's meaning for a group of people caught at the core of the conflict.

For the Muslim students at the Aligarh Muslim University, the partitioning of the subcontinent introduced a new emotion. While they had been aware of discrimination and the ostensible threat of communal riots, it was not until 1947 and after that they experienced actual fear for their personal safety. This is acutely obvious when they speak about the events of partition in 1947, and the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi in 1948, but is also traceable in their relationship to employment, the state and the challenges of being part of "the minority community" in Hindu majority in India.<sup>20</sup> This "fear of not belonging" has lasting implications for how we analyze India's partitioning.<sup>21</sup> The fear that these narrators experienced during partition has colored their relationship to state and society ever since, making clear that the realities of the South Asian partitioning are very much part of the present. Partition's "unrelenting immediacy"<sup>22</sup> emerges clearly in remembered narratives that represent an ongoing negotiation between past and present.

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<sup>20</sup> Although there are many minorities in India, Muslims are the largest, and have been treated before and after partition as "the" minority community.

<sup>21</sup> Guha Thakurta, "Uprooted and Divided."

<sup>22</sup> Jasodhara Bagchi and Subhoranjan Dasgupta, "The Problem," *Ibid.*, no. 510 (February 2002).

By examining reconfigurations of social experience like this, we can take seriously Pandey's critique of a view of partition violence that construes it as a "problem of origins."<sup>23</sup> To reduce partition to a history of its causes, he suggests, is to isolate it as a culminating, anomalous event with a single set of explanations. Ultimately, the "problem of origins" is insufficient to explain the trauma, which itself disrupts the continuity of the pre-existing situation, that is, the origins themselves. I would add that the reduction of partition to a "moment" strategically fails to consider the ongoing outcomes of partitioning in communities throughout the subcontinent. These oral histories foster the consideration of "partitioning" as a process of navigating many disruptions; they allow me to incorporate contemporary reflections on partition and its reverberations into the narration of it.

These histories also create space to look at other episodes of nation and state-making. The 1971 liberation of Bangladesh appears here not as a spontaneous eruption of regional enthusiasm but as an integral part of a longer process of negotiation that involved a particular identity politics as well as a reaction to West Pakistani suppression.<sup>24</sup> This led East Pakistanis to challenge the unity of the Two Nation Theory and to seek separation from their Muslim "brethren" and fellow "countrymen." Further, the narrators whose stories I have recorded throughout South Asia, who speak from inside the borders of three different post-partition states, envision their own history as continuous even though official narratives and most of the partition historiography has

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<sup>23</sup> Pandey, *Remembering Partition*, 49.

<sup>24</sup> Ahmed Kamal, *State against the Nation: The Decline of the Muslim League in Pre-Independence Bangladesh 1947-54* (Dhaka: The University Press Limited, 2009).

enforced the totality of partition's rupture. The narrative of rupture is certainly present, but it appears in surprising places. Thus, Aligarian migrants from North India to Pakistan minimize the sense of rupture, whereas those who remained in India feel the loss of unified India more acutely in the decimation of the size and power of the Muslim community in India. Aligarians in Bangladesh narrate a sense of rupture associated with the liberation from Pakistan in 1971 but sometimes yearn for a united subcontinent which might elide the sense of loss that they feel in being separated not only from fellow Bengalis in India, but fellow Muslims in Pakistan.

## **METHODOLOGY**

These narratives point to a variety of experience not typically included in studies that focus on Partition as a unique and terrible event that took place primarily in Punjab and Delhi. As David Gilmartin has suggested, the problems with narrating partition should encourage historians to “place the tension between multiple realities and the production of shared moral meaning at the very heart of the partition story.”<sup>25</sup> To explore these tensions in what has been characterized as a moment of rupture is to complicate a view of history that has become codified in official and collective memory. I suggest that if, as historians, we can treat Partition as “partitioning,” as a process rather than as a concise moment, we can create space to address its “multiple realities.” A more complete history requires a narrative of partition that acknowledges the forces at work in the long process of national mobilization that brought independence in the subcontinent, and also

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<sup>25</sup> Gilmartin, "Partition, Pakistan and South Asian History: In Search of a Narrative," 1070.

the long process of negotiating the present and future that is still taking place within communities on all sides of the borders long after they were drawn. These oral narratives provide rich material in which to search for meaning, “shared” or otherwise; they allow us to see Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi independence within the context of shifting boundaries of community and belonging, not just as the outcome of lines too hastily etched on a map. To look at partition in this way means gazing through the lens of communitarian, sometimes communal, state and individual politics through which Muslims see themselves and are seen by others throughout the subcontinent.

In the case of historical memories, Michel Rolph-Trouillot argues that “the collective subjects who supposedly remember [the past] did not exist as such at the time of the events they claim to remember. Rather, their constitution as subjects goes hand in hand with the continuous creation of the past.”<sup>26</sup> I argue that the lived reality of Muslim experience in South Asia lends itself to a continuous reading because the subjects that populate this reading are still being constituted. A mere sixty-five years after partition, the role of Muslims in the struggle for freedom, the fight for independence, the pursuit of liberation and the place of Muslims as citizens in the three post-1947 states is far from settled.

How is it possible to use personal accounts to examine partition’s “multiple realities?” It is established that AMU was a central site for the training of Muslim leadership before and after partition. By looking at the experience of its students, who have contributed so much to the trajectory of South Asian history, but share the formative

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<sup>26</sup> Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 16.

experience of being students of Aligarh, I will examine the points of convergence and divergence in their stories of their own experiences that can help us to understand the position of this group of South Asian Muslims in the years during and after partition.

Ultimately, the slippage evident in these stories between personal, communal and national memory serves to highlight partition's multiple realities. The national stories that these narrators read back onto their experiences during and after partition make it possible for us to see the same story through more than one lens. Thus we recognize discontinuity between remembered experiences without forcing those experiences into historical boxes defined by calendrical events and bounded by specific geographical spaces. We also leave space to recognize continuity of priorities and values between stories and across borders. South Asian partitioning emerges more clearly as a lived experience when we expand the temporal and spatial framework in which it transpires. We can shift the perspective away from a few "high profile" sites where it is easier to see partition as an anomalous moment, inconsistent with the narrative of national realization—as it appears in India—or as a triumphal accomplishment marked by heroic sacrifice—as it appears in Pakistan. This strategy allows us to see that it may be both and neither, less and more. It also exposes the fact that how partition is perceived may be as significant to our understanding of it as the events that transpired in its very execution.<sup>27</sup> In lower profile but much more common stories partition appears "incomplete,"<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Pandey, *Remembering Partition*, 6-7.

<sup>28</sup> Philip Oldenburg, "'A Place Insufficiently Imagined:' Language, Belief, and the Pakistan Crisis of 1971," *Journal of Asian Studies* 44, no. 4 (Aug. 1985).



“conjured,”<sup>29</sup> exclusive, gendered, bigoted, vital, temporary, “ever-present,”<sup>30</sup> failed, promising, inevitable, accidental. At these sites, the complexities of partition’s multiple realities come into view.

The argument for examining partition’s continuities is not entirely new, rather the initial wave of popular histories of partition, spurred by Urvashi Butalia’s *The Other Side of Silence*, emerged out of the recognition of a powerful continuity between the riots of 1947 and the anti-Sikh violence that followed the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1984.<sup>31</sup> Scholars like Veena Das and Urvashi Butalia recognized for the first time the continuity between this violence and the violence of Partition in which the many were punished for the crimes of the few.<sup>32</sup> This realization bred curiosity about the possibility that failures in information distribution and protection of victimized communities were systemic, a pattern established during the 1947 partition. The official histories of partition told a sanitized story of diplomacy (or lack of it), military action and high level negotiation, but the experience of the people who lived in areas disturbed by partition violence was absent. The two significant attempts to represent the experience on the ground had been composed by a British official and an Indian judge, and while they sought to quantify and describe the carnage they nonetheless conveyed a sense that the

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<sup>29</sup> Ayesha Jalal, "Conjuring Pakistan: History as Official Imagining," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 27, no. 1 (Feb. 1995).

<sup>30</sup> Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*, 5.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>32</sup> Veena Das, "Specificities: Oral Narratives, Rumour, and the Social Production of Hate," *Social Identities* 4, no. 1 (Feb. 1998).

reader was looking down on the bloodbath from above.<sup>33</sup> Butalia and others, including Kamla Bhasin and Ritu Menon in their *Borders and Boundaries* and Gyanendra Pandey in *Remembering Partition*, turned to oral histories to collect the untold stories of these times, to create an archive of personal stories as a way of filling the historical narrative with lived experience. It was the recognition of this powerful moment of continuity between 1947 and 1984 that led to the creation of a new historical thread linking the communities and geography of South Asia across the border drawn by Cyril Radcliffe that summer of 1947.

While 1984 triggered a sense of *déjà vu* for these scholars, it became a part of their intellectual biography more than a framing device for examining partition. These histories are concerned with understanding the consequences of a serious rupture in moral continuity and through them, partition became Partition, monolithic and untouchable.<sup>34</sup> This study seeks to take that initial recognition of continuity, and combine it with Pandey's recognition that partition changed fundamentally the subjectivity of everyone involved to suggest that partition—its violence, its boundaries, its prejudices, its disruptions—altered permanently the subjectivity of all involved, and that to understand this we must examine those subjectivities beyond the calendrical boundaries of Partition. How has the process of partitioning affected the subjectivity of Muslims throughout the subcontinent? How has their experience been determined by these dynamics? How can

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<sup>33</sup> Moon, *Divide and Quit: An Eye-Witness Account of the Partition of India*, Khosla, *Stern Reckoning; a Survey of the Events Leading up to and Following the Partition of India*.

<sup>34</sup> Pandey, in particular, deploys literature on memory and trauma from the Holocaust to suggest that similarly Partition may be a “limit case” of historiography, an episode so horrifying it is unique. Pandey, *Remembering Partition*, 45.

we use these episodes as a lens to understand their experience, and how can we use their experience to better understand ongoing processes of partitioning?

This dissertation examines the relationship between a group of individuals who emerged from a tightly regulated social, educational and political environment at a formative time in the histories of their nations and states, passed through the crucible of a traumatic separation and now look back on their past both as individuals and members of different collectivities. How they imagine their place within these collectivities affects how they remember their experiences during the disruptions of the 1947 partitioning. Their identities are relational, determined through experience, memory and comparison.

This examination differs from other studies of partition memory in several ways. Memory has helped to define our understanding of the experience of partitioning as it unfolded in 1947, but this study places a consideration of the dynamics of individual and collective memory at the heart of the examination to argue that the definition of partition as an “event” creates a kind of unreal discontinuity that separates experiences before and after August 1947. The critical difference here is about *meaning*, and the oral narratives are a rich source of meaning. For as historian Alessandro Portelli argues, “The first thing that makes oral history different... is that it tells us less about *events* than about their meaning.”<sup>35</sup> That is, the question of facticity in oral history is more determined by the *meaning* of the fact, than its historical verifiability.<sup>36</sup> This should not imply that the

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<sup>35</sup> Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 50.

<sup>36</sup> Oral historian Paul Thompson, with reference to Portelli addresses the issue of facticity, “What the informant believes is indeed a *fact* (that is, the *fact* that he or she believed it) just as much as what ‘really’

historian's work is only in analyzing the story. In fact, thoroughly developed historical context is required to understand the story's meaning at all. It is significant though, that the act of remembering South Asia's partition serves to create continuity for individuals and communities and should not necessarily be considered separately from our understanding of partition's impact on individuals, communities, institutions and states. Incorporating memory allows the historian to consider the ongoing experiences and effects of the partitioning that continue today through acts of terrorism, discrimination, the resilience and power of religious difference,<sup>37</sup> and the persistent lag in Human Development indices typical of Indian Muslims.<sup>38</sup> In Pakistan and Bangladesh, considering the effects of partitioning means looking at the relationship between minority and majority discourse and its implications for the unity of Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh.

Further, this study pursues the idea that the generation of students in the Aligarh Muslim University prior to 1947 shared a formative experience before dispersing when the new borders had been drawn in August. Their dispersion in 1947 and the years following it meant that the values of the environment of the university were dispersed across a wide geography. That their involvement in fighting for Pakistan was based on the close relationship between the advertised values of Pakistan and the Aligarh

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happened." Paul Richard Thompson, *Voice of the Past: Oral History*, 3rd ed. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 160.

<sup>37</sup> Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*, 9.

<sup>38</sup> Justice Rajender Sachar, "The Sachar Committee Report: Social, Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community of India," (New Delhi: Prime Minister's High Level Committee, Cabinet Secretariat, Government of India, 2006). Omar Khalidi, *Indian Muslims since Independence* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd, 1995), — — —, *Muslims in Indian Economy* (Gurgaon, Haryana: Three Essays Collective, 2006).

University meant that their expectations for the future were more than just casually molded by this experience. They form a type of diasporic community and the experiences that they shared prior to partition allow me to conceive of them as a group or groups after partition. By examining the dispersal of these groups of mostly young men, I incorporate a much broader geography than has typically been examined in partition studies. That is, I must move beyond the consideration of “border areas” in Punjab and Bengal and the metropolises of Delhi and Calcutta to think about smaller regional towns like Aligarh and the districts from which these narrators hail.

#### **THE TROUBLES OF HISTORY**

The studies of partition that have come from India are centered on narratives of often violently traumatic experiences by those who migrated from Pakistan areas and those who experienced the “vivisection” of their country, the undermining of their respected leadership who advocated a “composite culture” theory of Indian belonging, and who witnessed, even if not personally, the seemingly senseless violence plaguing Punjab, Bengal and North India. These studies have failed to investigate other experiences of India’s partitioning, ones that may not have been driven by physical violence, or forced migration. To some extent, these experiences have been covered in the fictional literature of partition—in Intizar Husain’s *Basti*, or Ismat Chughtai’s short story “Roots”—but, with the exception of Mushirul Hasan’s defensive essays about

Aligarh during the 1940s, these have not been the focus of historical inquiry.<sup>39</sup> These other experiences do not as easily establish a binary of aggressor-victim; they do not necessarily fit easily into national narratives of becoming, and they require an understanding that India's minorities may not have felt at home in its "composite culture." Many of these narratives, in fact, reveal significant slippage where personal narratives meet national ones. Indeed the ongoing effects of the division of the country into differently defined units continues to impact minority communities in all three states.

Thus, Riazur Rahman Sherwani, a nationalist and Congress supporter who worked for Congress candidates in 1946 in Aligarh town even as his own father ran on a Muslim League ticket in their rural home district, described his unwillingness to blame Muslims for the partition of India, as the Indian national story would have us believe. "Actually," he told me, "Only Muslims were not responsible for partition. The blame rests on others also. The British Government was also involved in that process, the Congress leadership also was responsible for it."<sup>40</sup> This view lays Sherwani open to accusations of disloyalty in an environment (India generally, Aligarh in particular) where the Muslims have worked tirelessly to demonstrate their allegiance to the Indian state as a way of making up for the transgressions of the Muslim League and its support for

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<sup>39</sup> Mushirul Hasan, "Nationalist and Separatist Trends in Aligarh, 1915-1947," in *Myth and Reality: The Struggle for Freedom in India, 1945-47*, ed. Amit Kumar Gupta (New Delhi: Manohar, 1987), 116. — — —, "Negotiating with Its Past and Present: The Changing Profile of the Aligarh Muslim University," in *Inventing Boundaries: Gender, Politics, and the Partition of India*, ed. Mushirul Hasan (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000). Ahmad Salim's collections of remembered narratives and partition literature do represent border-crossing collections, but his work incorporates little analysis. Ahmad Salim, ed., *Reconstructing History: Memories, Migrants, and Minorities* (Islamabad: Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), 2009), — — —, ed., *Lahore 1947* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2003).

<sup>40</sup> Riazur Rahman Sherwani, "Riazur Rahman Sherwani: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas, July 6, 2008," (Aligarh: July 6, 2008).

Pakistan.<sup>41</sup> It also exposes the complicated position of Nationalist Muslims who may not be willing to blame their “community” for the divided outcome of the independence movements.

The creation of Pakistan has become so intimately linked to the violence of partition, that even Pakistani narrators lay “blame” for the creation of Pakistan at the feet of Congress leaders Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel even as they herald the triumph of the Muslim League’s demand for independent statehood. This narrative reveals an important slippage between the narrative of triumph and the narrative of the oppressed minority that demands state protection and accommodation. It occurs because the “sacrifices” made by those who lost their lives during partition must be justified by the triumph of the state, yet narrators cannot accept the stigma of having created the conditions in which partition’s violence took place. This slippage illuminates a theme that runs throughout this argument, that if partition was imagined as an answer the “Muslim Question” it did little to “solve” it, but rather spawned a variety of persistent Muslim and minority questions that continue to trouble the post-partition states.

There are some surprises in the narratives collected here. For one, only a few of the individuals I interviewed who migrated from India to Pakistan had returned to India since 1947. I seemed to encounter fewer stories of divided families in Pakistan than I did in India. It seemed that almost everyone in India had a relative, or one side of the family

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<sup>41</sup> Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, in particular, as Deputy Prime Minister is remembered for making statements about Muslim loyalty that made it clear that their loyalty was suspect and would have to be proven. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, "Speech: You Cannot Ride Two Horses, January 6, 1948," in *For a United India: Speeches of Sardar Patel 1947- 1950* (Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1967). See also Saeed Naqvi, *Reflections of an Indian Muslim* (New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications, 1993).

who had gone to Pakistan, whereas the Pakistanis told me that all of their family migrated.<sup>42</sup> This created the impression that Pakistan remained part of the Indian Muslim imaginary much more than India did for the Pakistani imaginary. Whereas several Pakistani narrators described leaving India behind like so many kitchen utensils, and rarely have returned to India, Indian narrators described periodic visits to India for weddings or to visit family members and imagine their families as “divided.”<sup>43</sup> In fact, far more Indians cite the influence of their families in their decision to remain in India. Pakistanis, conversely, emphasize their independence. Even Sayyid Hamid, whose brother migrated to Pakistan said, “There was no discussion, but perhaps he thought that career-wise, it was a better proposition for him.”<sup>44</sup> Pakistanis proclaim their financial superiority over Indian Muslims, often describing Indian Muslims as “poor” or “backward,” but there is very little nostalgia, little sense that their origins lie in a country which they cannot easily visit. My interview with Pakistani Brigadier General Iqbal Shafi illustrates this well. Even as he told me that the triumph of achieving Pakistan outweighed any sense of loss at leaving India, he lamented, “But, of course, I miss Aligarh, I wish Aligarh was in Pakistan. I wish Delhi was in Pakistan, and Lucknow...”<sup>45</sup> While he recognized the geographic dislocation of Aligarh, the insurmountable spatial discontinuity, he also argued for a continuity of “Islamic values” that he learned in Aligarh. For Shafi and other Pakistani Aligarians, the university occupies a unique

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<sup>42</sup> Zamindar, *The Long Partition*. Narrators with divided families include: Sayyid Hamid, Irfan Habib, CSI (Anonymized), Wazir Ahmad Razzaqi (who ultimately migrated to Pakistan), Ather Siddiqi, among others.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 234- 37.

<sup>44</sup> Sayyid Hamid, "Sayyid Hamid: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas October 29, 2009," (New Delhi: October 29, 2009).

<sup>45</sup> Shafi, "Brigadier Iqbal Shafi (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 9, 2010."



position because the Pakistanis have incorporated it so fully into their collective history that it is as if it is not in India at all, but a seamless (though inaccessible) part of Pakistan.

The Aligarh of pre-partition, for those who remained in India, however, is equally inaccessible. Its reputation and experience were so catastrophically affected by the Muslim League activity and the events of 1947 that we find a sense of trauma and discontinuity that I do not find in Pakistan with relation to Aligarh. Though geographically located only ninety miles from New Delhi, the Aligarh of today remains emotionally isolated from India, and especially from India's national story—and this isolation has long been part of the Aligarh dynamic and part of its unique identity—that I have considered those alumni who remained closer to the university to occupy a different perceptive/analytical space from those of their contemporaries who left Aligarh and settled elsewhere in India. The university provides a protective boundary for those within its walls, but outside, Muslim graduates are more exposed, and must overcome the challenge of being an “Aligarh Muslim” with its shadow of disloyalty. Professor of History Mohammad Amin told me that in the years after partition in Delhi one avoided mentioning one's experience in Aligarh, because having been a student there was not the boon it should have been, but was a “black mark” on one's record.<sup>46</sup> Pakistanis have had to adjust to the contemporary reality of geographic dislocation with ideological continuity but Indians have faced the opposite: geographic continuity and ideological dislocation. The nostalgia of displacement comes from those who remain close to the University, not

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<sup>46</sup> Mohammad Amin, "Mohammad Amin: Personal Communication with Amber Abbas November 1, 2009," (New Delhi: November 1, 2009).

from those who are far away. This irony lends strength to my suggestion that it is worthwhile to look at “disturbed” places that were not affected by violence.

### **THE QUESTION OF CHOICE**

My approach to the migration decisions of these narrators as matters of “choice,” may be difficult to accept. As a scholar coming of age in the wake of the remarkable investigations of partition violence and gendered nationalism published during the 1990s, I have benefited from these investigations, but do not seek to repeat them. This literature focuses on communities of people who lived in disputed territories (like Punjab) or who were driven out of their homes by violence or the threat of violence. In the existing literature, however, there are already a few examples of individuals exercising “choice” over where to go and what to do during the upheavals of partition.

Urvashi Butalia recounts the story of her uncle who remained in Pakistan, converted to Islam, married and raised his children there. When he explained his reasoning, he was not motivated by a desire to profit from the family’s abandoned property as his sister suspected, rather he said, “I’d had little education. What would I have done in India? I had no qualifications, no job, nothing to recommend me.”<sup>47</sup> This story about opportunity and the lack of it is remarkably similar to many told by Aligarh graduates who settled in Pakistan and remarkably different from the majority of the best-known stories of partition displacement.

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<sup>47</sup> Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*, 28.

Bangladeshi scholar, Meghna Guha Thakurta notes that for many there was a matter of conscious choice, many families whose members were in government service “were given the option to take up equivalent work on the other side. Some families, however, had to decide in a very short period of time, so that people who exercised the option also had to reach a hurried decision.”<sup>48</sup> Soldiers in the army and other government servants were given some options, based on their religious background, to “opt” for settling in India or Pakistan. Muslims in areas that would become India could opt for either service, as could Hindus in Pakistan areas. Hindus in India, and Muslims in Pakistan however, were naturalized to that state; they were given no option. Both Butalia and Zamindar detail accounts of government servants who opted for one side, and then changed their minds and sought to migrate to the other (this happened in both directions).<sup>49</sup> This investigation does take the question of “choice” seriously, and interrogates it, too, for signs of coercion. Particularly in the case of women, their “choice” was often circumscribed by their family’s desire to see them well- married at a time when so many educated and eligible young men had moved to Pakistan.<sup>50</sup> Among the narrators who participated in my oral history project, only one narrator, from the

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<sup>48</sup> She claims that they “later regretted” this decision. My interviews with Ghulam Umar, Wajahat Husain, Iqbal Shafi, IQ (Anonymized) and others who “opted” have not revealed this sense of regret. Guha Thakurta, “Uprooted and Divided.”

<sup>49</sup> Zamindar, *The Long Partition*, 79-102, Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*, 74-77. Zafar Mohammad Khan, “Zafar Mohammad Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas April 4, 2009,” (Lucknow: April 4, 2009). Shahid Rashid, “Professor Shahid Rashid: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 19, 2010,” (Karachi: May 19, 2010).

<sup>50</sup> Khadija Minhaj Umar, “Khadija Minhaj Umar: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas January 4, 2008,” (Lahore: January 4, 2008), Fatima Fari Rahman, “Fatima Fari Rahman: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas January 4, 2008,” (Lahore: January 4, 2008). The film “Garam Hawa” (1973) portrays the terrible tension for a young Indian Muslim girl betrothed to her cousin who moved to Pakistan as she waits for him to return for her. The film was based on a short story by Ismat Chughtai, who attended the Aligarh Women’s College and was adapted for film by Kaifi Azmi.

Eastern UP city of Saharanpur, described his family being “forced” out of their home.<sup>51</sup> A few others—Ather Siddiqi from Saharanpur; Zahida Zaidi from Delhi; and a few from Meerut—mentioned riots, but Siddiqi, for instance, described his family’s move to Moradabad as a “migration” rather than an escape.<sup>52</sup> By decentering the Punjab as the dominant site of partition, other partition stories have the chance to emerge. The question of choice looks entirely different in cities that were not sites of significant violence. Professor Emeritus Irfan Habib suggested that opportunity motivated educated Muslims to leave for Pakistan. He said, “soon the idea that they will get high posts in Pakistan... they would get recorded property of Hindus in Sindh, and if they were Punjabis, in Punjab. That had begun to have its own attraction.”<sup>53</sup> This movement stopped, however, once the Indian state developed public sector engineering services because “they got higher pay here, why should they go?” Pakistani narrators advance an almost identical narrative, particularly those who graduated with degrees in engineering up to the mid 1950s. Those who graduated later, however, found jobs in India (Ahmad Rashid, Majid Ali Siddiqi) and made successful careers in the public services. Thus, Indian narrators

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<sup>51</sup> Abdul Rashid Khan, "Abdul Rashid Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas," (Karachi: August 10, 2006). In my M.A. Thesis, I included stories of memories of violence from Sarfaraz Husain Mirza, at that time a child in the East Punjabi city of Ferozpur. Sarfaraz Hussain Mirza, "Sarfaraz Hussain Mirza: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas July 21, 2006," (Lahore, Pakistan: July 21, 2006), Amber Abbas, "Thinking through Partition: Finishing the Narrative (Unpublished Master's Thesis)," (Austin: The University of Texas at Austin, 2006).

<sup>52</sup> Ather Siddiqi, "Professor Ather Siddiqi (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 11, 2009," (Aligarh: May 11, 2009). Zahida Zaidi, "Professor Zahida Zaidi (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas November 20, 2009," (Aligarh: November 20, 2009). On disruptions in Meerut, see: Mansoor Qamar, "Mrs. Mansoor Qamar: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 18, 2010," (Karachi: May 18, 2010). IS, "Mrs. I.S. (Anonymized): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 28, 2010," (Karachi: May 28, 2010). Anis Zaidi and Rais Sultana, "Mrs. Anis Zaidi and Mrs. Rais Sultana: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 20, 2010," (Karachi: May 20, 2010).

<sup>53</sup> Irfan Habib, "Irfan Habib: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 28, 2009," (Aligarh: June 28, 2009).

recognize the power of Pakistan's pull for those seeking career advancement, and Habib even recognizes the difficulty India had in matching it. However, for those who remained in AMU as professors, their own lives were marked by the intimacy of the university, and they felt privileged to have been able to stay.<sup>54</sup>

Thousands of people who fled their homes during the months of violence that spanned August 1946 in Calcutta, Bihar and Noakhali, to March 1947 in Rawalpindi to August, September and October 1947 in Lahore, Amritsar, and Delhi feared for their lives. Many had either witnessed violence or were aware of its threat. Many, including the women at the heart of Menon and Bhasin's research, still bear its scars. But the presence of groups of people who migrated for other reasons, whose lives were also disturbed by partition's refiguring of states does not undermine or threaten the integrity of those experiences. Rather, their stories help us to develop a complex understanding of partition experience and to examine other sites of disturbance. These are the "multiple realities" of partition, that even as people fled for their lives, others carefully considered their career choices, examined their options, imagined their futures. It is a shortcoming of the histories of partition violence that they occlude those futures by positing Partition as an emotional rupture of such force that the future becomes unimaginable.

It is a commonplace to recount the large numbers of people who migrated (10-15 million) and even of those who died (up to 1 million). Butalia cites the figure of 75,000

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<sup>54</sup> Fari Rahman, "Fatima Fari Rahman: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas January 4, 2008." Siddiqi, "Professor Ather Siddiqi (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 11, 2009." Iqtidar Alam Khan, "Professor Iqtidar Alam Khan (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 31, 2009," (Aligarh: May 31, 2009).

women who became victims of sexual violence, abduction or rape.<sup>55</sup> The official estimate of abducted women corroborates this figure, with 50,000 Muslim women held in India and 33,000 Hindu and Sikh women held in Pakistan.<sup>56</sup> But 12-14 million of those migrants survived, re-established themselves, married, bore children, built futures. Many more even than that faced futures disrupted by partition, in towns whose demographics had shifted, in universities whose survival became uncertain, in homes where neighbors felt like strangers, where they experienced fear. It seems reasonable to offer them a place in partition historiography, a place as actors, not just as bystanders, witnesses to violence. This investigation seeks to do that. And while it may seem unpleasant to move away from the visceral experiences of partition violence that, as Gyan Pandey has argued “constituted” partition,<sup>57</sup> it is time to do just that, to open partition as a site of analysis to a larger segment of South Asian society. For in it, we may find a depth of experience that helps us to understand the particular terms under which different groups and communities live in the three post-partition states of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

## NARRATORS

It is critical first to understand who these narrators are, and what draws them together. While I began with an assumption that it would be possible to use the Aligarh Muslim University as a central organizational node of analysis, from the outset I

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<sup>55</sup> This appears to be the number cited by Kamlaben Patel in her book *Mool Suta Ukhde* (Torn from the Roots). Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*, 34, 105.

<sup>56</sup> The recovery numbers were much lower, “12,552 for India and 6,272 for Pakistan.” Menon and Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries*, 70.

<sup>57</sup> Pandey, *Remembering Partition*, 4-5.

perceived that there would be several “groups” within this collectivity, whose experiences, perceptions and narratives would likely bear the imprint of their different attachments. Initially, I expected nationality and national narratives, allegiance to the state stories of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh to define these groups, but my research revealed that in addition to those obvious divisions, groups can be further defined by the political perspectives they held in their youth—the Leftists at Aligarh, for instance—or by their experiences of partition, or by their choice to remain attached in some way to the university, or to establish a life separate from it.<sup>58</sup>

They are Muslim.<sup>59</sup> For some, this defines a religious practice, for others a collectivity with which they feel a sense of commonality. It should not be understood here as a definition of their personal faith, though the sense of “belonging” to a Muslim collectivity undoubtedly affected the decisions they made with regard to attending Aligarh in the first place and their experience during and after their time there. Only two narrators spoke at any length about personal religiosity during their time in Aligarh: the Leftist Professor of History Iqtidar Alam Khan who, in any case, later disavowed this behavior; and Zafar Mohammad Khan. Many others, rather, described their efforts to evade the religious regulation in the Aligarh University. Today, however, in both India

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<sup>58</sup> See Appendix 1 for Biographical data on each of the narrators, and abstracts of the interviews.

<sup>59</sup> A.K. Mathur is an exception, the only non-Muslim I was able to interview. A.K. Mathur, "A.K. Mathur: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas September 30, 2009," (Lucknow: September 30, 2009).

and Pakistan, many narrators use religiously charged language, and some made a special effort to demonstrate their devotion or to suggest its importance to me.<sup>60</sup>

Most of the narrators come from families that were either in government service, as Ather Siddiqi, Masood ul Hasan, Waheeduddin Choudhri and Mohiuddin Khan; or were landholders, some with large estates, as Riazur Rahman Sherwani; and some with small estates, as Majid Ali Siddiqi and M.A. Rashid. Only two narrators came from educators' families: Iqbal Shafi and Irfan Habib;<sup>61</sup> but many became educators and professors: Iqtidar and Iftikhar Alam, Irfan Habib, Asloob Ahmad Ansari, Ather Siddiqi, Saeeda Kidwai, Zahida Zaidi, Fatima Fari Rahman, Shahid Rashid, Wazir Ahmad Razzaqi and Masood ul Hasan. Few come from families with military backgrounds (the Police was more common), though many of the narrators themselves, particularly those I interviewed in Pakistan, served in the military, first under the British Indian Army and later in Pakistan: Major Generals Ghulam Umar, Wajahat Husain and Brigadier General Iqbal Shafi, and Wing Commander Baaquie among others. In East Pakistan, Habibur Rahman tried to join the Pakistan Air Force in 1949 to become a pilot but he was deemed too small at only ninety pounds! He went on to a career in Law. Many of these informants were professional Engineers, and whereas, in this group, the military men

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<sup>60</sup> This was especially true of Mohammad Yunus and Colonel Shamsi in Lucknow. YM (Anonymized), "YM (Anonymized): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas August 7, 2008," (Lucknow: August 7, 2008). Mohsin Jalil Shamsi, "Colonel Mohsin Jalil Shamsi: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas August 11, 2008," (Lucknow: August 11, 2008).

<sup>61</sup> A.K. Mathur also came from an educator's family. His father was the principal of a Hindu College in Aligarh City. Mathur enrolled at Aligarh for his Intermediate in 1957, and passed out with his M.Sc. in 1965. After his marriage, his wife taught in Aligarh and so they remained in the city until 1978. However, because he is so much younger than the majority of informants, his interview figures only minorly here. Mathur, "A.K. Mathur: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas September 30, 2009."



were primarily in Pakistan and the professors primarily in India,<sup>62</sup> there were Engineers in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Among them: Z.A. Nizami, Zakir Ali Khan, (in Pakistan); Engr. Waheedudin Chowdhury, Mohiuddin Khan, Salahuddin Choudhury (Bangladesh); Majid Ali Siddiqi, Syed Saghir Ahmad Rizvi, and Ahmad Saeed (India). The women I interviewed were primarily educators: Saeeda Kidwai, Zakiya Siddiqi, Fatima Fari Rahman.

They were students in the Aligarh Muslim University during the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>63</sup> Almost all of the narrators share the experience of the residential life in Aligarh University, a unique institution in its time in India, and those who were non-residents (day scholars like Wajahat Husain, Iqbal Shafi and Irfan Habib) still had an attachment to a residence hall and understood the significance and dynamics of the residential experience. Though the female narrators were not full-time students of the university, they (like Zahida Zaidi and Saeeda Kidwai) attended under various schemes of separation and integration over this time period, with many living in the hostel of the Aligarh Women's College,<sup>64</sup> and attending post-graduate classes in the university. During their stay at the university, almost all of these narrators, male or female, had an awareness of the political changes afoot in the country, and generally concur that the Muslim League

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<sup>62</sup> The Aligarians I interviewed at the Sir Syed University of Engineering and Technology in Karachi, Pakistan ( including Z.A. Nizami, Abdul Rashid Khan, Zakir Ali Khan and others) are indeed educationists now, but began their careers in other professions.

<sup>63</sup> Bangladeshi Professor of English Akhtaruzzaman, Indian Engineer A.K. Mathur, and Indian Communist S.M. Mehdi are exceptions.

<sup>64</sup> For more on the Women's College see Gail Minault, *Secluded Scholars: Women's Education and Muslim Social Reform in Colonial India* (Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

agenda was broadly persuasive at Aligarh, though many of them deny sympathy for its utopian ideals.

The moment of decision marks a critical shift in the constitution of this group, which has, until this point in the story, seemed broadly unified. Of the seventy-two individuals I personally interviewed, thirty-two moved to Pakistan between 1947 and 1965 (two originally hail from Lahore), with the majority shifting in 1947 or '48. Many claim to have acted independently, as Major General (Ret'd) Wajahat Husain or Major General (Ret'd) Ghulam Umar. Others, particularly women, migrated later, when they married Pakistani men (who often had roots and family connections in UP),<sup>65</sup> or in the case of men, because their other family members had settled in Pakistan and urged them to come.<sup>66</sup>

Another twenty-eight narrators chose not to leave India, sometimes because they never supported the idea of Pakistan as in the case of Professor Irfan Habib and Professor Riazur Rahman Sherwani, but often because the circumstances in their families (attachment to land or community, or a father's attachment to Congress nationalism), or their own youth prevented them from making an independent decision, as in the cases of Professors Ather Siddiqi and Masoodul Hasan. Among these twenty-eight, there is an important divide that colors their perspective on many of the issues we discussed, that is, whether they remained in Aligarh and attached to the university, or whether they found

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<sup>65</sup> Umar, "Khadija Minhaj Umar: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas January 4, 2008." Fari Rahman, "Fatima Fari Rahman: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas January 4, 2008."

<sup>66</sup> Wazir Ahmad Razzaqi, "Professor Wazir Ahmad Razzaqi: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas, May 21, 2010," (Karachi: May 21, 2010).

employment beyond Aligarh's protective boundaries. Among these twenty-eight, all with an association to Aligarh University, seventeen have remained close to the institution. There are those who remained in Aligarh, who repeatedly talk about being lucky to be there, about how once they got that job they were set, didn't have to worry (Ather Siddiqi, Masoodul Hasan). Then there are those outside of Aligarh (Professor Mohammad Amin, Ahmad Rashid, Majid Ali Siddiqi,<sup>67</sup> Saghir Ahmad Rizvi) who seem willing to admit more adversity for Muslims. The remaining eleven live in Lucknow and New Delhi where many of them were engineers as Zafar Mohammad Khan, Ahmad Saeed, and Saghir Ahmad Rizvi, scientists, or educationists, as Professor Mohammad Amin, and Sayyid Hamid. One narrator, Ram Advani, a non-Muslim, shifted from Lahore to Lucknow during 1947.

Finally, there is a small group who settled in East Pakistan—the majority of them ethnic Bengalis or Sylhetis—and these narrators later supported Bangladeshi independence. Among these nine Bangladeshi narrators, only M.A. Rashid, originally hails from Lucknow, in UP, and is a native Urdu speaker. Their ethnicity marks a difference not only in their post-'47 experience, but it also means that their identity in Aligarh was objectively different from those students (and narrators for this study) who largely hail from the Urdu-speaking areas of UP. The Bengali former students offer a unique perspective on the culture of tolerance and brotherhood at the university—their habits of food and dress were different—and while they generally remember their

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<sup>67</sup> Majid Ali Siddiqi lays the blame for status disparity between Muslims and Others on: the caste system, corruption, communalism, all of which he said, have intensified since 1947.

experience positively, they were aware of “difference” in a way that Urdu-speaking, roti eating UP-wallahs were not.

Throughout this analysis one or two narrators may represent these different groups, and their definition is some ways fluid. For example, some East Pakistanis shared Leftist sympathies with their slightly younger North Indian fellows, but shifted to Pakistan nonetheless. It is key to recognize that Aligarh’s environment has long been rife with factional allegiances, and whereas I may have expected the pressures of family and community to affect the decisions of these young men during the independence movement and the demand for Pakistan, their actions were also tied up with attachments to local groups and leadership.

The data, experiences and stories I have collected from this large body of interviews comprises a significant data set, and certainly I have been unable to use all of it. My analysis has been guided by the issues that appeared to be of importance to my narrators, the experiences they spoke about and the significance of Aligarh and partition in their own lives. I have drawn on the literature of collective and generational memory to understand how a narrator’s experience at Aligarh and during partition might impact his or her later experience and how the relationship between past and present can shift the reading of an event or experience. The basic premise is that partition’s impact did not end when the major migrations did, or even when the violence did. Partition’s impact on the lives of Muslims in all three post-partition states is ongoing, and to understand the experience of Muslim South Asians, we should examine these long processes of partitioning.

## ON LANGUAGE

As in all of the interviews I conducted, those cited here contain a mix of Urdu and English. In the interest of preserving the tone of the interviews, I have italicized portions spoken in Urdu that I have translated. The translation is complicated, however, by the frequent “code-switching” that narrators employ, often switching languages several times within even a single sentence. Since its inception, English has been the primary medium of instruction at Aligarh. Many of the informants have also worked and published in English-dominant environments. However, most of their interpersonal interactions have always taken place in Urdu. As Majid Ali Siddiqi reminded me, English medium schools were far less common during the British period, therefore most students communicated in “Urdu. In Aligarh, it was Urdu. Because, there was reason about it. You know, the English schools have cropped up later on, after independence.”<sup>68</sup> Thus, particularly when narrators speak of their early life, many remember it in an Urdu idiom and discuss it in an Urdu medium. In Pakistan and Bangladesh narrators seemed comparatively comfortable speaking in English. In India, however, many of the interviews I conducted were primarily in Urdu and I have translated them into English. This ease with multiple languages would have been a sign of a well-rounded education in Aligarh, and I made no effort to circumscribe the narrators’ preferred mode of communication, only asking for

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<sup>68</sup> He also mentioned that Hindi became compulsory after independence and “I wanted to have English because without English you cannot go higher, you cannot study Engineering or Medical; you can’t do anything without English. So two languages had become compulsory. Third choice was either Urdu or Arts. So, Urdu, I have love for Urdu so I took Urdu. I took three languages and two mathematics and other science.” Majid Ali Siddiqi, “Majid Ali Siddiqi: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas October 2, 2009,” (Lucknow: October 2, 2009).

clarification if my own Urdu failed me. The boundaries between languages and idioms were frequently unclear and it is difficult to discern a pattern.

Funny things happened, however, and sometimes things did not go as planned. For instance, the following exchange established the parameters as I turned on the recorder during my interview with Retired Pakistani General Iqbal Shafi:

Brigadier Iqbal Shafi: I'll be talking mostly in Urdu, is that alright?

AA: That's alright. Either way is perfectly fine. If I don't understand, I'll ask you to clarify.

BIS: No, no I'll make it very simple, but we will talk in "mixed language" okay?

Throughout our one hour interview he used Urdu only for two purposes: to quote another speaker (sometimes quite emotionally as he remembered their words) and to quote the poetry of Iqbal. The frequent invocation of poetry to make a particular point is a common conversational device, and Shafi, and others, deploy it frequently. Urdu was thus distinctly marked during our interview to distinguish his words, opinions, and experiences from those of others. Several other narrators also used Urdu this way, in interviews otherwise conducted in English.

## **ORAL HISTORY**

I conducted these interviews in a time of tremendous social change in the subcontinent. In the years following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, Pakistan was increasingly drawn into a theater of war on its western border. The tensions created by this situation exerted far less pressure on the narratives in 2005 and 2006 than they did in my later rounds of interviews, beginning in January 2008 after the assassination of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. By the time I arrived to

conduct interviews in 2010, the turmoil in the country after the assumption of power by the Pakistan People's Party led by Asif Ali Zardari had created such a terrific anxiety that it became difficult to keep interviews focused on the subjects of my research. The interviews are a work in progress, a site "in which narrators revise the image of their own past as they go along."<sup>69</sup> This is incredibly important, because their anxieties about Pakistan emerge in their recounting of its creation. The history they were remembering is colored by the present they were experiencing as they spoke. Eventually, I did have to stop interviewing in Pakistan because the present was *too present* in the interviews for my taste. By May-June 2010, the security situation in the country had deteriorated to a point that it had taken over every conversation, every interaction. As an American at a time of growing anti-American sentiment in the country, I didn't fear for my safety, but for the integrity of my research.

In India, similarly, I arrived at a time of palpable tension between India and Pakistan. In November 2008, terrorists held Bombay hostage for three days as they attacked a number of sites associated with foreigners (the Taj Palace Hotel) and Jews (Nariman House). These events and others altered the relationship between non-Muslim Indians and their fellow Muslim citizens in that it created an impression that terrorist violence came from outside, rather than inside India. This removed some pressure from India's Muslims, who for decades, and particularly in the 1990s, were frequently suspected of perpetrating anti-state violence. However, it deepened tensions between India and Pakistan and this affected many of my interviews with Indian Muslims.

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<sup>69</sup> Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli*, 61.

Whereas in Pakistan I had been quite open about my own family's links to Aligarh (my father's mother's family is from Aligarh and their home still stands on the "City Side"), and the fact that my grandfather and several uncles attended Aligarh Muslim University, in India I became cautious about revealing this information. In fact, I sometimes didn't mention it until quite late in the interaction, when a narrator would become curious about me and my motives in collecting his story. Then I would tell him, "My father was born here, but now my family is outside." "Outside" is a euphemism for "abroad" and in this case allowed me to mask the fact that my family is in Pakistan. What most often followed was a brief investigation into what family I came from, but my father was too young to be known, only five when his family migrated. Occasionally a narrator might remember my great-uncle, now Major General Wajahat Husain (who was friends, for instance with Nawab Sahib Ibn-e-Saeed Chhatari), but more often than not, this conversation ended with shrugged shoulders and the reminder that "It was a big university." In the context of the personal interaction, it was never a problem that my family was in Pakistan, but I feared that if I revealed it too early it might affect people's willingness to share their true feelings about the state's creation, and their assessment of the people who moved there. In fact, I did sometimes have people beg my forgiveness, but then express frankly that they mistrusted Pakistanis, or found them crass, or dishonest.

I was glad to hear these assessments because I had expected them and it gave me a sense that despite my presence, people trusted their feelings, having lived with them for so long, I was not there to change their minds, only to understand its contents.



In Bangladesh I was also apprehensive about sharing my history in Pakistan, but as the Aligarians there are so few, I wanted to share with them the fact that I had recently lived in Aligarh and was particularly curious about their experience there. The Bangladesh chapter of the Aligarh Old Boys' Association was particularly helpful in locating narrators for me, and they invited me to speak at their annual meeting on Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan. This event gave me the opportunity to meet several senior Aligarians who I convinced to sit down with me. I was surprised to find, however, much less anxiety about Pakistan than I expected. This older generation, while they were active in the movement for Bangladeshi independence, had also been active in demanding an independent Pakistan. They believed in its ideals, but were disappointed in its realities. Many of them expressed a sense of loss at having gained independence from Pakistan, for although they hated the oppressive tactics of the government and army (which they often specifically referred to as Punjabi), they still believed in the value of state federation. Some hastened to share stories with me of their experiences and travels in Pakistan prior to 1971.

Many narrators received me as they would a granddaughter come home to do a report on her history. They invited me for tea and we sat together in the sitting room as I asked them to share their stories with me. In the earliest interviews I conducted, in 2005 and 2006 with narrators in Pakistan, I found them quite keen to help me to understand the whole trajectory of Pakistan history and to make sure I had the "correct" story.<sup>70</sup> In these

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<sup>70</sup> I have also written about this in my M.A. Thesis submitted to the University of Texas in 2006. Abbas, "Thinking through Partition: Finishing the Narrative (Unpublished Master's Thesis)."

interviews, I found myself interrogating narrators on questions of how they related to their own history, and to the state of Pakistan. In India, when I was living in Aligarh, my interviews were more driven by an attempt to understand the atmosphere of the university during the 1940s and 50s, and I asked many of them questions about their participation in university and political activities. In Bangladesh, I was curious about how the Bengali/Sylheti students were received in Aligarh, how they coped, and how things changed for them after 1947. As such, each body of interviews has a distinctly different texture. Only in Pakistan did I conduct interviews over a long period of time, from 2005-2010. Across this time period, as I noted above, the tensions and anxieties changed markedly and this is reflected in the interviews, as it inevitably must be.

Oral History interviews are unstable; they are highly dependent on context. A document, once written, may have been written in response to a particular context and may be interpreted differently over time, but its content remains the same. An interview, even the same questions, would be different if conducted under different circumstances. Oral history interviews are inherently dynamic, determined by the positioning of the interviewee, the interviewer and the context that surrounds both. As a young female, foreign, non-Muslim researcher (along with any number of other identity markers that people may have understood), my experience must be different from that of a man, or a Muslim or a South Asian. Any combination of these variables, if reconfigured, would create a different outcome. As it was, I was often welcomed as if a long-lost member of the family, reminded of my duties to community, family and faith (sometimes explicitly

as narrators read me passages from the Qu'ran<sup>71</sup>), and this served to remind me of my commitment to the story I was there to tell.

As a historian, I am a party to the data I have collected. The narrators have told their stories, but it remains up to me to apply an interpretive lens, to draw out the meaning inside the words they uttered. My interpretation may only be one of many, and perhaps someday these interviews will be the subject of other research, other dissertations. And when they are read under different historical circumstances, the anxieties and meanings that seemed so important to me and to the narrators as we created them, will inevitably appear different, and indeed they will be different.

#### **NOTE ON NAMES**

Throughout this work I refer repeatedly to many of the 72 individuals I interviewed between 2005 and 2010 in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Among them are retired army officers, professors, professionals, mothers, and teachers. The first time they appear, both in text and in citation it is with their full name and, in the case of retired army officers or professors, their rank. I have also included 1-2 sentence biographies in the footnotes on this first appearance. Ordinarily, I would address them, as is customary in the Indian subcontinent, by their least common name. Therefore, Major General Wajahat Husain (Ret'd) is General Wajahat. I addressed Professor Irfan Habib, as most people do, as Irfan Sahib; Professor Habib would seem to refer to his father, Professor Mohammad Habib. However, the question of a professional rank seems to interfere with the fact that at the time of the stories they are recounting, they were all students, not

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<sup>71</sup> Yunus, "Mohammad Yunus: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas August 7, 2008."

differentiated by rank. The risk of including their rank is to unwittingly authorize certain narratives over others, and this is certainly not my intent. Thus, in the body of the text, I have tried to be consistent in naming the narrators without their rank. This should not be construed as a lack of respect for their status, however, as I hope is clear from the regard I have for their willingness to share their deeply personal experiences with me.

## Chapter 1

### **Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and the Aligarh Muslim University**

The Aligarh University, and its founder, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan have a way of occupying the past and present simultaneously. Sir Sayyid's reputation as a reformer and a thinker has persisted, nearly unassailable in the minds of Aligarh Muslims; he represents a true path towards Muslim empowerment, and whatever difficulties the Muslim community may have faced are attributed to a failure to uphold the values of Sir Sayyid. He is therefore significant to this study for the foundational thought he gave to the Aligarh community, but also because he continues to exist as a powerful symbol of Aligarh's ideal Muslim: faithful, educated, generous, and able to move between the worlds of the West and Muslim India. This chapter examines the implication of that symbolic power while examining the tension between the foundational values of the institution at Aligarh and the world outside.

The symbolic pressure that Sir Sayyid continues to exert makes him part of contemporary life in Aligarh. Though dead for over one hundred years, he gazes down on the institution from portraits in nearly every room, and he often feels as present as the current administrators. For example, former student and retired Professor of English Asloob Ahmad Ansari told me, "I think he was the greatest benefactor of the Muslims in the last several years, or centuries I should say."<sup>1</sup> Ansari instinctively drew Sir Sayyid

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<sup>1</sup> Asloob Ahmad Ansari, "Asloob Ahmad Ansari: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas July 5, 2008," (Aligarh: July 5, 2008), Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom*, 2nd ed. (New Delhi: Orient

into the present. The period of his leadership and the values he represented are not distant from Aligarh in time, but occurred “in the last several years.” His influence continues even now as the actions of university students, teachers and administrators are constantly measured against the ideals of Sir Sayyid’s “mission.” This contemporaneity is significant, it fortifies the link between Aligarh now and Aligarh then, and creates a thread by which the traditions of the past might be expected to be relevant today. Aligarh prides itself on the maintenance of its traditions, though these “traditions” are best upheld in speech rather than practice. In some cases, this emphasis on tradition in perpetuity has preserved outdated and dangerous prejudices over which Sir Sayyid persists as the overseer.

His presence is imposing, as both an image and a guide. His values are accepted as perfect, nearly primordial among Aligarians the world over. Any sense that his politics may have had an influence in the Aligarh environment is largely absent. This history begins with his educational mission and his mission to reform Muslims, to rescue them from the decline initiated by the 1857 Mutiny. Many Aligarians profess to carry his torch by contributing to educational development. As Zakir Ali Khan, General Secretary of the Pakistan Aligarh Old Boys’ Association (since 1960) explained to me, the goals of the association are “exactly what Sir Sayyid has taught us: to establish educational institutions, to impart education, to make education available to those who cannot afford

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Longman, 1988). Asloob Ahmad Ansari joined AMU in 1937 and completed his B.A. in 1943. In 1946 he completed his M.A. in English. He went to Oxford where he received an Honors degree in English Language and Literature. He later became a Professor of English in Aligarh University and retired in 1987. He lives in Aligarh.

to pay.”<sup>2</sup> The Aligarh Old Boys’ Association in Pakistan has started a University of Engineering and Technology in his name, and the Association in Dhaka, Bangladesh has purchased land for a similar project.<sup>3</sup> Sir Sayyid himself is a watchdog over the lives of students in the University and the administration, and their shortcomings are often cast as a failure to uphold his ideals.<sup>4</sup>

To begin to understand the symbolic power of Aligarh University and its traditions, this chapter examines the origin story of the Aligarh University—initially the Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental College (MAO College)—and the intentions of its founder, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan. An examination not only of his own life, but his religious experience, the environment of his youth, the particular issues brought on by the 1857 Mutiny and an understanding of how these variables came together in the person of Sir Sayyid and the institution at Aligarh can help us to understand why his educational ideas and reforms continue to be significant.

As this investigation will show, however, Sir Sayyid’s values were imbedded in the current politics of his time. His educational agenda was driven by a politics of

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<sup>2</sup> Zakir Ali Khan, "Zakir Ali Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas August 10, 2006," (Karachi: August 10, 2006). Zakir Ali Khan graduated from Aligarh in 1948 with a degree in Civil Engineering. He migrated to Pakistan in 1949 where he served as first assistant and later Chief Engineer in the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation. He has been the General Secretary of the Pakistan Aligarh Old Boys’ Association since 1960.

<sup>3</sup> Significantly, although each of these associations is known as “The Aligarh Old Boys’ Association” there is little, if any, connection between them. The AOBA in Dhaka was interested and surprised to learn that the Pakistani Association had built an educational institution, as they were hoping to do, and asked me to facilitate a connection for them. There is a somewhat closer connection between the AOBA Pakistan and Aligarh University and in 2008 Zakir Ali Khan was awarded the first Sir Syed Ahmad Khan International Award for lifetime achievement in support of the ideals of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan.

<sup>4</sup> In 2005, as Zakir Ali Khan presented me a copy of his book *Riwayat-e-Aligarh* (The Traditions of Aligarh) he told me that the book was given to every incoming student at the Sir Syed University of Engineering and Technology in Karachi so that “He may become Aligarian.” Khan, "Zakir Ali Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas August 10, 2006."

decline, a theory of Muslim “relative deprivation” that inspired a movement for reform. This perception of deprivation spurred a shoring up of elite Muslim values in the period after the 1857 Mutiny and helped Sir Sayyid to generate support for his controversial ideas. At the same time, this consolidation fed a homogenizing narrative that privileged the Muslim elite of North India and risked excluding others who did not fit into this narrow identity. There are aspects of Sir Sayyid’s perspective that scholars have been willing to ascribe to “his time and place,” for instance his ideas on educating women.<sup>5</sup> Less examined, however, is the influence of the narrative of unity on the attitude of exceptionalism that developed within the university. Sir Sayyid’s reformist ideals have been viewed as progressive, and indeed he resisted the prevailing anxieties of his time, particularly with regard to Muslim reluctance to pursue Western education. Still, they were in part determined by his political concerns, his unwavering loyalty to British power and fear that any hint of disloyalty would lead to the permanent marginalization of Muslims. These two narratives are interwoven in the institutional environment where it has become difficult to separate the value of his educational mission and the dangers of his political prejudices.

What becomes visible here is the power of a narrative of decline a “discourse of Muslim backwardness,” how steadfastly Aligarh’s partisans hold to it, and the consequences of holding fast to the legacy of the founder. The university, its faculty and staff are fiercely protective of its narrative, and while internal relations at the university have long been faction-ridden, there has been a constant construction of a public narrative

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<sup>5</sup> For an in-depth examination of women’s education in India see Minault, *Secluded Scholars*.



of unity and solidarity that has been broadly persuasive, suggesting a unity of purpose that does not always exist.<sup>6</sup>

The environment that the early leaders in Aligarh sought to cultivate prioritized the brotherhood of students residing within its walls.<sup>7</sup> Sir Sayyid articulated an early version of his vision in 1871 when he argued that “the children of the noble, and well-to-do Muhammadans should be kept at a distance from their homes... they should be brought up and educated in a particular manner, and under special care... Boarding houses should be opened in healthy localities... with a garden and play ground attached; that there should be a mosque with a Muazzin... belonging to each house;” all of the boys should be compelled to learn and say their prayers and “all of them should be made to wear one and the same dress.”<sup>8</sup> He cautioned that unless boys were “brought up in the manner above referred to, they will always remain ignorant, worthless, and exposed to all sorts of evils.”<sup>9</sup> Within this environment, even non-Muslim students blended in. They were not compelled to observe the Muslim religious traditions, but permitted to maintain their own and their presence is a point of pride in the Aligarh narrative.

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<sup>6</sup> See the recently revised version of Minault and Lelyveld’s famous article “The Campaign for a Muslim University 1989-1920” in Gail Minault, *Gender, Language, and Learning: Essays in Indo-Muslim Cultural History* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2009), 220- 73. See also Chapter 3 of this dissertation for coverage of the 1930s and 40s.

<sup>7</sup> The most thorough examination of the early years of the Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental College is David Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation: Muslim Solidarity in British India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978). It is complemented by — — —, “Three Aligarh Students: Aftab Ahmad Khan, Ziauddin Ahmad, and Muhammad Ali,” *Modern Asian Studies* 9, no. 2 (1975).

<sup>8</sup> Syed Ahmed Khan, “Translation of the Report of the Members of the Select Committee for the Better Diffusion and Advancement of Learning among Muhammadans of India,” in *Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan's Educational Philosophy: A Documentary Record*, ed. Hafeez Malik (Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, 1872), 170.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

The tradition of inclusivity is central to Aligarh's sense of self, and in remembering the 1940s narrators elevated this tradition as the primary explanation for the absence of violence on the campus during periods of communal strife elsewhere in the country, including in Aligarh city, separated from the university only by the Railroad tracks and a bridge known as the *kat pulla* (wooden bridge).<sup>10</sup> This narrative also formed the foundation for a culture of exceptionalism and exclusivity that once appeared as a virtue of the residential system, but continued to trouble the institution throughout the 1930s and 40s as the boundaries between the university and the outside became increasingly difficult to monitor.

This chapter and the next examine the conditions of the university's founding, the personality and symbolic valence of its ever-present founder, and the environment of the university that instilled in young Muslim men a sense of solidarity backed by a distinctly Muslim masculine identity. This environment prepared them for the public life they were expected to lead, and by the late 1930s, the Muslim League seemed to offer the best opportunity for the fulfillment of that desire. The priority of Muslim unity that defined the Aligarh university was repeated in the assertion of Muslim "nationhood" that was central to the League's demand for independent statehood, thus linking the worlds of education and politics inextricably during this period.

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<sup>10</sup> Paul Brass notes that none of the early pre-independence riots in Aligarh City, in 1925, 1927, and 1937 involved Aligarh students. But in 1946-47 the Congress government paid special attention to Aligarh, concerned that the students would "invade" the city and they posted additional police there to prevent it. In March 1946 students were involved in a conflagration with a merchant that resulted in the burning of a market nearby to the university and sparked communal riot that left 4 dead and 16 injured. Brass, *Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence*, 71- 73.

## SIR SAYYID AHMAD KHAN

Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, the founder of the Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental College that became the Aligarh Muslim University in 1920, emerged as a prominent reformer in the late nineteenth-century. He was a mid-level colonial officer who gained recognition for his loyalty during and after the uprising against British power in 1857. The events of 1857 highlighted for Sayyid Ahmad the vulnerability of the Muslim position— as the deposed rulers of India— and he set about trying to rehabilitate Muslims who, as a whole, he felt were in a state of decline. In his view, the mighty ruling class that had yielded the formidable Mughal kings had since descended to a low ebb in its civilizational history because of complacency and the declining attention to the principles of respectable, or *ashraf* culture. This perception of decay, of “relative deprivation” is key to the politics of rejuvenation that were engendered at the Aligarh Muslim University.<sup>11</sup>

Sayyid Ahmad Khan was in many ways the perfect specimen for this kind of work. He enjoyed the high status of the Delhi *ashraf*—those families who claimed heritage outside the subcontinent and who were considered “respectable”—and his family had a long association with both the Mughal court and the British bureaucracy. Sayyid Ahmad was raised in the home of his maternal grandfather Khwaja Fariduddin Ahmad, who had been *vazir* (Prime Minister) in the court of the Mughal Emperor Akbar Shah II and also served as a British-appointed envoy to Persia and as its agent in Burma.<sup>12</sup> In

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<sup>11</sup> Minault, *Secluded Scholars*, 50.

<sup>12</sup> Rafi Ahmad Alavi, *Translation of Hayat-I-Jawed: A Biographical Account of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan by Altaf Husain Hali* (Aligarh: Aligarh Muslim University Press, 2008), 6.

addition, Khwaja Fariduddin was a pious Muslim, devoted to Shah Ghulam Ali, a *pir* (saint) of the Naqshbandi Sufi order.

In addition to this distinguished lineage, Sayyid Ahmad had been trained at home in the traditional subjects; he knew Persian, Urdu and Arabic. Himself a prominent follower of the reformer Shah Wali Ullah, Sayyid Ahmad later credited both his mother and his maternal grandfather with shaping his sensibilities. His upbringing was cosmopolitan, he participated in a variety of religious festivals and commemorations including that of Holi, the Hindu festival of color.<sup>13</sup> However, it was also determined by adherence to the norms of *ashraf* culture, and the traditions of the “late Mughal service gentry who had come to terms with the changing political and economic realities of British-ruled India.”<sup>14</sup> It would seem that his unconventional upbringing—both culturally and religiously—prepared him for his critical role in guiding his contemporaries through a process of adaptation to their altered circumstances after 1857.

The Mutiny of 1857 plays a pivotal role in most histories of the Aligarh Muslim University. In the collective memory, this history tells of the devastation of Muslims and their communities—especially Delhi and Lucknow—of the erosion of Muslim social status, the usurpation of land and the alienation of landholders.<sup>15</sup> For Indians, and for Muslims in particular, the uprising of 1857 has taken on the valence of a “national trauma,” an event that significantly disrupted the “institutional underpinnings of the

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>14</sup> Minault, *Secluded Scholars*, 17.

<sup>15</sup> Khalid Bin Sayeed, *Pakistan: The Formative Phase, 1857-1948*, 2nd ed. (London; New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 13.

social order.”<sup>16</sup> Disruptions to everyday life, such as 1857, become in the collective memory, moments of coherence for that moral community and provide “a close link between self-identity and national identity.”<sup>17</sup> As this section will show, 1857 provided the impetus for the formation of a concept of national identity closely identified with the intellectual leadership of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, embodied in the institution at Aligarh. Sir Sayyid is the link between the Aligarh University and the rebellion of 1857, and his presence in this narrative affects the way that 1857 is read in the Aligarh environment.

The meaning Aligarh Muslims have attributed to 1857 has less to do with the content or events of the revolution than it does with the perception of decline and rejuvenation that followed it. In other words, the revolt that might be identified as the beginning of the Freedom Movement by those who insist on calling it “The First War of Independence” is less significant in itself in this narrative than the outcome that Muslims were finally alienated from power with the exile of Bahadur Shah Zafar, the Mughal Emperor who the mutineers belatedly selected as their figurehead. The effect of the “national trauma” was not to disrupt an existing collective identity, but rather to create the conditions in which one might be formed, a moment around which a group of people could identify a set of grievances which might draw them together into a common narrative. 1857 is thus drawn into this history of collective identity and provides the founding conditions for a narrative of Muslim decline and regeneration led by Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan.

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<sup>16</sup> Arthur G. Neal, *National Trauma and Collective Memory: Major Events in the American Century* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), xi.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

The Mutiny of 1857 was an uprising of Hindu and Muslim soldiers who feared that the British were trying to “take away their caste and convert them forcibly to Christianity.”<sup>18</sup> Discontent over wages and the spread of British power had been spreading in the Company armies for decades,<sup>19</sup> but the trigger for the revolt was a rumor that cartridges for the new Enfield rifle were greased with a combination of beef and pork fat that, if ingested, would strip one of caste. Since the soldier had to pull the cartridge from its case using his teeth, he would certainly ingest the grease and it would pollute, and thus destroy, his caste.<sup>20</sup> Such a stripping of caste would render a man vulnerable to forced conversion to Christianity as he would be cut off permanently from his own community. This controversy erupted at a time of increasing suspicion of the British in the Bengal Army and led to the uprising that soon spread from Meerut across North India.<sup>21</sup> In the end, however, the mutineers—who had installed the ailing Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar as their leader<sup>22</sup>—were subdued and the British regained

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<sup>18</sup> Thomas R. Metcalf, *The Aftermath of Revolt: India, 1857-1870* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1964), 47.

<sup>19</sup> Heather Streets, *Martial Races: The Military, Race, and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 27.

<sup>20</sup> It is true that Muslims in India do not adhere to a rigid “caste” system as it is perceived in the Hindu tradition, though Muslim social hierarchy is marked by bloodlines that correspond to status. Nonetheless, the anxiety here is about pollution of the body, which would render it impure, and thus “outcast.” This question of purity was as significant to Muslims with regard to pig fat as it was to Hindus with regard to beef fat. One narrator sought to fully absolve Muslims of their role in the Mutiny by suggesting that the Hindus duped them into believing that the Enfield bullets were packed in pig fat, when it was only beef fat. Javid Iqbal, "Justice Javid Iqbal: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 13, 2006," (Lahore: June 13, 2006).

<sup>21</sup> Metcalf, *The Aftermath of Revolt*, 46-91.

<sup>22</sup> Pakistani nationalist historian, I.H. Qureishi, cites this action as “proof of the popularity of the Mughal dynasty” which seems an inversion of priorities, as though the Mutiny was motivated by a determination to save the Mughal Empire from the British rather than by much more localized grievances. Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi, "The Causes of the War of Independence Excerpted from a History of the Freedom Movement Vol. 2 (1831- 1905) Pt. 1," in *1857 in the Muslim Historiography*, ed. M. Ikram Chaghatai (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2007. Originally Published 1960), 286.

control. The Muslims lost their “First War of Independence.” As a starting point for the history of Muslim solidarity, then, it is a foreboding one. However, it is not the actual uprising of 1857 that marks the beginning of the period of Muslim regeneration. In the Aligarh version—in contrast to the Indian nationalist one—the discontent of the *sepoys* (soldiers) is not remembered as a proto-nationalist impulse that led to the movement for independence from the British. In this narrative, 1857 exposed the weakness of Muslims, their educational backwardness, and their lack of access to positions of power.

In the wake of the rebellion, Sayyid Ahmad did not see any potentially sustainable impulse that might indicate a larger revolutionary motive, or the potential for a systemic change that would mark the end of British rule in India. He was steadfastly loyal to British rule, and felt, as he suggested in his 1859 *Asbab-e-Bhagavat-e-Hind (The Causes of the Indian Revolt)*, that the rebellion reflected the confluence of “many grievances [that] had been rankling in the hearts of the people.”<sup>23</sup> In his estimation the rebellion was haphazard, rag-tag, not the outcome of a sophisticated conspiracy, and, lest we forget, the Indians lost: Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

Despite this negative narrative, the period after 1857 was actually one of the consolidation of the ideals of the middle classes in Northern India led by the reform movements of Sir Sayyid and others. As Anil Seal has revealed, the Muslims in the North-west Provinces and Awadh (later the United Provinces, today Uttar Pradesh) did not suffer the extreme alienation of the Muslims in Bengal. The Muslim population in

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<sup>23</sup> Syed Ahmed Khan Bahadur C.S.I., "The Causes of the Indian Revolt Written by Sayyid Ahmad Khan Bahadur, C.S.I. In Urdu, in the Year 1858 and Translated into English by His Two European Friends, Benares, Medical Hall Press. 1873,"

[http://www.columbia.edu/itc/meaac/pritchett/00litlinks/txt\\_sir\\_sayyid\\_asbab1873\\_basic.html](http://www.columbia.edu/itc/meaac/pritchett/00litlinks/txt_sir_sayyid_asbab1873_basic.html).

these Northern regions was urban, many were landholders or professionals; as late as the 1880s, “Muslims continued to hold more than 45 per cent of all of the uncovenanted and judicial posts in the provinces.”<sup>24</sup> Still, to the Muslim *ashraf* it is remembered as a period of relative deprivation during which their community fell under the suspicion of a shadow of disloyalty. Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan deployed a tendentious narrative based on the experience of Bengali Muslims to mobilize sympathy for his community of well-to-do Muslims in Northern India with the intention of elevating their status for better representation in the British establishment, especially with regard to Hindu competitors.

The issue of Muslim “backwardness” had emerged as a particular problem in Bengal, prompting W.W. Hunter to write his famous post-Mutiny treatise, *The Indian Mussulmans: Are they Bound in Conscience to Rebel Against the Queen?* in which he questioned the very possibility of Muslim loyalty to the British.<sup>25</sup> Sir Sayyid was appalled. He had, in 1859 (more than ten years before Hunter’s critique) published *Asbab-e-Bhagavat-e-Hind* in which he clearly indicated that he neither perceived the 1857 uprising to be the outcome of a conspiracy to overthrow the British ruling power, nor could he find any way to justify it in the context of the compulsions of Islamic faith. Still, with Hunter’s query, Sayyid Ahmad again found himself having to respond to the accusation that Muslims were somehow, inherently, ungovernable and potentially disloyal. In his rejoinder to Hunter, a review published in the *Pioneer*, Sir Sayyid

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<sup>24</sup> Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 304-05.

<sup>25</sup> W.W. Hunter, *The Indian Musalmans: Are They Bound in Conscience to Rebel against the Queen?* (London: Trubner and Co., 1871).



cautioned that “writers should be careful of their facts when treating of any important subject, and having got their facts, ought to avoid all exaggeration or misrepresentation” lest the ideas of one Englishman be interpreted as those of the “whole English community.”<sup>26</sup> The alarmist nature of Hunter’s book, and his broad questioning of Muslim loyalty, clearly hit a sore spot with Sir Sayyid, a self-described “cosmopolitan Mohamman”<sup>27</sup> who had gone to great lengths to expound upon the devotion of many Muslims to British service. In fact, Sayyid Ahmad Khan published a work documenting the role of loyal Muslims during the 1857 disturbances. *An Account of the Loyal Mohomedans of India* concludes with his wish that his work had “satisfactorily demonstrated... that there was really no foundation whatever for the calumnies which would lay upon Mahomedans the blame of originating the Rebellion in 1857, as an act sanctioned or countenanced by their religion!”<sup>28</sup> Through these written excursions into the British public sphere, and Sir Sayyid’s unabashed support for the British ruling establishment, he earned their favor, their ear, and became a vocal advocate for the needs and rights of Muslims both educationally and culturally.

Though Hunter’s book was nominally an analysis of Bengali Muslims, as Sir Sayyid rightly pointed out in his response, the book “abounds in passages which lead the reader to believe that it is not merely the Bengal Mohammedans that the author treats of,

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<sup>26</sup> Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, "Review on Hunter's *Indian Mussalmans*," in Shan Mohammad, ed., *Writings and Speeches of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan* (Bombay: Nachiketa Publications Limited, 1972), 66.

<sup>27</sup> Syed Ahmad Khan, "Review on Hunter's *Indian Mussalmans*," in *Writings and Speeches of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan*, ed. Shan Mohammad (Bombay: Nachiketa Publications Limited, 1972), 67.

<sup>28</sup> Sayyid Ahmad Khan, "An Account of the Loyal Mohomedans of India," in *Political Profile of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan*, ed. Hafeez Malik (Islamabad: 1982), 268.

but the Mohammadans throughout India.”<sup>29</sup> Hunter’s report became the basis for a “perception of decline” that persisted in Muslim reformist thinking through the late nineteenth-century and beyond. However, historians have shown “that the Muslim student population in modern high schools was generally proportionate to the Muslim numerical strength” in most of the provinces of India, except Bengal.<sup>30</sup> Even though Sir Sayyid, too, resisted the implication that Muslims throughout India were “educationally backward” he nonetheless employed a rhetoric of decline to generate support for his educational movement often using the examples of alienation in Bengal as tendentiously as had Hunter. Sir Sayyid coupled this narrative with a story of Muslim alienation from power in the wake of the Mutiny that he had developed in his *Asbab-e-Bhagavat-e-Hind*. The revolt had been caused, he suggested, by the British “treating Indians with contempt” and the fact that “this ill-treatment [was] more repugnant to the feelings of the Muhammadans.”<sup>31</sup> The Muslims were particularly troubled by the encroachment of British power, he argued, because “for centuries the Mahommadan's position in India has been an honourable one” and the British disregard for this historical position was offensive.

Paul Brass has argued that though the statistics Hunter deployed did indicate a measure of Muslim deprivation in Bengal, it was an irony of the Muslim nationalist movement that it was mobilized intensely in the United Provinces, where the conditions

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<sup>29</sup> Khan, "Review on Hunter's *Indian Mussalmans*," 67.

<sup>30</sup> Khalidi, *Indian Muslims since Independence*, 107.

<sup>31</sup> Khan Bahadur C.S.I., "Causes of the Indian Revolt- Pritchett 2005."

that Hunter described were largely inapplicable.<sup>32</sup> Brass draws attention to two contradictory arguments used by Muslim nationalists: a) that Muslims were backward and b) that Muslims had a historical link to power and prestige that qualified them for disproportionate representation in positions of power.<sup>33</sup> I disagree that these two arguments were contradictory, rather their complementarity gave them power. The combination of these two powerful myths, that of deprivation, and of decline as the result of alienation from power became the basis of a Muslim awakening that mobilized “Muslim national will for a competitive coexistence in the future.”<sup>34</sup> It established a precedent for Muslim power and facilitated a desire to recover it.

In the context of these grievances, Khan cast the relationship between natives, and particularly Muslims, in starkly gendered language. Quoting from the Bible, he argued that as Christians, the British had a responsibility to “inculcate friendship and love to all men.” He chided the ruling class for their indelicate dismissal of these social graces. “The Creator has instilled it into the heart of man and the instinct of animals, that the strong should be kind to and care for the weak. The father loves his child before the child loves him. The man tries to win the woman, not the woman the man.”<sup>35</sup> It was the responsibility of the ruling class to win the affections of the natives, and especially the Muslims, who could have been “friends and supporters.” Good governance, he suggested, could make loyal subjects of the well-born, and loyal subjects, unlike the mutineers, were

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<sup>32</sup> Paul R. Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India* (London; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 121.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

<sup>34</sup> Khalidi, *Indian Muslims since Independence*, 108.

<sup>35</sup> Khan Bahadur C.S.I., "Causes of the Indian Revolt- Pritchett 2005."

worthy, rather than emasculated and cowardly. Sir Sayyid reminded the British of a lesson they should already know, from the Book of Matthew, “‘Blessed’ are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”<sup>36</sup> It was therefore to the Muslims of his own region and status that Sir Sayyid turned his attention as he dedicated his life to recovering “respectable” Muslims from the specter of backwardness, by making every effort to prove their worthiness to the British ruling class even as his language complied with a hierarchy of power that placed Englishmen above Indians. Muslims may be able to become “friends” of the English, but they would not pose a threat.

As long as Muslims had been able to look to the leader of the Mughal Empire, being Muslim entailed a special relationship to power, and with the demise of that institution (symbolic as it was) the Muslim community lacked an institutional focus. Sir Sayyid’s educational movement sought to restore the link to power by preserving continuity with the past and looking to the future. He worked to protect the existing pillars of the community, and to create new ones designed to foster modern (read: European) values and learning. His experience with the British had taught him that to garner their favor, he would have to represent an interest “which the government believed existed, [with] which it imagined would need help.”<sup>37</sup> He set out to groom a class of boys who could become successful in the British system beyond even the boundaries of traditional government service.

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Francis Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims: The Politics of the United Provinces' Muslims, 1860-1923* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 85.

In earlier days, this meant the Mughal courts, but by the mid-nineteenth-century the British dominated the court environment; Muslims and Hindus only had access to low-paying clerical work. Armed with their traditional Persian education, young men apprenticed in government offices often under the tutelage or watchful eye of a relative. This lowly work offered benefits to the young man's family beyond his meager salary, including access and prestige that could aid a family in trouble. Young men were able to establish personal relationships with British officials, and many established families got their starts "as petty government officials; still others were rewarded for acts of loyalty."<sup>38</sup> Sir Sayyid's relationship with Mr. Shakespear, the Collector and Magistrate of Bijnor, exemplifies this pattern. During the uprising, Sir Sayyid assured Mrs. Shakespear of his loyalty and intention to protect the Europeans of Bijnor. He told her, "As long as I am alive, you should not worry. When you see my dead body lying before your mansion, then you may do so."<sup>39</sup> Sir Sayyid's loyalty during the uprising was rewarded with several titles and the respect of British officials.

However, this was a system that limited the advancement of Indians, and after 1857, Sir Sayyid came to see that traditional systems were losing social currency in the changing environment of British India.<sup>40</sup> His first moves towards educational reform involved establishing scientific societies and supporting the translation of Western scientific texts into Urdu. Eventually he settled on English as the most valuable tool for advancement. However, if Muslim students were to study English, Sir Sayyid would

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<sup>38</sup> Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation*, 61.

<sup>39</sup> Alavi, *Hayat-I-Jawed*, 34.

<sup>40</sup> Khan, "Report of the Select Committee," 155.

have to convince them not only of its utility in public life, but also its consistency with their faith and traditional values. British schools taught English and were spreading quickly after 1860 but the majority of their students were Hindu. Muslims were skeptical of these schools that promised “enlightenment,” fearing that English education would be instrumental in “creating disbelief of religion in the minds of the pupils.”<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, in these schools, *ashraf* Muslims feared, their children would have to mix with “vulgar people” by which they meant both Hindus and lower-class Muslims.<sup>42</sup> Instead of risking this social contamination, Muslims continued to look to their traditional education and traditional networks of patronage as pillars of a successful career.

Though he claimed to be organizing the community on the behalf of all Muslims, his efforts concentrated on the Urdu-speaking elite, the community in which he was raised. The Delhi of Sir Sayyid’s youth was characterized by rigid social stratification; he learned an ethos of social solidarity based on status, common descent and values rather than on common belief. This was the enduring legacy of his political thought.<sup>43</sup> His was not a territorial nationalism, but one that imagined a unique nation, led by men of his class, inspired by personal ambition and group solidarity.

## **POLITICS**

It was not until the late nineteenth- century that Indian communities began to organize themselves into political categories, and the Muslims were no exception.

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 138.

<sup>42</sup> Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation*, 92.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 311.

Startled by the numerical disparity between Hindus and Muslims as represented in the 1873 census, Muslim leaders feared being seen as a permanent minority in Indian politics. The codification of census data collected by the British lent concrete statistics to arguments about cultural influence and power. This created a link between political power, numerical statistics, and religious affiliation.<sup>44</sup> The Muslim community in India was fractured by sect and class divisions, but the realization that the British system of classification— which focused on religious categories—would determine the constitution of social units spurred Sayyid Ahmad to form a political organization for Muslims to correspond to the Indian National Congress, but with a distinctly loyalist orientation. The Muslim Educational Conference sought to include all of India’s Muslims in a political community. Francis Robinson writes that the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College “was the arena in which Muslim opinion was created and United Provinces Muslim leadership assembled. The Conference was the means by which this opinion was disseminated among Muslims in the rest of India and this leadership imposed upon them.”<sup>45</sup>

Though Sir Sayyid claimed that his goal in founding the Conference was non-political, intended rather to foster the social, educational and economic uplift of Muslims, everything about his goals and actions was political, and was constructed specifically in contrast to other political trends at the time, including the claims of the Indian National Congress to represent “all-India” interests. As David Lelyveld notes, even if political

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<sup>44</sup> Kenneth W. Jones, "Religious Identity and the Indian Census," in *The Census in British India*, ed. N.G. Barrier (Delhi: Manohar, 1981), 89.

<sup>45</sup> Robinson, *Separatism*, 125.

agitation to unify the Muslim community in opposition to the Congress was simply a way of encouraging Muslims to recognize their plight, the college itself “was a profoundly political enterprise” and rationale for its existence was bound up with an analysis of “being Muslim and the nature of political power in British India.”<sup>46</sup> Sir Sayyid feared British retaliation against Muslim political agitation, and because he accepted the inevitability of British rule—which he believed they had earned in India—politically, he opposed the Congress, and favored differentiating the Muslims from it.<sup>47</sup> The effect was the construction of a Muslim “moral community” which had a place in the British system but ultimately could not reconcile itself to the status of being a permanent minority in a Hindu dominated society.

Sir Sayyid remained intransigent in his opposition to Congress, despite the willingness of some Muslims to join its ranks as a way of finding a political voice. In Sir Sayyid’s view, if Muslims joined the Congress, they risked the special concessions that they had received in the past through British beneficence. For Sir Sayyid, the power of the Muslim community lay in its differentiation from potentially fickle Congressites, the recognition of the *qaum* as a distinct nationality with special needs, and the maintenance of the social standards of the *ashraf*.

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<sup>46</sup> Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation*, 317.

<sup>47</sup> Hafeez Malik, ed., *Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Muslim Modernism in India and Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 250.



Sir Sayyid used the Urdu word *qaum* to define this community, and though its meaning in different contexts has been contentious,<sup>48</sup> for him it connoted the Muslims of India differentiated from the greater body of Muslims worldwide by their unique interaction with the Indian situation.<sup>49</sup> Sayyid Ahmad Khan's ideas of *qaum*, a broadly unified group of people with similar interests, helped him to draw together a Muslim community in North India, and to invest it with the strength and power generated by common interest. As Faisal Devji has pointed out, Sir Sayyid's usage of the word *qaum* to define the Muslim community, rather than "*ummat* or *millat*, [terms] used for specifically religious groupings that were localizable neither in time nor in space" implied that among Muslims there was a "natural belonging together."<sup>50</sup> This usage marked a new dimension to the word *qaum* that now came to mean "nation," and this shift in meaning was critical to the development of a concept of Muslim solidarity and political consciousness. This conception of *qaum* did not necessarily exclude North Indian Hindus especially those who may have had shared interests with Muslims. Thus, Sir Sayyid's *qaum* was theoretically open to non-Muslims of the same social status, including the landholders and regional princes. He famously described the two main communities of India to be "two eyes of a beautiful bride" an image that suggested the two communities needed to work in tandem to be successful. But Sir Sayyid's vociferous

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<sup>48</sup> Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), 144. For a history of the transformation of the idea of *qaum* to communalism, see Ayesha Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty: Individual and Community in South Asian Islam since 1850* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000).

<sup>49</sup> Malik, ed., *Muslim Modernism*, 231.

<sup>50</sup> Faisal Devji, "Keywords in South Asian Studies: Qawm," (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2004).

efforts at uplift were aimed directly at Muslims and oriented around recovering their social status. His was not a nationalism linked to territory, as the Muslim League demand would later become. It was broadly inclusive in some ways, marked by solidarity of social status and experience, not merely religious confession.

It remains a point of pride for Aligarhians that Hindus were always a part of the student community, that though special arrangements were made for their dietary and residential needs, they looked and dressed just like the Muslim students. However, Sir Sayyid saw the emergence of a Hindu political group as a threat to his efforts. He did not feel that Muslims should associate themselves with the Indian National Congress for fear of rekindling the aspersions on loyalty cast on Muslims after the Mutiny. Loyalty to the British was tantamount to the success of his efforts to support Muslim education. Sir Sayyid's main site for organizing the *qaum* was the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh, and the MAO College could not survive without British financial support.<sup>51</sup>

The work of differentiating the Muslims was deeply informed by the prejudices of race, caste, and class, and what Mrinalini Sinha calls “the politics of colonial masculinity.”<sup>52</sup> Sinha refers here to the processes by which British colonizers shored up their masculine identity in India in part by constructing it in opposition to the image of the “effeminate Bengali,” a transparently gendered and racialized category. By deploying gender as an analytical tool for interpreting matrices of power, Sinha includes racist and

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<sup>51</sup> For more on the British investment in the College, see Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation*.

<sup>52</sup> Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity*.

classist language and action as part of the effort to fortify colonial masculinity. As she suggests, the indigenous elite, including the Muslim *ashraf* and Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan had its own investment in colonial masculinity as articulated by the British elite.

In seeking to elevate the position of Muslims in India, Sir Sayyid sought to align it ever more closely— as his efforts to replicate the Cambridge model in India indicate— with the seemingly unassailable position of the British ruling class. Configurations of superiority and inferiority, inclusion and exclusion imported from imperial thinking highlighted the differences between “Muslims” and “Bengalis” by exploiting the specter of the feminized, “clever Hindu”—read as synonymous with Bengali—and simultaneously associating the British with supreme power. This narrative is gendered, embedded in structures of power that restrict creativity, and the ability to envision a world with true equality either for women or for racialized others.

These narratives shored up Muslim identity by consolidating it under the values of the *ashraf*, though this represented only a small segment of Muslim society. Sir Sayyid looked for symbols to draw Muslim sympathies together and settled on one of the pillars of the North Indian Muslim community, its language: Urdu. A hybrid of the official Mughal court language of Persian and local Hindustani, prior the mid-nineteenth-century Urdu had primarily been a spoken vernacular. Still, it was an institution unique to the North Indian service gentry who occupied these overlapping milieux and Sayyid Ahmad felt it was under attack by advocates of Hindi (written in the Devanagari script).<sup>53</sup> Urdu

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<sup>53</sup> Even after Partition, the future of Urdu was linked to the loyalty and future of the Muslim community remaining in India. See Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty*, 569- 70.

had replaced Persian as the language of the courts, and though elite Muslims were traditionally educated in Persian, they often spoke Urdu at home.<sup>54</sup> Sir Sayyid's support for Urdu was articulated around the idea that without it, students were cut off "from original sources of knowledge as well as languages of political power."<sup>55</sup> While the privileging of Urdu as a "Muslim language" neglects the many rural and lower-class Muslims who spoke only regional languages and dialects, the destabilization of Urdu as an official language would certainly mean further alienation of elite Muslims. In addition, Sir Sayyid's allegiance to Urdu was one of the key issues that exposed his animosity towards the ascendance of Hindus in public space.<sup>56</sup> He clearly questioned their eligibility to fill positions of power previously held by Muslims, and sought to hinder their arrival at every step.

This basic inequality was not merely numerical, but was the result of the fact that Hindus had taken advantage of English education that had better prepared them for higher appointments. As part of Sir Sayyid's rhetoric of rejuvenation, then, he blamed the Hindus for advancing, not the Muslims for their recalcitrance. His fear was that newly-educated Hindus, especially those without a history of high status, would excel in the competitive examination, to the exclusion of Muslim men of "good breeding." For while in Sir Sayyid's conception, the *qaum* was open to Hindus as well as Muslims, it was drawn together by common background and experience. His anxiety about open competition between Hindus and Muslims was driven by fear of social transgression, the

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<sup>54</sup> Minault, *Secluded Scholars*, 21.

<sup>55</sup> Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation*, 72.

<sup>56</sup> Sayeed, *Pakistan: The Formative Phase, 1857-1948*, 18.

upheaval that might occur if “weakly” Bengalis attained positions of power not determined by their hereditary social standing. In 1888 he asked his audience to imagine the consequences of the competitive examination system:

Over all races, not only over Mahomedans but over Rajas of high position and the brave Rajputs who have not forgotten the swords of their ancestors, would be placed as rule a Bengali who at the sight of a table knife would crawl under his chair... I am delighted to see the Bengalis making progress, but the question is—What would be the result on the administration of the country? Do you think that the Rajput and the fiery Pathan, who are not afraid of being hanged or of encountering the swords of the police or the bayonets of the army, could remain in peace under the Bengalis?<sup>57</sup>

Sir Sayyid’s rhetoric indicates that the most threatening aspect of Bengali ascendance is the threat of their perceived effeminacy. He raised the possibility that the other “nations” of the country would not tolerate their rule and that chaos would ensue, which they would be unable to control because of their irrational fear of confrontation. Ultimately, he finds them unfit for public service. Theodore Beck emerged on the side of the Muslims in this controversy as well, “raising the fear of ‘quick-witted Bengalis’” who would flood the civil services to the detriment of both Muslims and British.<sup>58</sup>

Thus, even while Sir Sayyid supported a kind of Hindu-Muslim unity, he differentiated the political agenda of Muslims from that of Bengalis; he urged Muslims to resist alliance with the Bengali “National Congress.”<sup>59</sup> Though he often used the label “Bengali” to mean “Hindu,” he associated Bengalis with a particular political agenda with which Muslims could never find favor. His contempt bears a hint of the taint of “backwardness” described by Hunter that Sir Sayyid had worked so hard to prove did not

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<sup>57</sup> Syed Ahmad Khan, "Speech at Lucknow: December 28, 1887," in *Writings and Speeches of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan*, ed. Shan Mohammad (Bombay: Nachiketa Publications Limited, 1972), 209.

