Political Nationalism's Oedipal Moment: Abrahamic Psychologies in Central European and Late Colonial Indian *Fins de Siècle*

By Abdullah H. Mirza

Submitted to
Central European History
Department of History

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Supervisor: Professor Michael L. Miller

Second Readers: Professor Carsten Wilke

Vienna, Austria
June 2022

Copyright Notice

Abstract

This thesis examines how the early leaders of two modern nationalist movements, Zionism and Muslim nationalism in India, built on and diverted from their predecessors, through an examination of established source material and historical debates. I embrace the term "*fin de siècle*" in all its connotative ambiguities as a peculiar periodization at the tail end of the Age of Questions and as a metaphor for the methodological and conceptual challenges historians have faced in interpreting nationalism in the period. Interpreting the political crisis of *fins de siècle* in the mythological terms of the Oedipus myth, I seek to move beyond conventional explanations for the historical development of these political nationalisms while examining how certain querists, political figures, and historians old and new sometimes embraced and sometimes avoided psychological explanations. Political nationalism with its "charismatic" features being distinguished from period movements such as socialisms and other ideologies—as well as from older nationalist sentiments and philosophies and the ensuing institutionalization of nationalism and nation-states which followed—the comparison is somewhat asynchronous with some implications for the conception and periodization of an Indian Muslim *fin de siècle*. Finally, I consider the possible implications of a psychological-historical interpretation of modern political nationalisms' founding moments, and some prospects for future study.

1

Acknowledgements[1]

I would like first and foremost to thank my patient advisor Michael Miller; Brett Wilson, for valuable advice at the early stages, and for the email (forwarded to me by my father Mahan Mirza) by which I found out about the opportunity to study at CEU in the first place; Carsten Wilke, who provided patient advice throughout; my classmates and colleagues in the Jewish Studies Specialization: Hani Abramson, Flavia Matei, Panni Nagy, Olga Petrova, Tetiana Shyshkina, Peter Buchmuller, Lilla Kukor; professor Andras Kovaks; תודה רבה to my modern Hebrew instructor Szonja Komoroczy; the Center for Religious Studies, especially Jean-Louis Fabiani, Esther Holbrook, Rohan Basu; Aniko Molnar; the staff at the CEU Libraries in Vienna and Budapest; Lazslo Kontler, Gabor Klaniczay, Tolga Esmer, Daniel Ziemann, Mate Nikola Tokic, Ewelina Sikora, Marsha Siefert, Judit Majorossy, Maciej Janowski, Matthias Riedl, Nadia Al-Bagdadi, Aziz Al-Azmeh, who was an early inspiration and provided valuable feedback on an earlier conception in the fall thesis workshop along with Flora Ghazaryan, Istvan Perczel, Sanjay Kumar, Charles Shaw; my fellow MA students Bogoya Dmitrov, Tayla Myree, Alexander Thatcher, Lumi Beqri, Aleksandar Zhabov, Beren Azizi, Janos Jansky, Alperen Arslan, Theresa Strike, Salman Farrukh, Kasia Swierad, Benjamin Redwood Daniela Munteanu, Daniel Talamantes, Agatha Georgescu, Oana Capota, Patrick Morrish, Petar Milijic, Johan Muzhangody; the Center for Academic Writing, especially Borbala Farago and Judit Minczinger for her patience and last-minute formatting help. Special thanks to my parents Mahan and Stephanie Mirza without whom I would not have been here; my brothers, my grandparents Abbas and Rukhsana Mirza, and Arnold and Natalie Walta, and all my aunts, uncles, and cousins for their support. I would like to thank my friends and inspirations direct and indirect from St. John's College, Santa Fe, especially my tutors Michael

3

Preface

In 1954, Muhammad Asad, formerly Leopold Weiss, published his autobiography, *The Road to Mecca (The Road to Makkah)*. It was equally a story of the rejection of his Eastern European Jewish heritage as it was a movement towards the Islamic east, a movement which culminated in his political contributions to the nascent Pakistani state. Abraham Rubin has reinterpreted Asad's movement to Islam as depicted in the autobiography against the grain of conventional readings as a "case study in Jewish self-orientalization," one which—despite Asad's "acerbic" criticism of Zionism and renunciation of his past—was "steeped in the symbolic language of Jewish orientalist self-affirmation that characterized his generation's search for new modes of Jewish self-definition."[2] My personal motivation in writing this thesis is perhaps most analogous to a kind of reverse Muhammad Asad. Disillusioned with political idealism and conventional explanations of so-called religious nationalism and the state, I returned to Jewish Eastern and Central Europe as what some have styled the birthplace of the modern world, in a quest to discover some of the origins of the modern world and modern states.[3]

---

[2] Abraham Rubin, "Muhammad Asad's Conversion to Islam as a Case Study in Jewish Self-Orientalization,"
*Jewish Social Studies: History, Culture, Society n.s. 22, no. 1 Fall 2016), 1.
[3] Steven Beller, "Central Europe: Birthplace of the Modern World?" (*Austrian History Yearbook* 23 1992), 72.

Epigraphs

"General Remark

On the effects with regard to rights that follow from the nature of the civil union.

A.

The people should not *inquire* with any practical aim in view into the origin of the supreme authority to which it is subject, that is, a subject *ought not to reason subtly* for the sake of action about the origin of this authority, as a right that can still be called into question (*ius controversum*) with regard to the obedience he owes it. For, since a people must be regarded as already united under a general legislative will in order to judge with rightful force about the supreme authority (*summum imperium*), it cannot and may not judge otherwise than as the present head of state (*summus imperans*) wills it to. – Whether a state began with an actual contract of submission (*pactum subiectionis civilis*) as a fact, or whether power came first and law arrived only afterwards, or even whether they should have followed in this order: for a people already subject to civil law these subtle reasonings are altogether pointless and, moreover, threaten a state with danger. If a subject, having pondered over the ultimate origin of the authority now ruling, wanted to resist this authority, he would be punished, got rid of, or expelled (as an outlaw, *exlex*) in accordance with the laws of this authority, that is, with every right. – A law that is so holy (inviolable) that it is already a crime even to call it in doubt *in a practical way*, and so to suspend its effect for a moment, is thought as if it must have arisen not from human beings but from some highest, flawless lawgiver; and that is what the saying "All authority is from God" means. This saying is not an assertion about the *historical basis* of the civil constitution; it instead sets forth an idea as a practical principle of reason: the principle that the presently existing legislative authority ought to be obeyed, whatever its origin." -Kant, *Doctrine of Right*[4]

"The Jewish people on the move [*unterwegs*]," – Theodor Herzl[5]

---

[4] Immanuel Kant, and Allen W. Wood. "The Metaphysics of Morals (1797)." Chapter. In *Practical Philosophy*, edited by Mary J. Gregor, 461-462. The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511813306.013. [6:319]

[5] As quoted in Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siecle Vienna: Politics and Culture*, (Vintage Books, New York, 1981), 205.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction: Politics as Movement, Ideology as Emotion

The present thesis is about the history of movement, specifically, movement "as wish" as a metaphor for "political choice" as expressed in two specific modern political nationalisms. I use the seemingly redundant term "political nationalism" to distinguish it from non-political national articulations, such as theoretical articulations, ideas of the nation in religious thought and practice, or movements towards religious reform. "Political" is temporally limited, as it signifies the characteristic of nascent national movements as a "choice" between an old regime or status quo or a new nation. In simple terms, movement as emotion is rhetorical in an Aristotelian sense, insofar as the emotion is a reaction to a situation that is perceived to be unjust, lacking, or out of order.[6] This emotion is political insofar as it is the *expressed* wish to change the current situation, a decisive statement on "the choice whether to give up the present regime for a new one"—the subject of political philosophy. Not the politics of movement, but movement as politics. This wish, however, was as complicated as the contentious environments from which it emerged and was submerged. The uncovering of this emotion coded in ideology and literature relates the present study to intellectual and political history; the subject is the history of political nationalism, not directly state/institutional nationalism, not *necessarily* religion or philosophy, except in the case that those coincided with the principle of movement or provided the grounds for nationalism as ideology to invoke movement (as migration, exodus, movement) as a metaphor for political transformation. The methodology draws primarily from comparative history, while taking non-binding inspiration from a diverse variety of intellectual and interpretive frameworks such as psychology and social science.

---

[6] See Mirza, Abdullah "Emotional tears in the fabric of rationality: on the interconnectedness of thumos and logos in Aristotle's 'Art of Rhetoric,'" (St. John's College, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 2020).

1.1 Why comparison?

In recent years it has become fashionable in the upper echelons of Pakistani society to compare Pakistan with Israel; this is even a point of pride for certain Pakistani nationalists who celebrate the almost apocalyptic archetypal significance of those "only" two nations founded in the name of religion after World War II.[7] But this fashionable comparison is not confined to the realm of public demagoguery (and certainly there would be few reasons for the sentiment to be directed the other way), but has breached the academic sphere, most notably with Faisal Devji's work *Muslim Zion: Pakistan as a Political Idea.* As an intellectual historian, Devji justifies his comparison both empirically and theoretically, ultimately to criticize Pakistani nationalism as a contradictory effort born of an "unresolved desire both to join and reject the world of modern nation-states," for which the closest ideological parallel is Israel.[8]

Studies like Devji's remain rare and contentious, is in part because scholars in highly specialized fields in Jewish studies have generally resisted the tendency towards comparison. In recent years this has changed, as numerous frameworks and paradigms relating to Jewish studies have been increasingly adopted by scholars in other areas. In other historiographical contexts, scholars have taken inspiration from Jewish history. I will not try to chronicle all the examples. But even otherwise respected scholars are often plagued by accusations of polemical comparison. One example is Achille Mbembe, who considers the paradigm of Jewish suffering as he approaches the difficult subject of the African historical experience, but who attracted controversy after being accused of antisemitism for comparing Israeli policies to apartheid. Consider also Edward Said, who also wrote a controversial revisionist essay on Freud and was disinvited from delivering the paper at an institute in Vienna on a similar account. In general, anti-Zionist literature invokes

---

[7] My source is an oral account from a native Pakistani who wishes to remain anonymous.
[8] Faisal Devji, *Muslim Zion: Pakistan as a Political Idea*, (Harvard University Press, 2013), back cover.

polemical comparison which, though "no less exceptionalist" than advocates for Israel, "waves the banner of comparison by presenting Israel as an exemplar of western colonialism," a comparison Penslar describes as inherently "bad-faith."[9] Because of my methodological challenge to some conventional historians of nationalism, I believe this study will allow me in the spirit of Marc Bloch's hypothesis-testing of comparative history to undertake comparison in methodological and conceptual "good faith," though I acknowledge the inherently aspirational nature of this claim.[10]

The "Jewish Question" which has "haunted modernity ever since its inception," in the words of Steven Smith, "remains the most vivid form of the question of the Other, or human diversity, with which liberal society has labored to come to terms."[11] The Jewish question as paradigmatic has inspired much comparison. The literary critic Aamir Mufti is one contemporary writer who has sought to apply frameworks of the study of modern Jewry as paradigms for other contexts, in his case Muslims as minority in the Indian subcontinent. Mufti's work seeks to reexamine the ailing post-colonial secularism, which had its roots well before the state period. It is his basic premise is that

> "the crisis of Muslim identity must be understood in terms of the problematic of secularization and minority in post-Enlightenment liberal culture as a whole and therefore cannot be understood in isolation from the history of the so-called Jewish Question in modern Europe. I argue that in the "question of the Jews' status in modern culture and society, as it first came to be formulated in the late eighteenth century, what emerges is a set of paradigmatic narratives, conceptual frameworks, motifs, and formal relationships concerned with the very question of minority existence, which are then disseminated globally in the emergence, under colonial and semicolonial conditions, of the forms of modern social, political, and cultural life."[12]

---

[9] Derek J. Penslar, *Israel in History: The Jewish State in Comparative Perspective*, (Routledge, New York, 2007), 4.
[10] See William H. Sewell, Jr. "Marc Bloch and the Logic of Comparative History," (*History and Theory*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 1967), 208-218.
[11] Steven B. Smith, *Spinoza, Liberalism, and the Question of Jewish Identity*, (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1997), xiv.
[12] Aamir R. Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture*, (Princeton University Press, 2007), 2.

On the one hand, I would like to explore the issue of "questions" to some degree, especially considering the recent contributions of the intellectual historian Holly Case and her idea of the "Age of Questions." But beyond just the questions, I want to examine the answers. Zionism and Pakistani nationalism are exemplary among other nationalism precisely because of the improbable and dramatic redefinition of sovereignty and the unprecedented world-historical overthrow of established authority. I argue that they demonstrate—when correctly interpreted—how nationalism more than religion or even class was one of the most powerful forces of movement in the 20th century, and indeed how even as nationalists claimed lineage to ancient traditions. Further, the convenient timing of the establishment of the state in 1947 and 1948 provides a distinctive invitation for comparison because of how it prompts me to divide my sources.

In part due to the unbearably charged atmosphere which typically surrounds political discussions of nationalism, I would like roughly to divide my sources into two periods, pre-state and post-state. In the spirit of the Kantian epigraph, this has several benefits. Querists occupy a curious in-between, as they were active during the time in which the national idea was debated, even though it was not yet a state. In the first place, it allows us to respect the fact that the establishment of the state was not always a foregone conclusion. In fact, recent scholarship has reiterated this not-so-obvious point. Dmitry Shumsky is one contemporary scholar of Zionism who in *Beyond the Nation-State: The Zionist Political Imagination from Pinsker to Ben-Gurion*[13] sought to challenge the teleological narrative or the nation-state and explore the multifarious political directionality of modern Zionism in the pre-state period; as such, his work is at the same time a pointed critique of some of the established doctrines of Zionist historiography. There are parallel works in the case of Pakistan. The one I refer to often for his novel scholarship on the pre-state

---

[13] Dmitry Shumsky, *Beyond the Nation-State: The Zionist Political Imagination from Pinsker to Ben-Gurion*, (Yale University Press, 2018).

period is Venkat Dhulipala's recent *Creating a New Medina: State Power, Islam, and the Quest for Pakistan in Late Colonial India*.[14] Dhulipala challenged Ayesha Jalal's famous argument that the idea of Pakistan was a mere "bargaining chip" against the British that was singlehandedly orchestrated by the movement's charismatic leader, Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Dhuliapala examines some facets of how the idea of Pakistan was before the state in flux and hotly debated in the public sphere, as well as the way the political movement was shaped by certain *ulama*—that is, traditional Muslim scholarly authorities. Dhulipala's work is as much carving a path for more advanced historiography as it is a critique of existing teleologically-minded histories. These are just two examples of high-quality historical scholarship on nationalism today, and my survey is the briefest.

There are many reasons why people study nationalism today, but it has not gone away, and some would argue that nationalist tendencies are stronger than ever. I would like once more to highlight the Kantian epigraph, which either coincidentally or foresightedly captures a not-so-subtle truth about writings on nationalism in general: people concerned with the founding of the state generally seek either to justify it or destroy it. Although this dichotomy arguably holds very true in the case of many historians today, we ourselves as professional academics can at the very least "claim" to recuse ourselves under Kant's exception: our inquiry is not based on a *practical aim* or *for the sake of action*, but as impartial historicists. Doubtless, even this claim to impartiality could be criticized by the anti-statists—for whom inquiry is only justifiable insofar as it is part of a project of radically dismantling the state—as complicity with the state. Thus, in the second place, dividing pre- and post-state sources allows us to contextualize sources of the past seventy years to reflect on how we have arrived at the place we are today; for pre-state thinkers, there was no state to topple, even if there were ideas to criticize or powerful emotional impulses to diagnose. Thus,

---

[14] Venkat Dhulipala, *Creating a New Medina: State Power, Islam, and the Quest for Pakistan in Late Colonial North India* (Cambridge University Press, 2014).

12

for our pre-state sources, the Kantian question can be bypassed altogether, for post-state sources we can if nothing else position them on the justificatory-critical axis.

Literature on nationalism before the nation-state is vast and rich. Retrospectively unburdened by the choice between justifying or criticizing existing states—which by *fin de siècle* writers were often seen to be in severe decay—pre-state societies were very often hubs of relative literary and political freedom. Discourse on national "questions" was part of what the intellectual historian Holly Case calls the "Age of Questions" in the very long 19th century. The social significance of the Age of Questions—and one important factor distinguishing it from the state period—is that it was part of a temporally-bound age of literary and political freedom: a freedom which was inevitably short-lived. The so-called *fin-de-siècle* period in Europe coincided with key developments in intellectual history, including the development of psychoanalysis by Freud and Weber's science of sociology, in addition to the further development of previous intellectual paradigms and ideologies such as Marxism. The emergence of psychoanalysis and sociology is roughly contemporaneous with the development of modern political nationalism as a dominant social force.

Leo Strauss described the political consequences of this short-lived era: "In a considerable number of countries which, for about a hundred years, have enjoyed a practically complete freedom of public discussion, that freedom is now suppressed and replaced by a compulsion to coordinate speech with such views as the government believes to be expedient, or holds in all seriousness."[15] Thus begins Strauss's classic essay "Persecution and the Art of Writing," originally published in *Social Research* in 1941. The rough century that Strauss refers to and which began around the 1848 revolutions coincides with the rise of modern academic historiography and nationalism, the post-

15 Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1952), 22.

13

Haskalah, the decline of empires, and the advent of modernities. It also coincides with the Age of Questions. In a word, Strauss's depiction of the age is that of an historical anomaly, a period in history marked by a distinctive social and by extension political character.

Perhaps in part as a function of this short-lived freedom, this was also a feverous period of intellectual activity, particular respect to late imperial Central Europe in general and *fin-de-siècle* Vienna in particular, which Steven Beller went so far as to suggest was the birthplace of the modern world as such.[16] For some, the period was not as much a period of effervescence as decay and decline, where art was a testament to decadence.[17] The question of India's *fin de siècle* thus occupies an important comparative element of the second chapter. Whether viewed positively or negatively, the plethora of responses to the age is a testament to the peculiarly diverse and intellectually creative and chaotic character of the "age" which rapidly crashed to a halt as Europe approached World War II.

1.2 Main Argument of the Thesis

I believe that trends towards comparisons—including my own—are grounded in a conceptual problem in how we think about nationalism. In word, we try to study nationalism, where it can only be "diagnosed;" the question is "how?" This is because political nationalism in its many manifestations cannot be reduced to the simple logic of self-interest which historians take for granted (and which some historians take as their explicit aspect), or otherwise merely to mechanical and social forces, ideology, or political philosophy. Such explanations inevitably fail to account

---

[16] Steven Beller, "Central Europe: Birthplace of the Modern World?" (*Austrian History Yearbook* 23, 1992), 72.
[17] Consider an older sentiment in "Letter 102," by Montesquieu—whom Nordau read— "You have read the historians; think carefully about what they say: almost all monarchies were founded upon ignorance of the arts, and were destroyed only because they cultivated them too assiduously. We have a domestic example of this in the ancient Persian Empire." In Margaret Mauldon trans. *Persian Letters / Montesquieu*, (Oxford University Press, New York, 2008), 140-141.

for certain important aspects of the subject, which is why each generation of national historians returns to the same questions repeatedly, fighting back and forth, seemingly to no avail. They are unable fully to grasp the significance of national rhetoric. Such economic, political, class or otherwise reductive explanations inevitably fail when they take the phenomenon of political nationalism as such as their subject. When they succeed, it is often accidentally so.

In the spirit of Derek Penslar's recent shift in studying ideology as emotion, I argue that political nationalism is primarily emotional: it is the channeling of human will, the articulation of a revealed wish in political terms. It is as such a deeply human sort of articulation, even in its inherent artificiality, and thus can best be approximated by psychologies rather than underlying economic conditions or the theories which perhaps follow merely due to this initial choice. Historically, before the advent of the state, modern psychology emerged as an academic and social science discipline relatively concurrently to the development of the political nationalisms in question as powerful societal forces, if not concurrently to the nascent rumblings of proto-nationalism earlier in the 19th century.

A central research question is how certain querists who engaged with national questions—to an extent on its own terms—interfaced with these psychological ideas of the environment around them. Indeed, many of the examples we will look at in this thesis appeal to nascent psychological and psychiatric theories, and in some cases go so far as to diagnose entire nationalist sentiments as varieties of social pathology. In today's academia of specialism, both comparison and psychological approaches are rare: in the rare instances it finds a motivation, that motivation is often highly polemical in nature. On the other hand, certain forms of modern social science and social psychology such as the methodology developed by Theodor Adorno and others has proved itself in accounting for the historical development and social persistence of the phenomenon of antisemitism as a kind of social pathology. In conclusion, I argue that the turn towards a renewed

social-psychological study of early political nationalism would, far from replacing economic or political theories, complement them in a unique and revealing way.

1.3 Nationalist historiography and the Problem of Self-Interest

Historiographers as specialists are no longer psychologists *and* historians; they became specialists. For better or for worse, the Age of Questions was an age of interdisciplinarity. In the early state period, this interdisciplinarity took on a new flavor as national leaders served a powerful role in shaping the narrative of nationalist history by writing histories themselves. Further, national history was itself complicated by the role of those central figures who were implicated in their own history. In the case of Pakistan, it is fair to ask why historians and politicians generally did not and do not constitute a separate class. Like Israel, Pakistan remains a "strong state"[18] with close ties between academia and government. To date, no sitting prime minister of Pakistan has completed a term unimpeached or alive. Irrespective of the recurrent theme of military rule, it is not a positive mark on Pakistani historiography that many of the most influential and important national narratives of the pre-partition period were written by political figures who would play important roles in the post-partition state. Notable among these were figures such as Jawaharlal Nehru or Chaudhry Khaliquzzaman—whom I cite—or others. While national history was happy to use psychological metaphors in the service of the nation or anticolonial narratives, it was not particularly interested in genuine self-criticism and had little incentive to do so in a critical manner that did not corroborate the nationalist narrative. Thus, nationalist debates were dominated by historical essentialism, and tainted by the two-nation doctrine on the Pakistani side.

---

[18] Penslar, 19.

"One powerful reason," wrote Peter Gay, "I am convinced, why historians have resisted the lure of the psychoanalytic version of human nature is their commitment to the dominance of self-interest in human affairs."[19] In fact, the principle of self-interest has hitherto dominated the logic of national historiography, and understandably so. But in the state period, even impartial historians were liable to fall into that trap. After all,

> "self-interest conjures up none of the heavy artillery of the Oedipus complex, unconscious desires, concealed conflicts, and the rest of the Freudian arsenal; none of it seems necessary to explain why manufacturers clamor for high tariffs, chemical companies sabotage health inspectors, real estate speculators bulldoze historic neighborhoods, magazine editors favor low postage rates, or admirals lobby for increased naval budgets. Self-interest explains, at least to most historians' satisfaction, the performance of diplomats during negotiations, the movement of troops across frontiers, the maneuvering of policy makers among fiercely competing blocs known, significantly enough, as "interest groups." It explains princes protecting Luther and Bismarck tampering with dispatches, workers calling strikes and rural laborers establishing seasonal patterns of migration: survival is also an interest. Historians know, and they can muster impressive instances at a moment's notice, that politicians want to have power, business executives want to earn money, generals want to make war. If, for psychoanalysis, man is the wishing animal, he is, for the historian, the selfish animal. The two are not identical: the first struggles to reduce his tensions under the unremitting impress of his unconscious; the second lives under the sway of conscious egotism."[20]

In Gay's view, even altogether well-meaning historians can fall into the comfortable reliance on the logic of self-interest. All the same, in the case of the national histories under question, the dominance of national narratives only exacerbated this phenomenon.

