

Islam in Germany

(BY EMRAN HUSAIN)

Ceaseless but honest activities and amazing self-sacrifices of that section of Indian Muslims popularly known as Ahmadiyya Jamaat founded by the greatest genius born in the last century, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, have spread Islam to many countries where owing to lack of propaganda not the least was known before. This propagation of our religion in Europe finds eloquent manifestation in the establishment at Woking (England) and in Berlin (Germany) of two mosques which are standing proofs of the undeniable sacrifices of the above-mentioned Jamaat. Many Muslims of India as also of other Muslim Countries have been misled due to the dishonest and at times malicious propaganda carried on for a long time past by self-interested mischief-mongers that the Ahmadis are not true Muslims. This erroneous belief is due, *inter alia*, first to the mischievous propaganda, secondly to the incessant propagation of the views of those followers of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, commonly known as Qadianis, who too call themselves Ahmadis. Both are equally dangerous for obvious reasons. An extremely undesirable and certainly dangerous element in the solidarity of Islam, they proclaim to the world that they, and they alone, are Muslims and that others, who do not see eye to eye with them in regard to the claim of prophethood by the founder of the movement are Kafirs. They therefore refuse to have any dealings with the rest of the Muslims, with whom they neither intermarry nor offer prayers together. The fact that they call themselves Ahmadis has *ipso facto* created confusion in the minds of many who consequently see no distinction between the two organisations, feel hostile to both and naturally resent any attempt however honestly made to draw a line of demarcation between the two. The basic principle of Islam remaining the same, anybody who believes in it must be regarded as a Muslim. To repeat here what is known to all as the fundamental article of Islamic faith is: Belief in Allah and the finality of the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him). Now the attitude taken by the late Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to the above principles finds eloquent testimony in his undying statement:

بعد از خدا بعشق محمد مضموم
گر این کفر است بخدا سخت کافر

(After God I am intoxicated with the love of Muhammad, if this is idolatry, then, by God, I am the greatest Kafir). This sets at rest all the proofs of the Qadianis that the late founder of the movement ever claimed to be a Prophet.

Another complaint generally entertained is with regard to the name of the Organisation. The Qadianis hold that it is called after the name of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad while the Lahore Group (another name to signify the Ahmadis who have cut off all connections with the Qadianis) maintain that it is called after the name of the Holy Prophet, one of his names being Ahmad. There are sufficient proofs to show that the late founder himself sug-

gested the name Ahmad to be given to the organisation on account of certain attributes attached to the holy name Ahmad. The writer himself was under the erroneous impression but all the clouds of suspicion and misbelief have been set aside by a thorough study of their literature as also by the convincing arguments of his esteemed friend Dr. Abdullah, Imam of the Berlin Mosque, and of Maulana Sadr-ud-Din, Vice-President of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman-i-Ishaat-i-Islam, Lahore.

Now between this Lahore Group of the Ahmadis and the reasonable orthodox Muslims there is no difference except that whereas the former have been devoting all their time, money and energy to the spread of Islam in the non-Islamic countries, the latter (at least some of them) while completely ignorant and at times criminally negligent of their duty, devotion and loyalty to their faith do not cease taking undue advantage of certain supposed faiths of the former and directing pungent criticism and not infrequently making deliberate attacks upon them.

With the burning zeal, unequalled by anybody else so far, for the Faith of God, the Ahmadis built in 1924 in Berlin a Mosque (I do not concern myself for the present with the London Mosque) at a cost of Rs. 1,50,000. This sum was collected almost entirely from among themselves, the rest of the Muslims in other parts of India contributing very little towards the funds. About Rs. 4,000 was contributed by the then Turkish Ambassador in Berlin. It is interesting to note in this connection that on the day when the foundation stone of the Mosque was to be laid, some Indian Muslims (whose names it is not desirable to mention here) came to the place with bombs to destroy the very foundation of the temple of God. But anything done with a good intention and pure purpose is always crowned with success. So the Berlin Mosque remains to this day and will continue to remain for all time to come—a monumental proof of the honest intention of its builders. Soon after the construction of the Mosque an Association known as *Die Deutsch-Muslimische Gesellschaft* (the German-Muslim Association: the name Ahmadi does not find place here) was organised of which Dr. Abdullah is the General Secretary. The following short account shows how far its activities have met with success:—