<sup>58</sup> Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity*, 116.

<sup>59</sup> Syed Ahmad Khan, "Speech at Meerut: March 16, 1888," in *Writings and Speeches of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan*, ed. Shan Mohammad (Bombay: Nachiketa Publications Limited, 1972), 180.

apply to the Urdu-speaking elite. Thus, while Hindus were welcome as students in the university, and he made much of their financial support, as political actors, “Bengalis” (read: Hindus) were, in his view, diametrically opposed to Muslims.<sup>60</sup> The effect of this was to resist associating “martial” Muslims with “effete” Bengalis, and to avoid the pitfalls of being associated with a nationalist movement that might be seen to be opposing or undermining British authority.

Despite the aggressively communal political rhetoric that took hold of the Aligarh Movement in the waning years of the nineteenth-century, there was a sense that the institution at Aligarh could only be successful if it was open to all of India’s peoples. Sir Sayyid’s oft-quoted remarks in which he referred to Hindus and Muslims as “two eyes of a beautiful bride,” or called himself a Hindu by virtue of being a resident of Hindustan, laid the foundation for the attitude of inclusion at Aligarh that persisted through many generations.

One first generation Aligarian, Mohamad Ali Jauhar, published a pamphlet in 1904 in which he reinforced the ideal of inclusion by quoting from the educational scheme for the university which proclaimed its goal to send its graduates “throughout the length and breadth of the land to preach the gospel of free enquiry, or large-hearted toleration, and of a pure morality.”<sup>61</sup> This agenda outlined the “original and fundamental principles of the aims, objects, and policy of the Mohamedan Anglo-Oriental College”<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Graham, *The Life and Works of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan*, 176-77.

<sup>61</sup> Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, *History of the Aligarh Muslim University (1920- 1945)* (Karachi: Sir Syed University Press, 1998), 255.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

and were etched in stone at the entrance to the College Hall.<sup>63</sup> These aims were naturalized, not just by their linkage to familiar Victorian values, but because they were set in stone; the university could never waiver from these goals. Thus, although the political agenda of elite Muslims was increasingly divergent from that of the Hindu-led Indian National Congress, on an individual level, Hindus and Muslims should get along.<sup>64</sup>

North Indian narrators remember the spirit of tolerance that existed at Aligarh in the 1940s, remembering that Sunnis and Shias prayed in the same mosque, albeit at different times, and that the only way to tell a Hindu apart from a Muslim was that the Hindu ate vegetarian food. All students wore the same uniform, regardless of their faith, the “black sherwani and white pajama... [so that] looking from every angle you can see that he is from Aligarh.”<sup>65</sup> Ideally, students identified with the university and this obscured their allegiance to other faiths, families, clans, or castes. One narrator told me

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<sup>63</sup> In discussing Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Iqbal Shafi told me that in 1945 when Jinnah spoke to Aligarh students, he told them “Aligarh is the arsenal of Muslim India. I want you to fan out throughout the length and breadth of India and tell the Musalmans that they must vote for League ticket holders even if they are lamp posts!” The incorporation of AMU rhetoric in Jinnah’s electioneering speeches speaks to the intimate connection that Aligarians felt between their institution and the Muslim League demand for Pakistan. I can find no evidence of this speech taking place at Aligarh, though Jinnah did make the “lamp post” comment in a speech in the Frontier Province on November 27, 1945. It seems that Shafi has combined two discreet speeches, made five years apart as a way of linking AMU and the League. Shafi, "Brigadier Iqbal Shafi (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 9, 2010." M.A. Jinnah, "Message to the Musalmans of the Frontier Province, November 27, 1945," in Ahmad, ed., *Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah*, 247. M.A. Jinnah, "Speech at the Muslim University Union, Aligarh, March 10, 1941," in Jamil-ud-din Ahmad, ed., *Some Recent Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah*, 5th ed., 2 vols., vol. 1 (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1952), 268. Brigadier Iqbal Shafi was born in 1927, he started at Aligarh University in the mid-1940s and began military training in Dehra Dun in 1946. In 1947 he migrated to Pakistan where he served in the army, retiring as a Brigadier General. He co-founded the Sir Syed Memorial Society in Islamabad.

<sup>64</sup> A peculiar feature of many reflections on Hindu-Muslim relations from Aligarians in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh is that almost all narrators emphasize good relations with their Hindu neighbors, classmates and teachers prior to 1947. Yet, they also describe a pervasive mistrust of Hindus in matters of employment, equal treatment and justice.

<sup>65</sup> Khan, "Zakir Ali Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas August 10, 2006."

that allegiance to “the welfare of the university” was the common thread that drew the students together as they were all concerned to perpetuate the good name of “the alma mater.”<sup>66</sup> As such, toleration and unity at Aligarh was represented by conformity to the values and appearance of *ashraf* Muslims. Apart from Hindus, however, there were other groups who did not often feel entirely included by the Aligarh identity. Bengali students, for example, lamented the absence of rice in the offerings of the Dining Hall.<sup>67</sup> As Mohiuddin Khan told me, “We had to adjust! We had to adjust. One or two of our friends could not, and they left! (laughs) They could not adjust and they left Aligarh... Food was only the chapatti, bread or naan. [I had to change] from a rice-eating person to a wheat-eating person.”<sup>68</sup> Though the ethos of tolerance has remained a central “tradition” of the institution at Aligarh and a major point of pride for its well-wishers, its legacy is complicated.

The Hindu-Muslim strife that often resulted in riots in Aligarh and other cities, and that colors histories of the freedom movement in the 1940s, is conspicuously absent in these narratives, and narrators use this as evidence of the attitude of inclusion. Ghulam Umar asked me,

Did you know there was a special hostel at Aligarh for Hindus? They dressed exactly the same as I dressed... One of the things was, if you found a Hindu student and myself, you could not

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<sup>66</sup> KPS. "KPS (Anonymized) Personal Interview with Amber Abbas October 8, 2009." Lucknow, October 8, 2009.

<sup>67</sup> Salahuddin Chowdhury, "Salahuddin Chowdhury: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas April 10, 2010," (Dhaka: April 10, 2010). Salahuddin Chowdhury was born in Sylhet and joined Aligarh in the mid 1940s, finishing his degree in 1949. He made his career in the jute industry in East Pakistan, later Bangladesh. After retiring from that industry, he provided consulting services for the World Bank.

<sup>68</sup> Mohiuddin Khan, "Mohiuddin Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas March 28, 2010," (Dhaka: March 28, 2010). Mohiuddin Khan was born in Sylhet in 1924. He arrived in Aligarh in 1946 and completed his engineering degree in 1949. He served his entire career in East Pakistan, later Bangladesh as an engineer and retired as Chief Engineer of the Public Works Department.



distinguish. He was wearing the Turkish cap, he was wearing that *sherwani* and he was behaving exactly [as we were]. He was given vegetarian food... There was no fighting, there was no prejudice, there was nothing.<sup>69</sup>

In fact, the distinctions were often more marked and the separation more stark than his recollection suggests. Hindu students, were, for some time, “accommodated either in the thatched bungalows, or in hired Railway bungalows outside the University compound.”<sup>70</sup> This arrangement was necessitated by the overcrowded conditions in the hostels. In 1926, Vice Chancellor Aftab Ahmad Khan proposed the construction of the first Hindu hostel inside the campus since the days of Sir Sayyid.<sup>71</sup> In the early days, Hindus themselves resisted sharing accommodations with Muslims, fearing that “it would be much resented by their relatives & caste-fellows”<sup>72</sup> and in 1896 there were twenty-seven Hindu day scholars in the College, but no Hindu boarders.<sup>73</sup> Considering the importance of the university’s residential environment, the dislocation of Hindus made it more difficult for them to be incorporated into the student body seamlessly. Hindu students were spared the compulsory course on Muslim theology, and were permitted to take Muslim History in its place, but it was not until 1949 that the curriculum was made more hospitable to their interests. In the Annual Vice Chancellor’s Report, Zakir Husain announced that new

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<sup>69</sup> Ghulam Umar, "Major General Ghulam Umar (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas August 8, 2006," (Karachi: August 8, 2006). Major General Ghulam Umar completed all of his education in Aligarh before joining the Indian Army in the early 1940s during World War II. He returned to India from Japan after the war and opted for Pakistan. He served in Pakistan’s Army during both the 1965 and 1971 Wars and he also served as Military Secretary to King Faisal of Saudi Arabia. In his retirement he was involved in people-to people diplomacy with India. He died in January 2009.

<sup>70</sup> Aftab Ahmad Khan, "Note by Aftab Ahmad Khan on His Work & Experience During the Last Three Years of His Office as Vice-Chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University: Addressed to Members of the University Court," (Aligarh: Aligarh Muslim University, 1926), 90.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Theodore Beck, "Beck to Sir Sayyid, October 9, 1885," in Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, *Theodore Beck Papers from the Sir Syed Academy Archives* (Aligarh: Sir Syed Academy, 1991), 13.

<sup>73</sup> Theodore Beck, "The Principal's Annual Report 1895-6," in Ibid., 82.

courses would be substituted for non-Muslims: “‘Hindu Civilization’ in the High school, ‘Muslim Civilization’ in the Intermediate, and ‘World Civilization’ at the BA Degree Examinations.”<sup>74</sup> The *qaum*, it seems, for all its shared interests, was deeply marked by differences of faith, tradition and practice, and even as Aligarh sought to minimize the importance of those differences, over time it increasingly catered to them.

Theology classes were similarly separated for Sunni and Shi’a students, but Sir Sayyid’s attitude towards inclusion is often represented, even now, by the fact that Aligarh has only one congregational mosque in which both prayed.<sup>75</sup> As Zakir Ali Khan, General Secretary of the Pakistan Aligarh Old Boys’ Association told me, “Aligarh never had any factionalism... In Aligarh we never knew [who was Shi’a].”<sup>76</sup> There was one way to tell, however. As Wajahat Husain said,

In the University there was not much distinction between Sunnis and Shi’as... Aligarh Muslim University had a very fine mosque, a beautiful mosque and we all used to offer our prayers, especially Friday and *‘Id* prayers... The students used to say, ‘Which session are you attending? Are you going to the first show or the second show?’ The first show used to be the Sunni congregation and the second show used to be with the Shi’a congregation.<sup>77</sup>

While this story serves as evidence of the inclusivity of the Aligarh mosque, and to some extent the ways in which students massaged the requirements of ritual devotion to serve

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<sup>74</sup> Zakir Husain, "Annual Report of the Vice Chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University for Calendar Year, 1948. Read at the Convocation Held on 20th February, 1949," (Aligarh: Aligarh Muslim University, 1949).

<sup>75</sup> Iftikhar Alam Khan, author of a book on the history of Aligarh’s buildings, told me that the original plan called for two mosques, but financial limitations would not allow it. Iftikhar Alam Khan, "Professor Iftikhar Alam Khan (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 6, 2009," (Aligarh: June 6, 2009).

<sup>76</sup> Khan, "Zakir Ali Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas August 10, 2006."

<sup>77</sup> Wajahat Husain, "Major General Wajahat Husain (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 13, 2005," (Lahore: June 13, 2005). Wajahat Husain is originally from Aligarh where he completed all of his education by 1944. At war’s end he went for military training at the Indian Military Academy in Dehra Dun and opted for Pakistan. He first served on the Punjab Boundary Force, then as ADC to the Pakistan Army’s Commander-in-Chief before settling down into the Guides Cavalry. He also served Pakistan as an Ambassador to Greece and Australia.

their own needs, he also told me that the university authorities were concerned to keep students in line in matters of faith. When Wajahat attempted to take the Sunni theology class, which was rumored to be somewhat easier, he was confronted by his professor. Wajahat's father was Shi'a, but his father's brother, an Aligarh Old Boy who had been Captain of the Cricket team in the 1920s, was Sunni. The professor clarified Wajahat's parentage, and then routed him to the Shi'a theology course. Tolerance, it seems, was strictly bounded, and the boys were not permitted to use it to their advantage. Though Wajahat was a day scholar, the parental imperative of the residential system created space for his professor to remind him of his filial duties.

Many students describe how the residential arrangements were supposed to combat "regionalism" by placing boys from different regions of the country into shared rooms or suites. Despite these efforts, boys from areas outside the United Provinces felt marginalized. The impetus remained on them to adapt, to conform to the Aligarh ideal. They were not "naturally" a part of it, in the way that the Urdu-speaking students were. As Mohiuddin Khan put it, "We have always a difference, because we were non-Urdu-speaking people. We were more friendly with the Southern Indian students and to some extent with Pathan students... this belt: Frontier Province, Punjab, Bengal and Assam were the non-Urdu-speaking areas... So this difference was there between the students."<sup>78</sup> The students who did not fit easily into the Aligarh identity banded together, formed organizations of their own. The Bengali and Assamese students formed the

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<sup>78</sup> Khan, "Mohiuddin Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas March 28, 2010."

“Eastern Association.”<sup>79</sup> Pakistan’s Freedom Movement Archives are filled with petitions and letters from regional and parochial student groups at Aligarh. In addition to telegrams sent to M.A. Jinnah on behalf of specific residential halls,<sup>80</sup> the Momin Students’ Association,<sup>81</sup> the South African Indian Students’ Association,<sup>82</sup> and the Frontier Students’ Association<sup>83</sup> of the Aligarh University wrote or petitioned the Muslim League during the late 1940s.

The transition to independence that took place in 1947 manifested in some significant changes at Aligarh, particularly with regard to the relationship between Muslim and non-Muslim students. Many Muslim students had chosen to settle in Pakistan; the campus’ population was severely depleted. During the 1947-48 academic year, the population of Aligarh University and its allied institutions fell from 5896<sup>84</sup> to 4613, but these numbers mask the impact on the University population in which some programs were depleted by forty to fifty percent.<sup>85</sup> New students, displaced from their

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<sup>79</sup> Habib ur Rahman, "Habib Ur Rahman: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas February 20, 2010," (Dhaka: February 20, 2010). Habibur Rahman was born on January 1, 1925. He matriculated at Aligarh University in 1944 and lived in Sir Syed Hall. After completing his education he settled in then East Pakistan and became a lawyer. He went on to be active in the Awami Movement for the independence of Bangladesh.

<sup>80</sup> Various. Letters and Telegrams in Support of Manzar-i-Alam from Halls of Residence, Aligarh University. January 24, 1946. *Freedom Movement Archives* (Hereafter *FMA*), Vol. 238/ 29- 34, 37- 40. Islamabad: Pakistan National Archives (Hereafter PNA).

<sup>81</sup> Adil Ahmad Hasan. Resolution of Momin Students' Association, Aligarh. N.D. *Shamsul Hasan Collection SHC* (Hereafter *SHC*), Vol. 26/ 71. Islamabad: PNA.

<sup>82</sup> Muslim University Aligarh South African Indian Students Association. (Partial) Letter to M.A. Jinnah: Life Patron. October 20, 1946. *Ibid.*, Vol. 26/ 94. Islamabad: PNA.

<sup>83</sup> Various. Resolution of the Frontier Students of the Aligarh Muslim University. October 2, 1945. *FMA*, Vol. 238/ 21 (1-3). Islamabad: PNA.

<sup>84</sup> Mohd. Ismail Khan, "Annual Report of the Vice-Chancellor Aligarh Muslim University for the Calendar Year 1947: Read at the Convocation Held on 24th January, 1948," (Aligarh: Aligarh Muslim University Press, 1948), 1-3.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

universities, were coming in from the Punjab and elsewhere. The first post-independence Vice Chancellor, the nationalist Zakir Husain, was responsible for abolishing the residential separation between Muslim and Hindu students. As Irfan Habib told me, “Zakir Husain put Hindu and Sikh students along with Muslim students in 1949 and ’50. A very firm decision. He dissolved the Hindu/Sikh hostels, Ameen Hostel and others and said they must live together. And nothing happened. I mean, they lived together.”<sup>86</sup> Habib, like Zakir Husain, is deeply invested in the “composite culture” narrative of independent India. To him, the peace between Hindu and Muslim students in the years after partition, even after they were moved into shared hostels, is evidence that there was no substance to the Muslim League’s “Two Nation Theory.” Rather, the peace vindicated Zakir Husain’s choice, and Habib’s belief that the tension between Hindus and Muslims was largely a political construction. Similarly, this outcome embodies the tradition of communal harmony that had prevailed at Aligarh since its founding. For these narrators, that identity was normative, supported by the ideology and institutions of Aligarh, and they sought to cultivate it through the rest of their lives, though as this dissertation will show, that ethos has been interpreted in different ways in all three post-partition states.

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<sup>86</sup> Habib, "Irfan Habib: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 28, 2009." Irfan Habib was born in Baroda in 1931 but lived and was educated primarily in Aligarh. He completed his D.Phil in History from Oxford University. He taught in the Aligarh Muslim University History Department until 1991 and is now Professor Emeritus. He is one of India’s best-known Marxist historians.

## CONCLUSION

Sir Sayyid's idea for the College which later became the Aligarh Muslim University was to groom a generation of Muslims who would have the "knowledge, skills and values necessary to qualify them for public leadership."<sup>87</sup> It was no small task, but he succeeded in creating an environment where students learned to interact and organize themselves in preparation for their lives beyond the confines of the college.

At the end of the nineteenth-century, census numbers and the British penchant for classification had caused communities to identify themselves politically in ways they never had before. Sir Sayyid's quest to develop an Indian Muslim identity was a part of this mission and one that endowed the community with more power than the identification of Indian Muslims as a permanent minority in a democratic political system, because it associated Muslims with their former position of power. To enjoin Muslims to his agenda, Sir Sayyid mobilized a narrative of decline that urged them to work together to recover their former position of power. Over a long period of time, from the 1860s to the 1930s, this narrative was used again and again to rally Muslims to Aligarh's cause. He could not have anticipated the notion of India as a nation-state, but when that became the dominating idea, his ideas would be redeployed.

During Theodore Beck's tenure as the Principal of Aligarh, he tended to the growth of the first generation of Aligarh graduates who were loyal to their institution, one another, and the British. This allegiance was strictly enforced and in the debating Union, one topic was strictly off-limits: British rule in India. Beck was determined that the

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<sup>87</sup> Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation*, 318.

Aligarh Union not become a forum for “Bengali-style sedition.”<sup>88</sup> Though debate on religious principles was not permitted, on one occasion a Brahmin student extolled the virtues of vegetarianism only to be rebutted by Muslim students who overwhelmingly argued that “eating meat was part of the natural order a sign of strength.” Aligarh Professor and Cambridge graduate Walter Raleigh added that Adam and Eve might never have been expelled from the Garden of Eden had they “confined themselves to roast beef.”<sup>89</sup> The transparently masculine ideas supported in this environment exalted the strength of Muslims over Hindus and served to deepen the political gulf between them.

As political times changed, so too, did the role of institutions like the Union, and by the early 1940s, when Wajahat Husain was a Senior Cabinet Member of the Union, it had become a centralized location for the discussion of the political role of the Muslims and the Pakistan Movement. Muslim political leaders addressed the Union separately from the student body and allowed discussion of “the ongoing matters of politics, economy and so on” and that is where Wajahat met Mohammed Ali Jinnah on more than one occasion.<sup>90</sup> Zakir Ali Khan remembers that “the debating society was very rich and almost all leaders in those days, even the non-Muslims, used to come and lecture in Aligarh.”<sup>91</sup> He placed the Aligarh Union within the context of the nationalist movement and showed that all leaders of the country, not just the Muslims, recognized the importance of Aligarh men.

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 220.

<sup>89</sup> *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, December 22, 1885. Cited in Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation*, 222.

<sup>90</sup> Husain, interview, June 13, 2005.

<sup>91</sup> Zakir Ali Khan, interview.

The racialized and gendered values cultivated at Aligarh came into play in this political environment as the identities of the two groups as separate “nations” under the “Two Nation Theory” came to be accepted at Aligarh and elsewhere. The “Two Nation Theory” as Jinnah articulated it at the Muslim League Meeting of March 1940, made clear the differences between the Muslim and Hindu nations. He said that the religious philosophies, customs, and literatures of the two groups were rooted in different civilizations and drew on different sources of history. Jinnah concluded that “to yoke together two such nations under a single state, one as a numerical minority and the other as a majority, must lead to growing discontent and final destruction of any fabric that may be so built up for the government of such a state.”<sup>92</sup> This theory was the basis of the Muslim demand for independent statehood. Its suggestion of the total separation of Muslims and Hindus can be seen as the ultimate realization of the political differentiation between Congress and the Muslim League that Sir Sayyid and Theodore Beck had supported in the 1880s.<sup>93</sup> These communal tensions found no purchase amongst the students in Aligarh, but were central to the political aspirations of the Muslims. In the late 1930s, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, who had just emerged as the leader of the Muslim League, made a move to turn the masculinized and organized student body of Aligarh

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<sup>92</sup> Mohammad Ali Jinnah, “Presidential Address at the All-India Muslim League, Lahore Session, March 1940?” in *Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah*, ed. Jamil-ud-din Ahmad (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1952), 1:178.

<sup>93</sup> By making this link, I do not mean to suggest that Sir Sayyid is the progenitor of the “Two Nation Theory” or indeed, a “founder” of Pakistan. Some have suggested this, but others have attributed the theory to Mohammad Iqbal who first suggested a territorial solution, or to V.D. Savarkar who first discussed it at the 1937 Meeting of the Hindu Mahasabha. Rather, I am concerned with showing the continuity of these ideas with gendered and racialized patterns already established in the Muslim community at Aligarh and elsewhere.



into his political footsoldiers. He empowered them with a narrative of self-reliance rather than weakness, fought for representation not protection, and many of the young leaders trained at Aligarh went on to become founders of Pakistan.

Shortly after the passage of the Pakistan Resolution, the Aligarh Union declared its allegiance to the Muslim League demand for Pakistan. In January 1941 the Aligarh union debated and accepted the motion that

the best way to achieve India's freedom and to bring about lasting peace in the country is to strive for the establishment of independent states in the regions of Hindu and Muslim majorities with effective safeguards for the minorities in each state.<sup>94</sup>

The Union was fully allied with the Pakistan movement by 1941, and the idea that Aligarh men represented all Muslims was already deeply entrenched. In January of that year, the Honorary Secretary of the Union linked the Union and the Muslim League demand when he said, "Pakistan now represents the universal faith of the Mussalmans of India and Aligarh men are determined to hasten the realization of the ideal... The Union is the centre to train the Muslim youth to play their role worthily in the Muslim national movement."<sup>95</sup>

It has been important for Aligarh graduates to uphold the vision of the University that they believe Sir Sayyid advocated for in his efforts to recover the status of the Muslim community. A staunch loyalist, Sir Sayyid believed that the path of advancement for Muslims was to be more like the British, never again to be seen as the instigators of a

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<sup>94</sup> Aligarh Union Debate, January 27, 1941. Cited in *Zaman Students' Role*, 49.

<sup>95</sup> Speech by the Honorary Secretary of the Aligarh Union, January 28, 1941. Cited in *Zaman Students' Role*, 50.

rebellion against British rule as they had been in 1857. He denied that there were any prohibitions in Islam or Muslim culture against learning English or studying Western science and justified this by suggesting that “the most glorious period of Islamic history was characterized by a great flowering of rationalism and science.”<sup>96</sup> Islamic history, then, was informed by the same values as European Enlightenment rationality, and unlike the passionate, effeminate, polytheistic Bengalis leading the Congress, Sir Sayyid saw Muslims as martial, monotheistic, secular, and rational, thus capable of being active in official, public life.<sup>97</sup> As a result, Sir Sayyid invested deeply in a politics of masculinization that emerged from Britain at a particularly significant point in its own history. These values formed the basis of Aligarh exceptionalism, and over time were divorced from their context to become the persistent ideal of the Aligarh University. Whereas Sir Sayyid’s values were intimately linked to the specificity of his political activities and experience, today, they remain unassailable though not always appropriate.

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<sup>96</sup> Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation*, 78.

<sup>97</sup> Sir Sayyid’s critique of women above as “rationally deficient” excludes them from this formulation and establishes a gendered understanding of Muslim-ness.

## Chapter 2

### **Masculinity and the Aligarh Environment**

The enclosed environment of the Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental College (later the Aligarh Muslim University) proved to be fertile ground for cultivating Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan's ideas of Muslim manhood, as the institution trained boys for public life. The values on which the institution was founded combined the priorities of the British schools and universities, especially Cambridge and Oxford, with those of elite Muslim households. In so doing, they codified specific and sometimes prejudicial perspectives that were rooted in a specific time and place. At Aligarh, these values became timeless and continued to represent the ideal values of the institution throughout the period under study (1935- 1950). This environment bred a kind of elite masculinity and cultivated public men—that was Sir Sayyid's intention—who would be prepared to represent Muslims as a body in the British establishment. This chapter will further examine this masculinizing agenda, which served, over time, to differentiate Hindus and Muslims in politics if not within the precincts of the university. Aligarh's was a homogenizing narrative, and despite compelling evidence to the contrary—that is, that it remained a complex and heterogeneous environment—it is the narrative of similarity and solidarity facilitated by the residential university model that Aligarhians seek to protect because it seems best to represent the ideals of the founder.

As the previous chapter demonstrated, the Mutiny of 1857 was a critical turning point in the history of Muslim South Asia and is particularly significant for the institution at Aligarh as it marked the beginning of a period of reform that provided the founding conditions for the establishment of the MAO College and later, Aligarh University. The anxiety about the position of Muslims in the British system and their access to both vernacular and English education drove the reforms, collectively known as the Aligarh Movement. Another significant development critical to this tale is the shift in understanding about the relationship between metropole and colony that surrounded the uprising, and in particular the shift in perception about the relationship between colonial administrators and colonized peoples. In England, as this chapter will address, there was a distinct shift in conceptions of masculine identity that were a direct result of the presence of the Empire as a space of masculine rule. The subjects of that rule, too, were implicated in gendered hierarchies that associated loyalty with masculinity and to some extent similarity, and cast revolt as cowardly, effeminate.<sup>1</sup> As Heather Streets argues, the theory of the “martial races” expanded during this period as the mutineers of 1857 were caste as “treacherous, faithless, deluded and easily incited to passion” in contrast to the loyal martial groups that she identifies as Highlanders, Sikhs and Gurkhas.<sup>2</sup> In the space between the “unmanly” Bengal Army, and the “martial races” fell the Muslims, on whom much blame was laid in the aftermath of the fighting in Delhi and Lucknow.

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<sup>1</sup> Streets, *Martial Races*, 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

We have already seen how ardently Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan advocated for the absolution of the Muslim community in the wake of the Mutiny, in particular through his *An Account of the Loyal Mohammadans of India* in which he argued that “if in Hindoostan there was one class of people above another, who, from habits and associations, and from kindred disposition, were fast bound with Christians, in their dread hour of trial and danger, in the bonds of amity and friendship, those people were the MOHOMEDANS, and they alone!—and then will be effectually silenced the tongue of slander now so loud in their condemnation!”<sup>3</sup> His evidence for Muslim loyalty relies on the close relationship he perceived between the Muslims and the British establishment. In his eyes, this overriding loyalty was evidence of similarity that should have been testament enough to their innocence.

Though Streets rarely mentions Muslims in her history of the evolution of the “martial races” theory, Thomas Metcalf’s assessment of the post-Mutiny period argues that “the most bitter and widespread hostility was reserved for the Muslim community” who were regarded as the fomentors of the rebellion.<sup>4</sup> Their loyalty had always been suspect, it seems, as “to a large extent... the strong British hostility toward the Muslim community appears to have been based upon *a priori* deductive reasoning. As the former rulers of Hindustan, the Muslims had, in British eyes, necessarily to place themselves at the head of a movement for the overthrow of the British government.”<sup>5</sup> This suspicion was underscored by the growth of racial feeling emerging out of the British perception

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<sup>3</sup> Emphasis in original. Khan, “Account of the Loyal Mohomedans,” 194.

<sup>4</sup> Metcalf, *The Aftermath of Revolt*, 298.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 301.

that the Mutiny was a “race war.” The Mutiny, writes Metcalf, inspired a more “avowedly imperial sentiment” that elevated the status of the British and portrayed the Indians as racially inferior, and unfit for self-government.

Fears of disloyalty rocked the empire after 1857, and the need to preserve the superiority of the British “race” fed the valorization of militarism and the virtues of physical fitness and athleticism.<sup>6</sup> During this period, the ratio of British soldiers to Indian *sepoys* in the Indian Army shifted from 1:6 to a more even ratio of 1:2.<sup>7</sup> This shift buttressed the authority of British soldiers, but also created an increase in demand for British soldiers and officers in the empire. British rule was expanding into the hinterlands and required more British hands to manage it.

This shift in power became the substance of the Muslim grievance in the post-mutiny period. Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan positioned himself as a leader of the much maligned Muslims, and by responding to the crisis in the language of loyalism, sought to recover the position of privilege that Muslims had enjoyed, and that had been marked by the tenure of the last Mughal emperor in Delhi (though as a symbol, the ailing emperor did little to support an image of Muslim martial character). There is ample evidence to suggest that the Muslim situation was not as dire as Sir Sayyid made it appear, that in fact, British support for education remained stable, they ended their policies of annexation of princely states, and of direct proselytization, and increasingly patronized

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<sup>6</sup> Deslandes, *Oxbridge Men*, 5.

<sup>7</sup> Philip Mason, *A Matter of Honour: An Account of the Indian Army, Its Officers and Men* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1974), 263. Cited in Kenneth Ballhatchet, *Race, Sex, and Class under the Raj: Imperial Attitudes and Policies and Their Critics, 1793-1905* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980), 3.

the gentry and aristocracy.<sup>8</sup> It was the increase in “coercive power” that drove Sir Sayyid’s anxiety.<sup>9</sup> His strategy, to demonstrate Muslim loyalty by aligning the elite Muslim identity ever more closely with a demonstrably masculinist British one fed a narrative of recovery, of pride in community and history that did much to draw Muslims, and particularly elite Muslims, together in the dark days after the uprising.

Sir Sayyid’s *Account* begins with a plea not to blame the entire community for the misdeeds of a few. He dramatically recounts the tenor of newspaper articles and other works that contain “the most bitter denunciation against the Mohammedans, who are freely represented as being everything that is vile, treacherous and contemptible... There was no prickly thorn, in those awful times, respecting which it was not said that it was planted by a Mohammedan:- there was no fiery whirlwind that was not raised by a Mohammedan!”<sup>10</sup> As he sought to offer Muslims some purchase on their downward slope to political oblivion, Sir Sayyid turned to the example that he had seen in England in 1869 during his stay there with his son, Mahmud.

As Sir Sayyid departed for England, he wrote that the improvement of relations between Indians and the British was critical to India’s future prosperity, and these relations could be improved by visiting Europe. Indians could thus “learn for the good of

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<sup>8</sup> See Mushirul Hasan, "The Myth of Unity: Colonial and National Narratives," in *Islam in the Subcontinent: Muslims in a Plural Society* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2002). Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism*. Lance Brennan, "The Illusion of Security: The Background to Muslim Separatism in the United Provinces," in *India's Partition: Process, Strategy and Mobilization*, ed. Mushirul Hasan (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993).

<sup>9</sup> Metcalf, *The Aftermath of Revolt*, 297.

<sup>10</sup> Sayyid Ahmad Khan, "Excerpt: An Account of the Loyal Mohomadans of India," in *Translation of Hayat-I-Jawed: A Biographical Account of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan by Altaf Husin Hali*, ed. Rafi Ahmad Alavi (Aligarh: Aligarh Muslim University Press, 2008), 51.

India how the British people have benefited from their trade, industry, methods of agriculture, hospitals, welfare systems, clean cities, prosperity and learning.”<sup>11</sup> The qualities of civilized society that he outlined are linked to knowledge, comportment and generosity, three values that became a core element of the Aligarh ethos.

Upon his return to India, Sir Sayyid started a journal intended to offer advice and guidance to Muslims. Through this journal, *Tehzib ul-Akhlaq (Social Reform)*, Sir Sayyid sought to revive attention to the tenets of Islam, facilitate social harmony and encourage the dismissal of superstition amongst Muslims. According to Altaf Husain Hali, his biographer, “the writings usually lamented the degenerated conditions of the Muslims... The policy of the journal was simply to put before the people the correct side of the matter and not to force them to accept it.”<sup>12</sup> Nonetheless, his educational reforms were met with skepticism, even when he sought to build consensus by soliciting the opinions of other thinkers through an essay contest about “The Progress of Education Among Indian Muslims.”<sup>13</sup> Reporting on the results of the contest, Sir Sayyid wrote, “Muslims should themselves make arrangements for the education of their children if they want to preserve their ancient learning, secure benefits from modern learning, and to bring up their children according to the requirements of the age.”<sup>14</sup>

Sir Sayyid was dismayed by the conservatism of some Muslims who felt that English education would harm their children. While he was dedicated to the expansion of

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<sup>11</sup> Alavi, *Hayat-I-Jawed*, 84.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.



English education, particularly for Muslims, he went to some lengths to make it acceptable to them. Even as he looked towards the values and practices of Victorian England, he must have recognized the broad similarities with the lifestyles of the elite of North India and recognized the easy compatibility of the two societies. It is significant, however, that the nineteenth-century in England was a period during which priorities and values regarding patriarchy, the family and gender roles were changing markedly.

During this period in Victorian England, John Tosh argues, there developed simultaneously a sense of fundamental sexual difference between men and women, and an increasing identification between masculinity and domesticity.<sup>15</sup> These changes were marked by a separation of the spheres of work and home, and a growing emphasis on the role of men in both protecting and participating in the affairs of the household. Men were still allowed free exchange in the company of other men, but the privacy of home life grew in importance. Families who could afford it depended heavily on the labor of servants, thus creating a middle leisure class that entertained at home.

The increasing value placed on domesticity, even for men, during the Victorian period, mirrored the scope of elite manhood in India where the protection of the honor of a man's household was a primary concern. Men were expected to manage the financial affairs and tend to matters of work, but to maintain their family's comfort and the isolation of its women. The sanctity and honor of the private sphere among the middle and upper classes, along with the keeping of household servants in both societies, became

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<sup>15</sup> John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 7.

a “badge of social position.”<sup>16</sup> Status, in both India and England, was determined in part by the qualities of the household: “a non-working wife, a complement of servants and a tastefully furnished house.”<sup>17</sup> Elite women were relegated to the private sphere, though, as Gail Minault has shown in her important work on Muslim women, they were not always completely deprived of education or access to the world outside.<sup>18</sup> This emphasis on the structure of the domestic environment made its way into the planning of the institution at Aligarh, designed to take boys out of their homes and mold them into citizens in the college’s residential system.

The MAO College was informed by many of the rituals and traditions of the Oxbridge model. There were aspects of this system that already seemed familiar to Aligarh boys, raised as many had been, among extended familial networks. Sir Sayyid’s loyalism informed the development of the University’s traditions and even during the movement for independence from the British, the traditions gleaned from ancient universities continued to define the expressions of students and faculty alike. The MAO College was a distinctly Indian institution, but at the moment of its founding, it was also a profoundly colonial one. The foundation stone of the MAO College was laid in early 1877 by Viceroy and Governor-General Lord Lytton, setting in stone the relationship between the institution and the government of India. The seal of the college, set in marble above the entrance to the original quadrangle, exemplifies the union of East and West

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Minault, *Secluded Scholars*. C.M. Naim, "How Bibi Ashraf Learned to Read and Write," *Annual of Urdu Studies* 6 (1987).

that Sir Sayyid envisioned. On each side of a lush palm tree are a crescent moon, the symbol of Islam, and the British crown.

### **CONSTRUCTING MASCULINE SPACES AT ALIGARH**

As the empire expanded the conception of masculinity at Oxford and Cambridge became more muscular, predicated on notions of competition, physical strength, racial superiority, adventure, and action.<sup>19</sup> Cambridge prepared men for public life by taking them out of the climate of the domestic environment, encouraging competition on the sports fields and valorizing militarism and “imperial adventure.”<sup>20</sup> As such, education at Cambridge shifted from concentration on the subjects of classical learning to new academic disciplines: science, language, and history, and became a training facility for fit, confident and capable public men. Boys were, in other words, groomed for power in the classroom and on the athletic field. Their status was distinctly and deliberately gendered. They were eligible for public life because they were men coming of age in an environment dominated by a sense of sexual difference enshrined in the “separate spheres” ideology. Paul Deslandes notes in his study of Oxbridge men between 1850-1920 that the undergraduates complained that women: their mothers and sisters, simply could not understand what it was like to be in the university. Not only had they left home, but they were building up a unique and separate society within their colleges.

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<sup>19</sup> Deslandes, *Oxbridge Men*, 5.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

As the century drew to a close, conceptions about masculinity continued to change. Whereas in the mid-Victorian period, women were seen increasingly as companions--and indeed many of them had benefited from a secondary education<sup>21</sup>—by century's end, women were closely identified with a stifling domestic environment, and men increasingly sought independence away from home. The Public School system became normalized in this period, and boys were sent away to school often in their early teens. After a stint in the university, as Tosh argues, “in the late Victorian period disillusionment with domesticity and the hankering after a racing men-only world were what attracted many to careers overseas.”<sup>22</sup>

Though the home had traditionally been seen as the sanctuary in which middle and upper-class male subjectivities were formed, after 1870 the household tended to be characterized by what John Tosh has characterized as “a flight from domesticity.”<sup>23</sup> The preserve of British manliness was increasingly called into question during this period, following the mid-century emphasis on the necessity of a domesticated lifestyle for the full realization of a masculine identity.<sup>24</sup> This flight was prompted in part by concerns about the efficacy of preparing young men for public leadership within the confines of home. The later part of the century, for instance, was characterized by a reluctance on the part of young men to marry, and an emphasis on the development of a “single” life that emphasized adventure and glorified life in the empire. This masculine agenda was reified

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<sup>21</sup> Tosh, *A Man's Place*, 181.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 172.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

by its resistance to the women's movement and sought to keep women enshrined in a sphere of domesticity ever more sharply delineated from the sphere of public leadership. British feminists began to demand access to higher education, and explicitly "to challenge the validity of the separate spheres ideology."<sup>25</sup> Young colonial officers were trained for leadership in British public schools and universities, where men were separated from the feminizing influences of their mothers and sisters.

These "men-only" realms were distinctly different from home, places where classmates and teachers stood in for family, where allegiance was transferred from "home and mother to the broader world of manly responsibility" and to the institution itself.<sup>26</sup> However, the residential environment of the university did not itself constitute the public sphere. Rather, it was a substitute domestic environment in which masculine values replaced feminine ones, and young men could focus on their transition to the outside world. Only upon leaving the university, and facing the trials of the world beyond the boundaries of campus, could they truly become men.<sup>27</sup> In Aligarh, too, spaces were distinctly gendered and affected many aspects of daily life there. The boundary walls of Aligarh set it apart from the distinctly different world outside. Their purpose was to keep the wards in and the rest of the world out, especially during periods of ferment. During periods of political activity in Aligarh, it was the transgression of this boundary that drew

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<sup>25</sup> Deslandes, *Oxbridge Men*, 6.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>27</sup> Deslandes shows how undergraduate writings about the dons and instructors reviles them as not fully developed men, stuck as they are within the enclosed university environment. *Ibid.*, 59.

the most criticism. Throughout the period under study, and even today, the world outside the university evokes the threat of contamination and indiscipline.

The College Sir Sayyid founded was residential so that students would be removed from the folk influences of their households. As at Cambridge, the geography of the MAO College created a masculine private sphere, bounded by walls that physically shut out those who were not eligible for access to this elite environment. These walls also kept the boys in, where they could be monitored and disciplined into the men that they would be when they emerged from their chrysalis.<sup>28</sup>

The residential environment was a transitional environment, a liminal space between home and the world outside. Thus, it was important that it appear familiar, cultivate the same priorities of home. The campus was explicitly designed after Cambridge, but preserved the bond to the *ashraf* households in which the boys grew up. The campus was designed in the image of an *ashraf* haveli, with a courtyard surrounded by residential spaces. Students were thus sheltered from the outside world, but had space to move around, with easy access to the mosque, and the college's central academic gathering space, the Strachey Hall. The college was a healthier home where boys would not be spoiled, but brought up "properly."<sup>29</sup> Both at Cambridge and Aligarh, women's schools and colleges were outside the boundaries of the men's colleges.<sup>30</sup> The walls of the campus at Aligarh served to protect elite boys from the influences of the world

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<sup>28</sup> Khan, "Zakir Ali Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas August 10, 2006."

<sup>29</sup> Syed Ahmed Khan, "Excerpt: Lecture at Ludhiana," *The Aftab* Aftab Memoirs Special (January 23, 1883): 52. Faisal Devji dates this speech to 1884. Devji, "Keywords in South Asian Studies: Qawm."

<sup>30</sup> The Aligarh Girls' College was founded by Sheikh Abdullah in 1906. See Minault, *Secluded Scholars*.

outside and the customs of women, for if arrival in public sphere was the goal of Sir Sayyid's reforms, removal from the private sphere of the home was essential.

Placing students in this isolated environment, where they lived, ate, and played together, would encourage in them a feeling for the importance of the community, like their understanding of family, but without the mitigating customs that Sir Sayyid believed boys were exposed to in the *zenana*, and that threatened their character development.<sup>31</sup> The residential system was the core disciplinary regime, as Vice Chancellor Aftab Ahmad Khan wrote in 1926, it was the

most distinctive and the most important feature of our institution from its very start... Residential system is an organization according to which young men are kept together under a system which is best calculated to develop and bring out all that is best in human nature. This is only possible if the lives of young men are regulated according to principles and methods which have stood the test of time and experience. Such principles and methods are the basis of discipline without which no residential system, in the real sense of the term, is possible. Hundreds of young men, coming from different and distant parts of the country, and representing all sorts of ideas and manners, virtues and vices, if kept under proper control and effective discipline, gradually evolve a corporate life and character which leads to success. But if they are left unregulated and uncontrolled, the result must be disastrous.<sup>32</sup>

He resisted the idea of any students residing outside the formal campus, with the few exceptions of the day scholars who lived with their families in the city. Even those students raised his suspicions however, and this anxiety draws attention to how important Aligarh's isolation appeared to its faculty and administration. Within the campus, the students could be controlled, and were seen as a unified and disciplined group. When

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 16, 67-69. As Minault has pointed out, the values of the North Indian *ashraf*, and particularly the attitude towards women were similar to those of Victorian England. She does not believe them to be a product, however, of Sir Sayyid's international travels but simply the values of his own upbringing. — — —, *Secluded Scholars*, 15. See also Lelyveld, "Three Aligarh Students: Aftab Ahmad Khan, Ziauddin Ahmad, and Muhammad Ali," 232-33.

<sup>32</sup> Khan, "Note by Aftab Ahmad Khan," 54- 55.

outsiders penetrated this hallowed ground, it was never clear what contamination they might bring, and what might happen to them if they were not conditioned by the residential system. As a result, Aftab Ahmad Khan argued that “with the exception of those who live with their parents or very near relations, no student coming from outside should be permitted to reside in the city.”<sup>33</sup> The boundary between insiders and outsiders had to be rigidly maintained.

In the early years of the Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental College, however, due to a lack of funding, the walls did not fully enclose the campus and were thus ineffective at keeping students in;<sup>34</sup> this situation was further complicated by the willingness of the *chowkidar* (gate keeper) to let the students in and out during the night.<sup>35</sup> By the 1940s, these walls formed a physical barrier. Students were permitted to leave the campus to go into the city, but had to return to their hostels by 9:30 p.m. Restrictive though this system may seem, Zakir Ali Khan and others remember with pride that “this whole system was organized—the policing of the university system— by the students and the staff only. No police were involved. They were so competent that no quarreling was going on... the proctors, they were all students.”<sup>36</sup> Many narrators refer to the disciplinary environment as a key aspect of the university’s celebrated *mahol*, or atmosphere.

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>34</sup> Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation*, 157.

<sup>35</sup> Theodore Beck, "Theodore Beck to Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Letter No. 58, April 30, 1892," in *Theodore Beck Papers from the Sir Syed Academy Archives*, ed. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami (Aligarh: Sir Syed Academy, 1991), 53.

<sup>36</sup> Khan, "Zakir Ali Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas August 10, 2006." Also Rahman, "Habib Ur Rahman: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas February 20, 2010."



This system, which restrained student movement, was one of the important factors that set Aligarh apart from other schools. The Proctorial Monitors, as they were known, were selected from among the senior students and were responsible for maintaining student discipline on the university grounds and off. “It is under [the Proctorial Monitor’s] guidance that the City, Railway Station, Cinemas in the Town and other places outside the University area are patrolled by these representatives of our law and order who can haul up any student who misbehaves himself or is guilty of any breach of University discipline or commits an act which is likely to lower the prestige of his fellow-students.”<sup>37</sup> This excerpt from the *Aligarh Magazine* in 1934 shows clearly how important the cultivation of the brotherhood was at Aligarh. Even in matters of discipline, boys were reminded to keep the reputations of their “fellow-students” in mind. As such, this regime bred a powerful sense of collective identity closely associated with the notion of “belonging” to the institution. At the same time, as Zakir Ali Khan emphasized, the disciplinary regime at Aligarh was what prepared the boys for the world outside. It instilled in them resilience and responsibility. “We are proud of it and that brought a lot of self-confidence in us. We can go anywhere, you give us any problem and then we will try to solve the problem...We will undertake the responsibility and we will try to resolve this according to the best of our ability. That is the lesson of Aligarh.”<sup>38</sup>

This disciplinary environment was modeled closely on that of Cambridge. During the 1940s, Professor of History and Pro-Vice-Chancellor A.B.A. Haleem was

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<sup>37</sup> Various, *The Aligarh Magazine: Union Jubilee Number*, Autumn 1934, 261.

<sup>38</sup> Khan, "Zakir Ali Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas August 10, 2006." Zakir Ali Khan clearly associates this “can-do” attitude the success of Aligarians in Pakistan.

remembered especially as the administrator who enforced the rules of conduct and etiquette. Students remember Haleem as a stickler for the uniform; despite his high regard for the British, he still wore *churidar* (tight) pajamas and sherwani with Turki Topi (*fez*) though most teachers had dispensed with that by the mid-1940s.<sup>39</sup> This attention to dress and etiquette had been an early priority of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan as he sought to align the priorities of the Muslims and the British.<sup>40</sup>

The Aligarh costume was a curious mix of Eastern, Western and Turkish elements. Despite the punishing heat of Aligarh during much of the year, the full uniform consisted of a black sherwani (a long, heavy tunic with a banded collar), white straight pajamas still known as “Aligarh pajamas,” cotton socks, shoes and the red Turkish fez. This represented Sir Sayyid’s effort to choose the best elements of culture to elevate Muslims to the “highest level of culture” and to rescue them from contemptibility in the eyes of the British.<sup>41</sup> It also created a standard to which all Aligarh students could be held and identified even when outside the boundary walls. When a student donned the black sherwani and Aligarh pajamas, he began the transformation of becoming an Aligarh boy. All the boys, regardless of their ethnic or religious background, with only one or two exceptions, wore this costume. As noted in the Regulations of the Academic Council included in the Calendar of 1948 the “Sikh students are exempted from wearing the fez and for female students the uniform is the Black Burqa- even to receive their degrees at

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<sup>39</sup> Masood ul Hasan, "Some Glimpses of the University in the Forties," *The Aftab The Aftab Memoirs Special* (1976): 68.

<sup>40</sup> Manglori, *Towards a Common Destiny*, 124.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

convocation.”<sup>42</sup> A correction slip tucked between the pages further elucidates that non-Muslim women were exempt from wearing the burqa but “shall be required to appear with head covered by a shawl or other proper headgear.”<sup>43</sup> While students from varied backgrounds were welcomed into Aligarh’s fold, the expectation was clear that they were to adapt themselves to its environment, not the other way around.

Even young students were integrated into the system. Retired Professor Iftikhar Alam Khan remembers the first time he was disciplined into wearing the sherwani as a young boy in Minto Circle School in Aligarh.<sup>44</sup> He had been educated in Christian schools where the boys wore khaki short pants and white shirts. His first exposure to the Aligarh sherwani was when Aligarh students came to do Muslim League electioneering work and stayed at his father’s home in Fatehgarh in 1945 or 46. He was upset by their attire and was resistant to wearing it, even after he was sent to Aligarh in 1948. He described the incident, saying (in Urdu):

*One day I went to Shamshad Building wearing khaki knickers and a white shirt. And a senior boy asked me, ‘Are you a student?’ and I said, ‘Yes.’ ‘Where?’ ‘In Minto Circle.’ ‘What dress is this?’ ‘What’s wrong with it?’ He sent me back with another boy. He sat me on the back of a bicycle and said, ‘Take him back, put him in a sherwani and bring him back.’<sup>45</sup>*

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<sup>42</sup> "Aligarh Muslim University Calendar 1948," (Aligarh: Aligarh University Press, 1948).

<sup>43</sup> Though there were some Sikh students in Aligarh university prior to 1947, their numbers increased after partition when there was an influx of Sikh students into UP from Punjab. Ibid., 203- 05.

<sup>44</sup> The Minto Circle School was the Secondary School affiliated to Aligarh University.

<sup>45</sup> Khan, "Professor Iftikhar Alam Khan (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 6, 2009." Iftikhar Alam Khan arrived in Minto Circle School in 1949 and completed his High School in 1952. He passed out from Aligarh University and became a Professor of Museology there. He is an expert on Aligarh’s architectural history and has written several books on the subject.

The older students had power over the younger, and students who had been at the university longer had power over newcomers (even, oddly, if the longer tenured student had failed examinations and not advanced through the degree). The system of seniority, the tradition of grooming younger boys to respect and obey their elders is considered one of the key institutions in Aligarh. Many students remember that as juniors, they were compelled to say “salaam” to an elder before the elder had an opportunity to greet them first. Professor Nasir Ali, who joined Aligarh in 1939 wrote that the system “upheld the healthy traditions of Aligarh which constituted Aligarh culture. Any lapse on the part of their youngers elicited a stern admonition. These words were not uncommon ‘Partner, this is not done here.’ The well-meaning authorities could justifiably bank upon their good office in maintaining discipline. The student community in general held such seniors in high esteem and followed their advice unswervingly.”<sup>46</sup>

Most students speak glowingly about this system, but Saghir Ahmad Rizvi first saw it as sinister. He told me that when he first arrived at Aligarh as an intermediate student, he was upset by the culture of seniority, and the fact that he had to obey the senior boy who occupied the rear portion of their rooms in Sir Syed Hall. “He was the senior so he used to dictate and so I have to obey him. So I passed this way, three or four months and then I got tired of it.”<sup>47</sup> Rizvi left the University and completed his Intermediate degree in Lucknow. In contrast, Abdul Rashid Khan told me that this system

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<sup>46</sup> Nasir Ali, "Aligarh- Then and Now," *The Aftab* The Aftab Memoirs Special (1976): 140.

<sup>47</sup> Syed Saghir Ahmad Rizvi, "Syed Saghir Ahmad Rizvi: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas October 6, 2009," (Lucknow: October 6, 2009). Syed Saghir Ahmad Rizvi is a native of Lucknow where he completed his early education before studying Engineering in Lucknow. After completing his degree he moved to the United States for several years before settling down in India in the late 1960s where he worked as an engineer.

helped to build the solidarity of a familial environment. “It was such complete brotherhood there, and my senior loved me like a younger brother and I respected him like an elder. Even in front of my ‘elder brother,’ I didn’t smoke in front of him, in his presence. So that culture building was there.”<sup>48</sup> That “culture building” is key to the creation of the powerful moral community that developed at Aligarh—its coercive aspects created a sense of vulnerability in the students, but they were drawn into its fold where they discovered strength and support.

In a 1942 address to students A.B.A Haleem stressed

the need for the maintenance of a high standard of discipline and explained that the most successful nations of the world to-day are those which have realized the value of discipline. Discipline is bred in the bones of the English, and we should not have any hesitation in learning from them whatever is good in their national life. Self-discipline is the noblest and highest form of discipline and it is only where self-discipline is wanting that it becomes necessary to impose it from above.<sup>49</sup>

Haleem reminded the students of their place in the hierarchical order of empire (though it reads anachronistically now, as the Pakistan demand had been articulated two years prior). The British were at the top, with discipline bred in their bones, but their standard was attainable and the students, though inferior, could aspire to similar status by maintaining self-discipline. It became clear here that “civilization” marked by “discipline” could be taught. Haleem spoke to the students at a time when the majority of students were becoming involved in political activism for the Muslim League, an important transition in the life of the university as politics became a part of daily life

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<sup>48</sup> Khan, "Abdul Rashid Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas." Abdul Rashid Khan is a native of Saharanpur. He actively fought the Muslim League elections in 1945 and '46 before settling in Pakistan. He served most of his career in the Karachi Development Authority and is now on the faculty of the Sir Syed University of Engineering and Technology.

<sup>49</sup> A.B.A. Haleem, "Prof. Haleem's Address to Students," *Muslim University Gazette* January 1, 1942, 5. This article is a report on Haleem's speech, not a verbatim transcript of it.

there. As we will see later, the question of discipline was critical during the 1940s, as students were torn between the model Haleem sought to perpetuate, and the allure of expressing themselves publicly. While the disciplinary challenges of the League period were significant because of their involvement with the political movement, students had always found ways to challenge the strict disciplinary environment at Aligarh.

Aligarh students, like students everywhere, constantly sought tested the boundaries set by the institution. There is ample evidence for this despite the protestations of Professor Nasir Ali, writing in the Aftab Hall *Memoirs* published in 1976 that “there was no ragging [hazing], no teasing and no bullying at the time of admission or immediately after either in the hostels or in the departments. In fact such a ‘ragging’ was against the Aligarh tradition and strictly forbidden.”<sup>50</sup> It is significant that his proof for the absence of ragging/ hazing is that it was “against the Aligarh tradition” and “strictly forbidden,” for this reveals the power not only of the disciplinary environment, and its goals of character building, but perhaps more significantly for our story, the importance of maintaining appearances in Aligarh. Aligarh students and Old Boys remain devoted to the narrative of uplift through character building that Sir Sayyid developed, and they maintain that it determines the character of the Aligarh environment. If a rule was there, this narrative suggests that the rule would have been followed. Professor Nasir Ali did acknowledge however, as others have shown, that this disciplinary regime may not have been as hegemonic as it appeared.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Ali, "Aligarh- Then and Now," 138.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

“Introduction Night” persists as a powerful trope in this genre of Aligarh stories. Shortly after the students were admitted to the university, the “first year fools” were initiated into the Aligarh environment through a ritualized hazing event known as “Introduction Night.” Much secrecy surrounded this ritual and the young students were apprehensive for weeks, seeking to appease the elder students by strictly observing the protocols of greeting and respect. Masood ul Hasan remembered, that “the supposedly propitiatory and cajoling ‘salams’ were flung in profusion even from positions of poor visibility, as to the scared new-comer every ‘senior’ appeared to be a potential tormentor, and the very best way to soften the rigours of the evil hour was to keep the tyrants in good humour.”<sup>52</sup> Professor Ali described Introduction Night this way: “it was a closely guarded secret, seniors would come in pitch black, beating drums and ringing bells and made fun of new students highlighting their peculiar idiosyncrasies and whims.”<sup>53</sup> Introduction Night was, in fact, characterized by ragging/hazing, where the younger students were expected to obey the directives of the senior students.

Saghir Ahmad Rizvi, who earlier described his discomfort with the seniority tradition as a student of the Intermediate classes, had a change of heart when he returned a couple of years later for his Bachelor’s degree in Engineering. Rizvi’s second sojourn in Aligarh was markedly different. This time, he was formally introduced to the brotherhood. This time, Rizvi says, he was ragged by the “top-most rascal” in the university. The senior would tell him to do different things—none of them too shocking

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<sup>52</sup> Masood ul Hasan, "Some Glimpses of the University in the Forties," Ibid.The Aftab Memoirs Special (1976): 62.

<sup>53</sup> Nasir Ali, "Aligarh- Then and Now," Ibid.The Aftab Memoirs Special (1976): 138.

by today's standards—to go outside of the Hall, or stand in a certain way, and Rizvi remembers, “I have to do at that time whatever he says, but later on he became a good friend of mine.”<sup>54</sup> The outcome of the “Introduction,” as a classic rite of passage, was that new students were inducted into the brotherhood.

They were then feted at a post-Introduction breakfast, called a “*Bhaiyya* (Elder Brother) Party” which indicated that the new students had arrived, and passed through the crucible.<sup>55</sup> Masood ul Hasan reflected that “on the whole these ‘baptismal exercises’ helped in rounding off the angularities and in the formation of a balanced personality, which was as much the concern of the senior fellow-students as of the teachers.”<sup>56</sup> It is not difficult to see the similarities here between the ritualized induction of “embryos” by “fathers” in Theodore Beck’s *Apostles*, and the breaking-in of the Aligarh “freshers.” By first rendering the boys vulnerable and then cradling them in a nurturing environment, the “Introduction” sought to break relationships with the world outside and to rebuild them in the hostels.<sup>57</sup>

Even in the context of the “Introduction” the secrecy surrounding it betrays a hint of the transgressive. On both an individual and group level, there was some excitement

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<sup>54</sup> Rizvi, "Syed Saghir Ahmad Rizvi: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas October 6, 2009."

<sup>55</sup> At this event juniors were asked to sing, and answer trivia questions. Mohd. Safiul Haque, "Forty Years Back..." *The Aftab* The Aftab Memoirs Special (1976): 104.

<sup>56</sup> Masood ul Hasan, "Some Glimpses of the University in the Forties," *Ibid.* The Aftab Memoirs Special (1976): 62.

<sup>57</sup> This ritual follows the three phase model of a rite of passage as defined by Arnold van Gennep: separation, margin (limen), aggregation. And as much as the “Introduction Night” served as a rite of passage through which boys became part of the Aligarh moral community, it is itself embedded in the larger ritual passage from home to public that is represented by and Aligarh education in which Aligarh itself functions as a liminal space out of which boys emerge to be aggregated into the Muslim community. Arnold van Gennep, ed., *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1960). Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine Pub. Co., 1969).



about challenging the boundaries of the university's discipline. This excitement, however, rarely comes out of official, written reflections on life in the university, as reflected in Nasir Ali's reflections on "ragging" above. In conversation, however, stories of rule-breaking abound.

Many of these transgressions, not surprisingly, involve the opposite sex. The proximity of the Aligarh women's college meant that the boys of Aligarh had a distinct awareness of the absence of women from their campus. They interacted with girls only rarely, at the annual Exhibition in February, where Wajahat Husain told me that he used to pass notes to girls, and on the rare occasions that female students took classes in the University. In 1938, women were admitted to the B.A. class of the Education Department, with strict arrangements for maintaining *purdah*, and in 1939 girls attended the university convocation for the first time.<sup>58</sup> Throughout the 1940s, female students attended the University in increasing numbers for research and post-graduate classes that were not available in the Women's College.<sup>59</sup> They remained secluded from their male colleagues by the veils they were required to wear, and by segregated seating divided by a *purdah* or curtain.<sup>60</sup> A 1940 *Muslim University Gazette* article on women's education

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<sup>58</sup> Nizami, *History of the Aligarh Muslim University (1920- 1945)*, 209. See also Shan Mohammad, *Glimpses of Muslim Education in India: Peeping through the Convocation Addresses of the Aligarh Muslim University*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (New Delhi: Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd., 2006), 155.

<sup>59</sup> "Education of Girls in the Muslim University," *The Muslim University Gazette* (July 15, 1940): 6. See also Saeeda Kidwai, "Mrs. Saeeda Kidwai: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas: June 17, 2009," (Aligarh, India: June 17, 2009). Fatima Fari Rahman, "Fatima Fari Rahman: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 10, 2010," (Islamabad: May 10, 2010).

<sup>60</sup> In May 1946, Margaret Bourke-White visited Aligarh University and snapped several photos of young women attending classes in full burqa, and a zoology course in which the female students were shielded from their male counterparts by a cloth screen. Margaret Bourke-White. Photo: Indian Female Students Wearing Face-Covering Birkas as They Wend Their Way to Class at Aligarh Muslim Univ. 1946. *Time & Life Pictures*. Getty Images, — — —. Photo: Zoology Class Divided W. Female Students Sitting Behind a

called these arrangements “the most important work done in the matter of advancement of female education among the Muslims.”<sup>61</sup> The piece made an argument for the necessity of inducting women into the national body, suggesting that it would be a detriment to the whole Muslim community if women were uneducated. Muslims had “to put up a strenuous struggle for our very existence as a nation and it will be a very great handicap if more than half the population of Mussalmans in India is precluded from participating in this struggle because of its being uneducated and ignorant of its rights and duties.”<sup>62</sup>

As we have seen at Aligarh, the composition of the national body was intimately linked to the health and presentation of the individual. The case for women was no exception. The compelling reasoning for inducting women into education as late as 1940, was that the “greatest of all handicaps is the health of woman and children which is badly suffering because of the ignorance of our women folk from modern rules of health and hygiene which comes through modern education.”<sup>63</sup> Despite this call to raise women out of a degraded state, as Shahnaz Rouse has pointed out with regard to the Muslim League Movement, “women are directly interpellated, not as actors in their own right, but as (supplemental) partners in a collective national project.”<sup>64</sup> This representation of women echoes the nineteenth-century reformist agenda of men like Sir Sayyid and women’s

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Purdah Screen as Their Male Counterparts Sit in the Open at Aligarh Muslim Univ. May 1, 1946. *Time & Life Pictures*. Getty Images.

<sup>61</sup> "Education of Girls in the Muslim University," 5.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Shahnaz Rouse, *Shifting Body Politics: Gender, Nation and State in Pakistan* (New Delhi: Women Unlimited (an imprint of Kali for Women), 2004), 138.

literature author Deputy Nazir Ahmed, who saw women as important supporters, but failed to differentiate women's goals from the goals of the nation. As Sir Sayyid had argued, education should draw Muslims out of the dark and unhealthy spaces of the *zenana* and into the modern world. Women were increasingly a part of the national awakening that was taking place at Aligarh. While they would become part of the national body, and thus be expected to work for its sustenance, the protection of their honor remained strictly the purview of their male counterparts.

Young university students may not have been the best candidates for the protection of women's honor in this environment. When the girls would file in and sit on the other side of the *purdah*, the temptation was strong to try to catch a glimpse of them. Perhaps, the boys hoped, they had removed their head covering, once they could "hear their bangles and so on and know that they had arrived."<sup>65</sup> The boys, surreptitiously, sought holes in the curtain through which they might see the girls, even sometimes cutting it with a small knife or blade to get a better view. They could not hide for long, however, and their professors caught on to their antics. Thereafter, one narrator told me, the classroom assistant carried a needle and thread with him; everyday he inspected the curtain and stitched up any holes. But, he told me slyly, sometimes, the girls used to cut the curtain!

The women's college, two kilometers away, was far enough down the road that the male students could not get to it without some effort. In addition, it was and remains

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<sup>65</sup> Wajahat Husain, "Major General Wajahat Husain (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas July 11, 2006," (Lahore: July 11, 2006).

surrounded by a high wall, with recreational, residential, education and dining facilities all inside. The girls rarely left through the large gates, and when they did, they were shrouded in a two-piece *burqa* which Fatima Fari Rahman described as being a head covering with “a coat-like thing.”<sup>66</sup> Despite these difficulties: the space between the campuses, and the walls around each one, Saghir Ahmad Rizvi, who led a gang of several boys,<sup>67</sup> made an arrangement with the guard of the Sir Syed Hall so that they could sneak out at night.<sup>68</sup> The guard was complicit, Rizvi told me, because “he knew that I am very naughty and all this. So I used to go out and do all sorts of things!” Rizvi insisted that either I wouldn’t believe him if he told me all of his stories, or that he just could not bring himself to tell me. But he did describe sneaking off campus at night with a gang of friends to ride bicycles over to the Aligarh Women’s College. Once there, they sorted through and read the girls’ outgoing letters home in the letter box so that they could stand outside the gates of the college the following day reciting snippets of those personal letters to try to catch the attention of the burqa-clad girl students as they passed. It was not at all unusual, he implied, to “pass remarks” at girls. But, as in the story above where the purity of the girls’ intentions was tantalizingly impugned, Rizvi told me that there were a few girls who would come out of the college to meet the boys, too. He told me

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<sup>66</sup> Fari Rahman, "Fatima Fari Rahman: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas January 4, 2008." Fatima Fari Rahman was born in Saharanpur but her family was originally from Aligarh. Upon the death of her father, the family moved back to Aligarh and she completed her M.Sc. from the Aligarh University in 1948. She later completed a Ph.D. in Organic Chemistry from the University of London. In 1961 she married a Pakistan Army officer and migrated there.

<sup>67</sup> Ahmad Saeed, "Ahmad Saeed: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas October 10, 2009," (Lucknow: October 10, 2009). Ahmad Saeed is a Lucknow native who grew up in Aligarh and attended the Muslim University High School. He graduated from AMU with a degree in engineering and served the United Provinces State Electricity Board.

<sup>68</sup> Rizvi, "Syed Saghir Ahmad Rizvi: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas October 6, 2009."

this cautiously, caught by the knowledge that telling me would reflect poorly on the reputation of the girls, and so as he spoke, he was careful to protect even the idea of their reputations. “We are on good terms and sometimes they used to-- if I tell you?-- they used to come out! But we respected them very much, it is not—you know.” There was nothing untoward, he assured me, but the very act of meeting with girls was so taboo, that in speaking it now he felt compelled to offer evidence as to the purity of their relationship: one of those girls is now married to his friend.<sup>69</sup> The tension that Rizvi expressed here reveals the boys’ thrill at having broken the rules, and a powerful awareness of the responsibility of the adult man to protect the honor of women.

Inside the boundary walls, the students of the college became a “brotherhood” a *biradari*. This *biradari* functioned in different situations, whether as religious confession, a political interest group, or the basis for an independent national identity.<sup>70</sup> The bonds of this brotherhood were formed on top of the already shared values of the *ashraf*, which, Lelyveld emphasizes, had less to do with birth, as in the Hindu caste system, than with “cosmopolitan Mughal criteria:” manners, dress, architecture, painting, literature, athletic skills, etc.<sup>71</sup> The enclosed environment of Aligarh was dedicated to the cultivation of those ideals, and the residential system provided both formal and informal training for the world outside.

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation*, 343.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 30.

## SPORTS

One of the critical aspects of the development of masculinity both at Cambridge and at Aligarh was the cultivation of a competitive, sporting culture. Theodore Beck brought cricket to Aligarh, arguing that a successful cricket program would elevate Aligarh's prestige and visibility and help to establish bonds with the outside community. During the Victorian period, sport was seen as an important site for the "training of a boy's character... [that] helped create the confidence to lead and the compulsion to follow."<sup>72</sup> The relationship between leadership and deference was key to the training of colonial servants, who had at once to embrace their role as the dominant race and their place in a hierarchical system that they had agreed to serve. For Aligarh men, the inculcation of discipline was designed to nurture the ideal of group solidarity in which the individual was subordinated, and to encourage personal accountability to the group. Theodore Beck referred to this combination of independence and responsibility as "manly."<sup>73</sup> In the Principal's Annual Report for 1895-6 he highlighted the importance of active physical games to "supplant the natural indolence of the East by the restless activity of the Englishman."<sup>74</sup> The sports culture complemented the residential system by offering a site for physical challenge, cooperation and competition. And as in late Victorian England, sport was tied to health, both physical and cultural.

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<sup>72</sup> J.A. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal* (Harmondsworth; New York: Viking, 1986), 18.

<sup>73</sup> Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation*, 260.

<sup>74</sup> Theodore Beck, "The Principal's Annual Report 1895-6," in *Theodore Beck Papers from the Sir Syed Academy Archives*, ed. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami (Aligarh: Sir Syed Academy, 1991), 85. This statement clearly exposes Beck's sense that there was a pervasive gendered "difference" between Indians and Englishmen, albeit one that could be at least partially overcome by good training.

Thought not much of an athlete himself compared to his older brother Shaukat, Mohamad Ali extolled the virtues of sport in his 1904 pamphlet when he referred to “life outside the lecture rooms, the life of the playgrounds” as critical to the development of the University environment, one of the aspects that differentiated the residential university from the school.<sup>75</sup> This culture exalted the fit, physical body as the masculine body, complemented by a sharp mind and developed physical and intellectual skills.

In my interviews with Aligarh graduates of the 1940s generation, many spoke of the sporting culture at Aligarh, modeled deliberately on that of Cambridge. Cricket was the Aligarh sport *par excellence*, but other sports, especially field hockey, earned a reputation, too. In 1900, there were facilities for cricket, football, and riding, including stables for the horses.<sup>76</sup> In the 1940s, Zakir Ali Khan told me,

Every facility was there. Now it has expanded a lot because there was a great stress laid on sports so we had a stadium for sport, we had for cricket, hockey, tennis, swimming. And every other thing. There was a lot of cricket... You can imagine the interest taken by the university in the realm of sport that in 1902, a team of Oxford University [came]... that was the first game which was in Aligarh.<sup>77</sup>

The visit of the Oxford “Authentics,” a team cobbled together from former players and even a few Cambridge men, marked a high point in the history of sport at Aligarh, though when rains forced the end of the match, the Aligarh team had no hope of winning with “182 to get in the fourth innings.”<sup>78</sup> The teams adjourned to a friendly game of football

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<sup>75</sup> Mohamad Ali, "The Proposed Mohamedan University (1904)," in Nizami, *History of the Aligarh Muslim University (1920- 1945)*, 262.

<sup>76</sup> Iftikhar Alam Khan, "Map of Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh, 1900," in *Muhammadian Kalij Histari* (Agra: Mufid-i- Am Press, 1974). Reproduced in Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation*, 161.

<sup>77</sup> Khan, "Zakir Ali Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas August 10, 2006."

<sup>78</sup> Cecil Headlam, *Ten Thousand Miles through India and Burma: An Account of the Oxford University Authentics' Cricket Tour with Mr. K.J. Key in the Year of the Coronation Durbar* (London: J.M. Dent & Co., 1903), 176.

on the wet ground and though this has not survived in the Aligarh telling, the Aligarh team beat “their heavier but less practiced opponents.”<sup>79</sup> Unlike the examples Patrick McDevitt cites of English defeats at the hands of New Zealand’s “All Blacks” or South Africa’s “Springboks,” when organized sports tours sometimes served as “a weakening agent” of Empire if the British lost, the match in Aligarh is remembered fondly as a “good” one.<sup>80</sup> Undoubtedly, in the more critical of the two matches played in Aligarh that day, the “Authentics” left the Aligarh team “morally beaten” and had reason to be proud of such a drubbing.<sup>81</sup> Cecil Headlam’s account of the “Authentics” Indian tour details the positive influence cricket had on Indian society, identifying the Parsees, “perhaps the most intelligent and progressive; ...certainly the most Europeanised race in Asia” as the most devoted cricket players. Still, Headlam admired the culture at Aligarh, conceding that the Muslims of the Anglo-Oriental College, lay “claim to be considered one of the best elevens in India”<sup>82</sup> and praising the “encouragement of manly sports of all kinds in combination with secular and religious instruction” familiar to him from England’s public schools.<sup>83</sup> Aligarh men were good opponents, working towards Sir Sayyid’s admirable dream of reforming the Muslims so that they might “meet on equal terms the Europeans who are, like them, subjects of the King-Emperor.”<sup>84</sup> This was high praise in 1903, and it seems that sport, and the development of manly ideals at Aligarh, helped to

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Patrick McDevitt, *May the Best Man Win: Sport, Masculinity, and Nationalism in Great Britain and the Empire, 1880-1935* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 2.

<sup>81</sup> Headlam, *Ten Thousand Miles*, 171.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 173.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.



bridge the gap between white and brown, between Aligarh and “Authentics” at least on that day.

This culture of sport was highly organized, a culture of play that allowed “authorized games at authorized times.”<sup>85</sup> Local sports and games, kite flying, wrestling, *gilli danda* or *kabaddi*, found no purchase in this highly organized arena.<sup>86</sup> Students still played them, undoubtedly, as Pakistan’s Iqbal Shafi remembered fondly from his boyhood days in Aligarh.<sup>87</sup> In October 1943 a brief piece on the history of Aligarh sport appeared in the *Gazette*. Cricket had been established in 1878, football in 1890, hockey in 1902, the riding club in 1894 by Theodore Morison, swimming in 1916 (Aligarh students remain proud of their indoor swimming pool), “But alas! Nothing is known about the Kabaddi Club.”<sup>88</sup> Like many of the institutions that Beck established at the college, sports were deeply symbolic of the values of both British and Indian elites. Cricket was ideally suited for this culture because, as Ramachandra Guha suggests, “in terms of its rules, rituals and vocabulary, cricket is the most complex game in the world.”<sup>89</sup> A student who excelled at cricket, and mastered its rules, might be seen as one who could master the rules of social interaction, scientific study, and advancement within the British system.<sup>90</sup> It is possible to look to the culture of sport at Aligarh for evidence about the values of the

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<sup>85</sup> Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation*, 254.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> Brigadier Shafi explained to me how to play *gilli danda* and even drew a picture of the playing pieces. Shafi, “Brigadier Iqbal Shafi (Ret’d): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 9, 2010.”

<sup>88</sup> “M.U. Sportsmen, Do You Know?,” *Muslim University Gazette* 7, no. 18 (October 15, 1943).

<sup>89</sup> Ramachandra Guha, “Cricket and Politics in Colonial India,” *Past and Present*, no. 161 (Nov., 1998): 158.

<sup>90</sup> Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation*, 257-61.

Muslim community being fostered there. The key element of this culture that narrators remember was discipline.

They remember an environment in which authority was highly respected, and their participation was voluntary. The team captains were highly respected with special rooms and privileges.<sup>91</sup> Zakir Ali Khan, who was captain of the hockey team, remembers, “There were special seats reserved for the sportsmen. Special benefits and privileges were given to him. Those who were unable to pay the fees they were not charged the fees. Even meals were given to them free. Then they were decorated and looked up to by the boys.”<sup>92</sup> From the beginning of their career at Aligarh, sportsmen received preferential entry; they were not required to meet as high an academic standard as other entrants.<sup>93</sup> They also received special housing: the cricket captain lived in the university’s premier accommodation, Sir Syed Hall, and General Sports/Athletics was allotted to Aftab Hall where rooms were otherwise reserved for the students with top academic honors, or those in need of financial assistance. Zakir Ali Khan was given a room in Aftab Hall’s Mumtaz Hostel.<sup>94</sup> These special privileges helped to cultivate the culture of seniority and by spreading the captains amongst the hostels, helped to develop a sense of group rivalry and accomplishment.

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<sup>91</sup> Khan, "Zakir Ali Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas August 10, 2006."

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ziauddin Ahmad and A.E. Zobairi, in *Minutes of an Ordinary Meeting of the Academic Council* (Aligarh: Aligarh Muslim University, June 8th, 1946), 5.

<sup>94</sup> Masood ul Hasan, "Masood Ul Hasan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 1, 2009," (Aligarh: May 1, 2009). Masood ul Hasan was born in Moradabad in 1928. He studied in Aligarh University from 1943 to 1947 completing his B.A. and M.A. in English literature. He went on to complete his Ph.D. from Liverpool and to serve as a Professor of English in AMU.

By no means all of the students were involved in sports, however, and some viewed the sportsmen with contempt. S.M. Tonki, a student during the Khilafat days, remembered Beck's influence on Aligarh's culture, highly touted by most, with disdain. "This patronage had an adverse effect on the academic atmosphere of the college. Players and sportsmen, who neglected their studies and set a record of successive failures, were hailed as seniors and those who devoted their time to studies were dubbed as bookworms."<sup>95</sup> Tonki's disgust for Beck and all that he represented undoubtedly affected his perspective but there was a marked tension between the life of the classrooms and the life of the fields that was not so elegantly balanced as Mohamad Ali made it seem. Masood ul Hasan told me that the approach to sports during his childhood was very different from that at Aligarh. He had been injured as a child playing hockey, and thereafter lost his interest in games. This lack of interest was not seen as problematic in his village, he told me because, "in those days, the formula was, a very funny formula: *padhogay, likhogay banogay nawab; khelogay, koodogay hogay kharab* (You will become noble if you study and write; you will become worthless if you play around) so that was the approach to the games!"<sup>96</sup> Though he mentioned a moment later that foregoing physical activity was "unhealthy," it seems he never developed an interest in games. At best, he said, he was a "witness and a side-backer."

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<sup>95</sup> S.M. Tonki, *Aligarh and Jamia: Fight for National Education System* (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1983), 9.

<sup>96</sup> Hasan, "Masood Ul Hasan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 1, 2009."

As it turns out, sports and intellectual activities were frequently linked and represented as the central institutions of character development in the university. Asloob Ahmad Ansari, now a retired professor of English, devoted his attentions exclusively to intellectual development. As he told me, like the sports captains, successful Union speakers traveled all over India for their competitions as representatives of the university and were treated “in a ‘special way;’ introduced... to various dignitaries who visited the university. Those who participated in the debates were regarded as sort of privileged persons.”<sup>97</sup> The honorific language used to describe these two different categories of leaders at Aligarh makes clear that they occupied similar positions. Hameed Alhashmi was a hockey and cricket player during his student days in Aftab Hall. As Provost of the Hall in 1976, he suggested that during his tenure in that position “some of the best students were inhabitants of Aftab and I did my best to mould them to win the Inter Hall Sports and Games as also Literary and Cultural Championship.”<sup>98</sup> While narrators rarely discussed their academic experiences, participation in the Union and sports are common topics, both embodying the spirit of competition, and the ethos that the successful individual student represented the student body and the university as a whole.

In 1940, a few months after a chastening speech lamenting the decline of sports at the institution by the Nawab of Bhopal, a keen sportsman and Old Boy,<sup>99</sup> the *Gazette*

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<sup>97</sup> Ansari, "Asloob Ahmad Ansari: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas July 5, 2008."

<sup>98</sup> Hameed A. Alhashmi, "1450 Plus," *The Aftab* Aftab Memoirs Special (1976).

<sup>99</sup> Patrick McDevitt discusses the way in which polo built a bond of solidarity between elite British soldiers and colonial servants and Indian royalty, "The Princes." Racial generalizations were "balanced by frequent compliments of the more cerebral and moral aspects of the game's best Indian players...the endless complimenting of individual princes as 'sportsmen'... denoted more than just natural, physical skill. The moral uprightness that was thought to go hand in glove with athleticism was also implied." A. Vadivelu, in

published an article outlining the tenets of “Physical Culture at Aligarh” in which Aligarh’s modernity was made to hinge on the original inclusion of an emphasis on physical culture. Significantly, the piece emphasized the fact that this success was the outcome of disciplined hard work, that “sporting talents and achievements are recognized by the University as much as academic distinctions and equal encouragement is given in both.”<sup>100</sup> Articles like these constantly reminded students of the importance of the university’s values and priorities. They served to perpetuate the university’s traditions and to create a common narrative (particularly in times of turmoil) that persists now, even as former students recall their experiences in the college and on the playing fields.

1940 was an important turning point in the University’s history. It clearly marked the beginning of the domination of the Muslim League in the affections of the university students (though there is evidence of it even earlier, in 1940, the majority of students were drawn into sympathy with the League’s explicit demand for Pakistan). It is perhaps not surprising to detect a sense of caution in the discussions about the university’s *esprit de corps*. New political rifts were emerging, and certainly later in the decade, those tensions were expressed in physical conflict. The piece on physical culture concluded,

wherever an Aligarh team goes in a friendly match or tournament or meet, its sportsmanship and good behaviour in victory or defeat is appreciated and praised. This distinction is the result of its carefully planned and worked residential system which trains them in the highest standard of conduct and behaviour, which is the hall-mark of Aligarh.<sup>101</sup>

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his 1915 book *The Ruling Chiefs, Nobles and Zamindars of India* described numerous princes as “keen sportsmen.” McDevitt, *May the Best Man Win*, 49.

<sup>100</sup> “Physical Culture in the Muslim University,” *The Muslim University Gazette* (July 15, 1940).

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

As they discussed their experiences, these narrators were keenly aware of the place that sports held in the Aligarh narrative. “We were interested in the responsibilities of Aligarh so much that when our teams used to visit other cities, no college teacher was with them, the captain was the sole authority. He used to conduct all about sixteen or seventeen persons, conduct the tour and bring them. That was the training given to us. And that lasts.”<sup>102</sup> This culture of discipline extended beyond individual ambition or individual sporting events. Rather, the discipline and respect that was cultivated there allowed students to see the team as a microcosm of other social organizations in their community and themselves as its representatives. As David Lelyveld writes, “to excel as an individual was also to serve the purposes of the team, the college, and the Muslims of India.”<sup>103</sup> Thus, the stakes were high, and the student leaders knew it.

These narrators clearly connected their experiences with team sports to their participation in other kinds of activities. As the 1940s advanced, both the environment of the Union and that of the playing fields became important sites of interaction with the politics of the Muslim League and occasionally other parties. A boy’s association with those institutions would have elevated him to a position of prestige, but the physical fields themselves also provided a site of contact with the visiting dignitaries guiding the students in their political pursuits. Zakir Ali Khan remembers meeting both Nehru and Jinnah on the hockey ground, and having photographs taken with them there.<sup>104</sup> Some

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<sup>102</sup> Khan, "Zakir Ali Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas August 10, 2006."

<sup>103</sup> Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation*, 260.

<sup>104</sup> On the request of Wajahat Husain, I sought out the photograph of Jinnah with the AMU Riding Squad but was unable to locate it in Aligarh University. This evidence remains: on the afternoon of November 4,

stories about sports during the 1940s are woven together with stories about narrators' involvement in the Muslim League's Pakistan movement and their mobilization during the Second World War. Wajahat Husain recalled how being a member of the riding school enabled him to meet and interact with political leaders when they visited the university.

Those of us who were proficient were taken in the riding squad and we had the uniform like a cavalry regiment. [It was] a beautiful uniform which I was told was donated by [His Royal Highness] the Nizam of Hyderabad, and whenever these eminent persons used to visit Aligarh the riding squad used to provide the escort and the students would ride on either side of the carriage like you do in the British Household Brigade and so on. So by virtue of that I used to meet these people from the railway station onwards and then be with them until they left the campus.<sup>105</sup>

During Jinnah's famous visit to Aligarh in November 1942, Wajahat, as part of the riding squad sent to receive Jinnah at the station, remembered "we brought him in the carriage, which normally was two- horse driven. The students removed the horses and we dragged the carriage a few miles up to the University."<sup>106</sup> It is interesting to note here, that as a member of the riding squad, Wajahat rode alongside the procession; he did not physically lift the cart and drag it up the hill. But, in the retelling, he included himself in the group of boys who did, thus insinuating himself among the group of boys who supported Jinnah with this physical display of affection and deference.

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1942 Jinnah "posed for photographs with different clubs and associations and also gave autographs to hundreds of students." Mushtaq Husain Khan. *Other Functions Surrounding M.A. Jinnah's Speech: Muslim India Speaks*. November 2, 1942. *FMA*, F237/21 (1-25). PNA.

<sup>105</sup> Husain, "Major General Wajahat Husain (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 13, 2005."

<sup>106</sup> Ibid. At the beginning of his speech before the Muslim University Union, Jinnah thanked the students for their "great welcome" adding that "the way in which they had received him might be taken as an honour by any one in this country or any other." Mohammad Ali Jinnah. *Muslim India Speaks: Speech Delivered by Quaid-E-Azam Mr. M.A. Jinnah President of the All-India Muslim League at a Meeting Held under the Auspices of the Muslim University Union*. November 2, 1942. *FMA*, F 237/ 21 (1-25). PNA. I have quoted from the manuscript that includes the introductory and closing remarks by Union representatives, this speech is also found (without the supplementary remarks) in Ahmad, ed., *Some Recent Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah*, 472-84.

These extra-curricular activities facilitated the formation of the *biradari* that was mutually supportive. The culture of sport and brotherhood empowered young men to be agents of their own destiny; it encouraged self-reliance and ambition. Zakir Ali Khan's testimony above asserts that the real education was not linguistic, scientific or mathematical, not, in fact, in the subjects that Sir Sayyid worked so hard to get established there. Rather, the real education was in leadership, in sport, in competition, and in training. Abdul Rashid Khan, a student at Aligarh in the late 1940s, linked character training, sports, and the military when he told me, "the main objective was to bring up a nation well-equipped in every respect. Mentally, culturally, everything. There it was not just an institution to give degrees. There was a riding school also. They had the military training also... there, character-building was the most emphasized of all."<sup>107</sup> As aspects of "character training" these values prepared men for many futures outside of the protected environment of the university, but there was an especially close connection between this personal training and military training.

In addition to the deliberate invention of Aligarh's priorities in the early years of the university, that served to feed a masculinized Muslim solidarity, during the 1940s two other major forces drew the attention of Aligarh students. World War II was raging in Europe and pro-independence nationalism was growing in influence, especially amongst Muslims. Both episodes had distinct effects on the university. In addition, the values of the university, as an outpost of *ashraf* culture, were reflected in these movements, making

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<sup>107</sup> Khan, "Abdul Rashid Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas."



Aligarh students prime targets for recruitment. The university deliberately prepared students for both.

## **WORLD WAR II**

During World War II, Muslim League supporters sought to differentiate themselves from the “Quit India” Movement by participating in the war effort. Congress leaders had resigned their positions in legislative assemblies throughout the country in a non-cooperation protest against the British government’s decision to declare war without consulting Indian leaders. Muslim League politicians did not resign. While Congress leaders languished in jail the League used the war years to build stronger relationships with the ruling British that bolstered their influence in the negotiations for independence after the war. General Wajahat remembers Jinnah’s speech during his 1942 visit in which he praised the students for staying aloof during the Quit India unrest in August, when many students in other universities got involved.<sup>108</sup> Wajahat remembers that Jinnah urged the students to complete their studies in preparation for leadership in Pakistan.

He came in and he addressed the students and he told them, “You are the leaders of tomorrow on whom I am banking when Pakistan is formed. I don’t want you to waste your time and take part in these demonstrations and be jailed and waste your time. I want you to concentrate on your studies and get ready to play your part when Pakistan is formed.”<sup>109</sup>

Muslim support of the British war effort both demonstrated the loyalty of the Muslim community to the British in a time of need, and further differentiated the agenda of the

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<sup>108</sup> See Chapter Three “Understanding Minority: Aligarh University and the Muslim Question”

<sup>109</sup> Husain, "Major General Wajahat Husain (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 13, 2005."

Muslim League from that of the Indian National Congress' Quit India Movement.<sup>110</sup> The restraint of Aligarh students was noted also by the Nizam of Hyderabad, the Chancellor of the University, who wrote to the Vice Chancellor, Ziauddin Ahmad, in order to commend the students and to inform them that their abstention from the Quit India unrest had been noted even by the Viceroy who "appreciated" their "good conduct and behavior." The Nizam used the opportunity to remind the students of Aligarh that "perseverance and manly character are the chief necessary factors to combat the evil forces that are unfortunately rampant in the country; so it is all the more necessary that we should overcome them by our sagacity and prudence at all costs."<sup>111</sup> Within the University, however, the students' behavior was cast less as result of pro-British, than as pro-Muslim League sentiment. As the Vice-President of the Aligarh Union suggested, as he introduced Jinnah to the students packed into Strachey Hall during Jinnah's visit, "we obeyed and carried out to the very letter the mandate of the Working Committee [of the All India Muslim League] by continuing our peaceful academic life and refusing to be drawn into the suicidal and destructive activities of the Congress."<sup>112</sup> Even as he cautioned the students against getting mixed up with the Congress-led Quit India

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<sup>110</sup> Jinnah. Speech: Muslim India Speaks.

<sup>111</sup> "H.E.H. The Chancellor's Gracious Message: Satisfaction with Students' Conduct During Congress Movement, November 30, 1942," *Muslim University Gazette* January 1, 1943, 1.

<sup>112</sup> Shakir Husain Khan. Introductory Remarks to M.A. Jinnah's Speech: Muslim India Speaks. November 2, 1942. *FMA*, F 237/ 21 (1-25). PNA.