Consider the case of Sikanadar Hayat, a critical contemporary historian who operates with a nationally sympathetic spirit and with the blessing of national institutions. Hayat acknowledges the *longee durée* justifications of Pakistan, such as tracing the roots of Pakistan to the Arab conquests of Sindh in 711 or the "War of Independence" of 1857, but he traces the "Pakistan movement" to the Lahore resolution on the grounds that it is plausible and "empirically testable."[21]

---

[19] Peter Gay, *Freud for Historians*, (Oxford University Press, New York, 1986), 99.
[20] Gay, 99-100.
[21] Sikandar Hayat: *Aspects of the Pakistan Movement*, (National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, Centre of Excellence, Quaid-i-Azam Univesrity New Campus, Islamabad, third revised, expanded edition 2016 (first edition 1990)), 1.

Though national ideas had been previously expressed, Hayat emphasizes the March 1940 session of the All-India Muslim League and Mohammad Ali Jinnah's presidential address and the "Lahore Resolution" which is generally accepted as the start of the "Pakistan movement" as a political movement. This presidential address was a feature of the annual League congresses going back to 1906, each year delivered by a different distinguished speaker. The conception of the nation articulated in this late period of the 1940s was assimilated into the framework of Pakistani nationalist historiography.

Situating the Pakistan movement in a *longue durée* narrative of the struggles of Indian Muslims, Hayat denies that the foundations of nationalism were primarily emotional: "… nor was it a movement started in a fit of anger or in a flurry of excitement. It was a well-founded movement, based on religion, culture, history, and political aspirations, all formulating Muslim nationhood, and sought a separate homeland of Pakistan for the Muslims to enable them to live their lives in their own way with freedom, power, and security."[22] Hayat traces the problems of modern Indian Muslims to the effects of the "cataclysmic events" of the failed 1857 revolution against British rule. "The Muslims found themselves in a very difficult situation. The defeat in the 'War of Independence' made them villains. The British came to regard them as their arch enemies, who had converted a "sepoy mutiny" into a "political conspiracy aimed at the extinction of the British Raj."[23] Hayat takes Syed Ahmad Khan as a forefather of the national movement, despite Khan's assimilatory stance towards the British government and to Western education.[24] In Hayat's interpretation, Khan's contribution to the movement was his advocacy and promotion for the "Muslim cause."[25] In other words, in this orthodox narrative, the story of nationalism takes a classic

---

[22] Hayat, 3.
[23] Hayat, 3-4.
[24] Hayat, 5.
[25] Hayat, 6.

historiographical argument for self-interest. But this sort of interpretation is not confined to the work of Hayat, as it is a general trope of national histories and even national-critical historians.

If we examine the rhetoric of the Muslim League documents going back to the first 1906 session, the language of the interests of the Muslims originated early in Muslim politics. In the context of the homogenizing tendencies of the Age of Questions, the various possible explanations for this. In examining the causes of the Age of Questions as an extension of Holly Case's work, we are simultaneously examining the causes of the effects of that age, including the development of national and homogenizing categories which—for instance—lumped the Muslims of India into a single, conceptually unform group; categories which Muslims themselves willingly assumed.

For self-professed "impartial historicists," if nothing else the present study may allow us to distinguish the phenomenon of modern political nationalism from varieties of religious nationalism and religious psychology. Political nationalism also maintained an ambiguous relationship with territoriality: the geographical demands of political nationalism were ambiguous enough that territoriality could be shaped by the popular demands of the movement—a fact which supports the claim that nationalism as such derived its strength from movement rather than arrival or the end of movement. Further, an eye to psychology can reinterpret the social-political significance of charismatic leaders in the national movements, not merely as "incidental ideological or political causes" or "great persons," but rather *as necessary catalysts for popular emotion*—in other words, themselves equally effects of their environment as they were creative instigators of change. As such, the early form of this study puts charismatic elites back in focus, while redefining their relationship to the subjects from which they derive legitimacy.

Zionism was a unique nationalism in Europe because of the uniqueness of the Jews of Europe, even as it was sometimes characteristically European (as was arguably the case with centuries-colonized British India). I am interested in both Zionism and Muslim nationalism in

comparison because of their idiosyncratic relationship between minority and majority, and the grey area of the relationship to imperial authority characteristic of both (either in the entreating of imperial power or in the case of Muslims additionally a lost legacy of rule); also in the relationship and appropriation of religious ideas by political nationalism. If nationalism was indeed one of the most powerful social and political forces of the 20th century, then it was stronger than and overpowered religion as such even as it appropriated religious ideas and structures. I have a personal interest in how nationalism gave birth to distinctly modern forms of politics, while calling back to ancient archetypes and myths. With respect to Kant's insight indicated in the epigraph, perhaps I could be motivated by some sort of perverse curiosity towards the past—for which I plead at least one degree of historical distance; but I am also motivated by a legitimate interest in those historical connections between the traditions of which "Judaism" and "Islam" are world-historical neighbors or siblings—on the one hand—and the circumstances of today's oftentimes confusing modernities—on the other.

2. Chapter One: Diagnosticians of Past and Present: Psychology, *Fin de Siècle*, and Zionism as Emotion

2.1 Freud, Psychology, and Zionism

In 1985 Peter Gay[26] depicted the many "defensive fortifications" in historian's "commonsense fortress" against the "Freudian assailant," one of the last and strongest "pockets of resistance" of which was the fundamental impracticability of the project of integrating psychoanalysis into historical research; namely, this was [what this historian believes'] a "devastating reservation: one cannot, when all is said, psychoanalyze the dead;" Gay himself concedes that "the past, individual or collective, is not a patient."[27] This criticism is well and good. That the past is not our patient cannot deny the historical reality that the people of the past—and as we will point out especially those involved in national movements and commenting on them— relentlessly psychoanalyzed each other.

While by the time Gay was writing in the 1980s, psychoanalysis was already a viral global phenomenon, at the turn of the century moment it was one among many new philosophies and ideologies: indeed, it was even one among other psychologies. After World War 1 and at the age of seventeen, Karl Popper had "ranked psychoanalysis among the 'pseudosciences' clamoring for attention in revolutionary Vienna."[28] Along with Marxism, Adler's "individual psychology," psychoanalysis had a "remarkable 'explanatory power'" and the world was "full of verifications" of the theory; it was the general infalsifiability of the theory which disqualified it—in Popper's

---

[26] Born to a Jewish family in Berlin, Peter Joachim Frölich is one of a few scholars I will mention who fled from Nazi Germany in the 1930s. He wrote award-winning studies of the Enlightenment and German culture, and later wrote a biography and studies on Sigmund Freud, a period in which he wrote *Freud for Historians*; this work is in the first place a spirited defense of the concept of psychohistory, while at the same time a discerning recognition of the various critiques historians have brought against different forms of this methodology. It is thus at the same time an history of the critique of psychoanalysis and psychohistory.

[27] Gay, 181-182.

[28] Gay, 62.

eyes—from scientific qualification.[29] The idea that psychoanalysis has the explanatory power to throw light on human nature is an assumption that historians have not generally shared.[30] Sometimes, this point of view has been tied to the idea that psychoanalysis is quintessentially Viennese:[31] "the legend of the Viennese Jewess as the characteristic analysand."[32]

In the case of Zionism, this discussion is potentially quite interesting, given the proximity and relationship between Freud as the founder of psychoanalysis, who lived in Vienna during the birth of the movement, and early political Zionism. Schorske famously contextualized Freud's thought within the crises of his own life, the most important in the 1890s which centered on the death of his father—what Freud called "the most important event, the most poignant loss, of a man's life."[33] Freud's personal trajectory was not particularly tied to Zionism. In 1930, Freud was unsympathetic to the Zionist cause, an opinion which he expressed in a letter to Chaim Koffler in response to the latter's request for a public statement in support of Zionism.[34] Freud diagnosed Herzl's son, Hans, with an Oedipus complex.[35] His late work *Moses and Monotheism* (1939) focuses primarily on the origins of ancient Jewish monotheism and not Zionism.

Today, the respectable invocation of Freud has been reduced to the mythological and the literary. Today there seems to be hardly much "historical" rather than literary about one of Freud's most powerful and compelling observations before 1900, that is, of the recurring nature of the Oedipus complex in "its continuous traffic with culture." In the Sophocles' play and in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Freud had noticed "the changed treatment of the same material," one which

---

[29] College students still read that Popper essay often, as my PhD friend at an American university told me.
[30] Gay, 78.
[31] Gay, 79.
[32] Gay, 80.
[33] Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siecle Vienna: Politics and Culture*, (Vintage Books, New York, 1981), 233.
[34] Ro Oranim, "What Did Freud Really Think of Zionism?" The National Library of Israel, 08.09.2019, https://blog.nli.org.il/en/freud_on_zionism/
[35] Derek Penslar, *Theodor Herzl: The Charismatic Leader*, Jewish Lives - Yale University Press, New Haven, 2020: 206.

"reveals the whole difference in the mental life of these two widely separated cultural epochs: the secular advance of repression in the emotional life of mankind."[36]

> "While in *Oedipus Rex* "the child's fundamental wish fantasy is brought out into daylight and realized as in a dream," in "*Hamlet* it remains repressed; and we learn of its existence only—much as we would with a neurosis—from the inhibiting operations that stem from it." Freud's reading of Sophocles and Shakespeare remains in dispute. But the point at issue here is that Freud, though insisting on the persistence and preeminence of the Oedipus complex throughout human experience, never slighted its possible range of expression or its social dimensions. Thus this very complex, belying its reputations as a fixed point on a rigid, unvarying itinerary that all humans in all ages must traverse, testifies to Freud's essentially historical orientation."[37]

I would like to argue that the founding texts of modern political nationalism, specifically Zionism and Pakistani nationalism, can be remarkably well understood in terms of Freud's psychohistorical hermeneutic of the revealed dream or wish. To engage in this sort of free interpretation may perhaps sacrifice the claim to historicity. However, without succumbing to essentialism, we can invoke Freud for some general conceptual inspiration, while giving up the finer details of his contested clinical methodology. As Gay argues, Freud's insights are most interesting when it is historical. Gay cites Page Smith's argument that the Oedipus complex is one reason that psychoanalytic theory is "basically antithetical to history," because if the "father-son conflict" were taken seriously it would destroy the continuity of the passage of wisdom between generations.[38] Against this, Gay defends the idea and makes a claim to the subtlety of Freud's thought:

> "Actually the oedipal experience does exactly what Smith seems to desire: it generates the incest taboo and the pangs of conscience in the child and thus passes on to the sons the wisdom of the fathers. David Hackett Fischer has a somewhat more creditable objection; in his raids on the fallacies of other historians, he finds fault with the English anthropologist Geoffrey Gorer for seeing "the historical relationship between Anglo-America and Europe in terms of a national Oedipus complex," and he rejects as exceedingly odd the political

---

[36] Gay, 96.
[37] Gay, 96-97.
[38] As quoted in Gay, 97.

23

family tensions that Gorer had unearthed. He has a point, but such reductionism violates the spirit, not merely of history but of psychoanalysis."[39]

Before we continue discussing the psychology of Zionism, especially in the context of the thought of another psychologist who in fact preceded Freud—namely, Max Nordau—I want to take a step back first to situate the turn of the century moment within a more general paradigm of modern Jewish history on the one hand, but also one which is general enough that it allows us to frame Zionism in comparative historical terms. Much of this present study revolves around the people whom the intellectual historian Holly Case calls "querists." In 2018 Case posited an "Age of Questions" corresponding to a very long 19th century. As such, this period corresponded with among other things, the post-Enlightenment. Seeking to move beyond the tendency of regional and specialist historians to consider questions in isolation including her own experience with the "Transylvanian question," Case sought to examine the underlying causes behind the proliferation of the question formulation in 19th century literature which she associated with certain political and social developments, especially what she calls the "internationalization of the public sphere." Case's work revolves around seven interpretive arguments for understanding the Age of Questions arguments which seek to understand the reasons behind the emergence of "querists."

2.2 Strauss as a Querist of Modernity

The preface to the English translation of Strauss's dissertation *Spinoza's Critique of Religion* (dedicated to Franz Rosenzweig) is a long and profound meditation on the historical significance of the emergence of political Zionism and the Jewish state. Living in the transition period between the old and new worlds, Strauss had been a witness to Weimar Germany and the development of Zionism in the German world, particularly the Zionist student movement, before

---

[39] Gay, 98.

24

emigrating to the US. While more prominently known as a classicist, his contributions to political philosophy, the idea of the theological-political problem, and his critique of certain forms of historicism, Strauss's work was nonetheless deeply historical in character. He and Gershom Scholem, together whom Steven B. Smith describes as possibly the most important Jewish thinkers in the intellectual history of the 20th century,[40] presented the modern predicament in distinct terms. For Strauss, it was a shift in political philosophy that could be traced back to the work of Machiavelli, whereas Scholem's account—specifically, of Jewish modernity—could be traced to the apocalyptic messianism which emerged following the Spanish expulsions.[41] Strauss and Scholem each formulated their own idiosyncratic responses to the questions of modernity, and both long maintained complicated relationships with the state and Zionism.

Why invoke Strauss, who was a relentless critic of historicism? In short, within Case's framework, Strauss was a late querist. I do not intend to argue that Strauss's framework for approaching the history of political Zionism is necessarily "objectively correct." Rather, Strauss—most often implicitly invoked for his theory—is interesting as an historical figure, a contributor to the declining public sphere. Further, Strauss occupies straddles the transition between the pre-state and state periods. I use this distinction because like France and Germany, Israel today remains a "strong state," with "powerful public sector and close connections between academia and government." So too is Pakistan, perhaps even more so. This contrasts with weak states such as the United States which have a tradition of anti-statist institutions.[42] The historiography of Zionism, like any other nationalism that resulted in a state, was influenced by the founding of the state. For instance, in Israeli historiography revisionist and "New Histories"

---

[40] Steven B. Smith, "Gershom Scholem and Leo Strauss: Notes toward a German-Jewish Dialogue." (*Modern Judaism* 13, no. 3, 1993), 209. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1396323
[41] Smith, 209.
[42] Penslar, *Israel in History*, 19.

who sought to "compensate for the errors of official Israeli military historiography" of the early generation of state histories.[43] Like other national histories, later generations of historians would have to reckon with previous generations of scholarship. Penslar describes this process in Israel thus:

> "In the mid-1960s… academic study of the Yishuv was made possible by two factors: the general growth of the Israeli universities and a sense that the generation of the founders of the state was passing and that the current crop of graduate students, who had experienced the foundation of the state as children or at most adolescents, would be able to write the Yishuv's history unburdened by private memory. Kolatt added that a deepening of the gap between older and current scholarship on Zionism and the Yishuv had occurred after the 1973 Arab–Israeli War, which had occasioned historical rumination about the long-term political and social causes of Israel's military failures. Kolatt appeared to place Israeli historiography somewhere between two paradigms: ''western,'' which was adversarial and devoted to the shattering of myths, and ''Third World,'' which served the interests of nation-building."[44]

In other words, historiography after the founding of the state was somewhat insular due to linguistic constraints and often served the interests of the state. In the case of the Zionist Labor movement, the history was a focus of this early generation of historians.[45] Yishuv historiography was largely confined to the Israeli cultural sphere and largely remains untranslated.[46] In 1975 David Vital published *The Origins of Zionism* which was valuable for the English-speaking public. But according to Penslar, the real reason behind the lack of non-Israeli historians writing about the Yishuv and Israeli history was motivation, not linguistic ability.[47] The recent change in this could be attributed to, among other things, historical distance.

In non-state historiography of European Jews, similar phenomena occur, and well-meaning historians find themselves in patterns of institutional stability. Frankel describes the

---

[43] Penslar, 22.
[44] Penslar, 13.
[45] Penslar, 15.
[46] Penslar, 16.
[47] Penslar, 16.

26

development of an historiographical orthodoxy in scholarship on Eastern European Jews, and the reasons for this.[48]

As an outsider to the world of professional historians, Strauss's relatively *longue durée* approach to political history allowed him to connect modern political Zionism with the philosophy of the excommunicated Dutch heretic Spinoza centuries prior. Strauss's analysis of politics generally centred not the individual as such, but on the role of traditions and regimes.[49] Strauss's political philosophy takes state and city somewhat synonymously, especially in the context of the pre-modern world. For Strauss the Athenian city-state was the paradigmatic model *polis*, as was the dichotomy between Athens and Jerusalem. According to Strauss, pre-modern writers believed in a gulf that separated "the wise" and "the vulgar." Further, they were convinced that philosophy "as such" was "suspect to, and hated by, the majority of men."[50] Given that writings are accessible to everyone who can read, writers of philosophical books included an exoteric teaching and another between the lines.[51] Strauss related his own positionality as a writer and his relationship with the theologico-political problem to the context of his historical surroundings. In the preface to the English translation of his dissertation on Spinoza, Strauss notes that the work was written over the course of the years 1925-1928 in Germany, at which time, "The author was a young Jew born and raised in Germany who found himself in the grip of the theologico-political predicament."[52]

[48] Frankel, Jonathan. "Assimilation and the Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe: Toward a New Historiography?" Chapter. In *Crisis, Revolution, and Russian Jews*, 276–310. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511551895.012.
[49] Paskewich, J. Christopher. "Leo Strauss' Modern Regime Cycle." (*Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory* 56, no. 118, 2009), 40–62. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41802425
[50] Strauss, *Persecution*, 34.
[51] Strauss, 32.
[52] Leo Strauss, E.M. Sinclair trans. *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*, Schocken Books, New York, 1965: 1.

Herzl as the founder of the political Zionist movement thus occupies a peculiar position in the Straussian worldview. On the one hand, "Herzl began to see 'the people' as 'the mass.' He despaired of their wisdom with the question: 'And these should be consulted?'"[53] But on the other hand, in Straussian terminology Herzl was the opposite of esoteric: he was exoteric. He articulated the political will not merely through an allegory, a white lie, or some other esoteric means; this was only possible given the circumstances, the political freedom characteristic of the political freedom of the age. On the one hand this political freedom allowed him, in Strauss's view, to instigate a Spinozian transformation in world Jewry on a world-historical scale.

2.3 Strauss's Historical Analysis of Political Zionism

The analysis we find here is in the preface to Strauss's *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*. The original work was published in Berlin in 1930, but Strauss wrote this revised introduction much later. Nonetheless, it refers to his personal experiences in Weimar Germany. This historical sketch began in late 19th century Germany. The liberal democracy that was the Weimar Republic Strauss calls an "option against Bismarck," a republic which was grounded in the tradition of the high poet Goethe who was part of both and neither the French revolution and the German Nation out of the collapse of the Holy Roman Empire.[54] The role of the charismatic leader in politics was as a catalyst and channeler of wills as political forces. For Strauss who had witnessed the response to the murder of Walther Rathenau in 1922, the "old Germany" was threatening to overpower by being "strong in will" the "new Germany," a will which just as in the case of Communism in Russia would bring victory to National Socialism as a "necessary consequence" of the fact that "the man with the strongest will or single-mindedness, the greatest ruthlessness, daring, and power over his following,

---

[53] Schorske, 195.
[54] Strauss, *Spinoza*. 1.

and the best judgement about the strength of the various forces in the immediately relevant political field was the leader of the revolution."[55] Strauss's judgement of the Jewish question and the ensuing rise of Zionism was in terms of a response to the negative evolution, a relapse of the Christian political order. The weakening of German liberal democracy had defined itself ("in theologico-political treatises") in opposition to medieval society itself, a Catholic era defined by the Crusades in which the massacre of entire Jewish communities was not in any way accidental; the post-Weimar regime could *only* define itself as "non-Jewish" (this was the only clear meaning of "Aryan").[56]

Strauss referenced an age of problems, among which the Jewish problem was placed. "In the course of the nineteenth century many Western men had come to conceive of much, if not all, sufferings as consisting of problems which as such were soluble as a matter of course. In this manner, too, they had come to speak of the Jewish problem."[57] This problem was of course never solved, but "annihilated by the annihilation of the German Jews."[58] Before this, the German Jews had in Strauss's estimation believed that their problem had been "solved in principle by liberalism."[59] Here he quotes Herzl, "Who belongs and who does not belong, is decided by the majority; it is a question of power."[60] By contrast, some German Jews, a considerable minority but for the ones in universities, had by this point turned to Zionism, which in Strauss's estimation rejected the logic of the majority.[61] Strauss notes that on the one hand, "Zionism was almost never

---

[55] Strauss, 1.
[56] Strauss, 3.
[57] Strauss, 4.
[58] Strauss, 4.
[59] Consider Karl Marx's comment on Bruno Bauer: "The critique of the Jewish question is the answer to the Jewish question." As quoted in, Holly Case, *The Age of Questions*, (Princeton University Press, 2018), 118.
[60] Strauss, 4.
[61] Strauss, 4.

wholly divorced from traditional Jewish hopes," but on the other hand was not intended as a reconstruction on a Biblical scale.[62]

Strauss frames "strictly political Zionism" as a modern movement as in a way an inheritance of the failure of liberalism, namely, as a movement which sought to solve the problem in "human terms" and which had been articulated in Leon Pinsker's and Herzl's texts.[63] Strauss suggests that this problem "cannot be solved by appealing to the justice or generosity of other nations, to say nothing of a league of all nations;"[64] this view is inaccurate to Zionism because these were precisely the methodology that many different figures adopted, including Herzl, and Weizmann also (as Penslar has pointed out, both operated within the established Jewish political tradition of entreating/negotiating the protection of other nations and leaders). However, this inaccuracy is notable with respect to Strauss's intention behind that statement: Zionism was not an outsourcing of Jewish interests, it was an articulation of Jewish emotional will. The emotional significance of the Zionist movement was primarily the "recovery of Jewish dignity, honor or pride" and cleansing them of their "millennial degradation."[65]

For Strauss, the human terms implied were an emotional restoration of the idea of a community. "Political Zionism, then, strictly understood was the movement of an elite on behalf of a community constituted by common descent and common degradation, for the restoration of their honor through the acquisition of statehood and therefore of a country—of any country: the land which the strictly political Zionism promised to the Jews was not necessarily the land of Israel."[66] There were at least two sides to the Jewish question, as Strauss put it, one was the perennial Jewish question which was based on the internal religious crisis, and "common descent,"

---

[62] Strauss, 4.
[63] Strauss, 4.
[64] Strauss, 4.
[65] Strauss, 4-5.
[66] Strauss, 5.

that is, the endogamic, divinely ordained order, and the other side was the Jewish problem as articulated by the external society, on whose behalf Jews had been (racialized, socially marginalized etc.) and collectively degraded. Strauss quotes Herzl: "We are a nation—the enemy makes us a nation whether we like it or not."[67] The nationality of the Jews in the context of strictly political Zionism was both a political and international question, even if the nationalities were not necessarily strictly internally defined, but in part from outside forces. Nationalism was caught between this outside force and internal endogamic, religious, and cultural bases; the restoration of honor thus necessarily involved a international dialectic by means of which the honor of the Jewish state was defined in terms of other nations. Zionism was impossible, unless the Jewish nation was conceived of as a modern nation, and the Jews were considered their own national group (i.e, on the terms of modern nationalism).

