

Muslim Civil Society and Modern Education in the Punjab Region, South Asia: A Case Study of *Anjuman Himāyat-e Islām*

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Place of fieldwork: Pakistan

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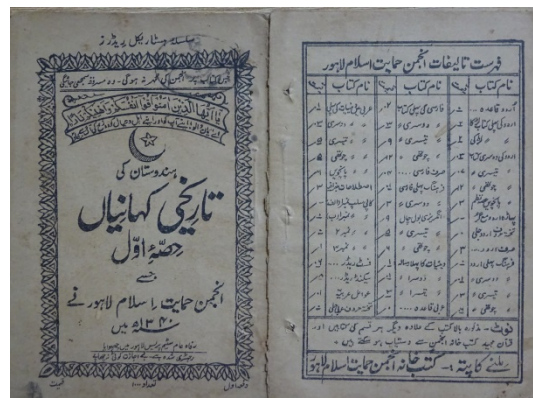
The subject of my research is a Muslim association, *Anjuman Himāyat-e Islām* (AHI), which was established in 1884 in the Punjab in British India. AHI was supported not only by Muslim elites in British India but also by locals in the Punjab. AHI's main activity was promoting education, with a particular focus on basic levels of education and education for girls. It differed from a contemporary Muslim educational movement in North India initiated by a Muslim modernist, Saiyid Ahmad *Khān* (Saiyid), which focused more on higher levels of education and education for boys. Mainly initiated by locals in the Punjab, AHI's particular goal was the reform of Muslim education, not merely a simplified version of Saiyid's reform.

The purpose of my research is to situate AHI in the context of a civil society and to investigate their discussion of and activities concerning educational issues. I use the term 'civil society' to denote a cluster of associations created in a public sphere, an arena in which a certain community or communities can share and discuss their concerns. I use the term 'Muslim civil society' in particular to refer to a cluster of Muslim associations created for specific Muslim issues by Muslims themselves. Investigating AHI as an association within a Muslim civil society will lead to a better understanding of Muslim civil society itself.

The aim of my fieldwork was to collect primary sources, namely, magazines or reports issued by AHI. I was able to collect monthly magazines issued from 1887 to the mid-1920s, as well as yearly reports from the 1930s, educational booklets, and special review editions issued after independence (Pictures 1 and 2).



Pic. 1. Monthly magazine (1887)



Pic. 2. Educational booklet about the history of India in 1340 (1921-22)

I also visited the institutions established by AHI and interviewed some of the persons connected to these institutions. This visit and these interviews made it possible for me to understand AHI's history. The college buildings built by AHI in the British Period (Pictures 3 and 4) made it easy for me to imagine how magnificent AHI's activity was. An interviewee told me that AHI was active through the 1960s, but after the all AHI's schools

being nationalized in 1972 it became disconnected with the schools that they had established, and gradually lost the power to influence the public.



Pic. 3. The façade of Islamia College, Railway Road



Pic. 4. View of the college from beside the main entrance

In the future, I would like to do additional research to collect primary resources from the 1930s and 1940s to cover the entire period from the establishment of AHI. I would also like to interview more of the persons who either participated in AHI's activities during the British Period, or know a good deal about these activities.