Movement, Jinnah thanked the students for raising funds for the League, and aggressively urged them to “work, work and work and organize the Muslim League.”<sup>113</sup>

In addition to the League work and their studies, Aligarh students were encouraged to demonstrate their support for the British effort by pursuing military training. By volunteering for the military, Muslim Leaguers and Aligarh students could engage in “useful” support and cast themselves as “martial” in contrast to the ostensibly non-violent ethos of the Hindu-led Congress. Aligarh Muslim University took up the mantle of the masculine imperative to defend the homeland by recruiting students for the armed forces.<sup>114</sup> During the war, Aligarh students were expected to participate in a compulsory “drill” that took place three periods a week in the morning.<sup>115</sup> The drill was considered the preliminary step in acquainting students with the discipline and training of modern warfare and was the foundational institution for what Ziauddin hoped would become Aligarh’s Military College.

Sir Ziauddin Ahmad was instrumental in expanding the university’s facilities for war preparation.<sup>116</sup> As early as 1937, he began to generate support and funding for a Military College at Aligarh University. In 1937 Khan Bahadur Abdul Hamid Khan appealed to the Nizam of Hyderabad for a grant to provide military training for Muslims.

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<sup>113</sup> Mohammad Ali Jinnah. *Muslim India Speaks: Speech Delivered by Quaid-E-Azam Mr. M.A. Jinnah President of the All-India Muslim League at a Meeting Held under the Auspices of the Muslim University Union. November 2, 1942.* Ibid., F 237/ 21 (1-25). PNA.

<sup>114</sup> Paul Deslandes notes that, similarly, Oxbridge colleges had been emptied of undergraduates during World War I. Clubs and the Union ceased to function, and, in the absence of undergraduates, the “‘real Oxford’ became only a memory.” Deslandes, *Oxbridge Men*, 24.

<sup>115</sup> Nizami, *History of the Aligarh Muslim University (1920- 1945)*, 219.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 217.

He mobilized the familiar narrative of decline to convince Muslim leaders to support the training so that the “military spirit” might be planted in the Muslim community enabling them to defend against the nefarious designs of their “countrymen” who sought to give “practical shape to their secret designs and make the Muslim life unbearable.” He therefore urged leaders “In the name of Islam... to come to the rescue of their community which has lost its vitality and is fast going down into the depths of degradation [sic].”<sup>117</sup> Abdul Hamid Khan’s strategy represents a deployment of the original declensionist narrative of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan. By presenting the Muslim polity as threatened, as undefended, his appeal sought to mobilize support for rejuvenation. On March 28, Ziauddin Ahmad presented his “Draft Scheme for a Military College at Aligarh” to the Muslim University Court. However, it was not until 1942 that the university received a grant from the Government of the United Provinces to establish a Department of Military Training.<sup>118</sup>

Despite the difficulty in generating support for a full-fledged Military College, the University Training Corps (it became the University Officers’ Training Corps U.O.T.C. in 1942)<sup>119</sup> flourished in Aligarh and was the first place many students received training. Masood ul Hasan recalled, “it used to be the feeder for the higher ranks of the army.”<sup>120</sup> It was from the ranks of the UTC that Pakistan’s future Army Commander-in-Chief, Ayub Khan, was recruited. As a result of the complaint that Indians were not fairly represented

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<sup>117</sup> Khan Bahadur Abdul Hamid Khan, "The Need of a Muslim Military College," *Muslim University Gazette* February 5, 1937, 8.

<sup>118</sup> Nizami, *History of the Aligarh Muslim University (1920- 1945)*, 218.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 219.

<sup>120</sup> Masood ul Hasan, "Masood Ul Hasan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas March 20, 2009," (Aligarh: March 20, 2009). See also Nizami, *History of the Aligarh Muslim University (1920- 1945)*, 219.

among the officers in the army, a recruiter gathered the students in Strachey Hall to look for “suitable officer-material.” Ayub Khan recalled in his memoir, “This was in early 1926 and I was a member of the University Training Corps. General Skeen asked me ‘Would you like to go into the army?’ I said, ‘Of course I would like to go into the army.’ He asked me why, and when I explained... he advised me to submit my application.”<sup>121</sup> Later, the Principal of the Intermediate College of Aligarh, the English Major Dann offered to coach him for the Sandhurst examination, and he was selected in June 1926.<sup>122</sup> Aligarh was an ideal site for officer recruitment, many students came from families with long-standing martial traditions, and the Aligarh boys were already accustomed to a disciplined lifestyle.

The emphasis on the martial tradition persisted throughout the peace between the wars and when World War II began, it became an important political tool as well. In 1939 the *Aligarh Magazine* reported that as proof of Aligarh’s loyalty to the British establishment, a tradition founded by Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, “a large number of the UTC [University Training Corps] members are voluntarily offering to fight on the side of Britain.”<sup>123</sup> Throughout the war, the UTC continued to grow, though it became increasingly difficult to finance. From 1941 to 1942, the corps doubled in size, but shortage of funds meant a shortage of equipment and frequent staff changes. Still, the *Aligarh Gazette* proclaimed that “a high level of efficiency and enthusiasm has been

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<sup>121</sup> Mohammad Ayub Khan, *Friends Not Masters* (New York; London; Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1967), 7.

<sup>122</sup> Major E.W. Dann was appointed Principal of the Intermediate College in 1921. Nizami, *History of the Aligarh Muslim University (1920- 1945)*, 92.

<sup>123</sup> Various, "Iqbal Number," *The Aligarh Magazine* 1939-40, viii.

maintained, and a considerable number of cadet members have joined the fighting forces.”<sup>124</sup>

Whereas the day-to-day maintenance of discipline may have been the preserve of students, training for the military was managed by teachers and military officers. The university supported special training for some members of the staff in the hope that they might be able to “impart Military training to students on modern lines.”<sup>125</sup> Some university officials even held “honorary rank” in the army, including Colonel Haider, the head of the Department of Chemistry and the Vice Chancellor Sir Ziauddin Ahmad who was granted the honorary rank of Lieutenant Colonel in 1942.<sup>126</sup> By the middle of the war, Aligarh had become a site of official recruiting for the military.

In 1942, while recruiting for Emergency Commissions, the Commissioner of Bareilly Division, Mr. Nethersole, wrote that he found Aligarh students highly qualified for the commissions, as they were “alert, full of enthusiasm and generally of a very good type.”<sup>127</sup> Nethersole’s “good type” tellingly links the mental and the physical to praise the qualifications of Aligarh boys. The university provided “special facilities” to prepare students for these Emergency Commissions during the war, including the fact that the selection committee’s work was completed on site. “Students with sound physique and inclination for military service” were invited to take advantage of the unique training

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<sup>124</sup> — — —, *Muslim University Gazette* February 15, 1942, 7.

<sup>125</sup> Five members of the staff were sent to the Staff College for “military training on modern lines.” “Muslim University in the Year 1941-42 (Con’t),” *Muslim University Gazette* June 1, 1942, 21.

<sup>126</sup> — — —, *Ibid.* March 1, 1942, 2. Colonel Haider influenced a number of the Aligarh students who were militarily inclined, and most remember him fondly. One narrator however, a student of chemistry, Wasi ur Rahman, told me that Haider was not a very good teacher! Wasi ur Rahman, “Wasi Ur Rahman: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas November 21, 2009,” (Aligarh: November 21, 2009).

<sup>127</sup> “Muslim University in the Year 1941-42 (Con’t),” 20.

opportunity available at Aligarh and to “help in maintaining the traditional share of the Muslims in the defence of the country.”<sup>128</sup> By March 1942, approximately 80 students had received such commissions for the Navy, Air Force and Land Force.<sup>129</sup> The following year, the Gazette reported that upwards of 500 students from Aligarh had received Emergency Commissions.<sup>130</sup>

In June 1942, the *Gazette* reported that Ziauddin had convinced the government of India to support a War Technician’s Class, for which the university provided a special barracks and selection committee.<sup>131</sup> The War Technician’s Class prepared young men for work in munitions factories and had the capacity to train up to three hundred students in each class.<sup>132</sup> To encourage Muslim students to join the training course, the course was free, paid for by scholarships. It was advertised to students as good preparation for earning a livelihood during the war and more importantly for contributing to “the Mussalamans’ share in the industrial progress of India.”<sup>133</sup>

During Jinnah’s 1942 visit, the students of Aligarh treated him to a military parade in which “different companies of students in military uniform marched past the base where he stood taking the salute to the accompaniment of military band. The leader of each company carried the Muslim League Flag which was also hoisted at the Cricket

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<sup>128</sup> "Training for Emergency Commissions," *Muslim University Gazette* July 15, 1942, 1.

<sup>129</sup> "Muslim University in the Year 1941-42 (Con't)," 21.

<sup>130</sup> A.W. Khairi, "Muslim University and the War by the Publicity Officer," *Ibid.* July 15, 1943, 2.

<sup>131</sup> "Muslim University in the Year 1941-42 (Con't)," 20.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

Pavilion.”<sup>134</sup> Wajahat described the interest of the University in recruiting capable Muslim students to serve:

The war was on, [so] the University was running a special drive to give basic training to the students to prepare for joining the armed forces... Aligarh Muslim University was well ahead in sending boys to join the armed forces with the idea of the university’s policy of sending as many Muslim officers as possible so that they could participate in the armed forces and later on be senior officers.<sup>135</sup>

Volunteering in the war was a way for Muslims to rededicate their support to the British cause. However, the war experience highlighted the ambiguity of the Muslim position. General Wajahat had the feeling that Indian soldiers fighting in Europe were treated as “cannon fodder.”<sup>136</sup> While none of the narrators who contributed here had personal stories of discrimination on the battlefield, General Ghulam Umar did speak of the farce of the selection board. He said the applicants were asked trivial questions, and enrolled even if they revealed no desire to become career officers, perhaps supporting a theory of their “dispensibility.”<sup>137</sup>

Although volunteering was the best way for Muslims to declare their loyalty and separation from the non-violent, “effeminate” tactics of the Congress, their masculinity was received as incomplete in the British system. In 2005 General Wajahat told me, “Let us say, if a brigade is attacking North Africa, or Italy or anywhere, then the first front units, those two units used to be Indian units and in the rear the reserves used to be the

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<sup>134</sup> Khan, *Other Functions Surrounding M.A. Jinnah's Speech: Muslim India Speaks*.

<sup>135</sup> Husain, "Major General Wajahat Husain (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 13, 2005."

<sup>136</sup> Deslandes, *Oxbridge Men*, 24.

<sup>137</sup> Umar, "Major General Ghulam Umar (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas August 8, 2006."



British units.”<sup>138</sup> The British were all too grateful for the Indian troops, but could not see them as equals. British and Indian soldiers did not eat together, did not share living quarters. The separation between British and Indians was similar to the separation between officers and enlisted men, enshrined in an unassailable hierarchy that placed white above brown. Ayub Khan writes in his memoir that during his tenure at Sandhurst “the British did not practice the colour bar in a blatant manner, as in some countries, but they were no less colour conscious. In those days anyone coming from a subject race was regarded as an inferior human being and this I found terribly galling.”<sup>139</sup> Though, he wrote, there was the camaraderie of common purpose, “there was never any close understanding.”<sup>140</sup>

The absence of a close understanding between the British and Indians had become the core principle of the resistance to British imperialism. Indians advocated for independence, for full representation and for an end to the British economic and political domination of Indian society. Aligarh boys had long struggled with their relationship to the British, but during the 1940s, under the guidance of the Muslim League and M.A. Jinnah, they had been persuaded to exercise forbearance, to avoid the tactics of the Congress, to organize and prepare for leadership on a day when the Muslims would rule their own state. Throughout the early 1940s, Jinnah and other League leaders had urged the students to focus on their studies, but as the Pakistan movement gathered momentum,

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<sup>138</sup> Wajahat Husain, "Major General Wajahat Husain (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 16, 2005," (Lahore: June 16, 2005).

<sup>139</sup> Khan, *Friends Not Masters*, 10.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

Jinnah began to shift his focus not only to generating popular support for the movement, but to preparing for its future.

Jinnah and the Muslim League were inspired by Sir Sayyid's nationalist philosophy and incorporated its values. However, as the movement developed and the establishment of Pakistan began to seem more and more likely, Jinnah began to shift his priorities in his speeches to students. Recognizing that social and economic diversity would be necessary to sustain the new state, he told students that the Muslim community had concentrated its energies on seeking employment in the Imperial Civil Service, a key goal of Sir Sayyid's organization, and it had neglected the "commercial aspect" of the nation, to its detriment.<sup>141</sup>

We have merely been producing B.A.s and M.A.s who look for a Government job carrying a salary of Rs. 50 or Rs. 60. This is a very unsatisfactory state of affairs. I say to you and to all our leaders that we must now take immediate steps to train our youth in a manner that they may be diverted to other useful channels, where they have better prospects; but the channels will also have to be created... You must have your own commerce and your own industry in which you will be able to give employment not only to thousands of workers and labourers, but also to the educated youth, who will have infinitely better prospects and will be in a position to do better work in these lines than Government service.<sup>142</sup>

He repeatedly urged students, in speeches throughout the subcontinent, to aspire to careers above the "mere clerkships" that had been allowed to them under the British, and to pursue vocational training in bookkeeping, banking and typing.<sup>143</sup> These were careers traditionally dominated by Hindus. Jinnah went so far as to suggest that students "must look to the example of the Hindu community" which had been more flexible in its

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<sup>141</sup> Speech at the Aligarh Muslim University Union March 9, 1944 in Ahmad, ed. *Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah Vol. II*, 8

<sup>142</sup> Speech at the Aligarh Muslim University Union March 9, 1944 in *ibid.*, 7.

<sup>143</sup> Speech at a Meeting of the Muslim University Muslim League, Aligarh, March 10, 1944 in *ibid.*, 16.

pursuance of social and political opportunities.<sup>144</sup> The principles of the *ashraf*, he implied, could not sustain an entire society. Aligarh University had been instrumental in providing some of this technical training during the war, and Jinnah hoped that this trend would continue. He began to transform Sir Sayyid's narrative into one more productive for political organizing. As the next chapter will show, it was Jinnah's re-imagined version of Sir Sayyid's nationalist philosophy that ultimately created the enthusiasm for the Pakistan demand.

As the British extended their power in India, Sir Sayyid tried to align Muslims with their strategy, to draw Muslim leaders closer to their agenda. He embarked on a mission to develop an Aligarh masculinity, one that sought to be broadly inclusive, but ultimately succeeded in excluding those who were unlike him, who came from different family backgrounds, regions, or priorities. The culture of discipline enforced through the residential system, the sporting environment, and the Union became the core of a "character building" program that excluded women and non-Muslims in particular.<sup>145</sup> It facilitated a narrow view of the Indian Muslim *qaum* that became even more significant when Muslim League leaders came to incorporate Aligarh boys in their political activism. When former students look back on this period, when they speak about non-political experiences, there is a broad consensus on the "atmosphere" of the University. Boys were, largely, boys. They lived, learned and played together in a perhaps not-too-

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<sup>144</sup> Speech at the Aligarh Muslim University Union 9 March 1944, in *ibid.*, 7.

<sup>145</sup> It should be clear by now that though non-Muslims and women were present in varying numbers and with varying visibility throughout Aligarh's history, they were never the targets of the reformist mission. Rather, they were tokens of its "tolerance."

detrimental culture of gentle teasing and ultimately deep support. By the 1940s, however, this culture experienced cataclysmic change as the priorities of the institution and its founder were re-imagined in service of a new political mission.

Within two years of war's end, India and Pakistan were independent. Aligarh men, including Pakistan's first Prime Minister, Liaqat Ali Khan led the nation to independence, supported by the students of Aligarh, the group that Jinnah had called "the arsenal of Muslim India."<sup>146</sup> Aligarh men were drawn into the movement for independence easily. They had been preparing throughout the war to leave the university and to take part in the world of men, as trained technicians, pilots, or officers. Many of their colleagues had already gone. The war's end left a void for the expression of this enthusiasm, and the political organizers of the Muslim League were ready to harness it. Throughout the 1940s the League had held political sway on the campus, dominating the university's publications, the Union and the sympathies of the administration and many of the teachers. In 1945-46 provincial elections were to be held, Aligarh boys threw themselves into League election work and set out across India to convince Muslims that a vote for the League was a vote for Pakistan.

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<sup>146</sup> Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Speech at Aligarh Muslim University, March 10, 1941. Cited in Mukhtar Zaman *Students' Role in the Pakistan Movement* (Karachi: Quaid-e-Azam Academy, 1978), 48.

## Chapter 3

### Self-Realization and the Nation: Aligarh Student Activism

The students of the Aligarh University are frequently invoked as the foot soldiers of Pakistan and their electioneering work recognized as the difference-maker in the 1945 and 1946 provincial elections when the pro-Pakistan Muslim League won the majority of Muslim seats.<sup>1</sup> The Muslim University Muslim League, under the guidance of Aligarh graduate and lawyer Manzar-i-Alam Ansari, was particularly active in recruiting, training, equipping and dispatching students into the hinterlands of UP, Punjab, the Northwest Frontier Province, Assam and Sindh to support Muslim League candidates. The elections are sometimes called “a referendum on Pakistan” (not to be confused with the actual referenda that took place in Bengal and the Northwest Frontier Provinces<sup>2</sup>) and secured sufficient support for the Muslim League agenda to convince the British that the Muslim League held a majority of Muslim support.

In one of Indian historian Mushirul Hasan’s most famous pieces on Aligarh, the image of Aligarh student election-workers sets the scene for his examination of the university during the Muslim League period.<sup>3</sup> Hasan’s work has done much to advance

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<sup>1</sup> The Minto-Morley Reforms of 1909 had provided for separate electorates for Muslims.

<sup>2</sup> Actual referenda took place in Sylhet, the Northwest Frontier Province, Punjab and Sindh in 1947.

<sup>3</sup> Two distinct versions of the article have been published no fewer than four times. The earliest argued that pan-Islamism drew attention to Muslim identity and that the ensuing religious fervor fueled the demand for an Islamic State. Hasan, "Nationalist and Separatist Trends," 116. Followed by: Mushirul Hasan and M.A.H. Qadri, "Nationalist and Separatist Trends in Aligarh, 1915- 47," *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 22, no. 1 (1985). A revised version of the article was first published in 1998, and again in 2000. This version incorporates the idea that Muslims should return to the spiritual and intellectual roots of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan’s inclusive philosophy in order to chart a path in post-colonial India. Mushirul

our understanding of the involvement of Aligarh students in the Pakistan demand, as has the work of Sarfaraz Husain Mirza, a Pakistani scholar who has collated and published much of the correspondence between Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Liaquat Ali Khan, and student groups throughout British India. However, neither scholar has undertaken a complete study of the role and experience of students during this period. The only monograph on the students' movement, written by Mukhtar Zaman, is fairly comprehensive, based on personal experience, interviews, memories and preserved documents. All three authors invoke student activity in the context of telling a story about Muslim nationalism that places the state at the center of the story. Thus, Muslim nationalism takes on comprehensive significance as a story about state making—the creation of both India and Pakistan—and the place of Muslims in general and Aligarh Muslims in particular in both states. Hasan is concerned to protect the reputation of his alma mater from the stain of separatist Muslim nationalism, Zaman exalts the students' central role in a teleological story of Pakistan, and Mirza has been instrumental in centering Aligarh in Pakistan's state narrative as the beating heart of the Pakistan demand.

This chapter argues that only by de-linking Aligarh students' activism in the 1930s and 40s from its outcome—the creation of Pakistan—can we clearly see their motives and the impact of state narratives on their memories. This allows us to place the Pakistan demand in a continuum of political action at the University beginning in its

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Hasan, "Negotiating with Its Past and Present: The Changing Profile of the Aligarh Muslim University," in *Knowledge, Power & Politics: Educational Institutions in India* (New Delhi: Roli Books, 1998). Hasan, "Negotiating with Its Past and Present: The Changing Profile of the Aligarh Muslim University."

earliest days and to recognize in it the central priority of Muslim uplift as a separate objective from that of independent statehood. For the student activists, particularly those at Aligarh, their concern was for the community, its integrity, safety and advancement. This was not simply a selfless and idyllic concern. Aligarh boys fully expected that they would be the leaders of this community. Their own welfare was tied to that of the community's fortunes. Only by examining the movement historically can we see through the stigma of Aligarh's exceptionalism and understand how its history has been co-opted by multiple state stories in ways that obscure many of the movement's priorities. This strategy clarifies the experience of students who had to navigate the shifting politics of the institution that was not only their school, but also their home. I will examine the changing environment at Aligarh in the late 1930s, and particularly the environment during the period when the Indian National Congress governed in provincial ministries. This was a difficult period for Muslims who perceived their status to be compromised and deliberately undermined by Congress workers' actions. The Muslim League, intent to rejuvenate support for Muslim nationalism after the return of Mohammad Ali Jinnah to Indian politics, exploited the tension between Hindus and Muslims and specifically targeted the Muslim students.<sup>4</sup>

Whereas in the late 1930s, Jinnah mobilized student support by appealing to the idea that Muslims were a Minority community that required concessions and safeguards in a democratic state, his speeches to student groups reflect over time the transformation

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<sup>4</sup> Sarfaraz Hussain Mirza, *Youth & Pakistan Movement: History and Chronology* (Lahore: Nazaria-i-Pakistan Foundation, 2004), 2. See also Khan, "Zakir Ali Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas August 10, 2006."

in his mind from conceiving of the Muslims as a Minority to insisting they be recognized as a Nation. This is the critical transformation of the Pakistan movement, and sits at the heart of one of the great debates in the historiography of the Pakistan Movement, namely, was the Pakistan demand understood to be territorial? It is not my intention to reargue this point here; I believe there is sufficient evidence to make clear that the demand for Pakistan was always territorial. In an address to the Punjab Muslim Students' Federation in March 1941, Jinnah unambiguously declared, "We are a nation and a nation must have a territory," a nation "must have a territorial state and that is what you want to get."<sup>5</sup> However, there is ample evidence to suggest that the question of completely separate statehood remained unresolved until very late in the negotiations for Pakistan.<sup>6</sup>

There was already a precedent for semi-autonomous statehood with which the students of Aligarh were intimately familiar. In addition to the support of local landholders and nawabs,<sup>7</sup> the leaders of the Aligarh University and of the Hyderabad State had been serving in one another's institutions since Aligarh's foundation; the Nizam

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<sup>5</sup> Ahmad, ed., *Some Recent Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah*, 247.

<sup>6</sup> Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League, and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985). This is the centerpiece of Jalal's argument but there is also evidence in the Pakistan Freedom Movement Archives that scholars with League sympathies continued to prepare plans well into the 1940s for "Muslim India" that included "safeguards and concessions" for a Muslim Minority. M.A.H. Qadri. M.A.H. Qadri to M.A. Jinnah: Terms of Reference for Education Committee of All India Muslim League. December 19, 1943. *SHC*, Vol. 51/ 144-62. PNA, A.B.A. Haleem. Statutory Safeguards for Minorities. May 12, 1946. *FMA*, F 1122/ 59-61. PNA.

<sup>7</sup> One narrator drove home point about the support of the Muslim feudal lords, tracing their support back to the founding of the university. "Sir Sayyid was a great visionary and he has chosen a place which is very near to Delhi and it is surrounded by small Muslim states. Small states you could call them, but they were all feudal lords. They were very helpful in establishment of Aligarh Muslim University." Khan, "Zakir Ali Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas August 10, 2006."



of Hyderabad was the Chancellor of the University,<sup>8</sup> the Nawab of Rampur its Pro-Chancellor and a significant financial patron;<sup>9</sup> and Nawab Ali Hasan Khan of Bhopal “was a great admirer of Sir Sayed and... helped Aligarh college with money and support.”<sup>10</sup> The Nawab of Chattari, a local *zamindar* (landlord) and Aligarh patron, was the Prime Minister of Hyderabad State from 1941-1943 and again in 1947; he also served as Chancellor of Osmania University in Hyderabad. It was not inconceivable that a Muslim state could exist within a larger Indian polity, and Aligarh’s links to Hyderabad, Rampur, Bhopal and other Muslim princely states proved it. There is no conflict between a Pakistan demand that is both territorial and part of India; the power of the Pakistan demand was that it meant different things to different people.<sup>11</sup> What emerges from this examination, however, is the sense that Aligarh students saw in the Pakistan demand the familiar terms of the Aligarh movement, that Pakistan was for them not merely a territory where Muslims occupied the majority, but a way of being that elevated the priorities of their founder to the highest position. Pakistan, for them, meant empowerment through solidarity, and they were willing to do anything to get it.

An examination of Aligarh’s past reveals that political ideas gained currency there during periods of difficulty, when the students perceived an external threat to their very existence. It was on this ground that Sir Sayyid first argued for the institution. He

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<sup>8</sup> The Nizam accepted his third term as Chancellor in 1941-42. "Muslim University in the Year 1941-42," *Muslim University Gazette* May 15, 1942, 4.

<sup>9</sup> The Nawab accepted his second term as Pro-Chancellor in 1941-42. Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Choudhry Khaliqzaman, *Pathway to Pakistan* (Lahore: Longmans Pakistan Branch, 1961), 7.

<sup>11</sup> Anita Inder Singh has argued that Pakistan meant “all things to all Muslims.” Anita Inder Singh, *The Origins of the Partition of India, 1936-1947*, Oxford University South Asian Studies Series (Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 107.

invoked fears of Muslim decline in the wake of the 1857 Mutiny, arguing that Muslims' failure to take advantage of English education would render them helpless in a state dominated by the British. Lack of education, and especially English education, would exclude them from consideration for many lucrative posts, commerce and social interactions with "European fellow subjects."<sup>12</sup> It became clear by the time of Sir Sayyid's death, however, that his loyalist views were not wholeheartedly shared by all Aligarhians, or even by all of the founders of the Aligarh Movement.<sup>13</sup> Rather, it was discontent with the behavior of Sir Sayyid's beloved British staff that aroused the anti-British sympathies among the students.<sup>14</sup>

The first British Principal of Aligarh, Theodore Beck, is widely recognized to have been a devotee of the Aligarh project who, in the eyes of Shaukat Ali behaved with "easy familiarity toward Indians"<sup>15</sup> and frequently interacted with the students, even in

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<sup>12</sup> Sayyid Ahmad Khan et al., "To His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General of India in Council: The Humble Petition of the British India Association, North West Provinces August 1, 1867," in *Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan's Educational Philosophy: A Documentary Record*, ed. Hafeez Malik (Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, 1989), 39-40.

<sup>13</sup> By 1898 "a situation had arised [sic] when the remaining supporters and co-workers of Sir Syed had decided even during his lifetime to place the entire situation concerning the College in the form of an appeal to the community." Manglori goes on to cite an incident from the memoirs of Waqarul Mulk, a close associate of Sir Syed's, in which he details a plan to publish a series of articles criticizing Sir Syed's neglect of the Muslim community, having allowed Theodore Beck to take charge. However, Sir Syed died, and the articles were never published. Manglori, *Towards a Common Destiny*, 195.

<sup>14</sup> In 1907, the Aligarh students went on strike against the university administration. Choudhry Khaliqzaman, who arrived in Aligarh later that year wrote in his memoir that he "learnt that the students had begun to feel that the English staff of the College were acting rather as agents of the Government than as professors of the College. A group of Aligarh College Trustees also shared the views of the students." He added that the strike was motivated by the "accumulated grievances of the students against the European staff which naturally resulted in creating in them anti-British sentiment" at a time when Muslim solidarity had been aroused by the partition (and subsequent annulment of partition) in Bengal. Khaliqzaman, *Pathway to Pakistan*, 16-17.

<sup>15</sup> Shaukat Ali, "The Late Mr. Beck and His Pupils," *Muslim Anglo-Oriental College Magazine*, June-July 1901, p. 27. Cited in Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation*, 285.

games.<sup>16</sup> Beck, however, barely outlived Sir Sayyid himself, and his successors had been deeply influenced by the culture of formal imperialism that was codified in the wake of the 1857 rebellion and that cast the British in a distinctly separate social category than their subjects.

Theodore Morison, for example, embraced a “stiff” policy towards the students, maintained a boundary between himself and their problems, and refused to meet them at his bungalow.<sup>17</sup> The growing tension between University Trustees, current students, and the English staff, echoed growing anti-British sentiment in India and internationally. In an unpublished pamphlet, Hameed-ud-Din Khan, who arrived at the MAO College in 1909, remembered his disappointment at discovering that the English staff were not as friendly or “intimate with the students” as he had expected from hearing tales of Beck. Rather, he “gradually realized that the general atmosphere [in Aligarh] was definitely anti-British... I cannot say how far we were influenced by the political tempo, steadily rising in the country, but we had sufficient sources of irritation of our own.”<sup>18</sup> The scene he describes in this pamphlet is one that is motivated by its internal characteristics. That is, when the nationalist leaders, including Mohandas K. Gandhi and Aligarh Old Boys Mohamad and Shaukat Ali, urged Aligarh students to join the non-cooperation movement

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 253-54.

<sup>17</sup> Shan Muhammad, *Education and Politics: From Sir Syed to the Present Day the Aligarh School* (New Delhi: A.P.H. Publishing Corporation, 2002), 47.

<sup>18</sup> The pamphlet was originally written in 1966 in response to the “injustice” of the amending of the Aligarh University Act in 1965 and intended for publication. Hameed-ud-deen Khan gave a copy to Professor Theodore Wright in 1966, but it is unlikely that the pamphlet was ever published. Professor Wright passed on a copy to Naved Masood, son of retired Aligarh University Professor Masood ul-Hasan, from whom I received a copy. Hameed-ud-Deen Khan, "Aligarh Muslim University: Attitudes and Trends of the M.A.O. College and the Aligarh Muslim University since 1909- Personal Observations and Revelations," (Aligarh: 1966), 1.

against British financing of institutions (educational and otherwise), they were inclined to participate as much because of its global implications as its local ones.<sup>19</sup> In the words of S.M. Tonki, a second generation Aligarh student who was drawn into the nationalist movement (and defected to the Jamia Millia Islamia), “The struggle continued between the self-respecting trustees and the all powerful principal till 1919, when the last of them, Mr. Towle, resigned with the European staff following him **en bloc**.”<sup>20</sup> The internal tension created by discontent with the attitude of British staff was linked with the broader movement to resist British imperialism and coincided with more explicit political agitation on the campus surrounding the negotiations for the establishment of a Muslim University.

The campaign for the Muslim University was a cause dear to the hearts of all associated with Aligarh, but the visions for the form and leadership of the institution varied widely. As Lelyveld and Minault have shown, the campaign itself became the battleground for factional rivalries; the divide between anti-imperialist nationalists and pro-British loyalists was a particularly acute fissure and the conflict with the English staff was by no means unique. It was emblematic to the students, however, of their discontent

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<sup>19</sup> To understand the relationship between non-cooperation and Aligarh see the expanded and revised version of Gail Minault and David Lelyveld, "The Campaign for a Muslim University, 1898-1920," in *Gender, Language and Learning: Essays in Indo-Muslim Cultural History* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2009).

<sup>20</sup> Tonki, *Aligarh and Jamia: Fight for National Education System*, 10. [emphasis original] Gail Minault and David Lelyveld date this event to 1918. They write that there was ‘a new crisis between the staff and the trustees when two British teachers were denied the usual annual increment in their salaries. Despite government efforts to discourage them from pressing the matter, all eight of the British staff resigned. “Trouble in the Aligarh College and the Resignation of Mr. Towle, the Principal and other European Professors,” *Educ* 1918, 221, Uttar Pradesh Secretariat Records, Lucknow. Cited in Gail Minault and David Lelyveld, "The Campaign for a Muslim University, 1898-1920," *Modern Asian Studies* 8, no. 2 (1974): 182.

with imperialism, and “created a highly favorable atmosphere... for the reception of Mahatma Gandhi’s non-cooperation Movement,” and may ultimately be seen as the one that drove them to action.<sup>21</sup> Whereas loyalist Muslims sought comfort in the traditions that linked the university to British patronage, nationalist Muslims looked outward from the university into the broader world of India and the Empire. Led by a prominent group of Old Boys who sought to carry Sir Sayyid’s torch but had come to see the loyalist aspirations of their alma mater as regressive and anti-national, the students fell into sympathy with the pro-Turkish Khilafat Movement and anti-imperialist forces of nationalism. When the debate over the conversion of MAO to AMU was taking place, in the context of the lead-up to the First World War, this faction—led by the Ali Brothers—wanted to keep control of AMU out of the hands of government and firmly in the hands of Muslims. They looked to the example of the Deoband Madrasa’s insistence on eschewing government grants.<sup>22</sup> A confluence of national and international events in 1919 and 1920 resulted in an agreement between the Congress, the League, and the Khilafat “in favour of noncooperation” which put Aligarh, as a government-supported institution, under the spotlight.<sup>23</sup> Aligarh was on its way to becoming a University, but an effort that started out as progressive took shelter in the conservatism of British loyalism, looked to the government for its future stability and shied away from nationalist calls to abandon government funding. Aligarh’s dedication to the secular education of Indian

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<sup>21</sup> Khan, "A.M.U.: Attitudes and Trends," 1.

<sup>22</sup> Barbara Daly Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982).

<sup>23</sup> Minault and Lelyveld, "Campaign," 185.

Muslims set it apart from other institutions initially, but the early twentieth-century saw a rush of inaugurations of new universities including Osmania, Dhaka, Lucknow, and Agra.<sup>24</sup> This proliferation threatened Aligarh's singular impact and tempered its value. So despite the Ali Brothers resistance, in the face of so much competition, "the ambitions for Aligarh as a central institution in an independent, Muslim, all-India educational system," characterized by affiliated junior institutions throughout the country, fell by the wayside.<sup>25</sup> The Ali Brothers continued to resist government affiliation. In October 1920, Mohamad Ali convinced some of Aligarh's students to walk out in protest, and founded the Jamia Millia Islamia, the "Muslim National University" in the Aligarh Mosque.<sup>26</sup> Other leaders, including the MAO Principal Ziauddin Ahmad, accepted a pared down University model, and moved for incorporation with government support. The incorporation of the Aligarh University by an Act of Parliament was accelerated in the face of the nationalist challenge presented by Mohamad Ali. Still the Jamia Millia Islamia, that "lusty child of non-cooperation," overshadowed the founding of the Aligarh Muslim University on December 1, 1920.<sup>27</sup>

The temporal and spatial coincidence of two new institutions of learning that laid claim to the same intellectual history but held sacred opposing philosophies links their

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<sup>24</sup> Allama Abdullah Yusuf Ali, "Human Factor in Education: Speech to the Golden Jubilee Session of the All India Muslim Educational Conference," *The Muslim University Gazette* March 31 1937, 7.

<sup>25</sup> Minault and Lelyveld, "Campaign," 184.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*: 186.

<sup>27</sup> The phrase first appeared in a report by a special correspondent in the *Independent* on November 7, 1920. In Jawaharlal Nehru's letter on the occasion of the Jamia Jubilee in 1946, he admitted to having been that special correspondent. See Tonki, *Aligarh and Jamia: Fight for National Education System*, 94-95. Also cited in Mushirul Hasan and Rakhshanda Jalil, *Partners in Freedom: Jamia Millia Islamia* (New Delhi: Niyogi Books, 2006), 14.

histories during this period inextricably. It ties Aligarh as an institution to trends in national politics, even if only by its resistance to them. It should be clear, however, that the leadership of both the conservative and the progressive factions of Aligarh Old Boys, Ziauddin Ahmed, the Principal of the MAO College and Mohamad Ali, famed Khilafat leader, were contemporaries at Aligarh. One thing that this reveals is the diversity of beliefs that emerged from that enclosed and protected environment. Well-wishers of Aligarh University argue that Sir Sayyid's Movement sought the "intellectual and cultural regeneration of Muslims" and that "the essence of the movement lay in its spirit of freedom of thought and expression, and in the urge to keep pace with changing times. It is for this reason that Aligarh produced figures of all political shades and hues."<sup>28</sup> This rosy assessment should not obscure the fact that the variety of political opinion that has emerged from Aligarh over the decades has contributed to deep and enduring conflicts of values and disputes over the direction that Indian Muslims should take. Aligarh Professor of Arabic Riazur Rahman Sherwani emphasized this point when I first interviewed him on the terrace of his home in Aligarh in 2008.

But I want to tell you one thing, not only during this period, even from an earlier period when there was no Muslim League, even from that time, there has always been a section of teachers and students in this institution, when it was MAO College as well as when it became University, who thought on different lines from the administration of the university, or from the majority of the students... Through all the phases, there have been students here and teachers also, whose line of action was different from that of the majority. I also belonged to that minority.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Ishrat Ali Qureshi, *Aligarh Past and Present* (Aligarh: Aligarh Muslim University, 1992), 79-80.

<sup>29</sup> Sherwani, "Riazur Rahman Sherwani: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas, July 6, 2008."

The Muslim League Movement of the 1940s, like earlier periods, was shot through with interpersonal and political frictions, though they have largely been obscured by historical concentration on the outcomes of partition.

Aligarh was, for several decades, a testing ground for ideas as students explored alternatives to the state in which they had been raised.<sup>30</sup> The Khilafat Movement invoked a rhetoric of pan-Islamism that drew India's Muslims into a broader field of resistance. As Gail Minault has argued, however, the purpose of this rhetoric was really to draw India's Muslims together around a set of shared values, to develop a Muslim constituency in support of the anti-imperialist cause of Indian nationalists. These values found purchase among those associated with Aligarh because they were based on powerful symbols in the Muslim imagination: the Muslim caliphate and the foundational values of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan. Minault's study concludes, "Islam as a religion and social order contains within itself certain symbols and networks of influence which allow for the development of alternative structures of mobilization."<sup>31</sup> Students were drawn together in solidarity, rallied around an apparently foundational institution of their faith and the authority it still carried, and around the idea that by suppressing the differences between and amongst them, Muslims could provide a challenge to international imperialism, in service not only of their own community, but also of India.

As the influence of the nationalist movement, grew, the younger generation of Aligarh students participated. The defining moment of the nationalist period at the

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<sup>30</sup> Hasan, "Nationalist and Separatist Trends," 121-22.

<sup>31</sup> Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India*, Studies in Oriental Culture (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 211.



university has become the founding of the Jamia Millia Islamia, but as Minault and Lelyveld allude, the initial revolt of students that resulted in the founding of the institution did not have enough momentum to keep the institution alive. It was not long before many students returned to the newly founded Aligarh Muslim University—in the interest of completing their education—but retained their nationalist sympathies.

Many students abandoned the loyalism of their founding father in favor of participation in the larger world of politics. The Muslim League held its annual session in Aligarh in 1925 and its president made a concerted effort to draw students to the League. However, Professor Mohammad Habib persuaded even more students to join the Congress which, in the aftermath of the English staff's departure, dominated the Students' Union.<sup>32</sup> K.G. Saiyyadain, an Aligarh Old Boy and well-known Indian educationist, fondly remembered that "it was [in the Aligarh Union] that I participated in the great Jubilee debate in 1926 when the students of the University endorsed with great acclaim, a policy of united nationalism."<sup>33</sup> The influence of the Muslim League at Aligarh has been overplayed in the public memory of the institution whereas the nationalist period is glossed over or merely used as a foil to expose the wrongs of the League. It is therefore significant to dwell on the nationalist period at the University, particularly the shift that occurred between the enthusiastic moment surrounding the founding of both the Jamia Millia Islamia and the Aligarh Muslim University and the wild popularity of the League fewer than twenty years later.

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<sup>32</sup> Muhammad, *Education and Politics*, 83.

<sup>33</sup> Akhtarul Wasey and Farhat Ehsas, eds., *Education, Gandhi, and Man: Select Writings Khwaja Ghulam Saiyyadain* (Delhi: Shipra Publications, 2008), 203.

## THE NATIONALIST PERIOD

The nationalist sentiment is evident in student publications, including *The Aligarh Magazine*. In 1930, an appeal for donations to the Sahibzada [Aftab Ahmad Khan] Memorial Fund was couched in nationalist rhetoric. The appeal calls on donors to support Aligarh with funds because of its impeccable nationalist credentials. The appeal argues that students from all provinces of India meet in Aligarh and

on one side we are placing into the crucible the Hindus, the Musalmans, the Christians, the Sikhs and the Parsees of India and beating them all on the furnace of Aligarh to fashion out of this mixture a common substance purged of the alloy thereby creating the typical man—that future citizen of India on whom would rest the task of building the nation of this great land, and perhaps of the world as India promised to be the future leader of humanity.<sup>34</sup>

The appeal heralded the universal Indian citizen, a composite of her many cultures that, once mixed, created a “typical man.” Aligarh was cast as a forge for creating this typical man: one who understood his fellow citizens, was sympathetic to their culture, but held dear the unity of the nation and would forego communal or sectarian allegiances to act in the best interest of India’s composite culture.<sup>35</sup>

Throughout the 1930s the Congress spirit remained evident in the university publications, the *Muslim University Gazette* and the *Aligarh Magazine*, as writers frequently appealed for “understanding cordiality between Hindus and Muslims.”<sup>36</sup> They reiterated Aligarh’s nationalist credentials by linking their interests with that of the nation emphasizing that the contribution Muslims broadly, and Aligarians in particular had made not only to Muslim educational and cultural advance, but to “the country in

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<sup>34</sup> M.A. Alavi, "A Plea for Sahibzada Memorial Fund," *Aligarh Magazine* January- August 1930, 44.

<sup>35</sup> During my interviews, I heard similar explanations for Aligarh’s value, and the argument that real tolerance comes from understanding the culture and religion of another. Siddiqi, "Majid Ali Siddiqi: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas October 2, 2009."

<sup>36</sup> "New Bengal Pact," *The Muslim University Gazette* January 22, 1937, 6.

general.”<sup>37</sup> A distinct tension began to arise here between the interests of the University, that had gone to some lengths to isolate its wards from the world outside and the interests of the students who insisted that their contribution to that larger world be recognized. This was in part an effort to recover Muslim history from the damage done to it after 1857 when Muslims were singled out as enemies of the state and thereafter seen as interlopers in Indian society, and it was in part an effort to earn recognition for their role in such nationalist agitations as non-cooperation—rejected outright in Banaras Hindu University—and the founding of the Jamia Millia Islamia.<sup>38</sup>

In 1937 the Indian National Congress’ election success allowed them to form provincial ministries under the Government of Indian Act 1935. This was a politically polarizing time, as Muslims came to grips with the reality of parliamentary democracy. In particular, although the League and Congress had worked together during the elections, generating nationalist enthusiasm, visible at Aligarh, once the ministry was seated, Congress declined to form alliances with the League. League partisans saw this as a

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<sup>37</sup> "Ourselves," *The Muslim University Gazette* January 8, 1937, 1. "Lessons from His Excellency's Visit," *The Muslim University Gazette* February 5, 1937, 5.

<sup>38</sup> Although BHU’s founder, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya was a devout Congress supporter—having been its president in 1909—and a close associate of Gandhi’s during this period, he rejected the call for the boycott of Government-controlled schools and colleges. Malaviya had fought hard for British support for his institution and argued that it was foolish to boycott education, the one amenity of the British Raj that really could prepare students for self-rule. Rather, students should first be equipped with education before committing themselves to the political cause of non-cooperation. He did, however, allow Gandhi to address the students and to attempt to persuade them to his cause, albeit with his own rejoinder, and Gandhi persuaded some students, less than ¼ of BHU’s student body, to leave the institution. Without further guidance, however, many students faltered, returned home or returned to the University. Those who remained outside established a Gandhi ashram under the guidance of Acharya J.B. Kripalani. Leah Renold, *A Hindu Education: Early Years of the Banaras Hindu University* (New Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 80-94.

breach of faith and used it to fuel support for their political movement.<sup>39</sup> It was during this period that students at AMU increasingly turned to the League for political expression, challenging the ethos of political passivity current at Aligarh since Sir Sayyid's days.<sup>40</sup>

The May 5<sup>th</sup> issue of the *Muslim University Gazette* took up the issue of the university's role in politics explicitly. Addressing the role of the university in the lives of students, the editorial evokes the separate nature of the university itself and the dangers of the temptations of the world outside. While in the university—an enclosed space, apart from practical life and strictly bounded—students were being prepared for life outside, but they were not in it yet, and to become involved would mean a dangerous distraction from the priorities of the student. Thus, the editorial reminds students that “the Muslim University allows fullest liberty to the students to discuss all social political and economic problems of the day and form into groups on that basis provided that the rules of discipline are scrupulously maintained and the strictly academic nature of these activities is not violated.”<sup>41</sup> The May editorial further acknowledged that among the staff of the university there were a variety of views, but that all AMU staff “act as a body” to exert a wholesome influence on the students and to guide them in their studies and “they

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<sup>39</sup> Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan 1857- 1964* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 170.

<sup>40</sup> Considering the repeated and zealous involvement of Aligarh students in political activities, the “traditional” separation seems flimsy at best, but it is frequently invoked as a critical pillar of Aligarh's identity. Indeed, although the Muslim League was founded largely by Aligarh men, Choudhry Khaliqzaman wrote that four years after its founding, “The office of the Muslim League had already been removed to Lucknow from Aligarh in 1910 as a measure of policy, not to keep the political organization too close to the educational institution.” Khaliqzaman, *Pathway to Pakistan*, 18.

<sup>41</sup> “University and Politics,” *The Muslim University Gazette* May 5, 1937, 5.

are always anxious to see that the academic atmosphere of this institution is not disturbed by forces outside this sphere.”<sup>42</sup> Two significant issues are raised in the closing lines of the story, one is the tension between education and politics and this will increase in significance throughout the next ten years, and the other is the idea that the forces of distraction and corruption come from outside the university. The Muslim League activity indeed put both of these premises to the test. But first, we must understand how the university was drawn into the politics of the Muslim League to the extent that in late 1938 The Pro-Vice Chancellor, A.B.A. Haleem went so far as to estimate that “about 90% of the students of the University have strong Muslim League sympathies and it is no exaggeration to say that out of 114 members of the staff about 100 at least are Muslim Leaguers.”<sup>43</sup> Whereas in 1937 nationalist sentiment was still strong, by 1942, when Congress announced the Quit India Resolution Irfan Habib recalls that “nothing stirred” in AMU. Congress had become so weak there in the wake of the Pakistan Resolution of 1940 that he does not remember the Congress even holding any meetings or processions in support of Quit India.<sup>44</sup>

#### **FROM NATIONALISM TO THE TWO NATION THEORY 1937-1940**

As the Congress Ministry in UP took its seat in 1937 the *Muslim University Gazette* published a supportive piece welcoming the leadership of “Pandit Pant and his

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> A.B.A. Haleem. A.B.A. Haleem to Maulavi Mohd. Ashiq Saheb Warsi: Report of the P.V.C. To the University Court. October 25, 1938. *FMA*, F 1094/ 340-343. PNA.

<sup>44</sup> Habib, "Irfan Habib: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 28, 2009."

co-workers, who are the right men in the right place, and who have been chosen by the people to govern in their name.”<sup>45</sup> The same piece criticized “minority Government” as antithetical to the spirit of democracy and therefore “unwholesome” and expressed trust in the motives of the Congress ministry to protect Muslim interests because Congress is “not a communal body and therefore it does not look at things from the communal point of view.” The editorial’s objective was to place the issue of Muslim education before the Congress Ministry in the context of the Karachi Resolution of Fundamental Rights that ensured free primary education.<sup>46</sup> The author urged the new Congress ministry to recognize that “a backward Muslim Society is a drag on the general advancement of the nation” and thus to make provisions for safeguarding the interests of Muslims, particularly in regard to education, culture, language, and religion. Ultimately, the author argued, consistent with the strategy that the paper had adopted during this period, the fate of Muslims was intimately tied up with the fate of the nation. It made no sense for the Congress ministry to abandon its Muslim constituents because although Muslims may have been “backward,” they were part of India, and their lot was India’s lot.

Significantly here, the Muslims are cast as a Minority, deserving of safeguards. The concept of a “minority government” was rejected as undemocratic and the author urged the elected government to care for its minority. The minority, however, was subject to the whims of this government, and there is a mild but implicit threat that just as Muslims who receive safeguards could help to ameliorate social ills, were the Muslims to

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<sup>45</sup> "Muslim Education and the New Ministry in U.P.," *The Muslim University Gazette* August 1, 1937.

<sup>46</sup> Sarvepalli Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, 3 vols., vol. 1 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 152.

find themselves empty-handed, they could prove an equally disruptive force. The role of the minority here was not to govern, but to participate and to hold the government accountable. According to the author's understanding of the Karachi Resolution, Congress' intentions were good, but the editorial served as a reminder that the previous government failed to address Muslim education, and the new government must.

A distinct transformation had taken place in *The Muslim University Gazette* by the end of 1937 and an almost frantic anxiety pervades an article on "National Education" in the year's last issue. Since August, the *Gazette* had been grappling with the ideas at the heart of Mahatma Gandhi's educational scheme, primarily the emphasis on craft/industrial production.<sup>47</sup> The Editor disagreed that education should be self-supporting, rather he desired that the state direct more money and resources at education.<sup>48</sup> But it was Pandit Madan Malaviya's Convocation address at Allahabad University that betrayed how threatened Muslims at Aligarh felt about Gandhi's Wardha Scheme of Education. The story heavily criticized Malaviya's use of Sanskritized Hindi in front of an audience conversant in an Urdu-ized Hindustani. According to this report, "when a gentleman tried to express his feelings of bewilderment, he was hooted down by the more vociferous section of the house, and no one questioned the despotic rule of the majority."<sup>49</sup> Only a few months after the magazine welcomed the Congress Ministries and expressed trust in their intentions to safeguard Muslim interests, this story cast

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<sup>47</sup> Editor, "Mahatma Gandhi and Education," *The Muslim University Gazette* August 24, 1937, 5. The Wardha Scheme of Education was designed in part by K.G. Saiyyadain, a distinguished Aligarh Old Boy.

<sup>48</sup> — — —, "Prohibition or Education or Both," *The Muslim University Gazette* October 24, 1937, 5.

<sup>49</sup> "National Education," *The Muslim University Gazette* December 24, 1937, 5.

majority rule as “despotic.” It went on to attack Aryan Hindu claims of Indian nativity that would exclude Muslims and argued aggressively for an inclusive system that would recognize the Muslim contribution to the Indian nation. The Muslims may have been in the minority, this argument suggested, but they were not separate from the Indian nation. Part and parcel of this argument is the demand that Urdu be recognized as the national language. The piece concluded with a jab at the majority community—calling it communally minded—and beckoned a leader “of vision and imagination” who could transform the political environment.<sup>50</sup>

Things were moving quickly now. December 1937 saw two meetings of the Muslim Students Federation, both held in Calcutta, one under the leadership of nationalist Humayun Kabir, and one under Mohammad Ali Jinnah.<sup>51</sup> The All India Muslim Students’ Federation had been founded at Aligarh, despite significant resistance from the still nationalist Union.<sup>52</sup> Remarkably, the speeches that each leader delivered in Calcutta appear to be in almost direct conversation; Kabir chastised Muslim leaders for relying on a narrative of weakness and decline that provided the necessity for political organization, Jinnah deployed just such a narrative even as he urged the students to organize. He said that he had “failed” with the Hindus and that “there is [now] no other course open to us

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> "The Two Voices," *The Muslim University Gazette* January 8, 1938. Waheed Ahmad, "M.A. Jinnah Addresses Muslim Students--'I Have Failed' with the Hindus, December 27, 1937," in *The Nation's Voice: Towards Consolidation; Quaid-I-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah Speeches and Statements March 1935-March 1940* (Karachi: Quaid-i-Azam Academy, 1992), Humayun Kabir, "Politics and Muslim Students: Presidential Address at the All India Muslim Students Conference December 1937," in *Muslim Politics 1906-1947 and Other Essays* (Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1969).

<sup>52</sup> Nripendra Nath Mitra, *The Indian Annual Register: An Annual Digest of Public Affairs of India 1937*, vol. 2 (Calcutta: The Annual Register Office, July- December 1937), 415- 16.



except to organize ourselves through separate organizations like the All-India Muslim Students Federation.”<sup>53</sup> Kabir called students to the nationalist cause, urging them to “rise above their personal or their class interests and work for the emancipation of their motherland.”<sup>54</sup> It was a mistake he argued, to believe that Indians or Muslims or the youth were weak, but it was obvious that by combining forces they would undoubtedly be strong. Jinnah argued that Muslims would no longer be “camp followers” and would never “be subdued or be camp followers or slaves or the subject race of ‘Hindu Raj.’”<sup>55</sup> Citing the failure of the All India Students’ Federation--over whose meeting he had presided the previous year—to include Muslims among the executive leadership and its failure to facilitate communal unity, Jinnah urged the students to “organize for self-defence and self-help.”<sup>56</sup> *The Muslim University Gazette* for its part, avoided taking sides between the two new organizations, but did not miss the opportunity to criticize the press for failing to cover the meeting led by Mr. Jinnah. Their explanation for this oversight is that the press did not “attach much importance to the problems which immediately concern Muslims.”<sup>57</sup> Thus while resisting the urge to take sides, the paper articulated a call for an Independent Muslim press, a move towards separate representation in the public sphere, a theme that would emerge again and again as the Muslim League sought to control its own propaganda/ narrative through the 1940s.

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<sup>53</sup> Ahmad, "M.A. Jinnah Addresses Muslim Students--'I Have Failed' with the Hindus, December 27, 1937."

<sup>54</sup> Kabir, "Politics and Muslim Students," 85.

<sup>55</sup> Waheed Ahmad, ed., *The Nation's Voice: Towards Consolidation; Quaid-I-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah Speeches and Statements March 1935- March 1940*, vol. 1 (Karachi: Quaid-i-Azam Academy, 1992), 203.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 202-03.

<sup>57</sup> "The Two Voices."

Beyond the University, in March 1937, Jawaharlal Nehru had issued a call to Congress to “make a special effort to enroll Muslim Congress members” and to engage them in practical politics while protecting the “religious, linguistic and cultural rights of minorities.”<sup>58</sup> The Muslim Mass Contact Campaign was a reaction to Congress’ poor performance in Muslim areas in the 1936 elections, and endeavored to draw Muslims into Congress based on common economic concerns rather than on the basis of Congress sympathy for Muslims’ parochial issues, as it had in the Khilafat Movement.<sup>59</sup> The MMCC targeted Aligarh and other cities in UP, and Mushirul Hasan reports, it “had a favorable impression” on students at AMU.<sup>60</sup> But Congress activity galvanized the League, an organization then seeking purchase in the Muslim community. Congress action felt like an assault on its territory and the League redoubled its efforts to draw Muslims into the League. Some mystery remains about how the Muslim League so quickly turned about-face, from its poor showing in the elections to the large organization it would claim by late 1937.<sup>61</sup> From the examination of *The Muslim University Gazette* above, however, it is clear that discontent grew quickly in 1937 both in the university and outside of it.

Controversy erupted over the actions and agendas of the Congress Ministries from the singing of *Bande Mataram* to the failure of Congress Governments to protect

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<sup>58</sup> Mushirul Hasan, "The Muslim Mass Contact Campaign: An Attempt at Political Mobilisation," *Economic and Political Weekly* Vol. 21, no. No. 52 (December 27, 1986): 2273.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*: 2274.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*: 2275.

<sup>61</sup> Sayeed, *Pakistan: The Formative Phase, 1857-1948*, 89-90.

Muslims from harm during communal riots.<sup>62</sup> Muslims felt threatened by the Mass Contacts Campaign that appeared to them to be an effort to drive a wedge between the Muslim masses and their traditional leadership, which had turned to the League in large numbers by the end of 1937.<sup>63</sup> The Wardha educational scheme had further frightened Muslims—already conditioned to fear assaults on their traditional systems of learning—with its apparent priority of teaching Hindu values, and even dancing (this came on top of the 1921 Vidya Mandir scheme, which sounded to Muslims as if schools would be turned into temples.)<sup>64</sup> This close link between education and Muslim solidarity placed Aligarh at the heart of the tension. It was shortly before his address to the inaugural meeting of the All India Muslim Students Federation that Jinnah came to recognize the political value of Muslim anxiety, and realized that at the heart of the education-political nexus, Muslim students were critical to the success of the Muslim League’s rejuvenation in the face of the Congress threat.<sup>65</sup>

Former student and retired Aligarh University Professor of English Masood ul-Hasan, described the allure of the League; he remembered, “The Congress volunteers had

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<sup>62</sup> "All India Muslim League Resolution on the Congress Use of the 'Bande Mataram' Song" Lucknow: 15-18 October 1937" and "All India Muslim League Resolution on Hindu-Muslim Riots in Congress-Rule Provinces: Calcutta: 17 April 1938" in Khurshid Kamal Aziz, ed., *Muslims under Congress Rule 1937-1939*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Delhi: Renaissance Publishing House, 1978), 150 and 57.

<sup>63</sup> Mohammad Mujeeb, "The Partition of India in Retrospect" in Mushirul Hasan, *India's Partition: Process, Strategy and Mobilization*, Oxford in India Readings: Themes in Indian History (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993), 405.

<sup>64</sup> Mohammad Mujeeb, "The Partition of India in Retrospect" in *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Mirza, *Youth & Pakistan Movement*, 2. Mirza suggests that Jinnah resisted the formation of a separate organization for Muslim Students until late 1937 when he came to understand that “if the Muslim League intended winning the battle of Muslim freedom it must secure the cooperation of Muslim students.” One student described Jinnah’s appeals to students as being the result of the fact that “he knew what revolution can a student bring in the masses. That is what actually happened.” Khan, "Zakir Ali Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas August 10, 2006."

their Young Men's Corps. Even the Khaksars, they had theirs. The ordinary young student, the ordinary young man, he was left out." The League seemed to present an opportunity to fulfill the students' desire for "self-manifestation."<sup>66</sup>

The publication in 1938 of the Pirpur Report put paid to Congress' claims to communal fairness. Though many still suspect that the episodes it describes are at best exaggerated, at worst "imaginary," the Pirpur report served to foment Muslim mistrust of the Congress Ministries.<sup>67</sup> The Pirpur Report is a litany of Muslim grievances from Congress-governed provinces alleging all manner of violence and disregard on the part of regular citizens and the authorities that ultimately argues that communalism was driven by the majority community.<sup>68</sup> The report reiterates the threat of the MMCC as a Congress tactic to destroy Muslim solidarity and to co-opt some symbols—the use of green in the tri-color Congress flag is called into question here—and failure to adopt others—Urdu is identified as a lingua franca developed by Muslims with the intent of adapting a common language but these efforts were destroyed by Hindu communalism to the detriment of Muslims. Part III of the report is a detailed accounting of "Muslims' Grievances" in the six Congress governed provinces: Bihar, UP, Orissa, CP, Madras and Bombay. As might be expected, the report was received with terrific anxiety, appearing, as it did, at a time when Muslims had already begun to turn their attention to the League and its mission. It

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<sup>66</sup> Hasan, "Masood Ul Hasan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 1, 2009."

<sup>67</sup> Masood ul-Hasan belittles the significance of the events listed in the reports "What were the atrocities? Nothing as compared to—two people killed there, one head broken there." Ibid. Another narrator cited the Muslim League's "Pirpur Report of imaginary assaults against Muslims." Irfan Habib, "Personal Interview with Amber Abbas," ed. Amber Abbas (Aligarh, India: June 28, 2009).

<sup>68</sup> Raja Syed Mohammad Mahdi, "The Pirpur Report: Delhi: End of 1938," in *Muslims under Congress Rule 1937-1939*, ed. Khurshheed Kamal Aziz (Islamabad: National Commission on Historical and Cultural Research, 1978), 310.

was the “widely publicized” Pirpur Report that finally turned the tide at Aligarh, and the League with its message of empowerment began formally to establish itself there.<sup>69</sup>

Mohammad Ali Jinnah visited Aligarh University in March 1940 to make an important speech to the students just before he traveled to Lahore for the Muslim League session at the end of the month. During that visit, he spoke about the difference between Minority and Nation. This rhetorical shift laid the ground upon which Jinnah sought to build his arsenal. The Muslim India of which Jinnah spoke in March was the same as the differentiated Nation that became the heart of the Pakistan Demand. Since the advent of separate electorates, he noted, most people assumed that the Muslims were a minority requiring safeguards and governmental or legislative protection of their rights. In fact, this was the rhetorical strategy Jinnah himself had used throughout the 1930s. Now, however, he argued that when “we used this term... what we meant was that the Muslims were a political entity and that must be preserved at all costs.”<sup>70</sup> The difference here is between the helpless minority and the empowered political force. Jinnah had turned away from the earlier rhetoric of decline, so ably deployed by reforming Muslim leaders before him, most notably Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, and turned a sense of exclusion into a call for action. Whereas the concept of Minority had given Muslims a false sense of security, and Hindus a false sense of power, the concept of nationhood made possible a demand

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<sup>69</sup> Hasan, "Masood Ul Hasan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 1, 2009."

<sup>70</sup> Mohammad Ali Jinnah, "Speech Delivered at the Muslim University Union, Aligarh on 6th March, 1940," in *Some Recent Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah Vol. I*, ed. Jamil-ud-din Ahmad (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1952), 153.

for political equality. This demand for parity would guide the League through the next seven years.

The All India Muslim League leaders, for their part, especially Jinnah and his right-hand man, the Aligarhian Liaqat Ali Khan, repeatedly reminded AMU boys of their centrality to the League's strength and Muslim life in general. Jinnah taught them that they represented India's Muslims, and hence that India's Muslims were like them, regardless of their regional or linguistic origin. The Urdu-speaking elites subscribed wholeheartedly to the idea that Jinnah inherited from Sir Sayyid, that the Muslims were a united moral community— a nation— because when they looked at its values, they saw themselves reflected. Mohammad Ali Jinnah empowered the students with the words, "What Aligarh thinks today, Muslim India will think tomorrow."<sup>71</sup> This Muslim Nation, and its claims, welcomed at Aligarh just prior to the passing of the Lahore Resolution, became the object and the goal of the Muslim League demand for Pakistan. For as in earlier attempts to mobilize the Muslims for change, Jinnah's demand that the League exclusively represent the Nation, paradoxically, was based on his desire to create a Nation, a political force strong enough to command attention at the center.<sup>72</sup> He missed no opportunity to convince the youth of this and to impress upon them the need to be self-reliant. "It was no use," he said, "depending upon anybody. We must depend upon

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<sup>71</sup> M.A. Dyan, "Whither Aligarh?," *The Muslim University Gazette*, 1 November 1940, 5.

<sup>72</sup> Minault and Lelyveld argue this point in their assessment of Mohamad Ali's efforts to reform Aligarh and call Muslims to non-cooperation. See Minault and Lelyveld, "Campaign," 173. Ayesha Jalal's biography of Jinnah is a detailed account of his efforts to solidify the League's monopoly. See Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman*.

ourselves. I am willing to be friendly with all but I depend upon my own inherent strength.”<sup>73</sup>

In 1941, before the students of Punjab, he berated the Congress for not catching on to the new paradigm: “Hindu leadership is still harping on the same old story that we are a minority and that they are willing to give all the safeguards according to the principles laid down by the League of Nations.”<sup>74</sup> Jinnah tried to draw the students away from a narrative of dependency, and into one of self-reliance. A critical part of this is an appeal for solidarity within and amongst Muslims themselves. Jinnah recognized, and it was clearly apparent to him in his political work in the provinces, that Muslims, though unified at least nominally by their shared faith, were divided by a variety of factional loyalties. His claim to nationhood could never stand without at least apparent loyalty on the part of Muslims. And the students were key to this appeal: “Muslims must remain in complete unity and solidarity amongst yourselves. Nobody can help you if you quarrel among yourselves.”<sup>75</sup>

This narrative of solidarity resonated at Aligarh, an institution built on an ethos of unity, a place that even now jealously protects its legacy as a place free from communal or factional strife. This is, of course, a fiction of sorts, and while the Aligarh environment

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<sup>73</sup> Jinnah, "Speech at A.M.U. Union, 6th March 1940," 159.

<sup>74</sup> "Presidential Address delivered at the Special Pakistan Session of the Punjab Muslim Students' Federation, 2nd March 1941" in Ahmad, ed., *Some Recent Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah*, 247. See Mark Mazower, "Minorities and the League of Nations in Interwar Europe," *Daedalus* Vol. 126, no. 2 Human Diversity (Spring 1997).

<sup>75</sup> "Full Text of the Presidential Address Delivered Extempore at the Fifth Annual Session of the All-India Muslim Students' Federation at Nagpur on December 26, 1941" in Ahmad, ed., *Some Recent Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah*, 365.

may not have been dominated by communal strife, there remained a certain amount of factionalism in the student body.

### **THE LEAGUE PERIOD AT ALIGARH, 1940-1947**

During the League period, other political groups continued, at least nominally, to function on the campus. In particular the leftists, led by Professor Mohammad Habib resisted the League monopoly. One of them, Nasim Ansari, an Indian Muslim graduate describes a university where amongst the students were “representatives of every province in India and followers of every party” where “whether the differences between them were based upon class or upon theories, they were not concealed in any way.”<sup>76</sup> This assessment fits very neatly into the image of Aligarh as a diverse yet harmonious environment, but several narrators described surprising levels of political bullying and coercion aimed at drawing students into the Muslim League fold. Certainly the Congress and the leftists continued to operate on the campus, but it was at risk of attack by the League. In an off-the-record exchange, one narrator described the arrival of several communist party activists near the English House hostel. When the young students realized who the representatives were, they began shouting abuses and cat-calling. This narrator is not alone in remembering the exclusivity of League sympathizers. Former student and retired professor of Arabic, Riazur Rahman Sherwani recalled that

During the earlier days, leaders of various parties used to visit the university. Pandit Nehru was very popular among the new generation of that time. And he visited the university in early 1930s... Gandhiji also visited this university. All those people used to come here. But when

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<sup>76</sup> Nasim Ansari, *Choosing to Stay: Memoirs of an Indian Muslim*, trans. Ralph Russell (Karachi: City Press, 1999), 41- 42.



Muslim League had a sway, it had hold of the university, the leaders of other parties stopped coming here. Not stopped, they were not allowed to come here. Only leaders of the Muslim League, they used to visit the university and no leader of any other party could come here.<sup>77</sup>

The Muslim League monopoly during this period extended to personal relations, and as Sherwani was a nationalist and Congress supporter even throughout this period, he told me, "My father was always anxious that I may not be harmed physically due to my views. Because the majority of the students were of a different point of view, so his main anxiety was my safety."<sup>78</sup> The League monopoly was perpetuated through all manner of persuasion, not all of them peaceful. They took over the Students' Union and became "the arsenal of Muslim India" when they later fanned out across the country working for the Muslim League in the 1945-46 elections.<sup>79</sup>

As a result of the Muslim League influence, the university continued to struggle with the relationship between the University and politics. Hameed-ud-din argued that the campus had always been immune to the "communal virus" because no matter what the political views of the college and university leadership "they never allowed the students to take any active part in politics and did not even lecture to them about Muslim's fears and aspirations on account of which they were opposed to the Congress ideology."<sup>80</sup> Time and again the *Gazette* harmonized on this point: students were in the university for training, not to get involved in political action. The frequent reminders to students that

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<sup>77</sup> Sherwani, "Riazur Rahman Sherwani: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas, July 6, 2008."

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> "Faith in Quaid-E-Azam Reaffirmed," *The Muslim University Gazette* November 1, 1941, 8.

<sup>80</sup> Only during the League period, Khan writes, were students "used for political propaganda." Khan, "A.M.U.: Attitudes and Trends," 1-2.

their job was to stay focused and to study, but not to agitate, betrays a potent anxiety over their potential.

Vice Chancellor Ziauddin Ahmed had shown, throughout the terms of his leadership, that he opposed student involvement in politics. This was clearly on display in the dispute over non-cooperation in 1920 and as late as 1942, during the Congress Quit India Movement, when, although students in other universities, particularly Allahabad, Lucknow and Banaras, actively responded to the Quit India agitation, as Irfan Habib remembered, Aligarh remained quiet. Mukhtar Zaman, as a student of Allahabad University, clearly remembers seeing the Hindus students form a procession to protest the spontaneous arrest of the Congress Working Committee.<sup>81</sup> Both at Allahabad, and at Aligarh, however, the Muslim students remained apart. At Aligarh, the British credited the calm to the willingness of Ziauddin Ahmed to cooperate with the authorities.<sup>82</sup> Certainly, by 1942, the League had gained significant traction at the university and the discipline of the students may also be seen as a reluctance to associate themselves with Congress' movement. Ziauddin appears actively to have encouraged their passivity. In a Central Assembly debate in 1942 he declared, "I very much deplore that some political organizations are using the students for political propaganda"<sup>83</sup> and he went on to lament the collusion of teachers. While this could be a reference to League activity at Aligarh, considering the timing, it is far more likely to be a direct attack on student involvement in

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<sup>81</sup> Mukhtar Zaman, *Students' Role in the Pakistan Movement* (Karachi: Quaid-i-Azam Academy, 1978), 40-41.

<sup>82</sup> "Revolutionary Activities by Congress in Punjab and U.P." August 13, 1942. Cited in P.N. Chopra, ed., *Quit India Movement: British Secret Documents*, 2 vols., vol. I (New Delhi: Interprint, 1986), 59.

<sup>83</sup> Ziauddin Ahmad, "Using Students for Party Propaganda Deplored," *The Muslim University Gazette* October 15, 1942.

the Quit India agitation. Jinnah praised the students' restraint in a speech before the All-India Muslim Students' Federation at Jalandhar in November 1942, congratulating "the Muslims that they in a body, from one end of India to the other, had kept completely aloof from the mass civil disobedience."<sup>84</sup>

League leaders at once enjoined the students to join the League and work on behalf of its ideals and urged them to focus on their education, and not to be distracted by the temptations of national politics. It seems that the League saw the students as a volatile and potentially fickle constituency. In the early years of the All-India Muslim Students' Federation, Jinnah and other Muslim politicians had urged the students to focus on their studies, to support their community, and prepare themselves for the "future responsibility" that would fall on their shoulders as leaders of the Muslim community.<sup>85</sup> Jinnah guided the students, through his appearances, at once encouraging them to prepare for their future role in Pakistan, and simultaneously cautioning them against being swayed by sloganeering and "catch words."<sup>86</sup> He retained their allegiance throughout this

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<sup>84</sup> "Speech at the Annual Session of the All-India Muslim Students' Federation, Jullundur, November 15, 1942" in Ahmad, ed., *Some Recent Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah*, 488-89.

<sup>85</sup> Mohammad Ali Jinnah, "Full Text of the Presidential Address Delivered Extempore at the Fifth Annual Session of the All-India Muslim Students' Federation at Nagpur on December 26, 1941," in *Some Recent Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah Vol. I*, ed. Jamil-ud-din Ahmad (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1952), 347, Husain, "Major General Wajahat Husain (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 13, 2005." Sarfaraz Hussain Mirza, ed., *Muslim Students and Pakistan Movement: Selected Documents (1937- 1947)*, 3 vols., vol. I (Lahore: Pakistan Study Centre, 1988), xlvi.

<sup>86</sup> "Speech at the Annual Conference of the Punjab Muslim Students' Federation, Lahore, 18 March 1944," in Ahmad, ed., *Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah*, 22.

period with his long-held promise that when “the time comes, and when you are ready, I will tell you what do to.”<sup>87</sup>

#### **ALIGARH AND THE 1945- 46 ELECTIONS**

Throughout the 1940s, the League developed its values among Aligarh students and elsewhere, but it was not until the occasion demanded, in the 1945-46 elections, that Jinnah moved to deploy his arsenal. In preparation for the 1945 elections Muslim League politicians impressed upon the students that the elections were “life or death” for the League and the Muslim Nation; the results of the elections would determine the viability and influence of the Muslim political community. <sup>88</sup> Jinnah urged students to do everything they could to support the League. They participated in fundraising, propaganda and pamphlet distribution, voter canvassing, and the establishment of polling stations.<sup>89</sup> “Even at the cost of one academic year,” Liaqat Ali Khan, Jinnah’s right-hand man told them, the time had come “in the life of the nation” that academic sacrifice was deemed appropriate to ensure the achievement of independence.<sup>90</sup> For the first time Ziauddin Ahmad, the Vice Chancellor, facilitated groups of students leaving the university actively to campaign for the League—now supporting student involvement in the freedom movement activities that he had previously opposed. The League organized a special training camp at Aligarh Muslim University in October 1944 to educate student

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<sup>87</sup> "Speech at the Muslim University Union, Aligarh, on March 10, 1941," in — — —, ed., *Some Recent Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah*, 269.

<sup>88</sup> *Daily Anjam* (Delhi), 27 September 1945, cited in Zaman, *Students' Role*, 145.

<sup>89</sup> Mirza, *Muslim Students and Pakistan Movement Vol I.*, lviii.

<sup>90</sup> *Daily Anjam* (Delhi), 27 September 1945, cited in Zaman, *Students' Role*, 144-5.

activists about the specifics of the Pakistan Demand. The agenda of the training course included lessons on Islamic history, Muslim League history and Pakistan, as well as lectures on the “Art of public speaking, and Manning [*sic*] the polling booths.”<sup>91</sup> The students who participated in this course were then dispatched outside of Aligarh to work on behalf of the League. Under the banner of the All-India Muslim League, the students executed Jinnah’s call to action.<sup>92</sup> Students were indispensable to the League during this time, traveling the countryside spreading the message about Pakistan and garnering support.

Liaquat Ali Khan, himself an Aligarian, was instrumental in organizing the students for election work. Brigadier Iqbal Shafi recalls that Liaquat personally interviewed the groups who wanted to go electioneering. Seeing the young Shafi, a boy of only about 15 years old, he asked,

*“Mian Sahibzada aap kya karengey? What the hell are you going to do?...Mian Sahibzada, aap kya karengey?”*  
*I said, “Sir, I recite the poems of Iqbal.”*  
*“Which poems do you recite?” I said, “Utho Meri Duniya [ke garibon ko jaga do]! (Rise and Arouse the poor of my world!)”*  
*So he said, Fine! Fine! Don’t waste my time.”...what he meant was, we were passed! You see, “Alright, you go.”<sup>93</sup>*

The League provided minimal financial support and sent this group to Punjab and the Northwest Frontier. The boys encountered resistance there as both provinces were officially opposed to the League.<sup>94</sup> Still, Shafi argues, “That was the thing. Government

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<sup>91</sup> Manzar-i- Alam. Manzar-i-Alam to Qazi Isa. November 15, 1945. *FMA*, F 237/ 71 (1-2) PNA.

<sup>92</sup> From M.A. Jinnah to A.B.A. Haleem, 26 February, 1945, in Mirza, *Muslim Students and Pakistan Movement Vol. I*, 66.

<sup>93</sup> Shafi, "Brigadier Iqbal Shafi (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 9, 2010."

<sup>94</sup> The Frontier had a Congress government, and Punjab was under the control of the British loyalist Unionist Party.

against you, but the masses with Quaid-e-Azam. That was the atmosphere! We were in between.”<sup>95</sup>

Several narrators reported that, while on these electioneering visits, they spoke to gatherings of people, particularly after the nighttime prayers.<sup>96</sup> Abdul Rashid Khan, now teaching in Karachi’s Sir Syed University of Engineering and Technology recalled “We went to towns and villages to convince the people to vote for Pakistan. In those days we were very staunch supporters.”<sup>97</sup> Their election work, in their minds, made a significant difference in the outcome of the elections, even in minority provinces, where Muslims were not expected to shift to Pakistan territory. Nonetheless, recalled Khan—who worked in the Hindu state of Bagrampur in UP—“My feeling is that Pakistan could not be formed without their vote. They voted 100% [for Pakistan].” Mukhtar Zaman, himself a student activist, and author of an important monograph, *Students’ Role in the Pakistan Movement*, suggests that “The youthful zeal of the student workers created a good impression on the electorate... the students’ participation in the campaign improved the image of the Muslim League... and the words uttered by the students were heard with attention.” The Aligarh boys, in particular, he writes “looked impressive” in their black sherwanis and Turkish caps and “left a mark on the imagination of the masses.”<sup>98</sup> Many of the Aligarh students who fought these elections were from minority provinces, though

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<sup>95</sup> Shafi, "Brigadier Iqbal Shafi (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 9, 2010." Zaman reports that students working in areas under the influence of the pro-Congress Jamiat-ul-ulema-e-Hind were “stoned and abused” and heard complaints that Muslim League workers denounced the Deoband ulema. See Zaman, *Students' Role*, 155.

<sup>96</sup> Shafi, "Brigadier Iqbal Shafi (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 9, 2010."

<sup>97</sup> Khan, "Abdul Rashid Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas."

<sup>98</sup> Zaman, *Students' Role*, 157.

it was not obvious that they would be required to shift to Pakistan to receive the benefits of autonomy. Jinnah aggressively propagated the idea that the Muslim minorities in India would be protected by the mere presence of a Muslim state- what has become known as the “Hostage Nation” theory. According to this idea, both minority Hindus in Pakistan and minority Muslims in India would be protected by their co-religionists across the border. As Abdul Rashid Khan put it, “that was the aim, that Pakistan will look after the interests of Muslims in the minority in India.”<sup>99</sup> Ultimately, however, many of these families, including Aligarh students, did migrate to Pakistan during or shortly after the mass migrations of 1947 when Pakistan and India were permanently divided, creating a fissure between the Muslim communities on either side of the border.

The involvement of Aligarh students in electioneering on behalf of the Muslim League has persisted as the most resilient image of Muslim student activism for Pakistan. Their enthusiasm, as seen from the Pakistani side of the border establishes their credentials as transparently nationalistic, and reinforces the idea that Aligarh students, as a whole, shared enthusiasm for Pakistan and its goals. In India, however, former students decry their involvement in the elections. Whereas Pakistani students hail the willingness and enthusiasm of youth influential in the elections, Indian narrators spin the same events in the opposite direction. For many of the young men who supported the League and ultimately chose to migrate to Pakistan, the emergence of the League represented the fulfillment of a hitherto nascent desire for action; it was an exciting and inspiring time. Major General Ghulam Umar remembers meeting Jinnah in 1940, only a couple of weeks

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<sup>99</sup> Khan, "Abdul Rashid Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas."

before the famous Lahore League Meeting, when he spoke before the Muslim University Union:

My association with Aligarh brought another very interesting change. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of March, 1940, Quaid-e-Azam, Mohammed Ali Jinnah—he was not yet Quaid-e-Azam—he visited Aligarh and I was a student there. He addressed the students and during his address he used the word “Muslim India.” One of the students got up and asked him, “Where is Muslim India? There are some provinces where Muslims are in the majority, four or five provinces, but otherwise, Muslims are in Bengal, in Madras, everywhere. What is this Muslim India?” And [Jinnah] said, “There is not a corner of India from which a Muslim student is not present here. This is Muslim India.” In other words, that was his concept of Muslim community.<sup>100</sup>

Jinnah’s words were so compelling to the young man that he held onto them verbatim for sixty years. Masood ul Hasan, one of a very few Indian narrators willing to speak in some detail about his experiences in Muslim League electioneering, began by noting that because Aligarh boys played an active role in electioneering “Aligarh had to pay heavily later on, we still have to pay for it.”<sup>101</sup> He dismissed student electioneering activities as inconsequential, overblown in the memory and the result of youthful enthusiasm. In contrast to Ghulam Umar’s clear and glowing recollection of Quaid-e-Azam’s visits, Masood ul-Hasan recalled the efforts of League leaders to empower Aligarh boys with a bitterness bordering on hostility. Jinnah had adopted a phrase that has remained the most powerful marker of the intimacy between Aligarh and the Muslim League activism for Pakistan; on March 10, 1941, Jinnah cried, “Aligarh is the arsenal of Muslim India and you are its best soldiers.”<sup>102</sup> Masood al-Hasan, remembering this, remarked, “Here is Jinnah Sahib, he coined that phrase ‘Arsenal.’ ‘My arsenal.’ ‘Arsenal.’ Anybody would

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<sup>100</sup> Umar, "Major General Ghulam Umar (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas August 8, 2006." Note: Jinnah addressed the Union on March 6<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>101</sup> Hasan, "Masood Ul Hasan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 1, 2009."

<sup>102</sup> "Speech at the Muslim University Union, Aligarh, on March 10, 1941" in Ahmad, ed., *Some Recent Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah*, 268.



feel puffed up. Okay. We were nothing.”<sup>103</sup> The League harnessed the enthusiasm of the young men and, in Masood ul-Hasan’s opinion, used them to accomplish its goals. He remembered with some regret and bitterness today that “Aligarh’s boys came in handy. Why? Did they come in handy because they were committed to the cause? I tell you! Not so. I speak as an insider. Not so.”<sup>104</sup> Masood ul-Hasan was one of only a few narrators who chose to remain in India after 1947 who would specifically address his involvement with the Muslim League during his student days. However, these recollections are frequently tinged with anger and he reiterates that his enthusiasm for the League was childlike and ill-advised. But he was among the many students who fortified the League organization in the late 1930s and early 1940s, at a time when many forces came together to galvanize Muslims in solidarity and action.

Professor of History in Delhi University, Mohammad Amin, resisted the argument that there was any coercion on the part of League sympathizers to draw in others. Rather, he told me, if you didn’t want to go electioneering for personal reasons, there was no pressure to do otherwise. You might decide, he told me, “If one is thinking, fifteen or twenty days, that would be a loss” then one might decide not to go.<sup>105</sup> Amin makes an interesting point here, that draws us back into the debate on the fundamental conflict between education and politics, that this electioneering interfered with the academic agenda of the University. While at first, League leaders had encouraged

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<sup>103</sup> Hasan, "Masood Ul Hasan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 1, 2009."

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Mohammad Amin, "Professor Mohammad Amin: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas November 5, 2009," (New Delhi: November 5, 2009).

students to spread the League message during their vacations, ultimately, Liaqat Ali Khan urged them to give up even a whole academic year if necessary to fight for Pakistan. Iqbal Shafi, then only a student of the Intermediate, was unfazed by the affect on his academics. In fact, he was looking forward to the further adventures he could have when it became clear that his attendance was too short for his year to count. And he remembered his disappointment when the Vice Chancellor, Ziauddin Ahmad, remembered as always an advocate for students, allowed the students to sit for their annual exams despite the ostensibly disqualifying poor attendance.<sup>106</sup>

Many of the interviews I have conducted address this period, and there is a wealth of correspondence between League leaders and Aligarh leaders that reveals a much more complex and fractious relationship between the two institutions and can complicate our view of student activity. This is valuable as a way of examining the power of state-supported teleologies that, in Pakistan, cast Aligarh men as the quintessential Pakistanis, and in India cast them as perfidious. The correspondence between League leadership at the center and at the university reveals a close intellectual relationship, but also some tensions financially and culturally. For all of the attention paid to the image of Aligarh students as the foot soldiers of the Pakistan Movement, an examination of the correspondence reveals surprising ambivalence. It seems that the glorified image is

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<sup>106</sup> Academic Council meeting notes read: “As a special case this year the shortage in attendance of the students appearing at the Intermediate B.A., B.Sc. (Pass & Hons.), MA. MSc (Previous & Final) and BT Examination of 1947 be condoned if they have put in 50% attendance till the end of March 1947.” And there are further provisions for the Vice Chancellor’s discretion in matters of attendance. Ziauddin Ahmad and A.E. Zobairi, in *Minutes of An Ordinary Meeting of the Academic Council* (Aligarh: Aligarh Muslim University, April 12, 1947).

largely retrospective and in fact, student activism was dominated by the same kinds of factional concerns that characterized all political activities at the institution.

The history of political activity at Aligarh has shown that the students were always eager to distinguish themselves, to establish their political credentials, though the movements to which they were attracted changed with the times. The thread that runs through all three major political moments at Aligarh prior to 1947 is that of solidarity—Muslims came together to support one another for the advancement of the community as a whole. By separating the outcome of the Pakistan demand from the political mobilization that made it possible, we can see why the students were attracted to the League’s rhetoric. There is no suggestion here that the students would be required to migrate elsewhere to enjoy Pakistan’s fruits. Rather, the Pakistan Movement, driven by Muslims bound together by common interest, led by Aligarh students, would give “expression to the hidden feelings of Muslim nation.”<sup>107</sup> In his speeches before the Aligarh Union, Jinnah frequently emphasized the rapid growth of the Muslim League since 1938. In November 1942, he told them that in 1939 the League had become big enough, influential enough, that it was no longer possible for the British to ignore it—but now, in 1942, the League was strong enough “to make as big a hell, if not bigger, as Congress can.”<sup>108</sup> This is a significant declaration considering the impact of the League’s political losses in the 1937 election, and it primed the students to keep working for the

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<sup>107</sup> (Sd.) Shakir Husain Khan. Shakir H. Khan to Liaqat Ali Khan. February 13, 1941. *FMA*, F 237/ 14-15. PNA.

<sup>108</sup> Mohammad Ali Jinnah. Pakistan, the Muslim Charter: Speech by Quaid-E-Azam M.A. Jinnah to Muslim University Union, Aligarh. November 2, 1941. *Ibid.*, F 237/ 19 (1-14). PNA.

League; the outcome of political action was strength, and it was measurable, and it was growing. In case the students had not fully grasped the implication of the rhetorical shift from minority to nation, Jinnah clarified: “It is not a question of concession or compromise, protection or safeguards. It is a question of the inherent birthright of Mussalmans to self-determination as a national group inhabiting this sub-continent to establish their own states in those zones where they are in a majority.”<sup>109</sup>

#### **THE MUSLIM UNIVERSITY MUSLIM LEAGUE (MUML)**

It is quite clear from the correspondence in Pakistan’s Freedom Movement Archives that the University administration—from the Union to the teaching staff to the Vice Chancellor to the Pro Vice Chancellor—was not only sympathetic to the demands of the League but also complicit in its expansion at the university. Both A.B.A. Haleem, the Pro-Vice Chancellor (the academic head of the University) and Ziauddin Ahmad (the executive head) were actively corresponding with Mohammad Ali Jinnah and Liaqat Ali Khan about League activities. Obaidur Rahman Khan Sherwani, Riazur Rahman Sherwani’s father was, at the time, honorary treasurer of the University and responsible for managing the funds that the Muslim League sent directly to the Muslim University Muslim League. These funds were disbursed through Sherwani and the accounting was documented by the Chief Accountant of the University.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Jinnah. Speech: Muslim India Speaks.

<sup>110</sup> Qazi Mohammad Isa. Qazi Mohammad Isa to Chief Accountant, Muslim University Aligarh. November 22, 1945. Ibid., F 237/ 74. PNA, Secretary Committee of Action All India Muslim League to the Chief Accountant Muslim University Aligarh. November 22, 1945. *FMA*, F 237/ 74. PNA, Jamil-ud-din Ahmad.

The Muslim University Muslim League, which gained official recognition as a City League in 1945—and thus was officially affiliated to the Parliamentary Board—“in recognition of the services it [had] rendered ever since 1937” worked feverishly to organize students for election work in the closing quarter of 1945. After the stellar showing of the League in the Central Assembly elections, Muslim University Muslim League president, Manzar-i-Alam began to organize for the Provincial Assembly elections. Having significantly depleted his own resources to dispatch students during the first round of electioneering—he spent up to Rs. 7000 of his own money in addition to the Rs. 1000 sent by the League Central Committee and Rs. 536/-4 sent personally by Nawabzada Liaqat Ali Khan in whose district many students canvassed—he now leveraged the official position of the MUML to appeal directly to Jinnah for funds.<sup>111</sup> There is a flurry of correspondence in late 1945 between Aligarh Leaguers and M.A. Jinnah as Jinnah himself tried, at this late stage, to begin to manage the League affairs at Aligarh from a distance. Jinnah first wrote to A.B.A. Haleem on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November 1945 requesting that he establish a committee, under his own direction, to manage the election work and deputing Jamiluddin Ahmad (who was deeply involved in League propaganda work) and Ishrat Ali Khan (then the student Vice President of the Union). Before Haleem could reply, Jamiluddin Ahmad and Manzar-i-Alam launched a propaganda campaign to highlight their own achievements and to marginalize the role

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Jamiluddin Ahmad to M.A. Jinnah: Election Work Committee Constituted. December 11, 1945. *SHC*, Vol. 26/ 180-81. PNA.