According to Strauss, the Zionist project thus had a powerful psychological significance as it "implied a profound modification of traditional Jewish hopes, a modification arrived at through a *break with these hopes*,"[68] a transformation which had been prophesized by Spinoza. Pinsker (and as we will see, Herzl) "saw the Jewish people as a herd without a shepherd to protect and gather it; he did not long or a shepherd, but for the transformation of the herd into a nation that could take care of itself." The conditions of this transformation are described as a kind of pathology or mental illness. "He regarded the Jewish situation as a natural sickness that could be cured only by natural means."[69] The transformation required would remasculate the Jewish mind: a remasculinization which was a necessary condition for the possibility of a revived Jewish state.[70]

---

[67] As quoted in, Strauss, *Spinoza*, 5.
[68] Strauss, 5.
[69] Strauss, 5.
[70] S. Daniel Breslauer,. "Barcuh Spinoza: What Manner of Zionist?" (*Hebrew Studies* 18 (1977)), 127. http://www.jstor.org/stable/27908598

Strauss describes this as "political Zionism making peace with traditional Jewish thought."[71] This "strictly political Zionism" could not "solve the Jewish problem," because of its narrowness which was "pointed out most effectively by cultural Zionism: strictly political Zionism, concerned only with the present emergency and resolve, lacks historical perspective: the community of descent, of the blood, must also be a community of the mind, of the national mind; the Jewish state will be an empty shell without a Jewish culture which has its roots in the Jewish heritage."[72] The problem with Cultural Zionism was that it necessarily became religious Zionism, which could not admit that a Jewish problem could have a human solution, and for this reason "the state of Israel [remains] part of the Galut."[73] Here Strauss ends his discussion on Israel and talks about the problem of faith for the assimilated Jew, for whom a legitimate solution to the Jewish problem existed in the form of a comprehensive return to the religious community insofar as it had maintained any traditional continuity.[74]

2.4 Zionism, Masculinity, and Spinoza

Steven Smith dubs Spinoza as—more than a theorist on the nature and limits of liberalism—"also the first writer to consider seriously the place of the Jews within modern liberal society."[75] Styling the *Theologico-Political Treatise* as the "most powerful and profound statement of the Jewish Question," Smith interprets Spinoza's critique of religion as "the direct consequence of his political aspiration: the creation of a new kind of liberal polity with a new kind of liberal citizen."[76]

---

[71] Strauss, *Spinoza*, 5.
[72] Strauss, 5-6.
[73] Strauss, 6.
[74] Strauss, 7.
[75] Smith, *Spinoza, Liberalism,* 13.
[76] Smith, *Spinoza*, 20.

In other words, "His efforts to undermine and replace the older theologico-political identity is, I suggest, a key premise of the modern liberal state."[77]

The historical connection of Spinzoa the history of Zionism has been heavily discussed. Strauss's view is part of a minority group; some see him and others as overstating this connection. Many trace Spinoza's connection to Zionism in the work of Moses Hess, particularly certain famous passages in *Rome and Jerusalem* (1862). Indeed, Spinoza the most often mentioned philosopher in the work.[78] He would later be interpreted by Zionists as having seen Judaism as a nationality which anticipated a future Jewish state, based on a famous passage in the theologico-political treatise.[79] In this reading of Spinoza, he postulated a new Jewish state, but only if the Jewish people could undo the emasculation of their minds: the psychological-political significance of the circumcision ritual. Daniel Breslauer depicts the resonances thus:

> "When one reads the works of Herzl and Nordau, one is astonished to find just such a refashioning of government, laws, and customs as Spinoza had hoped for. The ideal of these political Zionists was a model nation, a state that would exemplify the highest values of modernity." In other words, he did not desire the rebirth of a culture like Ahad Ha'am envisioned, or Buber's return to an idealized biblical vision.[80]

Jacob Adler chronicles the history of Spinoza in Zionist literature and is dubious of excessive weight placed on the figure. He offers various interpretations for this phenomenon, such as the idea of "Sphinozaphiles," the fashioning into an exemplary symbol (for the sake for which some Zionists such as Brykman sought to "rehabilitate" Spinoza's Jewishness.[81] Alexander Green, on the other hand, perhaps reaches the heart of the matter when he seeks to interpret Spinoza's conception of masculinity in emotional terms as a call for a "courageous spirit" and an appeal to

---

[77] Smith, *Spinoza*, 20.
[78] Harvey, Warren Zev. "Notes on Spinoza's Presence in Moses Hess' 'Rome and Jerusalem.'" *Iyyun: The Jerusalem Philosophical Quarterly / עיון: רבעון פילוסופי* 67 (2018), 46, http://www.jstor.org/stable/26492164.
[79] Harvey, 48.
[80] Breslauer, 129.
[81] Adler, Jacob. "The Zionists and Spinoza." *Israel Studies Forum* 24, no. 1 (2009): 29. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41805009.

the ethics of courage in the Jewish tradition.[82] For Green, Spinoza's thought in this regard was important, because it sought to revitalize the science of Jewish spiritual psychology. In fact, Green even goes so far as to suggest that the hidden purpose behind lack of Biblical references in the *Theological-Political Treatise* along with defining *ruah* (spirit) as courage was an attempt to uncover a "true authentic pre-prophetic psyche."[83] In Green's interpretation, Spinoza sought to disentangle this from the "politicization and imaginative interpretation of revelation by prophets."[84]

In fact, this interpretation aligns well with Strauss's view on the significance of Spinoza's political conflict with orthodoxy.[85] In Strauss's retrospective position, it is easy to make the claim as political Zionists would become the most significant inheritors of Spinoza. "But the books of men like the mature Spinoza, which are meant· as possessions for all times," wrote Strauss, "are primarily addressed to posterity."[86] Later, Zionists themselves would often explicitly claim lineage to Spinoza. But even early on, he appears as a phantasmic influence in Herzl's diaries:

> "My conception of God, is, after all, Spinozistic and also resembles the natural philosophy of the Monists. But I think of Spinoza's "substance" as something inert, so to speak, and that incomprehensible universal ether of the Monists seems too intangible and too vague to me. But I can conceive of an omnipresent will, for I see it at work in the physical world. I see it as I can see the functioning of a muscle. The world is the body and God is the functioning of it. (The ultimate purpose I do not and need not know; for me it is enough that it is something higher than our present condition. This I can again express with old words, and I gladly do so. *Eritis sicut dei, scientes bonum et malum* [Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil]).[87]

---

[82] Green, Alexander. "Spinoza on the Ethics of Courage and the Jewish Tradition." *Modern Judaism* 33, no. 2 (May 1, 2013): 199. doi:10.1093/mj/kjt002.

[83] Green, 204.

[84] Green, 204.

[85] "This much is certain: [Hermann] Cohen's critique of Spinoza does not come to grips with the fact that Spinoza's critique is directed against the whole body of authoritative teachings and rules known in Spinoza's time as Judaism and still maintained in Cohen's time by Jewish orthodoxy. Cohen took it for granted that Spinoza had refuted orthodoxy as such. Owing to the collapse of "the old thinking" it became then necessary to examine the *Theologico-political Treatise* with a view to the question of whether Spinoza had in fact refuted orthodoxy." (Strauss, *Spinoza*, 27-28)

[86] Strauss, *Persecution,* 160.

[87] Raphael Patai ed. Harry Zohn trans. *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl: Vol. 1*, (The Theodor Herzl Foundation, Inc. New York, 1960), 231.

Elsewhere, he evoked Spinoza upon having at long last read Hess's *Rome and Jerusalem*:

"The 19 hours of this round-trip were whiled away for me by Hess with his *Rome and Jerusalem*, which I had first started to read m 1898 in Jerusalem, but had never been able to finish properly in the pressure and rush of these years. Now I was enraptured and up. lifted by him. What an exalted, noble spirit! Everything that we have tried is already in his book. The only bothersome thing is his Hegelian terminology. Wonderful the Spinozistic-Jewish and nationalist elements. Since Spinoza Jewry has brought forth no greater spirit than this forgotten, faded Moses Hess![88]

2.5 Nordau's Psychology of the *Fin de Siècle*

Herzl was not alone in his nationalistic praise of Spinoza. Max Nordau also made the connection between Zionism and Spinoza explicit—which would be developed later by others—in his eulogy of Herzl and the Seventh Zionist congress. Nordau's speech compared Herzl to Jewish military heroes of antiquity over their rabbinic contemporaries and "implicitly stripped of their religious faith."[89] Among these heroes was Spinoza, whom Nordau claimed as the spiritual mentor of Zionism.[90]

Strauss had written of the "human terms" on which political Zionism sought to solve the Jewish problem. Many of the most influential Zionists, not only Herzl, similarly analyzed their contemporary condition in the "human terms" of the emerging science of modern psychology. Nordau was perhaps the most influential of these, the second most famous figure in the Zionist movement at the turn of the century. He was one of the first to vociferously articulate the idea of "fin de siècle" and simultaneously diagnose it as a physical and mental disease. In the opening to *Degeneration,* the first book of which is titled "Fin de Siècle," Nordau depicts it in human terms first and foremost as a "mood" which underlies modern phenomena. To be precise, it was a "mental

---

[88] Raphael Patai ed. Harry Zohn trans. *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl: Vol. 3*, (The Theodor Herzl Foundation, Inc. New York, 1960), 1090.
[89] Michael Stanislawski, *Zionism and the Fin de Siecle: Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism from Nordau to Jabotinsky*, (The University of California Press, 2001), 80.
[90] Stanislawski, 81.

state" which originated in France. Further than that, it was a malaise, with symptoms[91] to be diagnosed.[92] But in *Degeneration*, *fin de siècle* as a mental illness was doubly a biological phenomenon, manifesting in deviations from an original type from which Nordau drew on Morel's degeneration theory. The prominent side effects of degeneration included moral insanity in the form of "unbounded egoism" and "impulsiveness,"[93] accompanied by rote pessimism. Nordau adds as a cardinal mark of degeneration as "mysticism," or the obsession with religious questions or exaggerated piety.[94] In the second book, this discussion of mysticism descends even to the biological makeup of the gray matter of brain cells.[95]

The task of reconciling *Degeneration* with Nordau's later Zionism had long "befuddled" historians.[96] In fact, Nordau's work cannot be simply reduced, in part or whole, to a liberal, conservative, or reactionary ideology, but must be interpreted in through "an examination of one of the most difficult thickets of fin-de-siecle European intellectual history, not to speak of fin-de-siecle Jewish intellectual history, Social Darwinism."[97] Thus, though Nordau's work drew from a range of intellectual inspirations, it was not completely idiosyncratic of the age.[98] In his psychology, this implied interpreting the evolutionary development of society through instincts and drives. In *The Conventional Lies of our Civilization* (1883)—almost two decades before the publication of Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*—Nordau writes in in chapter six ("the matrimonial lie"), that the entirety of human life was driven by two powerful instincts: self-preservation and race-preservation. Nordau's Darwinian perspective on the development of sexuality was a subject

---

[91] Max Nordau, trans. *Degeneration,* (William Heinemann, London, 1898), 7.
https://archive.org/details/degeneration00nordiala/page/n1/mode/2up
[92] Nordau, 15.
[93] Nordau, 18.
[94] Nordau, 22.
[95] Nordau, 46.
[96] Stanislawski, 20.
[97] Stanislawski, 22.
[98] Stanislawski, 20.

that had long occupied him and was rooted in his medical thesis on female sterilization—a practice he opposed—in Paris, 1882.[99] In the chapter, Nordau employed the Goethean idea of elective affinity to describe human relations and specifically marriage in terms of the chemical attractions of elemental bodies.[100] As an result of his Social Darwinist reading of history, this process developed in advanced societies into the form we refer to as "love."[101] The co-optation of marriage by financial and class interests had, in his view, compromised this most developed principle, and degeneration followed consequently.[102]

Stanislawski writes of the "irony" of Nordau's attack on the "malaise of the fin de siècle," an attack which was itself "thoroughly conditioned and defined by the culture he so detested and sought to dislodge; namely, the "intellectual and cultural maelstrom of the European fin de siècle" in which his Zionism, scientific theories, and psychological analysis were entrenched.[103] Idealized masculinity emerged from this moment; for Nordau it was the *Muskeljude*, fruitfully enacted in the successful Viennese Jewish sports teams, and politically in the aesthetic appeal of Herzl's kingly visage which recalled an ancient Judean past.[104] It is telling that after moving to Jerusalem, this artist Ephraim Moses Linien shifted away from this aesthetic ideal towards a topographical obsession with the new Palestinian environment.[105]

2.6 Herzl and Charisma: Emotion Breaking onto the World-Scene

As Peter Gay has written, simplistic psychostudies of various nationalisms often take a simplifying, reductive approach to their subjects, unfairly reducing a national movement to a

---

[99] Stanislawski, 28.
[100] Max Nordau, *The Conventional Lies of our Civilization* (Laird & Lee Publishers, Chicago, 1895).
https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Conventional_Lies_of_our_Civilization/The_Matrimonial_Lie
[101] Stanislawski, 28.
[102] Stanislawski, 30.
[103] Stanislawski, 75.
[104] Stanislawski, 113.
[105] Stanislawski, 114.

"thinly disguised oedipal complex" or otherwise as narcissism. In *fin-de-siècle* Europe, a reductive interpretation of narcissism is impossible, precisely because *fin-de-siècle* writers themselves reflected heavily on their own psychology. Herzl himself in fact reflected on this when he was only a teenager. "In an essay written when he was only seventeen, young Theodor Herzl identified one of the chief tendencies in the *feuilleton* writer: narcissism. The *feuilleton* writer, Herzl said, ran the danger of "falling in love with his own spirit, and thus of losing any standard of judging himself or others."[106] Schorske describes the position thus:

> "The *feuilletonist* tended to transform objective analysis of the world into subjective cultivation of personal feelings. He conceived of the world as a random succession of stimuli to the sensibilities, not as a scene of action. The *feuilletonist* exemplified the cultural type to whom he addressed his columns: his characteristics were narcissism and introversion, passive receptivity toward outer reality, and, above all, sensitivity to psychic states. The bourgeois culture of feeling conditioned the mentality of its intellectuals and artists, refined their sensibilities, and created their problems."[107]

Though he would become a *feuilleton* writer himself in his years working for the *Neue Freie Presse,* it is simplistic to reduce Herzl's emotional personality to this possible feature of his personality. In effect, to reduce the charismatic figure to narcissism is to commit the same crime on the charge of which Gay censures historians for reducing the psychological dimension of historical fact to the one- or two-dimensional logic of "self-interest." To reduce Herzl to a narcissist is essentially to reduce him to a "self-interested" man; but while it may not be unjustified to interpret Herzl's self-interest in terms of its imaginative expression on behalf of the interests of an entire people, it is more plausible as more discerning psychohistorians have argued to read figures like Herzl as responding to an audience, to the subconscious psychological "wish" of that audience.[108]

---

[106] Penslar, *Herzl*, 5.
[107] Schorske, 39.
[108] The motto of Herzl's *Altneuland* as the very personification of the "wish", the Freudian will, psychology as the driver of history. Herzl as exoteric, bringing the wish into the open, bringing the human into history, in the words of Strauss.

38

Schorske does just this by framing Zionism as just one of many revolutionary breaks from the tradition of Austrian liberalism—Zionism which had sought to bring the masses back into the state—along with Pan-Germanism and Christian Socialism.[109] The charismatic dimension of these movements was known at the time as "the sharper key," which Schorske describes as "a mode of political behavior at once more abrasive, more creative, and more satisfying to the life of feeling than the deliberative style of the liberals," this new key was what he called Vienna's "post-rational politics." Like Schönerer and Lueger, Herzl "apostatized" his career as a political liberal to organize the struggling masses. "Each of these political artists… grasped a social-psychological reality which the liberal could not see. Each expressed in politics a rebellion against reason and law which soon became more widespread.[110] Herzl's approach to the political demands of the moment was primarily emotional, in contrast to the ideology or apathy of, for instance, socialist Jews in the East or assimilatory Jews in the West. "Herzl rejected a positivistic conception of historical progress in favor of sheer psychic energy as the motive force in history."[111] In a word, these were the "human terms" that Strauss had described. "The secret lies in movement. Hence I believe that somewhere a guidable aircraft will be discovered."[112] "The Jewish people on the move [*unterwegs*]."[113]

2.7 Weber's Theory of Charisma: Herzl as Charismatic

The charismatic significance of Herzl is best understood in the context of the history of the theory of charismatic leadership. The modern idea of charisma—though often abused, hence the importance of taking into consideration the history of the theory—had its origins in the social

---

[109] Schorske, 155.
[110] Schorske, 156.
[111] Schorske, 204.
[112] Schorske, 204.
[113] Schorske, 205.

science of Weber's scholarship between 1915 and 1922 on the economic ethics of world religions.[114] The term was virtually unknown in America until World War II and was not part of the vernacular until the late 1960s.[115] Weber's idea of charismatic leadership contrasted with organicist views of leaders by German sociologists like Theodor Geiger who wrote that "the leader represents and embodies the group as a whole."[116] The application of charismatic theory to relatively benign nationalist leaders is a relatively recent phenomenon. The initial popularity of the idea originated with scholarship on fascist leaders, a phenomenon which was "largely responsible for creating interest in charisma in the first place."[117] As Derman notes, this has led some scholars of the history of charisma to describe its application as a "creative misinterpretation" essential to the process of intellectual reception, though Derman seems to insist that such reinterpretations are not entirely out of the spirit of Weber's idea.[118]

To be clear, though the paradigmatic historical examples of charismatic figures included the likes of shamans, prophets, and ancient plebiscitary rulers, Weber included modern and contemporary figures as examples, figures such as Joseph Smith, Kurt Eisner, or Stefan George.[119] At the same time, the almost viral popularity of Weber's ideas and concepts propelled it well beyond what he himself could have done, and saw the appropriation of his own ideas such as charisma by other diagnosticians. Talking about the popularity of the concept of charisma in the 1930s, Derman writes "In a single word, *charisma* captured the argument—increasingly popular in the 1930s—that mass dictatorship represented a form of secularized religion. Finally, as Peter Baehr has noted, social scientists invoked the concept of charisma to express their conviction that

---

[114] Derman, Joshua. "Max Weber and Charisma: A Transatlantic Affair." (*New German Critique*, no. 113, 2011), 51–88. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41288134.
[115] Derman, 52.
[116] Derman, 53.
[117] Derman, 53.
[118] Derman, 54.
[119] Derman, 56.

modern dictatorships, despite their apparent radicalism, would inevitably be subject to 'routinization.' To call a leader charismatic was to suggest that his movement, while unusual and exceptional, could not indefinitely maintain its revolutionary fervor."[120] The social conditions of the explosion of this term were thus connected to the motivation of scholars to diagnose fascism and other ills.

Weber's theory of rulership posited three ideal types. In the first, "legal rulership," a constitution impersonally grounded subordinates to a set of norms and rules.[121] A second type was "traditional rulership," based on "an established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of those exercising authority under them."[122] Finally, charismatic leadership was based on "devotion to the exceptional sanctity, heroism, or exemplary character of an individual person, and the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him.'"[123] The significance of the concept for Weber was twofold: it was partly about ideal types which had models in ancient civilizations (like the Biblical prophet), it was also related to his diagnosis of contemporary society. On the one hand, "Weber believed that charisma represented 'the specifically 'creative' revolutionary force of history."[124] On the other hand, it was an "unstable and evanescent phenomenon," which depended entirely on the individual's demonstration of special powers.[125]

The idea of a charismatic figure as articulated by Weber is a powerful psychohistorical concept. The psychological function of the charismatic figure is in part an expression of the will or desire of the people. The charismatic figure represents/fulfills a wish of the people through a miraculous or wonderous way. For Weber, charisma was primarily a phenomenon of ancient

---

[120] Derman, 54.
[121] Derman, 56.
[122] Derman, 56.
[123] Derman, 56.
[124] Derman, 57.
[125] Derman, 58.

Jewish society. In ancient Judaism, tribal organization "seems especially often to have been formed by a charismatic leader. Such probably was the case for the tribe machir which later vanished as well as Manasseh…" After all, it is the people that gives the charismatic figure their power—the charismatic figure derived their legitimacy from the audience. This is in a technical sense true. However, we must be careful in distinguishing charismatic authority from legal and traditional forms. Insofar as it is in a time of uncertainty, charisma can appear to be a catalyst for the various transformative processes associated with nationalism. Thus, the source of charisma's power was also the reason for its unsustainability. "Normally, the power of these leaders lacked stable support."[126]

In ancient Judaism, class struggles were defined in terms of conflicts between different kinds of charismatic leaders. This was the historical significance of charisma. "With the Brahmins in India just as with the Levites we find the conflict between the personal charismatic and vocational status qualification on the one hand and the hereditary charismatic and status-by-birth qualification on the other."[127] But there is one important difference we should point out between ancient and modern charismatic leaders. According to Weber, prophets were liable to "various physiological, psychological and possibly pathological" ecstatic states, which in Israel were throughout antiquity perceived as holy.[128] Of course, this "ecstatic prophecy" also appeared as late as Muhammad's time in Arabia.[129] Clearly, Weber refers to Muhammad himself as part of this phenomenon. But these psychological peculiarities of the ancient prophets were far more dramatic than anything in the modern period.

---

[126] Max Weber Hans H. Gerth and Don Martindale trans. and ed. *Ancient Judaism* (The Free Press, 1952), 40. https://archive.org/details/in.gov.ignca.2975/page/n367/mode/2up
[127] Weber, 171.
[128] Weber, 288.
[129] Weber, 288.

Despite the "distance" of the ancient past, Weber's theoretical paradigm is useful for political nationalism for the following factors: the political instability, which is both a cause and effect of charismatic leadership; in this case it was a necessary precondition for the national movement, insofar as it was predicated on an idea of the revolutionary transformation of the social and political order; the charismatic leader made the "wish" apparent through the articulation of the national idea through rhetoric, later codified in ideology and art; the moment as an emotional movement needed a figure to channel and compromise various emotions and drives. The leader both identified and articulated the wish and channelled it.

Herzl's successful charisma is thus best understood as an effect as much as a force. This is precisely the argument Penslar makes, namely, that Herzl's charisma was *dialogic*. Penslar sought to avoid the extreme biographical tropes of hagiography and deconstruction, respectively, by reading Herzl's writings as manifestos, calls to action, not treatises.[130] As part of his scholarly turn of reconceptualizing ideology as emotion, Penslar's reading is thus in the spirit of Schorske's classic psychological history of Herzl. Penslar writes about how Herzl's "psychological anguish nourished his political passion."[131] Herzl's charisma was culturally specific.[132] "Had Herzl been dropped into a different era or continent he might not have been charismatic or prepossessing at all. Under different circumstances, Herzl might have been nothing more than a fanatical demi-intellectual..."[133] In addition to this cultural specificity was the importance of timing.

> "The Zionist movement arose at a time when traditional rabbinic authority was in crisis and the modern state had failed to protect the physical security and psychological well-being of great swathes of European Jewry. Herzl emerged from outside the traditional centers of Jewish power: the rabbinate and the Jewish financial elite. He claimed authority to act as an agent on behalf of the entire Jewish people and created the Zionist Organization with himself as its self-appointed head, not subject to recall. He captured and represented Jews' longings through the convening of annual Zionist Congresses, which Herzl's lieutenant, the

---

[130] Penslar, 2.
[131] Penslar, 3.
[132] Penslar, 2.
[133] Penslar, 2.

celebrated writer Max Nordau, passionately depicted Theodor Herzl as "the autonomous parliament of the Jewish Risorgimento" and "the authorized, legitimate, representative of the Jewish people.""[134]

Herzl's *The Jewish State* had not gone viral—so to speak—though the chief rabbi of Sofia, Bulgaria, proclaimed Herzl as the Messiah.[135] The political Zionist movement operated on a different level of scale and consciousness than the *Hovevei Zion* and other practical Zionists who had already started practical immigration to Palestine decades prior. The ideational significance of Herzl's nationalism is that its basis was arguably not an inherent territorial principle. "No one ever thought of looking for the Promised Land where it actually is—and yet it lies so near. This is where it is—within ourselves," he said, and initially considered Latin America as the physical location of the state "far from militarized and seedy Europe."[136] Despite his lifelong efforts, around one percent of world Jewry at best was on board with the vision of political Zionism at the time of his death.

