

Report on American Institute of Pakistan Studies Grant

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Grant Period: September 2007-March 2008

Site of Research: London, U.K.

Purpose: Archival Research

The AIPS Fellowship for 2007-2008 allowed me to conduct research on the introductory and historical chapters of my doctoral dissertation at the British Library in London, U.K. My dissertation investigates the historically shifting relationship of the Pakistani state with the Ahmadiyya community (in short, Ahmadis) in Pakistan, a controversial “sect” of Islam that was forcibly declared a non-Muslim minority by the Pakistani state in 1974. Through archival research at the British Library in the U.K., I investigated the symbolic representations of Ahmadis by Muslim nationalist leaders in the periods between 1920 and 1947. Additionally, I explored the relationship between the Ahmadiyya community and the British colonial state.

At the British library, I was primarily interested in looking at the following: the India Office Records; the Asian Language Collections; Private Papers and Collections; and the various English, Urdu, and Hindi language national and regional newspapers that are catalogued at the Library. Within the India Office Records, I found incredibly rich data documenting the correspondence between the colonial state and the Ahmadi *Jamaat* (Organization) on issues as diverse as Ahmadi missionary activities in India and abroad; Ahmadi-Ahrar riots in the 1930s and 1940s; the persecution of Ahmadis in Afghanistan; and the appointment of prominent Ahmadis such as Sir Zafrullah Khan in colonial service, to name a few. These files provide a very useful source for investigating the space occupied by the Ahmadis in the British colonial investigation. Furthermore, they allow the researcher to reconstruct the complex interactions between the two, with both sides vying to extract the maximum benefit from each other from this somewhat precarious symbiosis.

Second, I looked at the Asia Language Collections as well as the general catalogue. Consisting of, among other things, rare books and manuscripts from the colonial era, these collections allowed me to find books written by the Ahmadis on Islam, Indian politics, and the colonial state. Similarly, I found pamphlets written by mainstream and orthodox Muslim groups debating the religious status of the Ahmadis, and their relationship to the Pakistani nationalist movement. Third, by looking at newspaper collections, I was able to locate public debates of much historical significance, such as a series of articles written by Muhammad Iqbal in *The Statesman* on the religious status of the Ahmadiyya community.

Finally, I was able to locate additional material from various sources on the city of Qadian in District Gurdaspur, the birthplace of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the founder of the Ahmadiyya community, which also became the first headquarters of the community. For example, I was able to find records of the disturbances between Sikhs and Ahmadis in 1947 that eventually led to the Ahmadis relocating to Pakistan.

In conclusion, I would like to thank AIPS for this wonderful opportunity to complete work on a very significant portion of my project.