<sup>111</sup> Manzar-i- Alam. Manzar-i-Alam to Liaqat Ali Khan: Need of Assistance from Central Parliamentary Board. October 26, 2945. *FMA*, F 237/ 67. PNA.

played by A.B.A. Haleem.<sup>112</sup> This rift between the League leaders resulted in the division of League forces at Aligarh, and as Alam and Ahmad personally wrote to Jinnah with lists of the MUML's accomplishments in the Central Assembly elections, they were also trying to undermine Haleem's role. Their letters cite a variety of activities by large numbers of students: "500 student workers were sent by our university Muslim League for all the provinces but largely for UP"<sup>113</sup>; "700 selfless warriors" demonstrated the "untiring zeal of the Muslim youth"<sup>114</sup>; "600 students and 20 members of the teaching staff" were able to help the League in the Central Assembly elections.<sup>115</sup> In addition, a number of students wrote directly to Jinnah touting the pure intentions of the MUML president, Manzar-i-Alam, and his selfless efforts to organize and fund election work. Alam and Ahmad used this evidence to ask for funds above and beyond the initial Rs. 1000 that the Central Parliamentary Board had promised and finally delivered in November (after it had already been spent on training League workers).<sup>116</sup> Jamiluddin Ahmad immediately resisted the appointment of A.B.A. Haleem as the chair of the election committee and recommended Manzar-i-Alam out of concern that the students

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<sup>112</sup> The conflict between Haleem and Alam dates to 1938, when Manzar-i-Alam was a student of the university. Haleem accused Alam of being involved in creating mischief and admits that he was only readmitted to the university after his father's intervention. A.B.A. Haleem. A.B.A. Haleem to Maulavi Mohd. Ashiq Saheb Warsi: Report of the P.V.C. To the University Court. October 25, 1938. *Ibid.*, F 1094/ 340-343. PNA.

<sup>113</sup> Jamil-ud-din Ahmad. Jamiluddin Ahmad to M.A. Jinnah: Provincial Election Work and Committee. December 1, 1945. *SHC*, Vol. 26/ 129-32. PNA.

<sup>114</sup> Ali Ahmad Fazieli. Ali Ahmad Fazieli to M.A. Jinnah: Provincial Election Work. December 2, 1945. *Ibid.*, Vol. 26/ 136-38. PNA.

<sup>115</sup> Manzar-i- Alam. Manzar-i-Alam to M.A. Jinnah: Student Election Work and Need for Funds. December 3, 1945. *Ibid.*, Vol. 26/ 146- 48. PNA.

<sup>116</sup> Qazi Mohammad Isa. Qazi Mohammad Isa to Chief Accountant, Muslim University Aligarh. November 22, 1945. *FMA*, F 237/ 74. PNA.

would undoubtedly reject any person who appeared to be usurping the power of the MUMML.<sup>117</sup>

The students, the foot soldiers of the League's electioneering team, here become leverage in the aspirations of University officials for acquiring their own political power. The students were a potentially disruptive force as much as they were a potentially mobilizing one. The university officials understood the students' disruptive power well, and Jinnah appears to have had his own anxieties about this, which might explain his unwillingness to involve them in the world of active politics in the first place. Now, however, confronted with the evidence, in the form of the MUMML leadership's representations as well as testimonials from Liaqat Ali Khan and others as to the value of their influence, Jinnah began to send larger sums of money to the University, and by extension to the League, to facilitate their participation.<sup>118</sup>

Even as Jinnah authorized up to Rs. 30,000 for student League work, he cautioned his acolytes to work together. Their unity would be rewarded with his attention and support.<sup>119</sup> Ahmad and Alam succeeded in officially displacing Haleem as the chairman of the Election Funds Committee, forming on December 11<sup>th</sup> a "responsible committee after full consultations with the Vice-Chancellor Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad and all others who are genuinely and actively interested in Muslim League work" led by Dr. M.B.

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<sup>117</sup> Ahmad. Jamiluddin Ahmad to M.A. Jinnah: Provincial Election Work and Committee. *SUH* Vol 26/ 132 Jamiluddin to Jinnah December 1, 1945

<sup>118</sup> Mohammad Ali Jinnah. M.A. Jinnah to Jamil-Ud-Din Ahmad: Need to Establish an Election Committee. December 5, 1945. *Ibid.*, Vol. 26/ 133. PNA. — — — . M.A. Jinnah to Obaidur Rahman Khan Sherwani: Accounts of the Election Committee. January 21, 1946. *SHC*, Vol. 26/ 224. PNA.

<sup>119</sup> Mohammad Ali Jinnah. M.A. Jinnah to Jamil-Ud-Din Ahmad: Need to Establish an Election Committee. December 5, 1945. *SHC*, Vol. 26/ 133. PNA.

Mirza of the Department of Geography. Khan Bahadur Obaidur Rahman Khan Sherwani, Honorary Treasurer of the University was to serve as the manager of the funds Jinnah sent, and the remaining two committee members were Ahmad and Alam themselves.<sup>120</sup> Within ten days, Jinnah sent ten thousand rupees and ardently requested that Jamiluddin Ahmad, as convener of the committee, keep in close touch with him in regards to its use, this seemingly in addition to the accounting that Sherwani was to send. The committee leapt into action, immediately dispatching “225 students to Punjab, 25 students to N.W.F.P., 22 students to Sind, 10 students to Assam, 7 students to Bengal, and nearly 75 students to United Provinces and other provinces of India” despite the fact that the university had already closed for the winter break.<sup>121</sup> By the 13<sup>th</sup> of January, 1946, less than one month after Jinnah sent the money, it was gone.<sup>122</sup>

On January 19<sup>th</sup>, 1946, ABA Haleem’s contingent fired back. A fourth year bachelor’s student, a resident of Aftab Hostel, wrote to Jinnah to inform him that the real election committee led by A.B.A. Haleem and consisting of “responsible members of the staff aided by enthusiastic students” was carrying on League work and organizing the students for election work. In contrast, he argues, Ahmad, Alam, and Ahmad Wahab Khairi were doing nothing but “making propaganda on their ownelves [sic]” and using

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<sup>120</sup> Jamil-ud-din Ahmad. Jamiluddin Ahmad to M.A. Jinnah: Election Work Committee Constituted. December 11, 1945. *Ibid.*, Vol. 26/ 180-81. PNA. It was well-known that Ziauddin Ahmad and ABA Haleem were bitter enemies. In 1937, Ziauddin had recommended abolishing the post of PVC, held by Haleem, and the concentration of both academic and executive powers in the hands of the VC, himself. The post of PVC was abolished in 1944 at which time it had still been held by Haleem. "Muslim University Constitution: Need of Removing Certain Anomalies," *The Muslim University Gazette* April 28, 1937.

<sup>121</sup> Manzar-i- Alam. Manzar-i-Alam to M.A. Jinnah: Student Election Workers Sent out over Holidays. December 17, 1945. *SHC*, Vol. 26/ 187- 88. PNA.

<sup>122</sup> Jamil-ud-din Ahmad. Jamiluddin Ahmad to M.A. Jinnah: Proceedings of the Finance Committee. January 13, 1946. *Ibid.*, Vol. 26/ 212- 13. PNA.



the League for personal advancement but obstructing sincere League workers in the University area.<sup>123</sup> The student thus appeals to Jinnah to unseat the current committee and to replace it with a committee led by Haleem. It is important to recognize that all of the officials on both committees were involved in League work, and many of them including M.A.H. Qadri (Haleem) and Jamiluddin Ahmad (Alam) were working to create and distribute League propaganda through official channels.

Throughout this dispute, Jinnah played his cards close to his chest, repeatedly urging the complainants to work together for the good of the League. Jinnah was clearly concerned about how the money was being used, as he reiterated his concern that no one, apart from Sherwani himself, Jinnah's old friend and trusted associate, should sign the checks or authorize dispersal of funds. But in the ensuing days, Sherwani was called away to his rural district of Habibganj (where he was also standing for election) to see to his daughter's illness and his own campaign. During this period, Ahmad and Alam complained that they were having trouble funding League work, Alam advanced Rs. 10,000 to departing League workers and the sum total of the last check that Jinnah sent, under those express instructions, was transferred to Manzar-i-Alam before Sherwani's return from the countryside.<sup>124</sup>

The entire affair came to a head over the allotment of the Aligarh legislative seat for the Provincial elections. The UP Muslim League Parliamentary Board allotted the

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<sup>123</sup> Saiyed Mohammad Sarwar. Saiyed Mohammad Sarwar to M.A. Jinnah: Constitution of Election Committee. January 19, 1946. Ibid., Vol. 26/ 214- 15. PNA.

<sup>124</sup> Mohammad Obaidur Rahman Khan Sherwani. Obaidur Rahman Khan Sherwani to M.A. Jinnah: Report of the Accounts of the Election Committee. January 24, 1946. Ibid., Vol. 26/ 227- 28. PNA.

seat to an Aligarh businessman (and League worker) in January 1946. However, most of the correspondence in protest of his appointment does not even refer to the nominated candidate. It is evident that the real power play—at least as it appeared to Aligarh-- was between A.B.A. Haleem, President of the UP Muslim Students Federation and Manzar-i-Alam, President of the Muslim University Muslim League. Both Haleem’s and Alam’s partisans argued that the seat rightfully belonged to their leader. This is the first time that the realm of active politics acquired relevance in the workings of the League partisans at AMU. Until that point, the factional bickering had seemed to revolve around internal issues, and it now became clear that all of the League leaders, on both sides of the dispute, sought to leverage their involvement into greater political prestige in representing the new Pakistan. As before, Manzar-i-Alam’s student troops from the MUML rallied behind his cause, sending letters and telegrams to Nawabzada Liaqat Ali Khan, the Chairman of the MLPB, to beg him to reconsider appointing Alam in recognition of his electioneering work.<sup>125</sup> They accuse Haleem’s partisans of divisive behavior—particularly unseemly in Aligarh—and of nationalist, or sometimes Communist sympathies, sometimes using identical verbiage, including grammatical errors.<sup>126</sup> Both leaders had turned their supporters into campaigners for their own political ends.

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<sup>125</sup> Various. Letters and Telegrams in Support of Manzar-i-Alam from Halls of Residence, Aligarh University.

<sup>126</sup> Fasih-uddin Ansari. Fasih-Uddin Ansari to Liaqat Ali Khan: Letter in Support of Manzar-i-Alam. January 25, 1946. *Ibid.*, Vol. 238/ 33. PNA. A. Ghaffar and Wazir Ahmad Hussain. A. Ghaffar and Wazir Ahmad Hussain to Liaqat Ali Khan: Letter in Support of Manzar-i-Alam. January 25, 1946. *FMA*, Vol. 238/ 40. PNA. Two letters, written on January 25, 1946 refer to the efforts of Haleem partisans to disrupt the functioning of the League and “emphatically deprecate [*sic*] their attempts at misrepresentation.” Both

It was here that the League edifice at Aligarh began to crumble. It may have been the fulfillment of Aligarh's anxiety about the infiltration of active politics into the academic environment, or perhaps it was just the outcome of unbridled youthful enthusiasm. The significance of all this bickering lies in the role of the students, long-held to have been the "arsenal" of the League elections. The disciplinary scenario was complicated by the empowerment of the students as political agents, and in 1946, their behavior began to get out of hand. By mid 1946, that arsenal turned mercenary and Jinnah's fears came true. Ziauddin, who, as far back as 1920 had been ambivalent about student political activity, now again withdrew his support. He called a closed door staff meeting and "said that it was time that there was a shift in Aligarh's political role. Aligarh had to remain in the Indian Union and had to adjust and adapt itself to the situation. Political realism demanded that Aligarh [withdraw] itself from the political forefront."<sup>127</sup>

Practically, Ziauddin's shift in approach manifested in several ways, the best known is that he withdrew from publication an issue of the student *Aligarh Magazine* over the charge that it contained an inflammatory, anti-Hindu article on the aftermath of the Bihar riots.<sup>128</sup> In addition, Ghayurul Islam, Honorary Secretary of the Muslim University Union, complained to Jinnah that Ziauddin Ahmad had threatened to dissolve

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letters go on to reiterate the support of the MUMU for the MLPB, their obedience to its authority and commitment to the cause of Pakistan.

<sup>127</sup> Nizami, *History of the Aligarh Muslim University (1920- 1945)*, 224.

<sup>128</sup> Ghayurul Islam. Ghayurul Islam to M.A. Jinnah: Resignation of Ziauddin Ahmad. N.D. *SHC*, Vol. 51/ 34-36. PNA, Habib, "Personal Interview with Amber Abbas."

the League organization.<sup>129</sup> When Ziauddin realized that Aligarh would not be in Pakistan he finally withdrew his support for student political activity. It was not long since he had defended students against any charges of indiscipline,<sup>130</sup> and permitted students who had been gone electioneering to sit for annual exams; trying to reign them back in and refocus their attention to the educational task at hand. Ultimately, it seems, it was Ziauddin's discomfort with his own decision that probably led to this reversal. When in 1946 he tried to temper separatist League enthusiasm he became the subject of a student agitation. As Masood ul Hasan remembered, students organized a "demonstration in front of the VC's office. Schoolboys on their way to Minto Circle also joined the procession and they marched to the office. Offensive slogans were raised, glass-panes smashed, and the VC was forced to tender his resignation. It was unbelievable that a popular VC like *Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad* could be treated by the students so disgracefully."<sup>131</sup> After a long struggle between the changing political worlds inside and outside the university, the educationist in Ziauddin won out; the students, energized and politicized, ousted him; discipline broke down completely. Ziauddin, drawn in by the promises of Pakistan that sounded so consistent with the cause to which he had devoted his life assisted in creating a body of students with such a sense of entitlement that when the fruit of their efforts took on a concrete form, he shied away and they drove him from his position as their leader.

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<sup>129</sup> Islam. Ghayurul Islam to M.A. Jinnah: Resignation of Ziauddin Ahmad.

<sup>130</sup> Ziauddin Ahmad, "The Report of the Vice-Chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University for the Calendar Year 1945: Read at the Convocation Held on the 1st December, 1945," (Aligarh: Aligarh Muslim University Press, 1945), 5.

<sup>131</sup> Emphasis in original. Hasan, "Glimpses of the Forties," 67.

In a letter to Jinnah in January 1947, Ziauddin conceded, “On account of the impossible demands of the students and absence of support from the staff, I did not like to continue.” The choice of the next Vice Chancellor, Ziauddin says, was in Jinnah’s own hands.<sup>132</sup> In February 1947, as a result of the anxiety about Ziauddin’s possible return, “the students,” wrote then Honorary Secretary of the Muslim League Abdullah Ghani “are in a ferment. They are bent upon setting their own house in order.”<sup>133</sup> This letter, for all its fiery rhetoric, has a sense of resolution to it. Jinnah should know that the students were now settling down; the convocation came off peacefully (Ziauddin did not attend); the students had “diverted” their minds to their studies; and everyone was satisfied with the acting Vice Chancellor, Obaidur Rahman Sherwani, ostensibly a League man.<sup>134</sup>

For all of the political maneuvering taking place during this period, one thing is clear: the students were mobilized by the same concerns that had always inspired students at Aligarh—a narrative of solidarity and uplift—and their cohesion was destroyed by the same nepotistic and factional forces that had always left Aligarh’s movements in shambles. The League period at Aligarh was not an anomaly. It was theoretically and emotionally consistent with Aligarh’s past political movements. It is only in how this event is remembered that it is set apart.

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<sup>132</sup> Ziauddin Ahmad. Ziauddin Ahmad to M.A. Jinnah: The Future of Muslims in India. January 2, 1947. *FMA*, Vol. 591/ 3- 4. PNA.

<sup>133</sup> Abdullah Ghani. Abdullah Ghani to M.A. Jinnah: Discontent at Aligarh. February 22, 1947. *Ibid.*, F 962/ 70-78. PNA.

<sup>134</sup> Professor Emeritus Irfan Habib, at the time a first year student in the University, told me that Sherwani “was totally unsuited to the office of the Vice Chancellor... but the thing functioned.” Habib, “Irfan Habib: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 28, 2009.”

The students understood Pakistan to mean Muslim India, and very early on, Jinnah had told them that they represented Muslim India. There was no question of territoriality.<sup>135</sup> In 1945, a letter from a student residing in Aligarh cites his address as Aligarh, Pakistan.<sup>136</sup> This is not because he expected Pakistan to incorporate the city, as has been sometimes suggested—one explanation for the devotion of UP Muslims to Pakistan is the argument that they truly believed there would be a corridor connecting East and West Pakistan that would pass through their region<sup>137</sup>—rather it reflects the intimate connection between Aligarh’s priorities and the way the students understood the priorities of Pakistan.

This chapter has argued that the two national narratives that unproblematically incorporate the narratives of Aligarh’s Muslim League period to serve a particular national agenda have both deliberately overlooked the actual content of political ferment at the University during the 1940s. The students were mobilized by the terms of the demand for Pakistan, drawn to the empowering ideal of representing themselves as a Nation to be reckoned with, rather than as a Minority to be protected. This critical shift in the Muslim League rhetoric drew the students in, even before the formal passing of the Lahore Resolution in 1940. They were spurred toward this choice by the criticisms of the Congress Ministries in the late 1930s that made it appear that Hindus were abusing Muslims in every corner of India. The election campaign, organized through the

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<sup>135</sup> Iqbal Masud. Iqbal Masud to M.A. Jinnah: Boycott Elections in Punjab. September 24, 1945. *SHC*, Vol. 26/ 51-56. PNA.

<sup>136</sup> Fayazuddin Tariq. Fayazuddin Tariq to M.A. Jinnah (Urdu). N.D. *FMA*, F 962/ 81. PNA.

<sup>137</sup> B. Verma, "Present Pakistan Plan: Subject to Expansion," (Lahore: The Tribune, April 15, 1946). In 1940, the Nawab of Mamdot had indeed fronted a plan including corridors. Phillips Talbot, *An American Witness to India's Partition* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2007), 63- 67.

University appeared to be the modern way of responding to this oppression, and the students enthusiastically traveled, sometimes very far afield, to educate Muslims in towns and villages about the new force to be reckoned with. When they returned, utterly distracted from their studies, they did their best to maintain the momentum of electioneering in an environment overflowing with youthful energy. Their leadership took advantage of this energy and deployed the students to advocate for their own political aspirations. Having built themselves a constituency, they now appealed to it for support.

Aligarh in 1946 was tumultuous and roiled. When the university administration began to withdraw its support for the Muslim League's political agenda, the students, aware of their own persuasive powers, mounted a revolt. Pakistan, for them, was very real, even if they didn't understand it to mean that they would have to move to a specific territory. Pakistan, for them, was an obligation to educate and uplift other Muslims, to draw in and protect their own and to attain a measure of political power and influence. Ziauddin's ambivalence to this agenda, and his ultimate refusal to condone the rhetoric of hatred that came with it, marked the high point of unrest. Having exhausted their energies, the students got back to preparing themselves for Pakistan. Even Jinnah rarely visited during 1945 and 1946. He had been so active there in the early part of the decade, inspiring the students to work for Pakistan, and once they were consolidated, he left them to work under the leadership of their own; once they had proven their worth in the Central Assembly elections of 1945 he funded them for the Provincial election work. But Jinnah had stepped into a nest of irascible bees, and though he always sought to calm the

tensions and controversies at Aligarh, it undoubtedly caused him some anxiety to see how unpredictable his arsenal could be.



## Chapter 4

### Partition in Aligarh

“[Many] of us are inclined to give up Aligarh rather than the dreams they had dreamt there.” –Mohamad Ali Jauhar<sup>1</sup>

To understand the trauma of partition in Aligarh University requires an interpretive shift away from a narrative that suggests that violence “was” partition, and towards one that can incorporate unique and multiple experiences of disruption. This requires an examination of the particular meaning of trauma in life stories told by those who may not have experienced partition’s violence along the disturbed borders in Punjab. By expanding the contours of partition history, different understandings of trauma emerge. It becomes possible to see how people’s place in history has irrevocably shifted, how space is tightly linked to trauma and how recovery can illuminate trauma in particular life stories. In Aligarh, as my examination of partition narratives will make clear, trauma is intimately connected to questions of space and the university’s ability to expand its disciplinary regime into spaces beyond its boundary walls. While the university’s boundaries defined its unique territory, within which boys were conditioned into men, the university also exerted power beyond its boundaries that furnished its charges with a sense of belonging and importance that they carried with them when they stepped outside the institution’s walls. It was the disruption of this power that traumatized Aligarh’s students, and left them feeling exposed in post-independence India.

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<sup>1</sup> Mohamad Ali to Mahmudabad, 6 April 1917, Mohamad Ali Papers, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. Cited in Minault and Lelyveld, "The Campaign for a Muslim University, 1898-1920," 264.

A significant new force was introduced in Aligarh during partition, one that was conspicuous in its absence before. For the first time, Aligarh students felt afraid, because as Ahmad Saeed remembered, “In ’47... these communal riots [were] all around us. We used to read it in newspapers. Naturally we were scared. And we were in the center of it. All around there were people belonging to the other community. So we were scared! And there were threats also. At least we felt so, I don’ t know how real they were. So, naturally there were threats.”<sup>2</sup> In 1947, the sense of isolation and safety so integral to the university’s identity was disrupted.<sup>3</sup> Saeed describes a situation in which Aligarh appears surrounded, overwhelmed by forces of disruption all around. Aligarh, in his explanation, was “in the center,” of all animosity directed towards Muslims. By mere virtue of their faith and heritage, and allegiance to the institution, the students were “naturally” threatened and thus came to fear the world around them. After partition in India, Muslims officially became “the minority community” in India and the sense of commonality among Muslims that leaders like Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and later Mohammad Ali Jinnah sought to cultivate set Muslims apart as the subjects of suspicion. Even Ahmad Saeed, whose father was a nationalist and who claimed to have no sympathy with the League or its agenda, described the threats to Muslims as “natural.” This turn of phrase indicates the depth of the anxiety in Muslim communities during and after the 1947 partition. The choice to remain in independent India, and the belief that Muslims could be fully engaged citizens, seems to contradict his straightforward recognition of threats to

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<sup>2</sup> Saeed, "Ahmad Saeed: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas October 10, 2009," 64.

<sup>3</sup> Violette Graff, "Aligarh's Long Quest for 'Minority' Status: A.M.U. (Amendment) Act, 1981," *Economic and Political Weekly*, Aug. 11, 1990.

Muslim security. Saeed recognizes Muslim vulnerability as an inevitability even as he believes that hard work would propel Muslims to greater heights of success. The slippage between these illuminates the tension embodied in Muslim citizenship in India and how intimately it was linked to the events of the 1940s.

Those narrators who remained in India describe the disruptions to their lives by speaking primarily in terms of how this new paradigm of distrust affected their relationship to space. Thus, spaces that previously seemed safe, protected, were no longer accessible. In their narratives, even the city of Delhi which, during the Muslim League period had seemed to be an extension of the Aligarh campus, seems to shift location. The sites of violence former students refer to, that were now sites of terror, were previously places where their safety was ensured by the marks of their belonging to Aligarh. Formerly familiar spaces now terrified the students, and their fear is the surest mark that partition's disruptions exerted power there. This fear had a significant impact on life in the university and as narrators remember these events, it is clear that their fear was a result of the disruption of their understanding of their place in society, and the inability of Aligarh University to extend a carapace of protection over them both within and beyond its borders. Aligarh University itself had a special prestige and this is what generated the widespread sympathy for its students before partition; disruption to the moral order that supported this sense of prestige, that offered Aligarh's students a special way of belonging in India is the source of their trauma.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Arthur Neal has argued that trauma is constituted in the disruption of "the institutional underpinnings of the social order." Neal, *National Trauma and Collective Memory*, xi.

This chapter examines the former students' partition narratives closely, and shows the influence of these disruptions to everyday life, to the moral order of the Aligarh University. I explore the experiences of Aligarh students during and immediately after partition: how they interpreted the changes taking place, and the effects those changes would have on their own lives. Taking their unique perspective into account, this chapter explores the disruption of Aligarh's isolation and what it meant to the students to be thrust into the heart of partition's disruptions. Efforts to preserve moral continuity emerge, too, and many former students make an effort to minimize the effects of partition's disruptions over the long term. These are ironic stories: Indian narrators, many of whom have remained close to the university, tell stories of disruption and discontinuity, whereas Pakistani narrators emphasize continuity, even as they are physically dislocated from the university they remember. These narratives begin to show these slippages in perception and reveal the effort narrators must exert to normalize their stories to state narratives that define the roles of different groups (Muslims, Aligarians, Pakistanis, Indians).

Aligarh University was never attacked during the violence of partition.<sup>5</sup> Despite the absence of violence, this chapter explores the role of fear in rearranging the relationship between Aligarh students and the world around them. Through an examination of partition and post-partition experiences, this chapter argues that the outcomes of partition for many of the individuals interviewed here are still palpably felt

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<sup>5</sup> There were no attacks on AMU during 1947 and 1948, though there were riots and communal disturbances in Aligarh City. There had been violence between city dwellers and students in 1946 and there were a number of riots in the 1950s. Brass, *Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence*. Pars Ram, "A Unesco Study of Social Tensions in Aligarh, 1950-1951," ed. Gardner Murphy (Ahmedabad: UNESCO, 1955).

today. The violence that altered the Aligarh boys' view of the world was not "to be measured by external acts of murder, loot or abduction" but the "state where a sense of fear is generated and perpetrated in such a way as to make it systemic, pervasive and inevitable."<sup>6</sup> This was a new paradigm, one governed by "the fear of not belonging" in a place where one had always belonged before. Indeed, as Salman Khurshid has suggested, for those whose choice was "to stay at home" it has become difficult or impossible to "speak of the trauma, the injury or the insult."<sup>7</sup> In 1947 these anxieties about belonging were fresh, utterly unresolved, and marked a rupture with the period before; the fear was new and resilient.

Since the founding of the institution, Aligarh students were recognized as boys of good breeding who were engaged in a project of character building alongside their education. The uniform of the black sherwani marked them when they ventured outside the university's bounds: to the cinema, on the train to their homes, and in the annual Aligarh exhibition. Aligarh boys' prestige was evidenced by their smart uniform and backed by the history of the institution, and the fact that many of India's Muslim leaders (including some leaders in the Indian National Congress) had passed through its gates. During and after 1947, however, the sherwani exposed the boys to the stigma of being associated with the institution that had "caused" the partition of the country. Not only were Muslims now seen as the Other of the Indian national, but Aligarh in particular was held responsible for Muslim League successes in the elections prior to independence.

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<sup>6</sup> Guha Thakurta, "Uprooted and Divided."

<sup>7</sup> Salman Khurshid, *At Home in India: A Restatement of Indian Muslims* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd, 1986).

Ahmad Saeed's explanation implies that this suspicion was predictable because "Everybody knew the background of the University and what it did during the League days and how the entire student community and most of the staff of the university were working for the Muslim League and all that. [Aligarians] were not expecting that they would be allowed to flourish during those days."<sup>8</sup> Still, this new kind of exposure bred fear, both on the campus and among the students when they passed outside of the university's protective environs.

Thus, during the early years of independence, many narrators speak of efforts to conceal their identities, to disavow their Muslimness and their link to Aligarh in order to protect themselves. In instances of Hindu-Muslim violence, which, as Paul Brass has shown, were particularly frequent and acute in Aligarh in the years after 1947, Aligarh students feared that they would be held responsible for the wrongs of Muslims, though they were individually (largely) innocent. Muslim loyalty to the Indian state was immediately disputed, and it was not unusual for Muslims to be told "*Man, if you people are going, then you all go! It shouldn't be that some [Muslims] are here and some are there.*"<sup>9</sup> But Aligarh and Muslims remain in India, albeit in a perpetually vexed state.

Though Aligarians had always considered themselves apart from society, distinguished by their way of dress and comportment, it was born of a sense of social

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<sup>8</sup> Saeed, "Ahmad Saeed: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas October 10, 2009."

<sup>9</sup> Moinuddin Khan, "Moinuddin Khan: Interview with Sara Ansari, Citizens Archive of Pakistan," (Karachi: October 16, (2008?)). My translation from Urdu. Wazir Khan, "Captain Wazir Khan: Interview with Unam Muneer, Citizens Archive of Pakistan," ed. Unam Muneer (Karachi: N.D.).

superiority, not anxiety.<sup>10</sup> Isolation was maintained by the near constant efforts of the university's proctors, its administration and alumni who repeatedly reminded students of the significance of the residential system in developing men of character. Its isolation was self-imposed, but as the cultivation of a masculine identity became increasingly associated with a politically active one, the boundaries of the university became more porous. The Vice Chancellor and university administration cultivated links with the Muslim League, allowed and even encouraged student participation in political activities, and ultimately facilitated the shift in the university's identity from a culturally Muslim one, to a politically Muslim one. One outcome of this shift after 1947 was that the self-imposed isolation of the institution was now girded by a sense of exclusion and suspicion of disloyalty that firmed up the institution's boundaries and set it apart from the town and society more broadly.

The story of partition at Aligarh is the story of this increasing isolation and how the students and the university more broadly coped with it, and how they now seek to minimize the effects of this disruption and to prove the importance of Aligarh in a narrative of India's composite culture.

### **PARTITION IN ALIGARH**

The partition plan had been announced by Viceroy Mountbatten and grudgingly accepted by both League and Congress leadership on June 3, 1947, a mere ten weeks before British power would officially be transferred on August 15, 1947. The actual

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<sup>10</sup> Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation*.

border award was not made public until August 17. There had been unrest in Calcutta in 1946 and in Punjab in the early part of 1947, but the wanton violence of partition did not begin in earnest until the major migrations began in mid-August. As millions of refugees criss-crossed Punjab in the stultifying heat of that August, violence erupted in both urban and rural areas. The division between Aligarh and the rest of India became more stark as the identity politics that drove partition became more Manichean.

Students began arriving in Aligarh in July to begin the 1947-48 academic year,<sup>11</sup> before the violence in Punjab made it clear that the two new states of India and Pakistan would be separated by a formal international boundary, and Pakistan would not function as a semi-autonomous Muslim region with a porous frontier (or no border at all) that many expected. Whether these students came from “Pakistan areas” or from other parts of India, the partition violence trapped them in their university. One narrator from U.P. told me,

I wrote to my father. ‘Please call me back. I am being frightened over here.’ He said, ‘Why? You are a coward, boy? No! Be there in the hostel. What happens to the other students will happen to you also! And I think nothing will happen.’ ... Nothing has happened. It was correct, but I was a lad and so much frightened with my other students. They were from far distance so could not go there easily but I can go to Kanpur very easily. But he refused me... He said what happens to others, it will happen to you also!<sup>12</sup>

He found encouragement in his father’s instructions, but he was undoubtedly frightened by being forced to stay. It was not, however, until the early 1950s that Aligarh became

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<sup>11</sup> Notes from the Executive Council Meeting of December 11, 1947 show that the opening of the University was delayed until September 15, 1947 (it normally opened earlier) due to the unrest. I am thankful to Naved Masood for sharing this source with me.

<sup>12</sup> KPS, “KPS (Anonymized): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas October 8, 2009.” Hasan, “Masood Ul Hasan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 1, 2009.” Khan, “Zakir Ali Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas August 10, 2006.”



one of the most riot-prone towns in India.<sup>13</sup> Prior to this, and especially during 1947, Aligarh boys describe the waning influence of their university as a protective force. This waning influence created a persistent anxiety and efforts to take its defense into their own hands: sometimes arming themselves with the bamboo staves that held up their mosquito nets, sometimes patrolling the boundaries of the campus, alert to the possibility that their security could be breached and freshly conscious of their exposure as a Muslim institution surrounded by a Hindu majority.<sup>14</sup>

The University's protective capacity was upheld by the Proctorial system of discipline run by University staff assisted by students; its purview extended into the annual Aligarh Exhibition, the Railway Station and Aligarh's cinema halls. Students were required to adhere to the disciplinary norms of the university even in these places, and wardrobe or behavioral violations were punishable by fines. During 1946 and after, however, this system broke down, and it is through this collapse that students narrate tales of their fear.

As the previous chapter has made clear, 1945-1946 was a time of mounting student strength at Aligarh. The Vice Chancellor's anxiety about this was also growing and he repeatedly made attempts—rather ineffectually—to reel the students in, before he was ultimately ousted.<sup>15</sup> Despite his ouster, Vice Chancellor Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad is

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<sup>13</sup> Brass, *Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence*, 37.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> In his annual address in 1945 he complained, "All sorts of men, Hindu or Muslim, not connected with the University in any way, including even middle-aged men, have been treated by the railway staff as University students and all their misdeeds have been attributed to indiscipline in the University... To fortify ourselves against irresponsible criticism we have introduced the system of identity cards. We are tightening the system of permits, and are adopting other administrative measures for the still better supervision of our

well-remembered by former students on all sides of partition's borders as one who was sympathetic to the needs and desires of the students, this perhaps being one of the reasons the students gathered so much power in such a short time; Irfan Habib said that Ziauddin "was very afraid of taking action against hooligans" even if this meant manipulating the rules in their favor.

In 1946, there is one important episode, silenced in most stories about this period in Aligarh, that heralds the collapse of the discipline at AMU that had been so meticulously upheld throughout the 1920s, '30s and early '40s. This episode reveals the destruction of the boundary between the City of Aligarh and the University through an act of student indiscipline and efforts of the University administration. Though the original episode was a show of student strength, it created an opportunity for retributive violence on the part of city dwellers that established the precedent for fear of attack in 1947. As much as political opinions and allegiances in Aligarh had always been determined by local concerns, so too, we see here that the fear of violence emanated from a disruption to the local environment.

### **POLICING THE BOUNDARIES**

In several stories about partition in Aligarh, the students established their allegiance to the institution by describing their efforts to protect it. They patrolled its

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students." Ziauddin makes the move to fortify discipline seemingly out of disbelief that Aligarh boys could actually be responsible for the acts of indiscipline of which they were accused. His permit system was not to help in identification of undisciplined Aligarh boys, but rather an effort to prove that those who were behaving badly were not Aligarh boys at all. Ahmad, "The Report of the Vice-Chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University for the Calendar Year 1945: Read at the Convocation Held on the 1st December, 1945."

boundaries, they kept watch from the rooftops, they rallied to defend the campus against potential attackers, “wielding—many of them even trembling with fear—the sticks of the mosquito nets.”<sup>16</sup> There is a pervasive sense in the memories of these narrators that Aligarh was surrounded by hostile communities. Mohiuddin Khan, now settled in Bangladesh, told me that the “atmosphere was also tense. Sometimes we used to feel that maybe we may be attacked by Hindu majority people around... at night we used to remain very careful.”<sup>17</sup> There is a persistent narrative of threat here, but some students remember responding with a show of strength, as when Zakir Ali Khan told me, “We used to guard the university. We used to travel in trucks and whatever transport all around the university periphery. We spent the nights together guarding the university.”<sup>18</sup> The students were determined to protect their own safety within the boundaries of the university against any threat of outside attack from what Zakir Ali Khan called “mobs,”<sup>19</sup> and they never refer to engaging the outside authorities to maintain peace. Since Aligarh’s earliest days, and in the memories of many of these narrators, the university’s independence from the civil authorities was a source of pride. Zakir Ali Khan told me

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<sup>16</sup> Hasan, "Glimpses of the Forties," 66.

<sup>17</sup> Khan, "Mohiuddin Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas March 28, 2010."

<sup>18</sup> — — —, "Zakir Ali Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas August 10, 2006." An appendix to a meeting of the Academic Council in April 1946 resolves that two lorries will be made available and “one jeep can be made available with sufficient petrol for night duty.” It must be noted that this was the first meeting of the Academic Council following the conflagration in the grain market covered below. Sh. Abdul (Proctor) Rashid, "Appendix F (Ref. No. A.C. Res. No. 3, Dated 13th April, 1946): A Meeting of the Committee Appointed by the Academic Council to Devise Means for Patrolling the University at Night," in *Minutes of An Ordinary Meeting of the Academic Council* (Aligarh: Aligarh Muslim University, April 13, 1946).

<sup>19</sup> Khan, "Zakir Ali Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas August 10, 2006." Nizami, *History of the Aligarh Muslim University (1920- 1945)*, 219.

that there was no need for police intervention in Aligarh's conflicts because its own system operated so well.

However, in reflecting on the events of 1947, several narrators refer to the deployment of a military regiment around Aligarh during the disruptions.<sup>20</sup> In Mohiuddin's memory, "the government protected [the university] with Tribal People Regiment, Gurkha Regiment or something, they were guarding the University."<sup>21</sup> Khan's pride in the memory of Aligarh's independent disciplinary regime contrasts with the sense of security Mohiuddin describes as a result of the presence of a Gurkha Regiment on the boundary of the University. This shift marks an almost imperceptible silence in the story about partition at Aligarh that appears in the vast majority of narratives. That Aligarh would relinquish control over its policing to the Indian military shows that something significant had changed in its relation to the world around it. While at first glance this may appear to be the result of the scale of the threat, I believe it actually marks a shift in Aligarh's relationship to the town as a result of the disciplinary breaches that were allowed during the Muslim League period.

In the spring of 1946, as the students returned from electioneering, there was an attack on a local market that shows that while there was no precedent for a Hindu attack on the University that would justify deploying troops to protect it, there was a precedent from 1946 of Aligarh students threatening the residents of the city, in response to which

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<sup>20</sup> Naved Masood argues that this deployment was the United Provinces Armed Constabulary. Personal Communication with Naved Masood who says this "on the twin authority of late Mr. Merajuddin Ahmad who was the Commandant of the troops (moved from Agra); and a very respectable lawyer of Aligarh, Maulvi Fazlur Rahman (also long deceased)." February 12, 2012.

<sup>21</sup> Khan, "Mohiuddin Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas March 28, 2010."

the government deployed a company of military-police, not to protect the students from the city-dwellers, but to protect the city-dwellers from the students.

As Irfan Habib recounted the event to me, “In 1946, Aligarh students, in a large mob, went to the grain market of U.P. and burnt it. And five villagers were burned to death.”<sup>22</sup> Iqtidar Alam Khan told me that this was the first episode of violence that “disturbed” him, and ultimately led him to leave the University and to pursue his Intermediate education elsewhere. His memories of it are not vivid, because he was a boy, and “living inside the university,” however, he does “remember that some persons who were serving the students living with us in the hostel used to pretend they were participating in the events. I don’t know how far it is true. To the extent that sometimes I used to feel very afraid.”<sup>23</sup> Khan’s memory that the hostel staff bragged about being involved with the burning of the grain market in the town indicates that Muslims were in a position of power in this riot. Despite the power of Muslims in this conflict, the riot left the students feeling vulnerable, and it is this sense of vulnerability that persisted in their outlook throughout the years of partitioning. The 1946 episode itself and its aftermath reveal how great a threat an organized Muslim community—represented by the Muslim League and its attachment to Aligarh University—presented in Aligarh in the lead-up to the 1947 partition. How then does it become the source for a narrative of fear and anxiety?

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<sup>22</sup> Habib, "Irfan Habib: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 28, 2009." Pars Ram, in his UNESCO funded study of Aligarh’s riots, describes the location as a “Cotton and gur market.” Ram, "Unesco Study of Social Tensions," 172.

<sup>23</sup> Khan, "Professor Iqtidar Alam Khan (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 31, 2009."

Paul Brass has reported on this incident in his research into communal violence in Aligarh, and he dates it precisely to March 29, 1946. The conflict appears to have been “an altercation between AMU students and the proprietor of a Hindu cloth shop, in which students beat up the shopkeeper.”<sup>24</sup> This incident sparked a riot, the burning down of the grain market and the deaths of four individuals.<sup>25</sup> The British governor<sup>26</sup> blamed student indiscipline for the riot and noted that the “Hindus in the town always live in a kind of half panic” under the threat of the sometimes unruly students.<sup>27</sup> To mitigate student threat, the government created a Riot Scheme for the posting of a military-police company at several points along the railway line “through which the students are likely to enter the city.”<sup>28</sup> The University responded to the incident by increasing its defensive power, particularly along the boundaries. Without calling in the services of police or military, the university increased the number of *chowkidars* (watchmen) and armed them with sticks. Further, faculty and staff were enlisted to help in “patrolling the area with guns and being present in batches of 2 every night.”<sup>29</sup> It is telling that the university’s stance was defensive. It responded to the presence of a threat (albeit a retributive one),

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<sup>24</sup> Brass, *Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence*, 71-72.

<sup>25</sup> Irfan Habib cited five deaths in our conversation.

<sup>26</sup> The British Government was ruling U.P. under Section 93, but preparing to hand governance over to the Congress who had won a majority in the most recent elections. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant and his Ministry were sworn in on April 1 in Lucknow. "Late News," *The Times of India* April 2, 1946.

<sup>27</sup> United Provinces, Governor's Report, April 1, 1946. Cited in Brass, *Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence*, 72.

<sup>28</sup> Home (Police) Box 378 File # 5004/1046 (Aligarh--Riot Scheme). Cited in *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>29</sup> Rashid, "Appendix F (Ref. No. A.C. Res. No. 3, Dated 13th April, 1946): A Meeting of the Committee Appointed by the Academic Council to Devise Means for Patrolling the University at Night."

and in the meeting of the Academic Council during which these protective resolutions passed, there was no discussion of sanctioning the student culprits.<sup>30</sup>

The British governor was concerned that the local authorities were ineffective at controlling the students and that the incoming Congress administration would respond vindictively to the event. The incoming Congress Chief Minister, Govind Ballabh Pant, according both to Brass and to Irfan Habib, did favor taking legal action against the students. Brass credits a dispute with the British Governor, Francis Wylie, with forestalling this response, but Habib credits his father, Mohammad Habib, who, at the behest of AMU Vice Chancellor Dr. Sir Ziauddin, convinced Pandit Pant to use restraint in his punishment of the students.

So actually, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai was Home Minister and he issued a statement that there will be prosecutions and imprisonments. You can't kill people. So Dr. Sir Ziauddin, Vice Chancellor came to our house... My father was enraged at this [and argued] "They must be punished!" And Ziauddin said, "You know, Habib Sahib, it's useless talking to Kidwai Sahib. Talk to Pantji. He was your leader in the Swaraj Party. We are prepared to do everything they tell us. But prosecutions? What will happen?" So my father went to Pant, went to Lucknow, and he told us later that Pantji was very annoyed. Very annoyed. [Pant] said, "Rafi Sahib is right, we shall have prosecutions and we have witnesses. They shall go to prison!" And they had put military police, not in the university, but at the clocktower. And all the students, the moment they saw the military police at clocktower, totally there was demoralization in the university. Silence. My father said, "Alright, I'll tell [Ziauddin]." But as he reached the door, Pant said, "Habib, come back. After all, they are our children. We don't want to see them in prison. So tell Ziauddin it should not happen. But I'll tell Rafi Sahib to tell the police to withdraw the cases." So that's 1946.<sup>31</sup>

These explanations radically alter the narrative of perceived threat in Aligarh. For one thing, they show that Aligarh students had the capacity to threaten other Aligarh

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<sup>30</sup> The Hindustan Times of June 9 1946, several months after the incident, reported that the Vice Chancellor had agreed to pay "compensation to damage done to Hindu property" but that his estimate was too low to cover all of it. Further, he also "gave assurance that in future the university will make genuine efforts to restore good relations between the students and the Hindu population of Aligarh. The town will be made out of bounds to students till good relations are restored." "University's Compensation Offer for Aligarh Riot Damage." *The Hindustan Times* June 9, 1946, 3.

<sup>31</sup> Habib, "Irfan Habib: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 28, 2009."

residents, despite the geographic boundary of the railway tracks that separated the two communities. For another, they do show the power of the university to affect policy, and they show Ziauddin's approach to student discipline—even more than his concern with disciplining the students, he was concerned with protecting them from a threatening outside world, even at the expense of punishment. Though all of the details of this experience show that Aligarh boys were in a position of power throughout the episode, perpetrating violence and getting away with it, still Aligarh boys emphatically repeated their fear that Hindu mobs would cross the *kat pulla*, the wooden bridge that separated the university from the city. It is important to remember that no Hindu group had yet done so (and did not do so in 1947); rather, the Muslim students frequently crossed over into the town; in this episode, the outcome catastrophic.

This episode demonstrates why, despite the distance from the disturbed border areas in 1947, Aligarh students did feel so afraid. Their own actions left people dead in 1946, and though there was no retribution then, legal or otherwise, the possibility that the mostly Hindu residents of the town would exact revenge was again aroused during the communal disturbances of 1947. Masood ul Hasan has written specifically about the students' anxiety during this period, though he omits the role of the students in provoking the anger of Aligarh's Hindu residents:

In 1946 when communal riots had broken out on a large scale in the country, one evening a rumour got round that the University was to be attacked that night. Some night patrolman got panicky, and the University siren was sounded as a warning. But the students took it as a challenge, and rushed out of the hostels, wielding—many of them even trembling with fear—the sticks of the mosquito nets. Some of the more prudent strategists were even said to have chosen the ground under the dining-tables as a more advantageous field of operations. The Proctor had a



hard time of it, and it was with considerable difficulty that he could send the boys back to their hostels.<sup>32</sup>

Hasan's explanation characterizes the university as the victim of undifferentiated communal hatred, but he also shows students ready to respond with a show of force. The students rose up to defend their institution against "challenge," (he does not classify the potential attack as retributive) though the show of strength and the fear of victimization are closely linked. In fact, many of them simply ran to hide! This explanation, and its silences, clearly shows the difficulties the university faced in 1946 and 47. The students' power had outgrown the university's capacity to manage it. And as a result, they had provoked a potential response much too large for the university to defend against.

Irfan Habib remembered that during the 1946 deployment the students were "chastened" by the presence of the troops, indicating the power of external authority to modify their behavior in a way that internal discipline had been unable or unwilling to do. Thus the presence of the authorities at the clocktower in 1946 would have been an unambiguous signal that if Aligarh's students were to continue causing trouble in the city and with local residents, its traditional sovereignty would be subject to challenge from the authorities. However, in the memories of these narrators, the official presence of troops near the campus was now received not as threatening but as protective, comforting. This turn towards finding comfort in state protection during times of disruption is a marker of a more significant "Nationalist Turn" that began in Aligarh during this period. It is this nationalist orientation that provides the context for the memories of those Aligarians who

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<sup>32</sup> Hasan, "Glimpses of the Forties," 66.

remained in India throughout the disruptions documented here. Still, it is interlinked with the disruption that Aligarians experienced during this period, one that they experienced in very local and personal ways.

As former students remember this period, the events of 1946 have collapsed into the events of 1947 so that it appears that the police posted near and around the campus were protective forces deployed to keep the precious university safe from external attack.<sup>33</sup> This perspective confirms the notion that the government was concerned with protecting the institution itself and, by implication, India's Muslims. This effort to read-back nationalist solidarity and allegiance to the Indian state onto the period of partition in Aligarh is part and parcel of the effort of Aligarh Muslims to outgrow the suspicions about their loyalty. It has changed people's memories, making it possible for them, in some cases, to deny allegiance to the Muslim League, to mask their desire to migrate to Pakistan, to conceal student violence against one another and against non-Muslims, and ultimately to seek to overwrite the League period at the University by suggesting that it was little more than an anomaly.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> It is worth remembering that the university was closed until September 15, 1947, though many students had already arrived there as early as July. The opening was delayed due to unrest in the country.

<sup>34</sup> Mushirul Hasan is perhaps the most prominent scholar to take this approach. His articles on Aligarh during the 1940s have supported the idea that nationalism at Aligarh was more-or-less continuous and that the Pakistan period was an aberration that should be forgotten. In fact, this strategy, as I have shown, has altered the memory of the relationship between the city and the town and fortified the notion that Aligarh students were perpetually threatened by their city neighbors. It obscures the actions of Aligarh students that might have earned the ire of the non-Muslims living nearby. Hasan, "Negotiating with Its Past and Present: The Changing Profile of the Aligarh Muslim University."

Nonetheless, the fear and anxiety that former students report from this period is real, “systemic, pervasive and inevitable.”<sup>35</sup> Their concern was that the boundary walls of the institution might be breached, that non-Muslims would cross the wooden bridge, enter the university and attack the students. With the passage of time, most have neglected to remember that the attack they feared may have been retributive—rooted in the local conflict between Aligarh University and the town—and not, as they remember it, an unprovoked attack on a helpless minority.

There is a significant difference in the tone of narratives here, too, that helps to illuminate the power that national narratives exert on memory. Perhaps the most dramatic contrast appears in examining statements from Pakistani Engineer Zakir Ali Khan, and Aligarh University Retired Professor of English, Masood ul Hasan (cited above). The experiences of these two men, even during their time as Aligarh students, was dramatically different. Khan was an avid sportsman, captain of the university hockey team, and he had access to the privileges of that position. Hasan, on the other hand, was studious and unathletic. His allegiance to the Muslim League ideology of Pakistan is now a source of regret, whereas it was the core of Khan’s identity. During the uncertainty of 1946- 1947 and partition at Aligarh, both men were present on the campus. Khan remembers his experiences through a distinctly “League” lens:

When we were in Aligarh there were nights when the university was being attacked by the villages in which Hindus were living all around Aligarh. The Hindu mobs, it was a very rabid-type of organization of Hindus. They were in mobs, [organizing] attacks on the university by villagers. We used to guard the university. We used to travel in trucks and whatever transport all around the university periphery. We spent the nights together guarding the university.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Guha Thakurta, "Uprooted and Divided."

<sup>36</sup> Khan, "Zakir Ali Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas August 10, 2006."

Khan remembers two significant aspects of this experience. First, the threat to Muslims from Hindus was so real, that he remembers the campus actually “being attacked” by Hindu mobs. Second, he and his compatriots adopted a position of strength with regard to this threat. They did not cower under tables or hide inside the hostel. They traveled the university periphery to guard the university from attack.

The contrast between these two explanations is worth considering, for Khan’s narrative contains a key factual inconsistency. Aligarh was not attacked during the 1947 partition, though several narrators described the threat to the university in 1946 and fear of attack in 1947, and one described the university’s protective stance after the partition when refugees began to enter Aligarh—telling me, “we were asked to safeguard our university in the night and *we put a searchlight on the roof of V.M. Hall and we did duty up there... At night, we watched so that there should not be any attack.*”<sup>37</sup> Zakir Ali Khan’s description of patrolling the university is, at its heart, a narrative of triumph. He and his fellow students faced the threat of attack with strength, and he has imagined an actual attack to prove that they were successful. This narrative sits easily with the Muslim League narrative of Muslim vulnerability in India, but it is fortified by the idea that Muslims could wield power, as they would in Pakistan.

Hasan’s explanation (cited above) however, reveals the fact that the Muslim students felt vulnerable, more consistent with Aligarh’s post-1947 stance, when the narrative of Muslim empowerment had worn away and Aligarh once again seemed a

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<sup>37</sup> KPS, "KPS (Anonymized): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas October 8, 2009."

Muslim outpost in the hinterlands. Hasan's perspective represents an Indian nationalist disavowal of Aligarh's 1940s devotion to the Muslim League—a group seen as “separatist” in India. This disavowal seemed necessary to protect his own integrity and the integrity of the institution as loyal subjects of the Indian State. Even as he revealed these experiences to me, Hasan betrayed his anxiety: “I don't usually speak of them for the fear—or I shouldn't say fear—that I might be misunderstood. And my credentials may be unnecessarily questioned even at this stage.”<sup>38</sup> Hasan's anxiety that his former attachment to the Muslim League, if publicly known, might impugn his credentials reveals a key anxiety lurking beneath the protest that the Indian government has always taken care of the Aligarh University. It seems that, just as Aligarh's protective power collapsed in 1947, the Indian government cannot protect Muslims from suspicion of their loyalty to the very state that demands it.

#### **OTHER SITES OF DISRUPTION**

The disruption to the sense of security that Aligarh provided was key to the sense of trauma at Aligarh during partition. However, it was not only within the hallowed walls of the university that the university's reputation exerted its power over the boys' behavior and public opinion. Narrators' descriptions of three other sites demonstrate well the sense of disruption and its role in reconfiguring the boundaries of belonging.

The picture halls of Aligarh had been a favorite stomping ground of Aligarh students and many narrators told me of the special seat kept aside in Aligarh's cinema

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<sup>38</sup> Hasan, "Masood Ul Hasan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 1, 2009."

halls for the Proctorial Monitor. Majid Ali Siddiqi established the scene for me: “In the picture house, also, I must tell you. There was a Proctor Seat. A Proctor Seat in the back—*there were two picture houses, there weren’t so many*—in the Proctor Seat [the Monitor] used to sit free. That boy, he used to sit in the Proctor Seat and watch all the Aligarh boys in the cinema house, [to make sure] they are not doing any mischief.”<sup>39</sup> This description reveals a scene in which Aligarh boys’ presence in the cinema was permitted only under the watchful eye of the Monitor; the cinema hall became a sort of extension of the residential system. This system was designed to control the behavior of the students, to ensure they maintained the upright “character” expected of Aligarh boys.

However, in 1949 when Iftikhar Alam Khan arrived at Aligarh, as a student of the Minto Circle preparatory school, he described (in a mix of Urdu and English) a very different scene.

*To go a film you had to have at least eight or ten boys together [and] because there would be the bigger boys included, you could get permission from the Warden. I never went. Because I knew that in the film houses there were stabbings and people were killed. I feel that in all of those years, there is a cinema hall, Tasveer Mahal, which was very close to the university and I used to go to that one. But I was most afraid of Royal because I knew that a lot of people were killed there in '47... I believe that in the two or three years I was there, only once I would have gone and in that because lots of students were going to see this film together, some famous film and everyone was going. But I was so scared.*<sup>40</sup>

The sense of disruption he felt in going to the cinema halls immediately after 1947 contrasts sharply with the scene Siddiqi described and points to a significant disruption in

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<sup>39</sup> Though this narrator described the scene in 1952, it reflects the earlier calm of the pre-partition period. It also shows that order was restored in the disciplinary environment by the early 1950s. Siddiqi, "Majid Ali Siddiqi: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas October 2, 2009." Majid Ali Siddiqi was born in 1935 in Gorakhpur, India. He arrived at Aligarh in 1952 and completed his B.Sc. in Civil Engineering in 1956. His first job was in the Uttar Pradesh Irrigation Department as a Civil Engineer and still works after a long career with Jayaprakash Associates; he is now Director, JP Karsham Hydro, Corporation, Ltd. See also Hasan, "Masood Ul Hasan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 1, 2009."

<sup>40</sup> Khan, "Professor Iftikhar Alam Khan (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 6, 2009."

the moral order of the university, and its place in the town during the disruptions surrounding partition.<sup>41</sup> He felt safe only in that cinema hall that was closest to the university; the farther the boys moved from the university, Aligarh's power both to monitor and to protect them decreased. No longer did association with Aligarh represent prestige, as it had before, it represented vulnerability as the uniform marked the boys as "other" and the university's powers of influence were restricted. The Aligarh uniform of a black sherwani, white pajamas, shoes and socks had marked Aligarh boys outside of the confines of the university and Aligarh town.<sup>42</sup> Repeatedly narrators emphasized the influence of the uniform, "That was the recognition of Aligarh. Looking from every angle you can see that he is from Aligarh."<sup>43</sup> After 1947, this exposure left them feeling vulnerable to anti-Muslim violence.

The narrators' memories of this period reveal a shift in the understanding about Aligarh's "place in the world" spatially and in terms of its influence. The Railway Station was another site under the disciplinary purview of the Proctorial Monitor. Like the cinemas, the railway station functioned as a sort of extended part of the campus and Aligarh boys were highly visible there. It was also, of course, the gateway to Aligarh, a site through which almost all students had to pass as they moved between university and sometimes distant homes. Masood ul Hasan remembered, "Senior Proctor Monitor[s]...

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<sup>41</sup> I have no specific evidence on whether people were killed in Aligarh's cinema houses in 1947. However, the impact of this knowledge/rumor affected Khan's behavior, and left him fearful for his safety. This anxiety is what is at stake here, more than the facts of the violence in the city. In fact, he revealed, referring to the anxious days after 1947, "That fear is still with me."

<sup>42</sup> "The Aligarh Muslim University Act (Act XI of 1920)," (Aligarh: Muslim University Press, 1920/ 1948).

<sup>43</sup> Khan, "Zakir Ali Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas August 10, 2006."

would display badges. And they were specially prominent at the railway station where every arriving and departing train was attended upon by them.”<sup>44</sup>

Prior to 1947, the Aligarh students frequently traveled by train without actually purchasing tickets. Many narrators referred to this “Aligarh tradition” arguing that between Aligarh and Delhi, a distance of fewer than 100 miles, Aligarh students were not expected to purchase a ticket. Iqbal Shafi argued that it was a question of dignity:

It was below our dignity, of Aligarh students, below our dignity to buy a railway ticket to go Delhi or Agra. It was our railway. And all these railway officials knew that these are Aligarh University students, they'll never buy tickets so nobody bothered.

AA: What do you mean it was “below your dignity?” What does that mean?

BIS: Why should we buy tickets? We are going to Delhi and coming back! You know, Aligarh was like this hub and one side was Delhi and the other side was Bareilly and the third side was Agra. Agra, about forty miles, Bareilly about sixty miles, and Delhi about ninety miles. This was a free-for-all, and nobody bought the tickets. Why should we buy tickets? We are going to Delhi, Aligarh and you know, Bareilly. Anyhow, so that was the tradition.<sup>45</sup>

Shafi’s declaration that it was “our railway” is related to the sense that Aligarh, Delhi, Bareilly and Agra were Muslim centers, from which many Aligarh students and professors hailed. The direct rail connection between the four cities lent weight to the idea that the connection between them was more than just spatial. Shafi, here, incorporates the whole region around Aligarh into its sphere of influence. Aligarh students, he felt, were entitled to move freely in this area without fear of legal challenge. Although he seems to recognize that the privilege of Aligarh students to travel these distances without a ticket was not strictly speaking legal, it was certainly tolerated, largely because of the respect and influence that Aligarh commanded in the region.

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<sup>44</sup> Hasan, "Masood Ul Hasan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 1, 2009."

<sup>45</sup> Shafi, "Brigadier Iqbal Shafi (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 9, 2010."



During the 1945-46 elections, Aligarh students placed additional pressure on this system at a time when communal tensions were mounting all over the country, and in Aligarh itself. Students frequently traveled to Delhi for League meetings and to meet (or to try to meet) with Mohammad Ali Jinnah. Whereas many students may not have been able to afford a ticket, this system made it possible for them to leave Aligarh in the afternoon for a meeting after the evening prayers, and to return the following day for free. Habibur Rahman exclaimed, "We had to go. Regularly we had to go!"<sup>46</sup> It is clear from other sources that in 1945 and 1946, as Aligarh students were unleashed for election work, that this sense of entitlement, combined with the meager financial support the League provided for their endeavors, created tension between the railway staff, the university, other citizens, and even other Muslims. Even the All India Muslim Students Federation sought to censure the system and to challenge the sense of entitlement of Aligarh students. During its Seventh Annual Session, in 1945, the AIMS F passed a resolution arguing that the good name of university was being tarnished by

the irresponsible and undignified behaviour of those students who travel without ticket and steal eatable [sic] of the poor passengers. This so-called 'tradition' and 'Activity' [sic] of Aligarh boys has been too much degenerated and criminal habits are fast developing through them among a section of Aligarh students. Scenes of roudism [sic] and mal treatment [sic] have become things of daily occurrence. This session of the All-India Muslim Students Federation strongly condemns the above mentioned tradition and activity of the Aligarh students and recommends to the self respecting [sic] and dignified section of the Aligarh Students to create a strong public opinion against them.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Rahman, "Habib Ur Rahman: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas February 20, 2010."

<sup>47</sup> M.A. Bari. Resolutions for 7th Annual Session of the All India Muslim Students' Federation. March 1945. *FMA*, F 961/ 17- 21. PNA.

Despite Shafi's claim that the purchasing of the ticket was "below the dignity" of Aligarh students, here other students appealed to whatever remains of Aligarh students' "dignity" to end the system as it was causing a problem for the reputation of Muslims.

The League was complicit with this system as it sent Aligarh boys out into the countryside for election work. Iqbal Shafi remembered that as Liaqat Ali Khan gave his group their instructions, he also provided a small amount of support for their travel.

There was a *munshi* sitting with his black tin box. So [Liaqat Ali Khan] says, 'There are seven of you, okay. *Munshiji, give them two tickets, from Delhi to Jalandhar.*' Do you know what that means? In seven people, give them money for two tickets. There were a lot of things understood, or taken for granted. There was no explanation. The ticket would be of third class... And why two? And from Delhi to Jalandhar. Why? Because he knew that from Aligarh to Delhi they will all go free. From Aligarh to Delhi they would all go free and from Delhi to Jalandhar, among seven people, two tickets are enough. That's enough. Don't buy seven tickets. So that was the thing that was understood. And we took it for granted. '*Okay, fine, you got the money for two tickets, and now you go.*'<sup>48</sup>

Thus, even as the Muslim Students' Federation, who also supported the Muslim League demand for Pakistan, attempted to reel in Aligarh students, to encourage them to follow the letter of the law, the League itself was dispatching them into the countryside with meager provisions and an expectation that their status as Aligarians would secure them special privileges on the trains.

After 1947, however, trains became a site of spectral violence, and one of the key sites of catastrophic partition violence. The sense of entitlement that students felt with regard to the trains in the years before 1947 helps to expose why the trains became such a specific site of trauma for them after that date. The earlier system had allowed and even encouraged Aligarh students to flaunt their identity and relationship with the institution, as Pakistani Captain Wazir Khan put it, the sherwani was "like the license to travel, even

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<sup>48</sup> Shafi, "Brigadier Iqbal Shafi (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 9, 2010."

without ticket.”<sup>49</sup> The distinctive uniform that Aligarh boys wore set them apart for the privilege of ticket-less travel. However, during partition, as much of the scholarship on violence has shown, “thousands and thousands and thousands [were killed]--those who could travel by train, all the trains were attacked and the people were butchered they will not spare anybody.”<sup>50</sup> Aligarh students were not immune to the fear of violence in the trains after 1947, and their position was made more precarious by their distinct identity and sense of privilege.

In fact, after 1947 many students speak of efforts to hide their identity in trains and stations. Normally, they adopted one of two strategies (or a combination of both): they modified the markers of their appearance, or found company and a sense of security among other Muslims. Mohammad Amin said that he was advised to “to carry a book or something like that. And in the book, write the name Mahavir Prasad or Raghav Lal or something or the other.”<sup>51</sup> During the violence of partition, Muslims could often only be distinguished by the fact of their circumcision, and so Muslims made efforts to mask their Muslim identity with more easily accessible markers. They shed the sherwani, and here Amin suggests that he attempted to impersonate a Hindu student by writing a marked Hindu name in his book when he traveled by train. The arbitrary value of a name written in a book as a way of establishing identity suggests that even indelible physical characteristics (evidence of circumcision) could be considered equally arbitrary,

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<sup>49</sup> Khan, "Captain Wazir Khan: Interview with Unam Muneer, Citizens Archive of Pakistan."

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Amin, "Professor Mohammad Amin: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas November 5, 2009."

distinguishing only between aggressor and victim.<sup>52</sup> These efforts to conceal identity reveal a powerful anxiety and fear of violence. Aligarh boys for generations had flaunted their identity by proudly wearing their school uniform outside the university. During the election campaign of 1945-46, the sherwani was a mark of Aligarh's expanding influence.<sup>53</sup> Now, however, their identity had become a liability.

Iftikhar Alam Khan, whose narrative more than any other reveals the depth of anxiety that fear caused the students, told me that he could not travel in the direction of Delhi after the riots of 1947. Though his father lived there, he only felt safe traveling in the direction away from Delhi, away from the specter of violence. Still, as he traveled, he sought the company of other Muslims and sought to hide his identity. Remarkably, he found an ally in the man who ran the toddy shop in the Hathras Railway Station. In Hathras,<sup>54</sup> nearly 35 kilometers from Aligarh's protective reaches, Khan feared for his safety because he knew that in this direction, away from Delhi and Aligarh, there would be "no Muslim."

*So outside the Hathras station there was a store selling sharab. Sharab you know? Country-made liquor. A lot of people used to come to drink liquor over there. The bartender, the worker, he was called 'Pandit', he used to have a (ponytail). But he was a Muslim. I knew that. He was from my village. He had changed his name and all that, and because he had to live there, in the liquor shop. If he wasn't a pandit, his caste was very low, then people wouldn't drink. And if he was a Muslim they would kill him, so having become a pandit he stayed there. I was knowing this. I reached there at night, and had to wait three hours [for my connection]. I used to go out, near this liquor*

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<sup>52</sup> Saadat Hasan Manto's Short Story, "A Terrible Mistake" encapsulates this arbitrariness. In its entirety: "Piercing through his stomach, the knife slid down to his groin, in the process cutting his pajama cord in two and exposing his genitals. 'A terrible mistake!' the assassin gasped." Jai Ratan, ed., *The Best of Manto: A Collection of His Short Stories* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt., Ltd., 1989).

<sup>53</sup> Hasan, "Nationalist and Separatist Trends."

<sup>54</sup> Mohammad Amin described the influence of Aligarh on Hathras, "It is a fact that if the meeting was called in the [Aligarh] Union, and the bell rang here, shops in Hathras used to get closed. *Aligarh mein ho raha hain, Aligarh mein ho raha hain.* (Something is happening in Aligarh, something is happening in Aligarh)." Amin, "Professor Mohammad Amin: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas November 5, 2009."

*store and look to see if this man was there or not. He used to see me and give me a signal [of recognition] I used to say something. Then I would sit near to him. Until the train would come after three hours. He used to come and ask after me 'How are you doing?' 'Yes, I'm well.'*<sup>55</sup>

After departing from Hathras in the direction of his hometown—Qaimganj in District Farrukhabad—Khan began to feel more comfortable. For after three or four stations, people began to recognize him as the son of a powerful family. Then, he said, “*I was in my own territory. But what was really bad was that I couldn't go towards Delhi.*” The trauma of partition seems to have ruptured the intimacy of connection between Aligarh and Delhi that brought Delhi into Aligarh's sphere of influence,<sup>56</sup> that made Delhi a “Muslim” site. Though Khan did not arrive in Aligarh until 1949, and then as a young child, he seemed aware of the consequences of the rupture in the intimate relationship between Aligarh and Delhi that other narrators described in the period before 1947. The pride in a shared Muslim identity seems to have drawn the two cities together in the earlier period, but now failed to provide any protection.

To combat the fear of being isolated as a target for violence, many other students, too, reported that during their journeys, in order to find the kind of strength in community that Aligarh symbolized, they sought out other Muslims for company and more importantly, security. Iftikhar Alam Khan described this above, when a man, only nominally Muslim—known as “Pandit” and selling country-made liquor—provided enough of a veil of familiarity to make Khan feel safe. Another narrator, Masood ul

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<sup>55</sup> Khan, "Professor Iftikhar Alam Khan (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 6, 2009."

<sup>56</sup> Or perhaps the other way around. Political power emanated from Delhi, it was there that the students traveled to seek guidance from Jinnah. However, the League's power was legitimated for the students by its presence on the campus at Aligarh. Prior to 1947, Aligarh's reputation “authorized” student travel to Delhi, but after 1947 this reciprocal relationship was disrupted.

Hasan, reported finding comfort sitting next to a Muslim convict on the train! Questions of dignity here seem to be tested by questions of safety, and one effect of the exposure of Muslims after 1947 was to reify their identity as “Muslims.” Masood ul Hasan described his journey to his home in Bhopal in January 1948. Though the Railway system had established “minority compartments” after the “great killings”<sup>57</sup> of 1946 and 1947, Hasan, empowered in his identity as an Aligarhian, chose not to ride in the minority compartment, as a “little assertion of self-confidence.” He told me, “in those days I was religiously clad in a sherwani.”<sup>58</sup> In other words, as he embarked in Aligarh, he was dramatically marked out as a Muslim and an Aligarhian. Though he did not choose the minority compartment, he settled in near another Muslim, a “hefty prisoner” who was an “Afghan” and traveling with several constables. Hasan shared his breakfast with the prisoner. But at the next station, the prisoner and his constables disembarked, and Hasan eventually shifted to the minority compartment.

Zakir Ali Khan, who earlier tried to demonstrate the reality of the threat to Muslim security presented by the Hindu villages surrounding Aligarh by showing how Aligarh boys protected their campus in a show of strength, told a story about train travel that does more to betray his own fear for his safety.

Once when I was traveling, in my compartment, Hindus sighted two Muslims sitting there and they pointed and said, “He is a Muslim,” and they tried to tease him. They threw his luggage

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<sup>57</sup> “Great Killing” is the phrase used to describe the rioting that spread from Calcutta to Bihar and Noakhali in August 1946 in the wake of the Muslim League’s “Day of Deliverance.” Hasan uses the term here to account for both the rioting of 1946 and 1947; it also shows the continuity he sees between these two events. Hasan, “Masood Ul Hasan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas March 20, 2009.”

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

outside the train with the result that when the first station came the poor fellow got out of the train. I sat quiet there, and they never thought that I am also a Muslim.<sup>59</sup>

Whereas Khan's earlier story sought to portray his strength as a member of the Aligarh community, dedicated to its welfare, when outside that community, his position was severely compromised. When he was alone, not only did he conceal his own identity, but he failed to act in defense of another Muslim who was being mistreated. We see here how empowering the sense of community at Aligarh could be and how isolated Aligarh boys felt in the face of actual threat when they were out on their own.<sup>60</sup>

Like many stories told by former Aligarh students about the period immediately after partition, none of these young men became the victim of anti-Muslim violence. Still, there is trauma evident here. One effect of the sense of isolation of Aligarh from the rest of India prior to 1947 was that it created a sphere of influence around the university that created a protective boundary between them and the world outside. 1947 caused a re-centering of Aligarh as its students were held in large part responsible for the outcomes of partition.<sup>61</sup> The disruption of that boundary left the students, as Muslims, feeling exposed to danger. The anxiety that the former students betray here comes when they

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<sup>59</sup> Khan, "Zakir Ali Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas August 10, 2006."

<sup>60</sup> As late as the 1990s, when a Ph.D. student at Aligarh University, Professor Akhtaruzzaman of Dhaka University felt that when a Muslim went to AMU he seemed to have "received more power" but when he went "outside" he was again "ordinary." Mohammad Akhtaruzzaman, "Mohammad Akhtaruzzaman: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas March 10, 2010," (Dhaka: March 10, 2010).

<sup>61</sup> In 2010 I presented a paper at the Annual Madison South Asia Conference "The Ex-centricity of the Aligarh Muslim University" in which I argued that after 1947, Aligarh's place in Indian society shifted, so that it functions as both a center and a margin simultaneously. The insistence of Aligarh's well-wishers that it remains a critical site of Muslim opinion endangers it in the public sphere where for many others, including politicians, Aligarh is little more than a distracting irritation despite attempts to "nationalize" it after 1947. The title of the paper derives from this conflict and refers to Aligarh's "former" place as a center of Muslim politics, and its position "outside" the center of Indian life. Aligarh stands out as a powerful symbol of the contested citizenship of Muslims in India. AMU represents both a place where Muslims can safely express themselves educationally and culturally, and a place where they are isolated from Indian society and politics.

ventured beyond the protective boundaries of Aligarh, and it is worth remembering that many of these narrators have remained close to the institution from that point forward. The narrators who betray the sense of having been traumatized were not those who moved away from the institution—even into places that were “disrupted,” like New Delhi, but those who remained intimately attached to Aligarh and all that it symbolized.

Another aspect that appears significant here is Aligarh’s proximity to Delhi and other Muslim centers. Before 1947, students had used the trains and railway lines to mark out the boundaries of the territory they considered “theirs”—by imagining a network of cities, connected by railways through which they could freely and safely move. During the disruptions, narrators describe their relationship to the university and the university’s relationship to the world that surrounded it, Aligarh’s geographic location seems to shift. Zakir Ali Khan described Aligarh’s proximity to Delhi as a significant marker of the university’s importance; Asloob Ahmad Ansari (India) described Delhi as “not very far off”; several students, including Habibur Rahman (Bangladesh), Ghulam Umar and Iqbal Shafi (Pakistan) describe Delhi’s centrality in the Muslim League organizational structure, again emphasizing Aligarh’s proximity to it. Delhi’s closeness to Aligarh during the Muslim League period was clearly enhanced by ideological connection, but after 1947, several narrators identified Delhi as a source of disruption. It was as a result of refugees coming from the direction of Delhi and Dehra Dun, that KPS (Anonymized) describes setting up a searchlight on the roof of V.M. Hall and how the students took



turns keeping watch.<sup>62</sup> Asloob Ahmad Ansari told me that while Aligarh was “immune” from communal disturbance, riots were happening “round about Aligarh and Delhi.”<sup>63</sup> Delhi was the place, he told me, where people were “victimized.” Iftikhar Ahmad Khan’s testimony that he could not even travel in the direction of Delhi is perhaps the most powerful indictment of the earlier link between the two cities. And it is not difficult to see here that Delhi’s vulnerability to such unbridled violence challenged the notion that it exerted a protective shield over Aligarh.

For Aligarh boys during this period, their fear and anxiety arose from a serious disruption of the sources of authority that had previously served to protect them. The meaning of the spaces in which they had learned to feel safe, and to build solidarity—from the local sites of gathering in Aligarh, cafes and cinemas; to the railway station, their link between home and university; and the very geography of their institution in India—now changed irrevocably. When external authority deteriorated, the safest place appeared to be in Aligarh itself. While they feared attack on the university, no one actually crossed the boundary into the university, and whether they defended it with trembling hands or with shows of strength, the university itself represented a powerful continuity in the midst of traumatic disruption all around.

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<sup>62</sup> KPS, "KPS (Anonymized): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas October 8, 2009."

<sup>63</sup> Ansari, "Asloob Ahmad Ansari: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas July 5, 2008."

### **ESTABLISHING CONTINUITY**

Among those narrators who remained in India, the university remains a powerful site of continuity with their pre-partition lives, though their narratives betray the effort required to establish continuity between the institution and the Indian narrative of citizenship. To clarify, even as they reveal the trauma of disruption during the partition and the anxiety of being singled out as Muslims, they declare the importance of Aligarh as an exemplary site of India's composite culture, and credit her nationalist leaders with "saving" the institution. The tension evident in these complex narratives should not suggest that there is a problem of "loyalty" among Aligarh Muslims, but that in their effort to establish their position as unproblematic Indian citizens they have had to reimagine Aligarh's place in Indian history, excising the problematic "League" phase and minimizing their attachment to the League's ideals. Thus, many of these narrators both emphasize continuity at the university and mark the post-independence period by enthusiastic declarations of allegiance to the nationalist agenda, and in particular its leaders. Narrators seek to establish continuity in two ways: first, they minimize the disruptiveness of partition with regard to the normal functioning of the university; second, they focus attention on Zakir Husain, the first significant post-partition Vice Chancellor as an Aligarh "insider" who "saved" the institution.

By minimizing the disruptiveness of the partition, and even the impact of the out-migration of students and faculty to Pakistan, narrators suggest that for all of the League's self-importance during the period of its dominance the institution, it did not have the power permanently to disable the educational institution. The focus on Zakir

Husain establishes continuity with the pre-Muslim League nationalist period; when Zakir Husain took over in 1948, though it marked a shift from League allegiance, it rehabilitated the university's earlier nationalist identity. Therefore, narrators excise the League period as an anomaly and focus their attention on getting back to business after the disruptions of 1947.<sup>64</sup> Those who were not League partisans during the 1940s have a comparatively easier time of thinking through partition in this way, but those who felt sympathy with the Muslim League agenda now attempt to cover their tracks with expressions of regret and even guilt. For both groups, there is evidence that Muslim identity remains in conflict with Indian nationalist identity, and in the latter case, there is a sense that in the wake of partition Aligarh Muslims felt responsible for the deeds of fellow Muslims and Aligarians, and responsible to the larger body of the Indian citizenry.

Riazur Rahman Sherwani, whose family were large landholders in Aligarh, and who is now a retired professor of Arabic told me that "so as far as the working of the university was concerned, it was not affected by [partition]. The doors of the university always remained open for the non-Muslims as well, even during the time when that movement [the Muslim League movement for Pakistan] was in its full force."<sup>65</sup> This statement sets the stage for establishing the continuity of Aligarh's nationalist orientation. Sherwani never supported the League agenda for Pakistan, though his father was the university's treasurer and managed the League's funds for student electioneering.

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<sup>64</sup> This effort was evident when I was conducting field research in Aligarh. As I explained my intention to study the 1930s and 40s at Aligarh many people directed me to literature on "The Aligarh Movement," the educational movement led by Sir Sayyid in the nineteenth century that ultimately led to the founding of the institution. This period is highly glorified in the Aligarh narrative whereas study of the 1940s is absent. Many people in Aligarh were highly resistant to my efforts to study this period.

<sup>65</sup> Sherwani, "Riazur Rahman Sherwani: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas, July 6, 2008."

Sherwani defends the university's nationalist credentials both by arguing that the League influence was not powerful enough to displace Aligarh's agenda of inclusion, and that the division of the country had not had a marked effect on the functioning of the institution.<sup>66</sup> Irfan Habib, too, emphasized continuity in the academic realm when he suggested that "one of the strengths of the institution we didn't notice, that admissions were on time, classes were held, a teacher disappears [and] was replaced immediately by another teacher."<sup>67</sup> Habib's emphasis on continuity goes so far as to suggest that students "didn't notice" any disruption as a result of partition.

Whereas in their descriptions of life in Aligarh prior to partition, academic life occupies an inferior role relative to social and residential life, here narrators begin to emphasize the continuity of academics. Thus, by directing attention away from the disruption to residential life—exemplified by the emptying of the Aligarh hostels after a period of severe overcrowding—these narrators are able to suggest that very little changed on the campus. Ather Siddiqi, who arrived at Aligarh in the immediate aftermath of the partition migrations, was highly cognizant of the effect of the disruptions. Earlier in the year when he applied for admission, the hostels were too crowded and he was not given a place in the university.<sup>68</sup> After partition, however, "students left en masse. From six-seven thousand—that was a big number in those days!—[the student body] was

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<sup>66</sup> The minutes of the Executive Council Meeting of December 11, 1947 reflect that the university opened later than usual, on September 15, 1947.

<sup>67</sup> Habib, "Irfan Habib: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 28, 2009."

<sup>68</sup> Nawab Ismail Khan. Application for Additional Grants-in-Aid Submitted to the Government of India by the Vice-Chancellor Aligarh Muslim University. 1948. Aligarh: Maulana Azad Library.

reduced to two thousand. There was no difficulty in getting a room in the hostel.”<sup>69</sup> Despite his awareness of the significance of this disruption, Siddiqi also seeks to establish continuity with life before partition—though he was not present in Aligarh. Nonetheless, he argued, “Life continued and new teachers were appointed and our studies resumed.” Siddiqi implicates himself in the events of partition at the university.<sup>70</sup> Siddiqi’s narrative suggests that partition’s impact at Aligarh defined everything that followed there—his story suggests that all the disruptive forces disappeared in 1947—and life carried on peacefully after that.

However, narrators frequently described the empty hostels, and indeed between the 1946 and 1947-8 school years, the student population of the Aligarh University and its allied institutions, including the Muslim University High School, and the Minto Circle School, fell from 6061 to 4613.<sup>71</sup> The annual Vice Chancellor’s Report notes that many teachers and students had been “lost” as they could not join “through lack of communications” during the disruptions of 1947. In the Engineering College “the number of students returning for the Session 1947-48 was about 50 per cent of normal” and the number of undergraduates in the Faculty of Science dropped by about forty percent.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Siddiqi, "Professor Ather Siddiqi (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 11, 2009."

<sup>70</sup> Siddiqi actually told me he was in Aligarh during partition, but when I pressed him for details, he noted that he had been there earlier in the year to apply for admission and returned to matriculate in the fall. Ibid. KPS also told me, “These people who claim to be true Aligarians they joined Aligarh after post-independence era. So they are unable to locate what happened during that critical moments when Aligarh was on the major hit list.” KPS, "KPS (Anonymized): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas October 8, 2009."

<sup>71</sup> Mohammad Obaidur Rahman Khan Sherwani, "Report of the Vice-Chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University for the Calendar Year 1946: Read at the Convocation Held on the 16th February, 1947," (Aligarh: Aligarh Muslim University Press, 1947).

<sup>72</sup> Khan, "Annual Report of the Vice-Chancellor Aligarh Muslim University for the Calendar Year 1947: Read at the Convocation Held on 24th January, 1948." The Annual Report from 1945 noted that “the centre

Mohiuddin Khan, now settled in Bangladesh, told me that the remaining students felt this “loss of students” because “the whole university campus became very quiet!”<sup>73</sup> Mohiuddin, however, advances an explanation for this loss that is common to many of the Indian narrators but not well- supported by the available evidence. He told me that before 1947 “the students used to come from Punjab, Northwest Frontier Province, and also Southern India; they did not come [back].”<sup>74</sup> His explanation for the changes that took place at Aligarh during the 1947 partition was that those students from “Pakistan areas” did not return to the university, undermining the idea that North Indian Muslims who supported Pakistan migrated to Pakistan alone or with their families. Many narrators, including Irfan Habib, Ather Siddiqi, Saghir Ahmad Rizvi and KPS (Anonymized) argued that the depletion of Aligarh University’s population came primarily from the fact that no students from “partition provinces turned up at Aligarh” in 1947 and even that students from Hyderabad were airlifted out of Aligarh during the disruptions.<sup>75</sup>

This is a common thread among Indian Muslims at Aligarh, and this argument suggests an effort to read back Pakistan’s geographic identity onto her ideological one. However, it is not supported by available evidence. Support for the Pakistan movement was centered in the United Provinces (later Uttar Pradesh), and it was from these provinces that its leadership was primarily drawn. In addition, since its earliest days,

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of gravity of the University has shifted from Arts to Science, and the Strachey Hall now no longer occupies the central position which it had enjoyed for about sixty years.” In addition, during the war there had been a rush of applications to the Engineering College. Ahmad, "The Report of the Vice-Chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University for the Calendar Year 1945: Read at the Convocation Held on the 1st December, 1945."

<sup>73</sup> Khan, "Mohiuddin Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas March 28, 2010."

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> KPS. "KPS (Anonymized) Personal Interview with Amber Abbas October 8, 2009." Lucknow, October 8, 2009.

Aligarh University had attracted the majority of its students from these regions in North India.<sup>76</sup> While it had always had some students from other regions, they were in the minority. The explanation that only students from “Pakistan areas” ultimately settled there, however, serves Aligarh’s post-partition identity as an unproblematically loyalist institution by “showing” two equally important features about Aligarh’s student body. First, it seeks to prove that all those students who had been affiliated with the Muslim League’s demand for Pakistan were originally from those areas that were to become Pakistan—Punjab, Northwest Frontier Province, Sindh, Balochistan, Kashmir and Bengal—thus, that they were drawn to its narrative because they would be affected by it, not (as the evidence shows) because they had experienced or feared discrimination from Congress or Hindus more generally.<sup>77</sup> Second, it seeks to show that all those students who supported the League’s demand were purged by partition; they did not remain in Aligarh, and therefore, no disloyal elements remained in the student body.

That so many narrators supported this explanation suggests the importance of establishing Aligarh’s nationalist credentials. However, it is not born out by the facts. It is well established that the bulk of Aligarh’s students came from the United Provinces, Bihar and other neighboring areas. It was also these areas where the Muslim League was best established and drew much of its support. Although students from the “Pakistan Areas” did not return to the university, the majority of students who did not return were

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<sup>76</sup> David Lelyveld, "Places of Origin of Aligarh Students 1875- 1895: Map by Joseph E. Schwartzberg," in *Aligarh's First Generation: Muslim Solidarity in British India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978). *Alumni Directory, Aligarh Muslim University*, 3 vols., Sir Syed House Publication (Karachi: Sir Syed University of Engineering and Technology, 1974?).

<sup>77</sup> See Chapter 3 for more on why Aligarh students were drawn to the Pakistan Movement.

North Indians. Despite an absence of evidence for the suggestion that the only reason Aligarh's population was so severely depleted was because the students largely came from "Pakistan areas" this argument persisted, at least anecdotally, as a major feature of the Aligarh explanation of partition.

It is not difficult to understand why this narrative has become so well established in Aligarh. The loyalty of Aligarh students was questioned both locally, as Hindus urged them to join their fellow Muslims in Pakistan, and by government as Sardar Patel cautioned that Muslims would have to "prove" their loyalty. Still, evidence shows that Aligarh remained in transition at least until the early 1950s (when there were severe communal riots in Aligarh) and perhaps until as late as 1965 (when India and Pakistan fought an all-out war). Zakir Ali Khan, now settled in Pakistan, remained at Aligarh until 1951, and earlier described the efforts of the State of Pakistan to recruit engineers from Aligarh's Engineering College—one of the few in India, and the only one that admitted large numbers of Indian students.<sup>78</sup> Ather Siddiqi reported that Pakistan continued to draw students from Aligarh for many years after the 1947 partition: "Everybody at that time thought that he should get a degree and go to Pakistan so for the first maybe ten, fifteen, twenty years, maybe, this went on. Aligarh Muslim University was producing graduates but they were all going to Pakistan because there was great demand. For engineers and civil services bureaucracy, et cetera."<sup>79</sup> Pakistan represented a powerful

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<sup>78</sup> Roorkee University reserved only a handful of places for Muslims. Siddiqi, "Majid Ali Siddiqi: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas October 2, 2009.", Mohiuddin Khan, "Mohiuddin Khan: Personal Communication with Amber Abbas April 6, 2010," (Dhaka: April 6, 2010).

<sup>79</sup> Siddiqi, "Professor Ather Siddiqi (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 11, 2009."



opportunity to Aligarh graduates, and especially engineers. Thus despite the insistence that the migrations of partition stripped Aligarh only of those students who remained home in “Pakistan Areas,” the facts show that migration continued throughout the 1950s and early 1960s,<sup>80</sup> and even Aligarians recognize this trend. Irfan Habib reported that Muslims finally stopped going to Pakistan “after 1960 with the [establishment of] public sector engineering services [in India]. They got higher pay here, why should they go?”<sup>81</sup> This acknowledgement of the continuing migration from Aligarh even after partition puts up an explicit challenge to the notion that Pakistan created very little disruption in Aligarh.<sup>82</sup>

In addition, at least anecdotally, almost every narrator I spoke to in India told me that at least some of their family members had settled in Pakistan. Whereas they were reluctant to admit any personal attraction to migrating, almost all came from divided families. In Pakistan by contrast, nearly all narrators indicated to me that their entire families had migrated along with them, that they had left few relations in India, and those who were left behind had become estranged over time. This tension shows that Pakistan plays a much larger role in the Aligarian Indian imagination than the other way around, betraying an incomplete resolution of the partition experience at the university. Nonetheless, the efforts to preserve continuity, to minimize disruption, and to show that

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<sup>80</sup> Zamindar, *The Long Partition*.

<sup>81</sup> Habib, "Irfan Habib: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 28, 2009."

<sup>82</sup> This despite the disruption to Siddiqi's own family. His brother and later his parents and sister migrated to Pakistan.

loyalty to Pakistan was geographic, and not ideological, further suggest the complexity of the League period and partition in Aligarh University.

Many narrators point to the arrival of Zakir Husain as Vice Chancellor in 1948 as a critical moment in the university's nationalist transformation. In 1948, in the wake of the terrible communal disruptions of 1946 and '47, Aligarh deliberately re-oriented its allegiance and turned to face the secular Congress government. In addition to being comforted by the deployment of protective forces, it looked to the government for financial and moral support, and the government gave of it. Zakir Husain's appointment is remembered as the most important tool in establishing the institution's nationalist credibility. Unlike Ziauddin, Obaidur Rahman Khan Sherwani, or Nawab Ismail Khan who all served as Vice Chancellors during this tumultuous period and were partisans of the Muslim League, Zakir Husain's nationalist credentials were unsullied. He had abandoned Aligarh in 1920 during the non-cooperation agitation and been a founder of the Jamia Millia Islamia. He remained loyal to that institution throughout the independence period and was closely associated with Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. Husain was appointed Vice Chancellor of Aligarh University by Jawaharlal Nehru, and he served from 1948-1956 before moving back into a more active political life. These were critical years, and Zakir Husain's connections within the Congress government undoubtedly drew in support for the institution. It was under his guidance that the government increased the grants to the university,<sup>83</sup> and though he is

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<sup>83</sup> Zakir Husain. Application for Grants-in-Aid Submitted by the Vice-Chancellor Aligarh Muslim University to the Government of India. January 1950. Aligarh: Maulana Azad Library.

not remembered for large amounts of infrastructural development as Ziauddin had been, he ensured the university's survival during a period of uncertainty.