A crucial contrast between Herzl and the practical earlier generations of Zionist immigrants was the secondary importance of territoriality. Perhaps territory was of an abstract political importance to the integrity of the state as an idea, certainly in stark contrast to the case of contemporary and in-the-ensuing-decade movements in the Habsburg and Russian empires for Jewish non-territorial autonomy which in Austria in part responded to the tendency of German and Czech "national" groups towards non-territorial representative solutions in outlying regional territories of the empire. For Herzl, Palestine became attractive because it would galvanize both donors and supporters alike, more so than a solution in Africa or Latin America.

"Herzl's effects on people reflected both his own charisma and his interlocutors' deepest desires. To Lepsius, Herzl was a biblical king. To eastern European Jews, he was a latter-day Moses, raised in the Pharoah's court but now restored to his people. To young Zionists, Herzl was

---

[134] Penslar, 5-6.
[135] Penslar, 93.
[136] Penslar, 75.

a father figure who inspired adoration and awe. Women flirted with him and sent him love letters."[137] Herzl's charismatic leadership not as charming and warm but cool and distant, inspiring veneration from afar.[138]

2.8 Political Zionism's Break with the Past

Herzl's political Zionism as a radical break with the past, as much as it was a callback to a more ancient past. But this dramatic break brought him into conflict with established authorities, and economic and religious forces. Herzl's positionality as resentful of established wealthy Jews. He held animosity towards economic magnates such as the Baron Maurice de Hirsch. In his diaries, Herzl was blunt in the dramatic, emotional language with which he described the political and ideological tensions between himself and other prominent Jewish leaders. In his June 1895 diary Herzl had vowed to "smash" and "demolish" Hirsch.[139] But Herzl's attitude was hardly out of place in *fin-de-siecle* Vienna, an era in which the idea of the death of old orders was nothing short of an archetypal political—not to mention artistic and literary—motif. At the time, Schorske's paradigmatic psychological reading of the *fin de siècle* is exceptional because he sought to connect politics with the psyche, embodied throughout art. But compared to *fin-de-siècle* writers, Schorske hardly would have been out of place. To us today, his unconventional approach seems idiosyncratic, ingenious, or daring.

The opening example of the book with which Schorske tries to capture the spirit of the age in a single image is *La valse* of Maurice Ravel which personified the "violent death of the nineteenth-century world."[140] But the greatest loser of the era was Austrian liberalism. This was an age in which the safe, gradualist politics of liberalism came up short, and only some of the most

---

[137] Penslar, 122
[138] Penslar, 6.
[139] Penslar, 134.
[140] Schorske, 32.

psychologically revolutionary ideas raced to fill its place. One of the culminations of this period of death and rebirth was Zionism, which as the most successful articulation of Jewish nationalism and the most intellectually charged was paradigmatic but was at the same time radically distinct from other forms of ethnic and linguistic nationalisms.

Herzl's psychological exceptionalism is best understood in contrast with other Jewish nationalists and even other Zionists. At around the same period of the turn of the century, a year before Herzl's death, the Russian Labor Zionist Nachman Syrkin even wrote a psychological reading of history. Syrkin's psychological reading of history in *Sensation and Idea* (1903) sought to move beyond material considerations as a human motivators, but also "religious and quasireligious drives, by visionary 'goals.'"[141] His interpretation of nationalism was not necessarily tied to Palestine, even though it was the ancestral homeland and despite "the importance he assigned to messianic impulses in shaping the collective psyche."[142][143] If Herzl's conception of Zionism was based on a principle of movement, Syrkin sought to formulate a strategy for Jewish political independence in the tradition of Hess and in contrast to the cautious empiricism of Zhitlovsky.[144] As more grounded in economic and political ideology—even as he was an original and radical thinker in his own right—Syrkin is an example of a more emotionally stable kind of revolutionism which tried to find ways to rationalize history within an ideological framework. A consequence of this was a greater degree of emotional stability and continuity in the labor Zionist movement. Weizmann remarked on this contrast in a letter to Aberson from Pinsk in April 1904, "There is such an utter disorder in people's minds that no end is in sight. The only ones who work… are the Poale Zion [and] they – with very few exceptions – are territorialists with such fanciful

---

[141] Jonathan Frankel *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism, and the Russian Jews, 1862-1917* (Cambridge University Press, 1984), 297.
[142] Frankel, 301.
[143] Consider also Syrkin's *The Jewish Question and the Jewish Socialist State* (1898).
[144] Frankel, 306-307.

theories that one remains breathless."[145] What kept the Labor Zionists together were their shared

commitment to ideas, ideology, and a communal sense of political solidarity which often even went

beyond the Jews or Russians as communal groups: perhaps paralleling Herzl's return to *Judentum*.

---

[145] As quoted in Frankel, 322.

Chapter Two: Muslim India's *Fin de Siècle*: Diagnosticians of Crisis and Decline

3.1 Muslim India's *Fin de Siècle*?

When was India's *fin de siècle*? There is much to say regarding the criticism of social decline among religious thinkers going back centuries. Ruth Vanita has recently sought to reposition the origins of the idea of *fin-de-siècle* decline in the context of certain British administrators in India around 1850, such as W.H. Sleeman, who in 1848 and 1854 argued that the "degenerate traits" of the King of Awadh "demonstrated the decline of his dynasty and the ripeness of the kingdom for British control."[146] This was part of a pattern of British denunciation of Indian culture, with the result that educated Indians post-1857 "internalized" the views of their collective heritage as decadent; she examines this specifically in the context of the period poetry of Lucknow, which was part of a broader poetry of the "city," and of a vital Indian culture of decadence which went back well before 1870.[147] In fact, "The East India Company's principal strategy for usurping Indian kingdoms was to declare the heirs illegitimate, and this was often linked to the claim that monarch in question was impotent or homosexually inclined – therefore he could not have fathered his putative son…"[148]

In our examination of *fin de siècle* as a nexus between politics and psychology, I suggest the *fin de siècle* of Muslim India came considerably later than the 1850s. I would like to focus on political decline, specifically in terms of sovereignty and the eventual transformation of legitimate authority into the charismatic idiom. In this light, sovereign rule in India and the relationship of

---

[146] Ruth Vanita "Chapter Eighteen: India" in Michael Saler ed. *The Fin-de-Siecle World* (Routledge, New York, 2015), 283.
[147] Vanita, 284.
[148] Vanita, 291.

Muslims to political power can be understood in a twofold way: the decline of old orders signified by the death of key figures and institutions was directly proportional to the rise of new political aspirations. I have already mentioned how the Muslim community struggled to produce philosophers, and this could be partly attributed to the lack of a Muslim middle class. This basically contrasts with the story of educated Jews in Europe. Nonetheless, Mufti stops to remark on the postwar stigma that Jewish intellectuals were at best second-rate philosophers:

> "Fichte's theory of language and identity thus constitutes an allegory of the predicament of European culture at the beginning of the era of the nation-state. It clarifies the importance that historical continuity has for nation-thinking as the narrative and conceptual structure within which the displacements of minority are to be contained. The space of the national is thus susceptible, in its very constitution, to the intrusion of minority cultural and political practice, and the Jews, the exemplary figure for the disruptions of minority, are to be kept marginal to the core of the national culture if the integrity of that culture is to be achieved. Fichte thus inaugurates in the Addresses the recurring theme in German intellectual life of the artificiality of the Jewish acquisition and performance of the German language, especially in the ''higher'' linguistic domain of philosophical speculation. That this claim had a certain life even in the postwar era becomes evident when we recall that Jürgen Habermas felt the need, on the threshold of the 1960s, to defend at length ''Jewish philosophers'' such as Cohen, Rosenzweig, Buber, and Benjamin against the judgment that they ''at best attain stardom of the second rank.''"[149]

In any event, Jewish intellectuals in Europe were generally more "educated" than their Muslim counterparts, who had fallen off from the glory of the high Mughal period. In fact, it was German Jewish orientalists of the 19th century who were at the forefront of critical historical scholarship on Islam—which though hardly apologetic were far from being quite as polemical as their Christian or secular equivalents. Though there is not as much data on literacy, what we can safely say is that most of the population of India in 1911 was rural as compared to urban by a factor of roughly nine to one according to British imperial census.[150] For comparison, Jews in Austria

---

[149] Aamir R. Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture* (Princeton University Press, 2007), 74.
[150] Statistical abstract relating to British India from 1910-11 to 1919-20 London: His Majesty's Stationary Office 1922 (Digital South Asia Library, the University of Chicago) http://dsal.uchicago.edu/digbooks/digpager.html?BOOKID=Statistics_1910&object=9

rapidly urbanized following the 1848 revolution and were rapidly increasing in numbers by the turn of the century, especially poor, traditional Jews seeking economic opportunities.[151] According to Bose and Jalal, Mughal decline which picked up in the 18th century was a mixture of decentralization and decline.[152] It is a basic consensus among economic historians that British colonial rule retarded the economic development of India. Related to this is the idea of the slow development of the Muslim intellectual class; this was opined on by the likes of Ashraf, Nehru, and others. Nehru, in his autobiography, deemed Indians intellectually lethargic on account of retarded middle-class growth.[153] In the view of some, there was not even a concerted effort to promote a Muslim middle class out of Syed Ahmad Khan's "secular" Aligarh institution in the second half of the nineteenth century.[154]

Consequently, despite a diverse population, Indian Muslims did not really tend towards religious reform.[155] While the era of emancipation saw the rise in questioning the position of newly emancipated Jews inside Christian European societies, Muslims felt increasing pressures under discriminatory British policies and the final abolishment of the Mughal empire in 1857, which marked the final end of Muslim sovereign rule. The story of Muslims in India is one of homogenization by British censuses and the doctrine of "divide and rule" which fostered communal division, religious zealotry, and quashed the hopes of secularists. Mufti characterizes the tone of the age in terms of typical adjectives of the European *fin de siècle:* "It became clear that the form of political and intellectual secularism that had been tied to the postcolonial state in India, and

---

[151] Marsha L. Rozenblit, "Jewish assimilation in Habsburg Vienna" in Jonathan Frankel and Steven J. Zipperstein, ed. *Assimilation and Community: The Jews in nineteenth-century Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 230.
[152] Sugata Bose, Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy*, (Routledge, 2017), 38.
[153] K.M. Ashraf, ed. Jaweed Ashraf, *Historical Background to Muslim Question in India, 1764-1945: Volume 1 (1764-1925)* (Asha Jyoti Book Sellers & Publishers in Association with Mainframe Publishers, Delhi, 2008), 5.
[154] Ashraf, 13.
[155] Mushirul Hasan "Religion and Politics in India: the *Ulama* and the Khilafat Movement" in Mushirul Hasan, ed. *Communal and Pan-Islamic Trends in Colonial India*, (Manohar, New Delhi, 1981), 7.

whose founding figure was Jawaharlal Nehru, was in a state of irreversible collapse, regardless of the fortunes of those political organizations most closely associated with it."[156] Curiously, Mufti does not really emphasize the trope of decline in his work, though he mentions the relationship between the classic tradition of Urdu lyric poetry as a genre of Muslim decline, and the Muslim as a minority figure in India.[157]

Ayesha Jalal postulates a somewhat more religiously defined "Muslim psyche" which found the articulation of its territorial identity in the Urdu poetry genre known as "*shahr-i-ashoob* or *ashoobia shairi*: lament for the city. This genre encapsulated the socio-cultural turbulence, of cities in the late Mughal period," that reoriented the object of love poetry from a beloved to the *watan* or homeland. However, Jalal warns against defining this 19th century poetry as proto-nationalist, because playing with vague terms like *qaum* and *watan* really "amounts to thwarting any effort at disentangling the individual identity of the Muslim from the discourse on the Muslim community and nation."[158] While in 1857 at the fall of the last trace of Mughal sovereignty there was "no obvious invocation of the national idea in the form it had come to assume in the post-colonial Indian state's secular nationalism and Pakistan's two-nation theory," it was rather the "city or place of abode" which was central to poetic sentiments of social place.[159] Jalal invokes the term "Muslim psyche" as connected to a vague sense of territorial attachment, a sentiment irrespective of class.[160] She identifies the Muslim among other "subcontinental psyches" as articulated in the Urdu vernacular press and in debates on colonial policy and Hindu communal claims, an argument which fits well in Case's framework of the public sphere.[161] Jalal's use of the "Muslim psyche" is

---

[156] Mufti, 2.
[157] Mufti, 210.
[158] Ayesha Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty: Individual and Community in South Asian Islam Since 1850*, (Routledge, London, 2000), 11.
[159] Jalal, 11-12.
[160] Jalal, 14.
[161] Jalal, 46.

not critical and she uses it to refer to everything from popular sentiments expressed in newspapers, to the ecstatic dimension of the Sufi tradition of love of the prophet Muhammad.[162] The "Muslim psyche" is simply another way for Jalal to talk about how "Muslims felt."[163]

In the history of nationalism, this very sentiment is often, in terms of Gay's critique, nothing more than shorthand for "popular articulations of self-interest." But Jalal's account of the Muslim psyche—indeed, the whole reason she is able to talk about one in the first place—is an indication. It approximates the possibility for an articulation of a Muslim Indian *fin de siècle*. And there was one event which rocked the Muslim psyche more than anything else and which gives us the best approximation to pinpointing Muslim India's *fin de siècle*: the events of 1922.

3.2 An Anxiety about Sovereignty: Indian Querists in Holly Case's "Age of Questions"

I have already mentioned Holly Case's framework as a basis for comparison. Case's rough periodization of the "long" 19th century incidentally complements the timeline of Muslim India particularly well. This is a testament to her theory, considering that she does not really discuss India in the work. Although she does note that one of the earliest expressions of the phrase "the Eastern question" is in Britain with reference to India in 1777, an historical analysis of a "Muslim question" in India is notably absent from *The Age of Questions*. Thus, this chapter serves to contribute this aspect of Indian history to the Age of Questions framework, though I have neither endeavoured nor claim to have exhausted the theme. Case's framework and seven arguments work well in the analysis of the rise of the Muslim question in India, especially in terms of nationalism as an "answer" to questions.

---

[162] Jalal, 293.
[163] Jalal, 321.

First, a little on Case. Working in the tradition of Reinhart Koselleck, she sought to overcome the tendency of specialists to look at questions in isolation[164] but placed "questions" even higher up conceptually compared to the "concepts" of Koselleck's *Begriffsgeschichte.* In the present study, Zionism and Muslim nationalism in India can be seen as two case studies of the Age of Questions paradigm.

Case's 2018 work was significant as she styled it a "first attempt" of its kind, calling on historians and other academics to consider expanding on the work. Case examines the intellectual history of a certain kind of rhetorical formulation, "the x question," and attempts to trace family resemblances of these formulations.[165] When we analyze "x" questions, Case teaches us, we need not necessarily ascribe to the question an underlying ontological significance; rather, we must understand questions as products of "querists" (questioners). This is important. She situates this Age of Questions in a very long 19th century, but especially as it emerged in the 1820s and 30s with the politicization and expansion of the European presses, the enlargement of voting franchise in Britain, and certain historical events (especially the Greek uprising in the Ottoman Empire, the Bill for Removal of Jewish Disabilities, and other landmark events in Europe and the Ottoman world). These factors together gave rise to the development of a new "international public sphere," an unprecedented social environment in which questions proliferated.

Case's book revolves around seven arguments that explain the prevalence of questions in the Age of !uestions. Each of these "arguments" is an account which seeks to explain the age in terms of an interpretive principle, each of which distinguishes the Age of Questions from other historical periods. The very first argument is the national argument: quoting the British historian P.D.G. Thomas: "The eighteenth century saw the evolution of the Parliamentary question,"[166] "As

---

[164] C.f. her own background as a specialist of the "Transylvanian question."
[165] For example, the Eastern question, Woman question, Jewish question, Transylvanian question, etc.).
[166] Case, 36.

these questions tended to center on perceived failures, shortcomings, or excess expenditures generated by government policy, it was likely this practice that contributed most directly to the emergence of the shorthand 'the x question,' argues Case.[167] In the British context, one of the oldest national questions was the American; for instance, she examines instances of "American question" in Parliamentary parlance from the late 1770s onwards.

"The eighteenth and nineteenth century saw the emergence of the public sphere, consisting of venues beyond the purview of the state where issues of the time could be discussed and debated."[168] Part of the essence of questions per Case became their internationalization. In fact, "The age of questions delineates a period in which the public sphere was *internationalized*."[169] "The emergence of questions—indeed, their coincident creation—with the formulation of what I would call the *international public sphere* is traceable through querists' relationship to the periodical press and their interest in reaching the literate public, and to that end appealing above all to and through publicistic venues." [170] "Behind" the international public sphere was the nationalization of questions, catalyzed by the expansion of diplomacy after the Napoleonic Wars, the internationalization of the press including nationalist activism, and the idea that public opinion had some bearing on policy.[171]

Like the Zionist movement, which informed and connected the movement through an international newspaper *Die Welt*, and whose founding figure Theodor Herzl was a writer in the international press, the 20th century saw the expansion of the press in India. For Muslim national movements, the press functioned similarly to their Zionist counterparts. The Pakistan National

---

[167] Case, 36
[168] Case, 43.
[169] Case, 44.
[170] Case, 44.
[171] Case, 45.

Archives records at least 250 Urdu language newspapers in its file since 1797.[172] Tropes of the "Eastern question" were present in the early national Urdu press, as thinkers pondered how long Turkey would stay on his feet. India's *fin de siècle* saw the rapid descent of the Eastern question and the most significant pan-Islamic movement in India, the so-called *Khilafat* movement from roughly 1919-1924.

Gail Minault cites a poem by Maulana Shibli, which he had contributed to Abul Kalam Azad's ulama organ and Islamic revival newspaper *Al-Hilal* (the Moon) which was shut down by the Raj around World War I. Shibli's political verse supplemented the contributions of Azad and others to *Al-Hilal*. Minault describes the following poem, which refers to the "Sick Man" image characteristic of formulations of the "Eastern Question," in his poem:

> "When a government is in decline, how long
>   will its fame and influence last?
> How long does the smoke from a guttering candle last?
>
> If the mantel of the sultanate has been
>   Tattered by fate,
> How long can this public outrage last?
>
> Morocco has gone, and Persia too, now
>   we shall see
> How long Turkey, this "Sick Man" will last.
>
> The flood of misfortune sweeping in from the Balkans
> Has been stemmed by the cries of the oppressed,
>   But how long can they last? [173]

In total, Case provided seven different arguments to explain the rise of questions, each of which could be discussed at length. These include the argument for "force, movement, and migration" the "progressive age," a "federative argument" to explain questions. One is the

---

[172] "Newspapers" National Archives of Pakistan, http://archives.gov.pk/pdf/Newspapers.pdf. Note, this number includes newspapers up until today.
[173] As quoted in Minault, 44.

"farcical" argument. Case argues that "shadowy nature of [questions'] origins" should alert the historian to the fraudulent nature of the age of questions.[174] Case examines Jacob Toury as one historian of the Jewish question, who traced its origins to 1838 in two German essays titled, "The Jewish Question," on the basis of which he framed the question itself as "an anti-Jewish battle-cry."[175] Case argues that the Jewish question had appeared in English literature almost a decade earlier in public debates surrounding legislation for the removal of Jewish disabilities.[176] According to Case, Toury though well-intentioned misdated the origins of the Jewish question.[177] Others were not so well-meaning, such as the Polish question: many project the origin to a distant past well before its genuine historical context (such as the Eastern or Polish questions).[178]

The querist, for Case, operated primarily in the realm of the press, politics, and the public sphere. Thus, while not all querists were necessarily philosopher-products of the enlightenment, the most radical querists rejected traditional religious answers or political authority and sought their own answers, or else operated outside of any normative religious framework instead writing in the newspapers or engaging in public debates on governmental policy. In this way, the age of questions could be interpreted as more than farcical, but obscuring. While the "Jewish question" would be most famously answered by non-Jews, we must remember that Jewish questions have been answered for millennia by Jews themselves. Indeed, the answering of questions relating to Judaism (by Jews) is what we refer to as the Jewish religious tradition. How do non-Jews fit into the picture? If we look at competing answers to the "Jewish question" such as Herzl's Zionism, we can understand it as many have done in no small part as a response to this antisemitic provocation.

---

[174] Case, 154.
[175] Case, 154.
[176] Case, 155. C.f. the previous chapter, where I have mentioned Steven Smith's interpretation of Spinoza as the first one to articulate the Jewish question as a problem of modernity.
[177] Case, 155.
[178] Case, 156.

Indeed, as analysts of contemporary and historical antisemitism point out, antisemitism is often based on the abstracted desire not necessarily to eliminate the Jews, but to "determine their destiny."[179]

With respect to the areligious dimension of questions, it is important for us to keep in mind that, despite their wordings, questions as phrases and as subjects of discussion in the public sphere were not necessarily based on religious questions such as would have been asked or answered by religious authorities or even erudite philosophers, but rather on racial, ethnic, or national presumptions. The issue of the Muslim question also furnishes an excellent illustration of this point. "The Muslim question" in the Indian context seems rarely to have occurred on its own, without being attached to the national other; in other words, it was almost always (including by Muslims) referred to as the "Hindu-Muslim" question. In the early 20th century, a discourse around the "Hindu-Muslim" question emerged. "Who are the Indian Muslims?" Is the opening question of Mohammad Mujeeb's 1967 work *The Indian Muslims.*[180] Historically, there was writing on the Muslim question and the "Hindu-Muslim question" in particular. There was a short-chapter titled "The Hindu-Muslim Question" in C.F. Andrews's 1920 work *The True India: A Plea for Understanding*, which mainly touches on religious history since ancient times. Andrews compares Hinduism to Catholicism in its artistic celebration of the divine in pictorial forms and musical evocations to the public, while contrasting Islam as a puritanism from the barren Arabian desert which shuns music and images that speculate on the divine essence.[181] The history of the Hindu-Muslim question correlates with the rise of Muslim nationalism in India. A modern version of this

---

[179] Charles Asher Small ed, *Global Antisemitism: A Crisis of Modernity*, (Brill, Leiden, 2013), 42.
[180] Mohammad Mujeeb, *The Indian Muslims*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1967.
https://archive.org/details/indianmuslims0000muje/page/n5/mode/2up
[181] C.F. Andrews, *The True India: A Plea for Understanding*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, London, 1920: 197.
https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.100971/page/n9/mode/2up?msclkid=43030e35cf6511eca2ec5584a2277a5f

kind of literature is Raziuddin Aquil's *The Muslim Question: Understanding Islam and Indian History*.[182] Like Prasad and Young, Aquil takes a *longue durée* approach that contextualizes Muslim-Hindu relations over nearly a thousand years. Today, the "Muslim question" generally refers to the range of debates on "Islam in the modern world," especially in the post-9/11 USA and modern Europe, and especially with reference to national rights and minority protection. Aziz Al-Azmeh criticizes the consequences of the "overdetermination" of Islam due to the "postmodern obscurantism" associated with the so-called "Muslim question" in this contemporary context.[183]

Given that debates on "Muslim and Hindus" and other religious groups went back for centuries, the story of the "Hindu-Muslim question" as such is largely a linguistic formulation. But in line with Holly Case's first argument, this question was associated with British parliamentary discourse on national questions. For example, the "Hindu-Muslim question" was referenced in the 1931 Indian Round Table Conference, a parliamentary committee on minority reforms:

> "The vexed Hindu-Muslim question was referred to by Sir Muhammad Shafi on behalf of the Muslim Delegation, and he made it clear that as far as he was concerned he could not consent finally to frame any constitution unless the Hindu-Muslim question was settled. To this view Mr. Jinnah gave his adherence, on the ground that no constitution would work unless it embodied provisions which gave a sense of security to the Muslims and other minorities."[184]

The language of question as a parliamentary trope also appears in political contexts such as speeches like Jinnah's on "the question of partitioning Bengal and the Punjab."[185] In the 1940s, the Hindu-Muslim question was taken up by nationalist-critical observers who opposed Hindu-Muslim division and wrote analytical works which sought to analyze the roots of their disagreement, works

---

[182] Raziuddin Aquil, *The Muslim Question: Understanding Islam and Indian History*, (Penguin, 2017).
[183] al-Azmeh, Aziz. "Postmodern Obscurantism and the 'Muslim Question'." (*Socialist Register* 39, 2003).
[184] Prime Minister's Statement on the "Indian Round Table Conference 1930-1931," (Digital Library of India), 15. https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.81224/page/n1/mode/2up
[185] Speech by Muhammad Jinnah on the partition of Bengal and the Punjab, 4th May 1947 (FO 371/63533), (The National Archives). https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/indian-independence/jinnah-partition/

which I will discuss later. I would argue that this discourse on questions helps us to think about

Muslim India's *fin de siècle*.