The students remember his influence with a tremendous sense of gratitude. As Ahmad Saeed described him, Zakir Husain "was a sort of a 'screen' which almost saved the University from adverse days that it was expecting to see after partition."<sup>84</sup> Mohammad Amin reiterated that "it was primarily Nehru and his choice of sending Zakir Husain Sahib as Vice Chancellor that saved Aligarh University. Otherwise, for all purposes, it would have disappeared."<sup>85</sup> Nehru and Husain both came to the aid of the university during its time of need, facilitated a shift in the institution's orientation and became a protective "screen" for it. The language of screening engages the notion of the university's boundaries. The students imagine Zakir Husain and the nationalists as a boundary both protecting them from and connecting them to the non-Muslim world surrounding them. Thus, even as Nehru emphasized the shared environment of secular India, the boundaries remain critically important for Muslim engagement. Saeed sees Husain as an agent of the central government's benevolence, and above all, he credits the government for protecting the university.

### **SLIPPAGES OF MEMORY**

Despite the enthusiastic support for the nationalist reformation in the memory of India's Aligarians, I was surprised to hear a repeated slippage in their explanations of

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<sup>84</sup> Saeed, "Ahmad Saeed: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas October 10, 2009."

<sup>85</sup> Amin, "Professor Mohammad Amin: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas November 5, 2009."

their post-1947 experience. Many narrators expressed a sense of guilt as they reflected on their experiences during and after 1947. Iftikhar Alam Khan, for instance, explained his fear and anxiety by clarifying: “*my problem was that I was also feeling guilty.*”<sup>86</sup> The guilt that Iftikhar Alam Khan and others have described is a surprising continuity from the pre-partition political environment at Aligarh and in the United Provinces more broadly. It points to an incomplete imagining of a post-partition Indian Muslim identity, and though these narrators have repeatedly denounced the Muslim League and those who migrated to Pakistan, it creates a link between these narrators, who chose to stay in India, and those who chose to go. The guilt that remained with these narrators reveals a sense of solidarity that they felt with other Muslims during the heady period of Muslim unity and the heyday of the Two Nation Theory, even if, as in the case of the Alam brothers, they were not Muslim League sympathizers. In addition, it reveals the expansiveness of the question of Muslim belonging, embodied in the guilt of Muslim Indian citizens who feel responsible for what Gandhi called “the vivisection” of India.

The sense of guilt has morphed into fury over a serious betrayal of the ideals of solidarity that had been fostered at Aligarh. The students together fought to achieve Pakistan, but then the few who chose to stay were betrayed and abandoned by the many who left, and left a gaping hole in Aligarh.<sup>87</sup> Ather Siddiqi identified that “guilty

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<sup>86</sup> Khan, "Professor Iftikhar Alam Khan (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 6, 2009." See also Siddiqi, "Professor Ather Siddiqi (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 11, 2009." Zakir Ali Khan, "Personal Interview with Amber Abbas," ed. Amber Abbas (Karachi, Pakistan: August 10, 2010).

<sup>87</sup> Iftikhar Alam Khan describes arriving in Aligarh in 1949 “When I arrived in the hostel, there were six boys, only six boys in the whole of the [primary school]. There were... three hostels. Three big hostels means three hundred, or two-fifty capacity. So there was a total capacity of five or six hundred and in this

conscience” was the reason that his brother, who had been a Muslim League supporter, chose to migrate to Pakistan. Though Siddiqi is a vocal supporter of the Indian secular state, he told me, “I also wanted to go! But my father would not allow me to go. He was a government servant and he didn’t want his second son--only two sons--to go. He forbade me to go. So I didn’t know what to do. So I worked for a year but I wanted to do higher studies so I returned to Aligarh and I worked so hard.”<sup>88</sup> At the time, he was too young to make the decision on his own, and his father was not keen to leave because he was only three years away from retirement (Siddiqi’s father finally did migrate to Pakistan in 1965). But Siddiqi describes a turnaround in his sentiment that he portrays as an experience of “coming to his senses.” He told me, “Our sentiments and emotions were pro-Muslim League-y but when rational thinking increased...I realized that Pakistan was the wrong thing.”<sup>89</sup> Professor Siddiqi is not alone in claiming that support of Pakistan was irrational or senseless. Several narrators describe this sensation, compounded by youth. An exchange I had with professor of history Iqtidar Alam Khan, now well-known as a Leftist, displays this very well:

Iqtidar Alam Khan: What happened was that, this idea that there should be a Pakistan that would be good for Muslims and it would guarantee a good future for Muslims, that idea was all around. And perhaps I was also influenced by that because I remember that once or twice there was a procession taken out from the hostel, I don’t know why and how, but I was also a member of that procession! And fifty or sixty boys they were just raising slogans “Pakistan Zindabad!” Going round the university campus. For nothing! I don’t know why, who took out that procession! So this kind of atmosphere was there, and I was also influenced by that.

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there were only six boys.” Khan, "Professor Iftikhar Alam Khan (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 6, 2009."

<sup>88</sup> Siddiqi, "Professor Ather Siddiqi (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 11, 2009."

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

AA: Did you have an idea about what that meant—“Pakistan Zindabad?” What did Pakistan mean to you? Do you remember that?

Iqtidar Alam Khan: Yes! Something where the Muslims would be in a state and the Muslims would be in a dominant position, they wouldn't be oppressed. Really I was not a very, very thinking person. I was not able to analyze. I didn't have any idea of the institutions that were being created. But general frenzy was there and I was a part of that frenzy.<sup>90</sup>

Masood ul Hasan echoes this sentiment, when he suggests that “Maybe I am trying to rationalize or justify something. Maybe it is a mature man in me who is speaking now,” and that mature man has since realized that “No doubt the very demand for the partition of the country was not a very sane and wise call.”<sup>91</sup> The Indian narrators, even those who had been sometimes involved in the Muslim League campaigns remember their experiences as though they had been duped. Their activities were driven by a desire to fit in, to be involved, to be a part of something bigger than themselves. By 1947, however, the power of Aligarh's brotherhood had become too large to control. The fear generated by the threat of communal violence during this period had a chastening effect and fostered a nationalist turn that most of the remaining students embraced.

### **TELLING MOMENT: JANUARY 30, 1948**

Those Aligarians who chose to remain in India have been confronted with difficult questions about belonging. The collective identity that developed at Aligarh was focused on the shared interests of the Muslim elite, and the environment at the university during the 1940s showed the community's mounting strength. However, many narrators

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<sup>90</sup> Khan, "Professor Iqtidar Alam Khan (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 31, 2009."

<sup>91</sup> Hasan, "Masood Ul Hasan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 1, 2009."

described their experience on the day of the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, and the ways in which this event served to confirm the difference that would mark their future in India after 1947. Mohammad Amin suggested that this event “tells you the most” about partition’s disruptions. Whereas Aligarians felt targeted and afraid during the events of 1947, the assassination of Mohandas K. Gandhi, and the possibility that a Muslim might have been responsible, awakened Muslim terror, no matter where Aligarians found themselves that day. In a unique example of parallelism, many of the narrators with whom I spoke about their experiences on January 30, 1948, described being in trains or train stations, much like their experiences of the 1947 partition are told through stories about trains. Regardless of where they found themselves, however, they all describe their apprehension on hearing of the assassination, and fear that the assassin was a Muslim.

In every interview I conducted, when I asked about the assassination of Gandhi, the response was the same: Muslims feared that the assassin had been one of their community and this was accompanied by the certainty that if it had been, the consequences for Muslims would be terrible.<sup>92</sup> Similarly, they all credit Nehru and Patel with making the identity of the assassin, Nathuram Godse, a Hindu fundamentalist associated with the RSS, known as quickly as possible. Then, the community heaved a collective “sigh of relief.”<sup>93</sup> For many Aligarians, the comfort of learning the assassin’s identity followed a tense period of anxiety over the possibility of a Muslim assassin.

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<sup>92</sup> I cite only a few here: Syed Mohammad Mehdi, "S.M. Mehdi: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 15, 2009," (Aligarh: June 15, 2009). Siddiqi, "Professor Ather Siddiqi (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 11, 2009." Fari Rahman, "Fatima Fari Rahman: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas January 4, 2008."

<sup>93</sup> Siddiqi, "Professor Ather Siddiqi (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 11, 2009."

The narrators' attachment to the role of Congress leaders in "saving" Muslims by quickly making the assassin's identity known reflects the shift in the attitude of Aligarh students, from feeling threatened by the Congress government, to feeling that it was only a Congress government who could protect Muslims.

Masood ul Hasan was traveling by train from Aligarh to Bhopal on January 30, 1948; I have earlier shown that even before he learned of the assassination, he had chosen not to sit in the minority compartment, but to find another Muslim on the train for safety and comfort. The Muslim he found was a convict, traveling with two constables. Hasan befriended him, and shared his rations. But at the next station, in Agra, two things happened. First, the prisoner and his constables disembarked; second, Hasan noticed an "uncanny silence" on the platform. He heard some one say that Gandhi had been killed, and he was instantly struck by the thought that it must have been a Muslim who was responsible. His response, he said, was that "I lost nerve, and I also shifted to the minority compartment."<sup>94</sup> Whereas at the beginning of his journey, Hasan had exerted his self-confidence by sitting in the general compartment, the anxiety created by the assassination marked him out negatively as Muslim, and he feared sitting amongst his fellow Indians, lest he should become the target of their grief, or worse, rage.

S.M. Mehdi<sup>95</sup> then a Communist activist in Bombay, was preparing to board a train at Victoria Terminus in Bombay, when he heard the news of Gandhi's assassination.

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<sup>94</sup> Hasan, "Masood Ul Hasan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas March 20, 2009."

<sup>95</sup> Mehdi is one of the few non-Aligarians who I interviewed for the project. Though he lives in Aligarh to be close to his adult daughter, he said that in his younger years he had an "allergy" to Aligarh University! Mehdi, "S.M. Mehdi: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 15, 2009." S.M. Mehdi hails from Bhopal where he did his early education. He completed his M.A. from Lucknow University where he was



His fear for his own safety precluded his ability to grieve for the slain leader. When I asked him how he felt about the death of the great leader, he responded with surprise,

Emotionally, about Gandhi I thought, I mean, we thought less, I suppose, than ourselves. What is going to happen to us? Presuming some one is going to stab us, kill us. Who has killed? The whole thing was, who can it be? And it always came down, it must be a Muslim, it might be a Muslim, it must be a Muslim, it might be a Muslim, that's all. It must be a Muslim.<sup>96</sup>

And though Mehdi describes himself as a person who did not believe in communal division, in essential differences between Hindus and Muslims, who associated with a mixed group of Leftists, Socialists and Communists who had disavowed these labels, he said, “as we heard this news that a fanatic Hindu has killed Gandhi... I mean, just imagine! We, who did not believe in this nonsense of Hindus and Muslims, when we heard that a Hindu had killed Gandhi, we felt relieved, that at least a Muslim has not killed Gandhi.”<sup>97</sup> A lone potentially Muslim assassin became a metonym for the whole community and for a few tense hours, S.M. Mehdi's identity was reduced to only one aspect: his Muslimness. He, who put no stock in communal identity politics, found himself comforted by the knowledge that the assassin had been from the majority community. This episode betrays a serious disruption in the social fabric of Mehdi's chosen community. Though he normally would not identify as a Muslim first—preferring the less parochial veil of his political identity—the communalization of Indian life

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involved in Communist politics. He served for thirty years in the Soviet Embassy in Bombay and has now retired in Aligarh.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

created by the partition determined his reaction to the tragedy of Gandhi's assassination and he knew it would similarly determine the reaction of others towards him.<sup>98</sup>

In other places, too, the possibility of a Muslim assassin kept Muslims off the streets in fear of reprisal. The small group of Hindu conspirators responsible for Gandhi's death did not occupy the same metonymic space, for their disloyalty was transparently exceptional. Rather than being identified as a Hindu conspirator, Gandhi's assassin was identified as a member of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and any retributive actions were directed at that small, right wing political party. Two narrators describe anti-RSS sentiment in the wake of the assassination. Irfan Habib recalled that as Aligarh students marched towards the city, "There were communists also demanding execution of RSS leaders. 'Hindu Sabha, *nehin!*' (No to the Hindu Party!) 'RSS and Hindu Sabha, *Phansi Do! Phansi Do!*' (Catch the RSS! Hang the Hindu Party!) I forget the title, the slogans."<sup>99</sup> And Iqtidar Alam Khan recalled that RSS members were targeted and offices attacked in "a nationalist frenzy in which everyone was hating RSS like anything."<sup>100</sup> These memories are the exceptions, in that most narrators do not associate the aftermath of Gandhi's assassination with anti-RSS violence; they clearly remember the threat of anti-Muslim violence, for as Irfan Habib remarked, "Of course, Hindus are not marked out." The politics of partition essentialized identities and at Aligarh this process was magnified by the symbolic separation that already existed between the

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<sup>98</sup> In the following chapter, I describe a similar interpretive problem in 1971 Bangladesh where "communal" identity overrode all other aspects of an individual's identity.

<sup>99</sup> Habib, "Irfan Habib: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 28, 2009."

<sup>100</sup> Khan, "Professor Iqtidar Alam Khan (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 31, 2009."

university and the town. The procession that Professor Mohammad Habib led towards the town was intended as a show of solidarity, or possibly a show of force, once Muslim innocence had been established. Habib's memory of anti-RSS slogans raised at this event is particularly telling. It was a rare opportunity for Muslims to demonstrate their loyalty by critiquing the exclusionary politics of the RSS, an anti-Muslim organization.

In the aftermath of the assassination, the 1948 issue of the *Aligarh Magazine* opened with a photo of Mohandas K. Gandhi in his funeral shroud. The still face of India's fallen leader appearing there marks a significant shift in the university's outlook, the composition of the editorial board of the *Magazine* and an explicit sign that the events of 1947 and '48 had exerted their power on Aligarh's environment, despite its distance from the newly drawn borders. A panegyric essay "In Memoriam" served as a memorial to the life of Mahatma Gandhi and as a call Aligarh's students to "pledge ourselves anew to uphold steadfastly, by exercising a strenuous moral discipline and working incessantly for a just social and economic order, the ideals of universal human brotherhood and peace for which he lived so single-mindedly and laid down his life so heroically."<sup>101</sup> Whereas throughout the 1940s, both the *Aligarh Magazine* and the *Aligarh University Gazette* treated Gandhi as the representative of a Hindu parochial movement that threatened Muslims, his appearance in the *Magazine* as a national hero and a friend to the Muslims signals a re-orientation of Aligarh's outlook in an effort to fit into the secular Indian state.

This issue of the *Aligarh Magazine* is a particularly clear and poignant example of the shifts in outlook and orientation that were taking place in Aligarh in 1948 as it sought

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<sup>101</sup> Syed Zainul Abedin, "In Memoriam," *Aligarh Magazine* 1948, ii.

to establish itself as a nationalist institution and to excise the history of Muslim League domination there since 1940.<sup>102</sup> In a coincidence of timing and publishing, the issue also contains a much less prominent lament on the death of Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad, the former Vice Chancellor of the institution, who passed away in London in December 1947. Ziauddin had been one of the Pakistan partisans who facilitated the Muslim League's political organizing on the campus. When, however, it became manifest to him that Pakistan would be a separate state, of which Aligarh would not be a part, he withdrew institutional support for the movement, leading the students to forcibly oust him from his position of leadership. The transition that is marked in the *Magazine* between the League period and a new nationalist period is well captured by the laments for both Gandhi and Ziauddin.

The nationalist perspective is buttressed, in the same issue, by the publication of the 1948 Aligarh Convocation speech delivered by Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru only six days before Gandhi's death. Nehru's speech addresses the challenge that AMU faced as a result of its recent political orientation, but he magnanimously invited the university and its students to find solidarity of feeling with other Indians even as he reminded them that

all of us have to be clear about our basic allegiance to certain ideas. Do we believe in a national state which includes people of all religions and shades of opinion and is essentially secular as a

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<sup>102</sup> This effort was so successful that even now, administrators at the university cautioned me against looking at materials from this period, sometimes refusing to make them available. Hakeem Zillur Rahman even told me, during a conversation, that the reason I could not find personal papers from this period was because after partition people held bonfires and burned them, fearing retribution should they be accused of disloyalty. Syed Mohammad Ali and Farrukh Jalali confirmed that many documents had been destroyed.

state, or do we believe in the religious theocratic conception of a state which considers people of other faiths as something beyond the pole? [sic; read: pale].<sup>103</sup>

Thus even as Nehru made a point to make Aligarh students feel welcome as Indian citizens, he acknowledged the pull of Pakistan. Pakistan's allure continued to affect the students for many years (some say until 1965) but officially, the institution began its about-face in 1948, and by 1949, when the arrival of Zakir Husain as Vice Chancellor was announced in the *Aligarh Magazine*, its official transformation was complete.<sup>104</sup> For the students, however, January 1948 provided a terrifying reminder of what was at stake as they took on the responsibilities of citizenship.<sup>105</sup>

Gandhi's assassination is tied to partition in that it forced Muslims to recognize the precariousness of their position in independent India. Whereas S.M. Mehdi described the anxiety caused by the reduction of his identity to his "Muslimness" for a few tense hours, partition reduced the identity of Muslims to their "Muslimness" for decades, and Aligarh Muslims were among the most easily identifiable.<sup>106</sup> It is this kind of disruption, the disruption in the continuity of people's sense of identity, that has frequently been overlooked in studies of partition. Mehdi was not a victim of violence, but his worldview, and his ability to move freely were severely disrupted by partition's outcomes.

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<sup>103</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, "Speech by the Hon'ble Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India, at the Annual Convocation of the Muslim University at Aligarh on 24th January, 1948," *Aligarh Magazine* 1948, xvii. Also included in Mohammad, *Glimpses of Muslim Education Vol. 1*, 229- 33.

<sup>104</sup> Mohammad Iqbal, "Our New Vice Chancellor," *Aligarh Magazine* 1949.

<sup>105</sup> After independence, the convocation speeches delivered at Aligarh are overwhelming concerned with the responsibilities of citizenship. See Shan Mohammad, ed., *Glimpses of Muslim Education: Peeping through the Convocation Addresses of the Aligarh Muslim University*, 2 vols. (New Delhi: Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd., 2006).

<sup>106</sup> The 1948 issue of the *Aligarh Magazine*, also laments the decline in visibility of two markers of "belonging" to Aligarh: the Turkish Fez and the Sherwani. Syed Zainul Abedin, "The Flying Fez," *Aligarh Magazine* 1948, xiii.

Ather Siddiqi suggested that time would heal the wounds partition opened, but he referred to two other instances when Muslims felt especially threatened, merely for being Muslims and as an entire community: in the aftermath of the assassinations of both Mahatma Gandhi and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. It is quite telling that it was the assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984 that drew scholars' attention to partition and its violence, as they sought to understand how deeply the communal division reached in India after 1947.<sup>107</sup> The assassination of Indira Gandhi exposed links between the past and the present that spurred scholars to explore 1947 in new ways, but these narratives point to the continuity between 1947 and later instances when minority communities felt essentialized. For Muslims, these might include the Babri Masjid demolition in 1992, the 2002 Gujarat pogroms, and the spate of bombings of Muslim targets for which Muslims were held responsible (Samjhota Express, Mecca Masjid, etc.). The periodic repetition of events like this, that point to the discomfort of Muslim citizenship in India, establish a long thread of continuity that shows the importance of partition's disruptions beyond the border areas.

Those Muslims in India who describe their fear repeatedly enact the role of the threatened minority, the very identity that Mohammad Ali Jinnah and the Muslim League demand for Pakistan sought to displace with the language of the Muslim Nation. As I argue in the next chapters, it is impossible and unwise to ignore the outcomes of partition when considering the experience of South Asian Muslims after 1947, for the partition of

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<sup>107</sup> Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*, Menon and Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries*, Pandey, *Remembering Partition*.

India was a paradoxical outcome of the Pakistan movement that reduced the power of the Muslim minority in India precipitously, rather than fortifying the solidarity that gave the movement its power.

## Chapter 5

### The Muslim Question After Partition in India

On January 15, 2011 India's *Tehelka* Magazine published an article on several rounds of bombings that had targeted Muslims from 2006 to 2008. These blasts had earned notoriety in India and many Muslims, members of "radical organizations" were rounded up and charged with committing the crimes.<sup>1</sup> Ashish Khetan argues in *Tehelka* that "since the first horrific blasts in Mumbai in 1992, there has been an automatic and damaging perception amongst most Indians that there is a Muslim hand behind every terror blast" and that this bias has been shared by the security forces who were quick to look for Muslim rather than actual perpetrators. Khetan's article, "In the Words of a Zealot..." builds the case against this assumption. As he points out, over the last several years, further investigations have begun to break down the artifice of this discriminatory assumption, and have revealed radical Hindutva activists hiding behind it. Based on the leaked confession of Swami Aseemanand, the article illuminates the real culprits behind these infamous blasts, and suspicion now falls on activists throughout the RSS hierarchy, right to its highest ranks. Swami Aseemanand admitted to helping to conceive of the blasts and to identify targets though the blasts themselves were organized and executed

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<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the most egregious example of this was the "Batla House Encounter" in which students from Jamia Millia Islamia were picked up on suspicion of having exploded bombs in crowded sections of New Delhi in September 2008.



by others. Significantly, Aseemanand also identified other potential targets, including the Aligarh Muslim University.<sup>2</sup>

Aseemanand's confession sparked enough concern at Aligarh that it prompted a request for additional security,<sup>3</sup> perhaps a reasonable request considering the fact that most of the other targets had already been hit: Malegaon, Mecca Masjid (Hyderabad), the Ajmer Dargah.<sup>4</sup> While certainly the actions of a right-wing religious zealot should not be taken as the perspective of the majority, Aseemanand's confession raises a significant concern relevant to this study. All of the targets were selected to injure Muslims and two of the targets: Hyderabad and the Aligarh University, were selected because of their perceived connections to Pakistan. The persistence of suspicion of the motives of Muslims broadly and Aligarians specifically is remarkable when since 1947 Muslim intellectuals have worked tirelessly to undo this perception. I have tried to show why I believe that this assumption of disloyalty was founded on faulty assumptions about the motives of Aligarh's students with regard to their participation in the Pakistan movement. But the larger question relevant to independent India persists here, as Gyan Pandey so aptly put it, "Can a Muslim Be an Indian?"<sup>5</sup> This question has vexed the issue of citizenship for Muslims in the ostensibly secular Indian state. Pandey has shown that the creation of Pakistan, which may have appeared as a solution to the Muslim Question by

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<sup>2</sup> Ashish Khetan, "In the Words of a Zealot," *Tehelka* December 15, 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Lalmani Verma, "After Aseemanand's Confession, A.M.U. Wants More Security," *Indian Express* January 12, 2011.

<sup>4</sup> At a time of external threat, it should be noted here, the Aligarh Vice Chancellor turned immediately to the civil authorities for protection.

<sup>5</sup> Gyanendra Pandey, "Can a Muslim Be an Indian?," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 41, no. 4 (October 1999).

granting political autonomy to Muslim constituencies in fact, because of the rigidity of the final territorial solution, confirmed political “difference” and fixed the notion of the “Muslim minority” even in “districts, cities, or towns where they were in a numerical majority.”<sup>6</sup> The friability of this notion has had a profound impact on the status of the Indian Muslims today whose loyalty is now not questioned by the Queen—as in Hunter’s earlier query *Are they Bound in Conscience to Rebel against the Queen?*—but by fellow citizens of a secular and independent India.<sup>7</sup>

The history of the association of Indian Muslims—and in this case, particularly those attached to the Aligarh Muslim University—with the demand for Pakistan has permanently obscured their loyalty to the Indian state. The removal of so many Muslims to Pakistan created a whole new set of Muslim problems or Muslim questions.<sup>8</sup> My research examines some of those questions by moving beyond the immediate territorial reality of independent India to look also at the subject of Muslims in Pakistan and Bangladesh, where Muslims hold the power of the majority, but where they remain nonetheless plagued by questions about citizenship and belonging within the confines of the post-partition state. India provides an explosive example of the challenges of integration, and Aligarh University stands out as a powerful symbol of them, but Pakistan, too, continues to struggle with the insufficiency of its national narrative to create space for the many diverse ethnic, linguistic and regional groups that live within its

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: 610.

<sup>7</sup> Najeeb Jung, "Why Should a Muslim Have to Wear His Nationalism on His Sleeve?," *The Times of India* February 20, 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Tan and Kudaisya, *The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia*, 8.

borders. The independence of Bangladesh exemplifies this struggle and I will examine the way that my Bengali informants makes sense of the transitions and challenges they faced during their drive for freedom.

It is worth noting, with regard to the Indian case, that, in recent years, the Indian reaction to Hindu- Muslim communal tension has undergone a significant transformation. Suspicions over the loyalty of Aligarh University have left it in shadow since partition when the university was cast as a partisan for a separatist demand for Pakistan, a weapons manufacturer or a factory for engineers destined for the neighboring state.<sup>9</sup> However, since the destruction of the Babri Masjid in 1992 and the ten years of periodic riots that overwhelmingly targeted Muslims, the Indian public has in large measure come to recognize the threat under which Muslims live in daily life. The explosions of hatred typified by the violence surrounding the Babri Masjid destruction, and the Gujarat pogroms of 2002, embarrassed and shocked many Indians who, by and large, take the question of secularism very seriously. Still, as scholar Omar Khalidi has shown, “in every riot since independence, no matter when or where, or how the riots take place, no matter who starts the riots, in the end the victims are mainly Muslims, whether in numbers of people killed, wounded or arrested.”<sup>10</sup> As the tale of Swami Aseemanand shows,

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<sup>9</sup> Omar Khalidi reports that Vallabhbhai Patel labeled Maulana Azad’s Education Ministry, staffed by Muslims including K.G. Saiyidain, as a “miniature Pakistan.” Khalidi, *Muslims in Indian Economy*, 39. Hasan, "Masood Ul Hasan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 1, 2009.", Khan, "Zakir Ali Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas August 10, 2006." Hamid, "Sayyid Hamid: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas October 29, 2009." Sayyid Hamid was born in Faizabad near Lucknow in 1920. He attended Aligarh University 1937 to 1942, as a student, and later joined the Indian Administrative Service in 1943. In 1980 he was appointed by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to serve as Vice Chancellor of AMU where he remained until 1985. He is currently Chancellor of Jamia Hamdard University in New Delhi.

<sup>10</sup> Khalidi, *Indian Muslims since Independence*, 17.

Muslims are vulnerable not only as the targets in riots and pogroms, but are seen simultaneously as potential, even likely, perpetrators of violence. This suspicion remains directly linked to the suspect loyalty of Muslims of which Pakistan serves as a constant reminder.<sup>11</sup>

This dissertation has argued for a reevaluation of the politics and experiences of partition so as to challenge the hegemony of state narratives of origin and belonging. I have argued that the specter of Pakistan, and the persistent awareness of the outcome of the freedom movement and demand for Pakistan, has obscured our ability to examine the many meanings of the movements themselves. After partition, the lens of nationalism has deepened many of the pre-partition conflicts. The identity politics that contributed to the polarizing of Hindus and Muslims continue to be relevant today. The independence of Pakistan has raised “Muslim Questions” all over South Asia relating not only to Muslim belonging in non-Muslim majority states like India, but also about how comfortably Muslims might live alongside one another and non-Muslim minorities in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

This chapter and the next will examine the challenges of belonging in British India’s successor states to show the influence of state narratives on perceptions about belonging. The narratives of the nationalist movements in India—whether the “composite culture” narrative of Congress or the Two Nation Theory of the Muslim League—sought to create a broadly homogenous identity within the state they demanded from the British. While the “composite culture” narrative appears broadly inclusive, it is an assimilationist

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<sup>11</sup> Patel, "For a United India."

narrative that ultimately obscures and devalues difference. The Two Nation Theory, on the other hand, while it posited a fundamental difference between Hindus and Muslims, suggested that all Muslims were united by their common faith and similarly obscured the diversity of India's Muslim communities in favor of an elite, faith driven narrative of solidarity. In the face of these state narratives that manipulate the identities of citizens with their obscurantist tendencies, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh have witnessed ethnic or linguistic supremacy movements by the Majority that target the Minorit(ies). These reactionary movements seek to shore up majority identity against that of the minority, as Gyan Pandey has exposed in his 1999 essay.<sup>12</sup>

In the face of both the influence of state narratives, and the backlash of ethnic or linguistic supremacist movements, my objective here is to examine the experiences of Aligarians and other citizens of all the post-partition states. Here, Aligarians are representative of the larger Muslim minority in India. For though they are set apart by class and education, the perception that the institution is somehow linked inexorably to Pakistan has mitigated the differences of class and means that Aligarh Muslims both identify and are identified as part of an embattled minority. In the Muslim minority states, Aligarians are tied to assimilationist narratives that have the potential to oppress other minorities. Therefore, their position can be seen as both exceptional and unexceptional. How can we understand their attachment to certain state narratives, or narratives that resist the state's definition of the citizen? Aligarians have been involved in large and small ways in the establishment of all three states, and their experiences and perspectives

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<sup>12</sup> Pandey, "Can a Muslim Be an Indian?."

cast some light on these contestations over belonging. They take on different positions depending on their vantage point, and each individual's experience of partition and independence inevitably shapes his experience. These chapters examine the interplay between Aligarians' engagement with the politics of independence for India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, the influence of state narratives and homogenizing narratives of belonging. There is not one story here, there are many stories of discrimination, assimilation, acceptance, resistance and cooperation that illuminate partition's multiple realities. The disputes over identity and belonging that made partition seem necessary created a complex web of identities that Aligarians and South Asians more broadly continue to negotiate.

It is important to realize that as partition slips further into the past, it continues to have a transformative effect on the way people perceive themselves as citizens of states. The renegotiations over political space that are taking place in all three countries are the evidence of partition's continuing influence. It would be folly to try to isolate contemporary politics of hatred from the narratives of inclusion and exclusion that predominated during the movements for Indian independence and Pakistan when narratives of unity were constructed to politicize loosely linked groups in pursuit of a particular agenda. Likewise, regional and ethnic identities can still be mobilized in order to secure political space in the face of the homogenizing narrative of the state. Narratives that proclaim a space of unity for those with shared characteristics (as distinct from priorities): ethnic, religious, linguistic or national are mirrored by narratives of exclusion

that define who cannot be included. These narratives are interwoven parts of the larger fabric of South Asian identity. To understand them, we must see how they are connected.

Subaltern Historian Gyanendra Pandey has shown the importance of these narratives in the construction of national identities in India in his article “Can a Muslim Be an Indian?”<sup>13</sup> He argues that the construction of the mainstream and the minority are fundamental characteristics of defining the nation. The consequences of this process permanently complicate the position of Indian Muslims; the state cannot see them merely as citizens, but always as “Muslim” citizens. This is a holdover from the nationalist period when all Muslims were marked by their membership in a minority religious category, whether they were political or not. Nationalist Muslims supported Congress and its composite nationalism- but their designation as such implicitly marked other Muslims as “not” nationalist, and thus subject to suspicion. Implied in the placement of that qualifier is the idea that Muslims can never be truly loyal, because their history is not rooted in Indian soil—this differentiates them from other minorities including Sikhs and Jains—and therefore Muslims cannot be considered “natural” citizens.<sup>14</sup> In his examination of the “foreignness” of Islam within the Indian nationalist narrative, Pandey builds on Partha Chatterjee’s argument in *The Nation and Its Fragments* that the construction of the Indian nation has reified a “singular” history for India: the history of

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.: 621. Vazira Zamindar’s *The Long Partition* reveals the particular vulnerability of Muslims in the post-partition state. Whereas Jews who migrated to Israel in the early 1950s were allowed to return to India, Muslims who migrated to Pakistan around the same time but sought to return were denied re-entry. Zamindar, *The Long Partition*. Irfan Habib, too, noted that “Hindus are not marked out.” Habib, “Irfan Habib: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 28, 2009.”

Hindu civilization.<sup>15</sup> Hindus, unlike Muslims, are not constituents of the nation; they are the nation.<sup>16</sup> The centering of Hindus as the heart of the Indian nation positions all minorities as exceptions, and the Muslims are additionally problematic because of their own claim to exceptionalism, negatively represented by the Pakistan demand.

### **THE MUSLIM CASE IN INDIA**

Recent examinations have shown the results of Muslim marginalization in terms of poverty, employment and other human development indices. The 2006 Sachar Committee Report provides the most current evidence showing that Muslims throughout the social hierarchy in India lag in a variety of Human Development Indices.<sup>17</sup> They are less educated, less wealthy, and less secure than others in similar positions. In some cases, this was true before partition though revisionist history has, to some extent, disproven the assumption, originally fronted by Sir Sayyid, that Muslims were backward relative to Hindus, particularly in education.<sup>18</sup> The Hunter Report, published in 1871, stimulated this assumption because Hunter, though his research had only covered some portions of Bengal, was less than clear about the implications of his study for Indian Muslims overall.

Hunter's report provided an "objective" foundation for a "narrative of decline" that guided Muslim reformist thinking through the late nineteenth-century and beyond,

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<sup>15</sup> Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*, Princeton Studies in Culture/Power/History (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993).

<sup>16</sup> Pandey, "Can a Muslim Be an Indian?," 624.

<sup>17</sup> Sachar, "The Sachar Committee Report," 2.

<sup>18</sup> Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism*. Sachar, "The Sachar Committee Report." Khalidi, *Indian Muslims since Independence*.



exemplified by the educational philosophy of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan. While more recent research has argued against the factual veracity of Hunter's argument, it remained broadly persuasive amongst educated Muslims as an impetus for educational reform and helped to generate support for the Aligarh Movement. Paul Brass argues that though the statistics Hunter deployed did indicate a measure of Muslim deprivation in Bengal, it is the irony of the Muslim nationalist movement that educational reform was mobilized intensely in the United Provinces, where the conditions that Hunter describes were largely inapplicable.<sup>19</sup> Brass draws attention to two contradictory arguments used by the Muslim League in service of national mobilization: a) that Muslims were backward and b) that Muslims had a historical link to power and prestige that qualified them for disproportionate representation in positions of power.<sup>20</sup> I argue that the complementarity of these two arguments gave them power. In combination, these two powerful myths: of deprivation and decline as the result of alienation from power, became the basis of a Muslim awakening that mobilized "Muslim national will for a competitive coexistence in the future."<sup>21</sup> It established a precedent for Muslim power and facilitated a desire to recover it. This desire, I have argued, lies at the heart of the Pakistan movement.

Omar Khalidi argues that "Muslims had generally caught up with other groups in education in most provinces of the country by the 1940s."<sup>22</sup> The Sachar Committee Report confirms that at the time of independence the gap in graduation rates between

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<sup>19</sup> Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India*, 121.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

<sup>21</sup> Khalidi, *Indian Muslims since Independence*, 108.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

Muslims and All Others was relatively low. However, since that time, and especially since 1970, the gap has widened markedly and unemployment among Muslim graduates is higher than that of any other group.<sup>23</sup> It is a tremendous irony of partition that the myth of decline that Brass criticizes became reality after 1947. The post-independence reports on Muslim achievement that incorporate recommendations for reform by the government, reveal that Muslims lag in achievement, and that other marginal groups, including Dalits, have reached higher levels of achievement, despite starting from a lower position.

The “perception of decline” that emerged in the wake of the 1857 uprising, fueled by W.W. Hunter’s murky theorizing, and picked up by Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan with dramatic results, became, in the years after partition, an actual fact of “relative deprivation.”<sup>24</sup> The Sachar Committee Report lays bare the suspicions and obstacles in the way of Muslim success. Underlying communal tensions have created an environment where Muslims are seen as likely perpetrators in a variety of violent or illegal acts from petty crime to terrorism and whereas they are underrepresented in the professions, they are overrepresented relative to their population in jails.<sup>25</sup> Though a variety of reports have been commissioned by the government to examine the problem of Muslim achievement, few have had any impact on government policy and many have barely seen the light of day.<sup>26</sup> As a rule, the government has largely ignored the recommendations of these

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<sup>23</sup> Sachar, "The Sachar Committee Report," 67. Employment Statistics, 74.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>25</sup> 17.6% of convicted prison inmates are Muslim according to the 2008 National Crime Records Bureau Report. The ten year average is 17.53%. "Prison Statistics India 2008," (New Delhi: National Crime Records Bureau, 2008).

<sup>26</sup> Khalidi critiques the government’s transparency when he shows that since 1996 annual reports of the National Minorities Commission have not been made publicly available. He attributes this to the fact that

various committees, and official efforts to improve the conditions of Muslims have not led to measurable improvement. In the halls of parliament, Muslims become material during campaigns when candidates seek their support as a voting bank. Separate electorates were established in 1909 and indicated a shift towards a measure of Muslim sovereignty in voting. However, as a result of the perception that separate representation was intimately linked to the separatist politics that resulted in partition, separate electorates were abolished in India in 1949.<sup>27</sup> Still, this has not prevented politicians from recruiting Muslims en masse based on (later forgotten) appeals to their needs. Muslims are, in effect, treated electorally as a special constituency defined by shared interests, but separate from other groups that might have broadly similar needs.

Omar Khailidi has shown—in two books that focus on the experience of Indian Muslims after independence, and one that specifically treats the role of security forces in the management of ethnic violence—that the position of Muslims is closely linked to the migrations of partition and their symbolic value in the context of Indian and Pakistani statehood. This is important for a variety of reasons. First, it is significant with relation to how Muslims see themselves, particularly in those areas from which there was a high

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the reports must be presented in the Lok Sabha alongside an Action Taken Report. He also reveals that other government-sponsored reports have languished for years (like the Gopal Singh Panel Report commissioned in 1983 that was not presented in parliament until 1990) before being presented in parliament. Khalidi, *Muslims in Indian Economy*, 5-6.

<sup>27</sup> Steven I. Wilkinson, *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 109. See pages 108-122 for Wilkinson's discussion of the abolition of Muslim electorates, against the veto of the few remaining Muslim League politicians. Begum Aizaz Rasul, apparently at the urging of Congress' Maulana Azad, Sardar Patel and K.M. Munshi, spoke only hesitantly in favor of the abolition with the logic that as "an integral part of the Indian nation" (121) Muslims should participate in the general electorate. For an assessment of Congress' failure to fulfill commitments to Aligarh see also "A Wasted Generation at Aligarh" in Khurshid, *At Home in India: A Restatement of Indian Muslims*, 57-65.

level of migration including UP, Bihar, West Bengal and Central India.<sup>28</sup> Second, the migrations of partition served to remake local environments, to expose the raw wires of communal sensitivity and to provide the current running through them. The changes wrought by partition continue to influence day-to-day relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in mixed neighborhoods and have shaped perceptions about Indian identity in both communities. As Omar Khalidi has shown, riots tend to occur in neighborhoods where Hindus and Muslim live alongside one another, and tend to be marked by anxiety over Muslim economic advance.<sup>29</sup> This outcome reveals a persistent tension about belonging that reminds Muslims that their place in society is bounded, conditioned by Hindu tolerance (or lack thereof).

Paul Brass has examined the continuity between partition's migrations and the production of contemporary anti-Muslim violence; his research shows that the legacies of partition are significant for Muslims and non-Muslims alike. For example, in some cities in Uttar Pradesh he reports, (and I can attest from my own experience), Muslim localities are called "Pakistan" despite the choice of the residents not to migrate. These "mini-Pakistans," found in otherwise non-Muslim cities and towns, including Aligarh, serve to remind Hindus of the potentially traitorous population in their midst, and are used to justify violence against Muslims.<sup>30</sup> Whereas it is necessary to separate the outcome of Pakistan from our study of pre-partition politics, it is impossible to separate it from any examination of Muslims post- partition. As Pandey and others have shown, partition

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<sup>28</sup> Khalidi, *Indian Muslims since Independence*, 114.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 21-23.

<sup>30</sup> Brass, *Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence*, 36-37.

remade the nation in such a way that Muslims were pushed to the margins. The question of how they function there is the subject of this investigation.

In Muslim localities and communities, Muslims' sense of their own identity, as well as in many cases their actual social status, is bound up with the actions of those Muslims who departed. This perception is exemplified by the oft-heard argument that Muslims occupy a lower social status because all of the educated Muslims left for Pakistan.<sup>31</sup> Even after the 1947 partition, the employment opportunities in Pakistan continued to exert a powerful pull in Aligarh, especially for engineers. Khalidi shows, further, that UP and Bihar—two states heavily represented among the student body in Aligarh—remain the most educationally “sluggish” states in India six decades after partition.

The real effect of partition's migrations in terms of local environments in this case, was the “loss of leadership.” Another Muslim commentator, Salman Khurshid,<sup>32</sup> observes the effects of partition's brain drain in “the seemingly inexplicable poverty of social and political leadership.”<sup>33</sup> The issue of loss of leadership is especially important with relation to political power. Partition's migrations reduced the voting bloc of Muslims from approximately 25% of the population to more like 10%.<sup>34</sup> This represents

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<sup>31</sup> Habib, "Irfan Habib: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 28, 2009.", Siddiqi, "Professor Ather Siddiqi (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 11, 2009."

<sup>32</sup> Salman Khurshid is a grandson of Dr. Zakir Husain, India's first Muslim President. Khurshid was born in Aligarh, but he attended St. Stephen's College, Delhi. He is a lawyer, writer and politician, serving from the Farrukhabad Lok Sabha constituency. In 2009 he became the Minister for Minority Affairs and in 2011 Cabinet Minister for Law and Justice, and Minority Affairs.

<sup>33</sup> Khurshid, *At Home in India: A Restatement of Indian Muslims*, 21.

<sup>34</sup> In 1961, well after the major Partition-linked migration had ended, India's Muslim population was enumerated at 47 million, about 10% of the total population of 439 million. Sachar, "The Sachar

clearly a far less powerful bloc overall, and has created a sense of powerlessness within the Muslim community combined with a terrible resentment for those Pakistanis that one Muslim in Aligarh called “cheaters” who betrayed their Indian brethren.<sup>35</sup>

The narrators at the heart of my study in India, have, overall, an ambivalent relationship to the question of the position of Muslim Indians. Their first point of reference is the university itself. For example, their assessment of the university’s plight after partition is mired in a perception of decline. First and foremost, Aligarians of an older generation complain about the decline in status of Aligarh students. This is not expressed as a communal or sectarian concern—rather, it is the decline in the status of the Muslim students themselves that these narrators find troubling. “Previously,” a number of narrators suggested to me, “Only boys from good families were admitted. Now, the son of every shopkeeper and pan-wallah can come to Aligarh.” This complaint is of course linked to the migration of so many of those “good families” from the hinterlands of UP to the ostensible homeland of Pakistan.<sup>36</sup> There is a palpable sense of loss in this community for the cultural elite, the educated class who departed. While few of these narrators would concede a desire to migrate themselves, and have, as such, aggressively embraced the identity of Indian citizenship, even looking across the border with frustration and often pity, they also attribute some of the difficulties that Indian Muslims have faced to the

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Committee Report," 28. The most recent census data, from 2001, places the Indian Muslim Minority at approximately 13.4% of the population. <http://www.censusindia.gov.in>

<sup>35</sup> This assessment came from an informal exchange with an Aligarh graduate who has family in Pakistan.

<sup>36</sup> This argument, too, complicates the perception (outlined in the previous chapter) that only students from “Pakistan areas” remained in Pakistan, and that no one from Uttar Pradesh “migrated” there.

departure of their co-religionists.<sup>37</sup> Though many of the narrators with whom I spoke come from divided families, meaning that they have relatives in Pakistan, they compare their own experience and achievement to that of their family and friends on the other side.

In fact, this tendency exists on both sides of the border, further reinforcing the idea that the self is defined, at least in part, by difference. Relative to non-Muslims, Indian Muslims may have a qualitatively different experience, lagging behind in observable indices. Though my informants largely come from the upper and middle classes, they consider themselves to be exceptional and speak of the larger Muslim public when they speak of decline. However, in comparison to Pakistani Muslims, Indian Muslims consider themselves better off or are aggressively critical of those in the neighboring country, and with the intention of proving their success, sometimes use the examples of the exceptional to define the rule.

Consider, for example, Zakiya Siddiqi's critique of her husband's family in Pakistan, who she considered to be unnecessarily materialistic, "I used to go there my mother-in-law used to say, 'Put on some jewelry,' and this and that. And people would recognize me, 'Oh! She has come from India! Look at that. Poor India!'"<sup>38</sup> While at

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<sup>37</sup> Ather Siddiqi told me that his parents took his sister to Pakistan in 1965 because it was too difficult to find a good "match" for their daughter in India as so many of the "good families" had migrated to Pakistan. Siddiqi, "Professor Ather Siddiqi (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 11, 2009." Similarly, during a research visit to Lahore, I overheard an old Aligarh acquaintance ask Wajahat Husain if he knew of any good, potential matches for a girl "from an old Aligarh family." He told me they sought some one with a similar pedigree.

<sup>38</sup> Zakiya Siddiqi, "Professor Zakiya Siddiqi (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas December 9, 2009," (Aligarh: December 9, 2009). In a written memoir, Hayatullah Ansari, a former resident of Aftab Hostel in the late 1930s remembered his friend Akhtar Raepuri, a Communist who "later changed his road.

first glance, this may seem an innocuous difference in preference, Siddiqi uses it to show the fundamental corruption of society in Pakistan. Whereas, she indicates, modesty and simplicity are considered to be the values of Aligarh, or even Indian Muslims, Pakistan's culture is showy, shallow and materialistic. This is not fundamentally attached to any concept of place in her mind. Rather, she clarified, that those in Pakistan have undergone a substantive change. "Even those people who migrated from India to Pakistan, their value system has changed."<sup>39</sup> Many Indian Muslims deride Pakistani migrants as "opportunists" and this critique is at the heart of the perception that their values have changed. In this conception, Indian Muslims have made the best with the resources available to them, their quietism is a virtue.

Masood ul Hasan similarly links the presence of Pakistan with a betrayal of Aligarh's values. Speaking of Chaudhry Khaliquzzaman, an Aligarh Old Boy, Muslim League leader, and author of a comprehensive biography *Pathway to Pakistan*, Hasan calls him a "mean-minded man." Hasan describes Khaliquzzaman's abrupt departure for Pakistan as "stabbing us in the back!"<sup>40</sup> Hasan acknowledges that Khaliquzzaman had been "our" leader, by which he means not only the Muslim League's leader, but Aligarh's own leader. Whereas Hasan refuses to criticize Jinnah, a League man but ostensibly an Aligarh outsider,<sup>41</sup> his continued anger at Khaliquzzaman seems rooted in

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He became an aristocrat. When I met him in Pakistan probably about 1961, then his ideas were completely different." Hayatullah Ansari, "Mera Aftab Hall," *The Aftab* The Aftab Memoirs Special (1976).

<sup>39</sup> Siddiqi, "Professor Zakiya Siddiqi (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas December 9, 2009."

<sup>40</sup> Hasan, "Masood Ul Hasan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 1, 2009."

<sup>41</sup> Only to narrators in India. Pakistani narrators make an effort to portray him as an "insider," emphasizing his many visits to Aligarh during the 1940s. In a 2006 interview General Ghulam Umar intimated a direct link between Aligarh and Jinnah by placing Mohammad Ali Jauhar and the *Khilafat* Movement leadership



the same kind of betrayal of values that Zakiya Siddiqi describes above. Departure for Pakistan appears then not just as the pursuance of choice, or self-fulfilment, or even the culmination of the League's avowed policy, it is a personal and particular betrayal of Aligarh's values that reveals the corruption of Pakistan's partisans and separates Pakistan in its reality from India. This is, at worst, a betrayal of the Pakistan ideal that the students had pursued aggressively during the 1940s. They had worked to build and sustain an idea of Muslim solidarity, based on the values they had learned at Aligarh, and to spread this idea throughout the hinterlands. The creation of Pakistan as a separate and sovereign state, however, appears to them as a betrayal of this ideal. Rather than serving to unite India's Muslims, Pakistan has permanently divided them.

Aamir Mufti has examined the question of values, and their influence on Muslim political acceptability in an important 1995 article "Secularism and Minority: Elements of a Critique" in which he argues that those Nationalist Muslim Leaders who, like Maulana Kalam Azad fortified the Indian National Congress' claim to inclusivity, represented "traditional" culture.<sup>42</sup> This link to traditional culture reinforced the perception of Muslims as "non-modern" and provided a necessary contrast with the modernity of the Hindu nation thereby reinforcing the boundaries of that nation. While Nationalist Muslim leaders existed and remain, they always represent the minority, the part and not the

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between them. Jinnah neither attended Aligarh Muslim University nor supported the *Khilafat* Movement. However, General Umar easily incorporated him into Aligarh's narrative by identifying him as the heir to the legacy of Muslim reform in the period after 1857. The link was further solidified by Jinnah's commitment to the university and his belief that the young men educated there would go on to be leaders in Pakistan. Umar, "Major General Ghulam Umar (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas August 8, 2006." See also Abbas, "Thinking through Partition: Finishing the Narrative (Unpublished Master's Thesis)."

<sup>42</sup> Aamir Mufti, "Secularism and Minority: Elements of a Critique," *Social Text* 45 (Winter 1995): 84.

whole. As Mufti articulates, “The minority is cast as a segment only, and becomes an undifferentiated staging ground for the traditional, the premodern, the underdeveloped, the archaic.”<sup>43</sup> Mufti’s argument is useful, despite the attachment of Aligarh to its own “modernity.” Irfan Habib confirmed this when he spoke to me about the difference between Congress Muslims and Muslim League Muslims. In his estimation,

most nationalist Muslims were religious—Hakim [Ajmal Khan]...Dr. [M.A.] Ansari. Here was also Tasadduq Sherwani. They were all religious... Muslim Leaguers were not religious to this degree. Jinnah was not; he couldn’t pray. They were mostly modern with a large proportion of people who were landlords. On the women’s question they were iffy, but they had on their Working Committee women who didn’t observe purdah. Jinnah’s sister didn’t observe purdah. Begum Aizaz Rasool didn’t. So on these issues, purdah and so on, they were fairly modern...They were in this sense “modern communalists” rather than religious jihadis.<sup>44</sup>

Habib draws out a number of significant points here- perhaps most important is the identity he creates between the “Aligarh” identity of modernist Muslims and the “League” identity. Contrary to perceptions that the Pakistan Demand was driven by religious zeal, he shows that the Aligarh Muslims were largely ambivalent about the nature of their Muslim identity, preferring its cultural associations to the trappings of faith. Most of the former students who spoke with me described the fact that although there were expectations of religious observance, those students who performed them with sincere belief were in the minority. A shared religious identity was the baseline common attribute at Aligarh but few students expressed a sense of having been guided by questions of faith.

Whereas Congress Muslims, as Mufti argues, held fast to notions of “traditional” Muslim identity, marked by religious observance, Aligarh Muslims were engaged in a

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.: 85.

<sup>44</sup> Habib, "Irfan Habib: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 28, 2009."

process of mixing Western and traditional values. Although many non-Muslim Congressites had been raised in this tradition, including Gandhi and Nehru, the party had begun to differentiate itself from “British” values and identity markers in the 1920s. Attachment to these markers, then, became associated with British loyalism, unacceptable in the context of the Congress demand for independence.<sup>45</sup>

Within the context of India’s Muslims, the Aligarh University has represented a progressive strain since its inception. Even Habib’s description of his own father shows how identity at Aligarh was far from static. He said, “My father was a curious man: a devout believer in God, and his Prophet, even more devoted than Prophet to Gandhiji, and very well read in Marxism.”<sup>46</sup> However, in the context of the trajectory of the Indian state and the non-Muslim public, Aligarh appeared non-modern: ambivalently anti-imperialist and archaically communal.

The question of “communal identity” within Aligarh, however, as I have shown earlier is key to the institution’s own identity—that is, it defines itself by the absence of communalism within the university. Thus Aligarians in India critique the communal identity of Pakistan and express pity for the experience of Muslims there. Saeeda Kidwai, the first female student to attend the Aligarh Muslim University for post-graduate classes in Geography lamented (in Urdu) the situation in Pakistan.

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<sup>45</sup> Partha Chatterjee’s discussion also points out the Indian National Congress appropriation of “traditional” cultural features from Hindu/Indian society that were seen as anti-colonial. He argues that it is in the “so-called ‘spiritual’ domain” that “nationalism launches its most powerful, creative, and historically significant project: to fashion a ‘modern’ national culture that is nevertheless not Western. If the nation is an imagined community, then this is where it is brought into being. In this, its true and essential domain, the nation is already sovereign, even when the state is in the hands of the colonial power.” Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments*, 6.

<sup>46</sup> Habib, "Irfan Habib: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 28, 2009."

*What happens in Pakistan is such a terrible thing that Muslims are killing Muslims and destroying mosques. It is such a shameful thing. Here, if a Hindu kills, what is the complaint of the Muslim? Those people should complain because brother is killing brother. And in mosques!...On Fridays when more people come to the mosque. Boys also come, the younger generation also comes. Old people also come. If in Hindustan a mosque is destroyed look what a ruckus it creates!<sup>47</sup>*

Kidwai is referring here to the destruction of the Babri Mosque in 1992, and the massive impact that episode had on communal relations in India. She contrasts this with the complacency she perceives in Pakistan and her disbelief that Muslim vs. Muslim violence is even possible there. What surprises here is the notion that Hindu-Muslim conflict draws Muslims together in solidarity, and others, too, speak out against the injustice of these attacks. In Pakistan, however, the violence is “unnatural,” it contravenes the logic of the state and the identity politics that brought it into being by associating allegiance to Islam and allegiance to the state. This situation is perplexing to Indian Muslims, and exemplifies the fundamental difference they see between their experience and the experience of Pakistanis. Although the place of Muslims in Indian society is sometimes uncertain, the bonds of solidarity that connect Muslims to one another in India remain strong.

The Indian government reports commissioned to examine Muslim status confirm the suspicion of Muslim backwardness and communal attitudes, and the exceptions to the rule, India’s Muslim Presidents (Zakir Husain, Fakhruddin Ahmad, APJ Abdul Kalam) and Vice Presidents (Justice Mohammad Hidayatullah, Mohammad Hamid Ansari) serve to confirm India’s modernist commitment to secularism. That many of the Nationalist Muslims were educated at Aligarh, including Zakir Husain, the very picture of the

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<sup>47</sup> Translated from Urdu by author. Kidwai, "Mrs. Saeeda Kidwai: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas: June 17, 2009."

modernist Muslim with his miniature beard and dapper attire, escapes the notice of those who would cast Indian Muslims as backward while using the success of a handful of Nationalist Muslims to prove India's secular outlook. Observant or secular, traditional or modern, Indian Muslims are implicated in the nationalist project; the question arises in Mufti's examination, "If 'Muslim outright,' then how can he be an Indian in the modern sense?" But the question of secularism seems overdetermined with regard to the Indian state, and untrustworthy in the case of Muslims. Thus though Salman Haider,<sup>48</sup> Indian Foreign Secretary 1995-1997, selected "none" in the religion column on his Indian Foreign Service application, he continues to be seen as India's first Muslim Foreign Secretary.<sup>49</sup>

Another narrator, whose identity I have chosen to protect because his deliberate efforts to mask his past as a Muslim League activist while a student at Aligarh University reveals a real anxiety that this past might affect his reputation today, told me, in a moment of frankness, "Of course we are Muslims first, and Indians later... We are Muslims because we ARE Muslims and we are Indians because we live in India. So our loyalty is there, but our faith is obviously centered in Islam." His anxiety about his past is unsurprising considering this statement.<sup>50</sup> This hints at the great fear of Indian nationalism, that Muslims see their Indian nationality as incidental, whereas their Muslim identity is primordial. Given the choice between defending the state and defending the

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<sup>48</sup> Salman Haider is the grandson of Sheikh Abdullah, the founder of the Aligarh Women's College. His father, Colonel Haider was an important influence on many young men at Aligarh during the 1940s, including Wajahat Husain, whose memories are included in this study.

<sup>49</sup> Khalidi, *Muslims in Indian Economy*, 48.

<sup>50</sup> Masood ul Hasan expressed a similar anxiety, cited in the previous chapter.

faith, which would they choose? This narrator flatly denied his involvement in Muslim League causes, but he told me, “I was regarded as a very good debater in the Student’s Union here.” As my research progressed, it became clear that during his tenure as a student (1940-1946), only those students who supported the League were given space to speak in the Union. Additional evidence confirmed my suspicions, including an article in the *Aligarh Gazette* that identified him as an enthusiastic League member. His persistent attitude that his attachment to his faith comes before his attachment to India suggests that he has never given up on the goal of Muslim solidarity. Perhaps it is his proximity to Aligarh, the theoretical hub of Indian Muslim solidarity, that has allowed him to hold fast to its promises, despite the fracturing presence of Pakistan.

Indian Muslims, contrary to the outsider’s criticism of their non-nativity, become in this assessment, the preservers of truly Muslim, or truly “good” values and they link these directly to the Indian environment. While Muslims lament the departure of so many “good” families, leading to overall decline in Indian Muslim society, at the same time, those families who left are no longer “good” having been corrupted by their migration. Though from the same family, Zakiya Siddiqi determines that her in-laws have undergone a “change” which alienates them from herself. Chaudhry Khaliquzzaman, an Aligarh insider and leader, betrayed those values when he abruptly left for Pakistan in November 1947, despite being the leader of the League in the Indian Parliament. Masood ul Hasan sought to reveal Khaliquzzaman’s inauthenticity or intrinsic “meanness” when

he raised the conditions of his departure in 1947. Pakistan represents “corruption” and “opportunism,” values he implied are not native in Aligarh.<sup>51</sup>

Reversing the gaze, when Zakiya Siddiqi’s experience is viewed from the Pakistan side, her disinterest in showy jewelry or wealth appears as an indication of India’s poverty. In the hands of her in-laws, what she calls modesty appears to them as poverty, and serves to justify their migration choice. Major General Wajahat Husain, in considering the question of Indian Muslims, argued that the Muslims’ pre-partition fears about being excluded in the services have since come to pass in India. The “main point of discontentment” for Muslims in India, he told me, was the perception that “they would not get the same treatment that the British gave” once India became independent. And, he went on, “This is precisely what is happening now. There are more Muslims left in India than there are in Pakistan, but the conditions in which they are living, and the way they are treated and the unfairness that is meted out is what we expected would happen.”<sup>52</sup> Thus, the creation of Pakistan is justified by the fulfillment of Muslim anxieties about exclusion. This argument is troubling in its teleology, and it further deepens the sense of difference between Indian and Pakistani Muslims. There is a common argument for Indo-Pak peace that argues that “Pakistanis and Indians are brothers” or sometimes “the same people” but these perspectives, touted by Muslims with a shared geographic, historical

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<sup>51</sup> Certainly the available evidence belies this, as we have seen in earlier chapters. Aligarh’s environment was always riven with factionalism and opportunism. Sir Sayyid’s very goals in founding the institution were that Muslim boys should be well-educated and prepared to take advantage of the opportunities available to them. Hasan, "Masood Ul Hasan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 1, 2009."

<sup>52</sup> Husain, "Major General Wajahat Husain (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas July 11, 2006."

and institutional heritage, suggest that the boundary that divided India and Pakistan also created a boundary between people.

### **THE PRESENCE OF PAKISTAN**

The source of these anxieties can be understood on both sides of the border. While I have argued that support for the Pakistan movement did not necessarily imply a desire for independent statehood, and that we should avoid viewing pre-1947 sentiments and perspectives through the lens of Pakistan, the situation is drastically changed with regard to events and experiences involving Muslims throughout the subcontinent after 1947. Now, I argue, it is critical to consider the influence of the reality of Pakistan—no longer an ethos, a theory, a persuasive and perhaps multiply (but not insufficiently<sup>53</sup>) imagined idea—for the presence of Pakistan exerts influence on the experiences of Muslims throughout the region. As Saeed Naqvi suggests, “divergence of views on Partition conditioned differing attitudes towards Pakistan and consequently towards Indian Muslims.”<sup>54</sup> Partition is a distorting lens through which Pakistani and Indian Muslims examine one another and through which they are viewed by others. Pakistan created expectations on all sides of the borders and it is the fulfillment or disappointment of these that conditions the perspectives recounted here.

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<sup>53</sup> Salman Rushdie, *Shame* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1983), Oldenburg, "A Place Insufficiently Imagined:" Language, Belief, and the Pakistan Crisis of 1971." See also Venkat's Dhulipala's forthcoming book *Creating a New Medina*.

<sup>54</sup> Naqvi, *Reflections of an Indian Muslim*, 14-15.



Masood ul Hasan pushed this point further for me, “What soured our relations? The bloodshed.”<sup>55</sup> The bloodshed of partition made indelible the line that separated the two states. This line seemed arbitrary to many, and came with an expectation of permeability. It was never imagined as a permanent definition of identity but as one that would become “blurred”<sup>56</sup> with time. Instead it was reified by partition violence.<sup>57</sup> It now put a boundary not only between Muslim and non-Muslim Indians, but between Muslims in India and Pakistan. Pakistanis—almost by necessity—look back at India triumphant, taking solace in the perceived disadvantage of Indian Muslims, and the constant threat of violence under which they are believed to live. By contrast, Indian Muslims criticize the opportunism of those who migrated, those “cheaters,” and see the present political unrest—“Muslims killing Muslims!” while non-Muslims study peacefully in AMU<sup>58</sup>—as the vindication of their choice to stay in India. Saeed Naqvi’s argument to this end is based on the premise that the Muslim who remained in India was “less ambivalent than the majority community in his opposition to the two-nation theory” and therefore “a shared hatred for Pakistan became the acid test for loyalty.”<sup>59</sup> While Naqvi is adamant on this point for the period after 1947, I again think it important not to read it back. While Aligarh narrators may have been reluctant to discuss their involvement with or support

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<sup>55</sup> Hasan, "Masood Ul Hasan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 1, 2009."

<sup>56</sup> Naqvi, *Reflections of an Indian Muslim*, 41. Siddiqi, "Professor Ather Siddiqi (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 11, 2009."

<sup>57</sup> Zamindar, *The Long Partition*.

<sup>58</sup> Siddiqi, "Professor Zakiya Siddiqi (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas December 9, 2009."

<sup>59</sup> Naqvi, *Reflections of an Indian Muslim*, 17. KPS also expressed anxiety on this point when he argued that “EVERY Muslim is a nationalist” by which he means, that the Muslims who remain in India are there by choice, despite the presence of Pakistan and must be considered loyal Indians. KPS, "KPS (Anonymized): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas October 8, 2009."

for the League's objectives in the shadow of partition, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that many of them shared its priorities, as I have defined them in an earlier chapter, and even participated in League activities before partition. Further, Naqvi's protestations over Indian Muslim hatred for Pakistan perhaps resonate only with the converted and seem unlikely to convince others who still harbor suspicions over Muslim loyalty. The presence of urban "mini-Pakistans," and the persistent accusations of Indian Muslim support for the Pakistani national cricket team represent large and small ways of questioning Muslim loyalty in everyday life.<sup>60</sup>

Indian Muslims recognize that the burden of tolerance is on the Hindu majority. The fragile peace in Muslim communities is dependent upon Hindu forbearance. Ather Siddiqi, Zakiya Siddiqi's husband, who was a student at Aligarh in the 1940s, and taught in AMU for most of his career, laid this argument out most clearly. At the outset of our recorded interview, which was the second of our conversations, he told me, "*So I want to prove this that India, as a nation, has limitless tolerance and resilience, persecution as a concept does not exist.*"<sup>61</sup> The very presence of Muslims in India today, Siddiqi argued, is evidence of Hindu tolerance, "they could have chucked us out" during partition, he told me. Rather, they "allow" Muslims "use" of the country. Siddiqi laid the blame for partition squarely at the feet of Muslims.<sup>62</sup> He did not conflate the Muslims with the

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<sup>60</sup> Naqvi, *Reflections of an Indian Muslim*, 55- 59.

<sup>61</sup> Siddiqi, "Professor Ather Siddiqi (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 11, 2009." KPS, "KPS (Anonymized): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas October 8, 2009."

<sup>62</sup> At one point, he told me, "*Hindus will say this, that Muslims divided it. There were other reasons, but still.*" While he also blames Muslims, he recognizes the complexity of the identity politics, and acknowledges that the Hindu-Muslim relationship after 1947 has been dominated by this complaint and the suspicion it provokes.

Muslim League, or attribute the creation of Pakistan to League politics. Rather, he argued that Muslims, as a people, bear the responsibility for partitioning India. His is a broad indictment that grows from a sense that “*Muslims cannot live together.*”<sup>63</sup> This inability, as Siddiqi sees it, to live together, to live without conflict is a foil to India’s self-evident history of tolerance-- “Can you name a time when India has invaded any other country?”<sup>64</sup> This history of tolerance, Siddiqi argued, is evident in every day life when the early morning call to prayer is broadcast over loudspeakers. The fact that Hindus do not interfere with this loud, public reminder of Muslim presence, is a testament, he argued, to the depth of “Hindu” commitment to secular inclusion.

This story about Hindu tolerance, however, quickly becomes one about access to power. Even riots, including the riots in 1951 in Aligarh, Siddiqi said, had little to do with communal feelings, but were motivated by political ones. Whether it was the riots in 1947 that drove his parents and him out of Saharanpur (some of his siblings had already left for Pakistan), or the later riots in Aligarh, he conceded that “Only Hindus could start that, the riots” because Muslims felt very guilty, and were “subdued.” Consistent with Omar Khalidi’s argument, Siddiqi said, Muslims cannot and do not start riots, “because their numbers are small, and they have to live in this country and they can get a guilty conscience if they do.”<sup>65</sup> As Siddiqi navigates the tricky territory of his post 1947 experiences, ensconced in the safe and tolerant environs of Aligarh’s civil lines, he is

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<sup>63</sup> Siddiqi, "Professor Ather Siddiqi (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 11, 2009."

<sup>64</sup> The factual point notwithstanding, Siddiqi imagines an Indian state determined to protect the rights of minorities. Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

patently aware of Muslim vulnerability. It is guilt that prevents any Muslim uprising, guilt for their role—even their implied role—in the creation of Pakistan. Muslims, he told me, still “*suffer from this.*”

#### **THE CASE OF THE BABRI MASJID VERDICT**

More recent events in India, surrounding the late 2010 release of the Allahabad High Court’s verdict on the Babri Masjid demolition, show that Muslims are painfully aware that peace is maintained not by the good behavior of their community but at the whim of the non-Muslim community. The verdict was to determine how the contested land on which the Babri Masjid had been situated would be allotted to those claiming sovereignty over it. The Mosque was destroyed in 1992 as a result of the claim that the site was the birthplace of Lord Ram, the *Ramjanmabhoomi*. During the many years that have passed since the destruction of the mosque, the catastrophic rioting that followed all over India, and the periodic eruption of related violence, including the 2002 Gujarat pogroms, India’s non-Muslim public has come a great distance in recognizing the fragility of the communal peace that generally prevails in their country. Muslim apprehension in the days leading up to the verdict revealed their awareness of the possibility of violence in its wake.

On September 19, 2010 in anticipation of the announcement of the verdict, the Vice Chancellor of Aligarh University issued “an appeal to staff and students” to “maintain equanimity, and desist from any form of reaction that would destroy trust

between the communities.”<sup>66</sup> In addition, alumni of the Aligarh university engaged in a lively discussion over one of several AMU listservs about how to deal with the pending verdict, including suggestions to turn the disputed site over to the UN as a World Heritage Site, or to give the “Babri Masjid to our Hindu brethren to facilitate the construction of a Grand Temple so as to pay respect to their faith (*Astha*), leaving only a small piece of land away from *Garbha grah* to construct a small replica of the Babri Masjid.”<sup>67</sup> When these perspectives encountered the fiery resistance of those who felt Muslims must defend their claim, alumnus Islam Habib Khan replied, “Thousands of people and mostly Muslims have been killed at the time of the destruction of the Babri Masjid. I do not wish to visualise the reaction if a verdict is made specially in favour of Muslims. There will be another round of massacres. Personally, I do not think it will be worth it and then what would have we achieved?”<sup>68</sup> The Vice Chancellor and many of those who advocated that Muslims make clear that they would accept the verdict, no matter its outcome, raised the issue of “Aligarh’s tradition of communal harmony” to justify their willingness to forego contesting the verdict. The threat of violence by the majority was palpable, and the prevailing atmosphere on Aligarh’s campus was described as “an uneasy calm” as the date for the release of the verdict approached.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Rahat Abrar, "Appeal to Staff and Students for Communal Harmony," (Public Relations Office, Aligarh Muslim University, September 19, 2010).

<sup>67</sup> Anwar Khursheed, "Past Tense-Future Perfect: Appeal for Forgiveness and Reconciliation," (YahooGroups: AligarhNetwork; TheAligarhForum; VoiceofAligs; WorldofAligs Listservs, September 19, 2010). Comments used with permission.

<sup>68</sup> Islam Habib Khan, (YahooGroups: VoiceofAligs Listserv, September 26, 2010). Comments used with permission.

<sup>69</sup> "Aligarh Breathes Easy after Two Days of Anxiety," *The Asian Age Online* October 1, 2010.

There was also a contingent of voices among former Aligarhians arguing for Muslim solidarity in the face of Hindu tyranny, suggesting that Muslims must defend their claim to the territory. These voices mark the boundaries of an important rift within the Aligarh community. Some voices, particularly those who lived through the Indian partition, advocate docility and the benefits of communal harmony. Other voices, many coming from those who grew up in independent India, advocate for a more aggressively represented Muslim identity, particularly in the face of the perceived non-Muslim threat. Both groups however, recognize the threat to Muslim sovereignty in independent India. The value of protecting the Muslim community is common to both strategic responses. Some contributors to the AMUNetwork Listserv suggested that the destruction of the Babri Masjid was not an isolated event, but part of a larger plan to marginalize Muslims more fully. They argued that if Muslims relinquished their claim to the Babri Masjid, the Hindus would build a grand temple there and go on to police Muslim boundaries more closely. The anxiety that they expressed over a domino-effect on Muslim marginalization echoes some of the points that Ather Siddiqi outlined above. The concern to hold fast to “Muslim” territory is a way of marking Muslims’ legitimate presence in Indian public space. The anxiety of this scenario is that the construction of a grand Ram temple in Ayodhya would mark the symbolic foundation of an anti-Muslim Hindu state.<sup>70</sup>

Whereas older generations are plagued by the knowledge that demands for this kind of sovereignty over Indian space have dire consequences, including the violence that

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<sup>70</sup> Wajahat A. Khan Yousef Zai, (YahooGroups: VoiceofAligs Listserv, September 27, 2010). Comments used with permission.

characterized the Indian partition, the Babri Masjid destruction in 1992 and the Gujarat pogroms of 2002, the younger generations feel so circumscribed by the boundaries of their public personae, that they feel it necessary to aggressively defend themselves against encroachment on these boundaries. The continuity with earlier periods of pro-Muslim activism is clearly visible here. Famously, during the mosque destruction in 1992, Hindu nationalists raised the slogan “*Babar kisantan jao Pakistan!* (Children of Babur, go to Pakistan!)” This chant linked the entirety of Muslim civilization in the Indian subcontinent to the young state of Pakistan and reflected the deep-seated distrust of Muslim loyalty.<sup>71</sup> In the face of the perceived threat to Muslim autonomy, Aligarh students and young alumni have moved to resist it. But a senior Aligarhian, Islam Habib Khan (Engineering 1951) tried to temper the enthusiasm for a vigorous response with his experience,

If I know anything about human behaviour the reaction of the other party to the court case will be immediate and severe. Their agenda... will become firmer and not softer and you will always be in a state of clash rather than working towards a reconciliation. Wisdom tells us that the playing ground should be made softer rather than harder as the issues are many and difficult to negotiate.<sup>72</sup>

As one who arrived in Aligarh in the wake of partition, at a time when its student body was much depleted by partition’s migrations, and as one who likely experienced the tensions in Aligarh surrounding the 1951 riots, Islam Habib Khan recommends compromise, accommodation. Muslims will not be responsible for violence, he argues, they will be its victims.

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<sup>71</sup> Hasan, "Partition Narratives," 52.

<sup>72</sup> Islam Habib Khan, (YahooGroups: VoiceofAligs Listserv, September 27, 2010). Comments used with permission.

The verdict in the Babri Masjid case was finally released on September 30, 2010. The controversial verdict divided the disputed territory into three parcels, awarding two of them to two Hindu claimants, and one to the Sunni Waqf Board, the caretaker of the site prior to the mosque's destruction. There was discontent on many sides as a result of this "three-way partition" but it was generally hailed as one that would make an "attempt at resolution."<sup>73</sup> Many editorials contextualized the verdict by hailing it as an expression of "India's culture of religious pluralism;"<sup>74</sup> as evidence that "The Allahabad High Court itself seems to have vaguely recognised the imperative of communal harmony;"<sup>75</sup> and as "a compromise calculated to hold the religious peace."<sup>76</sup> The widespread Muslim discontent with the outcome of the verdict, which seemed to take into account matters of faith in addition to legal claims, settled down into a feeling of "sullen resignation to the inevitable."<sup>77</sup> As the Sunni Waqf Board vowed to appeal the decision to India's Supreme Court, and while Muslims expressed their disappointment to one another, no one took to the streets. This is a measure of India's secularism. One Indian Muslim commented to the Pakistani newspaper *Dawn*, "At least this is not the kind of a verdict that can justify any Muslim outrage... They'll settle for this deal."<sup>78</sup> Indian Muslims, as Ather Siddiqi also indicates, have settled for a place in Indian society entirely their own, but monitored and

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<sup>73</sup> Editorial, "Signal of Peace," *The Telegraph- Online Edition* October 1, 2010. In November, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad said that it would not allow the construction of a mosque on the site and announced plans to build a temple there. "International Religious Freedom Report- India," ed. Department of State (Washington, D.C.: July- December 2010), 19.

<sup>74</sup> Editorial, "Signal of Peace."

<sup>75</sup> Ramachandra Guha, "Life after Ayodhya," *The Hindustan Times- Online Edition* September 30, 2010.

<sup>76</sup> Editorial, "Intriguing Compromise Could Work," *The Hindu- Online Edition* October 1, 2010.

<sup>77</sup> — — —, "Aligarh Breathes Easy after Two Days of Anxiety," *The Asian Age Online* October 1, 2010.

<sup>78</sup> Nadeem F. Paracha, "Lessons from Ayodhya," *Dawn- Online Edition* October 1, 2010.



circumscribed by the non-Muslim public surrounding them. Undoubtedly there are alliances great and small, friends, neighbors and colleagues from both communities who recognize and even share the anxieties of Indian Muslims. Hindu and Muslim groups both had called for patience and restraint surrounding the Ayodhya verdict. It is telling, however, that the expectation of violence after the verdict was so widely anticipated that its absence became the heart of the story.<sup>79</sup>

Despite the complication of occasional communal violence, Ather Siddiqi and others maintain that Muslims do not face institutionalized discrimination. Constitutionally, of course, discrimination in employment is disallowed. However, the stories of discrimination, or perceived discrimination abound. Many narrators discount their importance, or challenge the basis for a discrimination claim. Ahmad Saeed argued, for instance, that Muslims, even when offered special consideration, failed to submit their applications or to compete for positions.<sup>80</sup> Still, one narrator told me, off the record, that in his job he overheard remarks by senior managers at his government job reluctant to give him a special project on the grounds that he was a “*karela*”—literally a bitter gourd—used here to mean inept, and troublesome: a Muslim. In the lower echelons of the labor economy, Ather Siddiqi argues, Muslims are a critical link in the interdependence of the labor economy, dominated by Muslims, and the industrial economy dominated by Hindus. The Hindus, he says, are “the providers;” any disruption in production results in

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<sup>79</sup> Editorial, "Aligarh Breathes Easy after Two Days of Anxiety."

<sup>80</sup> In his experience, he told me, even when the government “provided training arrangements for... scheduled caste and minority students who wanted to participate in these competitions... I found that there was no Muslim student. Scheduled caste students were there, but there were no Muslim students. Even with a free lunch they were not there!” Saeed, "Ahmad Saeed: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas October 10, 2009."

a disruption in sales which would hurt the industrialists and money-lenders. Therefore, they avoid it. Omar Khalidi, however, in his study *Indian Muslims Since Independence*, argues otherwise. Riots occur more frequently in “locations where the economic condition of the Muslims was seen as improving.”<sup>81</sup> Thus the tenuous balance that Siddiqi describes seems to hold up as long as Hindu “providers” and money-lenders maintain economic superiority; a challenge to this *status quo* has the potential to invite violent retribution.

Despite this, Ather Siddiqi argues that Muslim success is evidence of the “large-heartedness of the majority community.”<sup>82</sup> To prove this point on Hindu magnanimity, Siddiqi offers the example of his daughter, Taad, who, with her husband Adil, started a successful commercial bread bakery in New Delhi. Harvest Gold Foods India Pvt. grew 65-70 percent during its first four years, and by 2001 was selling nearly Rs. 40 crore, seven years after investing Rs. 1 crore (ten million) as startup cost.<sup>83</sup> Siddiqi used his daughter’s success in business as evidence that Muslims do not face discrimination in employment, though he earlier had indicated to me that Muslims tended to occupy the labor, rather than the creative or entrepreneurial classes. It remains a matter of pride for him that Indian Muslims have the capacity to succeed in independent India, and without the taint of corruption and greed that overshadows his perception of Pakistan where “there is a lot of corruption and the rich are super rich and want to get richer. Means are

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<sup>81</sup> Khalidi, *Indian Muslims since Independence*, 23.

<sup>82</sup> Siddiqi, "Professor Ather Siddiqi (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 11, 2009."

<sup>83</sup> Manjari Raman, "Harvest Gold: Key to a Well-Bread Campaign?," *Indian Express Internet Edition* February 23, 1998. Namita Bhandare, "Better Off Than Dad," *India Today International* February 19, 2001.

not important for them. They have no interest in nation-building or country-building or anything else. They are only interested in how can I get rich quickly by selling drugs, by smuggling, by doing this or by doing that.”<sup>84</sup> Siddiqi’s daughter demonstrates that opportunity is available for Muslims who are educated and willing to work hard, but she also represents an exception to the rules Khalidi outlines in his analysis of communal tension. Siddiqi, and other Aligarh Muslims turn to the exceptions to define the rules.

Both Zakiya and Ather Siddiqi suggest that the wealth in Pakistan is corrupt, deviant, and inconsistent with the values of India broadly, Indian Muslims more particularly, and Aligarh Muslims above all. They portray Muslim wealth in India as a marker of equal opportunity, and a sign of a tolerant and open society whereas in Pakistan, they represent wealth as ill-gotten. The Siddiqis’ perspective could probably be read in a number of different ways. What stands out to me is their bitterness towards Pakistan and everyone in it, to some extent including Ather Siddiqi’s own family.

Siddiqi’s anxiety about Pakistan has roots in his own disappointed aspirations to go to Pakistan. As a young man, looking up to his elder brothers, Muslim League sympathizers who migrated to Pakistan, Ather Siddiqi had his dreams thwarted as he remained subject to his father’s authority.<sup>85</sup> Having abided by his father’s injunction that he was too young to migrate to Pakistan, Siddiqi consistently refused later to migrate, even when his parents migrated in 1965. In December 1971, he traveled to Pakistan for his niece’s wedding, and was caught when India began bombing Karachi. As he tried to

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<sup>84</sup> Siddiqi, "Professor Ather Siddiqi (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 11, 2009."

<sup>85</sup> In contrast to several narrators who told me they migrated to Pakistan without consulting their fathers, many who stayed cite their father’s influence as a key factor in their decision to remain in India.

flee back to India, his plane was turned around mid-air and he returned to his sister's home to find her and his mother, on their prayer rugs. *"They were praying that our boy will get far away from us. What a paradox is that that the mother and sister would say, 'You go!'"*<sup>86</sup> The paradox of this moment encapsulates the tension he feels about his own family's relationship to Pakistan. Pakistan, for him, presents a problematic: the dream it represented, which he also held, has now complicated his existence in India, left him plagued by guilt, separated him from his own family, and forced him to place all hope for success in the lap of his daughter and the continued forbearance of Hindu society. These are complicated emotions, born of complicated experience. Partition no longer seems straightforward, momentary. Rather, it has taken nearly 60 years for Siddiqi to process his own choices and those of the people he loves. His daughter now holds the hope for the future, the evidence of the secular dream in India, while Pakistan lies corrupt and ruined, a dream deferred.

## **REDEMPTION**

Reflecting on the historiography and narratives of partition, Mushirul Hasan says he realized that the "preoccupation with pain and sorrow that resulted from partition has doubtlessly limited our understanding of many other crucial areas, including the political and civic fault-lines of religion, gender, caste and class that still run through our lives."<sup>87</sup> Even as we recognize, over a long period of time, the continuities present in partition

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<sup>86</sup> My translation from Urdu. Siddiqi, "Professor Ather Siddiqi (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 11, 2009."

<sup>87</sup> Hasan, "Partition Narratives," 49.

narratives, it is critical to recognize that all of the narrators whose stories are collected here have succeeded in finding some kind of redemption from the terrors of displacement, alienation and exclusion that characterized the early years after 1947. The efforts that narrators make to form continuous narratives across the rupture of partition can be measured by their ability to incorporate it, “come to terms with it” by recognizing its “present-tense-ness.”<sup>88</sup> This present-tense-ness emerged in every interview I conducted; as an interviewer I tried to be perpetually cognizant of the influence of the present. But it also became clear that the ability to engage with partition experience in the present-tense depended on a sense of redemption from the past. Many narrators in India referred to a sense of “guilt” for the outcomes of partition, but they also identified the individual or experience that freed them from this guilt’s crippling effect.

Many Aligarhians highlight the role of Zakir Husain in “saving” the university from certain demise after 1947 that would have resulted from the “natural” alienation that followed partition as a result of Aligarh’s controversial attachment to the demand for Pakistan. Husain’s power as a redemptive force was incorporated into other testaments of allegiance to the nationalist leadership as well. Iftikhar Alam Khan, retired professor of Museology at Aligarh and former director of Sir Syed Academy, spoke most explicitly about the impact of fear on his experience at AMU. Immediately after describing his fear of train travel and the threat of communal violence he told me (in a mix of English and Urdu):

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<sup>88</sup> Menon develops this terminology in her comment on Alok Bhalla’s interview with author Bhisham Sahni. “His interview moves back and forth in time past and time present to highlight the present-tense-ness of Partition for many Indians.” Ritu Menon, “Review of Pangs of Partition: The Human Dimension (Vol. 2),” *Seminar: Porous Bodies, Divided Selves*, no. 510 (February 2002).

Here in Aligarh, Zakir Sahib brought the changes... Rather I will say Zakir Sahib also because of Nehru and Maulana Azad. For Nehru I had unlimited—that is also because of this fear complex and guilty complex—I believed that Nehru was the only one who could save us. Without limit. He started that All India Youth Festival in 1954 probably. For this 150 universities were called... every university had started cultural activities. Here also there were cultural activities. And [the] first participation of Aligarh University's contingent was in 1956, I think. The drama team that we sent, I was the hero in that drama.<sup>89</sup>

His emphasis on the influence of Zakir Husain is common to many of the narratives. However, Iftikhar Alam Khan aligns himself more clearly with Prime Minister Nehru, the convocation speaker in Aligarh in 1948 at the moment when the University made a deliberate about-face towards nationalist ideology. Khan's attachment to Nehru comes largely from his support of youth (Iftikhar Alam Khan is one of the youngest informants, arriving at AMU's Minto Circle School 1949) and cultural activities. Also, Khan connects his attachment to Nehru with his "fear complex and guilty complex," subscribing to the nationalist ideology that the only way to overcome these anxieties was to participate fully in the secular endeavor "where there is equality of opportunity for all and where many variegated streams of thought and culture meet together to form a mighty river of progress and advancement for her people."<sup>90</sup> The Youth Festivals that Nehru organized brought together young people from many different regions, religions, and backgrounds from 150 different institutions. This microcosm of the secular, national state of which Nehru spoke in his convocation address in Aligarh appealed to Khan and though he told me "*that fear is still with me*" Nehru's deliberate efforts to bring people together made it possible for him to come to terms with the fear, and to move forward.

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<sup>89</sup> Khan, "Professor Iftikhar Alam Khan (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 6, 2009."

<sup>90</sup> Nehru, "Speech by the Hon'ble Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India, at the Annual Convocation of the Muslim University at Aligarh on 24th January, 1948."

As Iftikhar Alam Khan found redemption in nationalism, his brother Iqtidar and their comrade Irfan Habib, found redemption in the ideology of Communism. (Iftikhar Alam Khan described himself as a sort of incomplete Communist, who always maintained some allegiance to the establishment, for protection.) During the League period at Aligarh, the leftist Students' Federation provided an alternative ideological space. During the League period and immediately after partition, the leftist and Communist students were marginalized at the university; League documents, especially A.B.A. Haleem's letters to Mohammad Ali Jinnah, show a terrific anxiety about their influence despite that fact that the Communist Party officially supported Pakistan during this period.<sup>91</sup>

Iftikhar Alam Khan remembered the anti-Communist sentiment on the campus, that resulted in leftist students being "beaten up" in the Union and that "til 1952, there was a practice in the University that every year, before the Union elections took place, they would take out a procession. An Anti-Communist Procession. "Stalin, Hai Hai!" (laughing) "*Lamazhab log, hai Hai!*" (Irreligious people! Oh!)" Very strong Anti-Communist sentiment was there in the University."<sup>92</sup> After partition, however, the Communist influence grew on the campus. Irfan Habib remembered that in 1951 and 1953 the Students' Federation actually won the Union elections. While conflicting ideologies divided the institution for many years in a dispute between "Fundamentalists" and "Progressives"—Mohammad Amin told me that "Aligarh became a center also of the

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<sup>91</sup> A.B.A. Haleem was appointed Vice Chancellor of Karachi University after partition and is remembered for his particularly harsh crackdown on the activities of Leftists there.

<sup>92</sup> Khan, "Professor Iqtidar Alam Khan (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 31, 2009."

liberal school which helped in the understanding of Medieval India. Except when, later on, it goes up completely Red... and [became] ideologically tainted”<sup>93</sup>—it represented one change from the pre-1947 period that validated the perspectives of those who had not subscribed to Muslim League ideology.

Iqtidar Alam Khan had briefly participated with the pro-Pakistan movement, and was a devout Muslim—“from roughly ’44 onwards up till about ’50, I was an intensely religious person... [but I shouldn’t] use this word ‘intensely religious’ because I didn’t know anything about religion. I was a believing person. That’s all.”<sup>94</sup>—but in retrospect he sees these allegiances as being largely naïve. Similarly, when he discovered his attraction to Communism, he said, “I was still having those religious attitudes which I had earlier... I started attending those Students’ Federation meetings; there I met Professor Irfan Habib also... he had his own commitment to Marxism. He was a much more educated person than myself at that time also.”<sup>95</sup> Though Iqtidar Alam (like his brother) remembers his commitment as poorly informed, in 1951, in protest of a visit by then U.P Governor Pandit Govind Vallabh Pant, he was arrested.<sup>96</sup> During his two months in Aligarh and Agra prisons, he was converted to Communism. Many Communist activists were in jail—this was in the wake of the “Ranadive Period”<sup>97</sup> when the party actively encouraged revolution and the central government cracked down on their

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<sup>93</sup> Amin, "Professor Mohammad Amin: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas November 5, 2009."

<sup>94</sup> Khan, "Professor Iqtidar Alam Khan (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 31, 2009."

<sup>95</sup> Iqtidar Alam’s father had been arrested in 1949 for his involvement in a “*kisan satyagraha* from a Communist platform” though he was a member of the Muslim League. Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Zahida Zaidi was also arrested during the same protest. Zaidi, "Professor Zahida Zaidi (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas November 20, 2009."