3.3 A Symbolic Laius? The *Khilafat* Movement as a late response to the "Eastern Question"

Schorske had described the violent death of the 19th century world as it was symbolized in

fin-de-siècle Viennese art. *Fin-de-siècle* India was characterized by a series of meaningful deaths.

As I will discuss in the section on the genesis of the Muslim League, the death of Syed Ahmad

Khan was significant because it opened the door for a certain genre of Muslim political action. But

another "death" would prove even more important to Muslim politics on the continent. The

"Eastern question" had been in the sympathetic consciousness of Indian Muslims for many years,

exacerbated by the Balkan political crisis of the 1910s. Indeed, the political crises in the period

surrounding World War I were crucial, but they only amplified sentiments that had existed for

centuries previously. For instance, the revival of the the caliph as a symbol of Muslim unity in

India was a trend that went back to at least the late 19th century.[186]

In the 1980s, Gail Minault sought to diminish the long-held historiographical emphasis laid

on the pan-Islamic, international aspect of the movement, instead highlighting the indigenous

causes and effects and the symbolic political problems at stake. In 1982, Minault questioned the

national indifference that scholars of the Khilafat movement had accorded the movement, scholars

who instead emphasized the "extraterritorial loyalty" of the movement in line with its pan-Islamic

aspirations. Further, she argued that unlike as portrayed by the pan-Islamic interpretation of

Khilafat, the response of Indian Muslims to the fall of the caliphate was not monolithic.[187] Minault

---

[186] Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India*, (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1982), 5.
[187] Minault, 2.

described some of the social processes of this development, which took places in religious environments and even from the Friday sermons of the *ulama* and proliferated into Muslim consciousness throughout India. She summarizes the relevance of the movement to the Indian contexts as such: "The Khilafat movement was primarily a campaign by a particular group of Indian Muslim leaders to unite their community politically by means of religious and cultural symbols meaningful to all strata of that community. As such, it can be viewed as a quest for "pan-Indian Islam."[188] These pan-Indian Muslim forces would help to provide the social basis for the Muslim nationalist movement's conceptual rhetoric.

The sympathies between *Khilafatists* and the Indian national movement is somewhat of a paradox, but as Minault argues, no more a paradox than the aspiration of the movement itself to unite the Muslims of India who had always been historically divided.[189] The British had derived political authority from the Mughal emperor originally, and the last extinction of Mughal authority in 1857 "eliminated a whole symbolic structure of authority."[190] But many Muslims reacted strongly against the perceived dangers of political assimilation, manifested in the phenomenon of the *hijrat* (migration). This notion of religious migration to Muslim lands, most prominently Afghanistan, was slow to be sanctioned by the *ulama*. But long before the forced migration of the violent consequences of Partition, *hirjat* was a prominent theme in the *Khilafat* period. "The emergence of *hijrat* as an alternative to *jihad* and non-cooperation flushed out class, regional and ideological differences among Muslims, underlining the role of individual autonomy in judging how best to contribute to collective activity."[191] The *hijrat* "fervor" marked the pressure which lower classes, "converging" on the Afghan border, placed on the reluctant *ulama*.[192] The *hijrat*

---

[188] Minault, 2.
[189] Minault, 3.
[190] Minault, 5.
[191] Jalal, 218.
[192] Jalal, 218.

issue was an political desire to migrate expressed in the metaphor of a religious enactment. Further, it would not be unreasonable to relate the original Islamic *hijrat*, which Muslims trace to Muhammad's flight from Mecca to Medina), to the Jewish exodus as the world-historical paradigm for religious (or at the very least Abrahamic) emigration.

What I want to emphasize is the psychological dimension of the metaphorical death of the caliph in terms of the political failure of the *Khilafat* movement. This is only possible if we acknowledge the evolving social role of the *ulama*, that is, learned religious leaders at any levels of class and political authority, in the Muslim political hierarchy. In the absence of an Islamic "priesthood," the *ulama* "those possessing knowledge" were not originally separate as a class, but were eventually distinguishable between ascetic *ulama-i-akhrat* and *ulama-i-duniya*. The latter were associated with political authority, importantly the Sultans of Delhi to whom they conferred legitimacy,[193] and who in this manner were sometimes seen to have become "creatures of the state."[194] But British supremacy resulted in the eventual decline of the political role of the *ulama*.[195] As Indian politics tended at times towards secularism, Muslim attitudes became more conservative in response, with the result that there was largely a lack of significant reform movements among Indian Muslims.[196] Despite their fall from lofty associations with the highest political authorities, the *ulama* retained significant authority in the realm of answering religious questions and issuing rulings from a position of religious authority. With respect to the question of religious "question and response," it is notable that *ulama* from the conservative Deoband academy issued 147,851 *fatawa* in the period from 1911 to 1951.[197]

---

[193] Hasan, 4.
[194] Hasan, 5.
[195] Hasan, 5.
[196] Hasan, 7.
[197] Hasan, 7.

In contrast to the *ulama*, the early Muslim League as an inheritor of the relatively secular Aligarh Muslim University was largely considered a religion-less (*la-dini*) enterprise.[198] The political mobilization of the *ulama* in the *Khalifat* cause thus served as a way of bridging conservative and secular currents within the Muslim zeitgeist. The political mobilization of the *ulama* in the *Khilafat* cause was institutionalized in the establishment of political organizations, notably the *Anjuman-i-Khuddam-i-Ka'aba* in May 1912.[199] *Ulama* agitation included calls to rebel against the government and perform migration to Muslim lands to the West.[200] Jamiyat-i-Ulama-i-Hind, founded on 1919 under Abdul Bari, decided that it was *haram* (forbidden) for a Muslim soldier to serve in the army, a decision which would have a great influence on the Khilafat movement.[201] In the words of Khizar Ansari, who resorts to emotional metaphors to describe the situation:

> "The radical Khilafat leaders appealed to the more immediate economic interests of ordizary Muslims in order to mobilise support for their pan-Islamic aims. At the same time, some Muslim labour leaders recognised the potential of the Khilafatist mass agitation as a way of broadening support for their own socio-economic demands. The *Khilafa* was a symbol of Muslim unity; it was also the spart that ignited deep resentment against the British. For the Muslim workers of the industrial cities, there was resentment at the appalling economic dislocation brought by the first World War; for the Muslims of the *qasbahs*, there was resentment at the decline in their opportunities for jobs and the status they felt their due. Gradually, it became obvious that, although the Khilafatist leadership wanted to limit the movement to the demand for the restoration of the Caliphate to its proper status, the Turkish Caliph held little direct interest for the rank and file of the Movement. For the latter, it was often the anti-British aspect of the struggle, rather than the specifically religious one, which increasingly became more important. Consequently, many Muslims began to express their hostility to British rule under the cover of a religious movement, and to fight at the same time for their own specific social and economic interests and needs."[202]

---

[198] Hasan, 9.
[199] Hasan, 10.
[200] Hasan, 12-13.
[201] Hasan, 15.
[202] Khizar Humayun Ansari, *The Emergence of Socialist Thought Among North Indian Muslims (1917-1947)*, (Oxford University Press, Karachi, 2015), 59.

The Pakistani national historian Khaliquzzaman—a prominent Muslim nationalist politician and historian, and author of *Pathway to Pakistan*—repeatedly refers to the *Khalifat* issue and the relationship between Turkey and Indian politics as a "question:" "the Khilafat question." Khilafatists' vision of pan-Islamism served an important narrative: the claim that Muslims were not a minority of a larger India, but a majority in predominantly Muslim areas, and among the largest Muslims population in the world. Hasan quotes Mohamed Ali,"

> "Emphasizing this aspect of political reality, Mohamed Ali said: 'The Muslims constitute not a minority in the sense in which the last war (Balkan War) and its sequel has habituated us to consider European minorities... A community that in India alone must now be numbering more than 70 million cannot easily be called a minority in the sense of Geneva minorities, and when it is remembered that this community numbers nearly 400 million of people throughout the world, whose ambition is to convert the rest of mankind to their way of thought and their outlook on life, and who claim and feel a unique brotherhood: to talk of it as a minority is a mere absurdity.' "[203]

In 1919, Jinnah brought forward a memorandum to London on behalf of the All-India Muslim League to express the concerns of the Khilafat movement. Dated August 27, 1919, the letter speaks of "the anxiety of the Mussalmans of India was mainly to the position of their Khilafa."[204] The eighth point expresses concern over the Muslim holy sites that they would be "immune from attack and molestation."[205]

> "The ideology of the pan-Islamic movement, as conceived by Maulana Azad and Mohamed Ali, not only provided justification ·for the Khilafat cause, but was also a virtual statement of Muslim nationalism, later modified and elaborated by the Muslim League. It forcefully highlighted the need for an independent centre for the Muslims, rejected the territorial concept of nationhood advocated by the Congress, and emphasized the distinct political identity of the Muslims."[206]

The collapse of the Khilafat movement occurred in several stages, first with the separation of the Caliphate and Sultanate in November 1922, and then on March 1924, with the abolition of

---

[203] Hasan, 53.
[204] Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada ed. *Foundations of Pakistan: All India Muslim League Documents, Volume III: 1906-1947* (Royal Book Company, Karachi, 1990), 201.
[205] Pirzada, *Vol. III*, 202.
[206] Hasan, 56.

the Caliphate by Kemalists. Despite their confidence from the 1918 Muslim League session, the failure of the Khilafat resulted in the end of *ulama* dominance in politics, given how heavily they were invested in the cause.[207]

The idea of the death of a leader eventually became a prominent theme of Muslim League politics in general. Somewhere along the line, the League would begin commemorating the deaths of important communal figures at the beginnings of the formal proceedings of a given session. But in addition to these local deaths, another death would be far more significant.

In the political history of period Muslim politics, the psychological trauma of the decapitation of the traditional figure at the top of the religious hierarchy typically constitutes but a dramatic concluding paragraph of a section that marked the close of an era. This sort of trauma was an essential component of the national Oedipus, but it was only half of the equation. The turn to a distinctly Pakistani nation could not take place before a pan-Islamic indigenous solidarity (a pan-Islam which was so pan-Indian that solidarity with Hindus was an active component of this "pan-Islam") arose. The death of the Khilafat movement was the death of the metaphorical father, the symbolic head of Muslim political consciousness. Hasan describes in emotional terms the consequences of the Turkish resolution of 1922:

> "The result was: bewilderment, confusion, and even inactivity. Having once mobilised new groups, roused their religious fervour, and articulated their grievances, the ulama were now like a contrary jack-in-box refusing to retire, to seek new outlets for their energy, and to build something positive out of the Khilafat experience."[208]

Hasan then quotes this stunning paragraph from Khaliquzzaman:

> "As a result of this catastrophe, for practically one decade they suffer- ed from deep inertia and pessimism and were incapable of any organized mass action either for the freedom of India or for the protection of their own Muslim interests in the country. The Khilafat Committee continued for a few years more but it ceased to have a mass appeal or backing and was confined to a section of people who were sincerely struggling to retain the name

---

[207] Hasan, 19
[208] Hasan, 19.

of the organization rather than to achieve its purpose. As time went on their energy also began to be misdirected and found its escape in fighting for offices in the organization or for the formation of new parties with new names but no programmes. The Khilafatists who were once known as Khilafat- Congressmen became Congress-Khilafatists and some, after some time, purely Congressmen. Others remained nothing but ' Khilafatists with no work. …

The history of the next sixteen years of Muslim India is a mass of confusion and a chapter of political benightedness. The disruption of the Khilafat organisation was like **a breach in the embankment of the flowing stream of Muslim mass emotion,** which diverted it into several petty streams, some leading to desert lands there to dry up, some flowing by zig-zag routes to meet the original bed in their headlong march and some others rushing towards the mighty ocean to drown themselves. We were divided between ourselves…"[209]

In the case of the Zionist movement, querists often operated outside the religious, rabbinic establishment; the task of the movement was later reconciling with religious authorities. The state has long held a tenuous relationship with rabbinic authority. Consider the official rabbinic justification of Israel's sovereignty which came as late as 1958.[210] In the context of the age of questions, querists thus replaced religious figures in charting a course for the future of the people as a national whole. The case of India paints a different picture. On the one hand, querists such as Choudhary Rahmat Ali operated in context of the English university. But of the few thinkers who wrote on the Hindu-Muslim, perhaps none is more interesting than the professor Beni Prasad, who not only sought to write an history of the Hindu-Muslim question, but simultaneously to "diagnose" it as a disease in a manner most analogous to Nordau's depiction of the European *fin de siècle*.

3.4 Beni Prasad as Querist and "Diagnostician" of the Hindu-Muslim Question

I have mentioned how some Pakistani nationalists essentialize an anachronistic ideal type of the Muslim nation, placing the start of the regional territorial narrative with the Arab conquests

---

[209] Choudhry Khaliquzzaman, *Pathway to Pakistan*, (Lognmans Pakistan Branch, Lahore, 1961), 74. https://archive.org/details/pathway-to-pakistan-chaudhry-khaliquzzaman/page/n5/mode/2up . (highlights mine).
[210] Penslar, *Israel in History*, 74.

of 711 in Sindh. Such national narratives have their roots in social debates on political questions in the public sphere, though the idea of "Pakistan" itself emerged in the 1930s. When we look at writers who confront the two-nation theory critically, we find they the often engaged with it to an extent on its own terms, borrowing from nascent *longue durée* sociological theory which traces the origins of national problems on a similar time scale. Intriguingly, the writer we will closely examine in this regard also posed his critique of nationalism in terms of a psychological reading of the communal problem as "diagnosis."

Described as "a scholarly recluse" by J.N.K., Prasad was an ardent rationalist and professor of political science at the University of Allahabad, founder-editor of the *Indian Journal of Political Science* which he edited for seven years. His oft-cited *The Hindu-Muslim Questions* outlined his own innovative "solutions." Prasad's analysis was generally class-based. "The most important line of division in society so far has been class, a consequence of difference in political status, in wealth, occupation and enlightenment, prestige of birth and style of living."[211] However, in *The Hindu-Muslim Questions*, Prasad's analysis is fringed with hints of psychoanalytical probing. Prasad's work fits the theme of psychology as medicine, because in addition to Part II of the work, which offers dozens of "suggestions" for the "solution" of the problem, he calls Part I "Diagnosis," as if the Hindu-Muslim Question itself were a symptom of some kind of disease.

Prasad's sociological analysis of the ancient roots of the Hindu-Muslim problem most closely resembles Max Weber's analysis of the Ancient Jewish social order because both center the problem of caste. That he encountered Weber's *Ancient Judaism* is unlikely but not wholly implausible. Weber had compared the "problem of ancient Jewry" with the "problem of the Indian caste order," despite insisting on the uniqueness of the former in the socio-historical study of

---

[211] J. N. K. "The Late Prof. Beni Prasad." (*The Indian Journal of Political Science* 6, no. 4, 1945), 187–187. http://www.jstor.org/stable/42753618.

religion.[212] Here Weber introduced the concept of the Jew as pariah[213] (although this idea had been previously present), the difference with the Indian caste order being that the Jews maintained a self-imposed caste-like social structure in an environment otherwise free of castes.[214] In Weber's view, "all the essential traits of Jewry's attitude towards the environment can be deduced from this pariah existence—especially to its voluntary ghetto, long anteceding compulsory internment, and the dualistic nature of its in-group and out-group morality."[215] In contrast to Prasad, Weber did not frame the ancient ritual separation of Jewish society as a question or a problem, but as a social fact. Ritual segregation, a product of prophecy and traditional ritualism of ancient Israel, were the two factors which gave Jewry its "pariah place in the world."[216]

Prasad's remark about the primacy of psychology as a motivator in modern Indian politics most closely resembles Weber's point here.[217] Further, at the outset, Weber wrote that on the world-historical plane, Judaism was also in part the model for Muhammad's prophecy, that is, Islam.[218] With respect to Jewish tribes among Bedouins, "The Indian badges of sect would represent the analogous phenomena. The grand example of a religious quasi-order of fundamentally the same kind on the same soil was, of course, Islamism and its warrior orders, which established the numerous and, indeed, lasting Islamic states."[219] Here he made some speculative remarks on the possible origin of circumcision in warrior asceticism.[220]

Prasad took a similar line, in his first chapter, titled "History and Psychology," identifying the most important division of society as class, but in terms of endogamy. In human cultures, the

---

[212] Weber, 3.
[213] Note: for Weber, "pariah" was not disparaging, it was a technical term that referred to the Jews as a "guest people."
[214] Weber, 4.
[215] Weber, 3.
[216] Weber, 336.
[217] Weber (introduction), xxiii.
[218] Weber, 5.
[219] Weber, 79.
[220] Weber, 92.

"principle of stratification was fortified and made rigid by that of endogamy—marriage within a circle—in a few ancient lands, notable in India."[221] He traced this as a defining ancient influence that shaped both Hindu and Muslim communities. Caste was thus the root cause of a variety of social attitudes, more strongly than class. He referenced Franklin H. Gidding's idea of the root of society in reference to the social effects of the caste principle.[222] He referred to an endogamous group as a "sub-caste."[223] "Caste has not allowed Hindu society to acquire that degree of homogeneity and centrality of direction which the institution of classes, springing out of the medieval estates, has permitted to modern France, Britain, and other communities."[224]

Prasad identified the "village community" as the basic sociological unit of Indian society. In contrast with modern communalism, "Religious toleration has been one of the master characteristics of Indian history.[225] This was exemplified in the "absorption of immigrants" throughout Indian history including Scythians, Sakas, and Huns who adopted the Indian languages, manners, and practices.[226] The arrival of Muslims ("Musalmans") in the 8th century was a major test to the Hindu capacity for assimilation. In addition to the fact that Islam had already developed a philosophy and theology which stood in contrast to the Hindu pantheon of Gods, it was inherently proselytising; for these reasons general social fusion was impossible. "Hindu culture could not swamp the Musalmans as it had swamped the earlier settlers."[227] In ensuing generations, intermarriage was correlated with feeling the grip of India's "climate, its intellectual atmosphere and its economic framework."[228] This culminated with the rise of Urdu as a vernacular language,

---

[221] Beni Prasad, *The Hindu-Muslim Questions*, (Kitabistan, Allahabad, 1941), 2.
https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.278706/page/n181/mode/2up
[222] Prasad, 3.
[223] Prasad, 4.
[224] Prasad, 3.
[225] Prasad, 5
[226] Prasad, 6.
[227] Prasad, 7.
[228] Prasad, 9.

which with its common grounding with Hindi, for which reason in ordinary parlance the languages are "scarcely distinguishable." In the absence of inter-marriage across caste and creed, Hindus and Muslims were often indistinguishable on a class level.[229] Further, intermarriage between the high Mughal rulers and Rajput houses resulted in religious toleration as the policy of the state.[230]

Prasad listed certain Muslim and Hindu "revivalist" movements which arose in the early 19th century, such as the movement led by Haji Shariat Allah in Bengal, Saiyad Ahmad of Rai Bareli founded *Tariqah-I-Mohammadiyah* in the United Provinces, the *Ahl-I-Hadis* movement,[231] and criticizes the "halo" which religious revivalism—Hindu or Muslim—casts around historical periods such as ancient India.[232] He concluded the diagnostic chapter with a comment on the "Indian temperament" or "national character." Evoking the breakdown of relations between the Indian National Congress and Muslim League between 1938 and 1939, Prasad insisted on an emotional explanation: "It is not the merits of the demand or the refusal that call from attention here; it is the tendency to stand on abstract claims that is noteworthy."[233] But further than this, Prasad extends the argument of Indian emotionalism to the *entirety* of separatist nationalism:

> "The same **mentality** is responsible for the presentation of political or communal claims in all their logical completeness. The emotionalism of the Indian temperament manifests itself in love for flags, slogans, and songs. That these psychological characteristics are shared in equal degree by all is also proved by the readiness with which the varieties of symbolism invented by one party find their counterpart in the other party. The attachment to rival symbolisms, springing from the same psychological characteristics has been responsible for many misunderstandings during the last five years."[234]

Prasad concludes the first diagnostic chapter with a paragraph entitled "Social Psychotherapy," suggesting that though

---

[229] Prasad, 12.
[230] Prasad 13. Note: these marriages were not necessarily Muslim-Hindu marriages.
[231] C.f. the All-India *Ahl-I-Hadis* conference of 1906.
[232] Prasad, 27.
[233] Prasad, 31.
[234] Prasad, 31-32, emphasis mine.

"it is not easy to alter temperamental traits… modern psycho-analysis points out that the first step in overcoming their disadvantages is to be conscious of them. It is necessary to realise that logic, principle, declaration and definition, though they possess great value, must be adjusted to the claims of compromise and working settlement…. There is nothing in all this that really runs counter to the Indian scale of values. It is, however, a set of qualities to be brought consciously into play against the older manifestations which were suited to an environment of a negative and absolutist government."[235]

In the second chapter, "Democracy and Separatism," Prasad depicted "Western liberalism" as the defining political force in India following the failed mutiny of 1857.[236] Deeming India as slow to adapt to freedom, he judges India as trapped in a "negative" state of government, while in Europe the transition from absolutism to popular government was paralleled by "the passage from negative to positive government." "Positive" referred to government confining itself not only to defence and order, but more than these "elementary functions" to mass education, public health, and economic welfare.[237] He cited a ten percent literacy rate of India, which he blamed to the lack of funds allocated to education by the Indian government, and posited illiteracy as the greatest basis of susceptibility to propaganda and the obstacle to the true inheritance of culture.[238] He also cited deficiencies in Indian education and the retarded development of the middle classes.