<sup>97</sup> B.T. Ranadive was elected as General Secretary of the Communist Party of India in 1948 and served until 1950, during which time the party was actively encouraging revolutionary activities.



activities—and the jail was an incubator for young activists. Iqtidar Alam told me that unlike his earlier commitments which had been born of circumstance, his experience in the jail drew him closer to the ideology. As he described the experience to me, “I became a Communist party member inside jail. When I was in Agra prison, they used to hold their meetings, cell meetings. I said, ‘Why are you keeping me out? I came to jail because of you and now I am quite convinced. Everything is acceptable to me. So make me a member.’”<sup>98</sup> Once he became a member and fully separated himself from the challenging politics of the League period, Khan found absolution for his “guilty conscience” and naïve (if short-lived) commitments to religious devotion and Pakistan. Both Iqtidar Alam Khan and Irfan Habib have maintained their involvement with the Communist Party.

Some narrators find redemption in the vindication of the ideology to which they had subscribed throughout. In India, this stance is best exemplified by Riazur Rahman Sherwani, the son of Muslim Leaguer Obaidur Rahman Khan Sherwani, and who defied his family and maintained an allegiance to Congress nationalism throughout the League period at Aligarh. In 2008 he told me, “I did not agree with the ideology of the Muslim League. I was against the partition of the country. I thought that partition was harmful to the country as well as to the Muslims because country, if it was divided, it will lose its power, it will lose its resources.”<sup>99</sup> Sherwani suggests that he had predicted the decline of Muslims in independent India, and though he defends their position—in part by

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<sup>98</sup> Khan, "Professor Iqtidar Alam Khan (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 31, 2009."

<sup>99</sup> Sherwani, "Riazur Rahman Sherwani: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas, July 6, 2008."

suggesting that the implication that they were responsible for dividing the country is a fallacy—he is vindicated by having, from the outset, maintained his allegiance to Congress and its ideals, despite its unpopularity in AMU. Pakistanis, similarly, engage a narrative of justification for their adherence to Muslim League ideology. This narrative is based on the presence of Muslim suffering. The suffering of Indian Muslims before and after partition justifies the creation of Pakistan despite the suffering of Muslims during partition. Indeed, many narrators deployed ideas about the suffering of Muslims in India to suggest that even today, the legitimacy of Pakistan is self-evident.

The East Bengali narrators, who fully subscribed to the Pakistan ideal based on their experience (or the perception) of discrimination by Hindus found a home in Aligarh prior to 1947. Yet, this home was never free of discrimination or a taint of exclusion. In matters of food and language especially, Bengalis felt “other” at Aligarh despite the powerful connection provided by the Islamic idiom. As Mohiuddin Khan put it, “We have always a difference, because we were non-Urdu-speaking people... So this difference was there between the students.”<sup>100</sup> These students supported the independence movement fully, Habibur Rahman even argued that the Bengali students were especially “shrewd,” but they were disillusioned by their experience in Pakistan. None imagined breaking away from Pakistan, but as the movement for Bangladesh gathered momentum, they supported it. The rupture in continuity between East and West Pakistan left these individuals holding fast to an idea that no longer seemed relevant.

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<sup>100</sup> Khan, "Mohiuddin Khan: Personal Communication with Amber Abbas April 6, 2010."

Their attachment to the liberation of Bangladesh provided a redeeming narrative, a re-establishment of the boundaries of belonging.

This chapter has shown the persistence of the suspicion of Muslim loyalty that has affected Muslims in India and Aligarhians specifically. Since 1948, however, the institution itself has deliberately allied with the secular nationalist stream in Indian politics and, in fact, Muslim intellectuals have worked to prove that those Muslims who remained in India have chosen the rights and responsibilities of Indian citizenship. The assumption of disloyalty, in any case, was founded on faulty assumptions about the motives of Aligarh's students during the Pakistan movement and distrust of its relationship with Pakistan after 1947. The question of belonging therefore continues to vex the issue of citizenship for Muslims and leaves them exposed to violence. The creation and ongoing presence of Pakistan, as Pandey writes, confirmed political "difference," thus fixing the notion of the "Muslim minority"<sup>101</sup> in India.

Indian Muslim narrators who participated here have confronted the notion of minority by seeking redemption in other sources of legitimacy, other ideologies, acceptable individuals or narratives of tolerance that serve as a protective boundary around the community. When Aligarh the institution lost its power to endow its boys with the prestige of belonging, narrators have invested in other protective institutions.

Many of the narrators who remained in India, who may have had some attachment to the League prior to 1947, point to the current devastation in Pakistan to justify their

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<sup>101</sup> Pandey, "Can a Muslim Be an Indian?," 610.

satisfaction in their choice to remain Indians. This suggests that they see their own experience in the context of partition. Further, it pushes us to examine the situation in Pakistan, to test the promises that the League made, and that many of Aligarh's former students pursued. Critically, we must include in this study an examination of East Pakistan and the independence of Bangladesh. The conflict that emerged between West and East Pakistan represents the critical challenge to the Two Nation Theory upon the strength of which the creation of Pakistan was justified. It seems insufficient to accept the theoretical challenge without an understanding of the human experience of this challenge, particularly since it is driven by many critical claims to an alternative nationalism, one that was rejected by the West Pakistan government. How did this challenge affect people's perception of Pakistan, its role, and theirs? How do those Aligarhians who fought for Pakistan experience it now?

## Chapter 6

### **The Muslim Question After Partition: Pakistan and Bangladesh**

For Muslims throughout British India, partition represented a profound national trauma, an extraordinary disruption of “the institutional underpinnings of the social order.”<sup>1</sup> This institutional disruption “was not just an event but a trigger for a series of reverberations, the tremors of which can still be felt in the region.”<sup>2</sup> In the midst of this institutional disruption, however, individuals have had to find ways of carrying on, to make a place for themselves under drastically changed circumstances. As they have sought to understand their present, they engage in a process of reinterpreting their pasts to create a sense of continuity.

For instance, despite the shared heritage of the narrators included in this study, their identities are often formed in opposition. In Pakistan today, India is the spectral Other, the site of oppression of Muslims even as it is also the home of many Muslim religious and cultural sites. Though the idea of Pakistan that captured the imaginations of Aligarh students during the 1940s did not anticipate the severing of ties between India and Pakistan, rather foreseeing a Muslim polity within India, 1947 saw the establishment of state borders and the foundation of oppositional narratives between the two states. Pakistanis buttress their state’s accomplishments by describing the extent of Pakistan’s

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur G. Neal, *National Trauma and Collective Memory: Major Events in the American Century* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), xi.

<sup>2</sup> Tan and Kudaisya, *The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia*, 8.

disadvantage relative to India in 1947, when Pakistan lacked much infrastructure for government or industry.<sup>3</sup> The oppositional aspect of this narrative is part of the triumphal story of the establishment of the nation-state as the culmination of the Pakistan movement, but does not fully occlude awareness of the state's failures and the ongoing challenges it must confront. For the group of Pakistani narrators who shared their stories with me, recounting their personal relationship to Muslim nationalism meant developing a narrative in which they could emphasize their connection to institutions in India, insofar as those institutions incubated the Muslim nationalism that triumphed in Pakistan. This link to the sites of Muslim nationalism's origins distinguishes these stories from others that might be told about the significance of Pakistan.<sup>4</sup> It also provides a link between the stories told by former Aligarhians in both Pakistan and Bangladesh. Both groups have used national narratives to redefine their memories of partition in officially acceptable ways, but by localizing their memories in the institution of the Aligarh Muslim University, they have not fully allowed those national narratives to redefine their own stories.

These narrators' stories show how memories serve as a link between the past and the present to create a continuous narrative through Partition, that joins the intellectual and cultural history of Muslims in India with the nation-state of Pakistan. These narrators, all men old enough to remember the events of 1947,<sup>5</sup> are Aligarh educated

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<sup>3</sup> In 1950 only 23 percent of Pakistan's labor force was employed in the non-agricultural sector and industry contributed only 5.8 percent of the Gross National Product. "Some Basic Data of the Economy of Pakistan," (Lahore: Pakistan Administration Staff College, 1965), 5, 13.

<sup>4</sup> For a broader assessment of partition stories from those not originating in Aligarh, see Abbas, "Thinking through Partition: Finishing the Narrative (Unpublished Master's Thesis)."

<sup>5</sup> The single exception is Professor Akhtaruzzaman of Dhaka University, who studied in Aligarh in the early 1990s. He is included here because I was able to interview so few Aligarhians in Bangladesh and

professionals. They migrated to Pakistan in the wake of the partition and have built their lives there. They are representative of that class of Muslims that Sir Sayyid sought to reach; their fathers were, overwhelmingly, employed as servants to the Raj and many of those fathers were also graduates of Aligarh who had been raised on Sir Sayyid's British loyalism and spirit of Muslim revival.

With independence, the Muslim identity touted by the Muslim League ceased to be a minority category in the territories of Pakistan even as it defined a permanent minority in India. In the decades since, Sunni Islam has emerged as the dominant orthodoxy in Pakistan through the systematic marginalization of other groups including Ahmedis, Shias, Sufis and Bengalis. Similar forces of nation-making are at work in all of the post-partition states that sometimes challenge and sometimes reify the narratives of belonging that defined their boundaries.

#### **ALIGARH AND PAKISTAN**

From its inception, the educational institution at Aligarh had provided opportunities primarily for the Urdu-speaking elite of North India. All were welcome there, however, and it did attract well-off Muslim students from throughout the subcontinent. In fact, as several Bengali narrators told me, they became aware of Aligarh because they knew that several local, respected lawyers were its products. However, as Benedict Anderson's work on "imagined" national communities has shown, language is a

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because the themes of his narrative resonate with those from former students who studied in AMU fifty years earlier.

powerful organizational tool for the community, and is particularly powerful amongst the educated elite.<sup>6</sup> Language provides an important site for national solidarity among the bourgeoisie, in this case, the North Indian *ashraf*. The Pakistan demand was deeply rooted in the priorities of the North Indian service elite, that particular class who had the most to lose by the establishment of Indian democracy.

Taking Sir Sayyid's passion for the perpetuation of the Urdu language as a starting point, his rhetoric of an all-India Muslim identity is easily unraveled. The national identity of which Aligarh University has been so famously construed to be the home, was rooted explicitly in the values of a narrow segment of Muslim society: the Urdu-speaking, educated or landed class. Many of the narrators who contributed here belong to that class, and those from Bengal shared in its cultural similarities, but were distinguished by their lack of knowledge of Urdu.

When Jinnah spoke of the two "nations" of India having different languages, he referred to the Hindi-Urdu controversy that erupted in the late nineteenth-century when Urdu's status began to decline and Hindi gained currency as a lingua franca. Hindi was given equal status with Urdu as an official language of UP in 1900, only two years after Sir Sayyid's death. In addition to creating an intimate link between the Muslim demand for political autonomy and the language of Urdu, the tension over the relationship

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<sup>6</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), 74 and 115.



between language and power accentuated the growing animosity between Muslim and Hindu political organizations.

After the founding of Pakistan, however, a new language conflict emerged. In 1948, Mohammad Ali Jinnah traveled to Pakistan's East Wing and gave a speech in Dhaka University in which he proclaimed that "the State Language of Pakistan is going to be Urdu and no other language."<sup>7</sup> This attachment to Urdu, despite the fact that 52 percent of Pakistan's population spoke Bengali, and far fewer than half were Urdu speakers, betrays an attachment to the values of the *ashraf* that could no longer be made broadly applicable as it had been in the enclosed environment of the university. Aligarh's narrative was assimilationist and it obscured the individual priorities of different groups.

During the 1940s, when these values were reappropriated by the Pakistan movement, Aligarh boys took their role as Jinnah's "arsenal of Muslim India" seriously and now in Pakistan, speak passionately about the solidarity of Muslims, the inevitability of the partition and the establishment of the Pakistani state. Allegiance to Aligarh has facilitated a powerful collective identity and source of memory for those now displaced from it in Pakistan. Maurice Halbwachs, in his work *On Collective Memory* describes how our memories help us to perpetuate identity.<sup>8</sup> The Pakistani narrators' identity is based on their centrality in a teleological narrative of statehood. Yet, the Bengali narrators present a challenge to that teleology, revealing different memories both of Aligarh and of their time as Pakistanis.

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<sup>7</sup> Ahmad, ed., *Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah*, 490.

<sup>8</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. and ed. by Lewis A. Coser (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 52-53.

When speaking of Aligarh, many narrators describe a utopian world in which there was no sectarian or communal strife. Aligarh was concerned with taking in boys from many backgrounds, but the “Aligarh product” adhered to certain ideals of comportment and behavior.

Even as these narrators hearken back to the utopian vision of unity, their memories of their experiences at Aligarh betray the seeds of the tension. Bengali narrators remember a fundamental sense of not fully belonging amongst the largely Urdu-speaking Aligarh students. Habibur Rahman emphasized that, at Aligarh “they don’t believe in parochialism as well as localism. They would make it an international attitude, international brotherhood.”<sup>9</sup> However, every Bengali narrator described building friendships in Aligarh primarily with other Bengali students, as Salahuddin Chowdhury said, “when I went there, I was received by some people from Bangladesh and given a room.”<sup>10</sup> His sense of belonging at Aligarh was determined by the initial support he found among those who also “belonged” to his region.<sup>11</sup> Habibur Rahman belonged to the student group known as the “Eastern Association” that included students from Bengal and Assam.<sup>12</sup> Other narrators noted that “we were more friendly with the Southern Indian students and to some extent with Pathan students,” in other words, with other non-Urdu speakers. This statement highlights the fault-lines that emerged in the Aligarh student body that other former students have described in largely homogenizing ways—

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<sup>9</sup> Rahman, "Habib Ur Rahman: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas February 20, 2010."

<sup>10</sup> Chowdhury, "Salahuddin Chowdhury: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas April 10, 2010."

<sup>11</sup> Bangladesh, of course, did not exist then, so Chowdhury’s statement betrays an explicit “reading back” of national history. It makes sense that he would associate the solidarity of Bengalis at Aligarh with Bangladesh, especially if he had felt most at home among other Bengalis in Aligarh itself. *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Rahman, "Habib Ur Rahman: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas February 20, 2010."

emphasizing the invisibility of difference, or the university's efforts to create an "international brotherhood." As innocuous as it may seem at the university, the fault lines of language and region proved to be fundamental to the sense of difference between East and West Pakistan that became controversial shortly after partition and that led to violence as early as 1952.

While few of the Bangladeshi narrators would explicitly admit that they "did not belong" they indicated a sense of alienation and recounted the methods they employed to build community, even if on the fringes of the Aligarh mainstream. Where many students describe the "café culture" of students gathering for cheap snacks and long conversations in the cafés of Shamshad Market or even right on the campus, Mohiuddin described the effort to find a familiar culinary experience there. "Of course, we used go to the cafes. You see, in Bangladesh, we get *shingara*, we call it *shingara*—it is vegetable inside and it is rolled in a triangular shape. So somehow we used to get in Aligarh *namakpara* and potato chip, so we mixed together that and said, 'This is the taste of our *shingara*.'"<sup>13</sup> This episode illustrates the effort that Bengali students had to exert to fit into Aligarh's largely North Indian brotherhood. There is a sense that, more than other students, these students sought ways to retain their own culture, while engaging with that of Aligarh's.

In discussions about food the sense of displacement from home is most acute. Every narrator described the difficulty of eating a North Indian bread-heavy diet when they were accustomed to rice and fish. As minor as this may sound, the difficulty of feeding his family motivated Akhtaruzzaman to suggest his wife return to Dhaka early,

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<sup>13</sup> Khan, "Mohiuddin Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas March 28, 2010."

before he finished his degree.<sup>14</sup> And during the 1940s, several students described enlisting the hostel servants and their wives in preparing dishes that might convey a familiar taste, though of course, “on Monday noon, the hostels served a little biryani, so that was one of our very fond item, at least it is rice!”<sup>15</sup> Thus, while Aligarh was an environment that welcomed India’s diversity—as Jinnah had said, “This is Muslim India!”—it was not always a natural fit.

Though tolerance was an ideal of the student body, the memories of Pakistani narrators collapse difference. This triumphal narrative that denies any heterogeneity within the Muslim community is an essential component of their sense of citizenship. In this conception: Muslims were oppressed, Muslims unified and resisted injustice by mobilizing the progressive values of the Muslim elite and established a state in which those values could be safe and where their status would not be threatened. That the Pakistani state has not fulfilled its role in this image causes some anxiety for the Pakistani narrators, but this anxiety was acute for those from Bengal.

All agree that the problem with the Pakistani state was that it had rejected the values on which Muslim identity in Aligarh was based. However, the critique of the state, as might be expected, varies in each of Pakistan’s former wings. During the period of reform and regeneration from 1857- 1947, when the leaders of the Muslim community sought to unify it in opposition to British and Hindu domination, the needs and values of the elite were broadly interpreted and portrayed as the values of the community as a

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<sup>14</sup> Akhtaruzzaman, "Mohammad Akhtaruzzaman: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas March 10, 2010."

<sup>15</sup> Khan, "Mohiuddin Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas March 28, 2010."

whole. Within the religiously defined nation-state, however, communities cohered around different issues, those that were overwritten by the demand for statehood: class, sect, provincial and linguistic identity. The institutions that were established to service North India's Urdu-speaking elite, even those— like Urdu— that have survived in some form the disruption of Partition, proved manifestly insufficient to serve this ultimately diverse community.

In Pakistan, former Aligarians like General Wajahat, lament these emerging fractures.

I am a firm believer that it is the commitment to the country that is the main thing. Everything else is secondary. That is our main problem right now. It wasn't, in our first few years after formation of Pakistan. The spirit of Pakistan at the time of its establishment was quite different from what it is now. At that time we were only concerned with doing our best, hard work, get down to building the country, establishing the country, and getting the country moving forward. We were not concerned with anything else. It's only afterwards when these feelings of provincialism or ethnicity started entering. That has eaten up the country and has done a lot of damage, it is doing a lot of damage. That is our major problem.<sup>16</sup>

Aligarians in Pakistan do not recognize more localized identity markers and insist on setting themselves up as the standard of Muslim identity that developed in a straightforward and uncomplicated way at Aligarh and led to the establishment of the Pakistani state. In other words, the image of Muslim identity that survives in their collective memory, one that collapses difference, is constantly in conflict with the reality of Pakistani identity, which is much more aggressively diverse.

For the Bangladeshi narrators, the Pakistani state's unwillingness or inability to recognize and accommodate this diversity is at the heart of their grievance. In reflecting on the outcomes of the 1947 partition and their own later involvement in the movement

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<sup>16</sup> Wajahat Husain, "Major General Wajahat Husain (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 29, 2005," (Lahore: June 29, 2005).

for the independence of Bangladesh, several of these narrators demonstrate that they, too, believed in an ideal of unity. They emphasized their support for an idea of Federation, with a particular emphasis on the Pakistan Resolution of 1940. The Pakistan Resolution was originally fronted by Bengali Muslim League leader, Fazlul Haq, known as *Sher-e-Bangla*, or the Lion of Bengal, at the 1940 League session in Lahore.<sup>17</sup> It called for the grouping of “the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority” into zones “to constitute ‘Independent States.’” As Rounaq Jahan has noted, many Bengali Muslim League leaders emphasized the plural “states” though it was later amended to resolve the ambiguity of the plural.<sup>18</sup> When Bangladeshi narrators evoked the Resolution, they referred to this verbiage as the impulse to federation. This insistence on a return to the origins of the idea of Pakistan, with an emphasis on the possibility for federation is unique among the narratives I collected. These narrators, despite having twice fought for independence, continue to believe that the best outcome for the subcontinent in 1947, 1971 and today would be a collection of federated states rather than independent ones.

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<sup>17</sup> M.A. Rashid described the 1938 League session when Fazlul Haq was given this nickname. “He spoke in his speech ‘If Hindus did something wrong with the Muslims of UP we will take revenge in Bengal where we have the same average of Hindus and Muslims as in UP. Muslims are here in majority, and Hindus were in majority in Lucknow.’ On that point, the public of Lucknow uttered, ‘*Sher-e-Bengal Zindabad! (Long Live the Lion of Bengal!) Sher-e-Bengal Zindabad!*’ on this point. Since then, he became *Sher-e-Bangla*. And he is here also famous in this name, *Sher-e-Bangla*, *Sher-e-Bangla*. People know him as *Sher-e-Bangla* not as AK Fazlul Haq.” Mohammad Abdul Rashid, “M.A. Rashid: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas March 29, 2010,” (Dhaka: March 29, 2010). M.A. Rashid hails from Lucknow in North India; he was born in 1921. After passing of Aligarh in 1943, he settled in Calcutta, having taken a job with M.M. Ispahani, Ltd. He fled to Dhaka in East Pakistan in 1950 during communal riots in Calcutta. In the early 1950s he started his own business trading in jute. In 1954 he joined the East Pakistan Stock Exchange. Today he remains a Director of the Stock Exchange and lives in Dhaka.

<sup>18</sup> Rounaq Jahan, *Pakistan: Failure in National Integration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 22.

Some narrators maintain some allegiance to the solutions posed by the 1946 Cabinet Mission plan, in which the British Government suggested a confederation of groups that would unite Muslim states in the West and Muslim states in the East. Hindu states would form a third group. In Pakistan, the Cabinet Mission plan, and Jinnah's initial acceptance of it, is used as a critical component in the narrative that "blames" Nehru and Patel, and by extension, the Indian National Congress, for the outcomes of the partition.<sup>19</sup> As Wajahat Husain put it,

There is no doubt about it, and now more than ever it has come out quite clearly that the responsibility for Partition lays upon Mr. Nehru and Mr. Patel. On the Congress... Responsibility for the Partition—undoubtedly Pakistan was the main slogan and we wanted it—but the Muslim League had accepted the Cabinet Plan, and [was] going along and everybody thought it would work out alright. It was the Congress. Having agreed, they went back on their word and then there was no other alternative.<sup>20</sup>

There is a pervasive slippage here between the narrative of triumph, of "liberation," and the narrative of the oppressed minority that demands state protection and accommodation. This slippage illuminates a theme that has run throughout this argument, that if partition was initially designed as an answer to the "Muslim Question" it did little to "solve" it, but rather spawned a variety of persistent Muslim and minority questions

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<sup>19</sup> Several narrators, on all sides of the borders, were sympathetic to the Cabinet Mission plan and blamed Congress intransigence for its failure. IQ (Anonymized) argued "I think there was a glimpse of lightning when the Cabinet Mission was brought in... And Quaid-e-Azam almost agreed to it. *Ke* 'Okay, where the Muslims are in the majority we'll form the government, where the Hindus are in the majority, they will form the government. There will be a few subjects which will be centered for both. So Quaid-e-Azam almost agreed... But the Congress they did not agree. Because they wanted to have overall supremacy. See that is where, that was a glimpse of where things could have settled down, and been sorted out." IQ, "IQ (Anonymized): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 26, 2010," (Karachi: May 26, 2010). Major General Ghulam Umar (Ret'd) said, "Up til 1946 this Mr. Jinnah was trying to find some understanding and when that understanding was no more possible, then it became obvious that you have to part company and that was how Pakistan came into being." Umar, "Major General Ghulam Umar (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas August 8, 2006." Javid Iqbal, son of renown poet Mohammad Iqbal added, "Jinnah agreed with the Cabinet Mission plan... Jinnah conceded. But Nehru under the influence of Patel refused to accept it. So actually Pakistan was created by the Congress. By the Hindu obstinacy!" Iqbal, "Justice Javid Iqbal: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 13, 2006."

<sup>20</sup> Husain, "Major General Wajahat Husain (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 13, 2005."

that continue to find expression as evidence of the ongoing nature of India's partition. Despite the powerful rhetoric of liberation that the state of Bangladesh employs to describe its separation from West Pakistan, in the minds of those Aligarhians who fought for the independence of Pakistan first, complete "liberation" may not have been the ideal outcome. Rather, reconciliation with the original idea of Pakistan, as expressed in the Lahore Resolution, and as embodied in their work as students for Pakistan, remains a powerful counterbalance to the standard narrative of "liberation" from West Pakistan.

The Bangladeshis here use the Lahore Resolution and the Cabinet Mission Plan as components in a developing narrative in favor of federation. Habibur Rahman, (describing cooperation between Pakistan and Iran over oil resources), used the phrase, "mutual cooperation is necessary,"<sup>21</sup> which, in the context of Pakistani relations between 1947-1971, sums up the Bangladeshi reaction. It is the absence of a spirit of cooperation in the West Pakistan- East Pakistan relationship that troubles these narrators. Since 1940 they had invested their emotions in an expectation of federation that was further encouraged by the near-acceptance of the Cabinet Mission plan in 1946. In committing to Pakistan in 1947, they expected a federal system, one where some portfolios would be controlled at the center, but as Habibur Rahman described, "If there is a confederation, yes, obviously the federal government can restrict many things, but there is still some social development. Local development."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Rahman, "Habib Ur Rahman: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas February 20, 2010."

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.



Even the Awami League and its leader, Mujibur Rahman, professed an allegiance to the terms of the Pakistan Resolution in Rahman's 1966 "Six Points Programme." The first point demanded that "The Constitution should provide for a Federation of Pakistan in its true sense on the basis of 1940 Lahore Resolution, and parliamentary form of government with supremacy of legislature elected on the basis of universal adult franchise."<sup>23</sup> That the Lahore Resolution makes an appearance both in Sheikh Mujib's Six Points and in the memories of those who supported both Pakistan and Bangladesh suggests an important continuity between the 1947 partition and 1971. This coincidence conveys a sense of authenticity that several of these narrators have sought to project: that Bengalis were the true Pakistanis, that they remained true to the founder's ideals, ideals that were corrupted in Pakistan. Without federation, and without even a sense of equanimity with the Pakistani system, in the absence of concerted "local development" these narrators turned away from Pakistan, disappointed.

What becomes clear here is that both Bangladeshi and Pakistani narrators look to the origins of the Pakistan Movement for a sense of clarity about the meaning of Pakistan, but they have derived different meanings from its rhetoric. Both groups emphasize a kind of unity, but the Pakistanis suggest a homogenized unity, one that obscures the unique differences between individuals; the Bangladeshi narrators tout a vision of unity that recognizes difference and creates space for it, even while acknowledging a broader unity that could draw states together based on shared priorities.

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<sup>23</sup> "Six-Point Programme of Sheikh Mujib Ur Rahman," in *Banglapedia: National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh*.

Both of these visions for South Asia are rooted in notions of solidarity, the kind that were fostered at Aligarh University, but they also reflect the variety of experience that students lived there. Bengali students found commonality among the students whose language or dress or region of origin placed them outside of the mainstream. The students who represented the Urdu-speaking majority, however, subscribed to an identity that created little space for recognizing these other groups, assuming rather, that by their presence at Aligarh, they would be assimilated into an already familiar mold. These differences in outlook that emerge from different sides of the borders shed light on the problems of belonging in Pakistan, and also how deeply rooted these narrators' experience was in those years when they were fighting together for freedom.

#### **THE CASE OF PAKISTAN**

Dedicated observers of the scene in Pakistan have been aware of the problem of sectarianism and discrimination against minorities for some time and have recognized the challenges minorities face in finding space within a hegemonic and homogenizing Muslim national identity. In the months before the partition, anxiety developed about the place of minorities in both the Indian and Pakistani states. Jinnah addressed this concern repeatedly with assurances that minorities would be fully privileged citizens of the Pakistani state with full religious freedom.<sup>24</sup> His most famous declaration came in his

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<sup>24</sup> Mohammad Ali Jinnah, "Sacred Duty of Muslims to Protect Minorities," in *Quaid-I-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah (Speeches, Statements, Writings, Letters, Etc.)*, ed. Muhammad Haneef Shahid (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1976), 53. See also — — —, "Protection for Minorities in Pakistan," in *Quaid-I-Azam*

August 11, 1947 speech to Pakistan's Constituent Assembly. He addressed the nation with the immortal, and oft-cited words "You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place or worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed..." Despite these, Pakistan's minorities have faced an uphill battle for inclusion.

In 2010-11, in addition, even casual observers of international affairs have been drawn into the story of Pakistan's minorities by highly publicized cases involving the Blasphemy Laws.<sup>25</sup> The assassination of Punjab Governor Salman Taseer by one of his own security personnel in early 2011 because he stood up for the abolition of blasphemy laws that disproportionately target minorities, especially Christians, brought the issue of Pakistan's non-Muslim minorities to the fore in a complex and quickly changing political and religious conflict.<sup>26</sup> These events signal a shoring up of majority identity—increasingly defined as Sunni Muslim—against any others who might make a claim to legitimate belonging. Despite Jinnah's promises of inclusivity, Pakistan's minorities are well aware of the history of this challenge, even if the rest of world has been ignorant of

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*Muhammad Ali Jinnah (Speeches, Statements, Writings, Letters, Etc.)*, ed. Muhammad Haneef Shahid (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1976), 84.

<sup>25</sup> Jane Perlez, "Pakistani Sentenced to Death May Get a Pardon," *The New York Times* November 22, 2010. Dean Nelson, "Blog Shahbaz Bhatti Killing: What Hope Now for Pakistan's Christians?," *The Telegraph* March 2, 2011. Though the Blasphemy Laws have been on the books since the British period, Zia ul-Haq was responsible for refining the language and increasing the penalties. The penalty for defaming the Prophet is death. Theodore Gabriel, "The Blasphemy Law and Its Impact on the Christian Community," in *Christian Citizens in an Islamic State: The Pakistan Experience* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2007), 60.

<sup>26</sup> Salman Masood and Carlotta Gill, "Killing of Governor Deepens Crisis in Pakistan," *The New York Times* January 4, 2011. Ed Husain, "Explaining the Salman Taseer Murder," in *Expert Brief* (Council on Foreign Relations, January 7, 2011).

it, content to believe the official myth of Pakistani identity: that it is all Muslim.<sup>27</sup> The ostensibly “Muslim” identity of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan has been accepted as homogenous and undifferentiated. While scholars have worked to expose the diversity of the Muslim population of Pakistan and India, this image has not been resilient in the public sphere, particularly in the United States where the notion of Muslim “diversity” is poorly understood.<sup>28</sup>

As they speak about their own position, minorities frequently refer to the plight of other minority communities, sometimes expressing solidarity with them, and refer to the fact that Pakistan’s minorities anticipated the protection of the majority Muslims by virtue of the fact that Indian Muslims had an experience of minority identity in India, and would therefore be sympathetic. However, as research on trauma has shown, and I think the case of partition exemplifies well, one of the effects of trauma is “you can’t then see what you are capable of doing. You are always repeating a situation in which you are threatened and potentially destroyed.”<sup>29</sup> The process of identity formation that pits majority identity against minority threat is visible in all three post-partition South Asian states. The repetition of the trauma of threat is exemplified by repeated attempts to define

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<sup>27</sup> Rob Crilly, "Pakistan's Religious Divide on Display," *The Telegraph* January 9, 2011.

<sup>28</sup> Barbara Daly Metcalf, *Islamic Contestations: Essays on Muslims in India and Pakistan* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004). — — —, ed., *Islam in South Asia in Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009). Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty*. Many more works by Richard Eaton, Akbar Hyder, Simony Digby, Peter Hardy, David Gilmartin, Annemarie Schimmel, etc. focusing on Sufis, Shi’as and others might be included here.

<sup>29</sup> Jacqueline Rose, "Nation as Trauma, Zionism as Question: Jacqueline Rose Interviewed," ed. Rosemary Bechler (OpenDemocracy.net August 17, 2005). Rose is responding to the tension between the state of Israel and the potential threat of the Palestinians. She argues that Israel no longer has any concrete justification for feeling threatened as it possesses one of the most powerful militaries worldwide. Still, trauma is the foundation of its national identity and must be repeatedly enacted to fortify that identity.

the boundaries of the majority by pushing the minorities outside of it. The critique of Pakistani Muslim treatment of minorities that suggests that “the Muslims would remember the problems faced as a minority and would not perpetuate the same fate for other minorities” is confronted by the reality that “it turned out to be the opposite.”<sup>30</sup> The repetition of trauma, suggests Jacqueline Rose in the context of Israel, is the result of the “distressing overlap between the need to feel safe as a nation and the need to believe in yourself”<sup>31</sup> and is the “the most historically attested response to trauma.”<sup>32</sup> Thus, despite the good intentions of the founders of both India and Pakistan: Jinnah’s protestations of the intimacy in relationship between minorities and the state in Pakistan, and Nehru’s determination that the essential quality of the Indian state was its composite identity in which distinctions between majority and minority communities had no meaning in the eyes of the state, a variety of other identities have become important in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. These identity politics, worked out in an environment of mutual potential threat, sometimes called the “hostage nation theory” did little to create an environment of equal opportunity for minorities in either Pakistan or India. The persistence of identitarian politicking that marks citizens in relationship to one another rather than by their relationship to the state has challenged the founding narratives of all three post- partition states.

Perhaps the most potent case of religious discrimination against citizens who fell

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<sup>30</sup> Interview with Cecil Chaudhry, Rawalpindi, in Salim, ed., *Reconstructing History: Memories, Migrants, and Minorities*, 162.

<sup>31</sup> Rose, "Nation as Trauma, Zionism as Question: Jacqueline Rose Interviewed."

<sup>32</sup> Jacqueline Rose, "Response to Edward Said," in *Freud and the Non-European* (London; New York: Verso in Association with the Freud Museum, 2003), 77.

outside the fold of the mainstream Sunni Muslim identity in Pakistan is the case of the Ahmadis. Whereas the fundamental rights of non-Muslims in Pakistan have been protected under the law, the Ahmadis have been singled out for a legal classification as “non-Muslim” though they believe themselves to be Muslims. The “alleged doctrinal deviancy”<sup>33</sup> of the Ahmadi has resulted in ongoing persecution in Pakistan including periodic attacks on their “places of worship” and leadership. The roots of the conflict between the Ahmadi and those who consider them apostates dates to before the founding of Pakistan, but became a tool for the Pakistani state under successive leaders to curry favor among Pakistan’s conservative ulama, especially during periods when democratic forces had been compromised. In May 2010 two Ahmadi sites were simultaneously attacked in Lahore, part of a Sunni supremacist campaign of violence against those groups, including Shia, Sufis, and Christians, seen to be outside the Sunni fold. These sites were deliberately targeted as sites of plural or heterodox practice—so critical to the identity of Islam in South Asia—and these attacks represent a concerted effort to eliminate or discipline that plurality.<sup>34</sup>

The Ahmadi movement emerged during the same period as the reformist Aligarh and Deoband movements<sup>35</sup> and employed similar strategies—the establishment of educational institutions—to facilitate outreach and to spread its reformist message. Unlike Aligarh or Deoband however, the Ahmadi movement was largely rural and its

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<sup>33</sup> Simon Ross Valentine, *Islam and the Ahmadiyya Jama'at: History, Belief, Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 228.

<sup>34</sup> "International Religious Freedom Report- Pakistan," ed. Department of State (Washington, D.C.: July-December 2010), 2.

<sup>35</sup> Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India*.

adherents came from the middle and lower classes, and the movement particularly focused on “missionary outreach to non-Muslims.”<sup>36</sup> In its early years, the movement had much in common with other reformist movements, but after its leader Ghulam Ahmad claimed to be receiving revelations and began making prophecies, the Ahmadis increasingly became isolated and reviled by these other movements. The critical conflict between Sunni leadership and the Ahmadis is the question of Ghulam Ahmad’s claim to prophethood. After the creation of Pakistan, the Ahmadis were singled out as a threat to mainstream Islam—the threat of Hindus having largely been eliminated by partition’s migrations. During the 1950s they became the victims of violent attacks from the *Anjuman-i-Ahrar-i-Islam* a group with whom the Ahmadi had been in conflict since before Pakistan’s creation.<sup>37</sup> Maulana Maududi, the founder of the *Jamaat-i-Islami* emerged as a particularly virulent opponent of the Ahmadi and he demanded that the Ahmadis be declared “non-Muslims.”<sup>38</sup>

In 1974, the National Assembly passed a resolution that was signed into law by then Prime Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, vindicating Maududi’s request and declaring Ahmadis a “non-Muslim minority.” Though they are permitted to practice their religion, the law prevents them claiming to be Muslims. Ordinance XX passed by General Zia ul-Haq, as a part of his efforts to generate support among Pakistan’s ulama added two sections to the Pakistan Penal Code directed specifically against Ahmadis. These restrictions facilitated more persecution of Ahmadis including prohibition on the use of

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<sup>36</sup> Spencer Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah Movement: A History and Perspective* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1974), 12.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 164-85.

<sup>38</sup> S. Abul A'la Maududi, *The Qadiani Problem* (Lahore: Islamic Publications Limited, 1979 [1953]).

the Muslim call to prayer, the recitation of the *kalima*, or declaration of faith, and the right to call their “places of worship” mosques. Ahmadis are threatened under Pakistan’s harsh Blasphemy Laws, restricted under the Electoral code from voting “as Muslims,” and all Pakistanis must sign a pro forma declaring that they consider Ahmadis to be non-Muslims in order to obtain an identity card or passport. The institutionalization of this discrimination has marginalized Ahmadis and legitimized the accusation of apostasy constitutionally by enshrining the belief in the finality of the Prophet Mohammad as a criterion to claiming the Muslim and even the Pakistani identity. As a result, attacks on Ahmadis have largely gone un-prosecuted even as their rights as citizens and human beings have been compromised repeatedly through violence.<sup>39</sup>

In Maududi’s writings, particularly *The Qadiani Problem*, the “threat” of the Ahmadis becomes clear. For Maududi, it is not just their recognition of a new prophet that sets Ahmadis on a collision course with Sunni Islam. Rather it is his perception that Ahmadis see believers in the finality of Mohammad’s prophecy as non-believers. “The inevitable implication of a claim to prophethood is that anyone who does not accept him as such automatically becomes a KAFIR (infidel) [sic]; as a matter of fact the Qadianis did exactly that and openly declared through their writings and speeches that those who do not believe in the prophethood of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad are *Kafirs* [sic].”<sup>40</sup> While Maududi recognized the presence of other sects of Islam, he claimed that they isolate

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<sup>39</sup> Valentine, *Islam and the Ahmadiyya Jama'at: History, Belief, Practice*, 232- 33.

<sup>40</sup> Maududi, *The Qadiani Problem*, 6.



themselves “like small rocks scattered on the borderline”<sup>41</sup> whereas Ahmadis “penetrate into the Muslim Society posing as Muslims... [and] carry on proselytizing propaganda in an aggressive manner.”<sup>42</sup> It is this missionary zeal which appears particularly problematic because it puts the Sunni mainstream at risk of conversion. Maududi’s logic is circular, but was clearly persuasive, as the cry of “Islam in danger” had served to mobilize the Muslim constituency against outsiders in the past. The call to protect Islam from imposters serves to center a particular identity against plurality. The legal restrictions placed on Ahmadis in particular have facilitated the idea that the state supports a certain version of Islam, under which all heterodox practices including Sufism and Shiism are vulnerable.

Ahmadis are not alone among persecuted minorities in Pakistan. However, they have been particularly targeted by the government and singled out for institutionalized discrimination as the mainstream has sought to protect its boundaries against the threat of blasphemy and apostasy. The most significant crisis of nationalism in Pakistan, however, emerged as a result of the tensions between the Pakistan’s two wings.

The independence of Bangladesh proved a fundamental challenge to the Two Nation Theory betrayed by the total lack of sympathy for the rights of East Pakistan, and it serves to expose a deeper racialized tension and a difficult history of communalized politics that challenged the ostensible brotherhood of Muslims on which Pakistan was created. It is worth examining this further, as the Bengali challenge was only one of many

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 18.

that exposed the weakness of the Two Nation Theory as a founding narrative for independent statehood. The attitudes that resulted in the “loss of East Pakistan” continued to divide the country and undermine the Two Nation Theory, betraying insurmountable differences within the communities of Muslims that had joined together to form Pakistan itself. The degradation of the foundational narrative of Pakistani national identity is a perpetual source of regret and anxiety among these many informants. Pakistan no longer embodies for them the priorities of unity and solidarity to which they subscribed as student Muslim League workers. On the contrary, Pakistan today is divided, Muslim against Muslim, and the few minorities that have survived the increasingly puritanizing environment have become the subjects of a campaign of violence supported explicitly and implicitly by the government of Pakistan.

Once charged with unifying its people, today Pakistan’s government has become an instrument of oppression, isolating and persecuting minorities, much to the chagrin of many who think of themselves as Pakistan’s founders. These self-proclaimed “founders,” former students of Aligarh University who were active in the demand for Pakistan, however, disdain just as equally the rise of regional, ethnic and linguistic nationalisms that they see as a challenge to the unmarked Muslim Pakistani identity. And the minorities are blamed for its disintegration. This lament for Pakistan is perhaps best summarized in the words of former Aligarh student Abdul Rashid Khan. “Think of those times in 1944. The aim was... to build up culture for the Muslims. Now [in Pakistan] we

are not Muslims, we are Sindhis, we are Punjabis, we are all that... the nation-building spirit has gone."<sup>43</sup>

### **ALIGARH AND BANGLADESH**

In Bangladesh, the six narrators I was able to locate with the assistance of the Bangladesh chapter of the Aligarh Muslim University Old Boys Association offered some of the most surprising commentary on partition experience. All but one of these narrators had been in Aligarh between 1942 and 1949 and active in the Muslim League demand for Pakistan to some degree. They describe an institution whose reputation had spread far and wide, that had provided Muslim lawyers throughout India, and that was widely recognized for its academic achievement and the prestige that its graduates carried. For two of the narrators, coming from Sylhet, Aligarh represented their only option for an education in Engineering, as there were few seats available for minorities in Bengal. The final informant, Professor Akhtaruzzaman of Dhaka University, was a student in AMU during the 1990s as he completed his Ph.D. Though he is much younger (born in 1961) his story touches on similar themes as those from the earlier period, revealing continuity over a long period.

The institution that the Bengalis describe is substantively similar to the one described by others during the 1940s. These narrators, too, tout the importance and uniqueness of the university's disciplinary system, and how this system lent credibility to Aligarh's reputation. Habibur Rahman emphasized the university's independence from

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<sup>43</sup> Khan, "Abdul Rashid Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas."

the government; whereas in other universities, like the Jamia Millia Islamia, the Chancellor was appointed by the government, in Aligarh there was “no Chancellor from Government. The Nawab of Hyderabad was the Chancellor. It was completely independent.”<sup>44</sup> These narrators also describe the influence of the Muslim League, though they tend to reveal more ambivalence in their allegiance to its ideology. Salahuddin Chowdhury, for instance, described himself as basically non-political, but when I asked about Pakistan, he conceded, that the idea of Pakistan was “more or less not controversial” and that he was “not [a] very active member. But supporter. I had to support this, but not as an active member.”<sup>45</sup> His comments reveal the pressure that Aligarh students were under to conform to the League agenda. Both Mohiuddin Khan and his childhood friend Waheeduddin Chowdhury, who shared a room in AMU, shared the Leftist inclinations of the Students’ Federation, and even attended a rally in Delhi in 1947.<sup>46</sup> Despite these political differences, none betray their faith in the mission of the university. The university, especially during times of disruption provided safe haven. These students traveled a great distance to attend AMU, they had no option of returning home during periods of unrest. Therefore, for them, the university’s protective capacity was particularly significant.

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<sup>44</sup> Rahman, "Habib Ur Rahman: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas February 20, 2010."

<sup>45</sup> Chowdhury, "Salahuddin Chowdhury: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas April 10, 2010."

<sup>46</sup> An article on the session in *The Student* notes that “in the procession were a large contingent of Muslim students—many of them were from Aligarh in their black sherwanis and Jinnah caps. Together with the rest of the procession they joined their voices in the resounding slogans of: ‘*Hindu-Muslim nahi lareng!*’ ‘*Angrezo-per war kareng!*’ (‘Hindus and Muslims will not fight each other!’ ‘Together we shall fight the British!’)” “Forward to New Battles!: The A.I.S.F. Conference, Delhi,” *The Student: Journal of the All India Students Federation* (January 1947).

These stories, however, when they focus on the events of partition, are substantively different from those I heard in India. Whereas Indian informants strove to minimize the sense of disruption in the Aligarh environment, these stories focus on disruption, both public and personal. Waheeduddin Choudhri recounted to me in a long, winding narrative, the difficulty he had in reaching Aligarh during the summer of 1946, when the city of Calcutta, through which he would have had to transit, was in the throes of a communal conflict known as the Great Calcutta Killings. After leaving his home in Sylhet—more specifically, Maulvi Bazaar, where he was in school—he headed for Calcutta, but

I could not reach Calcutta. I was advised by somebody that ‘You don’t go to Calcutta.’ Calcutta was very much disturbed. ‘You go to Bardhaman, by Loop Line.’ From there, I took a train and somehow I reached Aligarh. Once I reached Aligarh, I was safe there. The university authorities had an arrangement in the railway station for the students who were going and reaching there. So ultimately, I reached Aligarh.<sup>47</sup>

Throughout the interview I conducted with Choudhri, he repeated aspects of this story multiple times: “there is trouble in Calcutta;” “I went to Bardhaman;” “I just used to sit down, in khaki dress;” “it was a very disturbing time.” He links the disturbances in the country very tightly to his own experience of a disrupted and dangerous train journey. He realized, traveling in the train, that his only hope for safety was to change his plans, keep a low profile (khaki dress) and not to draw attention to himself (by sitting still). Throughout the interview, this is the only reference he makes to unrest in the country, and it is metonymically represented by his own disrupted train ride. Like others, however,

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<sup>47</sup> Engineer Waheeduddin Choudhri, "Waheeduddin Choudhri: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas April 6, 2010," (Dhaka, Bangladesh: April 6, 2010).

he described the safety of Aligarh, the sense that once he arrived on the train platform, that he was safe.

Like other Indian narrators, Waheedudin also described the presence of the army, dispatched by the government to protect the university. However, as before, the chronology is difficult to follow, incorporating experiences from 1946 and 1947 into a continuous chain. In the middle of describing his disrupted train journey in 1946, Waheeduddin began to describe the efforts of the government in 1947 to protect the university by dispatching first Nawab Ismail Khan, a Muslim leader, but close friend of the Nehru family, and, in 1948, Zakir Husain, to lead the institution. Although Waheeduddin and his friend Mohiuddin (who was present and participated in this interview) describe themselves as Leftists--supporters of Pakistan but more invested in Leftist ideology—here they, too, place their faith for the university's survival in the Indian nationalist leadership.

The values these students learned at Aligarh have indeed stayed with them, and Pakistan, despite its impossibility in reality, has persisted as a guiding idea—a federation of states, that is—that remains important to them. This is especially significant in light of the persecution that those who were seen to have allied with Pakistan during 1971 have faced in Bangladesh since liberation.<sup>48</sup> These narrators have felt a connection to Pakistan, though, M.A. Rashid, the businessman, offered a critique of life in the Western state similar to that of Indian Muslims.

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<sup>48</sup> Ari Bassin, "Justice or Charade in Dhaka?," *International Justice Tribune*, no. 123 (March 2, 2011).

Karachi was like machines, you see. People had no time for social jobs, you see. So I never like. I always liked Dhaka. People here, my neighbor here and there, any function they come. If there is any trouble, we help each other. They are very friendly and social. But Karachi people, no! Somebody stays in one building in some flat and down on the ground floor does not know who is staying. If somebody dies, they do not go for his burial. They were very business-type people.<sup>49</sup>

In his critique of the values of Pakistan, we hear his lament about the absence of cooperation. Whereas these Bangladeshis still hold tight to the possibility of federation, of a system based on “mutual cooperation,” and helping one another, Pakistanis have changed. This change can be seen at the heart of the conflict between Pakistan’s two wings.

#### **THE CASE OF BANGLADESH**

In Bangladesh, it is perhaps not surprising that the 1947 partition does not serve as a central motif in the official national history. Rather, it is one of three partitions (1905, 1947, 1971), and seen as only a stepping stone on the way to full independence, achieved after the war with Pakistan in 1971. This variation marks an important difference with the national stories of both India and Pakistan in which, I am arguing, partition serves to reorient the experience of social and political relations.

In Bangladesh, 1971 definitively serves this role, but the tensions born out of the making of the state of Pakistan in 1947 were the fuel for the conflict that resulted in the independence of Bangladesh, thus fortifying my suggestion that the 1947 partition was a lengthy and drawn out process, and did not end in 1947 or even 1948. The identity politics that determined the nature of the relationship between Pakistan’s East and West

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<sup>49</sup> Rashid, "M.A. Rashid: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas March 29, 2010."

wings were not only continuous in a longer view of Muslim nationalism before partition, linked to the basic political conflict between the Congress and Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan as early as the late nineteenth-century.<sup>50</sup> They persisted until the crisis became so acute that the East Pakistanis felt they could no longer remain part of Pakistan without recognition. The efforts of the Pakistani establishment to narrowly determine the boundaries of belonging, and the content of Pakistani identity, resulted in terrible violence perpetrated by the Pakistani government and military upon Pakistan's Bengali majority and the severing of ties between the two wings.

The narrators whose stories are collected here represent a small but unique group. I conducted several interviews with Bangladeshi men who were students at Aligarh University during the 1940s, and actively supported the Muslim League and worked for Pakistan. These narrators settled in East Pakistan, and remained there throughout the war that resulted in the independence of Bangladesh in 1971. Because my collection is so limited, I have also analyzed interviews collected in Ahmad Salim's 2009 oral history collection *Reconstructing History: Memories, Migrants, and Minorities*.<sup>51</sup> The backgrounds of Salim's narrators are more varied, and not always clear. In addition, I have used a few interviews with former Aligarians collected and preserved by the Citizens Archive of Pakistan, "a non profit organization dedicated to Cultural and Historic

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<sup>50</sup> And later, the Muslim League, founded in 1906. Many early League leaders were connected to Sir Sayyid and the Aligarh Movement.

<sup>51</sup> Although these interviews provide a diversity of views, Salim provides little to no biographical information on the informants, which compromises their value as "life history" interviews, in my opinion. I have used several excerpts from these interviews below, but lack any contextualizing (age, profession, birthplace, etc.) information for each narrator's comments. Salim, ed., *Reconstructing History: Memories, Migrants, and Minorities*.



Preservation... [that has] focused its attention on the tradition of oral story-telling in Pakistan, emphasizing the importance of such narratives in a dialogue on national identity.”<sup>52</sup> Together, these sets of stories give us a complex picture of the human experience of the conflict between East and West Pakistan that resulted in the independence of Bangladesh.

The historically rooted perceptions of difference that divided the North Indian Muslim from the Bengali Muslim through deeply rooted and gendered rhetoric, persisted from the mid-nineteenth-century into the mid-twentieth. Though they originated in colonial notions of “martial” and “effeminized” races, they lasted beyond the temporal boundaries of British domination.<sup>53</sup> Although Bengali Muslims had been enthusiastic supporters of the Muslim League and the demand for Pakistan, they were never allowed to become fully privileged citizens of an independent Pakistani state. The Government of Pakistan used a variety of tactics to prevent the assumption of the majority by the 52% of the population that was Bengali, going so far as first to re-draw the boundaries of the provinces—the “One Unit” scheme<sup>54</sup>—and then to dismiss the parliament after the electoral victory of the Bengali-led Awami League in 1970.

Muslim League leaders, and later, West Pakistanis were willing to preach a message of unity as long as it fortified their own political power. However, shortly after the creation of Pakistan, the East Pakistanis came to be seen as a liability. They were

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<sup>52</sup> "The Citizens Archive of Pakistan," <http://www.citizensarchive.org/index.php>.

<sup>53</sup> Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity*. Streets, *Martial Races*.

<sup>54</sup> The One Unit Scheme amalgamated all of the provinces of West Pakistan into one province thus nearly equalizing the percentage of the population in each state, creating a false sense of West Pakistani regional unity and providing a bulwark against the possibility of a Bengali representative majority in government.

spatially marginalized, and seen as weak and backward. The perception of Bengali effeteness or weakness that had survived British colonialism was combined with the sense that East Pakistan was undeveloped, unable to be self sufficient, thus feeding the West Pakistani sense of superiority and paternalism. As General Wajahat told me,

At the time of Partition East Pakistan was in a very bad way, [it was] very backward. By way of administration, there was no infrastructure and [it was] very poorly administered and of course, they had—except for jute—there were hardly any resources. We did a lot for East Pakistan. We established for East Pakistan one of the world’s best inland water transport systems for inland communications. The Chittagong harbor, which was nothing, just a very small port really, at the time of Partition, was developed by us into a first class port and harbor. Similarly, Dhaka, which was a very backward small town was developed into a modern town. All the infrastructure, post and telegraph, railways, internal water communications—and the main thing was the development of the cantonment and the creation of the East Pakistan armed forces—was done entirely by the Federal Government at the expense of West Pakistan.<sup>55</sup>

I quote this passage at length to demonstrate the masculinist rhetoric of the West Pakistanis (here, an Aligarian). In this formulation, the East Pakistanis are characterized as weak and inept, utterly dependent on the goodwill and financial resources of the West. In addition, the services that General Wajahat so proudly claims credit for taking to the East are the very same ones that the British so proudly established in India during their rule.<sup>56</sup> He explicitly associates development with colonial modernity and military infrastructure. General Wajahat went on to claim that the East Pakistanis were ungrateful for the support of the West and accused the West of stealing revenue from jute exporting, which he claims “wasn’t very much.” He delegitimizes the claims of the East Pakistanis

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<sup>55</sup> Wajahat Husain, "Major General Wajahat Husain (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas July 8, 2005," (Lahore: July 8, 2005).

<sup>56</sup> It is reasonable to characterize the relationship between West and East Pakistan, in fact as a “colonial” one, marked by the same exploitative commercial and political tactics of the recently deposed British Imperial regime. See also "Introduction" to Minault, *Gender, Language, and Learning*, 5.

and privileges the development of the military cantonment as the ultimate marker of West Pakistani generosity.

Significantly, he speaks at length about the unsuitability of Bengalis for military service. They had been underrepresented in the British Indian Army and had to be trained for the Pakistan Army, but, he suggested,

initially we had problems with the East Pakistanis because of their physical—I wouldn't say disability... but they were weaker, physically, than Pakistanis. As a result of that, they did not conform to the physical standards required for the infantry or the armored corps. Eventually, we lowered the physical standards for the East Pakistanis, so much so that the whole armored corps suffered on account of that, by lowering the physical standards. When we got the first lot, I remember only three or four in my squadron. They were clever, they were intelligent, they were better educated, they were more open-minded in many respects, than any West Pakistani Punjabi or Pathan soldier. But, as far as their professional side was concerned they were very weak on the physical side.<sup>57</sup>

Again Wajahat deploys colonial rhetoric to describe the Bengalis, as “weak” and “clever” and draws on the British theory of “martial races” to identify strong Pakistani soldiers with Punjabis and Pathans. He blames Bengalis for compromising the quality of the Pakistan Army, perhaps to account in part for the loss of the West Pakistan Army to the Bengalis in 1971.<sup>58</sup>

The lie of Bengali effeminacy was, of course, exposed by “the loss of East Pakistan,” an event still seen in Pakistan as purely the result of Indian intervention to the extent that, in Pakistan, the 1971 war is seen as a war with India rather than as a civil war waged by an alienated segment of Pakistani society. Dr. Tariq Rehman of Islamabad was a cadet in the Pakistan Military Academy in 1971. He told Ahmad Salim that the people of Pakistan have been “brainwashed” into believing that the war of 1971 was “an Indian

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<sup>57</sup> Husain, "Major General Wajahat Husain (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas July 8, 2005."

<sup>58</sup> However, he primarily accounts for this failure of West Pakistani masculinity by blaming the conniving Indian forces who “infiltrated” the East Pakistani militias. Ibid.

conspiracy or Bangladeshi deviance.”<sup>59</sup> It is impossible to miss the sexualized rhetoric here, and it points to the importance of taking a long view of the tensions between East and West Pakistan that allows us to see the impact of long-established racist theories of Bengali inadequacy that posed a challenge to the myth of Punjabi masculinity and had very concrete consequences for national unity.

Language has been elevated to the heart of the conflict between East and West Pakistan, and Jinnah’s 1948 speech designating Urdu as the national language as the critical moment marking West Pakistani intransigence, but if the conflict is to be seen in the context of a challenge to the Two Nation Theory, then we must confront the suspicions that Bengalis belonged to a different nation from the North India elite who determined the “Nation” in the first place. The inability of West Pakistan to transparently allow the Bengalis into the hallowed halls of the majority rests on more than a conflict over language (though we can see how the importance of a “national language” was deployed by Muslims earlier in their efforts to create a Muslim constituency) and is intimately linked to the earlier conflicts over race, caste, and class that provided the content for the initial drive to establish a differentiated Muslim constituency in North India. Bengalis could not be Pakistanis because they were seen as only nominally Muslim—mostly Hindu—and therefore, suspect.

Ahmad Salim’s collection of oral histories includes an interview entitled “Treatment with Maulvi Tamizuddin Khan’s Family” in which the story of Dr. Norul

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<sup>59</sup> Dr. Tariq Rehman, Islamabad in Salim, ed., *Reconstructing History: Memories, Migrants, and Minorities*, 72.

Huda of Dhaka University's Department of Economics is retold by his brother-in-law. On the morning of March 26, 1971, the Pakistan army burst into Dr. Norul Huda's home while he was reading the Quran. They "demanded to know his name and his religion, Dr. Huda told them his name and said, 'I am a Bengali Muslim.' The leader sarcastically remarked, 'Can a Bengali be a Muslim?'"<sup>60</sup> This story, which I include here anecdotally, reveals the tensions between East Pakistanis and the West Pakistan Army. Included in the story is the charge that the Army leader took Dr. Norul Huda's Quran and threw it on the floor. This narrative authorizes Dr. Norul Huda's piety in two ways, he is characterized as a respected intellectual, though he had escaped the March 25 massacre of intellectuals and scholars, and as a devout, Quran-reading Muslim. It was as an act of defiance that he announced to the Pakistan Army leader "I am a *Bengali* Muslim" rather than simply stating his religion. As if in response to the question "What are you?" he states that he is a Bengali first, and a Muslim, an identity clearly abhorrent to the Pakistani establishment so intent on disciplining Bengalis into being Pakistanis. This defiance provoked a transgression by the Pakistani Army leader as he threw the sacred text to the ground. Even as the story establishes Dr. Norul Huda's piety—it challenges the West Pakistani claim to a normative Muslim identity by describing the sacrilegious behavior of the Pakistani army officer. We learn nothing more of Dr. Norul Huda in this narrative, but it exposes a powerful moment of conflicting prejudices: the Pakistani Army is represented as hypermasculinized, anti-intellectual and blasphemous; the Bengali is represented as calm and collected, devout, and steadfastly loyal to his Bengali heritage.

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 74.

Consider another story, from the pen of a Bangladeshi Hindu scholar whose father was killed by the Pakistan Army in 1971. Meghna Guha Thakurta's father "met his death at the hands of the Pakistan Army in 1971 when he was accused of possessing an identity which he had always resisted, i.e. of being a Hindu. His professed identity of a humanist was not to be found anywhere in the vocabulary of Yahya Khan's barbaric regime."<sup>61</sup> Both the Hindu, definitively non-Pakistani, and the Bengali Muslim are challenged on the basis of their identities. In these cases, the Bengali cannot be a Muslim, and he cannot be not-Hindu.<sup>62</sup> And in neither case, can he be treated as a fully privileged citizen of Pakistan, for the narrative of the state left little space for these identities. Many stories of this period reflect these kinds of conflicts, and from both of Pakistan's wings. It seems that the forces of prejudice were as productive of the conflict between the two wings as any of the other, more easily identified conflicts over representation, language and economics.

The Bangla Language Movement that fueled the desire for Bangladeshi independence captured the imaginations of millions of East Pakistanis, and combined with widespread perceptions of West Pakistani and particularly Punjabi oppression, served to draw in broad support for the resistance to West Pakistan. During this struggle, Urdu-speaking Muslims and non-ethnic Bengali East Pakistanis were opposed by ethnic

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<sup>61</sup> Guha Thakurta, "Uprooted and Divided."

<sup>62</sup> Remember the example of Salman Haider becoming "India's first Muslim Foreign Secretary" despite the fact that he selected "none" in the Religion Section of his Foreign Service Application. In all of these cases Muslimness is essentialized, in Pakistan it is synonymous with loyalty to the state, and in India it is proof of the state's affection for its minorities.

Bengalis demanding further recognition from the state of Pakistan.<sup>63</sup> The graduates of Aligarh Muslim University with whom I spoke about their experiences during this difficult time were primarily Bengali-speaking, though several hail from Sylhet.<sup>64</sup> Despite having attended Aligarh University and supported the demand for Pakistan, when their loyalty to Bengali identity came into conflict with loyalty to the Pakistani state, they placed their solidarity with the Bengali people and supported the demand for liberation.

However, they protest the assertion that Sheikh Mujib's desire was always for independence. Though the independence of Bangladesh was the result of armed struggle, and the Bengali people suffered extreme hardship, these narrators insist that their demand was first and foremost a demand for social justice. Although the Bengalis were not a numerical minority, they were treated as second-class citizens by West Pakistan, and particularly by Punjabis. Although these narrators fought for the independence of Pakistan, it was, in their minds, West Pakistan's betrayal of the original dream of Muslim solidarity that led them to work for Bangladeshi independence.

For the Bengali students at Aligarh, the allure of Pakistan was tied to their perceptions of the communal disharmony in their own home state. Habibur Rahman suggested that it was the history of Hindu oppression that drew him to League activity. As he told me, "the Hindus generally used to neglect the Muslims. And mostly in East

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<sup>63</sup> Sarmila Bose's 2011 book *Dead Reckoning* argues that more attention should be paid to the "civil war" that raged in Bangladesh between Bengali nationalists and non-Muslims and non-Bengalis. She argues that these minority groups were deliberately and aggressively targeted by Bangladeshi nationalists simply because they did not fit easily within the narrowly defined identity "Bengali." The work is highly problematic, but does shed light on this internal conflict which has, in turn, spawned racialized violence in independent Bangladesh. Bose, *Dead Reckoning: Memories of the 1971 Bangladesh War*.

<sup>64</sup> Mohiuddin Khan of Dhaka told me "Sylheti is not a language, it is a dialect of Bengali. It is Bengali." Khan, "Mohiuddin Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas March 28, 2010."

Pakistan.”<sup>65</sup> He went on to explain the most significant aspect of the Bengali relationship to Pakistan, in his opinion, that “It was only in Bangladesh that all the MLAs were Muslims.” Rahman himself was very involved in student activism for Pakistan after 1944 when he arrived at Aligarh. He even participated in training other students for election work. He credits the Bengali students with having been very influential in Pakistan work because they were “very intelligent” and “shrewd” and goes so far as to suggest that the Bengalis “made” Pakistan.<sup>66</sup> His sentiments about Pakistan are similar to those of the non-Bengali students who were drawn in by the enthusiasm for Pakistan and Rahman characterizes the goal of their work as “the hope that there will be a change of the fortunes of people.”<sup>67</sup> The hope that the Bengalis placed in Pakistan was the same as the hope the North Indian Urdu speakers did. Pakistan should empower the people, serve them, and bring them freedom from the oppressive Hindu majority.

After the creation of Pakistan, however, Habibur Rahman said that it was not very long before he recognized that, “unfortunately, the army of West Pakistan, especially the Punjabis, were in control” of the implementation of the expected democracy. The fundamentally undemocratic imbalance of power represented by this outcome was deeply troubling to him, and to others who had fought for the independence of Muslims. He frequently reiterated to me that he was “very much in favor of the Pakistan Movement,” an active participant, and one who worked hard to learn about Pakistan and to participate

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<sup>65</sup> He uses “East Pakistan” anachronistically here, referring to the period before 1947. Rahman, "Habib Ur Rahman: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas February 20, 2010."

<sup>66</sup> He uses the stereotype of Bengalis as “clever” to their advantage here, demonstrating the intellectual commitment of the Bengali students to the Pakistani cause.

<sup>67</sup> Rahman, "Habib Ur Rahman: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas February 20, 2010."



in activities to build support for Pakistan. It was only “when they started all these discriminations” that he felt there was nothing else he could do but join the Awami League opposition. Still, he insisted, “No one demanded complete separations.”<sup>68</sup> Rather, East Pakistan, led by Mujibur Rahman, sought sovereignty over internal issues including Commerce, Industries, and currency, while granting Defence and Foreign Affairs portfolios to the center. Sheikh Mujib’s Six Points were designed to restore the priorities of Pakistan’s original charter, The 1940 Lahore Resolution, to restore parliamentary democracy and to create a “Federation of Pakistan in its true sense.”<sup>69</sup> The Pakistani government refused patently to accede to these demands and the conflict mounted. Contrary to Pakistani opinion, Habibur Rahman insisted, the movement for liberation was not made on “the insistence of India;” it was a demand for “self-existence!” This language aligns the demands of Bangladesh with the demands of Muslims during the Pakistan movement in the 1940s and especially with that of students seeking “self-manifestation.”<sup>70</sup>

In fact, the extent to which the narratives of these two events, 1947’s partition and 1971’s liberation, are made structurally similar is worthy of closer examination. Narrator Mohiuddin Khan, president of the Aligarh Old Boys’ Association, Dhaka 2009-2010, pointed out, that it was not Jinnah who rejected the Cabinet Mission plan, but that after

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> "Six-Point Programme of Sheikh Mujib Ur Rahman."

<sup>70</sup> Hasan, "Masood Ul Hasan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas March 20, 2009."

Congress rejected it, Jinnah was left with no choice but to push forward for Pakistan.<sup>71</sup> Similarly, Mohiuddin said it was “unfortunate” that East and West Pakistan parted. But he placed the burden on Pakistan’s unwillingness to treat East Pakistan with dignity. “If they only could have accommodated us, just a little bit. It would have been different. We didn’t want separation. Even Sheikh Mujib did not want separation throughout.”<sup>72</sup> It was only upon Pakistan’s rejection of Sheikh Mujib’s Six Points that separation became inevitable. Mohiuddin, like Rahman, insisted that “we supported Pakistan. We fought for Pakistan” and this investment in Pakistan should have earned East Pakistanis the rights of full citizenship and participation in a democratic system. In the end, it was the unwillingness of the more powerful party to accommodate the weaker one that led to the separation.

And as in the earlier Pakistan movement, it was the experience of oppression that drove these narrators into solidarity with their fellow countrymen and against the powers-that-be. For these men, who had worked for Pakistan in the 1940s, the narrative was familiar, but the memory of Pakistani oppression remains fresh and painful. Mohiuddin described his initial attraction to Aligarh university as motivated by “this mood of Hindu-

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<sup>71</sup> At Aligarh, the Union, led by Bengali A.T.M. Mustafa initially rejected the Cabinet Mission Proposals outright, only withdrawing their vehemence when chided by Jinnah for not following the lead of the Muslim League Council. Ultimately, Mustafa assured Jinnah, “now that the Muslim League Council has declared that it accepts the Proposals [sic] only because they contain the germs of Pakistan...Aligarh stands sold behind the decision.” A.T.M. Mustafa. A.T.M. Mustafa to M.A. Jinnah: Muslim University Union Response to Cabinet Proposals- Full Account of the Meeting. June 12, 1946. *SHC*, Vol. 26/ 76-81. PNA. Mohammad Ali Jinnah. M.A. Jinnah to A.T.M. Mustafa (Vice President Muslim University Union): Muslim University Union Response to Cabinet Proposals. June 10, 1946. *SHC*, Vol. 26/ 75. PNA.

<sup>72</sup> Khan, "Mohiuddin Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas March 28, 2010."

Muslim feelings [that] was on the forefront at that time to a large extent.”<sup>73</sup> That the communal tension spurred his interest in Aligarh suggests that Mohiuddin sought an environment where he might be able to contest Hindu domination. Even before he was admitted to Aligarh in 1946, he had been active in campaigning for the Muslim League candidates in Assam. He links his interest in League campaigning to the political situation in Assam, where he lived. He was influenced by the “atmosphere at that time, in the year 1946. Throughout India more of this communal politics was coming up and the British wanted to leave and the demand for Pakistan [was] growing. So, naturally,” he says, “we supported the Pakistan Movement at that time.”<sup>74</sup> His attachment to Pakistan was “natural” considering the political situation at the time. Similarly, Mohiuddin describes his later opposition to the administration of West Pakistan as a “natural” result of the feeling of being “cheated some way or other by revenue.”

East Pakistanis saw West Pakistan developing infrastructure at a faster rate, and felt that their province was being neglected.<sup>75</sup> This complaint against the West is enshrined in three of Mujibur Rahman’s Six Points. The third point demands “effective constitutional provisions... to stop the flight of capital from East to West Pakistan;” the fourth point addresses uneven distribution of tax revenue between the two wings, and the fifth point addresses the need to abolish customs duties on products produced in one

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> An appraisal of Pakistan’s economic policy reveals that it was overly concerned with protecting industry at the expense of agricultural development. Since East Pakistan’s economy was driven by agricultural production, “a transfer of resources from agriculture to industry also implies a transfer from the East to the West Wing, since during the period under review more than 60 per cent of East Pakistan’s gross output originated in agriculture and about 40 per cent in West Pakistan.” Keith Griffin and Azizur Rahman Khan, eds., *Growth and Inequality in Pakistan* (London: Macmillan 1972), 29.

wing, and sold in the other. The complaint about unfair distribution of revenue and uneven levying of taxes is a persistent one, and more than one narrator expressed it.<sup>76</sup> Mohiuddin noticed these disparities not long after partition and began “surreptitiously” (because he was a government employee) to attend “these meetings where Mr. Fazlul Huq was delivering his speech about his activities in the Assembly.”<sup>77</sup> By the time of the language movement, he told me, “I was against remaining Pakistan.” It was West Pakistan’s inability to allow East Pakistan fully to participate in the representative democracy that hardened him to it, and he felt a tremendous sense of triumph upon the success of the Bangladesh liberation movement.

Mohiuddin’s close friend, Engineer Waheeduddin Choudhri, shared his Leftist ideals, but in retrospect was less willing to concede his support for Pakistan. He suggested, rather, that Pakistan was not the fulfillment of his Leftist ideals; he sought a United India from the outset. At the time of partition, he said, “I could not say at that time I am a Pakistani or I am an Indian. Everything was in a fluid state. As I told you, we neither used to support Pakistan, nor used to support India. We were Leftists. In fact, we wanted to have a Leftist United India.”<sup>78</sup> He clarified that what he hoped for was a United India and a democratic state. When I pressed him on support of Bangladesh, by asking “Did you support independence of Bangladesh?” he replied, correcting me, “Actually, we did not support Pakistan; so we neither wanted East Pakistan nor West Pakistan, but Bengal. We wanted another state.” Waheeduddin is attached to a concept of Bengal as a

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<sup>76</sup> See also Rahman, "Habib Ur Rahman: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas February 20, 2010."

<sup>77</sup> Khan, "Mohiuddin Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas March 28, 2010."

<sup>78</sup> Choudhri, "Waheeduddin Choudhri: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas April 6, 2010."

whole, and as distinct from East Pakistan. While he would not commit to having earlier supported Pakistan or India, he now enthusiastically cast his support behind Bengal. Bengal, it appears, embodied the values for which he had been fighting all along.

Cast in these ways, there is immediate continuity between the demand for Pakistan and the demand for Bangladeshi liberation. Waheeduddin's anxiety about attaching himself to East Pakistan exposes the discomfort he had with what Pakistan represented. Undoubtedly, his memories are colored by his traumatic experiences with his family in Chittagong during the 1971 war, but his insistence that Pakistan was a misrepresentation of his ideals seems an important lens on the relationship between 1947 and 1971. 1971 clarified questions of belonging for Bengali Muslims, even as it challenged the foundation of the identity of Pakistan.

#### **REFLECTING**

As the narrators whose stories are collected here reflect on these experiences, they betray the complexities of their memories and experiences through imperfect attempts to align their personal stories with the readily accessible official narratives. It is the imperfections in this process that remind us of the complexities of independence, partition and liberation in South Asia. Whether the questions are of belonging, triumph/failure, inclusion/ exclusion or past/present/future, they reveal deeper processes of reconciliation that narrators have gone through in trying to establish their own identities as citizens of states and supporters of certain ideological movements. We have seen this earlier with the conflict between Pakistan's triumphal narrative of its own creation

contrasted with a persistent effort by several narrators to place “the blame” for the creation of Pakistan on the shoulders of India’s leadership, especially Nehru and Patel. Mohiuddin Khan and Habibur Rahman replayed this process when they argued that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman did not really seek independence from Pakistan, but was forced into it by West Pakistani intransigence. Unwittingly, they cast a shadow over the possibility that Bangladesh was the triumphant outcome of a War of Liberation by obscuring the motives of the leaders behind the conflict. This section examines several points of slippage in the stories of narrators from all three collection projects: my own with Aligarh graduates, Ahmad Salim’s conducted in Pakistan and Bangladesh, and that of the Citizen’s Archive of Pakistan. They sit together here because they do not fit comfortably elsewhere, and I use them to expose some of the complications of remembering through the lens of the state and the nation.

Several interviews with enlisted Pakistan Army men from Pind Dadan Khan appear in Ahmad Salim’s collection.<sup>79</sup> These interviews reveal the firsthand perceptions of the men who fought for the Pakistan Army in East Pakistan, and expose the lasting anxiety over the challenge the Bengalis presented to Pakistani identity. Without hesitation, these soldiers identify the Bengalis as traitors, and make the point that in East Bengal it was impossible to distinguish Muslims from non-Muslims. As Laal Khan argued, “Mukti Bahini and India were involved in this conspiracy. Bengalis did not

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<sup>79</sup> The village is located in the Jhelum District of Pakistan’s Punjab Province.

behave with us. Mukti Bahini consisted of both Hindus and Muslims of Bengal.”<sup>80</sup> All of these narrators were made Prisoners of War, and their bitterness towards the Bengalis must be read in that context. However, it reveals West Pakistani anxiety about the ability of Bengalis to fit into the Pakistani national identity. They are cast as indistinguishable from both Hindus and Indians, thus casting doubt on their very Pakistani-ness, an identity rooted in a different linguistic history and martial tradition. However, by the logic of the Two Nation Theory, this “Pakistani” identity should have been distinctly different from both Hindu and Indian identity. Ironically, perception that these boundaries were blurred in East Pakistan clarifies some of the terrific anger that remains in Pakistan about Bangladeshi independence. The 1971 war cannot be remembered as a Civil War because West Pakistan’s adversaries in East Pakistan were not real Pakistanis, they did not share those elements of identity—language, faith, history—so critical to the Two Nation Theory. Because of the role played by India, Pakistanis easily push the East Bengalis out of the shared identity of “Us”—Muslims, Pakistanis—and into that of “them”—Non-Muslims, Indians; the war of 1971 becomes an international conflict as well as an interstate one.

West Pakistanis who had some experience in East Pakistan see the situation more sympathetically. With regard to the relationship between East and West Pakistan, narrators on both sides of the borders see a parallel situation between the pre-partition environment, and the post-partition one. However, as Captain Wazir Hasan of Karachi

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<sup>80</sup> Laal Khan, Pind Dadan Khan in Salim, ed., *Reconstructing History: Memories, Migrants, and Minorities*, 136.

pointed out in an interview with the Citizens Archive of Pakistan, the personnel had changed. He recounted his experiences in Chittagong in the 1950s, “When the West Pakistanis went there... we thought we were the rulers and they are the subjects. One of the supervisors—a Hindu—said, that ‘Before the British were ruling, and now you are ruling us. So what is the difference? Where is the independence?’”<sup>81</sup> Considering the depth of the anxiety that persists in Pakistan today over “the loss of East Pakistan,” I was surprised to hear recognition of the Pakistan Army’s oppression and sympathy for the plight of East Pakistanis from several narrators who spoke with interviewers from the Citizens Archive of Pakistan. Narrator Moinuddin Khan, who lived in Dhaka, East Pakistan briefly in the 1950s, echoed Captain Hasan’s remarks when he suggested that West Pakistanis had been aware of the mistreatment of East Pakistanis. Moinuddin lamented, “*West Pakistanis thought of themselves, having gone there, that ‘We are the Badshahs of this place.’ This [attitude] was there, and we saw it, we heard it, we tolerated it.*”<sup>82</sup> He went on to criticize the overreaction by the Pakistan Army to East Pakistani resistance.<sup>83</sup> Moinuddin clarified his own position, saying that as an educated person, he never could understand the reason for enmity between the two peoples. Moinuddin’s comment here seems rooted in the complicated legacy of outward tolerance that was fostered at Aligarh and easily became synonymous with interethnic,

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<sup>81</sup> Khan, "Captain Wazir Khan: Interview with Unam Muneer, Citizens Archive of Pakistan."

<sup>82</sup> Moinuddin Khan, "Moinuddin Khan: Interview with Sara Ansari, Citizens Archive of Pakistan (Transcribed August 4, 2009)," (Karachi, Pakistan: N.D.), — — —, "Moinuddin Khan: Interview with Sara Ansari, Citizens Archive of Pakistan," ed. Sara Ansari and transcribed by Noor Mahamadi (Karachi, Pakistan: N.D. Transcribed August 4, 2009).

<sup>83</sup> Khan, "Moinuddin Khan: Interview with Sara Ansari, Citizens Archive of Pakistan." Translation by Amber Abbas.



interlinguistic Muslim solidarity, but also recognizes that the tension between the two wings was deeper than the agitations surrounding the Bangla language movement. After all, West Pakistani resistance to East Pakistani parity itself had deeper roots in a history of anti-Bengali feeling and the perception of fundamental difference between the peoples of the two wings.

However, Moinuddin refers to Pakistan as a whole when he says, “The first time Pakistan had to suffer while it was made. The second time Pakistan suffered when East Pakistan separated.”<sup>84</sup> Here again, the events of 1971 become equivalent to the events of 1947 and both are cast as traumas to Pakistan. The violence of 1947 marked the troubled beginning to the fulfillment of the solidarity agenda that the students of Aligarh University had pursued, and 1971 can be seen as its collapse. This sense of a double trauma emerges in East Pakistan, too. Salena Hussain of Dhaka, who was a recent graduate in 1971 told Ahmad Salim, “We as a nation suffered twice; in 1947, when as Muslims we crossed the border from India and again in 1971 as Bengalis living in East Pakistan.”<sup>85</sup> Whether speaking from the East Pakistani or West Pakistani sides of the border, it seems, 1971 and 1947 are too intimately connected to be considered separately. Salena Hussain draws attention to the trauma of “living in” East Pakistan during 1971. Whereas in 1947 the trauma was one of displacement, in 1971 the trauma was an everyday fear. For as Bangladeshi historian Meghna Guha Thakurta has suggested, “What is crucial to note is that violence also typifies a state where a sense of fear is

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Salena Hussain, Dhaka in Salim, ed., *Reconstructing History: Memories, Migrants, and Minorities*, 130.

generated and perpetrated in such a way as to make it systemic, pervasive and inevitable.”<sup>86</sup> Whereas 1947 introduced fear on the campus of Aligarh University, 1971 brought fear, wholesale, to East Pakistan. Bangladeshi poet, Taslima Nasrin sums up the relationship of the two events in her poem “Denial”; she writes “That man who fought in 71 and won/ That man who thrashed away the two-nation theory/ He can never accept defeat at the hands of 47.”<sup>87</sup> In other words, “1971 challenged and rejected 1947.”<sup>88</sup> But it is worth noting that 1971 became a necessity because of the ways in which 1947 remade the social and political environment of each of Pakistan’s wings. Further, there are distinct narrative parallels in the ways that both experiences are remembered and retold: like Indian Muslims, East Pakistanis were marginalized by a group with greater political power (if not numerical); East Pakistanis sought compromise with Sheikh Mujib’s Six Points, as the Muslim League did in the Cabinet Mission; the West Pakistanis, like the Indian National Congress, dismissed these efforts, shut down talks, and forced a catastrophically violent division that resulted in triumphant, though troubled, “liberation.”

The independence of Bangladesh is widely believed to have presented the major substantive challenge to the “Two Nation Theory” that had become the basis of the demand for Pakistan. This is the suggestion that there were irreconcilable and fundamental differences between Muslims and Hindus that created an impossible situation for cohabitation. It was not possible for Hindus and Muslims to live together,

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<sup>86</sup> Guha Thakurta, "Uprooted and Divided."

<sup>87</sup> Taslima Nasreen, "Poems on Partition," *Ibid.*, no. 510 (2002).

<sup>88</sup> Cited in Jasodhara Bagchi and Subhoranjan Dasgupta, "The Problem," *Ibid.*, no. 510 (February 2002).

or—despite a history to the contrary—peacefully to govern one another. This latter suggestion, of course, really only means that it would be impossible for Muslims to be governed by non-Muslims, as it was precisely the history of Muslim governance over non-Muslims that gave substance to the Muslim reformers’ aspirations to power. How persuasive was the Two Nation Theory in the minds of young Muslims who desired the fulfillment of Pakistan? Combined with their existing perceptions about the injustice of Hindu power—facilitated by Jinnah and the Muslim League in the late 1930s—the Two Nation Theory gave a name to their perception of difference from majority Hindus that had been quantified in census and political data since the late nineteenth-century.

However, in many interviews, there is a persistent desire to recover Hindu-Muslim amity. In India, this impulse finds a home in the Indian national story of “composite culture” that deploys evidence of hundreds of years of Hindu-Muslim cohabitation that is best articulated in Jawaharlal Nehru’s *Discovery of India*. With reference to Bangladesh, Hindu-Muslim harmony is elevated as an indicator of difference between the cultures of East and West Pakistan. The Bengalis were early and ardent supporters of the Pakistan Movement, primarily because there was an already established struggle between Hindu landlords and Muslim farmers. The Pakistan demand politicized and communalized this struggle; young Muslims recognized its priorities and were drawn into its fold. However, when it became clear, particularly after 1952, that West Pakistani rule had displaced British and Hindu domination in East Bengal, the East Pakistanis made a similar push for parity under the law as the Muslim League had made in British India.

For many narrators, this challenge to Pakistan's founding narrative is a bit sad, rather than triumphant. As Anwar Ahsan Siddiqui suggested in an interview collected in Karachi by Ahmad Salim, the independence of Bangladesh was "a tragic event and it tore the two-nation theory into pieces and along with it, the hearts of its people. The fact is that the two-nation theory forwarded in 1947 became the basis of Pakistan; suddenly no life was left in it. And Hindus did not do it; Muslims finished it by themselves."<sup>89</sup> Anwar Ahsan Siddiqui went on to say that "unity forged on the basis of religion, race or nationalism is a false unity" because the "real issues were economic" and created conflict between the interests of special groups, especially landlords, and the wider public.<sup>90</sup> Tahira Mazhar Ali of Lahore agreed that Pakistan was created for economic reasons, but she recognized in Bengali resistance an important opportunity to build solidarity with East Pakistan, rather than as an unpatriotic challenge to Pakistan's very foundation.

In the face of the oppression in East Pakistan she called a meeting of the Anjuman-e-Taraqqi Pasand Khawateen (Association of Progressive Women) to protest the army action. Her views were unpopular in Lahore at the time, she said, and "people spat on us and called us traitors. We were arrested and my house was ransacked."<sup>91</sup> When pressed by the authorities to apologize for her behavior she argued that it would be too shameful to acquiesce to the injustice of army action in East Pakistan. Narrator Sayeed Hasan Khan in Karachi felt it was a "tragedy" that resulted in the infertility and

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<sup>89</sup> Anwar Ahsan Siddiqui, Karachi in Salim, ed., *Reconstructing History: Memories, Migrants, and Minorities*, 58.

<sup>90</sup> Anwar Ahsan Siddiqui, Karachi in *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> Tahira Mazhar Ali, Lahore in *Ibid.*, 68.

barrenness of contemporary Pakistan. Whereas Bengal and Sindh had “contributed the most in the creation of Pakistan,” the Bengalis were treated as “traitors.”<sup>92</sup> Whether they see it as a betrayal or a failure, all recognize that the 1971 independence of Bangladesh was not in the original plan.

In contrast to the sense among Pakistani narrators that leaving India represented no “loss,” the conflict with East Pakistan cannot be seen as anything but a loss. The “loss of East Pakistan” remains the most humiliating moment in Pakistan’s short history, almost totally excised from official memory. It represents a fundamental failing of Pakistani masculinity, and cannot be easily incorporated into a narrative of national triumph.

Whereas Bengalis today are triumphant, Pakistanis increasingly point out that Bangladesh is doing better than Pakistan, and this is used as evidence that the idea of Pakistan has been fully, and perhaps finally, degraded. As Mr. Salman Khaliq of Lahore, who was Senior Superintendent of Police in East Pakistan in 1971 wished, “I want to visit Bangladesh. I want to tell them that the Bengalis did not leave us. We left the Bengalis. We could have had a great country, instead now we have a terror ridden and a divided country.”<sup>93</sup> As the Bangladeshis create an intimate link between the outcomes of 1947 and 1971, drawing attention to the structural similarity, so too, Khaliq draws the outcome of 1971 onto the stage of the contemporary. The relevance of Pakistan’s founding

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<sup>92</sup> Sayeed Hasan Khan, Karachi in *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>93</sup> Mr. Salman Khaliq, Lahore in *Ibid.*, 109.

narrative provides a site for contestation not only over the meaning of the past, but perhaps most significantly, as a site for examining the present and even the future.

This challenge to the founding narrative of Pakistan creates a complicated relationship to the past. Whereas many Pakistani narrators were deeply hesitant to confront the issue of “loss” with regard to India, they remain deeply injured by the “loss of East Pakistan.” It seems that when, as young men, the contributors to this project chose Pakistan, they chose the opportunity of fulfilling the promise of the Muslim solidarity agenda, and chose to leave behind the challenges of exclusion that they feared in an independent India, and as members of a permanent minority.

Ironically, it was the establishment of a territorially defined nation-state, designed to ensure the political survival of the Muslim nation conceived of by Sir Sayyid that forced the profound disruption of Muslim institutions: educational, cultural, and religious. In relocating the Aligarh community outside of the physical space in which its values were embodied, the “dense networks of interrelationships that defined the particularities of place”<sup>94</sup> were dislocated and de-emphasized. With this in mind, the Aligarh Old Boys Associations of Pakistan and also of Bangladesh have made the (re)creation of such an institution their primary agenda.

All of these examples draw out the continuing relevance of the identity politics legitimized by the partition of India and their influence on formations of identity throughout the subcontinent. I have referred to these ongoing contestations as the

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<sup>94</sup> Gilmartin, “Partition, Pakistan, and South Asian History,” 1090.

“partitioning” of the subcontinent, situations born of the original “Muslim Question” that not only was not solved by the 1947 Partition, but that, in fact, grew out of it. In order to understand the persistence of these questions about the relationship between identity and the state it is important to recognize the importance of partition’s influence on South Asian identity-making. In the case of Aligarh, the institution’s values, long hailed as progressive, have been deployed in the development of exclusionary narratives of belonging that both represented the necessity of an independent homeland, and then led to its demise. The logic of the Two Nation Theory that suggested a broad homogeneity among Muslims and fundamental difference from Hindus proved incapable of incorporating variations of practices among Muslims in diverse regions of the subcontinent. Similarly, despite the broad inclusivity of India’s “composite culture” narrative, Muslims present a persistent problem. That Muslims have been slower to develop than other minority groups is a self-fulfilling prophecy of the Muslim League argument of Muslim exclusion. Whereas Aligarh Muslims are in many cases best equipped to achieve success, they continue to identify with a narrative of Muslim marginalization in India. Frequent episodes of communal unrest throughout India have meant that the tenuous status of Muslims—exemplified by their anxiety on the day of Mahatma Gandhi’s assassination—persists in some measure in daily life. Muslim loyalty continues to be suspect and Muslim success far from guaranteed.

The unsettled nature of these questions about belonging illuminate the need to expand our lens as we examine the outcomes of Partition/partitioning in the subcontinent. We cannot isolate the contemporary politics of hatred and exclusion currently being

played out in the subcontinent from the identity politics that created the conditions for the 1947 partition. In all three post-partition states diverse groups compete for space and recognition; even as they do they develop exclusionary narratives that drive other groups out. The 1947 partition radically altered South Asian subjectivities, and its aftermath life in South Asia has been characterized by a long series of “partitionings,” that demand further exploration.



## Conclusion

### Aligarh University after 1947

The Aligarh Muslim University, with its connections to both Pakistan and Bangladesh stands as a powerful symbol of the contested citizenship of Muslims in India.<sup>1</sup> AMU represents both a place where Muslims can safely express themselves educationally and culturally, and a place where they are isolated from Indian society and politics. Its political history has vexed its position as the center of Muslim opinion and left it at the center of debates about Muslim loyalty. This complexity forms an important aspect of AMU's legacy in South Asia, and provides a lens for examining the position of Indian Muslims. Aligarh is implicated in a complex matrix of historical, ahistorical, communal and secular forces in which it functions sometimes as a center and other times as a margin. My conclusions here examine some of the assumptions inherent in narratives that seek to railroad Aligarh's legacy to one side or the other.

The standard story about the Aligarh Muslim University, told by its advocates, places it as the center of education, organization and uplift for South Asia's Muslims. This narrative, however, relies on a problematic, ahistorical elision that obscures the changes that have taken place there since the end of the nineteenth-century. Most discussions of the institution at Aligarh conflate the early period when Sir Sayyid and his cohorts operated the Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental College with the period after 1920

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<sup>1</sup> Heads of state in all three countries, as well as other leaders, have passed through Aligarh University. For example, India: Zakir Husain (President), Hamid Ansari (Vice-President); Pakistan: Liaqat Ali Khan (Prime Minister), Khwaja Nazimuddin (Governor-General, Prime Minister), Ghulam Mohammad (Governor General); Bangladesh: Muhammad Mansur Ali (Prime Minister), M.A.G. Osmani (Leader of Bangladeshi Liberation Forces);

when an Act of Parliament elevated the institution to become The Aligarh University. While this elision may seem harmless, it has very real historical consequences for our understanding of the role of Aligarh in Indian politics and whether it is seen as a center of Muslim education and culture—critical to Indian life and the maintenance of its values— or as a center of Muslim life only—specifically of Muslim separatism—therefore marginal in independent India. The insistence of Aligarh’s well-wishers that it remains a critical site of Muslim opinion endangers it in the public sphere where for many others, including politicians, Aligarh is little more than a distracting irritation despite attempts to “nationalize” it after 1947. Aligarh’s legacy in India is viewed through its place as a former and potential center of Muslim politics, and its position outside the center of Indian life which has been facilitated both by the actions of Aligarh well-wishers and its critics.

In the context of nineteenth-century India Sir Sayyid’s vision to bring modern education to the “backward” community of North Indian Muslims has been conceived as liberal. His willingness to incorporate English and to look outside the traditionally narrow boundaries of Islamic education represented by the Deoband school were undoubtedly progressive, but in many ways, Aligarh’s political environment was defined by its conservatism.<sup>2</sup> Sir Sayyid sought to preserve the influence of Muslims in India by nurturing an elite class qualified to take up government posts, and to represent Muslims in local government. His sights were set on the public services, and many of his wards

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<sup>2</sup> I refer here to a Victorian conservatism: concern with proper upbringing, elegance and decorum that found sympathy with the traditional values of the Muslim elite. This conservatism was not necessarily religious. Though the university’s identity revolves around Muslim-ness, much evidence reveals that not only were students not driven by issues of faith and devotion, but they often interacted with their religion largely through its public rituals. In other words, it was less important to pray as a spiritual imperative than it was to be seen praying, as a disciplinary one.

went on to pursue careers there.<sup>3</sup> Sir Sayyid and his compatriots argued for a separate examination for Muslims seeking positions in the services, and this movement led into a later demand for separate electorates. Though he claimed his agenda to be purely educational, Sir Sayyid continually sought political protections for Muslims. He endeavored to carve out educational, political, and social space for them even as British fears over Muslim loyalty threatened to erode it away.

Though Sir Sayyid died several years before the 1906 founding of the Muslim League in Dhaka, many of his collaborators in the Aligarh project were among its founding members. This created a tight link between the priorities of Muslim political organizing and the Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental College, later the Aligarh Muslim University. The tendency to examine the League, the institution at Aligarh and the Pakistan demand through the lens of the outcomes of 1947 has obscured the fact that the League was not always a separatist organization, and the University students and faculty were not always in solidarity with the League. As I have shown, it was not until the late 1930s that students and faculty were drawn to the League's agenda, having previously been largely in sympathy with the anti-imperialist motives of the Indian National Congress (even this nationalist sentiment marks a break with the British loyalism of Sir Sayyid). Aligarh's priorities were always driven by the concerns of its local environment: anti-imperialism was driven by discontent with British staff, League sympathy was driven by the perception of Congress Ministry abuse of Muslims enshrined in the Pirpur Report, and the demand for Pakistan found support at Aligarh in the context of the

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<sup>3</sup> So powerful was this agenda that as late as 1998, M.N. Farooqi reflects that "The maximum goal to be achieved was success in the IAS [Indian Administrative Service] and IPS [Indian Police Service] examinations, and it continues to remain so." M.N. Farooqi, *My Days at Aligarh* (Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delli, 1998), 20.

institution's historical values of Muslim solidarity and support. To view Aligarh University through the static lens of 1947 is to freeze it in time, to disregard the environment of active debate and to imprison the institution's future within the anxieties born of only one of its important political moments.

In the memory of the larger Indian public, however, the significance of the events of 1947 overshadowed all of Aligarh's earlier history except its first few years. And it is here that the elision of MAO and AMU takes on significant meaning. The legacy of the 1940s and the participation of so many Aligarh students in the demand for Pakistan has permanently tainted the Aligarh Muslim University in the public eye as a hub of anti-national activity, hidden its history of communal harmony and tolerance (even in 1947 the Aligarh campus was quiet), and, oblivious to the conditions of its founding, linked it permanently to the specter of Muslim separatism. On the other hand, Aligarh insiders cast 1947 as "exceptional" and seek to link AMU today to the values of its founder with his progressive educational agenda, to reach back to a more perfect time. As they try to establish their nationalist credentials they lionize Sir Sayyid as a representative of India's "composite culture," a great secularist who advocated peaceful co-existence of the two major communities. Both tendencies obscure the dynamic environment at Aligarh where opposing ideologies often emerged out of the same foundation. It was not without contestation that supporters of The Muslim League, The Indian National Congress, and the Communist Party co-existed at Aligarh, but a failure to recognize the possibility does damage to the complexity of Aligarh's legacy.

The trends in Aligarh itself since Independence have perfectly established the tension between center and margin. Since 1947 it has been the explicit and determined

efforts of the central government to fund AMU that have kept it running, and attempted to save it from the stigma of its intimate association with the Muslim League demand for Pakistan. As Violette Graff observed, “Aligarh has become a key-symbol [sic] of the not altogether easy relationship which has developed between the Government of India and its secular policies on the one hand, and the *Millat* on the other hand.”<sup>4</sup> The tensions at the heart of this relationship are those that complicate the position of Muslims throughout India. The government is responsible for ensuring the equitable treatment of Muslims, but it must always appease the sensibilities of the majority community. Disproportionate demands for recognition by Muslims raise anxieties over the potential for the development of a separate identity. Anxieties over Muslim power are linked immediately to the outcomes of partition and must be carefully handled.

There is a contingent of alumni who continue to argue that Aligarh should be granted a special “Minority Character” enabling it to provide additional reservations for Muslim students. The outcome of the efforts in favor of the Minority Character would be to create—or to preserve—a realm created by and for Muslims, free of the meddling of outside forces. It would create “a protective nest”<sup>5</sup> that some would say was Sir Sayyid’s intention when he founded the MAO College.

The demand for “Minority Character” brings many of the tensions underlying Aligarh’s relationship to the Indian state and other communities to a head.<sup>6</sup> Aligarh Muslim University is one of India’s twenty Central Universities, a designation that

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<sup>4</sup> Graff, “Aligarh’s Long Quest for ‘Minority’ Status: A.M.U. (Amendment) Act, 1981,” 1771.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 1779.

<sup>6</sup> Violette Graff’s close study of the Demand for Minority Character exposes many of the issues at stake. My review here is deeply informed by her study and by that of Theodore Wright. See also Theodore P. Wright Jr., “Muslim Education in India at the Crossroads: The Case of Aligarh,” *Pacific Affairs* 39, no. 1/2 (Spring- Summer 1966).

indicates its incorporation by an Act of Parliament and marks it as a recipient of funding through the University Grants Commission. Such central universities have a provision to “reserve” seats for students from certain low caste and tribal communities, who are assumed to come from a low Socio-Economic Status, and therefore deprived of many educational and employment opportunities. In some cases, Muslims are included in the “Other Backward Castes” category, thus giving them an advantage in admissions. However, there is a large faction within the Aligarh Community that desires Aligarh to be kept apart, as an institution with “Minority Character,” and to be a special preserve of Muslims, with a 50% reservation for Muslims across the board. Keeping in mind that a large percentage of Aligarh’s student body is comprised of “internal” candidates—those students who have attended an Aligarh University affiliated secondary institution like the City High School or Aligarh Women’s College—the vast majority of Aligarh students are Muslims. The extension of the reservation implied by the push for “Minority Character” would go even further to exclude non-Muslims from the institution.

This demand for separate consideration reinforces the anxieties about Aligarh’s relationship to the “separatist” Pakistan demand and draws Aligarh University into the public eye, where it comes under attack by those with a communal outlook. As recently as August 7, 2010, IBN Live ran a story entitled “AMU Falsely Claiming to be a Minority Institution” that referred to the BJP allegation that Aligarh’s claims to Minority Status are precluded by its status as a Central University and its history of being incorporated by an act of Parliament—not by the actions of the Minority Community—and that it is thus delinquent in fulfilling reservations for SC/ST/OBCs. Opponents of increasing reservations for Muslims, commonly known as “Minority Character,” say that

because AMU was founded by an act of Parliament, and not by a minority community itself, it is not eligible for additional reservations. Here we see the reduction of AMU's significance to the bureaucratic instant of the university's creation and the disavowal of Aligarh's history beginning with the MAO College.

As we have seen with the debates around the release of the Babri Masjid Verdict in late 2010, the Aligarh community itself is not unified in its perspective on the value of Minority Character. This conflict is linked to the tension between those Muslims who would seek to blend into India's broader secular public by limiting the demands that they place as a community on the central government, and those who suggest that Muslims are already "marked" by virtue of their faith, and therefore deserve special protection and services from the government. The tension here has been present in various guises since the earliest years of the MAO College's existence when there was no consensus on the value of maintaining a close tie with the British government. Some Aligarh partisans admired the system of support developed in Deoband, where the institution was supported purely by donations from the Muslim community.<sup>7</sup> The debates and disagreements over government loyalty came to a head during the demand for the Muslim University, and it was the incorporation of the University by an Act of Parliament during the height of the nationalist movement that remains at the heart of the current debate.<sup>8</sup> Aligarh had long survived with some government support and some support from the community, but it had always remained apart from the world of India around it, an isolated environment whose residents developed familial bonds with one

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<sup>7</sup> Minault and Lelyveld, "The Campaign for a Muslim University, 1898-1920."

<sup>8</sup> K.N. Wanchoo et al., "S. Azeez Basha and Anr Vs. Union of India on 20 October, 1967," (New Delhi: Union of India, October 20, 1967).

another, and a sense of difference with the worlds—defined by status, faith and region—around them.

As Professor Asloob Ahmad Ansari told me in the summer of 2008, Aligarh has always been somewhat isolated from other institutions in India. The demand for “Minority Character” would deepen that difference, a move that is distasteful to many onlookers whose attitudes towards Aligarh have not softened much over time. In the final assessment, there are several aspects of its identity that keep Aligarh apart from the world outside. The relationship between Aligarh and the Indian state has deteriorated since the years immediately following partition when Zakir Husain brought his nationalist credentials to the institution and, with the government’s support, restored its academic standards.<sup>9</sup> The persistence of anxieties surrounding the university’s very existence has resulted in its marginalization as a whole.

Proponents of Minority Character defend it because they do not see any other institution making an effort for Muslims. This problem has persisted over a long period of time. Mohiuddin Khan of Dhaka credited his interest in Aligarh in 1946 in part to a recognition of the fact that because there were very few reserved seats, he “couldn’t get a seat” in Shibpur Engineering College by virtue of being both a Muslim and a Sylheti.<sup>10</sup> As Theodore Wright has noted, “admitting students and recruiting faculty for Aligarh strictly on ‘merit’ would mean swamping it with non-Muslims without any compensating

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<sup>9</sup> Habib, "Irfan Habib: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas June 28, 2009.", Siddiqi, "Professor Ather Siddiqi (Ret'd): Personal Interview with Amber Abbas May 11, 2009." Graff, "Aligarh's Long Quest for 'Minority' Status: A.M.U. (Amendment) Act, 1981," 1771.

<sup>10</sup> Khan was unable to get a seat reserved for Muslims or for Assamese or Sylhetis in Bengal Shibpur Engineering College. This, in part, he suggested, was because “[the seats] were limited and there was very hard competition... and there was again a difference between Assamese, Bengalis, Hindus and Muslims and all these combinations.” Unable to find a seat in an engineering college in Bengal that recognized either his ability or his religion or his region of origin, Mohiuddin set his sights on Aligarh, where he passed the competition and took his seat in 1946. Khan, "Mohiuddin Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas March 28, 2010."



improvements in Muslim access to other institutions of higher education.”<sup>11</sup> Aligarh has always seen its role as a unique one, designed to serve a particular class of Indians, but after partition, that agenda was called into question.

Throughout the debates on Minority Character that have waxed and waned periodically over the last forty years, Aligarh’s situation has been uniquely problematic. Other institutions have been granted the privileges of Minority Character. Even the Jamia Millia Islamia, founded in part by Aligarh Old Boys, and led for many years by Zakir Husain, was awarded Minority Character in February 2011.<sup>12</sup> The National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions (NCMEI) deemed the Jamia’s appeal legitimate because “The Jamia Millia Islamia Act 1988, codified, declared, confirmed and encapsulated the continuous and preexisting factual and legal position of the Jamia by incorporating the existing institution formally under the Act as a central university.... Thus, the evidence on record clearly proves that since its inception, administration of the Jamia remained in the hands of Muslims.”<sup>13</sup> The Commission clarified that Aligarh’s appeal, on the other hand, has repeatedly been denied in the wake of the *Azeez Bhasha* case in which the Supreme Court determined that “the MAO College had lost its identity by its conversion into the AMU, which was established by the AMU Act, 1920. In the instant case, the Jamia never lost its identity.”<sup>14</sup> It is certainly worth considering the fact that the Jamia Millia Islamia, unlike the Aligarh Muslim University, has an unsullied nationalist pedigree, and though it has sometimes come under suspicion of harboring

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<sup>11</sup> Wright Jr., "Muslim Education in India at the Crossroads: The Case of Aligarh," 61-62.

<sup>12</sup> Aarti Dhar, "Jamia Millia Islamia Declared Minority Institution," *The Hindu- Online Edition* February 23, 2011.

<sup>13</sup> Justice M.S.A. Siddiqui, "Order in the Matters Of: Case No. 891 of 2006, Case No. 1824 of 2006, Case No. 1825 of 2006, ," ed. National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions (New Delhi: February 22, 2011), 52.

<sup>14</sup> Dhar, "Jamia Millia Islamia Declared Minority Institution."

extremists, has no material connection to the separatist politics of India's partition or the taint of British loyalism. In the context of the Jamia's demand for Minority Character, Aligarh alumni again began to consider options for pushing their own demand, and the tension was apparent between the quietists and those who would protest before the Indian parliament.

AMU remains a powerful symbol of Muslim rejuvenation despite the fact that Muslims today face many of the same problems Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan sought to eliminate when he founded the institution in 1875, and despite the factions and differences of opinion and strategy that continue to hound its partisans. It follows that Muslims would seek to protect the institution which they believe was designed exclusively to serve their community. But in a society increasingly focused on assimilation, where nationalism is the new loyalism, this demand smacks of much-dreaded Muslim separatism. The fears of both parties prey on the other, and Aligarh remains caught, no longer "the arsenal of Muslim India" and certainly not, as its well-wisher Mushirul Hasan has argued, "the symbol of Indian secularism."<sup>15</sup>

#### **LOOKING ACROSS THE PARTITION(S)**

In May 2010, I arrived in Pakistan for the final leg of my dissertation research. This visit included both plans to collect oral history interviews and archival materials. Unlike past years, I decided to focus my attention on Karachi, the city where most migrants from North India settled during and after 1947. Karachi, since the 1980s, has been a site of interethnic violence driven by regional rivalries and in 2010 and 2011 had

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<sup>15</sup> Mushirul Hasan, "Introduction," in *Knowledge, Power and Politics: Educational Institutions in India*, ed. Mushirul Hasan (New Delhi: Roli Books, 1998), 15-16.

become the site of political violence (largely between the Pashto-led Awami National Party and the Urdu-led Muttahida Qaumi Movement—formerly the Mohajir Qaumi Mahaz) on a massive scale. As these ethno-political rivalries threaten the functioning of Pakistan’s commercial center and the comings and goings of average Pakistanis (markets and thoroughfares are frequently shut down during periods of unrest), ethnic identity politics are becoming even more deeply entrenched. I spoke with one of my cousins about this during my 2010 visit. His father has been a life-long PPP man—a civil servant—but in 2010, even as the PPP sat in power in Islamabad, I heard his youngest son making a distinction between Urdu speakers and non-Urdu speakers. When I asked him what he was getting at, he told me, “Amber, we are Urdu speakers, see, there is a war on, we have to take sides.” The distortion of Pakistani identity that this fragmentation represents was also troubling the narrators with whom I spoke during that visit. In Karachi more than elsewhere, the pervasive sense of uncertainty overshadowed any other conversation. For those who came to Pakistan to pursue an opportunity for a life without communal strife, the intra-Muslim, intra-Pakistani fighting seemed to threaten the entire project. The sense of disappointment that has colored all of my interviews in Pakistan now became the overarching theme.

After the assassination of Benazir Bhutto in December 2007, I had noticed a significant change in the position of Pakistan’s *mohajirs*, those who migrated into Pakistan in 1947 (this appellation includes the offspring of migrants, now settled in Pakistan for multiple generations). In drawing rooms all over Lahore in the days that followed I witnessed an entrenchment of regional identity. Suddenly, I heard Punjabis conversing in their mother tongue to the exclusion of Urdu speakers in the room. As

violence erupted in Karachi (organized political violence) I heard *mohajirs* in Lahore express fear about “the breakup of the country.” What did they mean? The answer was usually the same: a beloved Sindhi politician was assassinated (likely) by the Punjab-dominated army. This would stir up regional sentiments. If Sindh were to break away, Balochistan would be quick to follow. The Northwest Frontier Province, only nominally under the jurisdiction of the central government had been infiltrated by Al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters (who came in droves after 2005) and instability in the rest of the country would further destabilize the government there. In the event, Punjab still controlled most of the water resources, but the power in Punjab lay with the feudal landlords who would likely tighten their grip on those resources. In short, it seemed, the *mohajirs* would be left with very little of the country. Those who believe themselves to be its “footsoldiers” who “sacrificed” for Pakistan, those who, since their student days, touted the narrative of a progressive, democratic state (even though this dream had long since atrophied), now were confronting the consequences of the inability of the Two Nation Theory to incorporate all of Pakistan’s multiple identities.

It was a sense of betrayed history that motivated much of the critique of the Pakistani state that I heard in Pakistan. The anti-Punjabi bias was significant as narrators blamed Punjabi-style feudalism for hijacking the agenda of democracy. After all, narrators did not hesitate to remind me, Punjab did not support Pakistan until very late in the game. In fact, some argued, Pakistan should have been made in what is now UP and Bihar—where the support for the League’s agenda was strongest. As historian Ahmad Saeed told me in Lahore in 2006, “I am of the view that Pakistan should have been established in C.P. (Central Provinces) in U.P. (United Provinces) because those people

worked for Pakistan. Those people suffered for Pakistan. They could be more loyal than we people living in Punjab, Sindh, NWFP and Balochistan.”<sup>16</sup> Similarly, Aligarhian Pakistanis lament the intrusion of identity politics into Pakistani life. For while the outcome of their “united Muslim” identity politics in India was a new country, the outcome of regional identity politics in Pakistan was the creation of Bangladesh—known in Pakistan as “the loss of Bangladesh”—and the division of the country. They desperately fear a repeat performance.

The overwhelming feeling that comes from this large collection of oral histories, especially in India and Pakistan, is one of anxiety over the position of Muslims and citizens in South Asia today. Surprisingly, in Bangladesh, the youngest of South Asia’s post-partition’s states, and her weakest in geo-political terms, this sense of anxiety was less pronounced. I was especially surprised not to hear any charged anti-Pakistan rhetoric (quite unlike my experience in Pakistan where I heard anti-Indian rhetoric), but rather a sense of disappointment at outcomes that had spiraled out of control. While these narrators described Pakistani oppression and injustice, especially between 1952 and 1970, they did not seem to harbor any lasting ill-will against Pakistanis as a whole.

Rather, they have retained a sense of the legitimacy of the original idea, and a belief that, had it been implemented in the true spirit of Pakistan, as they understood it in Aligarh University, that much of the conflict the subcontinent has witnessed would have been avoided. These are utopian visions, remarkably persistent despite the disappointments of both Pakistan and Bangladesh that Mohiuddin described as he spoke about his feelings upon the 1971 independence of Bangladesh: “Triumph we felt. But

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<sup>16</sup> Ahmad Saeed, "Professor Ahmad Saeed: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas July 20, 2006," (Lahore: July 20, 2006).

then, disappointment in the normal mismanagement of the government; these are the disappointments. But as against the Pakistan movement and all that, we felt that this independence—we were very happy.”<sup>17</sup>

Each group of narrators has defined themselves against the others. They have negotiated national, individual and collective identities to reconcile conflicting histories into a coherent sense of belonging. This process has resulted in the re-writing of their pasts, their relations and their identities and created its own boundaries that incorporate the priorities of collective solidarity that they learned at Aligarh. As much as these narratives of belonging expose partition’s “multiple realities,” they also illuminate a shared yearning for unity.

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<sup>17</sup> Khan, "Mohiuddin Khan: Personal Interview with Amber Abbas March 28, 2010."

## Appendix

### Narrator Biographies and Interview Abstracts

Interviewee: Mr. Ram Advani

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Location: Ram Advani Bookseller, Hazrat Ganj, Lucknow, UP, India

Date: April 4, 2009

Biographical Notes: Ram Advani was born on October 21, 1921. He spent his childhood in Lahore, but attended Bishop Cotton School and Lucknow University. He fled Lahore in 1947, ultimately settling in Lucknow where he opened a bookshop of which he remains proprietor after more than 65 years. He is a friend to many academics and told me “A Bookshop brings people together- you meet so many people in a bookshop.”

Abstract: Ram Advani begins by telling me about his experiences as a young bookseller in Lahore. He fled Lahore during the partition and went to Simla and then to Lucknow; he opened bookshops in both places. During World War II, however, he had been bursar at Bishop Cotton School. His uncle sold the bookshop in Lahore to Ferozesons booksellers, and the store stands today in the same location. He tells me about meeting the Ferozesons Booksellers at the Delhi Book Fair and reminisces about Lahore. He goes on to tell me more about the disturbances in Simla in 1947 and the challenges of opening the shop. He found Simla too sleepy, and therefore moved down to Lucknow to open a shop. He was set to open his shop on February 1, 1948 inside the Gandhi Ashram, but was derailed by Gandhi’s assassination on January 30. In the early 1950s, he shifted to his present location in the Mayfair Building. He briefly mentions his love of cricket and promises more stories on a later visit.

Interviewee: Qazi Moinuddin Ahmad  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Location: Defense Housing Association, Lahore  
Date: May 16, 2010  
RELEASE: ORAL

Biographical Notes: Qazi Moinuddin Ahmad was born in Sikandarabad, District Bulandshahr on January 6, 1929. He had four brothers and two sisters, most of whom remain in Pakistan. His father was Professor Saeeduddin Ahmad and taught Geography in Punjab University. His mother, from Aligarh, died when he was quite young. Qazi Moinuddin studied in the Muslim University High School in Aligarh before shifting to Lahore. He worked for Pakistan and has received a "Gold Medal" from the Nazaria-i-Pakistan Foundation for his work. He lives in Lahore.

Abstract: Part 1: Qazi Moin begins by telling me about his family and his father, a geographer and member of the Boundary Commission. He had taught in Aligarh University from 1934 until 1945 before migrating to "Pakistan" before partition. Qazi Moin spent most of his childhood in Aligarh and has been a Shell Pakistan dealer since 1953. He tells me about his childhood and education in Aligarh. He also tells me about the atmosphere in Lahore before partition, when, in schools, there were more non-Muslims than Muslims. He tells me about his work for the Pakistan movement from his days in the Baccha Muslim League (Children's Muslim League) in Sikandarabad. He tells me about his academic accomplishments and his experience at FC College, as a Muslim Students' Federation activist. Today he is known as a businessman and philanthropist. He had met Mohammad Ali Jinnah in Aligarh, when Jinnah died, Qazi Sahib was "disturbed" and worried about Pakistani leadership. He says, till now, Pakistan has had no such leader. Were he looking down, he would want to see rule of law, good governance, and economic development. Still, compared to Muslims in the "poor country" of India, Qazi Moin believes Pakistanis are advanced. Part 2: Qazi Moin shows me several photographs of himself, and his family and from his career in Pakistan. Mr. Naim tells about the criteria that Nazaria-i-Pakistan Foundation uses to award Gold Medals. Qazi Moin tells me about his wedding in Lahore. Mr. Naim gives his assessment of the current government, and says that Pakistan is still waiting for a leader. Qazi Moin tells me that he is a born social-worker. He feels little connection with Muslims worldwide, or other Muslim countries that do not cooperate with Pakistan. He says that Jinnah promoted hard work among the youth of Pakistan. He says that there was no loss in leaving India apart from the material, which was replaced in Pakistan. Mr. Naim notes that his family left everything in East Punjab and that many became the victims of corruption in the Settlement Dept who did not allot the appropriate value of property to many, including his father. He tells me that the most important things he learned in Aligarh were confidence and broad-mindedness. The three of us speak about the role of Islam in Pakistan. As we close, he misremembers Gandhi assassination, saying that he was a small child in India. [Gandhi was assassinated in 1948]



Interviewee: Shamim and Hamida Ahmad  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Location: Aligarh, India  
Date: November 19, 2009

Biographical Notes: Shamim and Hamida Ahmad are both professors in Aligarh University. Hamida Ahmad is a professor of Psychology. Shamim Ahmad, an engineering professor, served briefly as Vice Chancellor. They live in Aligarh.

Abstract: Shamim Ahmad begins by telling me about the frequency of communal riots after partition which sent Muslims running for Pakistan. Aligarh became increasingly segregated into Hindu and Muslim areas. This all changed in 1971, Muslims realized they had to stay in India. He tells me about the history of the Muslim League activism to protect Muslim interests. Hamida Ahmad speaks about the state of Muslim education in India, and the detrimental impact of the fear of failure among Muslims. She advises that Muslims must work hard to achieve success. Both advocate for the expansion of secularism in India, for the benefit of Muslims. In particular Shamim Ahmad advocates for tolerance, and respect for other opinions. Shamim Ahmad speaks about the hierarchies within Islam. We discuss communal rioting, and the separation between the City and the University. He says that the security forces have become communalized. He notes the link between the Muslim neighborhoods and the Aligarh University. Shamim Ahmad describes his family's hardship during partition. Shamim Ahmad describes his family's nationalist past—on his mother's side, he is related to A.M. Khwaja, Gandhi's close associate. He speaks of the impact of losing the family property. He argues that the university practically saved Muslim education. His father chose not to migrate to Pakistan because he had only minimal education and felt he would not be able to get decent work in Pakistan. Shamim Ahmad speaks of his involvement in the Congress party. Still, he says, he could understand why people migrated to Pakistan in 1947, but since then, he says, there is no reason. He notes how widespread the Aligarh diaspora is, worldwide. He speaks of learning elocution directly from Zakir Husain in the Students' Union. He decries the influence of political parties in the university. He speaks about his tenure as Vice Chancellor and his belief that this figurehead must set an example of humility. He tells me about their charitable work.

Interviewee: Syed Mohammad Ahmad and Farrukh Jalali  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Location: Old Boys Lodge, Aligarh  
Date: May 27, 2009

Biographical Notes: Syed Mohamamd Ahmad (d. December 26, 2011) was a longtime Aligarh personality, having long served as the Assistant/ Acting Public Relations Officer. He retired in 1996. He originally hails from Hapur. His father was killed in a communal riot in 1952. Many called him “Chaccha” or Uncle. He completed his Ph.D. on M. Obaidullah Sindhi after retiring from the PRO office. After his retirement he continued to live in the Old Boys Lodge, with a view of the Aligarh mosque.

Farrukh Jalali is a scholar of Aligarh history. He lives in Aligarh near Muzzammil Manzil.

Abstract: Farrukh Jalali began speaking (in English) before I attached the microphone. As the recording begins, he was telling me about the early years of the Pakistan movement and the “role of Aligarh people.” The students were overwhelmingly Muslim League, a movement inspired by *zamindars*. There was another group that was not interested in these movements. Jalali mentions that it will be hard to find materials about the 1940s because much had been destroyed by Muslim League people after partition. Syed Ahmad weighs in (in Urdu) on the value of biography and autobiography. They refer to me several good resources on Aligarh History. Jalali tells me that his family was from Karachi. We speak about the vilification of Muslims in History, beginning with the British period. Both suggest a wide variety of materials on Aligarh. We discuss scholars that we both know, including my supervisor, Gail Minault. Jalali speaks to me about Nizamuddin Husain Nizami Badayuni (d. 1940) who started a weekly paper in 1903 that persisted until 1919. He also suggests *Musalmanon ka Roshan Mustaqbil* by Tufail Manglori. He refers to M.M. Bashir, a Pakistan worker from 1941-50s.<sup>1</sup> Syed Mohammad Ahmad tells me about his family’s history. Jalali tells me that his family were early supporters of women’s education. We conclude by speaking about more sources for Aligarh history.

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<sup>1</sup> M.M. Bashir was initially given the League ticket for the Assembly elections in 1946.

Interviewee: Dr. Rafique Ahmed  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Location: Nazaria-e-Pakistan office, Lahore  
Date: August 5, 2006  
RELEASE: FULL

Biographical Notes: Rafique Ahmad was born on February 3, 1927 in Lahore. Both sides of his family hail from the old city of Lahore and he spend his childhood there. His father, Mohammad Siddique was a businessman. He owned the Punjab Stores provisions store in Tollington Market on the Mall in Lahore. The store served locals as well as foreigners and the military. Rafique Ahmed completed his M.A. in Islamia College in 1948 and went abroad to complete his Ph.D. from Oxford University in 1956. He returned to Pakistan and began teaching in Punjab University. Eventually he became Vice Chancellor of Islamia University-Bahawalpur, where he established the campus. He helped to establish the Nazaria-e-Pakistan Foundation in 1999. He lives in Lahore.

Abstract: Dr. Rafique begins by telling me about the nationalization of the colleges under Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's semi-socialist regime and how this led to decline in the educational standard in the institutions. He tells me about his father's business concerns in Lahore and the establishment of Tollington Market. He describes the tussle in his family over his decision to pursue his studies, rather than business, which he tempered by staying involved with the store even as he studied for his M.A. and pursued research in economics. He details his career path in Punjab University and other educational institutions in Pakistan. He speaks about the challenges associated with establishing the Nazaria-e-Pakistan foundation as an independent foundation, free of government meddling. He compares this experience to that of Pakistan Television where their speech is circumscribed by their relationship to the government. He describes at length his memories of the 1940 Muslim League meeting where the Pakistan Resolution passed, and other memories of the Pakistan movement and Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah. During the 1947 partition he, and other students, helped to manage the incoming refugees and he also describes the atmosphere in Lahore at that time, and the burning of Shahalmi Gate. He gives a long exposition of Muslim Nationalism, the origin of which he dates to Allama Iqbal's 1930 speech. He also traces the development of the Two Nation Theory and the origins of Muslim separatism. He blames the policies of the British and Hindu discrimination for the creation of Pakistan, and says the best monument to the triumph of Pakistan would be good education. He adds that to some extent the visions of Jinnah and Iqbal have been fulfilled, through development of Muslims, but suggests that there will always be more to do. He describes the aims of the Nazaria-e-Pakistan foundation and the need of good leadership, like that of Jinnah, to keep Pakistan going in the right direction.

Interviewee: Professor Mohammad Akhtaruzzaman

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Location: Department of Islamic History and Culture, Dhaka University

Date: March 10, 2010

RELEASE: ORAL

\*This interview was not recorded.

Biographical Notes: Akhtaruzzaman was born in Borguna, in southern Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) in 1961. His father was a teacher who later became a politician, and his mother was a housewife, but had a primary education. He has two brothers and three sisters. Akhtaruzzaman completed his B.A. and M.A. in Dhaka University before he went to Aligarh Muslim University in 1995 to study Medieval History with Iqtidar Husain Siddiqi. He is currently Chair of the Department of History in Dhaka University.

Abstract: Professor Akhtaruzzaman begins by speaking about his decision to go to Aligarh University to study Medieval Indian History because it had the best reputation. AMU is revered in Bangladesh and about 90% of the students are Muslims. He says that although there were non-Muslims at the University, they “were not as happy.” He speaks briefly about the town-and-gown relationship and the tension over Aligarh students supporting the Pakistan cricket team against India. He speaks of many other regional and international groups at the University who struggled with its identity. He addresses language issues at Aligarh. He speaks about his own educational experience and why he prefers to live in Bangladesh. Then he speaks briefly about his memories of the struggle for the liberation of Bangladesh and finally about how the standards of education at Aligarh have declined precipitously.

Interviewee: Professor Mohammad Amin  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Location: Oxford Apartments, Patpar Ganj, New Delhi  
Date: November 5, 2009  
RELEASE: FULL

Biographical Notes: Professor Mohammad Amin was a student in Aligarh during the 1940s but was not active in League election work. He later became a Professor in St. Stephen's College of Delhi University where he taught for over forty years. He became a well-known medieval historian. He is also the father of Shahid Amin, a historian in Delhi University.

Abstract: Professor Mohammad Amin begins by telling me about his early career at St. Stephen's College in Delhi, where he was referred by Dr. Mohammad Habib. He speaks of the importance of History as a discipline, and the different approaches to writing history. He speaks about his early religious education and his father's intellectual bent, unusual in the Police! He describes the Liberal History Department at Allahabad University and the "Red" History Department at Aligarh. Professor Amin tells me that he and his brother were the first in their family to attend AMU—his brother later shifted to Pakistan. He remembers the influence of the Muslim League during the 1940s and the students' electoral activities. After independence, he said those who had associated with the Muslim League were made to "pay a price." The Muslim League met very little opposition, but he also does not recall feeling coerced into Muslim League electioneering. He critiques the narrative of Muslim decline from a historian's perspective, then, after a break, he returns to speaking about Aligarh. He describes a sense of euphoria in Aligarh, a feeling that the institution had a role in determining the destiny of the country. He describes the atmosphere at Aligarh in 1947, and the fear the students experienced. He makes a direct comparison to the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi to show the impact of violence on Muslims. He speaks of Gandhi's influence in ending partition violence. He describes Zakir Husain's influence at AMU. He goes on to describe his own transition to St. Stephen's, where he taught for his entire career. He refers to provincialism at AMU, the role of Islam there and concludes by criticizing the anxiety about the singing of the Indian nationalist song *Vande Mataram*, arguing that "Iqbal's *Tarana* is on par and sung more often because it is easier!"

Interviewee: Professor Asloob Ahmad Ansari

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Location: "Gulfishan" Aligarh

Date: June 5, 2008

RELEASE: FULL

Biographical Notes: Asloob Ahmad Ansari was born in Delhi in 1925. He passed his Matriculation from Government High School, Delhi in 1939. He joined Aligarh Muslim University in the Intermediate Class the same year. He completed his Intermediate in 1941, went on to earn a First Class degree in his B.A. and B.Sc. Examinations in 1943 and earned a University Gold Medal. He also won the Marris Prize for the best marks in English in both examinations. During his tenure as a student at AMU, he was an active speaker in the University Union and won several prizes for his writing and speaking both inside and outside the university. He lived in Aftab Hostel. In 1946 he completed his M.A. in English and was appointed lecturer in the Dept of English at AMU. In 1946 he left for Oxford, earning an Honors degree in English Language and Literature. After returning from Oxford he was appointed Reader and later Professor. Professor Asloob Ahmad Ansari retired in 1987 and lives in Aligarh.

Abstract: Professor Ansari began by telling me about his early education and arrival at AMU where he eventually became a professor. His family is from Kashmiri Gate in Delhi, but most of his family was educated in Aligarh. He describes living in Aftab Hostel and participating in the Union where he was considered "a very good debater" though he doesn't remember any specific details about the issues under debate. He claims to have had no particular political allegiance during his student days, and remembers that Aligarh was peaceful during the partition days, which he attributes to its isolation and distance from New Delhi. Though he chose not to migrate, all of his siblings did go which created some disruption in the family relationships. He tells me that his two daughters also teach in the Aligarh University. He remembers the *pardah* (seclusion) arrangements when girls first started taking classes in the university, until partition when *pardah* ended. He describes his early Islamic education, and the orthodox atmosphere in his home as a child, and he still considers himself devout. He sees himself as a Muslim first, then an Indian, then as a Citizen of the World! He feels the most important thing about Aligarh "is to know what Sir Syed stood for" because he was "the greatest benefactor of Muslims."

Interviewee: Wing Commander M.A. Baaquie

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Location: Dhaka, Bangladesh

Date: March 22 and April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Biographical Notes: M.A. Baaquie was born on Friday Dec. 28, 1917 in Fardabad, Pargana Bardakhat in Comilla. His father was Hazrat Shah Sufi Moulana Muhammad Ali Akbar and he was educated in Islamic Theology and secured Title degree from Alia Madrassa. M.A. Baaquie attended Aligarh Muslim University before joining the Pakistan Air Force.

Abstract March 22, 2010: Wing Commander Baaquie begins by telling me about his three children, and apologizes for his failures of memory. He speaks at length about his son Bilal's educational experience and success. He describes his own experience getting out of his village to go outside for education in science. He was admitted to Dhaka College in Physics Honors. Later, he left for Aligarh University. He mentions the political environment in the country at the time, with two major parties. The Aligarh students were enthusiastic about the Muslim League, which they saw as the only organization representing Muslims. The League planned its meeting in Aligarh while he was there, in 1941. Baaquie was discouraged by his mentor from attending the conference or getting involved in politics. After that, he was only indirectly involved in politics. In the Pakistan Air Force, he was the senior man from the East wing. He describes how he was implicated in the Agartala Conspiracy Case and his relationship with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. During the war, he was called for military service and he was selected for the British Air Force. He served briefly in Burma. In 1947, he opted for Pakistan. He speaks about his experiences in the Air Force and his forced retirement. He says he suffered discrimination for being a Bengali, from "way back" in matters of seniority. He returned to East Pakistan/ Bangladesh as a civilian. He supported the liberation of Bangladesh and especially Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Abstract April 7, 2010: This is my second interview with Wing Commander Baaquie. Part 1: I read his book *British Bengal to Bangladesh* and wanted to follow up on a few things. He begins by speaking about his father's emphasis on education. His own goal was to get the best education he could get and remain to serve his country. He speaks of his dedication to his "soil" and fighting for East Pakistan and later Bangladesh. He speaks about the separation of Pakistan and Bangladesh and the legacy of the Muslim League. He describes his attachment to a brotherhood of Muslims and the fact that the "Hindu Indian Congress" was responsible for alienating Muslims and forcing the 1947 partition. He speaks of the importance of good leaders, not just Mohammad Ali Jinnah, but especially A.K. Fazlul Haq and Liaquat Ali Khan. Baaquie's memory falters as he describes his experience at Aligarh, but he suggests that the value of the experience there was not educational. Rather it generated prestige for a group of students, especially sports captains, and that Bengalis were excluded from this. Part 2: Baaquie speaks about his

involvement in the freedom movement—this part is difficult to follow—and his relationship with fellow Aligarian M.A.G. Osmani. He concludes by describing his efforts to found the Retired Armed Forces Association.



Interviewee: Anonymized as CSI  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Location: Aligarh, India  
Date: June 16, 2009  
RELEASE: REQUESTS ANONYMITY

Biographical Notes: CSI was born in August 1923; his family were large landholders. He began his school in 1933 in the Minto Circle School. After completing his education he took over responsibility for the affairs of his family's state until 1952 when large estates were abolished, though he still manages some orchard operations there. During his stay at the University he supported the Muslim League, and although his elder brother migrated to Pakistan, he did not follow. He had been in poor health and preferred to stay nearer to home. He has remained in his family home in Aligarh and is frequently invited to preside over occasions at the university.

Abstract: CSI begins by telling me about his childhood and the lifestyle of a landowning family. Before the abolition of zamindari, he cared for the properties. Today, he still manages the orchards, though most of the property is gone. He still feels wronged by the abolition, claiming that his family was not abusing the system, and they lost a lot. He speaks about his son's accomplishments. He goes on to emphasize the character building agenda of Aligarh University. Still, he tells me stories about his mischevious behavior! He speaks about the highly honorable behavior of his tutors who refused to accept payment for supporting their students. Today, he says, tutors make a living from this extra help. He tells me about the decline of values in modern society. Though he was not a sportsman in Aligarh, he, like his father, is an avid hunter. He says that a consequence of partition for India was that the "Hindu-Muslim question came" after 1947. He tells me about his father. He speaks about the creation of Pakistan and the hardship for Indian Muslims. He tells me about his visit to Pakistan, where his daughter lives. We turn off the recording as he takes me to see the gallery of photographs from the 1940s hanging in his house.

Interviewee: Mahmood Ali Khan Chaudhry (d. May 29, 2011)

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Location: Lahore School of Economics, Lahore

Date: July 4, 2005 and July 6, 2005

Biographical Notes: M.A.K. Chaudhry was born in Wazirabad in 1923. He was the second youngest with six brothers and a sister. He spent his childhood in Wazirabad and Jullunder. He studied in Mofussil College in Ludhiana. He was commissioned in the British Indian Army in 1944. He served in Burma during World War II. His family, in India, was known for its support of Pakistan, and suffered somewhat for this. Thus, his whole family migrated to Pakistan. He was an important public figure in Pakistan. He served as Inspector General of Police in East Pakistan in the 1960s and Director General Federal Intelligence Agency and Interior Secretary in the 1970s. After being retired by General Zia, he took up a law practice in Lahore in the late 1970s and in the 1990s he became the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Lahore School of Economics.

Abstract July 4, 2005: M.A.K. Chaudhry begins by telling me about his experiences during World War II in Burma as a Second Lieutenant and the challenge of adapting to the Army way! He describes his fear of Japanese atrocities—some thought they were cannibals—especially in Korea. In fact, they found the Japanese very docile, crushed by the famine and occupation. Chaudhry tells about the deception that he used to get back to New Delhi, by claiming he was carrying important dispatches. He describes his difficulty in migrating to Pakistan. He was aided by a Hindu officer whose father had been killed in Lahore, but upheld the British Indian Army standard of camaraderie. Initially, he says, those morals came into Pakistan, but have since declined markedly. He found his brother, a foreign service officer, posted in the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi. Though his brother wanted him to stay to help with refugees, they were living on meager rations and MAK said he'd rather go directly to Pakistan! He found his family in Lahore, they had come by train from Jullunder. He goes over some of the history of the Indian independence movement, beginning with "Quit India" and the subsequent closing of recruitment to the superior services by the British. All vacancies were then reserved for those who rendered war service, and it was under these auspices that Chaudhry joined the army, later joining the Civil Service. He speaks in "stray thoughts" about the standards Jinnah set in his leadership, but decries his expertise. He speaks about his own father, a businessman, who came from a Hindu background (four generations back, his family converted to Islam in Jaipur), and was settled in Jullunder. He describes his old home in Jullunder, and the challenges of surviving after his father's death. As we close, he tells me about his posting in East Pakistan until 1953, during which time he became close to the Bengalis, speaking and writing their language. He describes them as "good Pakistanis."

Abstract July 6, 2005: M.A.K. Chaudhry tells me about his deployment in East Pakistan from 1948-1953 when he noticed that the Hindu population was uncomfortable. He

speaks about the historical system of land tenure that had hurt Muslims. He also notes some details about caste oppression there. Though Muslims were liberated by partition, the language problem persisted, because although Urdu was a universal language of Muslims, it was only minimally spoken in East Pakistan. Jinnah thought it was a “neutral” language, not belonging to any province, but this “irked” the Bengalis, provoking language riots. He reviews the history and major events in the conflict. He returns, then, to the 1940 Lahore Resolution and the mention of “states.” He also mentions the 1953 Lahore riots against Ahmadis/Qadianis. The army learned then, that the police were relatively docile, excepting the Border Police, who were heavily armed. In 1958 the Border Police were incorporated into the army, eliminating their threat to the army and fortifying the army’s power. However, he says, few resisted the 1958 martial law. He then tells me about 1971, when he was Inspector General of Police in the Northwest Frontier, but after the police “ran away” in East Pakistan, General Yahya asked him to go and raise a police force. He found only a few officers there and resistance from the *mukti bahini*. He speaks at some length about his experiences in East Pakistan and the challenges he faced there. M.A.K. Chaudhry was taken prisoner after the loss of the war, and he was held in India for two years. In his interrogation he was asked, “Why didn’t the Pakistan Army fight?” But he protested that he knew little about the army. He feared being taken to Delhi Fort where he “knew what happened” but he was saved by another officer’s declaration that Chaudhry was a “stubborn son-of-a-bitch” who wouldn’t talk no matter what! After 1971, he testified to the Prime Minister that Pakistan should recognize Bangladesh in order to mitigate Indian influence there. He tells me more about the police administration in Pakistan and the reforms under the Pervez Musharraf government, making the police more “people friendly.” He says the imposition of martial law in 1958 was the low point in his career. He speaks about his wife’s family and heritage in Punjab. He also speaks about his own family and early education. He speaks about the difference between the imperial police and the British police (in England). In England, they represented and defended the people, in India, they represented and defended the colonial power. This system, inherited by Pakistan, served the landed interests and not the people. As we close, he mentions that he prays regularly, but does not consider himself devout. His service, he says, is through promoting education, especially for those without resources. His priority is to inculcate a sense of fairness, and honesty and not bending before injustice. He praises his family for their unflinching support even in periods of difficulty and illness.

Interviewee: Saima Choudhri  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Location: Dhaka, Bangladesh  
Date: April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010  
RELEASE: ORAL

Biographical Notes: Saima Choudhri is a female poet originally from Sylhet, where she was born in 1930. After fourth class she shifted to Calcutta. She completed her Intermediate degree before marrying Waheeduddin and he supported her as she completed more education later. She has published several books of poetry. She lives in Dhaka.

Abstract: Saima Choudhri begins by describing her early education. She had some religious training as a child, guided by her mother who was semi-literate. Her mother was highly supportive of education, so much so that Saima continued her education even after her marriage. She went to school to a Muslim girls school in Calcutta during Partition. She describes the disruptions of the 1946 riots. Her father was a Muslim League leader and after partition the family shifted to Dhaka where she completed her education in Eden College. Initially, she says, she supported Pakistan, but in reality it was not good for Bengalis. By the late 1960s she began to support Bangladeshi independence. Independence, she argues, gave her children space to express their talent. She concludes by speaking briefly the war and about her children.

Interviewee: Engineer Waheeduddin Choudhri

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Location: Dhaka, Bangladesh

Date: April 6, 2010

RELEASE: ORAL

**Biographical Notes:** Waheeduddin Choudhri was born in Sylhet. He attended Aligarh University for engineering from 1946- 1949. He held Leftist sympathies and was active in the student movement. He settled in East Pakistan and became an engineer for the government. He later supported the movement for the independence of Bangladesh.

**Abstract:** Waheeduddin Choudhri speaks to me about his early education and attending Aligarh for Engineering. He describes the political atmosphere there, his leftist sympathies, and the fact that the Muslim League dominated the environment there. He speaks about the arrangements for girls in the university, though there were none in engineering at that time. They used to look for the girls in the annual exhibition! He details at length the troubling train journey from Sylhet to Aligarh during the 1946 Calcutta riots. When he finally arrived in Aligarh he felt safe in the university. This story becomes a thread throughout the interview, and he focuses on the personal disruption caused by the riots. He describes the role of Aligarh's leadership in stewarding the institution through partition, and the fluidity of his politics—though he was a leftist he supported a United India, but settled in (then) East Pakistan. He concludes by sharing his perception of the conflict between East and West Pakistan. The army was responsible for the tension, and even the murder of Liaqat Ali Khan in 1951—a moment he identifies as critical. The idea of Pakistan was good, but in its execution, it failed.

Interviewee: Salahuddin Chowdhury

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Location: Dhaka, Bangladesh

Date: April 10, 2010

RELEASE: ORAL

Biographical Notes: Salahuddin Chowdhury was born in Sylhet in 1928 and was the youngest of six siblings. He passed his matriculation from Sylhet Government High School in 1943 and got his Intermediate degree from Sylhet College before setting out for Aligarh. In Aligarh he lived in Sir Syed Hall. He passed out of Aligarh in 1949. Chowdhury left for Scotland in 1949 to study jute technology at Dundee Technical College. When he returned to then East Pakistan in 1953 he worked four years in the Adamjee Jute Mill. Then, from there, he went to Bhawani Jute Mill. Since his retirement he has consulted for the World Bank.

Abstract: Salahuddin Chowdhury begins by telling me about his early childhood in Sylhet where his father was small zamindar. His wife's father also had a tea garden, and she is his cousin. He goes on to speak about Aligarh University, how distant it was, and how it was difficult to adjust to the food. Luckily, there were other Bengali boys there who received him and helped him to get settled. He also remembers that at Aligarh, they were "very particular" about the prayer, and he served as a prayer monitor. He never experienced any discrimination in Aligarh, and he was a supporter of Muslim League politics, though he never participated in Union debates, he was attracted to the strong sense of community in the university. After finishing in Aligarh in 1949 he went on to Scotland to complete a degree in Jute Technology. He worked in this field in East Pakistan and Bangladesh for his entire career, passing up an opportunity to work abroad so that he could be closer to his family. He insists that prior to 1947 and prior to 1971 he was not involved in politics, but felt supportive of independence in both cases. He speaks briefly about his work with the World Bank and the careers of his children.

Interviewee: Mrs. Fatima Minhaj Fari Rahman

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Location: G.O.R. #6 College Road, Lahore, Pakistan (2008) and Islamabad (2010)

Date: January 4, 2008 and May 10, 2010

RELEASE: FULL

Biographical Notes: Fatima Fari Rahman was born in Sheikupura in Punjab. After her father's early death her family moved to their hometown of Aligarh where she grew up and completed her education in the Abdullah College and Aligarh Muslim University. She completed her M.Sc. in Chemistry in 1948. She taught for several years in the Women's College and later completed her Ph.D. in Organic Chemistry at the University of London. She got married in 1961 and moved to Pakistan where her husband, a Pakistan Army Officer was stationed. She was the only female co-founder of the Sir Syed Memorial Society in Islamabad.

Abstract January 4, 2008: Dr. Fatima Fari Rahman begins by speaking about her early childhood and the premature death of her father, after which she and her sisters moved back to Aligarh with their mother. She describes her post-secondary education in Chemistry, and then speaks about her travels all over India with her sister Tahira. They traveled by train. She describes the importance of Aligarh in her family, and its centrality in their lives, though she has returned only rarely since her mother's death. For her, a teaching job in Aligarh just after graduating with her degree gave her a sense of having "arrived." She speaks briefly about partition, her migration to Pakistan after marrying a Pakistani army officer, and the disturbances in Aligarh during partition. She tells me about the anxieties Muslims experienced when Gandhi was assassinated; traveling by train; the disruptions of partition and the atmosphere in Aligarh Women's College. She speaks about the *burqa* the girls were required to wear. They still played sports: badminton and volleyball. All of her five sisters were highly educated at their mother's urging. Since the founding of Pakistan, she says, things have changed for the better for women, but she laments the disunity; people thought that Pakistan would be a paradise.

Abstract May 10, 2010: Dr. Rahman first describes the location of her home in Aligarh, and speaks about moving between the women's college and men's university during her post-graduate classes in chemistry. There were only two girls in her class. They were in the first batch of women in Aligarh. She had to wear the *pardah* at the university. The chairman of her department was a very liberal person and he used to tell her to go out without her *burqa*. Once she entered a government college, post-graduation, she did not wear the *burqa*. She started lecturing in 1956. As her family was from Aligarh, she lived in her house and not in the hostel. She describes her decision to pursue sciences. Then she speaks about her involvement in Muslim League activism, spurred by female League workers. The girls used to go into Aligarh city to speak with women about Pakistan. She speaks about traveling as a single woman and coming back from England to teach boys in Aligarh! She compares the position of Muslims in India and Pakistan, suggesting that

Muslims still face problems of acceptance in India. Then she speaks about partition's disruptions, and traveling around the country for Science Congresses. We speak about Pakistan, Jinnah's virtues and the challenges of leadership. Then she tells me about bringing her mother to Pakistan and surreptitiously changing her nationality when she had not wanted to leave her hometown, her motherland. For the last several minutes we chat about life in Aligarh, my stay and my family's background and she gives me the contact information for many of her old friends and relatives in Pakistan and India.



Interviewee: Dr. Aijaz Fatima

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Location: Ziauddin Hospital, North Nazimabad, Karachi

Date: May 25, 2010

RELEASE: FULL

Biographical Notes: Dr. Aijaz Fatima was born in New Delhi on December 31, 1927. Her mother died when she was two years old and she spent her childhood amongst various relatives in UP, before her father called her to Aligarh when she was twelve years old. She has two sisters and one brother, but they all grew up in different houses with different relatives. Her father, Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad was Vice Chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University. She sometimes attended classes at the Aligarh Women's College, and completed her Intermediate from there before shifting to Lady Hardinge College in New Delhi from where she earned a Medical degree before shifting to Pakistan.

Abstract: Dr. Fatima begins by describing her early life and education after the death of her mother. As a child she lived with relatives around the United Provinces. She then describes her return to Aligarh and her secondary education. She speaks about her father's death in 1947 and his burial in Aligarh, in a place of pride next to Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, the university's founder. She describes her father's approach to leadership—he maintained an open door policy—and as a hospital administrator she has tried to adopt the same policy. She speaks about her father's close relationship with Muslim League leaders, but then declines to speak about the idea of Pakistan. I asked her more about her education in Aligarh, and she describes the atmosphere of equality in the Aligarh Women's College and the particular aspects of that environment. She speaks about shedding the *burqa* when she was a student in Lady Hardinge Medical College, and how important it is for her to “show your identity.” She describes her family as “conservative” and says they were practically all “forced” to shift to Pakistan in 1947. I raised the topic of Bangladesh and she asked me to turn off the recording again. She goes on to speak about her sister's involvement in political activities, and the celebrations for independence. She speaks about her comfortable relationship with Hindus, but describes the devastation partition created in Delhi. We speak about leadership, her mentors, and the relationship between Pakistan and Bangladesh. We touch on gender in Aligarh and then continue talking about Dr. Fatima's career. She speaks about education for girls in India and the challenges they still face, especially in Pakistan. She argues that terrorism is the biggest challenge Pakistan currently faces. She describes the hardships Muslims face in Pakistan. We conclude by chatting about my research.

Interviewee: Professor Irfan Habib

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Location: Center for Advanced Study, Dept of History, Aligarh

Date: June 28, 2009

RELEASE: FULL

Biographical Notes: Irfan Habib was born in Baroda in 1931 but grew up primarily in Aligarh where his father had been a professor since the mid 1920s. Habib began his education in Zahoor Ward and then onto Minto Circle and the Muslim University High School. His family was staunchly nationalist and close to both the Nehru Family and Mahatma Gandhi. He was a Leftist student leader at Aligarh and went on to become a professor of History there after completing his D.Phil at New College, Oxford. He is currently Professor Emeritus, having retired in 1991. Nearly every day Professor Irfan Habib returns to the History Department at AMU and continues to guide students and discuss politics with his old colleagues.

Abstract: Irfan Habib begins by telling me about his parents and his early life and education in Aligarh. He emphasizes the “nationalist spirit” there. Under the Congress Ministry in UP the educational curriculum was brought into line with Gandhi’s Wardha scheme by K.G. Saiyidain and others, so he says he had a good, nationalist education. Even when the League held sway at Aligarh they were powerless to change this. He speaks of the disruptive tactics of the Khaksars; the growing tensions between Hindus and Muslims in the late 1930s and his father’s relationship with Jinnah. He notes that the Muslim League leaders were not overly devout, that Jinnah couldn’t even pray, whereas Muslim nationalists were known for their religious observance. The Muslim League, he says, were not “religious jihadis.” Still, he describes being bullied by them, and then his father sent him away to boarding school. He tells a story of his father bringing a prominent atheist to give a talk in AMU. He says he didn’t have a clear idea about Pakistan because he was only a boy. He remembers Jawaharlal Nehru’s visit to their house one afternoon for lunch. He speaks of his father’s influence, especially with the League, though he did not support their politics. Rather, his father was a Marxist and a nationalist. He describes a riot involving Aligarh students in 1946. Irfan Habib remembers hearing Khaliquzzaman, his father’s cousin, suggest that Pakistan was no more than a bargaining chip in the independence negotiations. He speaks of the pain at his own brother’s departure for Pakistan in the 1960s. He tells me that Aligarh was only minimally disrupted during partition and credits Gandhi’s assassination with fueling the recovery and nationalist turn. He says most AMU students had their eyes on Pakistan until the mid- 1950s at least. He speaks of Aligarh traditions and how much has changed since 1947. He mentions Vice Chancellor Ziauddin and his role in facilitating Muslim League action at AMU. He concludes with memories of his friend Satya Bhushan.

Interviewee: Colonel Mohammed Hadique

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Location: Karachi, Pakistan

Date: May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Biographical Notes: Mohammad Hadique was born in 1947 during the time of partition in Assam. Because his father, Mohmmad Siddiq, was in the Railways and he was posted there. A month after the partition took place they went to East Pakistan. He grew up in East Pakistan and graduated from Dhaka University in 1969. And then he joined the Pakistani army and relocated to West Pakistan. His father and his uncles were killed during the war in East Pakistan. His mother and sisters escaped and crossed over to India and went to Nepal. From Nepal they went to Karachi in West Pakistan. He has six sisters all of whom are very successful and educated. His mother was very adamant about education for her children. He started his education in Bengali medium then he went to an Urdu medium school where he took his Matric exam.

Abstract: He briefly summarizes his family's experience in East Pakistan and the death of many relatives after he joined the army in 1970 and went to West Pakistan. Even today, the family's property is held by the Bangladeshi government. He speaks about his parents, and his mother's emphasis on education. Though his father did not know Bengali, his mother could understand, and much of Colobel Hadique's early education was in Bengali medium. He describes the emergence of the Bengali/Urdu divide in the late 1960s. He believes Sheikh Mujib is a good orator, but a mediocre leader. He describes the exploitative attitudes of West Pakistanis towards East Pakistan and hurtful economic policies. He speaks about the responsibility for the civil war that led to Bangladeshi independence and blames Zulfikar Ali Bhutto for the conflict. He speaks about Bengalis and non-Bengalis in the army, and different customs. Pakistani Muslims, he says, are better off because they know that they are free. Indian Muslims live under threat, but Bengali Muslims have an advantage because of the unity of their culture and religion. Pakistan is too fragmented and has no unity. He speaks about these difficulties, and why they still won't drive him to migrate out of the country. He speaks about his post-army career in oil and gas. He concludes by telling me about his hobbies, and speaking about the differences in character between East Pakistanis (humble, friendly caring) and West Pakistanis (the opposite).

Interviewee: Mrs. Zahra Haider  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Location: Lahore, Pakistan  
Date: June 28, 2005

Biographical Notes: Mrs. Zahra Haider was born in Dehra Dun. Her father's name was Yaqoob Shah and her mother Zohra Shah. She was raised in Lahore by her Aunt because her mother was unwell. Her father was the Auditor General of Pakistan. He was posted for two years in Washington as Pakistan's representative to the World Bank, and took his family along with him. She married Khurshid Haider. General Haider died a few years before this interview. Currently she lives in Rawalpindi, Pakistan with her son Mohsin and his family.

Abstract: Zahra Haider begins by speaking about her early childhood in Lahore and her mother's illness. Her adopted mother was very fond of Jinnah and took her to listen to him. Zahra became aware of the movement for Pakistan as a young girl and felt that if Muslims had an independent country that it would be a bit better. She tells me that she was in Murree during August, but that when she returned to Lahore in September she found her college, Kinnaird College, closed and many of her friends planned to migrate. The Muslim girls who remained volunteered in the refugee hospitals instead of going to school. She describes the difficulties in early Pakistan, and the violence in the trains—her mother was briefly stopped in a train—and describes the migration story of her own family and her husband (who brought my father from Aligarh to Lahore). She speaks about students electioneering activities and processions in Lahore. She describes her experiences on hearing of the deaths of John F. Kennedy and Mohammad Ali Jinnah then she details meeting her husband and his career trajectory. She speaks about ethnicity and language and assimilation in Pakistan. She says that although he says her prayers regularly, she does not consider herself devout. Also, she tells me that while she considers herself Sunni (as do both of her daughters-in-law), her husband was Shia and so are her sons. She emphasizes the value of tolerance in their family so this never caused conflict. As we conclude she leaves a legacy for her grandchildren that they should be honest and honorable and love their country and put the country's priorities above their own.

Interviewee: Sayyid Hamid  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Location: Talimabad, Delhi  
Date: October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2009  
RELEASE: FULL

Biographical Notes: Sayyid Hamid was born in Faizabad near Lucknow in 1920. He did his early education in Western UP. His father, Sayyid Mehdi Hassan, was a police officer. His mother was a housewife. He completed a B.A. in English Literature and M.A. in Persian from Aligarh University. He joined the Uttar Pradesh Civil Service in 1943 and was later selected for the Indian Administrative Service. He was in the UP cadre. He is a former Vice Chancellor of Aligarh University. He was in Aligarh twice for two five-year terms. The first was from 1937 to 1942, as a student, and later as Vice Chancellor from 1980 to 1985. Currently he is Chancellor of Jamia Hamdard University in Delhi. He still goes to the office even though he is of retiring age.

Abstract: Sayyid Hamid begins by telling me about joining the Indian Administrative Service in 1943 through competitive examination. He was posted to the United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh). He later become Vice Chancellor of Aligarh University and noted that normally the administrative service officers were not supposed to head a university, but Aligarh's tumultuous environment necessitated the posting of required service officers. Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister at that time and she sent him to head Aligarh. He tells me that he was not very politically involved as a young man (his memory is also fading). At Aligarh, he lived in Aftab Hall because of his academic achievements. He says that he had no interest in Pakistan, though one of his brothers decided to settle there. He has visited Pakistan a number of times, mostly in his official capacity, on trade delegations. He notes that Muslims remain impoverished and poorly educated in India and Aligarh suffers from the stigma of its association with Pakistan. He notes that there was always a nationalist contingent at Aligarh throughout the 1940s. In conclusion, he remembers the influence of his teachers at Aligarh and his gratitude to them.

Interviewee: Professor Masood ul Hasan

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Location: Sir Syed Nagar, Aligarh

Date: March 20, 2009 and May 1, 2009

RELEASE: FULL

Biographical Notes: Professor Masood ul Hasan was born in Moradabad in 1928. He completed high school from Hewat Muslim High School. His father was an employee of the Municipal Board. He completed his F.A. (Intermediate) from Government Inter-College, Moradabad. He studied in the Aligarh Muslim University from 1943 to 1947 where he completed his B.A. and M.A. in English Literature. He completed his Ph.D. in Liverpool while he was appointed as a Reader in the Department of English at AMU. He retired from AMU in 1988 after serving as Professor of English, Chair of Department of English and Dean of the Faculty of Arts. He also served as the Proctor of the University. He continues to live in Aligarh, in Sir Syed Nagar.

Abstract March 20, 2009: Professor Hasan begins by describing his own educational experience at Aligarh University, which he joined in 1943. He describes Ziauddin Ahmad's reputation for absentmindedness, and illustrates it with a couple of anecdotes. He goes on to speak about many of the professors and readers who were in AMU when he was a student, including their own academic pedigrees, and whether or not they migrated to Pakistan. He describes the influence of Mohammad Ali Jinnah in the University Court, and the organization of academics. He also covers the University School and City High School, and the effect of the war on AMU and its faculty. He describes his early years in Moradabad. He speaks about his family and his own academic background, as he chose English as his degree and received some recognition for his analysis of John Donne's imagery. He completed his Ph.D. from Liverpool. In conclusion he briefly speaks about his wife, and we make plans for a second interview.

Abstract May 1, 2009: Professor Hasan begins speaking about Saeeda Apa, one of the first women to attend classes in the Aligarh Muslim University. He recommends some further reading for me and we speak briefly about sports at AMU and other resources for my research. He speaks about his experience living in Aftab Hostel, admissions, and details about the disciplinary environment. He speaks about the organization of food, cleaning, and other domestic necessities in the hostels. He never played sports in AMU, however, he was a side-backer and socialized in the cafes. He speaks about some of his old friends, and what the atmosphere was like in hostel and in classes and in the Union. He frequented the Union library, and was considered persuasive in English, so he supported various candidates. He begins to discuss at some length his involvement in Muslim League electioneering but gets very agitated when I ask follow-up questions. He describes this period in his life as having been governed by "youthful enthusiasm." He then goes on to describe his experience on the day of Gandhi's assassination and how frightened he was to be traveling, lest he be discovered as a Muslim.

Interviewee: Vice Admiral Iqtidar Husain  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Location: Naval Housing Colony, Karachi  
Date: December 13, 2009  
RELEASE: ORAL

Biographical Notes: Iqtidar Husain was born in Aligarh in July 1936. He was the twelfth or thirteenth of his mother's children, the last surviving, and therefore the youngest. (My grandmother was the oldest) His father was Iftikhar Husain and his uncle was Fasahat Husain. His mother's family were landlords near Hapur. Iqtidar began his education at the Government School in Aligarh, a mixed educational environment. He migrated with his family to Pakistan in 1947, when he was only ten years old. His family settled in Lahore, and he had increased success in academics. He got a First Division in his Matric and tutored his younger cousins (including my father, who is his nephew) in math. After his twelfth grade he joined the Navy and was sent to England for training, where he married his Pakistani Christian wife.

Abstract: Vice Admiral Husain began by telling me about his birth and early childhood and home in Madar Darwaza/ Tamboli Para, Aligarh, India. The street was later named after his grandfather, Amjad Ali, a lawyer. He describes the geography of the home and where different branches of the family lived. His father was fond of entertaining in his home in the evenings though he remained a "remote figure" to his children. He remembers how much fun he and his siblings and cousins had playing cricket and flying kites. Unlike his elder siblings, he was not sent to the Minto Circle School because his father felt that academics were underemphasized in favor of extra-curricular activities. He walked to school each day and remembers the trials of walking two miles loaded down by books until his brother learned to ride a bike. He remembers how the tensions and occasional violence grew between Muslims and Hindus in the 1940s. He describes his father's representation to the Cabinet Mission. He describes his mother's family near Hapur. He describes Aligarh's culinary culture: kebabs, parathas, and sweets. He studied the Qur'an at home under the supervision of his mother and with the aid of a local maulvi. He also describes his father's conversion and the mixed nature of his family—both Sunni and Shia. His family observed the "occasions" of both sects, though as Hindu-Muslim tensions increased, they were exacerbated by public celebrations. Suspicion fell on Iqtidar's father Iftikhar for being a leader of Muslims, and "pressure started building" and the family decided, led by the eldest brothers and cousins, to shift to Pakistan. Iqtidar describes the family's migration in a military truck in October 1947 and the efforts of the neighbors to prevent them from leaving (or trying to go along!). He describes his family's effort to find a house in Lahore; they settled at 47 Jail Road without any beds or other furniture. He describes the money problems and the way the family worked together to get settled and regain a sense of normalcy. He describes his education in Lahore where he joined Government College, Lahore. After twelfth grade he joined the Navy. He concludes by describing my father's departure for the United States in 1958.

Interviewee: Colonel Nayyar Husain

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Location: Lahore

Date: May 16, 2009

RELEASE: ORAL

Biographical Notes: Nayyar Husain was born in Aligarh on January 16, 1936. His grandfather was Syed Tassaduq Husain, head of Intelligence in British India. His father was Syed Fasahat Husain, who studied in Aligarh Muslim University and was Captain of the Aligarh University Cricket Team. Nayyar Husain had ten brothers and sisters, most of whom were born in India. He did his early education in Aligarh before migrating to Pakistan in 1948. He was commissioned in the Pakistan Army in 1958, the same year that his father passed away. He married Roshan Abbas (my father's elder sister) and had four children. He retired from the Army as a Colonel and went on to serve in Fauji Fertilizer before retiring in Lahore.

Abstract: Colonel Husain began by speaking about his father's experience at Aligarh University as a student and sportsman. He speaks about the popularity of cricket both in the university and outside. As a boy, he used to play on the lawn of his home in Aligarh, which he describes in detail. He moves on to describe his own childhood in Aligarh, attending City High School before shifting to Bulandshahr, Bihar and later migrating to Pakistan in 1948. He speaks about his awareness of the movement for Pakistan as a child, saying he "always knew" Aligarh would not be part of Pakistan. He describes Muslim alienation from power, Hindu discrimination and the role of Congress in creating the conditions for Pakistan. He describes his neighborhood as "mixed" and "congenial" except during riots. Still, he says that there was a lot of killing and Muslims were always vulnerable which is why his family left for Pakistan. He speaks about the importance of English under the British and the role of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan in supporting Muslim education. He describes his family's experience of migration by plane from Aligarh with only a suitcase after many of his older relatives had already gone, especially those in the military. He is one of the few Pakistanis who describes the difficulty of finding work in Pakistan, and a sense of loss for connections left behind. He remembers Lahore when he first arrived and also his childhood home and memories of Aligarh. He describes, at length, the sweets he remembers: gazak, shahi tukra, faluda, etc. He describes his experience as a cricketer, playing on the national team, and the decision to remain in the army instead of becoming a professional cricketer. He speaks about our common family (He is my father's cousin and also the husband of my father's elder sister). He mentions his childhood friend Niranjana Lal, and suggests that he would be a good connection in Aligarh, because he cannot recognize the pictures I have brought of his home there. He describes the property that he remembers, which has changed markedly now! He goes on to describe the disruptions of partition and the role of individuals in helping one another to get through it. He concludes by describing the friendly relations between his family and Hindus, free of bigotry.



Interviewee: Major General Wajahat Husain (Ret'd)  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Location: 100 Park Lane, Lahore Cantonment, Pakistan  
Dates: 2005-2008  
RELEASE: FULL

Biographical Notes: Wajahat Husain was born in Aligarh where his family lived in the city on a road named after his grandfather. Wajahat did his early schooling in Minto Circle School and the Muslim University City High School before he began his university education at Aligarh Muslim University. He passed out from AMU in 1944 and volunteered for the Air Training Corps' in 1945. He was decommissioned at the end of the war and joined the Indian Military Academy in Dehra Dun. He passed out from there in 1946. Husain opted for Pakistan, but first served on the bilateral Punjab Boundary Force before settling in Pakistan and serving in Guides Cavalry. He also served as ADC to General Gracey, the second Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan Army. He later served Pakistan as Ambassador to Greece and then Australia. He lives in Lahore.

Abstract June 13, 2005: General Wajahat Husain begins by describing his early life in Aligarh, with his family. He talks about his education in the Minto Circle School and Aligarh Muslim University. While there, he was able to meet Mr. Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the founder and father of Pakistan, also known as Quaid-e-Azam, on number of occasions. He recalls the political milieu in India at the time and how Pakistan came into being. He talks about his decision to join the army and the major influences on that decision. Finally, he discusses his decision to opt for Pakistan and briefly describes some of his experiences on the Punjab Boundary Force.

Abstract June 14, 2005: General Wajahat Husain talked primarily about the Punjab Boundary Force, its aim, its tactics, and the traumatic events of the Partition. He describes how he was able to help his family to leave India and to come to Pakistan as well as the aid provided to him by other officers in the Indian and Pakistani armies who arranged for transport. He concludes by describing the Golden Jubilee reunion of his class from the Indian Military Academy Dehra Dun.

Abstract June 16, 2005: General Wajahat begins by speaking about the development of communal or ethnic identity amongst Indian Muslims and the early years of the Pakistan Movement in Aligarh. He describes his personal visits with Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Jinnah's views on governance, religious conservatism, and the future of the Pakistani state. He moves on to the rise of religious conservatism in Pakistan, the influence of Zia ul-Huq's policies and the history of communalism and class tension in India. He describes the role of the British Indian army when it is called "in aid to civil power," and his training in preparation for that event. He describes the traditions of excellence and judiciousness in the British Indian Army and its effect on the relationships between officers and enlisted men. He describes at length the problems within the Pakistani state in terms of

governance, education, and civil administration. He closes with some more thoughts on Jinnah's relationship to the army, its importance, and the development and effect of communal and sectarian identity between Muslims and the tensions that have arisen in Pakistan between Sunni and Shi'a communities.

Abstract June 18, 2005: General Wajahat speaks about his time as ADC to General Gracey in 1948-49. He describes in detail the day-to-day responsibilities of the ADCs, their relationship to Gracey and to other important country builders at the time. He described Gracey's unfailing dedication to the Pakistan Army, the long hours he worked, and Gracey's desire to raise a professional army. He further describes Jinnah's role and his relationship to the army. He goes on to describe the two leading officers of the early 1950s, General Iftikhar and General Sher Khan who looked poised to take over after Gracey's departure, but were killed in a plane crash, opening the door for Ayub Khan to become Chief of the Army. He closes by describing how supportive General Gracey was of him personally and how they maintained a relationship after Gracey left Pakistan. He maintained an interest in the Pakistan Army and its development, and even predicted Ayub's takeover 3 years before it actually took place!

Abstract June 21, 2005: Husain begins by speaking about the conflict in Kashmir that has persisted since 1948. He describes the "tribal incursion," the Indian army's response and Mohammad Ali Jinnah's stunned reaction because he "had not been informed of the operation." Jinnah and the Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan Army, General Gracey, formulated Pakistan's response without engaging the regular army. He says that the Kashmir issue is important because of water and strategic defense. Although it is a drain on Pakistan's resources to fight for it, he says the fight is worth it, and that a sovereign Kashmir is not sustainable. He lays the blame for partition at the feet of the Indian National Congress but argues that partition was inevitable. He goes on to tell me about the deaths of Jinnah in 1949 and Liaqat Ali Khan in 1951. At the national level, this led to a vacuum of leadership. He describes the relations between India and Pakistan and the series of crises that beset Pakistan in the early years. He speaks at some length about General Akbar Khan, one of the accused in the 1951 Conspiracy Case, and describes his lavish social life and Wajahat's own brush with the conspiracy!

Abstract June 23, 2005: General Wajahat continues his discussion of the Pindi Conspiracy Case and its effect on army morale and discipline. He discusses at length his experience during the 1958 martial law and the activities of his regiment in Rawalpindi and their responsibilities as martial law administrators. He then discusses his course at Fort Knox, in Louisville, KY, USA. He talks about his impressions, his friends, and institutionalized racism in the 1950s. He was welcomed warmly by the Americans, though he often found them ignorant about his country and lifestyle. He compares and contrasts his many educational experiences in training courses around the world. He concludes by discussing an experience in 1959 when an Indian airplane penetrated

Pakistani airspace on 'Id day and he was sent to recover the Indian officers who had been ejected from the plane.

Abstract June 27, 2005: General Wajahat discusses his marriage, his relationships with his in-laws and their political history. His father-in-law Mr. Amjad Ali was very well connected politically, having been a member of the Unionist Party in the Punjab and the Muslim League. When General Wajahat met Talat, his wife, her father was serving as Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States in Washington, D.C. He discusses the property that his father-in-law provided for them at the time of the marriage, its fate, and some of their experiences early in their marriage. He concludes by discussing his role and his father's role in resettling refugees and their refusal to accept bribes of choice land, preferring instead to allot the property to the displaced persons.

Abstract June 29, 2005: General Wajahat talks about the early days of the Kashmir situation including the circumstances and tactics by which it was started and his involvement when he was ADC to General Gracey. He fielded the telephone calls from the Indian Commander-in-Chief to negotiate the cease-fire and he describes that experience and the events that led up to it. He talks about building the infrastructure of the army in the wake of the Kashmir dispute and the strain that the conflict put on resources. He goes on to talk about what it means to be a soldier, to fight for your country, and what it means to be a Pakistani. He concludes by talking about the meaning of martial law and how it was administered during different regimes.

Abstract June 30, 2005: General Wajahat tells more specifically about the events that took place when martial law was declared in October 1958, his role as a martial law administrator, and his relationship with his brigadier. He then talks about the origins of corruption in the civil service and why the common people were ready for martial law. He discusses the success stories of the martial law. He discusses at length his interactions with Zulfikar Ali Bhutto from the time Bhutto was a young man, until he was in Yahya Khan's Cabinet. He goes on to talk about his experience as a Special Envoy, hand-picked by President Yahya to secure arms agreements from Turkey and Iran during the 1971 War. He describes in detail his visit to Tehran to secure aid.

Abstract July 7, 2005: General Wajahat speaks in detail about his experiences during the 1965 War with India. He expands upon his thoughts about a solution to the Kashmir dispute and considers the history of that conflict. From here he discusses Pakistan's strategic alliances and the lessons that Pakistan learned about them as a result of the two wars fought with India during this period. In the wake of my interviews with M.A.K. Chaudry we have a lengthy conversation about the role of the military and police and their relationships under martial law. He then talks about the origins and ubiquity of corruption, and the problems with the civil bureaucracy in Pakistan and its role and relationship with the military, particularly under martial law. He concludes by talking about Pakistan's priorities and concerns in 1947 and 1948.

Abstract July 8, 2005: General Wajahat begins by outlining the political forces that came into conflict in the period after the 1965 War with India and that led, in his opinion, to the 1971 War and the “loss” of East Pakistan. He describes his mission during the 1971 War as a special delegate to Turkey and Iran attempting to secure war supplies. He discusses the effect of US and Russian allegiances during that conflict, and Pakistan’s surprise and the failure of their trade partners to follow through with providing supplies. General Wajahat concludes by speaking about Zia-ul-Huq’s government takeover. He describes in detail his relationship with Zia-ul-Huq throughout their careers, which ran roughly parallel, though Zia was slightly senior. He describes Zia’s fear that Wajahat would pose a political threat due to Prime Minister Bhutto’s admiration. General Wajahat then describes how their relationship changed when he was sent to Greece and Australia as Ambassador.

Abstract July 10, 2006: General Wajahat tells me about his work on the Punjab Boundary Force under General Rees and Colonel Bell. He describes the breakdowns in communications and chain of command that plagued the boundary force during the disruptions to civil power and in the police in the Punjab in 1947. He describes operations evacuating Muslim refugees from East Punjab and the relative preparedness of Hindu refugees leaving the west. Both groups were beleaguered, but as the columns of refugees passed one another on the road, no fighting broke out. He describes the difficulty of working with the refugees with limited resources and manpower. He moves on to speak about the meaning of independence. He concludes by discussing his mission to Turkey to secure military aid for Pakistan during the 1971 war, and his disillusionment at the failure of Pakistan’s allies to come to her aid.

Abstract July 11, 2006: General Wajahat begins by speaking about Saudi Arabia’s King Faisal. We quickly shift to discussing life in Aligarh and he tells me about his father’s social relations with Muslims and Hindus. He describes his neighborhood and the fact that the university, and the university mosque, though farther away than the main city mosque, felt like the center of their world and it was there that they went for the important ‘Id prayers. He tells me about his life as a “day scholar” at Aligarh and what the environment was like including what courses he studied. He lauds the academic environment of the university, naming several well-known professors. Unfortunately, he says, nothing similar exists in Pakistan. He notes the atmosphere of tolerance at AMU and the difficult decision its professors faced at partition when they were torn between their desire for Pakistan and their loyalty to the institution. He speaks about the role of Aligarians in Pakistan and the fact that the political parties that represent *mohajirs*, or migrants from India do not seem to incorporate the progressive values of his generation of Aligarians. He suggests that although his family gave up a lot to get to Pakistan, they did not miss India or feel a sense of loss. He speaks of Pakistan as a land of opportunity and outlines the origins of provincialism and sectarianism. He says that Pakistan needs a renaissance and the force that should draw Pakistanis together as one is the resistance to

Islamic fundamentalism. As we close he speaks about the importance of commemorating the sacrifices people made during partition and for Pakistan. In conclusion, he argues that August 14 is the *real* independence day and that the celebration of March 23 as Republic Day is misleading and possibly shines too much attention on the idea of the “Islamic Republic.”

Abstract January 7, 2008: Wajahat Husain begins by telling me in some detail about the annual Exhibition in Aligarh, and its role as a major social event, one where young men could sometimes catch a glimpse of young women! Another special attraction was the food, kebab and paratha. I asked him about the *purdah* arrangements in the classroom, and he told me more about how the girls had a separate entrance and sat in the back of the class in the graduate classes. He describes the tradition of *purdah* in India and his own family’s progressive approach to *purdah* and his mother’s rejection of it. This was significant because, in his mind, Aligarh represented a progressive Muslim outlook. He speaks of Jinnah’s visits to Aligarh, where he stayed at Chattari Manzil, and would sometimes meet with the students. He speaks briefly about Hindu students in the law classes, though none of them were his friends, and they lived in a separate hostel. He tells me about evacuating his family from Aligarh, where communal tensions were rising, after his experience on the Punjab Boundary Force. When he returned to his regiment in Ahmednagar, he found a changed environment and felt excluded, grateful to be opting for Pakistan. He discusses the conditions under which the Boundary Force was formed, and the challenges of authority and management that it faced. He tells a story about evacuating refugees from a camp in Jullunder under Colonel Bristow during flood conditions. He mentions Bristow’s Book, *Memories of the British Raj*.<sup>2</sup> He suggests that when I am in Aligarh I should try to understand the situation now, and the relationship between Aligarh and Pakistan. We speak about his old colleagues and friends from East Pakistan in preparation for my visit there. He especially points out General Bacchoo. He concludes by noting the bitter feelings between officers after the 1971 war.

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<sup>2</sup> He misidentifies the book as Leonard Mosley, *The Last Days of the British Raj* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962). The correct citation is Brigadier R.C.B. Bristow, *Memories of the British Raj: Soldier in India* (London: Johnson, 1974).

Interviewee: Justice Javid Iqbal (Ret'd)  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Location: Lahore, Pakistan  
Date: Thursday July 13, 2006

Biographical Notes: Javid Iqbal is the son of Pakistan's Poet Laureate Mohammad Iqbal. He was born October 5, 1924 in Sialkot, now in Pakistan. He was educated in the Government College of the Punjab University in Lahore, where he grew up. He completed his Ph.D. from Cambridge University and was admitted to the bar. In Pakistan he served in the High Court and retired as Justice of the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

Abstract: Justice Iqbal begins by speaking about his childhood in a Punjabi railway colony and the fact that his childhood home in Lahore—on old Meo Road, now Allama Iqbal Road—has been converted into a museum because of his father's iconic fame. He describes his writing and his ancestors' history. Several generations back, he notes, his family of Kashmiri Brahmins converted to Islam as a result of the influence of Sufi adepts. He was educated in the Government College of the Punjab University before completing law at Cambridge. He made a brief foray into politics before rising through the legal ranks and finally retiring as a Justice of Pakistan's Supreme Court. His parents both died before he was a young teenager; thereafter he and his sister were raised primarily by a German governess. He describes his wife's qualifications--she retired as a judge of the High Court—and their courtship and marriage. He describes his parents relationship and his mother's minimal education. He describes his early education in Sanskrit and Arabic, his minimal religious education and a bit more about his governess (whose brother-in-law was a Professor of Botany in Aligarh University: A.A. Hyder). He discusses the influence of Sayyid Ahmad Khan on the development of Muslim national identity. He describes the tension between Hindus and Muslims over political power prior to 1947, and elaborates on a discussion in Pakistan over "the beginning" of Pakistan's history and Mohammad Iqbal's notion of Muslim nationalism. He speaks of meeting Jinnah as a boy, his own involvement in the Pakistan movement, and his gratitude that Pakistan earned independence. He speaks of his own *Ideology of Pakistan* and the challenges of separating Church and State in Pakistan, in contrast to Europe and the United States. As he says, "although the source [of law] claims to be revelational its import is mundane, secular." He speaks about the relationship between criminal law, and banking law, and the laws of Islam. He speaks about his memories of partition, what Pakistan gained in independence and the challenges it faces constitutionally today. He concludes with a lament on the absence of young leadership in Pakistan.

Interviewee: Anonymized as IQ

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Date: May 26, 2010

Location: Sir Syed University of Engineering and Technology, Karachi, Pakistan

Release: REQUESTS ANONYMITY; RELEASED ONLY FOR BONA FIDE RESEARCH PURPOSES AND FOR DEPOSIT IN A RESEARCH LIBRARY OR ARCHIVE

Biographical Notes: IQ was born in Azamgarh on June 15, 1929. He was brought up in Banaras, but attended the Aligarh University. After partition he traveled to Pakistan and after holding a variety of odd jobs, he joined the Army. He is now retired from the army but serves on the Board of Governors of the Sir Syed University of Engineering and Technology. In addition, he runs the “co-curricular” program, organizing drama, sports, and debate contests and other extra-curricular activities.

Abstract: IQ begins by offering some history of the Sir Syed University of Engineering and Technology—how they procured the land, funding and equipment. He describes his role on the Board of Governors. Then he speaks about his childhood in Banaras, a city that was “famous” for riots, and how he chose to attend the Aligarh University. He describes the allure of the Muslim League Two Nation Theory and why Jinnah enjoined the students to campaign for it. He describes his adventures while electioneering for the League in Punjab and Sindh only to return to Aligarh too short of attendance to be allowed to sit for examinations. The Vice Chancellor intervened and allowed the boys to take the exams. He describes the disturbances during partition and the efforts the students made to defend the university against potential threat. He traveled to Pakistan along with some military officers in an official train. After arriving in Karachi, he describes, he and his friends struggled to find a safe place to live, and to find work. He was encouraged when another Aligarian he met helped them. He found work, with several non-Muslims in the Air India office, and though he was afraid of being discriminated against, he found his superiors to be open and helpful. He describes his decision to join the army, and spend two years in military school. We then return to some basic details, his birthdate and early childhood, religious education and his father’s position as a policeman. He speaks about his recently deceased friend, Shah Hasan Atta who had also been active in the demand for Pakistan. He describes being on a hunting expedition and seeing a tiger run through their camp! He describes the importance of Pakistan and attending Jinnah’s funeral. I then asked him, and others in the room about their decision to come to Pakistan. Other persons in the room speak briefly about their own experiences of migration and settlement in Pakistan. The interview concludes with a discussion of my research.

Interviewee: Abdul Rashid Khan

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Date: Thursday August 10, 2006

Location: Sir Sayyid University of Engineering and Technology, Karachi, Pakistan

Release: FULL

Biographical Notes: Abdul Rashid Khan was born in Saharanpur. He completed his matriculation and started at Aligarh in 1944. As a student at Aligarh he worked for the elections in 1945-46 and later he migrated to Pakistan in late 1947. Khan became a government servant, first serving in Sukkar District and then later with the Karachi Development Authority. He now serves on the faculty of the Sir Syed University of Engineering and Technology in Karachi.

Abstract: Abdul Rashid Khan describes his early childhood and choice to join the Aligarh Muslim University. He goes on to discuss his evacuation to Pakistan, at the compulsion of the government of East Punjab. He speaks of communal harmony at Aligarh, and the support of professors. He suggests that the beneficiaries of Pakistan have largely been landlords and landed interests, at the expense of democracy and the poor. There is no Aligarh in Pakistan, he says, where character-building is a fundamental part of the educational agenda. He laments that Aligarh's objective was to prepare men for nation-building, and that feeling is missing in Pakistan.



Interviewee: Professor Iftikhar Alam Khan (Ret'd Alig)

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Location: Alam Manzil, Zora Bagh, Aligarh

Date: June 6, 2009

RELEASE: FULL

Biographical Notes: Iftikhar Alam Khan first arrived in Aligarh's Minto Circle School in 1949 after his father was arrested and shortly after the partition. He found the student population much depleted by the changes wrought by 1947's migrations. His landowning family was largely split between Muslim League and Communist sympathies before 1947 and both he and his brother Iqtidar were active in Leftist student demonstrations during their tenure in Aligarh. He completed his High School in 1951 or 1952. He became a Professor of Museology and was active in the dramatic arts at Aligarh. He directed the Aligarh Museum and the Sir Syed Academy. He is an expert on Aligarh's architectural history, and has written several books on this subject.