The Non-Cooperation and *Khilafat* movements ushered in the wider public into politics, the lower middle class, which resulted in the "enlargement of the public," on the one hand, but on the other hand one which was "politically immature."[239] There is a section on spiritualism in politics.[240] In the third chapter, "Power and Politics," Prasad brought in debates in Europe surrounding the "guarantee system," and its relation to India, though he says the post-war attempt to protect minorities, though it "evoked a sympathetic response in India," nonetheless "broke down

---

[235] Prasad, 32.
[236] Prasad, 33.
[237] Prasad, 35.
[238] Prasad, 35.
[239] Prasad. 47-48.
[240] Prasad, 49-50.

within a few years" due to "race sentiment, nationalistic fervor, extra-territorial patriotism, foreign intrigues, irredentism, and treaty-revisionism."[241] He compared the advocacy for the partition of India as a "rough parallel" to the Sudetan movement in Czechoslovakia and the debates around Pan-Germanism.[242] Prasad depicted India as a geographically unique region which explains the historical tendency towards unification.[243]

His arguments against partition include that it would be economically disastrous,[244] calling it a "psychological escape" from the reality of the situation, and "no solution to the Indian problem."[245] Part II, "Suggestions," is a speculative roadmap for the future of Indian politics. He first divides Hindu-Muslim questions into three categories, the first depending on the "quick and planned progress in education, economics and defense," the second category "calls for cultural adjustment in terms of freedom, humanism and a restraint on artificiality and narrowness." The third category of "political questions"[246] outlined a system of government, democratic, federalist, based on the English system, with provisions for the protections of minorities.[247]

In 1946, a slightly edited version was published in 1946, with Prasad's Christmas Day, 1944 epigraph reading, "This book seeks to offer a diagnosis of the Indian communal problem and to suggest a comprehensive remedy…"[248] On the whole Prasad's historical analysis generally holds well considering modern scholarship. His "diagnostic" analysis though is methodologically distinct and more closely resembles the creative "diagnosis" of Nordau. Though there is little evidence that

---

[241] Prasad, 69.
[242] Prasad, 70.
[243] Prasad, 83.
[244] Prasad, 86.
[245] Prasad, 89.
[246] Prasad, 131.
[247] Prasad, 157
[248] Prasad, Beni, *India's Hindu-Muslim Questions*, (Hugh Paton and Sons, Ltd. Edinburgh, 1946). https://archive.org/details/dli.ernet.237194/page/n5/mode/2up

the work influenced debates on the Pakistan question at the time, his work is often cited by contemporary scholars in passing.

3.5 Muslim India's Anti-Spinoza: Iqbal as Querist and Diagnostician of Decline

In the face of the confusion of the pre-state period which has befuddled national historians for decades, Faisal Devji takes a different approach, choosing to analyze Muslim nationalism in terms not of chains of cause and effect, but in terms of the history of ideas. On the one hand, Devji's work seeks to eschew the mundane helter-skelter, the endless drama of traditional historians who on the whole fruitlessly attempt to trace unending streams of causes and effects. On the other hand, Devji rejects the terms of both political history and psychology in a turn to the sometimes-curious intellectual bases of modern political nationalism. As such, Devji distances himself from traditional historiographical trends to regionalize and localize history to the point that the historiographer arrives "at the psychological and even physiological conditions that motivated individuals."[249] These methods fail because they do not consider Muslim nationalism as "worthy of consideration" in its own right.[250] Despite rejecting a psychological approach, Devji's work suggests an underlying psychological mystery. Devji quotes Jacqueline Rose on Zionism, who wrote "Zionism always involved a form of 'insubordination' against reality and the demands of reason."[251] "It is the insubordinate character of the demand for Pakistan, too, that interests me in this book, one whose unreality was so widely recognized at the time that historians even today must struggle to explain it by various forms of rationalization."[252] For Devji, it was not some sort of logical rationalization,

---

[249] Devji, 8.
[250] Devji, 8.
[251] Devji, 10-11.
[252] Devji, 11.

72

as much as an insubordinate emotional drive that best captures the heart of the riddle that is Muslim nationalism.

One figure in the international public sphere who represents almost paradigmatically the insubordinate character of the Muslim Indian *fin de siècle* was the querist Muhammad Iqbal, the celebrated Urdu and Persian poet who studied briefly in Germany, learned German in three months under a German woman with whom he developed a strictly Platonic friendship, and is still officially celebrated there as a sort of Eastern Goethe. There is an interesting parallel between the relationship of Zionists to Jewish socialists on the one hand, and the relationship between Muslim nationalists and Muslim socialists in India on the other. One interesting case is how Muslim socialists responded to the poet and intellectual Iqbal's diagnosis of Muslim decline. Khizar Humayun Ansari situates Iqbal's diagnosis of decline within the context of the Romantic revolution in Urdu poetry in the 1920s and 30s. Progressive Urdu poets saw Iqbal as "correct in laying the blame for the stagnation of Muslim society on the penetration of mystical, self-abnegating, and world-denying tendencies in Indian Islam."[253] At the same time, Muslim writers in the socialist camp criticized Iqbal's reactionary ideas and "accused him of fomenting communal divisions."[254] By World War II, Iqbal was widely rejected among Muslim socialists and in 1935 Akhtar Husain Raipuri—scholar of the Progressive Writer's Movement—even condemned him as an "Islamic fascist."[255]

Indeed, Iqbal's notion of *khudi* or selfhood marked a selfish turn in Muslim Indian literary consciousness. Iqbal shared an academic supervisor at Ludwig Maximilian University with Gershom Scholem, though they were separated by a decade; Devji suggests Iqbal's idea of a "heroic Satan" resembles Scholem's notion of an "apostate messiah."[256] Iqbal's poetic subjectivity

---

[253] Ansari, 123.
[254] Ansari, 125.
[255] Ansari, 125.
[256] Devji, 153.

marked a revolutionary shift in Urdu literature; his singular legacy among modern Urdu poets and adoption as the national poet was only possible given his psychological centering of the individual, which was at the same time a criticism and rejection of the past (and related to his Nietzschean-influenced worldview.

In the absence of a Spinoza-like figure for the Pakistan movement, Iqbal was the closest the Muslims had to a philosophical inspiration. This parallel is apt for numerous reasons, especially given his alleged philosophical tendency towards pantheism.[257] However, Iqbal would end up merely reaffirming an exclusivist idea of orthodoxy with disastrous results for members of the Ahmadiyyah sect. Qadir interprets the assumption of Iqbal's 1934 essay *Qadianis and Orthodox Muslims* as while "Iqbal never suggested any definition of an "orthodox Muslim," the implication of the essay is that "an orthodox Muslim is only what an Ahmadi is not."[258] Nehru in 1935 interpreted the essay as that Iqbal's "Islamic solidarity" had "fallen away." This was followed in 1935 by a follow-up essay, "*Islam and Ahmadism,*" in which Iqbal clarified his definition of heresy. In Qadir's view, Iqbal's conception of "Muslim selfhood" (that is, *khudi*) "relies on hereticization of the Ahmadiyya." In fact, Iqbal even created an explicit analogy to the excommunication of Spinoza in invoking the expulsion for the Ahmadiyya in his work. Devji also puts Iqbal on the metaphorical side of the rabbinic authority of Amsterdam: "Iqbal, in other words, managed in his anti-Ahmadi writings to adopt an orthodox mien in a specifically rabbinical way, while at the same time upholding a radically mystical vision of Islam. But this had to be compensated for by the most rigorous conservatism, since the 'portable fatherland' of Islam, too, otherwise risked destruction in a world context where Muslims were increasingly seen, as in India, to be nothing more than a

---

[257] Whittemore, Robert. "Iqbal's Panentheism." (*The Review of Metaphysics* 9, no. 4, 1956), 681–99. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20123542.

[258] Ali Qadir, *Deconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam: Iqbal and the Ahmadiyya*, (*The Muslim World* / Volume 111, Issue 3, December 3, 2021), p. 488-510. https://doi.org/10.1111/muwo.12410

minority. And so the very radicalism of Iqbal's thought impels him towards a conservative protection of Muslim practice in a gesture that can be seen as paradoxical if not a sign of bad faith."[259]

Devji ironically calls Iqbal the greatest critic of nationalism in India and at the same time the person who would become the "spiritual father of Pakistan."[260] As a widely popular poet and public intellectual, Iqbal's "apparent support of Muslim nationalism gave the League an intellectual credibility it would otherwise have lacked."[261] In fact, his view of nationalism was more extreme than Muhammad Ali Jinnah, because whereas Jinnah took the "two nation" stance, Iqbal claimed that "Muslims of India are the only Indian people who can fitly be described as a nation in the modern sense of the word."[262] In this respect, Iqbal's idea of nationalism was relatively idiosyncratic. "In addition to rejecting a national history, which, after all, could only be written in serial time, Iqbal also dismissed geography as a basis for political life, favoring instead a foundation made up of ideas alone, which he lauds insofar as they are universal in scope. In fact, he was severely critical of space as a category, preferring, like Bergson, to see it as a dynamic structure of events instead."[263] Iqbal was probably the most important Muslim political philosopher of the Pakistan moment, influencing after his death debates from figures such as Mahmudabad.[264] But despite his critical, philosophical angle, Iqbal's thought presented at best a nascent and experimental political vision.

There is much to talk about regarding Iqbal, including his 1910 sociological study in the style of W.E.B. Dubois, "The Muslim Community – A Sociological Study." However, here I will

---

[259] Devji, 160-161

[260] Devji, 110.

[261] Devji, 110.

[262] Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada ed. *Foundations of Pakistan: All-India Muslim League Documents: 1906-1947 (Vol. II: 1924-1947)* (National Publishing House Ltd. Karachi, 1970), 169.

[263] Devji, 112.

[264] Dhulipala, 210.

focus on Iqbal's most well-known contribution to the national movement: his presidential address at the 1930 session of the All-India Muslim League. The speech personified Islam: "Never in our history has Islam had to stand a greater trial than the one which confronts it to-day. It is open to a people to modify, reinterpret or reject the foundational principles of their social structure; but it is necessary for them to see clearly what they are doing before they undertake to try a fresh experiment."[265] This "fresh experiment" was an opportunity to question the foundations of religion itself.[266] "Is religion a private affair? Would you like to see Islam, as a moral and political ideal, meeting the same fate in the world of Islam as Christianity has already met in Europe? Is it possible to retain Islam as an ethical ideal and to reject it as a polity, in favour of national polities in which the religious attitude is not permitted to play any part?"[267] The articulation of this contradiction of the idea of "religious nationalism" was for Iqbal the central issue, as was the prospect of sacrificing the principle of Islamic solidarity. "The religious ideal of Islam, therefore, is organically related to the social order which it has created. The rejection of the one will eventually involve the rejection of the other. Therefore the construction of a polity on national lines, if it means a displacement of the Islamic principle of solidarity, is simply unthinkable to a Muslim."[268]

Rather, Iqbal appealed to Renan's definition of nation as a "moral consciousness."

"Such a [national] formation is quite possible, though it involves the long and arduous process of practically remaking men and furnishing them with a fresh emotional equipment. It might have been a fact in India, if the teaching of *Kabir* and the 'Divine Faith' of Akbar had seized the imagination of the masses of the country. Experience, however, shows that the various caste units and religious units in India have shown no inclination to sink their respective individualities in a larger whole. Each group is intensely jealous of the collective existence. The formation of the kind of moral consciousness which constitutes the essence

---

[265] Pirzada, *Vol II*, 156.
[266] Devji offers this reading. "Historians have done little more than follow Indian or Pakistani nationalists in arguing if Iqbal's conception of territorial autonomy can be seen as a precursor to the subcontinent's partition, but what is of real interest in his always ambiguous pronouncements on the subject are Iqbal's reasons for making the demand. By giving Muslims the political and economic power to organize and administer their own societies, such autonomy, he thought, would allow them to **remake Islam itself**, or rather address the challenge that modernity posed it." (Devji, 119).
[267] Pirzada, *Vol II*. 156.
[268] Pirzada, *Vol II*. 157.

76

of a nation in Renan's sense demands, a price which the peoples of India are not prepared to pay."[269]

The consequence Iqbal's recognition of the deep rootedness of regional indigeneity were that "communalism" would be not a blight to be overcome but social fact to be accommodated:

> "Communalism in its higher aspect, then, is indispensable to the formation of a harmonious whole in a country like India. The units of Indian society are not territorial as in European countries. India is a continent of human groups belonging to different races, speaking different languages, and professing different religions. Their behavior is not at all determined by a common race-consciousness. [meaning transcending communal/ethnic boundaries]. Even the Hindus do not form a homogeneous group. The principle of European democracy cannot be applied to India without recognizing the fact of communal groups. The Muslim demand for the creation of a Muslim India within India is, therefore, perfectly justified."[270]

In other words, the endogamous principle in India was at times so fiercely rooted that it was ironically a regional force a powerful resistant to a homogenizing nationalism. In endogamic terms, personification of Islam as a living mother served as a symbolic center: "The life of Islam as a cultural force in this living country very largely depends on its centralization in a specified territory." As for Ahad Ha'am's Cultural Zionism, the territory was not essential except as a focal point and as a cultural center. Some implications of Iqbal's position were that Sindh be united by Baluchistan and turned in to a separate province. "She has her back towards India and her face towards Central Asia."[271] He also interestingly declared "the Afghan is by instinct more fitted for democratic institutions than any other people in India," and predicted that applying British democratic sentiments to India as a whole would lead to civil war.[272]

Iqbal found a religious image for this organic metaphor in the Qur'an and extended to the idea of the nation. "One of the profoundest verses in the Holy Quran teaches us that the birth and rebirth of the whole of humanity is like the birth and rebirth of a single individual. Why cannot

---

[269] Pirzada, *Vol II*. 157.
[270] Pirzada, *Vol II*, 158-159.
[271] Pirzada, *Vol. II*, 167.
[272] Pirzada, *Vol. II*, 168.

you, who as a people, can well claim to be the first practical exponents of this superb conception

of humanity, live and move and have your being as a single individual?[273] Yet the emphasis was

mainly on the "rebirth." This rejection of the past was a rejection of the old stamp of Arabian

imperialism, clearly a reference to the caliphate problem.

> "I therefore demand the formation of a consolidated Muslim State in the best interest of
> India and Islam. For India it means security and peace resulting from an internal balance of
> power; for Islam an opportunity **to rid itself of the stamp that Arabian imperialism was
> forced to give it**, to mobilize its law, its education, its culture, and to bring them into closer
> contact with its own original spirit and with the spirit of modern times."[274]

Iqbal's nationalism was between an embrace of the true Islamic spirit of an indigenous

nation, and rejecting the imperial past, the imperial stamp of an ancient Arab father. But his vision

was "expansive" and distrustful of the nation state, proposing a federated province in northwest

India instead of separatism, and at best held an ambiguous attitude towards a Muslim state.[275]

For Iqbal, Muslim endogamy was not inherently racist, and he dismissed the mundanity of

the blood relationship. "Islam repudiates the race idea altogether and founds itself on the religious

idea alone. Since Islam bases itself on the religious idea alone, a basis which is wholly spiritual

and consequently far more ethereal than blood relationship, Muslim society is naturally much more

sensitive to forces which it considers harmful to its integrity."[276] Rather, the focus shifted to what

constituted a Muslim. Devji centralizes the early tension between orthodox Indian and later

Pakistani Islam and the messianic reform *Ahmadiyyah* movement, founded by Mirza Ghulam

Ahmad, a figure whom Iqbal set up as an analogy, if inferior, to Spinoza.[277] Orthodox Muslim

rejection of the Ahmadiyya movement was on intensely theological grounds; the historical polticail

significance of the Ahmaddiya movement was an early challenge to the vision of Islam in an

---

[273] Pirzada ii. 171.
[274] As quoted in Devji, 119, (emphasis mine).
[275] Devji, 151.
[276] Devji, 158.
[277] Devji, 160.

increasingly public society—a challenge which persisted.[278] Iqbal's death before the consummation of the nation about whose territorial aspirations he had expressed his own doubts, as Devji has demonstrated, is significant. As one of the few public intellectuals with that much popularity, Iqbal's death only worked to codify his place in national symbology. Today the anniversary of Iqbal's death is honored in Pakistani culture.[279]

3.6 Muslim Nationalism and Syed Ahmad Khan

In comparison with the political thought of the Muslim socialists, the All-India Muslim League seemed behind in terms of political theory, typically oriented towards practical goals or the promotion of policy. Further, during the movement to mass-mobilization, in which the Muslim League compromised on political philosophy with the *ulama* to win over their institutional support, at the end of the day, there was no coherent political system, as politicians sparred with conflicting idealistic visions of what it would mean to run a Muslim nation. This resulted in the emergence of new concepts such as "Islamic democracy," "Islamic state," or a nebulous idea of implementing the *Shariah*.[280] Mahmudabad himself considered that Islamic literature had "not yet progressed enough to furnish the technical and scientific terms" for a coherent contemporary theory of the Islamic state.[281]

The development of the Muslim national movement in India had begun as a story of overcoming the self-imposed political limitations of earlier Muslim activist reformers who were

---

[278] Consider the case of Pakistan's sole Nobel Laureate, himself an Ahmadi.
[279] Aside from his literary and philosophical significance, Iqbal is today commemorated in popular memory as a singular Muslim national poet. I recently attended an Eid holiday celebration with the PCFA, Pakistan Community Forum Austria, 2022. At the event there was a huge banner unfurled, displaying the logo of the forum, and on it two figures were displayed: Mohammad Ali Jinnah and Muhammad Iqbal. This image captures the symbolic national significance of these two figures in the national diasporic imagination. there was no female figure on the logo, the only sign of femininity was the Pakistani flag with star and crescent moon at the center.
[280] Dhulipala, 214
[281] As quoted in Dhuliapla, 214

nonetheless complicit in the status-quo. As I have already noted, the All-India Muslim League (the first "All-India" Muslim movement and a precursor to the short-lived pan-Islamism of the *Khilafat* movement), which would later become the main organ of the nationalist cause in the 1930s, was conceived of as a social and political continuity of the so-called Aligarh movement led by Syed Ahmad Khan. At the same time, it was a radical departure from Khan's vision. In the nebulous proto-national period, national theorists and Muslim activists employed a new vocabulary in a movement towards the conception of a national identity, a vocabulary which was grounded in classical Islamic and Qur'anic Arabic concepts that had spilled over into the Urdu language. However, by the time of Choudhary Rahmat Ali's declaration of the Pakistan movement in 1933, nationalists had—whether consciously or not—personified the nation in an image of a female figure which represented Indian Islam, and who was described and alluded to in graphic psychological metaphors. In Pakistan's "charismatic" period, 1937-1947, what Fatimah Jinnah after the fact had called the "epochal decade" leading up to the establishment of the state.[282]

These themes can be traced at least as far as the first session of the All-India Muslim League in 1906 at Dacca. The members of this session sought to come to terms with the fact that the very establishment of the movement suggested a possibly radical departure from Khan's political ideology which had regulated the relationship of English-educated Muslims to the British government. "It is well known that day after the end of their conference in 1906 the entire leadership of the Mohammaden Educational Conference as a body assembled in the foundation session of All India Muslim League that was presided over by the Nawab of Dhaka, and elected the Agha Khan as their first president. In other words, there was complete continuity between Aligarh Movement and Muslim League in terms of persons and policies."[283] The All-India Muslim

---

[282] Fatimah Jinnah, ed. Sharif Al-Mujahid, *My Brother*, (Quaid-e-Azam Academy, Karachi, 1987), 7.
[283] Ashraf, 41. On Ashraf's life see Dhulipala, 53.

League's formal attitude of opposition to an "Indian National Congress" of united India was grounded on a fear of anti-British attitudes in the congress; this opposition was initially a remnant of the idea of Khan.[284]

It is necessary that we have a little background on Khan's conception of the nation. *Qaum* was used by Khan in the sense of a "territory-based populace" For this reason, many Pakistani historians consider Syed the first person to articulate the idea of Muslims as a separate national entity.[285] Originally a Qur'anic term, the use of the Urdu term *qaum*, meaning "nation" or "people," roughly corresponds to the idea of an ethnic nation or people.[286] There are three terms to mention here: *umma*, *qaum*, and *dinia*. Umma is roughly analogous to the Hebrew אמיא. Whereas the *umma* had a universal significance and implied the global totality of Muslims across every state and land, *qaum* which was another Qur'anic term referred to a particular people (the people of Moses, Noah, etc.).[287] *Qaum* was an equivalent term which was utilized in an analogous sense to *umma* by Syed Ahmad Khan. According to Ashraf, Khan used the word *qaum* in a diverse array of meanings including "clan," "caste," "race," "religious community," and others.[288] Why *qaum* and not *ummah*—perhaps it was more particular and political, in contrast to the religious notion of the *ummah* or the worldwide collectivity of believing Muslims. Ashraf discusses these in his reference of the social development of the attitude among many Pakistani scholars that, whereas Khan was father of the "nation," Jinnah was father of the "country."[289]

As others have done, I contrast Khan here with conservative Muslims at the other end of the spectrum associated with the Deoband educational and religious institution; many present

---

[284] Ashraf, 42.
[285] Ashraf 16.
[286] Ashraf, 15.
[287] This is relevant because Khan also wrote a commentary on the *Qur'an*.
[288] Ashraf, 31.
[289] Ashraf, 16.

81

Aligahr and Deoband as "progressive" and "conservative" extremes. For Khan, loyalty to the British had been a religious duty ordained by God.[290] Khan wished the British to "compromise with the feudal social system that was as old as 1858 and is repeatedly mentioned in his *Asbab*."[291] Because of his support for British rule, Khan in fact supported Hindu-Muslim division as British policy. Khan describes the negative political consequence of that "brotherly relationship" between Hindu and Muslim soldiers in the British army,[292] since as an adherent of the so-called policy of "Divide and Rule," he supported the idea of separate platoons in the army and separate electorates by the same logic. Otherwise, Hindu-Muslim unity would threaten (legitimate) British authority.[293]

> Ashraf quotes from Khan's own meditations on the Islamic evolution of the word:

> "The word *Qaum* is such a word that it is imperative to think on the meaning of it. For a long time the beginning of which lies much beyond the histroical time, the *Qaum* comprised of the descendents of some elder or of those residing in some country. Mohammed the unlettered Prophet of god obliterated this difference between *Qaum* which only concerned this world and established a spiritual *Qaumi* relationship …. Islam asks no body whether he is Turk or Tajik? He lives in Africa or in Arabia? He lives in China or in *Machin*? He was born in Punjab or in Hindustan? He is black or white? On the other hand who so ever firmly grasped the *Kalima* became a single Qaum, became sons of one spiritual father."[294]

3.7 The First Session of the All-India Muslim League: Reconciling a Break with the Past

Partly given the intricate relationship between Syed Ahmad Khan and the Mughal legitimation of British rule in the mid-19th century, it is difficult to characterize Khan's leadership as charismatic. In the first place, Khan's leadership was not revolutionary and did not seek to overturn the established imperial order. Rather, Khan sought to legitimize British authority in Islamic legal terms as the rightful inheritors of Mughal kingship. Khan's leadership was premised

---

[290] Ashraf, 17.
[291] Ashraf, 18.
[292] Ashraf, 24.
[293] Ashraf, 25.
[294] Ashraf, 31.

on what Weber would have called legal and traditional authority, even as Khan simultaneously sought to reform those systems. The educational reforms promoted by Khan and his school could still be explained within some degree of Mughal continuity, which contrasts his political aspect with that of the charismatic Jinnah's radical departure with the past. But long before the All-India Muslim League would find itself under the influence of strongly anti-British popular sentiments, the League was from the beginning a subtle departure from Khan's pro-British vision. The inaugural session of the league was held in Dacca in 1906. The Nawab Viqar-ul-Mulk (a title meaning "pride of the country") Bahadur, a close confidant of Khan, was unanimously elected Chairman. In the ensuing inaugural speech, the Nawab reflected on the title given to him.