Abstract: Iftikhar Alam Khan (known to most as Iffan Mian) begins by telling me about his family, in which he is the second oldest of six. He remembers some events of 1947 and '48 including his father's arrest and the fear he felt because he was Muslim. He feared that the non-Muslims in his locality hated him because he was Muslim. He would hear stories of people killed in trains and it made him afraid to travel and he only felt safe when he was near home and people recognized him. When he arrived in Minto Circle, there were only a few students there, the warden would take the boys hunting for chickens, and Iftikhar felt safe because the warden had a gun. He dwells throughout the interview on his extreme fear during the partition days. He describes himself as a sort of incomplete Communist, torn by his need to obey the Headmaster and his desire to attend meetings. Because of tardiness he avoided being arrested during a protest in 1951 (when his brother Iqtidar Alam Khan was arrested) but was chastised by the student leadership. He describes hiding his identity when traveling by train, and what the threats were. He looks back and credits Zakir Husain with saving the university and remembers his involvement in Nehru's Youth Festivals and drama at AMU. He discusses factionalism and politics in the university during the early years. He laments the resurgence of communalism in the 1970s which resulted in the banning of girls from the stage. We speak about scholars we both know, and his own recent scholarship, I asked him about what publications he read as a student, where he got the news, and he describes the culture of the common rooms and Hall magazines. He details at some length the difficulties of working in Aligarh's archives and the compilation of the Alumni Directory. He concludes with some laments about the effect of the Muslim League period on Aligarh's culture and his difficulty in accepting the official uniform of the sherwani.

Interviewee: Professor Iqtidar Alam Khan (Ret'd Alig)

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Location: 4/758 Friends Colony, Aligarh

Date: May 31, 2009

Biographical Notes: Iqtidar Alam Khan was born in a village near Kaimganj in District Farrukhabad in 1932. His father's family were landlords though his father also maintained a small law practice. His father, Ghulam Rabbani Khan, also developed a reputation as a poet known as "Taban." His mother was a homemaker and proficient in reading Urdu and Arabic. One of his brothers, Iftikhar Alam Khan also became a professor in AMU, and another brother has had a political career. He first arrived in 1945, and then returned in 1950. During his first experience at Aligarh he was initially attracted to the Muslim League idea of Pakistan, though he later became affiliated with the Leftist Students' Federation. Alam became a professor of History at AMU, from where he retired, though he still frequently visits campus.

Abstract: Iqtidar Alam Khan begins by telling me of his family's origins, and their relation to prominent nationalist Zakir Husain. He tells me about his family's political activities, and the fact that family members were allied with different parties: the Agriculturalist (Landlord) Party, the Muslim League, the Congress and the Communists. He remembers that his father and uncle were well-respected in the village and the *biradari* came together to prevent them from leaving for Pakistan. His father increasingly turned to the Leftist party and was eventually arrested in 1949. Alam goes on to tell me about his experiences at Aligarh, first as a school student, and later in his Intermediate. He recalls that he was sent to Aligarh at first because he had been unsuccessful in school. He describes his political identity at Aligarh and the influence of his father's Leftist views. He mentions that he was "intensely religious" for a period, much to his father's chagrin! He describes his arrest for being involved in a Leftist Students' Federation protest at Aligarh, and how he learned to be a Communist from all the comrades who were imprisoned with him. He tells me about his experience of partition in Aligarh and the "deadly fear that something very horrible is happening around." He tells me about his fear of the *sharnyartis*—the refugees displaced by partition. After partition he describes his experience at Aligarh, getting admission, life in the halls, how other students responded to his arrest and detention. He speaks of how he came to study history, his relationship with Irfan Habib, and Habib's influence on the Students' Federation. Finally he speaks about his efforts to thwart communalism at the university.

Interviewee: Mohiuddin Khan  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Location: Gulshan 2, Dhaka, Bangladesh  
Date: March 28, 2010  
RELEASE: ORAL

Biographical Notes: Mohiuddin Khan was born in Sylhet in 1924. His father was a police inspector and as he was growing up they lived in different places throughout Sylhet and Assam. He passed his matriculation in 1941 and his intermediate from Calcutta University. He completed his Bachelor's in 1945 from M.C. College in Assam. Then, due to a shortage of seats for Muslims in Engineering Colleges, he applied to Aligarh University. During his stay at Aligarh he was involved with the Progressive Students' Federation and even attended conferences in New Delhi. He was also a supporter of Pakistan. After completing his engineering degree in 1949, he settled in then East Pakistan. For most of his career he served in the East Pakistan Government in the Communications and Building Department. Until his retirement in 1982, he was a government engineer and finally Chief Engineer of the Public Works Department. At the time of our interview he was serving as President of the Aligarh Muslim University Old Boys' Association, Dhaka.

Abstract: Mohiuddin Khan begins by telling me about his early education and decision to apply to Aligarh University after not getting admission in engineering programs in East Bengal as a Muslim. He tells me about the train journey to get the long distance to Aligarh and how he shared a room with a childhood friend. He describes his family's education background and his early training in reading Qur'an. He describes his activities at Aligarh and his sympathy for both Pakistan and the leftist Students' Federation. He describes the changes in Aligarh during partition, the population decline, as well as the difficulty of adjusting to living so far from home. He details his career path as an engineer and his activities during the movement for the liberation of Bangladesh with which he was sympathetic. Although it was risky for him, he sheltered freedom fighters in his home in Chittagong and displayed signs of resistance against Pakistan. We speak about the difficulties of linguistic difference both in Aligarh and in East Pakistan, and about the relationship of Aligarh University to Bangladesh. He speaks of the "self-reliance" he learned at Aligarh and the atmosphere there. In conclusion he describes the role of the Old Boys' Association in Bangladesh in developing educational and medical services for the poor.

Interviewee: Anonymized as KPS (d. 2011)  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Location: Indira Nagar, Lucknow  
Date: September 27, 2009 and October 8, 2009  
RELEASE: ANONYMITY

Biographical Notes: KPS was born July 1, 1931 in Hardoi. He completed his intermediate from the U.P. Board in 1945, and then went to Aligarh where he lived in V.M. Hall. He completed his Intermediate, B.Sc. M.Sc. (Botany) and Ph.D. by 1956. He then went to work as a scientist in the National Botanical Research Institute. When I met him he was retired and an active member of the Aligarh Old Boys' Association in Lucknow. KPS died in 2011.

Abstract September 27, 2009: KPS begins by speaking about some of the challenges he faced in being a Muslim in government service. He chose to defy the communalism surrounding him by maintaining a high standard of work and by maintaining his identity. He also said it is important to remember that Muslims live in a Hindu majority country. He recounts a couple of stories in which he shows how he did this, once when entertaining foreign scientists who were surprised to discover he was a Muslim when he refused an alcoholic drink, and once when he defied his Director for behaving inappropriately during scientific discussion. In closing, he described the virtues of the different Vice Chancellors, especially Sir Ziauddin Ahmad and Zakir Husain who he credits with having saved the university after partition. Partition had been a frightening time at the university and he describes how the students kept watch from the roof of V.M. Hall.

Abstract October 8, 2009: KPS had begun talking before I attached the microphone and I followed up on some of these points at the beginning of the interview. He began by speaking about the challenges of Muslim leadership in India. Though India has faced a challenge in producing Muslim leaders, he cites several Aligarians who were prominent in India and abroad. He also notes that not all of India's successful Muslims were Aligarians, though "most" of them were. He spoke briefly about Leftists at the university, the impact of the death of Mahatma Gandhi, and the significant impact of Zakir Husain as Vice Chancellor of the university after the 1947 partition. At my request, he compared and contrasted Zakir Husain with Sir Ziauddin, the pre-independence VC. He talked about his experience during partition, and how important those days were for understanding the position of the university today. Both KPS and his son speak about the mistaken suspicion that Aligarh is filled with partisans of Pakistan—particularly in cricket. He speaks about the arrest of Iqtidar Alam Khan in 1951 and the interview concludes with a recap of some of the basic details of his life: birthplace, family, etc.

Interviewee: Major General (Ret'd) Sahibzada Yaqoob Ali Khan

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Location: Islamabad F-7/3

Date: August 7, 2006

RELEASE: DECLINED

Biographical Notes: Sahibzada Major General Yaqoob Ali Khan was born on December 20, 1920. He hails from the Princely State of Rampur, where his father was the Dewan. He attended the Royal Indian Military Academy from the age of twelve and received his commission at 19. He served in Europe and North Africa. After opting for Pakistan in 1947 he served in the military before embarking on a diplomatic career as Ambassador to France and Foreign Minister of Pakistan.

Abstract: General Yaqoob began by speaking about his family's role in the 1857 Mutiny (also known as the First War of Independence). He speaks briefly about his educational history at the Royal Indian Military Academy, and his commission in the British Indian Army during World War II. He describes his "Two Azan Theory"—the conflicting calls of Islam and State—that he feels has created complications for citizenship in Pakistan that he links to "cognitive dissonance." He speaks at length about the history of the Pakistan movement. He tells me about about the importance of Aligarh in the demand for Pakistan and though he is very knowledgeable about these matters, he frequently laments his inability to help me, calling himself a "distorting mirror." He tells me about his experience in Europe and North Africa during World War II and his own family's history in Rampur. Before partition he served in Viceroy Mountbatten's personal guard and by August 14, 1947 he was serving in Jinnah's bodyguard because he had been attracted to Jinnah as an individual and the idea of Muslim sovereignty. During partition, his detachment remained in India and he describes the horrors of partition in the city. He describes the importance of South Asia in International Relations, the changes in Pakistan after the 1971 War and the importance of peacefully resolving the India-Pakistan conflict over Kashmir. He again protests his unhelpfulness and suggests that the "movement of ideas" is much more interesting than his personal experiences. He is more concerned with the present than the past, he suggests. He concludes with his perspective that Jinnah was forced into agreeing to the partition after the Congress declined the Cabinet Mission Plan. When I asked more questions about Jinnah, he removed the microphone and told about his personal experiences with Jinnah.

Interviewee: Zafar Mohammad Khan  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Location: Gokhale Vihar Marg, Lucknow  
Date: April 4, 2009  
RELEASE: ORAL

Biographical Notes: Zafar Mohammad Khan was born in the old city of Lucknow. His grandfather came from Qaimganj, district Farrukhabad and married in Lucknow. His father, Aziz Mohammad Khan worked in an office in the Railway Dept. in Lucknow and later Calcutta. He completed his early education, up to his Bachelor's in Lucknow and then took an Engineering degree from Aligarh (1955). He arrived there in 1952. He lives in Lucknow.

Abstract: Zafar Mohammad Khan begins by telling me how his family landed in Lucknow. His grandfather did not care for his home place because the people were illiterate. He tells me that "in India, all Muslims know" about Aligarh because of the presence of old students. His cousins had also studied in Aligarh. He tells me that his tenure in Aligarh was quite peaceful and Zakir Husain was Vice Chancellor. He describes the atmosphere—though it has changed now. He was a "regular go-er" to the mosque and interested in translation of the Qur'an so he would read to others in the mosque. Two of his sisters migrated to Pakistan for their marriages. Neither he nor his father was involved politics, but remembers the uncertainty about the future, about whether they would move to Pakistan or remain in India. He outlines the violence of partition and the numbers who migrated and died. His father was in Calcutta during the riots of 1946 but he remained safe. Zafar Mohammad Khan never considered going to Pakistan since he found work in the Public Works Department, and says that engineers had no trouble finding jobs in India; there was a big demand. He spent his early career in Aligarh. After becoming a gazetted engineer he was transferred to Almora and later to Gorakhpur, Kanpur and other places. He returned to Aligarh as the University Engineer (1978-1981) about the time his children reached university age. At this time he noticed a decline in discipline in the institution. He speaks about the demographics of the university. He speaks about the agenda of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, and why he wanted AMU to be English medium. He speaks about old Lucknow and the arrangements for refugees. After partition, however, he says, conditions in education and jobs have improved for Muslims, though this has not had a marked effect on social class. We speak about my stay in Aligarh and I give him my contact information.

Interviewee: Zakir Ali Khan (d. Feb. 7, 2012)

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Location: Sir Sayyid University of Engineering and Technology, Karachi, Pakistan

Date: Thursday August 10, 2006

RELEASE: FULL

Biographical Notes: Zakir Ali Khan was born in the princely state of Rampur on July 8, 1926. His father served there as Superintendent of Police. As there was no university in Rampur, Khan was sent to Aligarh after completing his matriculation. His older brother was also there. During his stay in Aligarh he was captain of the hockey team and had the opportunity to tour all over India. He graduated in Civil Engineering in 1948 and in 1949 he chose to migrate to Pakistan where there was a shortage of engineers. His mother permitted him to go, but did not follow. He initially worked in the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation until 1979 when he became Chief Engineer of the [Karachi] Metropolitan Corporation. He retired in 1986 as Managing Director of Karachi Water and Sewerage Board and has been the General Secretary of the Aligarh Old Boys' Association of Pakistan since 1960. In 2009 Zakir Ali Khan was awarded the the first Sir Syed Ahmad Khan International Award for lifetime achievement in support of the ideals of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan.

Abstract: Zakir Ali Khan received his degree in Engineering from Aligarh Muslim University. His father was Superintendent of Police and also an Aligarh graduate. He made the decision to migrate to Pakistan because he felt there was no future for Muslims in India. He describes the culture of sport in Aligarh, and also his early encounters with Nehru and Jinnah at the University, especially on the hockey field. He describes how the students trusted Mr. Jinnah, and how deeply invested he was in them, their education and views. He describes Sir Sayyid's vision for character building and the agenda of the university. He remembers the atmosphere during Partition in Aligarh, and his home state of Rampur. He describes his early education at home in Islam, guided by his mother, and completing his M.A. in Engineering before migrating to Pakistan to work. The SSUET and the Aligarh University Old Boys Association seeks to carry on Sir Sayyid's legacy, and Zakir Ali Khan laments that the nation-building spirit is gone in Pakistan. He recommends a return to Jinnah's vision of "Faith, Unity, Discipline."

Interviewee: Saeeda Kidwai “Saeeda Apa”

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Date: June 17, 2009

Location: Bangali Koti, Aligarh

RELEASE: FULL

Biographical Notes: Saeeda Kidwai is originally from Delhi but was largely raised in Aligarh by an uncle after her father's death. She has three sisters. She was admitted to the Aligarh Women's College in 1926 and was the first woman to take graduate classes in Geography in AMU. She graduated in 1939 and began teaching in 1941. She taught in the Women's College and lives in Aligarh.

Abstract: Saeeda Kidwai tells me a bit about the history of the Aligarh Women's College and how Sheikh Abdullah and his wife recruited teachers and generated support for it in the conservative town of Aligarh. She describes the environment in the college as it grew. It was difficult to recruit teachers because Aligarh was such a small place. Many were Christian, but there were some Hindus, but after Muslim girls began to graduate the supply of Muslim teachers grew. She tells me about the *purdah* arrangements for transportation and when she started post-graduate classes in AMU. She tells me about her studies in geography. She then tells me more about her own childhood growing up with her uncle. When she started at Aligarh, the university built her a separate entrance to get into the classroom unseen. She tells me that she never considered migrating to Pakistan and knew little about it before 1947. She credits “Mrs. Gandhi and Panditji” with the peace in Aligarh University during partition and with saving the institution. She goes on to tell me about Mahatma Gandhi's assassination and laments the sectarian and ethnic strife in Pakistan where Muslims fight one another, and compares this to India. She tells me about the Aligarh Exhibition and the good foods available there. She suggests that I meet Birjees Abdullah, the last remaining daughter of Shaikh Abdullah. She tells me she chose Geography because she couldn't remember history! She had no interest in the step-by-step progression of history, but found geography rational. Still, she recognizes that without history, nothing could happen. She tells me about a series of illnesses she has survived, including a breast lump and gall bladder problems that caused her to abandon her Ph.D. Her son is now in Toronto. She tells me about the Students Union and the culture of debates that brought students together from all over the country (though girls did not participate).



Interviewee: A.K. Mathur  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Location: New Hyderabad, Lucknow, India  
Date: September 30, 2009  
RELEASE: FULL

Biographical Notes: A.K. Mathur was born in 1944. He is from Jaipur. However, he moved to Aligarh in 1951 when his father became Principal of Barahsini College, a local Hindu degree college. A.K. Mathur entered AMU in 1957. He had been in government college until 10<sup>th</sup> class in Aligarh city. He spent his career in UP State Electricity Board posted in Aligarh. His association remained with Aligarh after his marriage until 1978 because his wife was teaching there. He is an engineer and lives in Lucknow.

Abstract: A.K. Mathur begins by telling me about his career history and his association with Aligarh that began in 1951 when his father moved the family there. He tells me that his father was keen to develop the relationship between AMU and the Hindu degree colleges, and that as a result he, himself developed great affection for Aligarh. He tells me what it was like to be a “day scholar” in AMU, rather than a boarder. He describes the disruption in AMU in 1965 and the declining state of discipline in the university. He tells me about the relationship between Hindi and Urdu and his own linguistic background. Then he speaks about the history of the Mathur clan/caste. He notes that the Hindu-Muslim tension in Aligarh has been particularly acute after the 1950s. He notes the political divide in Aligarh between the Progressives and the Fundamentalists, and claims sympathy with the Progressives, though not formally. He makes the point that, despite being a non-Muslim in the Muslim University, he never felt excluded because his father still had a lot of influence there. He speaks about the culture of “influence” that favors regional and sectarian identity, but that this holds little attraction for the students in AMU. He remembers the culture of the university when he was an engineering student. He tells me that the boys in AMU used to support Pakistan in the Pakistan v. India cricket matches. In conclusion he remembers a few professors: Hadi Hasan and K.G. Saiyidain and says he owes everything to his experience in Aligarh.

Interviewee: S.M. Mehdi  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Location: Alig Apartments, Shamshad Market, Aligarh  
Date: June 15, 2009  
Release: FULL

Biographical Notes: S.M. Mehdi hails from Bhopal State, and was born around 1924. He did his early education, through high school in Bhopal before transferring to Christchurch College in Kanpur in 1939. He later completed his M.A. from Lucknow University. Mehdi's father, Syed Mohammad Askari, was a lawyer. In Kanpur Mehdi lived with his paternal uncle, a prominent Congress leader, but under the influence of his teacher at Christchurch College he became a Socialist. Eventually he became a Communist and in Bombay in the mid-1940s he was engaged in distributing Communist literature in the Muslim areas of the city. He was a member of the Progressive Writers Group and ultimately served most of his career in the Soviet Embassy in Bombay. He has since retired to Aligarh where his daughter is a medical doctor.

Abstract: S.M. Mehdi begins by describing his "allergy" to the Muslim League, initially born of a positive encounter with Congress leader Sarojini Naidu followed by a negative encounter with M.A. Jinnah in Bhopal in the late 1930s. After finishing High School in Bhopal, Mehdi went on to Kanpur for his B.A. and then to Lucknow for his M.A. Degree. During his time in both places he was involved with the Students' Union and turned increasingly towards Socialism—under the influence of his teacher Christopher Ackroyd—and then to Communism. During 1946 and 1947 he was in Bombay putting out an Urdu paper for the Communist party- a post to which he had been recruited by Sajjad Zaheer. He tells a long story about his experiences on the day Gandhi was killed, one of the few I heard in which a narrator does not suggest that they heard "immediately" that the assassin had been a Hindu and not a Muslim. He describes the anxiety that dogged them all day wondering if a Muslim had been the assassin. Finally he describes some of his friends in Bombay and suggests a book to me, written by his nephew, *Reflections of an Indian Muslim*.

Interviewee: Dr. Sarfaraz Hussain Mirza  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Location: Nazaria-e-Pakistan office, Lahore  
Date: Thursday July 21, 2006  
RELEASE: FULL

Biographical Notes: Sarfaraz Hussain Mirza was born in Ferozepur, India in 1942. His father was a policeman and he spent his early years in the civil lines, in the police colony. His family migrated to Pakistan during partition, feeling the threat of violence. He is a scholar of Pakistan history and the editor of several collections of documents as well as other books. Today he is a resident scholar at the Nazaria-e-Pakistan foundation. He lives in Lahore.

Abstract: After describing the environment of his early childhood in Jullunder, Mirza immediately begins describing the disruptions of partition in East Punjab. His family shifted to Ferozepur right before partition in the hope that it would go to Pakistan. When it did not, chaos ensued. He describes his early memories of violence and migration to Pakistan. He speaks of his dedication to Pakistan and the role of Indian Muslims, especially the students from Aligarh University and Islamia College, Lahore in creating the conditions for its creation. He tells me of his father's transfer to Pakistan and his own career path as a researcher in Punjab University. He describes Jinnah's importance and his experiences on the day of Jinnah's death, when everyone was crying "*Baba Mar Gaya*" (Our father has died). He believes that there is still much to be done in education and improving the values of Pakistan to fulfill Jinnah's vision for Pakistan. He elaborates on the importance of independence, "political, economic, religious, cultural" and the fact that although the antecedents are important, Pakistan's history began in 1947, when the state was founded. In conclusion, he tells me that there is no sense of loss because all that was left in India were material things, the real achievement has been the creation of Pakistan and its founder Mohammad Ali Jinnah is responsible for that.

Interviewee: Professor Shariful Mujahid

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Location: Karachi

Dates: May 25, 2010

RELEASE: ORAL

Biographical Notes: Shariful Mujahid is a Pakistani Higher Education Commission Distinguished National Professor. He was born in Madras in 1926. He studied in Presidency College and later completed a Master's degree in History from Madras University in 1950. He subsequently migrated, alone, to Pakistan. He received a Fulbright fellowship and attended Stanford University. He returned to Pakistan and made a career there as an academic. He was the founding Director of the Quaid-e-Azam Academy at Karachi University in 1976. He is an internationally known academic, especially for his work on Mohammad Ali Jinnah. He lives in Karachi.

Abstract: Part 1: Shariful Mujahid begins by telling me about his educational pedigree. He tells me that he became involved in the Muslim League through his writing, he wrote for many of the League newspapers India-wide, though he cautions that his writing was often hagiographical. He was active in the Muslim Students' Federation. Though hailing from South India, he had his sights set on Pakistan. He migrated alone. He received a Fulbright to the U.S., but he chose not to settle there. Though he served for many years as the head of the Quaid-e-Azam Academy, he lets me know about some of the difficulties he has had because he refused to play politics. He tells me how the Academy, and especially its library, has declined since his departure. He became a journalist because it was the only career, apart from government service, open to aspiring young men. He dwells again on the actions of the establishment to remove him from service to the Quaid-e-Azam Academy and the challenges he faced. He tells me about what attracted him to Pakistan, the idea of the "restitution of power" to Muslims. He says that the Congress regime, especially in North India, was oppressive—less so in Madras, where he says he had good relations with Hindus. He remembers Jinnah's erudition and impressive ability to hold a room in his thrall. He was incorruptible. Part 2: He tells me about the League's infrastructure in Madras and other leadership, including C. Rajagopalachari who came from this part of the country. Madras housed the longest running Muslim League weekly, *Deccan Times*, one of its editors went on to become editor of *Dawn*. He tells me more about Muslims in Madras. He challenges the elevation of Mohammad Iqbal to the status of "co-founder" of Pakistan, saying "they wanted some one from Punjab." He speaks more about Jinnah's vision for Pakistan, and the challenges Pakistan faced, in terms of leadership, after Jinnah's death. He decries the actions of the current regime and links them to an early absence of a democratic ethos. He describes Jinnah as an "enigma" in Muslim society; he was so different, honest, civilized and rational, his success seems unlikely! He suggests that Pakistan's history begins in 1947 but that today, Jinnah would say Pakistan has abandoned his high principles. He laments the current shameless dynastic politics in Pakistan and the influence of conservative politicians.

Interviewee: Mukhtar Ahmad Naqvi

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Location: Sir Sayyid University of Engineering and Technology

Date: May 24, 2010

RELEASE: Not for BROADCASTING, PUBLICATION INCLUDING INTERNET PUBLICATION, PUBLIC PERFORMANCE, DISPLAY OR EXHIBITION

Biographical Notes: Mukhtar Ahmad Naqvi hails from Sehaswan in district Badaun, U.P. He was born in 1933, but his mother died when he was only two years old. He was raised by his father Rais Ahmad, a medical doctor, along with his brother and two sisters. After completing his matriculation, he began his Intermediate at Aligarh University. He migrated to Pakistan in 1947, crossing the deserts of Rajasthan and Sindh. He finished his undergraduate degree at Punjab University and his M.Sc. from Canterbury University in New Zealand. He worked in the Ministry of Agriculture in Islamabad for more than twenty years and now serves as the Convenor of Sir Syed University of Engineering and Technology in Karachi.

Abstract: Mukhtar Ahmad Naqvi begins by telling me about his family and origins. He quickly begins describing the disruptions of partition. His brother was in Delhi, and incommunicado for some time. As a result Naqvi's father asked him to leave "immediately" for Pakistan. Naqvi cross into Sindh in 1947, and his brother transferred in 1948. He then tells me more about his experience in Aligarh, living in Aftab Hostel. He describes the tension between Hindus and Muslims that made Pakistan a necessity but also mentions that he had good friends who were non-Muslims. He speaks of his expectations that Pakistan would provide freedom of thought and worship and that those expectations have been fulfilled despite economic problems. He describes his visits back to India. Then he speaks again about the absence of provincialism in Aligarh and the role of Pakistan Radio in alerting the Muslims to the details of Gandhi's assassination. He claims that unlike India, there is no prejudice in Pakistan against minorities. He describes his experiences on the day of Gandhi's assassination, Pakistan's leadership problems, and concludes by discussing the value of the confidence he learned in Aligarh.

Interviewee: Zilley Ahmad Nizami (Z.A. Nizami)

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Location: Sir Sayyid University of Engineering and Technology, Karachi

Date: May 24, 2010

RELEASE: FULL

Biographical Notes: Zilley Ahmad Nizami was born on May 25, 1931 in Amroha, India. He grew up in Meerut. He was educated at home as a child and then joined the High School and completed his Intermediate in Meerut College. His family is prominently associated with Aligarh, and his was the third generation to send its sons there. He is the younger brother of Aligarh historian K.A. Nizami and his youngest brother Taufiq, taught in the Political Science Dept. Z.A. Nizami was the Director General of the Karachi Development Authority and is President of the Aligarh Muslim University Old Boys Association-Pakistan and a founder and the Chancellor of Sir Syed University of Engineering and Technology in Karachi.

Abstract: Z.A. Nizami begins by telling me about his early education and his family's legacy at Aligarh. Though his father was a League supporter, he left the migration decision up to the discretion of each of his children. Some of Nizami's siblings migrated, others remained in India. His father and mother remained in Meerut. He compares the Sir Syed University of Engineering and Technology's mission to that of Aligarh, emphasizing the use of English and the simultaneous study of religious matters and technology. He speaks about partition in Aligarh and the importance of the leadership of Zakir Husain in saving the university from being "wound up." He recalls seeing Quaid-e-Azam speak and calls him "our torch bearer," but doesn't remember much difference when he arrived in Pakistan. He settled in quickly and found work eventually becoming the head of Karachi Development Authority. He takes responsibility for all that is good and bad in Karachi's development. He says that Meerut changed after Hindu migrants arrived, it was hard to mix with them because their culture was different. In Pakistan, too, migrants had a hard time adjusting. If Quaid-e-Azam had lived longer, Pakistan would have been more stable because nobody challenged his authority. He concludes that Aligarh has made a huge contribution to Pakistan in terms of leadership and tells me that the best way to learn more is to read his brother's, K.A. Nizami's books!

Interviewee: Mrs. Mansoor Qamar  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Location: B-8 Naval Housing Scheme, Karachi  
Date: May 18, 2010  
RELEASE: FULL

Biographical Notes: Mansoor Qamar is from Meerut where she was the youngest of her eight brothers and sisters. Her father, Mohammad Mukrim was a staunch Congress supporter. She attended Mohammad Ismail Girls School and Ragunath Girls' College. After completing her Matric she went on to Meerut College for her B.A. She completed her B.Ed. at Aligarh University Training College. She secured a teaching job in Meerut and determined to stay there. However, she went to Pakistan and ended up marrying and settling there in the early 1960s. Her first marriage lasted thirteen years, and he has three children. Her husband died and she later married one of his cousins to whom she remains married today. She lives in Karachi.

Abstract: Mansoor Qamar begins by telling me about her educational experiences and the disruptions of partition. Her family moved from the country into the city where they were closer to other Muslims. Still, she had non-Muslim friends who would come to her home and invite her to theirs. They were refugees and had lost a lot. She describes some of the horrors and fears provoked by partition violence. She describes her first experience of going out without wearing the full *burqa* and her decision to leave it permanently. She repeats the stories about her education and talks about her family's relationship to partition: her father opposed it, but several of her older siblings migrated. She tells me about her experience in Aligarh and the atmosphere there in the late 1950s. She tells a funny story about the "Honor List" and how busy she was in her program. She tells how she refused to get married, how she was considered so strange in Muslim society in Meerut for riding a bicycle, abandoning *burqa*, getting educated, refusing to marry, etc. She first arrived in Pakistan to help her brother while his wife was sick, was convinced to marry—though she insisted it must be into an educated family—and then remained. She returned to India only briefly but had a falling out with her Jamaat-i-Islami employer and returned to Pakistan. She was married for thirteen years before her husband died then she was alone for six years before marrying Qamaruzzaman, her current husband. She concludes by describing her experience teaching in St. Joseph's school, where, because she was teaching Islamiat, she developed an interest in Islam and Islamic history.

Interviewee: Habib ur Rahman

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Location: Aligarh Old Boys' Association, Motijheel, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Date: February 20, 2010

Release: ORAL

Biographical Notes: Habibur Rahman was born in Dhaka on January 1, 1925. His father was in charge of the Lal Bagh Police Station, but his family belongs to village Munshiganj outside of Dhaka. He passed his matriculation from Calcutta University and his father sent him on a tour of North India by train. After that, he began his education at Aligarh in 1944 and he lived in Sir Syed East. During his time at Aligarh he tried to learn to fly in preparation for military service, and he was very involved in Muslim League activities. After returned to then East Pakistan in 1949 he tried to join the Air Force to become a pilot but he was deemed too small at only ninety pounds! He was later active in the Awami League and supported the independence of Bangladesh in 1971. Two of his brothers were killed during the war. He fled to India until Mujibur Rahman established his government in 1971. Rahman became an Advocate and cared for his mother for much of his adult life, marrying quite late. He is now married and has a young daughter.

Abstract: Advocate Habib ur Rahman began by describing his arrival at Aligarh Muslim University and his earlier education in Dhaka. He describes his solo tour of India, which he undertook before going to Aligarh. He met and became friendly with a Sikh traveler and his young son. He then describes the atmosphere at Aligarh, with students from different regions living together. He describes the privileges of Aligarh students and military training at the University. He talks about the wife of an another Bengali, who would cook fish and rice for the Bengali students. He speaks about his involvement in the Pakistan Movement and the Bangladeshi grievance against Pakistani governance prior to 1971. He speaks of his involvement in the movement for the independence of Bangladesh as an Awami League supporter. He speaks about his experiences during the 1971 War when he became a refugee in India. He tells me a bit about the history of the Old Boys' Association and the its Urdu speaking members. He describes his father's decision that Habib ur Rahman should be sent to Aligarh, because he was "naughty." He speaks about Aligarh's reputation and concludes by telling me about his family and his late marriage.



Interviewee: Professor Hakeem Syed Zillur Rahman

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Location: Ibn Sina Academy, Aligarh

Date: June 29, 2009

RELEASE: FULL

Biographical Notes: Zillur Rahman was born on July 1, 1940 in Bhopal. His father and grandfather were both Unani physicians and authors of books on the subject. He was raised in Bhopal and attended Aligarh University, arriving in 1955. After passing out he became a faculty member and has settled in Aligarh. In 2008 he opened the Ibn Sina Academy in his home: a library, museum and reading room that focuses on Unani Medicine and Islamic History.

Abstract: Zillur Rahman begins by telling me about his family's history and association with Unani medicine. His father and grandfather had traditional education in Islamic knowledge and studied Unani with individual practitioners. He chose to attend Aligarh University because of its reputation and went on to teach there and settle in Aligarh. His son completed an allopathic medical degree and is a lecturer in AMU's medical school. He describes how Unani medicine suffered under the British and how Aligarh helped to maintain the tradition with their program. He describes the system of Unani medicine and differentiates it from herbal medicine. Many alternative medical systems utilize herbs, he says, but Unani is a comprehensive, holistic system. He tells me about his own contribution to the field. He tells me that despite the local orientation of Unani cures, and the globalization of the world, all diseases can be treated by local cures. Patients of Unani hakeems are Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, all kinds of people. The medium of instruction in Unani schools is primarily Urdu and most practitioners are Muslims. He goes on to tell me about the Ibn Sina Academy and its purpose. He describes how his own family suffered during partition, not receiving appropriate allotments in Pakistan, etc. Families on both sides were able to travel back and forth and he minimizes the differences between India and Pakistan. He credits Aligarh with bringing together many different kinds of people: political, regional, religious, etc. He identifies AMU it as the only remaining center of Urdu and Muslim culture. He speaks about the early founders and the early period at Aligarh and the emergence of the nationalist and Muslim League sentiments. Still, he emphasizes that people with differing opinions coexisted in this environment. He minimizes the idea that Aligarh had a special role in migration to Pakistan, Muslims left from all over India. However, he says that 1971 showed Indian Muslims that Pakistan would not make space for them, as it had failed to accommodate the Biharis. He also suggests that Muslims do not suffer in India, rather they have the freedom to join any party and wield political influence, after all there are more Muslims in India than in India or Bangladesh and even Saudi Arabia! In addition there are many resources for Muslim education, etc. Part 2: Hakeem Zillur Rahman describes himself as Muslim, Indian and a student of Unani.

Interviewee: Professor Wasi ur Rahman (d. June 21, 2010)

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Location: Al-Chemy, Sir Syed Nagar, Aligarh

Date: November 21, 2009

RELEASE: FULL \*Please use discretion

Biographical Notes: Wasi ur Rahman is originally from Shamsabad, District Farrukhabad, Tehsil Qaimganj. He was born on December 27, 1927. His father was a teacher. He was the youngest of five siblings. He completed his early education in Shukohabad and his B.Sc. from Kanpur (Agra University). He first came to Aligarh in 1947-48 and completed his M.Sc. and Ph.D. He taught for some time in SUNY Albany and completed additional research work. He taught in Aligarh and was briefly Pro Vice Chancellor.

Abstract: Wasi ur Rahman begins by telling me about his arrival in Aligarh. He mentions his father was educated in Kanpur and his mother was literate in Arabic and Urdu. His mother died when he was only five or six years old. He tells me then about his own educational pedigree and how he was inspired to study Chemistry. He tells me about his mentor and the inspiration he found doing research in the United States. He speaks about the role of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and the Muslim University in reviving Muslim education. He felt inspired by Sir Sayyid's example to dedicate himself fully to his profession and teaching. Wasi ur Rahman tells me about the atmosphere in Aligarh when he was a student, and how they created a second home for the boys far from home. Independence was very exciting for him because it meant that he was free- free from bondage. He always had a nationalist frame of mind and but he was active in the Congress activities—though he never stood for elections—he identifies himself as an “ordinary worker.” He speaks about his tenure at Kanpur University and being in the minority as a Muslim. He speaks about Colonel Haider, and says he was not a great teacher or researcher, but he was very supportive of extra-curricular activities, including University Training Corps. He was appointed as Proctor of AMU and later as Pro Vice Chancellor during a time of crisis in the late 1980s. He tells me a bit of the politics of the university during his tenure. During the VC's absence, he served as Acting Vice Chancellor—he is concerned here with defending his reputation and conduct. He describes his resignation as Vice Chancellor in 1990. He says the AMU still is important for educating Muslims and preparing them for competitive examinations. Though the university has grown, he thinks that Sir Sayyid would be disappointed by its current state. He believes that his role has been to uphold Sir Sayyid's vision and to support the university. He becomes emotional and begins to cry as the interview concludes.

Interviewee: Mrs. Anjuman Rashid

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Location: Karachi

Dates: May 19, 2010

RELEASE: ORAL

Biographical Notes: Mrs. Anjuman Rashid hails from Rewa State (now in Madhya Pradesh), she was born in the early 1940s, and was only four or five at the time of partition in 1947. Her father was a medical doctor and opened his own clinic in Rewa State. She has spent her entire life in Pakistan, and believes that her father settled in well in Pakistan. She is married to Professor Shahid Rashid and lives in Karachi.

Abstract: Mrs. Rashid tells a story about growing up in Rewa State (now in Madhya Pradesh). Her father was a medical doctor and the tutor of the Raja's son. Her father joined the Muslim League, much to the dismay of others in the state. When they left for Pakistan, via Bhopal, amidst growing violence, the children did not understand. They thought they were out for an adventure, and could not understand why their mother kept crying. They finally reunited with her father in Bombay and took tickets on a ship for Karachi. They were amazed by Karachi, and thought the people were so nice and wonderful. Her father treated women in Karachi, even prostitutes. After some time her aunt's daughter arrived and they took admission in the school, and later met other relatives. They were living at the time near Quaid-e-Azam's monument. She describes her mother's grief at having left all of their possessions behind when they fled India. The children were enjoying themselves, oblivious of their family's loss. Today, she loves Pakistan, barely remembering India. Few of her relatives migrated. She tells me about Quaid-e-Azam's death. She describes her affection for him, and also for Ayub Khan, especially his looks! She does not believe that Pakistan fully represents the vision of Quaid-e-Azam. She describes his vision as one for an Islamic state, where everyone would get along and there would be no difference between sects, ethnicities, etc. Today, she says, there is no leadership. The beginning of Pakistan, she says, is Quaid-e-Azam's vision. Only through hard work and love with that vision be realized; above all, corruption must end.

Interviewee: Mohammad Abdul Rashid  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Date: March 29, 2010  
Location: Motijheel, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Biographical Notes: M.A. Rashid hails from Lucknow in North India; he was born in 1921. He studied in Amir Daula Islamia High School. At the age of seventeen, in 1938, he participated in the Lucknow session of the Muslim League, serving water to the delegates. He was the first in his family to attend Aligarh University. After passing out from Aligarh in 1943, he settled in Calcutta, having taken a job with M.M. Ispahani, Ltd. However, after communal riots in 1950 he fled to Dhaka in East Pakistan and settled there, “because it was Pakistan.” In the early 1950s he started his own business trading in jute. In 1954 he joined the East Pakistan Stock Exchange. Though he planned to leave Dhaka in 1971 when Bangladesh became independent, his fellow Aligarians, General M.A.G. Osmani (leader of Bangladesh Liberation Forces) and Captain Mansoor Ali (Bangladesh’s first Prime Minister) and neighbors promised to protect him and prevented him from leaving, even getting police officers deputed to guard his house! The Stock Exchange was closed from 1971 to 1975 during which time businesses were nationalized. After liberalization, he returned to his work in the Stock Exchange. Today he remains a Director of the Stock Exchange and leads an active life.

Abstract: M.A. Rashid begins by telling me about his early career after leaving Aligarh University in 1943. He became a grain trader for M.M. Ispahani, the Chief Agent to the Government of Bengal. He describes his allegiance to Muslim League politics by telling me that Hasan Ispahani was a League man, and that he, himself had been involved in the Lucknow Session of the League in 1938, when he was only a student. After describing the route that took him to Dhaka he explained why he stayed after 1971, at the behest of fellow Aligarians and Bengali neighbors. Despite being Urdu-speaking and non-Bengali he has felt at home in Dhaka. When I asked about the wealth disparity between East and West Pakistan during this period he spoke about how East Pakistan presented a good business opportunity because a lot of development was needed. He went on to describe Ayub Khan’s efforts to develop East Pakistan after 1958, with the assistance of the Adamjees, the Ispahanis and other Calcutta businessmen. I asked him how his family reacted to his decision to join business and leave the family *zamindari* outside of Lucknow. As the family share had declined over generations, he described, there was little left for him to take over. He described his visit to Karachi, where his sister had lived until her recent death. He never liked it because “people had no time for social jobs,” whereas in Bangladesh “we help each other.” He concludes with the thought that in Karachi people are “business-type people” with no care for social relations.

Interviewee: Professor Shahid Rashid

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Location: Karachi

Dates: May 19, 2010

RELEASE: ORAL

Biographical Notes: Shahid Rashid was born in Bijnor, India in January 1938. His father, Mohamad Hasan was a civil servant, the Secretary of the Municipal Corporation in Bijnor. He has two brothers and two sisters. He was educated in a Muslim school as a boy and then after High School he did Intermediate from Nagina Hindu College. He ultimately completed his M.Sc. in 1960 in Lucknow. He was also hockey captain there. He migrated to Pakistan in 1963 at the age of 25. After working and teaching in the UK for fifteen years and completing his Ph.D. in Bradford University, he returned to Pakistan. He is a Professor of Pharmacology at Karachi University.

Abstract: He begins by telling me about his birth and the investment of Bijnor in Indian nationalism—few migrated to Pakistan. The Congress newspaper *Medina* was published from there by his grandfather. After partition, he tells me that Hindu harassment of Muslims increased. His own family was divided between the League and Congress. His mother, Mehmoona, was a devoted housewife, somewhat literate in Urdu and she could read the Qur'an. He learned Hindi, Urdu and Arabic. He describes his education and how he landed at Aligarh University—in Jubilee Hostel of V.M. Hall. Most of his mother's family remains in India, but his father's family is in Pakistan. He migrated to Pakistan because his sister had married in Pakistan, and was alone; she requested one brother be sent near to her. His only reason for migrating was because of his sister, he had no difficulty finding work (or any other hardship) in India. Once in Pakistan, he experienced a "miracle," that led him to teach in the UK. He taught in London and Slough for fifteen years. Another "miracle" was that after turning down a job as an Assistant Chemist, he met a professor from Oxford who offered him a job—and for one year he taught in Oxford. He then completed his M.Phil from Oxford. He used his Aligarh network to join Wyeth Laboratories in Slough. A third "miracle" led him to complete a Ph.D. in 1977 at Bradford University while at Wyeth, and at their expense. After his Ph.D. Karachi University offered him a teaching position, and he returned to Pakistan. Shortly afterward, his sister left for the United States. We speak a bit more about Pakistan and the effect of riots. He tells me about Aligarh traditions and the importance of character building there. He felt that the Hindus discriminated against Muslims, but that the ethnic discrimination in Pakistan is more widespread. He feels this is not a problem generated by migrants, *mohajirs*, but by those with provincial loyalties. The interview concludes as the men leave for the evening prayer. Interviewee: Professor

Wazir Ahmad Razzaqi  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Location: Naval Housing Colony, Karachi  
Date: May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2010  
Release: FULL

Biographical Notes: Wazir Ahmad Razzaqi was born in Meerut, a town close to Delhi, in Western UP in 1942. Most of his family migrated to Pakistan in the early 1960s. His wife is also from Meerut; they married in 1975. He initially worked as stenographer before working for the Life Insurance Corporation of India in Saharanpur and later Meerut. He is a Professor of Commerce and has written several books on the subject.

Abstract: Professor Wazir Ahmad Razzaqi begins by telling me how much he values teaching and how it was only possible for him in Pakistan. I ask to go back and fill in some details and he tells me about his birth and the region from where he comes. He was born and educated in Meerut and stayed there till 1969. He attended a primary school in his neighborhood. He tells me of the importance of Meerut College. After 1947, he decided not to go to Pakistan because he, like his father, believed it was not in the best interest for Muslims. However, two of his brothers, sisters, and his mother went to Pakistan while he and his father stayed in India. His brothers shifted to Pakistan in 1961. The feeling of his family who went to Pakistan was that they still feel like they are Indian. He eventually moved to Pakistan. His father was not up to the idea of coming to Pakistan, but he also went after he retired because all the other family members were settled in Pakistan. When Razzaqi was growing up in Ismail Nagar (his neighborhood) it was a higher class area. He believes the educational standard in Pakistan is poor. He taught in Karachi University after his retirement. In his view when you study the nation of Pakistan the Muslims were kept backwards by the mullahs. He remains critical of Pakistan, despite having lived there for over thirty years. He tells me that Urdu is in decline, along with honesty, good record keeping and honest accounting. He describes the changes that have taken place in Meerut since his departure, the importance of loyalty to your country, and his daughters' marriages. As we conclude we speak about the importance of education and he laments the poor educational standard in Pakistan, despite his best efforts to serve his country as an educator.

Interviewee: Syed Saghir Ahmad Rizvi

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Location: Parag Narain Road, Lucknow, India

Date: October 6, 2009

RELEASE: Not for Broadcast, Public Display, or Exhibition. NOT AVAILABLE FOR OTHER RESEARCHERS.

Biographical Notes: Syed Saghir Ahmad Rizvi is originally from Lucknow, the place to which his mother's relations belong. After passing High School he joined Aligarh in the Intermediate. He left Aligarh after only a few months and completed his Intermediate in Lucknow. However, he returned to Aligarh to complete his Engineering degree. He was active in supporting candidates in the Engineering College and Union elections and served in some posts himself. He was also captain of the Engineering College hockey team. He supported the Muslim League but rather than migrating to Pakistan, he left for the United States shortly after completing his education. He lived and worked in the United States for several years before settling down in India.

Abstract: Syed Saghir Ahmad Rizvi begins by speaking about his first experience at Aligarh as a student of the Intermediate. He didn't enjoy being a "junior" and obeying the "senior" so he left to complete his Intermediate at Lucknow University. He returned to Aligarh, however, to study engineering. He describes the hazing/ragging associated with "Introduction Night" and how this ritual helped him to build relationships with seniors. He describes his mischievous activities. He speaks about Ziauddin's role in supporting the students, and even offering them concessions. Even Zakir Husain, he says, recognized the strength of the group Rizvi led and recommended him for a scholarship. He describes his involvement in the Engineering College Union elections. He goes on to discuss his support of the Muslim League when he was a student, though when he got older he "realized it was not good." He concludes by describing his journeys to the United States, his first marriage to a Swiss girl and his efforts to ensure that their daughter, Yasmin, grew up in India. He returned to India permanently in 1969 after a road journey from Europe during which he picked up a hitchhiker.

Interviewee: Professor Ahmad Saeed  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Location: Nazaria-e-Pakistan office, Lahore  
Date: July 20, 2006  
Release: FULL

Biographical Notes: Ahmad Saeed was born on July 21, 1942 in Jullunder, East Punjab, then in India. His family shifted to Lahore in 1947 via military transport. He was educated in the Government College and Punjab University He taught for many years in Islamia College, Lahore before retiring in 2002. He is now a historian with the Nazaria-e-Pakistan (Ideology of Pakistan) foundation.

Abstract: Professor Saeed begins by speaking about his professional qualifications and publications. He has published several collections of primary documents pertaining to the Pakistan movement. Speaking about his childhood, he describes the disruptions that took place during the 1947 partition, and the fearful experiences and migration that his family survived. However, he cautioned, he was just a child and didn't remember much from those days. His grandfather, a government contractor, was in the Muslim League and his uncle owned the Pak Teahouse on the Mall in Lahore. He describes the tension between Indians and the British, his memories of going to hear Mohammad Ali Jinnah [Quaid-e-Azam] speak, Hindu discrimination against Muslims and his feelings about the importance of Pakistan. He describes Jinnah's vision for Pakistan, the domination of Punjabis, who he believes have corrupted that vision, and the disenfranchisement of Muslims who migrated from North India. He speaks about income inequality and the danger of government corruption and disrespect for the country. We speak about the role of religion (Islam) in his life and in the state. We speak about the meaning of democracy, independence and partition. Saeed argues that partition was inevitable and speaks about the relationship between intellectual and territorial nationalism. He speaks about the importance of good educational institutions, the challenges of education in Pakistan, and the absence of opportunities for the poor. This, he says is Pakistan's biggest challenge to overcome.



Interviewee: Ahmad Saeed  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Location: Lucknow, India  
Date: October 10, 2009  
RELEASE: FULL

Biographical Notes: Ahmad Saeed was born in Lucknow in 1927. Ahmad Saeed was primarily raised in Aligarh and attended the Muslim University High School. He got his degree in engineering from Aligarh University where he had served as a Senior Cabinet member of the Engineering College Union. He was never attracted to the Muslim League because his father was a nationalist. Saeed even read Leftist and Communist literature but never joined a party. During his stay at the university he was also into horse riding and won the Mr. University contest. He later served on the UP State Electricity Board from which he retired as Director. Both of his children also attended AMU.

Abstract: Ahmad Saeed begins by telling me about his early life in Aligarh and in the University. He praises the system of discipline but criticizes the food. He goes on to tell me about the Exhibition in Aligarh and how there were a lot of restrictions on student movement and behavior. He then tells me about his friend and neighbor Syed Saghir Ahmad Rizvi and how mischeivous he was during his stay at Aligarh. Saeed speaks about his involvement as Senior Cabinet Member with the Engineering College Union. Politically, though he remembers the visits of Muslim League leaders and even attended the meetings, he was not sympathetic to their cause because his father was a nationalist. He mentions, though, that almost all of his classmates went to Pakistan (Saeed left Aligarh in 1950). He describes the importance of Zakir Husain as Vice Chancellor and his role in "saving the university from the aftermath of partition." Saeed describes his own political leaning as "inclined towards Progressives" though was never officially a party member. After Aligarh, Saeed tells me, while many of his friends left for Pakistan, he refused, and left his job when his employer, MacNeill and Barry, insisted that it was their policy to send Muslims to Pakistan. Of course, he said, those who stayed in India did also get jobs. Saeed returns to discussing the university, and his involvement in sports, socializing, the system of seniority, and the importance of the Engineering college for Indian Muslims. There was no tension between Hindus and Muslims, he tells me, even during the 1940s and before partition students came from all over India. He contrasts his experiences when Gandhi and Jinnah each died. He concludes by discussing the challenges Muslims face in India, his perception that they have a "defeatist attitude," and his feeling of brotherhood with Aligs rather than the broader Muslim *ummah*.

Interviewee: Anonymized as Mrs. IS  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Location: Karachi  
Dates: May 28, 2010  
RELEASE: REQUESTS ANONYMITY

Biographical Notes: Mrs. IS was born in Delhi in 1929. She lost her mother when she was three months old. From then on, she lived with relatives in Meerut. Her father was an important official in Aligarh Muslim University. Her early education was with tutors, and she finished the Qur'an under the guidance of a maulvi and an aunt. Mrs. IS moved to Aligarh when she was fourteen years old, and completed her education there. She emigrated to Pakistan in 1948 and married a naval officer. She returned to India only twice, upon the births of her children. She lives in Karachi.

Abstract: Part 1: Mrs. IS begins by telling me about Aligarh when the Pakistan Movement was in full swing. She was very involved in the activities of the girls' school and college and was keen on the Pakistan movement. She remembers Quaid-e-Azam as a good listener and sharp. Her father supported Pakistan but in the end was critical of the infrastructural plans. She thought that Pakistan would be a paradise for Muslims, without Hindus. But, she says, most of the people were ignorant because this was not Quaid-e-Azam's vision. She remembers her terror when Gandhi was assassinated. As a young girl, she knew many young Hindu girls and never had any negative experience with them. Yet, she believes Pakistan was inevitable, but the boundary line was the outcome of Nehru's relationship with Mountbatten. In 1948, before migrating, she had visited Pakistan for one month, with her cousin, who was in the Pakistan Navy. But when she tried to return to India, her relatives prevented her due to the threat of war with India. She settled in Pakistan with no possessions apart from what was in her suitcase! She goes back to describe her early childhood with her father's mother, after her mother's death. She describes her involvement in the Pakistan Movement. During the elections, girls would try to recruit Muslim women in the city to vote for Pakistan. Now she describes her activities as "cheating" because the people she recruited could not come to Pakistan. "For what?" Since the separation of Bangladesh, she says, Indian Muslims were satisfied that Pakistan is not for all Muslims. Since then, she says, they started "building themselves." She says that everybody speaks Urdu, but everyone claims "Urdu is not our language!" She says the beginning of Pakistan was a British idea, Rehmat Ali Choudry developed enthusiasm for it, and then Jinnah was selected to lead it. She laments the failures of leadership in Pakistan. Part 2: During partition, she felt unsafe and slept with a weapon in her bed. She describes the unrest in Meerut. She describes her experiences on the day of Jinnah's death and her own father's death. She speaks of her father's dedication to Aligarh, both its students and the institution itself. She notes that "our family" was divided by partition—by which she means the Muslim community—seeing disconnection as a consequence of partition. She says, "Lots of people lost, some people gained. We lost."

Interviewee: Dr. Tahira Minhaj Servaes

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Location: G.O.R. Lahore

Date: January 4, 2008

RELEASE: FULL

Biographical Notes: Dr. Mrs. Tahir Minhaj Servaes was born in Aligarh in 1931 but spent her first ten years in Punjab. She completed her Master's in Aligarh and then went to Boston University for her Ph.D. Her father, Minhajuddin was a Chief Engineer in the Lahore Irrigation Department. He died when she was ten. She is the second youngest of nine siblings: three boys and six girls. She married an American and had a child before completing her Ph.D. in Physics. She married an American and has raised her family in Boston. She has spent most of her career working in industry as a communications engineer, and she has also taught. She lives in Boston.

Abstract: Mrs. Servaes begins by telling me about her early childhood and education and her home in Aligarh. She tells me about her migration, during partition, to Lahore, where her elder sister lived. She traveled partly by plane and partly by convoy. She returned to Aligarh after one year and remained there until 1958. She describes her chilly arrival in Boston in October, 1958 and her difficulty coping with the "difference" of America. She tells me about her Ph.D. program there. She left academia and joined industry, pursuing another Master's in Engineering. She describes the changes to the industry at the end of the cold war. She reminisces about the excitement of being in Aligarh in the 1940s and 50s, and how beautiful it was. Her mother was literate, though she had never attended school; she had married at age 15. She describes Aligarh, especially the university, was "basically Muslim;" everything was informed by Islamic culture. She speaks about segregation between girls and boys in the university and the girls' college, and the shortage of female teachers. She says there were only a few Hindu girls in school with her, mostly they went to Banaras Hindu University. She tells me that she "had to be an Engineer" because her brothers and father were engineers, and how she was disallowed from doing it in Aligarh in 1948. She tells me more about the year she spend in Lahore when she and all of her cousins were "shipped to Pakistan" for their safety, and how much she missed her family in Aligarh. Aligarh, she says, was totally safe, though there had been trouble in Delhi. She says that when she returned to Aligarh, the journey was very harrowing. Her sisters, Khadija and Fatima join in the conversation, speaking about this period. She tells me that the girls in the Lahore College for Women were given some civil training with guns. She still visits Aligarh and the university, even after her mother's death, she feels deep affection for the place, though she scarcely recognizes it today!

Interviewee: Brigadier Iqbal Shafi

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Location: Islamabad, Pakistan

Date: May 9, 2010

Release: FULL

Biographical Notes: Iqbal Shafi was born in Aligarh in 1927. His father was an Aligarian and a professor at the University and his mother ran a small school for the children of the university's staff. Shafi began his education in Zahoor Ward and went on to the Muslim University High School where he passed out in 1943 before he attended Aligarh Muslim University. From 1940 he was attracted to the Muslim League platform and became a member of the Baccha (Children's) Muslim League. He actively campaigned for the elections in 1945 and 1946. Shafi migrated to Pakistan in late 1947 and served as a career officer in Pakistan's army. He co-founded the Sir Syed Memorial Society in Pakistan and continues to be active in educational development and leadership.

Abstract: Part 1: Brigadier Iqbal Shafi begins by describing his father's academic pedigree which included degrees from Aligarh and the London School of Economics before he settled in as a professor in Aligarh to teach Economics and Commerce. Shafi describes their family home on the campus of Aligarh University in great detail. He goes on to describe his grandfather's medical and diplomatic work under the British. He speaks about his mother, her background and philanthropic educational work in Aligarh with the children of the university's labor force. He remembers a trip when he returned to Aligarh and met the family of one of his mother's former students. Throughout the interview, he uses anecdotes to illustrate the "atmosphere" of Aligarh in which support for fellow Muslims and the advancement of education were top priorities. He speaks a bit about his own educational and political experience as a student of Aligarh. When speaking about Aligarh's atmosphere, and its relationship to the Pakistan movement he becomes very emotional and cries several times. Part 2: Brigadier Shafi begins with a description of Jinnah's presence and frequent visits at the university and Shafi's own experience as a Muslim League election worker in Punjab and the Northwest Frontier. The descriptions and stories are very colorful. After returning to Aligarh, he decided to join the army because he was so fed up with academics. He describes his experience in Dehra Dun during partition when the Muslim students of the Indian Military Academy opted for Pakistan and took forty school boys from the Doon School, Joseph Cotton, and Colonel Browns' Schools along with them in the military transport. As we conclude he speaks about his own decision to come to Pakistan, his father's belated arrival and educational work in Pakistan, his own experience in the Union elections in Aligarh, hostel and social life and the importance of the atmosphere. In the end, he describes the sense of loss that Aligarh is not in Pakistan, but the sense of triumph over Pakistan's mere existence.

Interviewee: Colonel Mohsin Jalil Shamsi

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Location: Gomti Nagar, Lucknow

Date: August 11, 2008

RELEASE: FULL

Biographical Notes: Colonel Shamsi belongs to Gonda, he was born in the late 1930s. His family were in business, and belonged to the Punjabi *biradari*, converts to Islam from several generations back. His father, Hafiz Abdul Razzaq was a *hafiz* and a businessman, and he taught English administrators Urdu and Persian. He passed away while Shamsi was in High School. Shamsi matriculated at the medical college in Lucknow in 1957. He joined the army and served for more than 25 years. He lives in Lucknow.

Abstract: Part 1: Colonel Shamsi tells me about his family's ancestral history and conversion to Islam by Shamsuddin Turk of Panipat. His family was involved in goods transport ranging from Sialkot to Calcutta. Shamsi decided in ninth class (1950) that he would become a doctor. The loss of his father when he was in High School prevented him from traveling to Germany for medical training. During his childhood, the family was in retail of general merchandise. He resisted the family's pressure to join the business in favor of continued studies. After his medical degree, he joined the army. He speaks about the cooperation of Hindus and Muslims during his childhood. He speaks about the importance of Islam in his life. He makes an argument for Muslim equality in India, right from the beginning, though they may be underrepresented in services. Muslims should study and compete, he argues. He blames Muslims for their position. He speaks about his parents' role in his early Islamic education. He speaks about the cooperation of Hindus and Muslims in putting on religious festivals. We speak about partition, which took place when he was in 6<sup>th</sup> class. In 1947 he attended the independence ceremony in the police lines, he remembers seeing the flag go up and down. He also remembers a riot in 1948 in Agra in one in Gonda. He says this "went on." He remembers the departure of educated Muslims from Gonda. He describes the arrival of "hopeless" refugees from Pakistan areas, and Muslims entered a decline after partition for at least ten years. He says India is "very flexible" and can accommodate many religions and cultures. He speaks about how he has tried to mentor young Muslim boys in his neighborhood, to inspire them. We take a break so that he can say his prayers. Part 2: I meet Colonel Shamsi's young granddaughter and have tea. Part 3: Colonel Shamsi speaks about Sufi tradition and veneration of saints as a corruption of true Islam. We speak of his views on Islam. He says you can respect saints, but never ask anything from them. We speak about his first marriage (his first wife died) and how he met his wife during an eye examination!

Interviewee: Professor Riazur Rahman Sherwani

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Location: Habib Manzil, Aligarh, India

Date: July 6, 2008 and November 20, 2009

RELEASE: FULL

Biographical Notes: Riazur Rahman Sherwani began his schooling in Minto Circle School in the 1930s. His family were large landholders in UP, and his father a well-known politician and, during the 1940s, a League sympathizer. Riazur Rahman Sherwani's early education was traditional, in Arabic, Persian and the classical Islamic subjects. After joining the school he went on to complete his M.A. and Ph.D. in Arabic and taught both in Aligarh Muslim University and in Kashmir University. Sherwani never sympathized with the League despite his father's allegiances and in fact, worked on the side of Congress during the 1945-6 elections. He still lives in his family home, Habib Manzil in Aligarh, reportedly where Mohammad Ali Jinnah used to stay during his Aligarh visits.

Abstract July 6, 2008: Sherwani Sahib joined Minto Circle school in the 1930s. As a result of his difficulty hearing, he misinterpreted my question about his "student days" as being about his "feudal days" and begins by speaking to me about his family's history as landowners. I redirected the conversation to AMU and asked about his political involvement in the 1940s. He keenly communicates to me that there were different groups in AMU, and there was always some group, of which he was a part, that opposed the administration. During the 1940s most of the students followed the Muslim League, but he remained a nationalist, though he hesitates to blame Muslims for partition. He says that the working of the university was unaffected by partition's migrations, classes continued and there was no discrimination against non-Muslims. He speaks briefly about the unrest in the university in 1965. He speaks about the visits of political leaders to AMU, and the shift that occurred during the 1940s when nationalist leaders "were not allowed" to come. He clarifies that the Aligarh movement was essentially about education, not politics. As a child, he received religious education before he went to school, which delayed his school entrance by two years, but also set him on his professional path as a scholar of Arabic language. His mother was literate in Urdu and Persian, but not English. Sherwani describes himself as a rebel, when his father was a League sympathizer who eventually ran for office in the 1946 election on a Muslim League ticket. At the end, he asks me about myself and American politics.

Abstract November 20, 2009: Part 1: Riazur Rahman Sherwani begins by telling me that from 1942- 1948 he studied in AMU when politics in India had reached a high level, it was "epoch making." Though the period 1945- 1947—from the time Congress leaders finally came out of jail to partition—was especially critical for the nationalist movement, he says that in AMU, it was as if nothing was happening; everything was "calm and quiet." But most in AMU supported Pakistan. He tells me he had no part in the Students'

Union, because it was dominated by “aggressive” Muslim Leaguers. Rather, they sided with those Leaguers who were somewhat better. He tells me about his father, who ran for the assembly on the Muslim League ticket—thus the university and his household were both opposed to his own way of thinking. He formed a small students’ organization for a small number of like-thinking students: Nationalist Muslim Students’ Federation. They worked for Congress candidates but they had a lot of problems. He tells me about his father’s brief tenure as Vice Chancellor, during which there was peace in the university, under the protection of the government. But the student’s numbers had dropped and those Muslims who remained would not send their children to AMU for a couple of years out of fear. Dr. Zakir Husain came in late 1948 and then things began to change. Immediately after partition, Muslims, whether they joined political parties or not, faced discrimination from Hindus. The minority parties were unsuccessful and demoralized. Zakir Husain’s real value was that he was a real academic administrator and raised the standards, as opposed to Ziauddin whose main concern was to get Muslims employed. Sir Sayyid’s concern had been purely for to get them Western education, he argues, it was not for employment. And this agenda is still necessary; Muslims lag. Part 2: Riazur Rahman Sherwani critiques the term “nationalist”—it only had meaning before partition. The problem is with “liberalism” and “orthodoxy” among Muslims. Today, he says, this is the main problem among Muslims, and both groups exist in Aligarh. He speaks about the debates over girls wearing hijab and again there is a movement for forming an organization for Muslims—but he feels that the only reason the League was successful was because of separate electorates. He concludes by telling me about living in Aftab hostel, where he had a single-seater room, though he did not play any sports.

Interviewee: Professor Ather Siddiqi  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Location: Sir Syed Nagar, Aligarh, India  
Date: May 11, 2009  
RELEASE: FULL

Biographical Notes: Ather Siddiqi is originally from Saharanpur. He was admitted to Aligarh University in 1947 for his Intermediate. He completed his M.Sc. in Aligarh and his Ph.D. in Zoology in the United States and became a professor. During his tenure at Aligarh he supported the Muslim League and his sibling and parents all eventually migrated to Pakistan. He chose to remain in India having been appointed as a professor in Aligarh University. He is retired and lives in Aligarh with his wife, fellow academic Dr. Zakiya Siddiqi.

Abstract: The formal interview begins with Professor Ather Siddiqi speaking about the culture of tolerance among Hindu Indians who did not even punish Muslims for dividing the country. He first says that he had decided “from the beginning” not to go to Pakistan though the rest of his family did migrate by the mid- 1960s. He describes visiting Pakistan for his niece’s wedding in 1971 where he was caught on the outbreak of war between India and Pakistan and the Civil War with East Pakistan. He describes his escape aboard a flight organized by the Swiss Embassy. He criticizes Pakistan and repeats that India has no interest in annexing Pakistan or Bangladesh. His older brother had been a League sympathizer and chose to migrate to Pakistan; at this point Siddiqi admits that he had wanted to go to Pakistan, but his father would not allow him to go. Instead, he finished his education at AMU, and became a professor of Zoology. He briefly describes the changes in AMU during partition. He describes the “atmosphere of fear and danger” that prevailed after partition as a result of all the killing that had taken place. He speaks about the threat of violence to the university during the riots in Aligarh City in 1951 and 1961, but argues that only Hindus could start riots because Muslims would get a “guilty conscience” if they do. He describes his daughter’s business, Harvest Gold Bread, as evidence that Muslims can attain any level of success. He speaks about relations with Hindus at AMU, his involvement in sports, and the Union. He describes his experience on the day of Gandhi’s assassination, and the fear of repercussions if a Muslim had been the assassin. He praises Zakir Husain for supporting study leave for faculty. He returns to why he did not support the creation of Pakistan, because he had grown up in a secular environment and he is disappointed that Pakistan has claimed Sir Sayyid for themselves when he simply sought to uplift Indian Muslims. In conclusion, he offers to give me his autobiographical writings (which I eventually photocopied).



Interviewee: Majid Ali Siddiqi  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Location: 10 Butler Road, Lucknow, India  
Date: October 2, 2009  
RELEASE: FULL

Biographical Notes: Majid Ali Siddiqi was born in 1935 in Gorakhpur, India. He arrived at Aligarh in 1952 to study engineering. He was also involved in sports, hurdles and hockey. He completed his B.Sc. in Civil Engineering from Aligarh University in 1956. He was married in 1957. His first job was in the Uttar Pradesh Irrigation Department as a Civil Engineer. He completed a post-graduate degree from Roorkee University. Siddiqi still works after a long career with Jayaprakash Associates he is now Director, JP Karsham Hydro, Corporation, Ltd.

Abstract Part 1: Majid Ali Siddiqi begins by describing his professional life as a Civil Engineer. In the first section he talks about his early education, and why he chose to do his engineering in Aligarh. His father was a small landowner, but he grew up in the city of Gorakhpur where he lived in a mixed neighborhood. He speaks much about tolerance, and the absence of Hindu-Muslim tensions. When I asked him if he knew anyone who had left for Pakistan he became agitated, asked me to turn off the microphone and told me that he would not speak about Pakistan. Part 2: Siddiqi speaks about the organization of the Sir Suleiman Engineering Hall at Aligarh, and the fact that the Engineering College was evenly divided amongst Hindu and Muslim students. Part 3: Majid Ali Siddiqi speaks about Urdu, the organization of early education and he begins to speak about his reading habits and television habits. Part 4: Siddiqi speaks at length about the importance of understanding other faiths. He returns to why he attended Aligarh, and the importance of character building there. He tells me about playing hockey and billiards, and more on the system of seniority/ juniority and the Introduction Night events. He tells a lengthy story about trying to convince his first boss why Aligarh Engineering students were at least as good, if not better than those from Roorkee, which hinges on the fact that Aligarh boys were better administrators. Then he speaks about the Aligarh Old Boys' Association, and tells some anecdotes about playing hockey. He concludes with an anecdote about the hockey team photo taken with Zakir Husain in which a conflict over seniority arose and Zakir Husain diffused the situation.

Interviewee: Professor Zakiya Siddiqi  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Location: Sir Syed Nagar, Aligarh, India  
Date: December 9, 2009  
Release: ORAL

Biographical Notes: Zakiya Siddiqi was born in Allahabad in 1936. Her father was an advocate who also served as an MLA. Her elder sister Saeeda was educated at Aligarh before her and went on to become a teacher. Zakiya Siddiqi did her early education in her sister's school and then in Lucknow's Karamat Husain Girls' School where she completed her Intermediate in 1952. She then shifted to Aligarh's Women's College where she lived in the hostel. She completed her Bachelor's of Education and M.A. in the Aligarh University. After her marriage to Ather Siddiqi, she moved to the United States and pursued an M.S. in Guidance and Counseling at Purdue University. After teaching for many years in the Aligarh Women's College, she became the Principal and Provost. After retiring from that position she established the Center for Women's Studies at Aligarh University and now she oversees the Aligarh Public School. She also enjoys caring for her garden.

Abstract: Zakiya Siddiqi begins by describing her early childhood, family origin and education. She describes her father as very "forward-looking," willing to educate his daughters despite resistance in his community. She compares her lifestyle in Lucknow's Karamat Husain Girls' School with the relative openness at Aligarh, which she liked very much. She discusses the benefits of residential education, and the religiously mixed hostels. She discusses her religious background, and the fact that she never forced her children to maintain religious observance. She describes her advocacy for girls' education and the resistance to it that is still prevalent in the Muslim community. She tells me about her tenure as Principal and Provost of the Women's College, which she calls a "vacation" not "vocation." Although she has been criticized for it, she continues to encourage girls to establish a career and delay marriage. She talks about her refusal to retire and her success in rejuvenating the Aligarh Public School. She speaks at length about the problems Muslims face in India and how to turn the University into a premier institution. I redirect her narrative to her time at Aligarh and partition, though she was too young to experience it personally. Her father was vehemently anti-Pakistan and refused to allow his daughters to marry there. However, since her husband's family is in Pakistan, Zakiya Siddiqi speaks about her experiences there, and contrasts Pakistan and India. She concludes by speaking about how Muslims need to work harder to achieve more success in India, and the role of the intellectual class in encouraging hard work.

Interviewee: Mrs. Masooda Siddiqui  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Date: March 12, 2010  
Location: Dhaka, Bangladesh

Biographical Notes: Masooda Siddiqui was born in Faridpur in the early 1930s. She was 77 at the time of this interview. She grew up in Faridpur and Calcutta but fled Calcutta in 1946. She was married in 1948. Today she lives in Dhaka.

Abstract: Masooda Siddiqui speaks of her childhood and the liberal environment in which she was allowed to ride a bicycle. She started school in Calcutta at age 7. She studied English and Bangla together under English and Bengali teachers. She lived with her brother in Calcutta in 1946, during the Great Calcutta Killings. They lived in a Muslim area, near Park Circus. She speaks of the resistance to British colonialism and anger that erupted over restrictions on indigo. She describes the Hindu-Muslim violence in Calcutta and how she became trapped in her house because of the danger outside. She speaks of Pathans who helped her family escape, and Sikhs who went into Muslim houses and left no one alive. She says that she had no understanding of Pakistan, but immediately notes that in East Pakistan they were not allowed to speak their language. Though she did not want to get married, she did in 1948, after corresponding with her betrothed. After her marriage, she moved with her husband to Kulna.

Interviewee: General Ghulam Umar (d. January 18, 2009)  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Location: 84/II, 23<sup>rd</sup> St. Khayaban-e-Sahar, D.H.A. Karachi, Pakistan  
Date: Monday August 8, 2006  
Release: FULL

Biographical Notes: Ghulam Umar was born on October 1, 1922 into a family of Islamic scholars in Ambala. His father served in the Post and Telegraph Department and Umar was mostly educated in Aligarh, but his family lived in Simla and Delhi. He joined the army during World War II and opted for Pakistan in 1947 where he served in 10<sup>th</sup> Punjab Regiment (then 2<sup>nd</sup> 15<sup>th</sup> Punjab) and also as Military Secretary to King Faisal of Saudi Arabia. He served as a Brigadier General in the Pakistan Army in the 1965 War, and he served General Yahya Khan as Secretary of the National Security Council (Military Intelligence) during the 1971 War, but fell out of favor with Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and was held under house arrest in the early 1970s. After his retirement from the Pakistan Army he has been involved in people-to-people peace diplomacy between India and Pakistan.

Abstract: General Umar begins by telling me where he is from and then begins outlining the history of Indian Muslims from the early days of the British period and leads directly into a brief description of Sir Sayyid and the Aligarh Movement, what Umar calls “the politics of educational reform.” He speaks about the Khilafat Movement, and the emergence of Mohammad Ali Jinnah as a leader, and the intellectual leadership of Allama Iqbal. He credits the Congress with creating the conditions for the independence of Pakistan, as a last resort after the failure of the Cabinet Mission. He describes the role of Aligarhians in establishing Pakistan. He goes on to speak about South Asia as a region, and the fact that India should lead it, due to its size and resources, though India has a conflict with all of its neighbors. He tells me about his experience with Track 2 Diplomacy, and then I redirect him to speak about his life. He tells me about the intellectual environment of his early childhood and jumps to a description of Jinnah’s 1940 visit to Aligarh. He goes on to discuss his relationship with Quaid-e-Azam and how he came to join the army and later to become Military Secretary to King Faisal of Saudi Arabia. He goes back to speaking of his childhood and life in the Aligarh hostels. He speaks about the importance of unity and democracy in Pakistan, and the fact that neither exist. He speaks about leadership, and the importance of education. He describes his experiences during 1947 when he was in central India after returning from Japan. He opted for the Pakistan Army because of his connection to Quaid-e-Azam and the idea of Pakistan. He tells me a bit about his military career. He offers some solutions to Pakistan’s difficulties, suggesting that Pakistan needs to believe in itself. He outlines a plan for distributing power among the provinces more evenly and reducing the strength of Pakistan’s standing army, and he addresses the question of Pakistani disintegration. He concludes by suggesting the importance of an educational institution like Aligarh that could obscure regional and sectarian identities.

Interviewee: Mrs. Khadija Minhaj Umar  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Location: G.O.R. #6 College Road, Lahore, Pakistan  
Date: January 4, 2008  
RELEASE: FULL

Biographical Notes: Mrs. Khadija Minhaj Umar was born in Aligarh, India. She was educated in Aligarh, Lahore, Sargodha and Lucknow where she received a Master's Degree. She married in 1944 and settled in Lahore just before partition because her husband was based in Punjab. She taught Mathematics at Islamia College, Lahore and then at Kinnaird College, Lahore. Since 1947 she has resided at #6 College Road, just off The Mall in Lahore, Pakistan.

Abstract: Khadija Minhaj Umar speaks about her education and moving around to different schools before becoming a teacher of mathematics first at Islamia College, then Kinnaird College, Lahore. Mrs. Khadija was married in 1944 and describes her early marriage and her experiences during partition. She details how she was able to secure the home in which she now lives, and discusses her husband's refugee recovery work. She tells me a little bit about living in Dhaka, and her experiences there in the early years of East Pakistan. She describes her father's attitude on veiling and how she and her sisters used their veils as a disguise. Midway through the interview, Mrs. Khadija's sisters begin to participate and we have a conversation about common friends and relatives. Mrs. Khadija then remembered her experiences when Jinnah died and when Gandhi died which brings us to the recent assassination of Benazir Bhutto. In conclusion she tells me about her children, and how successful they have been in their careers, which brings her great satisfaction.

Interviewee: Anonymized as YM  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Location: Lucknow, India  
Date: Thursday August 7, 2008  
RELEASE: FULL BUT REQUESTS ANONYMITY

Biographical Notes: YM is from Shahjahanpur. He studied at Aligarh Muslim University from 1952-55, but did not receive a degree from there. He opened an eyeglass lenses business in Lucknow with his brother and has made his home in Lucknow. His sons were educated at La Martiniere College and Aligarh Muslim University.

Abstract: Part 1: YM begins by telling me about his early childhood and his family's business in supplying cloth, sugar and tobacco. He began his eyeglass business in 1952. He speaks about the atmosphere in Aligarh and emphasizes the importance of the uniform of sherwani/pajamas. He tells me that Aligarh Old Boys celebrate Sir Syed Day (October 17) internationally. He tells me that he did not complete his degree from Aligarh because of his family's investment in business. Prior to arriving in Aligarh, he had only studied one subject, science, in English. Part 2: We speak with his wife about my research and visit to India. YM tells me more about prominent people in Aligarh, some of whom I had already met. He tells me that he was, and is, anti-Pakistan. He tells me that during the British period Muslims were primarily involved in service, and Hindus in business. He mentions the brain-drain to Pakistan. He speaks about the disruptions to Muslim life in Aligarh and elsewhere as a result of partition, and the re-allotment of properties. He speaks about the influence of Chinese manufacturing on prices of products in India. He speaks about the oppressive separation of Indians and British under the colonial system. He describes his grandfather's lifestyle as simple, devout, despite having money. He tells me that all of his children have been educated in English from the beginning of their education to prepare them for their futures. He describes his early Qur'anic education according to the traditional method. He says that, in his time, children of all status played together, they played sports in the open grounds. We speak about my own background for some time and the fact that although I come from a Muslim family, I was not raised Muslim. He tells me that Islam and Christianity are similar, but that Islam teaches that God had no son, Jesus was a prophet of God. He reads to me from the Qur'an, Surat Miriam. YM Sahib praises the joint-family system and the loyalty of his sons and daughters-in-law. We speak further about my family and background. His wife tells me that she also had a business, a boutique. YM tells me that all of his family has some kind of business. I meet one of his daughters-in-law and we speak about her children and my large family. YM Sahib advises me to track down my roots in India. We speak about my Urdu program in Lucknow. He concludes talking about the fluctuation in international manufacturing and how China has eclipsed Japan. He critiques the American stance towards the Muslim world.

Interviewee: Mrs. Anis Zaidi and Mrs. Rais Sultana  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Location: 11/A North Avenue, Phase I D.H.A., Karachi  
Date: May 20, 2010  
RELEASE: FULL

Biographical Notes: Anis Zaidi was born on April 19, 1928 in Chindausi. Her sister Rais Sultana was born in 1926. The sisters were raised in Meerut where their father was an Income Tax Lawyer. Sultana married young and moved to Moradabad. Zaidi pursued her B.A. at Aligarh, but as she was ailing he completed her degree as a private candidate. During partition both sisters moved with their family to Pakistan. They both pursued higher education in Pakistan and became educators. The women are now retired and live together in Karachi.

Abstract: I spoke with two sisters, Anis Zaidi—who was wearing the microphone—and Rais Sultana, who also weighed in from time to time. We start off speaking about their parents, in particular their mother's activism on behalf of the Muslim League. Then we speak about their family's educational history and the emphasis placed on education by several generations of women. They describe their own early education and Rais Sultana's early marriage (at 17) to a law graduate who ultimately practiced income tax law (like their father) in Moradabad. We speak about Zaidi's experience in Aligarh (the bad food) and then about the disruptions to the family during partition. She speaks about the violence of partition on both sides and we speak at length about the importance of Urdu and her own mother's work on behalf of Urdu. Anis Zaidi speaks of the importance of Pakistan and Quaid-e-Azam's leadership. We conclude with her lament that Pakistanis do not appreciate their freedom because most Pakistanis did not fight for it—that the bulk of the sacrifice was made by UP Muslims. The final minutes of the interview are devoted to Rais Sultana. I speak with her first about her education. She describes her move to Pakistan, despite the fact that her husband was a "Congress," sympathetic to India. He died shortly after arriving in Pakistan. As Sultana raised her children, with her father's help, she continued her education. Ultimately, she began teaching Political Science. After retirement she tried living outside Pakistan with her children but she returned. Today she feels disappointed in Pakistan and suggests that perhaps Jinnah "mised" us. In closing, Anis Zaidi counters that she thinks Pakistanis are "lucky" to have a free country. She concludes by telling me about the educational institution she led and developed in Wah, the site of the Pakistan Ordinance Factory.

Interviewee: Professor Zahida Zaidi (d. January 2011)

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Location: ADA Colony, Aligarh, India

Date: November 20, 2009

RELEASE: NOT FOR BROADCASTING PURPOSES OR PUBLIC PERFORMANCE, DISPLAY OR EXHIBITION. REQUESTS ANONYMITY FOR THE NAMES OF OTHERS MENTIONED

Biographical Notes: Zahida Zaidi was born in Meerut. She was one of five sisters and one half-brother. Her father died when she was quite young. After some time in Aligarh, the family shifted to Panipat. Zaidi received her primary education in Panipat and at this time she finished her Qur'an under the guidance of Maulana Hali's son, Khwaja Sajjad Husain. She was a professor of English in Aligarh as well as a poet and a playwright.

Abstract: Part 1: Zahida Zaidi begins by telling me about the hardship she and her mother and sisters endured after her father's death. Her mother shifted her children to Aligarh where she could stay with her brother, K.G. Saiyidain, a prominent Aligarh educationist. Zaidi remembers little of this period, but says that her uncle's house was a center of literary and intellectual life. The family shifted to Panipat after Saiyidain shifted to Kashmir. She tells me about studying Qur'an under Hali's son. Her family shifted again to Aligarh. There, she also experienced her first drama, performing the lead role in a play at the age of 14. In tenth class, she became a residential student in the Aligarh Women's College. She describes this period as a "glamorous time" in Aligarh. She played basketball and was interested in fashion, drama, debate and poetry. She celebrated Indian independence in Bombay and decided to give up *purdah*. She describes the disruption and violence in Delhi during partition and how she and her sisters were saved by a Sikh family who warned them against attack. Part 2: Zaidi continues by telling me that Maulana Azad sent a jeep to protect them and take them to his house. They stayed with Maulana Azad for over a month, having lost all their possessions and jewelry. She mentions that, as young children, they enjoyed this a lot! They later shifted to the home of relatives who were not as kind, and they made their way back to Aligarh. Zaidi refocused attention on her studies and her mother returned to Aligarh. In Aligarh she became involved in leftist and Communist activities and was eventually arrested during a protest along with her two sisters. The girls were sent to Banaras jail. She says that it was at this point that she lost faith in the Congress and Pandit Nehru because of the crackdown on Communists. She began her teaching career in Lady Irwin College, Delhi and then she shifted to Aligarh as a lecturer in Women's College. She later went to Cambridge and studied drama and art, and "tasted freedom" and independence. This inspired her to leave the Communist party. She had also begun writing poetry. She tells me about her early teaching career in Delhi and her creative work in drama and poetry and the banning of dramas in Aligarh. She worked with famous playwrights and actors like Nasiruddin Shah and Muzaffar Ali. She discusses her involvement in the Progressive Writers Association. She concludes speaking about her mother's open-mindedness.



Interviewee: Mubarak Shah Zuberi

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Date: May 26, 2010

Location: Karachi

RELEASE: FULL

Biographical Notes: Mubarak Shah Zuberi is the grandson of Dr. Sir Ziauddin, the Vice Chancellor of Aligarh University during the 1940s. He was born in Meerut on October 7, 1935 and attended Aligarh University. His father was a civil servant who was killed in a train accident near Lucknow. After graduating from Aligarh he remained in India until 1961, though much of his family migrated to Pakistan. At the request of his mother, he finally shifted in 1964. He has also lived and worked in the United States, both California and New York. He currently splits his time between Karachi and California.

Abstract: Part 1: Mubarak Shah Zuberi begins by telling me about the egalitarian atmosphere of the Aligarh university, and how he saw it as a “family home.” As a student of Aligarh University, he lived at home because his grandfather was Vice Chancellor. Zuberi tells me about Sir Sayyid’s significance as the “founder” of the Two Nation Theory. He expounds on Dr. Ziauddin’s talents in public life and his role in the university. He describes the experience when Ziauddin’s body was returned to Aligarh after his death, and the students’ effort to have him interred next to Sir Sayyid. Part 2: Zuberi speaks about other members of his family that I will be interviewing. He describes the purpose of the Sir Ziauddin Memorial Society, and the importance of preserving Ziauddin’s memory, which he says has suffered in Pakistan. He laments the marginalization of important figures like Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar and Maulana Hasrat Mohani and even Liaqat Ali Khan who he argues have been largely forgotten. He speaks about the problems with ethnic strife and marginalization of Urdu speakers in Bangladesh. Then he begins speaking about his cousins, Ziauddin’s daughters, with whom I also spoke. He speaks about the potential of Pakistanis, and the failure of the vision of Pakistan due to poor execution. His guest, Dr. Navid, speaks at length about the sources of ethnic strife in Pakistan. Zuberi then speaks about Aligarh and his participation in the Muslim League elections in 1945-46. Then he speaks about tolerance in the United State and India and the fact that his Muslim family had good relations with non-Muslims (and still does) in India. He speaks at length about the difficulties facing Pakistanis and the internal strife. As he concludes, he tells a couple of stories about working in America and his experience in a more egalitarian environment.

Interviewee: Professor Viqar Ahmad Zuberi

Interviewer: Amber Abbas

Location: Karachi

Date: May 19, 2010

RELEASE: ORAL

Biographical Notes: Viqar Ahmad Zuberi was born in 1938 in Lucknow. However, he did all of his early education in Moradabad before shifting to Pakistan after his Intermediate. He completed his higher education in Pakistan and taught Zoology and Environmental Biology for his entire career, including two years in Iraq early on and two years in Abu Dhabi after his retirement. His parents migrated to Pakistan in the mid-1960s. Professor Zuberi lives in Karachi.

Abstract: He tells me about his early life, and we discover a mutual acquaintance. He tells me about his choice to learn sciences in an Urdu medium institution in Lahore, where his brother lived, and a bit more about his educational history. He describes the division in his own family on the issue of Pakistan, one side was with Congress and one side was with the League. He then shifts and begins giving me the history of Muslim nationalism and the importance of Aligarh and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. He speaks about the decline of Muslim education, discrimination against Bengalis and the conspiracy that led to the breakup of Pakistan. He feels that Pakistan was deprived in the boundary negotiations and that it would have been impossible for Muslims to remain. He speaks of his memories of Moradabad during partition. He speaks of his family's decision to migrate, the tension between Hindus and Muslims and the "humiliation" of being a Muslim in India. We conclude speaking about his mother's unhappiness in Pakistan, having left her property in India. His father, he says, was happy, because the whole family was together again.

Interviewee: Waqar Ahmad Zuberi  
Interviewer: Amber Abbas  
Location: North Nazimabad, Karachi  
Date: May 28, 2010

Biographical Notes: Waqar Ahmad Zuberi belongs to the family of Aligarh University's Vice Chancellor, Sir Ziauddin Ahmad and originally hails from Meerut. Though he never attended Aligarh Muslim University, he was active in the Pakistan Movement as a student in Meerut.

Abstract: Waqar Ahmad Zuberi tells me about the history of the Muslim League and the importance of Aligarh Muslim University and the Muslim Students' Federation. He shows me printed materials referencing the involvement of his family in Muslim League activism. He describes making a map of Pakistan from his own blood. He tells me how he migrated, by train, and was able to bring his papers and evidence of his dedication to Pakistan. He tells me about Muslim involvement in other anti-imperial movements, including the Indian National Army. He and other students protested the punishment of INA men though Jinnah tried to stop them. He speaks of the importance of Pakistan's "Objectives Resolution" and the importance of incorporating Islam and Islamic justice into governance in Pakistan. He describes his efforts to meet Mohammad Ali Jinnah. He describes the pre-partition period, under British and Hindu domination as an "unjust" time for Muslims. He tells me about his early life and education in Meerut. He tells me about learning Qur'an from a poor Muslim maulvi who used to come to his home. He describes working for the election of Liaqat Ali Khan in the Meerut District. He describes his aspirations for Pakistan with "Islami Nizam" (Muslim Rule). He laments the rampant corruption and Muslim vs. Muslim violence in Pakistan, despite which, Pakistan will survive. He says that the problem with the Two Nation Theory is that it was formed when Muslims and Hindus were in opposition. The absence of Hindus in Pakistan has meant that the conflict will necessarily be amongst Muslims. But he also blames the intervention of the United States and greed for "the dollar." We conclude speaking about my research and my own connections to Pakistan. He says he is happy to share his information, that it should be shared. He says that Pakistan's history begins in 1947, but really with the founding of the Muslim League. He notes that the goal was "Muslim unity."

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