> "I have, however, to thank the Hon'ble Nawab Salim-ul-lah Bahadur of Dacca specially, for the title which he has unconsciously given to me. I have my doubts about being Viqar-ul-Mulk or 'the pride of the country', but I can assure you I am, as I have always been, 'Mushtaq-ul-Mulk' or 'the lover of my country'. To us old men creeping every day nearer and nearer to our graves, what is left to do, but to be Mushtaq-ul-Mulk and Mushtaq-ul-Qaum, lovers of our country and lovers of our race."[295]

Following these introductory pleasantries, the Nawab requested anyone present with a formal position in the government to recuse themselves from the forum, "as the tie which binds him to the Government precludes the possibility of our regarding him free in the sense in which non-official members of any community can be."[296] Despite their departure from Khan's previous stance of staying out of politics, early leaders sought to frame themselves in a political continuity. The first issue discussed by the chair was an acknowledgement of the sentiment of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, "to whose foresight and statesmanship Musalmans should always be grateful," that the Muslims' prosperity lay in "their keeping aloof from the Congress."[297] "This view has been proved

---

[295] Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada ed. *Foundations of Pakistan: All-India Muslim League Documents: 1906-1947 (Vol. I: 19061924)* (National Publishing House Ltd. Karachi), 156. Pirzada I, 2-3. (the editor has here supplied a clarifying note that "The term 'race' is here and hereafter used in the sense of '*qaum*' or '*millat*', not in the racial or ethnic sense.
[296] Pirzada, *Vol. I,* 3.
[297] Pirzada, *Vol. I,* 3.

to be so far right that though Sir Syed Ahmed Khan is no more among us, the Mohammedans are still firm in that belief, and as time passes they will feel more and more that, in order to protect and advance their political rights and interests, it will be necessary for them to form their own separate organization."[298]

He also reminded the members that the Muslims "have not yet forgotten the tradition of our own recent rule in India and elsewhere, and are more intimately acquainted than other communities of India with the proper relations which should subsist between the Government and its subjects…"[299] But this fact is only for the purpose of reiterating the loyalty Muslims owe to the British and that they will ally "to perform the necessary duty of combating this rebellious spirit" side by side with the British.[300]

In moving the resolution, Nawab Salim-ul-lah Bahadur of Dacca, emphasized the political significance of the meeting, in which Muslims had traveled from all parts of India, sometimes over great distance and difficulty. "India seems to be on the eve of a new era of public life, and the Mohammedans who suffered so far from a kind of suspended animation, feel to-day the revivifying effect of a general awakening."[301] At the same time, he reiterated that "this movement of Musalmans of India is nothing new or strange." He expressed his surprise at the rather surprising recent discovery that Khan had "felt the need for a separate political organization for the Musalmans in India" in 1893 (in contrast to the more well-known speech from 1887 which had called on Muslims to stay clear from joining the "so-called National Congress.")[302] The significance of Khan's 1893 "Defence Association" was, in the Nawab's words, "defence not defiance; and to guard still further against the dangers of political activity in a half-educated and

---

[298] Pirzada, *Vol. I*, 3.
[299] Pirzada, *Vol. I*, 4.
[300] Pirzada, *Vol. I*, 5.
[301] Pirzada, *Vol I*, 6.
[302] Pirzada, *Vol I*. 7.

war-like race, such safeguards were devised as almost paralysed the organization even for purposes of defence."[303]

The figure of Syed Ahmad Khan, the leader of this "secular" institution, would continue to be celebrated in Pakistani national memory. Khaliquzzaman goes so far as to call him the true father of Pakistan. The Muslim League set up an "All-India" political organization which sought to serve as the mouthpiece for Muslim political interests in the subcontinent, but it would not attain nationalist aspirations until later. All the same, the establishment of the League as early as 1906 was significant. The effects of indigenous mobilization were exacerbated by (and amplified) the turn to pan-Islamism in the decades that would follow. Though in the early days the League was grounded in a cautionary ideology of gradualism, the format with an annual presidential address to a diverse audience would become a primary "All-India" outlet for the charismatic leader of the Pakistan movement and the most important figure in leading the charge for the Muslim nation.

---

[303] Pirzada, *Vol I*. 8.

4. Chapter 3: Political Nationalism's Oedipal Moment

4.1 "A Nation is Orphaned:" Nationalism, the Woman Question, and the Missing Mother

"A Nation is Orphaned." This is the title of the first chapter of Fatimah Jinnah's biography of her brother Muhammad Ali, "the Quaid-I-Azam, "the great leader" as he is officially referred to as, sometimes "*Baba-i-Qaum*" or "Father of the Nation." The title of the chapter was a reference to Muhammad Ali Jinnah's untimely death less than a year following the establishment of Pakistan. But one thing is glaringly missing from this orphan tale: the mother. Jinnah was married twice and had only one daughter with his second wife who died in February 1929. As his wife came from an Orthodox Zoroastrian family and later converting to Islam, the marriage caused familial estrangement and marital crisis, she died on her 29th birthday of an unknown disease. But neither of Jinnah's wives are mentioned by Fatimah, who herself had not approved of the marriage. As a result of this, one facet of the story of the orphaned nation is blatantly missing. For Fatimah, the nation was not a product of incest, it was the legitimate child of Muhammad Ali. Her metaphor is plagued by obvious contradictions, but they only corroborate the masculinist claim of nationalism. Fatimah invokes the Mughal metaphor of imperial lineage, but it's abstracted from the people. What is apparently missing is the "mother." But the abstraction I am talking about was facilitated precisely by the absence of any such "queen" figure.

Why did Muslim nationalism miss the mythological obligation to the woman? During the partition of India, the political consequences of this overlooked factor perhaps contributed in enabling the ruthless matricide that followed: the devastation of the land of birth from which Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, and others were forced to flee. Unlike cosmopolitan Zionism, Pakistani nationalism had little incentive to conceptualize the woman—this was perhaps the most significant

86

consequence of nationalism's overturning of the old order. Even though women were granted voting rights in the Zionist congress, they did not come to play a significant role in the institutionalization of the movement. In fact, Herzl identified this as a problem early on in a 1901 address to the Women's Zionist Association, where he entreated Jewish women to rise from poverty and traditionalism to become a "new breed of Jewish woman" who would attract others through Zionism in their social circles.[304] Nonetheless, the position of women in the Zionist movement was strongly conceptualized even as there were practical attempts to facilitate the transformations which primarily male Zionist leaders had envisioned. Alison Rose argues that a variety of factors "the quest for a national or ethnic identity in the face of assimilation and growing anti-Jewish sentiment, alongside the need to reconcile femininity and feminism, led some Jewish women to Zionism."[305] But despite the promise of an egalitarian revolution, "the notion of a virile New Hebrew Man" inhibited this actualization in practice.[306]

Women seem to be all but absent from the high-level Muslim League sessions, not present—much less having voting rights. Rather, the womanly was appropriated in the service of the nationalist ideal of the nation. Like Zionists, Muslim nationalists framed nationalism as the restoration of collective honor. Stanislawski remarked that the "true villain" of Nordau's 1893 play *The Right to Love* was not the "haute-bourgeois wife," but amoral bureaucrat Otto Bardenholm preying on "unsatisfied wives of the upper middle class; he was thus the personification of all the vices of modernity."[307] Analogously, anxieties about morality informed a conservative turn in Muslim middle-class morality. Jalal has examined debates on the woman question in the public sphere in what I have called calling India's later *fin de siècle*, particularly the symbolic importance

[304] Rose, Alison. *Jewish Women in Fin de Siècle Vienna*, (University of Texas Press, 2008), 109.
[305] Rose, 109.
[306] Rose, 121.
[307] Stanislawski, 32.

of how woman as ornament in the Muslim bourgeoisie became "a key object in the construction of a communitarian identity."[308] According to Jalal, women were not active agents, but silenced in the process of the redefinition of the Muslim middle- and upper-class identity, "Concerned with projecting and preserving their distinctive religiously informed cultural identity, salaried and professional Muslim men were anxious to protect their women from the 'evil' influences of colonial modernity."[309] Jalal traces this cautious conservative turn to English attitudes towards married women as traced through the thought of figures like Khan.[310] Depictions of an "ideal Muslim woman" such as in the works of Ashraf Ali Thanawi of the Deoband seminar proved an "agenda for perfection, impossible for Muslim women to attain."[311]

4.2 Marrying the Mother: The Personification of the Muslim Nation

One of Holly Case's arguments for the Age of Questions was the temporal argument. "A tone of urgency overlaid the work of just about every querist, with the implication that it is high time to see the question addressed."[312] In light of this consideration, Choudhary Rahmat Ali—Cambridge student and founder of the Pakistan movement from England—is most analogous to Leon Pinsker, who in 1882 published *Autoemancipation* with the epigraph from Hillel, "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And if not now, when?"[313] The title of Ali's 1933 London pamphlet was emblazoned with an anguished question: "Now or Never: *Are we to live or perish for ever?*"[314] In the prefatory letter, Ali introduced his "proposed solution of this great Indian problem," almost

---

[308] Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty,* 45.
[309] Jalal, 69.
[310] Jalal, 73.
[311] Jalal. 69.
[312] Case, 182.
[313] Leon Pinsker, *Autoemancipation*, Translated from the German by Dr. D. S. Blondheim, *Essential Texts of Zionism.* (Federation of American Zionists, 1916) (Jewish Virtual Library) https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/quot-auto-emancipation-quot-leon-pinsker Accessed June, 2022.
[314] Choudhary Rahmat Ali, *Now or Never: Are we to live or perish for ever?* (The Pakistan National Movement, Cambridge, 1933), https://archive.org/details/NowOrNever_201701/mode/2up

as if it were a reference to Herzl's "attempt for a modern solution to the Jewish question/problem."[315] The document was not about the philosophy or practicalities of state, as his later 1935 book *Pakistan: the Fatherland of Pak Nation* would attempt to be. Nor was at a diagnosis, like Pinsker's diagnosis of antisemitism/Judeophobia as a "psychic aberration" that was "hereditary, and as a disease transmitted for two thousand years it is incurable."[316] Ali's text was about the restoration of Muslim national honor; but it was perhaps even more extreme and graphic than Pinkser, Nordau or Herzl's depiction of this restoration of Jewish millennial degradation. The language of Ali's political nationalism was a distinctly masculine sense of obligation towards a decidedly feminine abstraction of the nation.

I would like to argue that at its founding moment, the rhetoric of nascent Pakistani political nationalism framed the idea of the nation as a personified ideal. Muslim nationalists—intentionally or otherwise, described the nation in metaphorical terms as a vulnerable mother figure to whom the men of the nation owed an existential obligation. Drawing the ethno-communalist principle of endogamy to its theoretical extreme, Muslim nationalists simultaneously defined the Hindu nation as a national other and presented it as a threat to the female Islamic national figure. In the absence of a coherent political ideology, the brunt of the nationalist argument rested on this dialectical assumption, as "All-India" Muslim politics had from the beginning. The psychological significance Muslim national movement was amplified by the death of the pan-Islamic symbolic patriarchal figure, the caliph, who had come to acquire an immense new symbolic significance in the political upheavals and the role of *ulama* in politics in the 1920s. This decapitation of the political father was twofold, as later it took the form of a rebellious strike against the British sovereign head—the legacy of Mughal imperial authority. The novelty of the formulation of the nation as a metaphorical

---

[315] Ali, 2.
[316] Pinsker, *Autoemancipation*.

89

mother parallels political Zionism, as does the masculine character of the nationalism itself; the difference being that though both essentialized the idea of the nation not as an idea or philosophy, Muslim nationalism in India expressed this in particular as a moral obligation with existential stakes expressed in unique and terrifying metaphors.

Ali, like the most ardent Muslim nationalists at the genesis of the Pakistan idea, derided the Muslim establishment for failing their duties to the nation. I would like to focus on the metaphors Ali adopts which caricaturize "Indian Islam" as a helpless female subject or mother figure on the altar of Hindu ritual sacrifice. This idea of Pakistan as articulated by Ali and later others is comparable to the female mythological national archetypes of Britannia, Marianne, or Germania.[317] The main difference is of course that Pakistan was born in the 1930s, not—though in an abstract sense many Pakistani nationalists would certainly deny this—centuries prior.

Ali's begins with an appeal to religion and decries the idea of an "All-India Federation" as amounting to "nothing less than signing the death-warrant of Islam and its future in India,"[318] but he does not only appeal to religion. "Our religion, culture, history, tradition, economic system, laws of inheritance, success and marriage are basically and fundamentally different from those of the people living in the rest of India." The nation was not merely a religious group but conceived of as an endogamous unit. Muslim and Hindu were to live not as brothers, but as "friendly neighbors" as if two families in separate houses.

"Our brave but voiceless nation is being sacrificed on the altar of Hindu Nationalism." With this violent, suggestive image, Ali implicitly seems to evoke the image of *sati*, a controversial and obscure Hindu ritual whereby a widowed bride would self-immolate on the funeral pyre of her deceased husband—a ritual which had long been debated in the public sphere since at least Mughal

---

[317] See Mosse, 97.
[318] Ali, 3.

90

times, but especially during the colonial period, and which continues—though exceedingly rare—today.[319] In Ali's image, the Muslim nation, as a female, was on the receiving end of an analogous existential punishment. What is more, Ali declared the distrust of the standing Muslim leadership, rebelling against the old order; "but not only by the non-Muslims, but to the lasting disgrace of Islam, by our own so-called leaders, with reckless disregard to our future and in utter contempt of the teachings of history."[320] In fact, it was as if the Muslim leaders were themselves responsible for the disgrace: "human beings who, till quiet recently, were the custodians of the glory of Islam in India..." The metaphors throughout the text evoke images of rape: "our body and soul are at stake;" "the tighter we shut our eyes, the harder the truth will hit us."[321]

The language of Ali's political nationalism illustrates what George Mosse called "idealization of masculinity as the foundation of the nation and society."[322] It also exemplified the kind of extreme rhetoric which emerged during and after the *Khilafat* period and was rewarded in India's turn to mass politics. The atmosphere of this drawn-out period is captured by the anecdote, narrated by Ayesha Jalal, of a narration of from the sole female proprietor of the Allahabad-based newspaper *Muslim Herald* who "complained bitterly of financial difficulties in trying to run an honest business. No one bought her paper unless it published explosive articles."[323] The mood in "unlettered and less privileged" towns was colored by feelings of anticipation towards the coming of eschatological figures such as the messianic "Imam Mehdi-i-Islam."[324] Descriptions such as this paint a picture of a volatile environment which rewarded the most provocative and inciteful of

---

[319] Bosch, Lourens P. van den. "A Burning Question: Sati and Sati Temples as the Focus of Political Interest." (*Numen* 37, no. 2 1990), 174–94. https://doi.org/10.2307/3269862.
[320] Ali, 3.
[321] Ali, 4.
[322] George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe*, (New York: Howard Fertig, 1985), 17.
[323] Jalal, 208.
[324] Jalal, 208.

rhetoric. It was in this period in which the Muslim League shifted to mass politics and the Muslims found themselves a charismatic leader for the cause of the Muslim League as it rapidly evolved in a nationalist orientation and eventually to active separatism from the Indian Congress.

In comparing Ali with Pinsker, I am implying a bold claim, namely that Muslim political nationalism was born at least some fifty years after its Jewish counterpart. The Jewish analogy for Ali was what Yosef Yerushalmi called the "Psychological Jew," born well before Freud, marked by alienation from classical texts and commitment to new intellectual and ethical ideals.[325] In Ali we see the full articulation, not strictly speaking the explicit "loss of faith in the God of one's fathers,"[326] but the psychologically equivalent loss of faith in the fathers, who had failed in their responsibility to the nation.

Most importantly, the psychological Jew sought a secular culture hero, be it Freud, Marx, or Spinoza.[327] Pinsker speaks of the Jew as treated "as a stepchild, as a Cinderella;" and only in the most favorable cases "as an adopted child whose rights may be questioned," but never a "legitimate child of the fatherland."[328] The metaphor of family is interesting here, but in entreating the recovery of self-respect Pinsker similarly suggests the need for a leader: "Of course, we have not the genius of a Moses – history does not grant such leaders repeatedly." He seems to consider that the rise of a charismatic leader was a reasonable expectation.[329] Pinsker seems to anticipate Herzl, just as Ali anticipated Jinnah.

---

[325] Smith, *Spinoza,* 16.
[326] Smith, 16.
[327] Smith, 16.
[328] Pinsker, *Autoemancipation*.
[329] Pinsker, *Autoemancipation*.

4.3 Jinnah's Charisma and the Codification of a National Father

Pakistan's Herzl was Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Choudhary Rahmat Ali in fact met Jinnah when the latter was on a four-year period of self-imposed exile in England, after initially rejecting Gandhi's turn to mass politics.[330] Ali also met the Muslim leader Chaudhry Khaliquzzaman, who remarked on the stubbornness with which Ali held fast to the Pakistan idea in spite of the knowledge that many Indians viewed him as a "British stooge;" nonetheless, by their December 1938 meeting, Khaliquzzaman had supposedly already been converted to the Pakistan idea.[331] Jinnah was ostensibly slower to convert, supposedly offering an encouraging word to Ali to be patient and let the waters flow to their level on their own.[332] Ali himself would find himself perennially rejected by the nation which he had conceived dying a tragic death in England after being forced to leave the subcontinent. The leadership of the movement was to be the province of Jinnah.

The place of charisma and its suitable interpretation is a topic heavily debated among scholars of Pakistani nationalism, even contentious. Ayesha Jalal, for instance, famously positioned Jinnah's as the "sole spokesperson" for the Muslim national movement and interpreted his positionality on account of his position to use Pakistan as a bargaining chip in negotiating with the British on behalf of Muslim interests. Sikandar Hayat, on the other side, while reiterating Jinnah's importance depicts his charisma in terms of exceptional personality, excitedly invoking Weber in the process. Both these writers overstate Jinnah's agency. While he may have in effect been the sole spokesperson for the so-called Muslim cause, this was not more an active choice than it was

---

[330] Karthik Venkatesh, "All but Forgotten: Choudhary Rahmat Ali, the Inventor and First Champion of Pakistan," https://thewire.in/history/choudhary-rahmat-ali-the-inventor-of-pakistan
[331] K.K. Aziz, *Rahmat Ali: A Biography*, (Vanguard Books, Lahore, 1987), 146, https://archive.org/details/dli.ernet.244268/page/1/mode/2up. This biography is valuable but takes an hagiographical tone. For instance, Aziz attempts to portray events impartially, but seems often to criticize accounts in turn.
[332] Venkatesh, "All but Forgotten."

an effect of the circumstance. In fact, Muslim organizers had originally entreated Jinnah to return to lead the movement again in 1934 following his self-imposed exile in London.[333] Further, his leadership was almost entirely conditional on the seemingly endless series of compromises to his personal ideologies. The success of the Muslim League was in no small measure to the series of key compromises made with the *ulama* leadership, who rapidly encroached upon Jinnah's secularist sensibilities. In contrast to Herzl or others like him, who were relatively insulated from oppressive religious forces in cosmopolitan Vienna and sought to make peace with traditional Jewry along the way, Jinnah was part of a relatively small minority of liberally educated Muslim elites and was rocked by the political and religious forces around him.

Dhulipala further challenged Jalal's "sole spokesperson" thesis under which he kept a sort of monopoly on the Pakistan idea and kept the idea deliberately vague.[334] Dhulipala's analysis revolves around the lively debates on Pakistan in the Indian political sphere which he looked at to demonstrate the many ways that people commented on the Pakistan question. Dhulipala chronicles the support of Deobandi *ulama*, which he calls a lesser-known factor in the Muslim League's popular success.[335] In the late 1930s, the Muslim turn to the politics of mass-mobilization was a response to the Indian National Congress's movement to mass mobilization under the leadership of Nehru and Gandhi. At the 1939 Patna session, attended by the Deobandi delegation, Liaquat Ali Khan had held a meeting between Jinnah and *ulama* leadership, emphasizing the Muslim League's position that the Muslims were a "religious community (*mazhabi qaum).*"[336] According to witness Zafar Ahmad, it was in this session that the *ulama* convinced Jinnah to abandon is "European"

---

[333] Dhulipala, 30.
[334] According to some, Jalal also distanced herself from her old interpretation at some point (not necessarily in response to either of the writers I mention).
[335] Dhulipala, 50.
[336] Dhulipala, 105.

separation of religion from politics, a change which was reflected in his Patna session speech the following day, and which was noticed in the press.[337]

One book Dhulipala explores at length is B.R. Ambedkar's *Thoughts on Pakistan* (1940) as one example of an influential work debating the Pakistan idea in the public sphere and which was a "thorough and thoughtful treatise" presented to the "emotional, rapturous supporters of Pakistan (as much as to its opponents)"[338] and which was famously cited in Gandhi and Jinnah's 1944 talks.[339] In it, Ambedkar, who could rightfully be described as a querist, justified the idea of the Muslims being a nation and encouraged Hindus to contemplate the importance of the two-state sentiment among Muslims; he also suggested that an unpartitioned India might become the "sick man of Asia."[340] It is interesting to note that Ambedkar framed the condition of the Muslim body politic in biological metaphors.[341] Though he agreed with Gandhi that Punjabis of different religions were of the same racial stock, the refuted Hindu arguments that Muslims and Hindus could possibly constitute a single nation.[342] Ambedkar distinguishes between nationality and nationalism as "two different psychological states of the human mind."[343][344] "Nationality means 'consciousness of kind, awareness of the existence of the tie of kinship'. Nationalism means 'the desire for a separate national existence for those who are bound by the tie of kinship.'"[345]

---

[337] Z.A. Ahmad's argument the Congress to appeal to the Muslims, though relying heavily on a Marxist determinist view of history and bemoaning the retardation of Muslim development, had been manipulated by Khilafatists. Consider the influence of the Deobandi leader Ashraf Thanawi in rejecting congress and unity (for more see Dhulipala, 107).

[338] Dhulipala, 124.

[339] Dhulipala, 125.

[340] Dhulipala, 126.

[341] Dhulipala, 126

[342] Dhulipala, 132

[343] Ambedkar, 33.

[344] B.R. Ambedkar, *Thoughts on Pakistan*, (Thacker and Company Limited, Rampart Row, Bombay, 1941). https://archive.org/details/thoughtsonpakist035271mbp/page/n5/mode/2up

[345] Ambedkar, 33.

Though his sister Fatimah would later depict the nation as the metaphorical child, orphaned by Jinnah the father, a more apt metaphor would be that the idea of the *nation* as the mother. It was an idea for which Jinnah, in the decade and a half following the death of his wife, devoted his life spirit and for which he ultimately sacrificed the liberal Western ideals of the old British order in which he had been molded. Fatimah Jinnah quotes Muhammad Ali's mature articulation of this sentiment on the occasion of his speech at the opening of the Pakistan state bank, at a time in which he was in a state of ill health and near death. In this revealing quotation, Jinnah articulates the significance of nationalism's rejection of the old colonial order and which had been the previous sovereign power of India. A ray of optimism shines through in the end where Jinnah returns to the fate of humanity in a kind of liberal figure in Muslim garb:

> "The economic system of the West has created almost insoluble problems, for humanity and to many of us it appears that only a miracle can save it from disaster that is now facing the world. It has failed to do justice between man and man and to eradicate friction from the international field. On the contrary, it was largely responsible for the two world wars in the last half century. The Western world, in spite of its advantages of mechanization and industrial efficiency is today in a worse mess than ever before in history. The adoption of Western economic theory and practice will not help us in achieving our goal of creating a happy and contented people. We must work our destiny in our own way and present to the world an economic system based on true Islamic concept of equality of manhood and social justice. We will thereby be fulfilling our mission as Muslims and giving to humanity the message of peace which alone can save it and secure the welfare, happiness and prosperity of mankind."[346]

To earlier witnesses of Jinnah's political trajectory, such an attitude on the surface would have been completely unexpected. In fact, this excerpt epitomizes how Jinnah's position was as much an effect as a cause. Ironically, the very person who would assume the representation of the national movement for Pakistan had to be converted to the cause. In the Delhi Muslim proposals

---

[346] As quoted in Jinnah, 22.

96

of 1927, he had originally advocated a position of Indian unity.[347] The Muslim League's turn to the mass mobilization campaign was what Dhulipala called "a desperate bid for survival."[348]

In fact, even by the time the Pakistani state would be officially established, certain Indian political communities famously did not follow suit. The rejection of Pakistan by Muslim princely states in Northern India was a stunning rebuke but highlights the volatile stakes of nationalist legitimacy a contested narrative. It also highlights the difference between the charismatic, sometimes chaotic leadership of Jinnah and the established legacies of traditional princely authority. At the creation of India, the northern princely states joined India, much to the bafflement of the Pakistanis. As early as the 30s, the princely states had appealed to the Muslims "magnanimous" values to welcome non-Muslims as part of the community.[349] The princes also integrated with Sikh clothing styles to appease religious prejudices.[350] It is evident from the case of the princely states that the resistance to Pakistani separatism was a feature of those in power, not the mass of Muslims themselves, as the popular dimension of Pakistani separatism was not confined to the so-called "six provinces."[351] Jinnah in 1943 sent a private secretary Khurshid Ahmad to report on the state of the Kashmiri Muslims and how they might receive Muslim League propaganda.[352] Ahmad remarked on the "certain psychological and moral peculiarities of the Kashmiri Muslims…" which meant that any successful propaganda would require "considerable effort, spread over a long period of time, to reform them and convert them into true Muslims willing to suffer and sacrifice for high, Islamic purposes."[353] Ultimately, the league push for a network of

---

[347] Hayat, *Aspects*, 246.
[348] Dhulipala, 50.
[349] Copland, Ian. "The Princely States, the Muslim League, and the Partition of India in 1947." (*The International History Review* 13, no. 1 1991), 46. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40106322.
[350] Copland, 47.
[351] Copland, 50.
[352] Copland, 54.
[353] As quoted in Copland, 54.

independent Muslim states across India failed utterly and the Indian takeover of Hyderabad coincided with the death of Jinnah.[354]

Even on its own terms, political nationalism was not merely an idea but a psychological dynamic, deriving its strength from a certain kind of middle-class morality; the psychological attitude towards history allows us to interpret nationalism as deriving its strength from the most powerful of human neuroses: the Oedipus complex. Despite the temporary aspect of charismatic leadership, the leader as symbol was codified into the national body. Today, such figures remain the emblems of the nation, often in the absence of a queen. But for political nationalism as such, a physical queen is not needed, for the idealization of the nation *was* the queen.

---

[354] Copland, 64.

5. Conclusion: Implications of a Psychological Approach to National History

I have argued that ideology, ideas, and philosophy are insufficient to explain the phenomenon of political nationalism. The nation is more than the state, and more than an imagined construct. Rather, nationalism only makes sense when understood in those "human terms" at its founding moments as a response to a distinctly modern anxiety about sovereignty which at the same time evoked a more fundamental psychology. Pakistani nationalism implicated its followers in a twofold Oedipal movement involving the death of the father and "marrying" the nation as mother; while Zionism operated on a similar rhetoric, appropriating and arguably misconstruing a theological-political contention they traced back at least to Spinoza.

Political nationalism presented a contrast from ideologically and philosophically grounded movements of the time, including communists, socialists, and religious communalists. The significance of the Age of Questions was an appropriation of religion as a shift/racialization of a religious group into an endogamous group, conceived of by querists as religiously endogamous groups as national groups. The endogamous principle, the ubiquitous social basis of in-group and out-group morality, was how querists legitimized the ethnic/national/racial argument on a self-defined national scale. In both cases, however, querists appropriated a foreign essentialization. For many, including Herzl and Pinsker, this was a very self-conscious appropriation and recognition of the dual relationship of antisemitism to the Jewish nation. For Nordau, nationality did not even imply endogamy. The case of Indian Islam presents a contrast. At Spinoza's time, Muslim orthodoxy as it was being codified under the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb was yet implicated with imperial authority. From this relatively *longue durée* point of view, the "late" development of Muslim political nationalism in India compared to its Jewish counterpart is hardly surprising; but

99

both were part of larger patterns in global history. By the 20th century, religion often become a metaphor for the ethnic/racial simplification characteristic of the Age of Questions, even if it was in part on the terms of antisemites or the British colonial classifications[355] of religion. This only made sense in a transregional, homogenizing identifications of national groups, which by the end of the Age of Questions had been adopted by people who successfully took it on themselves to speak for the groups as a whole.

Insofar as I have attempted to focus strictly on political nationalism, this study has not wandered far into the realm of religion as such. Rather, I have argued how nationalism subverted religious psychology even as it relentlessly appropriated it. The strings of revolutionary nationalism and mass emotion which nationalists plucked were precisely those emotions which religious leaders always sought to regulate.[356] Religious leadership based on the principles of stability and loyalty to an established or contested tradition implied emotional stability. Religion was a way of controlling emotions as much as it was about celebrating them within carefully confined and choreographed ceremonies, rituals, and contexts.[357]

This thesis was not primarily about religion or even the religious characteristics of nationalism, which would all make for a very interesting study. Rather, it is about how nationalism in appealing to wildly original and appropriated, homogenized ideas about ethnic or religious groups as metaphors for the nation overcame the in-built barriers to homogenization which many of which the querists in the previous chapters (as we have seen) went at lengths to emphasize. In a word, political nationalism could only do this by "making peace" with religion, or by what scholars

---

[355] In a word, the colonial tendency to make one Hinduism or Islam, where there were many.

[356] Hence, for instance, the expulsion of Spinoza from the religious community, or Mughal executions.

[357] Consider *hijrat* or religious migration, discussed in the second chapter, which contextualized and even regulated migration in the spiritually charged terms of ancient religious narrative and myth.

such as George Mosse have approximated in describing how European nationalism fashioned a utilitarian alliance with a new bourgeois morality.[358]

The most insightful nationalists themselves often offered their own "solutions" to nationalism. In Nordau's late work *Der Sinn der Geschichte* published in Berlin (the English version titled *The Interpretation of History* published in London in 1910) barely mentioned Zionism, but engaged with the diverse spread of contemporary philosophies of European nationalism.[359] As Stanislawski notes, the work was in fact an attack on certain ideas about nationalism, particularly contemporaneous theorists of *Völkerpsychologie* who were then also inspiring the likes of Jabotinsky.[360] Against those who interpreted the state in "organic" and natural metaphors of national will, Stanislawski frames Nordau's conception of nationalism as decidedly realistic turn, one that saw nationalism as tactical rather than ontological and which should have been rhetoricated as such.[361]

Similarly, we saw various instances in which querists offered their own diagnoses and "solutions." I have argued that for various reasons—including the tendency of the modern academy for specialization—state period and modern historiography of specialism is markedly differentiable from those pre-state histories and "diagnostic" literature whose work was imbued with psychological resonances, methods, and frameworks. Given the terrifying history of "answers," perhaps this shift is on the whole welcome. But the fragmented approach towards the psychology of charisma in contemporary scholarship often results in the inability of contemporary scholars to contextualize and to scale the historical role of charismatic figures in nationalist movements as historical forces. Beyond recognizing the phenomenon of charisma, we must appreciate charisma

---

[358] Mosse, 9.
[359] Stanislawski, 32.
[360] Stanislawski, 33.
[361] Stanislawski, 35.

as an effect as much as a cause—charisma as "causing" as many contemporary historians of Pakistani nationalism have reduced it to—which was necessary for national movement precisely because it transcended the limitations of religion and ideology at their point of confrontation; for this reason, the effect of charismatic leadership as a kind of catalyst was a necessary precondition of political national movements. But the historical role of charismatic leadership in the early period of the history of nationalism only makes sense within an ambitious, psychologically-oriented framework: a dynamic in which querists of the pre-state period were actively engaged, but of which the closest comparative analogy today is the social psychology of today in the analysis of social science.

Like the study of modern charisma before it, the academic study of prejudice came to be employed to find the social roots of the great causes of evil in the 20th century. Vokhov identified modern antisemitism's social and political function in German society as a cultural code.[362] But could nationalism as emotion be studied as psychologically analogous to the social function of antisemitism? What would it mean to study the enduring psychological impact of political nationalism in terms of social pathology? It seems that there would be little incentive for historians to study nationalism in the same terms of social pathology non polemically. If, according to Kant, it was obscene to probe into the origins of the state—a kind of perverse investigation into one's origins—in today's speak, terms such as social pathology imply that there is something aberrational—such as in the case of antisemitism, for which the "diagnosis" of authoritarian personality is often suitably applied—and that nationalism is therefore fundamentally unhealthy. This obviously undermines the state. But that is not necessarily my position. I would argue that anyone who carelessly undermines the state risks being polemical for its own sake; nationalism as

---

[362] Volkov, Shulamit: "Antisemitism as cultural code," in: *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook, XXIII* (1978).

emotion can function in a similar manner psychologically, even if it claims to fight for different causes. The Oedipal problem likely will remain nothing more than a mythological metaphor for historians. Still, history can teach us something profound about ourselves. The implications of this argument for the nation can perhaps be appreciated in a general sense in terms of a kind of psychoanalytic metaphor of the life-continuity of the individual: we can interpret political nationalism—insofar as it was an unprecedented and uniquely imaginative and synthetic moment in the political history of nations imagined or real—in the most general terms of an Oedipal moment or phase (to borrow the mythological language of Freud that has indeed been so often abused by historians) defined in relation to the old political authorities of power and an abstract idea of the nation often metaphorized as an *alma mater*. This phase is part of the temporalized psychological development of the nation: and can only compliment economic or political accounts of the nation.

There is apparently little incentive for social scientists to undertake such studies. In fact, it would be at best impolite to divert energies away from research on ostensibly more seemingly immediate and pressing social problems, such as antisemitism or prejudice, which persist. But I argue that the psychological study of political nationalism is also valuable for historians and other people. It recenters agency and is paradoxically empowering in the broader context of colonial victimhood and the challenge of antisemitism and state violence. It elevates victims of colonialism from objects of oppression and mechanical formulas of self-interest to human beings with political-psychological complexity—complete with the capacity for mythological error—who had an immense amount of power in defining the terms of a new sovereignty. In fact, future studies might use the terms and concepts of indigenous, traditional, or alternative psychologies in the critical interpretation of the same or similar historical materials.

If nothing else, future historians can preserve a keen eye to the distinctly psychological themes, narratives, dimensions of national history, which as I have tried to argue are more

interpretively useful than religious, philosophical, or even political explanations. For instance, where Jalal sought to find the Islamic roots of the idea of Muslim nationalism embodied in Iqbal's doctrine of selfhood,[363] I suggest that ideas such as the "Muslim world" as offered by querists may be the wrong way to think about Pakistani nationalism as such. Pakistan cannot be understood in solely Islamic terms, but in the terms of a psychological crisis of indigeneity, in which a nebulous and contested idea of Islam came to represent a certain kind of masculine, endogamous ideal on an ethno-regional scale. Just as Zionism had to overcome the social political limitations to a dramatic social-psychological reorientation to be able to present an appealing alternative to the Jewish world as it was in a diverse range of diasporic manifestations, Muslim nationalism as a social force overcame the in-built limitations of heavily regionalized and firmly indigenous Muslim cultures. The combination of British imperial classification, sympathetic conservative movements, the unifying catalyst of the decline and fall of the caliphate, and the Indian turn to mass politics of which the charismatic leadership of the Muslim community on a similarly mass scale was a response all worked together to overcome those barriers.

I would like to take one moment to depart briefly from the mindset of strict historicism. In the spirit of the late Aijaz Ahmad, who sought to break academics out of their periodic disconnection between theory and reality, I offer an humble observation: nations as yet new states will have to reckon with the powerful ramifications of their founding emotions which live on today in a variety of forms of political life: they will need to contend with and can be studied in terms of how they have contended with the psychological challenges of having started afresh, challenges which time alone cannot simply overcome. The enduring psychology of nationalism ironically repudiates the sensibilities of the moment of subjectivity which gave it birth. But if psychological

---

[363] Jalal, 8.

history reframes the "childhood" of modern nationalism in Oedipal terms (very loosely speaking), then the study of the ensuing nation could benefit from a critical reflection on the implications of that Oedipal moment. This does not necessarily imply that the answer is to reject the nation—millions are born into modern nations as we speak. The outright rejection of the nation merely would imitate in an emotional reenactment the psychological rejection of the old order which brought the nation into being in the first place—rather, it is coming to terms with the past, making peace with the fathers instead of "killing" them, finding objects of worship besides the mother(land), and fashioning myths to reckon with the past. If the subjects of modern nationalism fail to come to terms with the psychological history which underlies the basis of the nation itself, they may as national subjects remain in an endless Oedipal cycle in which incest and war are the only two options for national life.

6. Bibliography:

6.1 Primary sources:

Ali, Choudhary Rahmat, *Now or Never: Are we to live or perish for ever?* (The Pakistan National Movement, Cambridge, 1933), https://archive.org/details/NowOrNever_201701/mode/2up

B.R. Ambedkar, *Thoughts on Pakistan*, Thacker and Company Limited, Rampart Row, Bombay, 1941. https://archive.org/details/thoughtsonpakist035271mbp/page/n5/mode/2up

Andrews, C.F, *The True India: A Plea for Understanding*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, London, 1920: 197. https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.100971/page/n9/mode/2up?msclkid=43030e35cf6511eca2ec5584a2277a5f

Aziz, K.K, *Rahmat Ali: A Biography*, (Vanguard Books, Lahore, 1987), 146, https://archive.org/details/dli.ernet.244268/page/1/mode/2up

Kant, Immanuel, and Allen W. Wood. "The Metaphysics of Morals (1797)." Chapter. In *Practical Philosophy*, edited by Mary J. Gregor, 461-462. The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511813306.013. [6:319]

Khaliquzzaman, Choudhry, *Pathway to Pakistan*, Lognmans Pakistan Branch, Lahore, 1961: 74. https://archive.org/details/pathway-to-pakistan-chaudhry-khaliquzzaman/page/n3/mode/2up

Jinnah, Fatimah ed. Sharif Al-Mujahid*, My Brother*, Quaid-e-Azam Academy, Karachi, 1987.

Nordau, Max, *The Conventional Lies of our Civilization* (1883), Laird & Lee Publishers, Chicago, 1895. https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Conventional_Lies_of_our_Civilization/The_Matrimonial_Lie

Nordau, Max, *Degeneration,* William Heinemann, London, 1898.

Patai, Raphael (ed.), Zohn, Harry (trans.) *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl: Vol. 1*, The Theodor Herzl Foundation, Inc. New York, 1960: 231. https://archive.org/details/TheCompleteDiariesOfTheodorHerzl_201606/TheCompleteDiariesOfTheodorHerzlEngVolume1_OCR/page/n121/mode/2up

Patai, Raphael (ed.), Zohn, Harry (trans.) *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl: Vol. 3*, The Theodor Herzl Foundation, Inc. New York, 1960: 1090.

https://archive.org/details/TheCompleteDiariesOfTheodorHerzl_201606/TheCompleteDiariesOfTheodorHerzlEngVolume3_OCR/page/n135/mode/2up

Prime Minister's Statement on the "Indian Round Table Conference 1930-1931," (Digital Library of India): 15. https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.81224/page/n1/mode/2up

Pinsker, Leon, *Autoemancipation*, Translated from the German by Dr. D. S. Blondheim, *Essential Texts of Zionism*. (Federation of American Zionists, 1916) Jewish Virtual Library https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/quot-auto-emancipation-quot-leon-pinsker Accessed June, 2022.

Pirzada, Syed Sharifuddin ed. *Foundations of Pakistan: All-India Muslim League Documents: 1906-1947 (Vol. I: 19061924)* National Publishing House Ltd. Karachi.

Pirzada, Syed Sharifuddin ed. *Foundations of Pakistan: All-India Muslim League Documents: 1906-1947 (Vol. II: 1924-1947)* National Publishing House Ltd. Karachi, 1970.

Pirzada, Syed Sharifuddin ed. *Foundations of Pakistan: All India Muslim League Documents: 1906-1947,* Royal Book Company, Karachi, 1990.

Beni Prasad, *The Hindu-Muslim Questions*, Kitabistan, Allahabad, 1941: 2. https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.278706/page/n181/mode/2up

Prasad, Beni, *India's Hindu-Muslim Questions*, Hugh Paton and Sons, Ltd. Edinburgh, 1946. https://archive.org/details/dli.ernet.237194/page/n5/mode/2up

Weber , Max, Hans H. Gerth and Don Martindale trans, ed. *Ancient Judaism*, The Free Press, 1952: 40. https://archive.org/details/in.gov.ignca.2975/page/n367/mode/2up

6.2 Secondary Sources

Adler, Jacob. "The Zionists and Spinoza." *Israel Studies Forum* 24, no. 1, 2009. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41805009.

Al-Azmeh, Aziz. "Postmodern Obscurantism and the 'Muslim Question'." *Socialist Register* 39, 2003.

Ansari, Khizar Humayun, *The Emergence of Socialist Thought Among North Indian Muslims (1917-1947)*, Oxford University Press, Karachi, 2015.

Aquil, Raziuddin *The Muslim Question: Understanding Islam and Indian History*, Penguin, 2017.

Ashraf, K.M., Jaweed Ashraf ed., *Historical Background to Muslim Question in India, 1764-1945: Volume 1 (1764-1925):* Asha Jyoti Book Sellers & Publishers in Association with Mainframe Publishers, Delhi, (copyright Jaweed Ashraf) 2008.

Beller, Steven, "Central Europe: Birthplace of the Modern World?" *Austrian History Yearbook* 23, 1992.

Bosch, Lourens P. van den. "A Burning Question: Sati and Sati Temples as the Focus of Political Interest." *Numen* 37, no. 2, 1990. https://doi.org/10.2307/3269862.

Bose, Sugata and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy*, Routledge, 2017.

Breslauer, S. Daniel. "Barcuh Spinoza: What Manner of Zionist?" *Hebrew Studies* 18, 1977. http://www.jstor.org/stable/27908598

Case, Holly, *The Age of Questions: Or, A First Attempt at an Aggregate History of the Eastern, Social, Woman, American, Jewish, Polish, Bullion, Tuberculosis, and Many Other Questions over the Nineteenth Century, and Beyond*, Princeton University Press, 2018.

Copland, Ian. "The Princely States, the Muslim League, and the Partition of India in 1947." *The International History Review* 13, no. 1, 1991. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40106322.

Derman, Joshua. "Max Weber and Charisma: A Transatlantic Affair." *New German Critique*, no. 113, 2011. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41288134.

Devji, Faisal, *Muslim Zion: Pakistan as a Political Idea*, Harvard University Press, 2013.

Dhulipala, Venkat, *Creating a New Medina: State Power, Islam, and the Quest for Pakistan in Late Colonial North India.* Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Frankel, Jonathan, "Assimilation and the Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe: Toward a New Historiography?" Chapter. In *Crisis, Revolution, and Russian Jews*, 276–310. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511551895.012.

Frankel, Jonathan, *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism, and the Russian Jews, 1862-1917,* Cambridge University Press 1984: 297. (2003)

Gay, Peter, *Freud for Historians*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1986.

Green, Alexander. "Spinoza on the Ethics of Courage and the Jewish Tradition." *Modern Judaism* 33, no. 2 (May 1, 2013): 199. doi:10.1093/mj/kjt002.

Harvey, Warren Zev. "Notes on Spinoza's Presence in Moses Hess' 'Rome and Jerusalem.'" *Iyyun: The Jerusalem Philosophical Quarterly / עיון: רבעון פילוסופי* 67, 2018. http://www.jstor.org/stable/26492164.

J. N. K. "The Late Prof. Beni Prasad," *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 6, no. 4, 1945. http://www.jstor.org/stable/42753618.

Minault, Gail, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1982.

Hasan, Mushirul, "Religion and Politics in India: the *Ulama* and the Khilafat Movement" in Mushirul Hasan, ed. *Communal and Pan-Islamic Trends in Colonial India*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1981.

Hayat, Sikandar, *Aspects of the Pakistan Movement*, National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, Centre of Excellence, Quaid-i-Azam Univesrity (New Campus), Islamabad, third revised, expanded edition 2016 (first edition 1990).

Jalal, Ayesha, *Self and Sovereignty: Individual and Community in South Asian Islam Since 1850*, Routledge, London, 2000.

Mufti, Aamir R. *Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture*, Princeton University Press, 2007.

Mauldon, Margaret trans. *Persian Letters / Montesquieu*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2008.

Mosse, George L. *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe*, New York: Howard Fertig, 1985.

Mujeeb, Mohammad. *The Indian Muslims*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1967.

"Newspapers" National Archives of Pakistan, http://archives.gov.pk/pdf/Newspapers.pdf. Accessed June 2022.

Paskewich, J. Christopher. "Leo Strauss' Modern Regime Cycle." *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory* 56, no. 118, 2009. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41802425.

Penslar, Derek J, *Israel in History: The Jewish State in Comparative Perspective*, Routledge, New York, 2007.

Penslar, Derek, *Theodor Herzl: The Charismatic Leader*, Jewish Lives, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2020: 206.

Qadir, Ali, *Deconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam: Iqbal and the Ahmadiyya*, *The Muslim World* / Volume 111, Issue 3, p. 488-510, December 3, 2021. https://doi.org/10.1111/muwo.12410

Rose, Alison. *Jewish Women in Fin de Siècle Vienna*. University of Texas Press, 2008. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7560/718616:

Rozenblit, Marsha L, "Jewish assimilation in Habsburg Vienna" in Jonathan Frankel and Steven J. Zipperstein, ed. *Assimilation and Community: The Jews in nineteenth-century Europe* Cambridge University Press, 2004: 230.

Rubin, Abraham, "Muhammad Asad's Conversion to Islam as a Case Study in Jewish Self-Orientalization," Jewish Social Studies: History, Culture, Society n.s. 22, no. 1 (Fall 2016): 1. Copyright © 2016 The Trustees of Indiana University. doi:10.2979/jewisocistud.22.1.01

Schorske, Carl E, *Fin-de-Siecle Vienna: Politics and Culture*, Vintage Books, New York, 1981.

Shumsky, Dmitry, *Beyond the Nation-State: The Zionist Political Imagination from Pinsker to Ben-Gurion*, Yale University Press, 2018.

Small, Charles Asher ed. *Global Antisemitism: A Crisis of Modernity*, Brill, Leiden, 2013: 42.

Stanislawski, Michael, *Zionism and the Fin de Siecle: Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism from Nordau to Jabotinsky*, The University of California Press, 2001.

Smith, Steven B. *Spinoza, Liberalism, and the Question of Jewish Identity*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1997, 13.

Sewell, Jr, William H. "Marc Bloch and the Logic of Comparative History," *History and Theory*, 1967, Vol. 6, No. 2, 1967.

Smith, Steven B. "Gershom Scholem and Leo Strauss: Notes toward a German-Jewish Dialogue." *Modern Judaism* 13, no. 3 (1993): 209. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1396323.

Strauss, Leo, E.M. Sinclair trans. *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*, Schocken Books, New York, 1965: 1. "The main body of this book was published as Die Religionskritik Spinozas als Grundlage seiner Bibelwissenscheft Untersuchungen zu Spinozas Theologisch-Politischem Traktat Akademie-Verlag, Berlin, 1930."

Strauss, Leo, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1952.

Vanita, Ruth, "Chapter Eighteen: India" in Michael Saler ed. *The Fin-de-Siecle World*, Routledge, New York, 2015, 283.

Whittemore, Robert. "Iqbal's Panentheism." *The Review of Metaphysics* 9, no. 4 (1956), 681–99. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20123542.