1. The Mosque was built in the year 1924 at a cost of Rs. 1,50,000.
2. A quarterly journal is being published for the last 14 years, that is, from the very inception of the Mosque. This is distributed free to practically all the big libraries and public reading rooms of Germany. The journal is called *Moslemische Revue*.
3. German translation of the Holy Quran has been done by Maulana Sadr-ud-Din, the founder of the Berlin Mosque and Mission. It is now in the press.
4. About half a dozen of booklets and pamphlets on Islam have been published by the Mission in the German language.
5. Regular lectures, discussion evenings and

social gatherings are held every Friday under the auspices of the German Muslim Society, which was founded in the year 1930.

6. Festivals, such as Id-ul-Fitr, Id-uz-Zuha and Milad-un-Nabi are celebrated regularly on large scales. Friday prayers are held regularly and the Khutbah is delivered in the German language.

7. Muslim children are imparted religious instructions and are taught Arabic Quran every Sunday forenoon.

8. Arabic classes for grown up persons are held on Tuesday evenings. Lessons are free of charge.

9. Islam is preached through interviews and correspondence, etc.

10. There are about 150 German converts to Islam, scattered throughout the whole of Germany.

This is the present state of affairs. If more funds were available (any amount however small subscribed to the Berlin Association will be thankfully received) and if there were no mean propaganda such as is being carried on by certain interested persons, the activities of the Mosque could be strengthened with great success. But as has been stated above the ludicrous propaganda is being carried on to thwart the activities of the association by one Mr. Habib-ur-Rahman Qureshi commonly known as Habib-ur-Rahman. It is strange to see that for some reason or other he has dropped his family name. He is said to be the Secretary of the Islamische Gemeinde founded by one Mr. Jabbar-Kheiri—a man very well-known to the students of Aligarh University. Lost in thoughts, he moves about at Aligarh mixing with none. Let some of my readers who know him rather intimately throw further light as to what he may be doing in India. Now it is quite clear from the above account as to what an organisation founded by such a man as described above can be like. Of this so-called organisation Mr. Habib-ur-Rahman is the Secretary. His only activities are to put every possible obstacle in the smooth working of the Association by publishing articles in some Urdu papers of the Punjab. He is said to be without any University-education—a personal conversation has convinced the author of the same—knows little English, nothing whatsoever of Arabic or Persian but good in German and is a strict follower of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, ex-President of the Indian National Congress. Fearing he might not be tolerated in the Hitler-Germany he has through his cunning given the public to understand that Mr. Nehru is a Socialist, not a communist. Further more he is a pucca Congressite and very much resents the organisation of the Muslims under Mr. Jinnah. He is one of the very few Muslims who frequent the Indian Club here which none of the other Indian Muslims attend for the simple reason that it is so much Congress-minded that a Muslim having sympathy with the All-India Muslim League feels almost suffocated by the atmosphere.

A little while ago he issued a statement published by The United Press on the 18th July last *vide* the *Tribune*, Lahore, July 19, col. 5, page 16). The statement runs as follows:

"We, the Muslims in Berlin, protest strongly against the disgraceful incident which took place recently at Brahmanbaria where a large number of Muslims threw stones at a procession injuring fifteen persons, including the Congress President, Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose. Earlier, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had been hit in a similar fashion with stones at Allahabad. The Muslims of India in behaving in this way are putting themselves in a false light before the whole world."

The resolution is most reprehensible in its nature inasmuch as there are very few Muslims in Berlin who can associate themselves with such a condemnable resolution. While no self-respecting man would like to see leaders like Messrs. Nehru and Bose mal-treated like that, that was hardly an occasion for the Muslims of Berlin belonging to different countries to pass such a resolution thus bringing discredit upon the Indian Muslims in the eyes of those living abroad. It is said that this Habib-ur-Rahman is a correspondent of the "Star of Indian". If so, it is desirable that the editor of this esteemed paper should hold him responsible for the resolution and further see that no such things are repeated in future.

This then is a brief account of the progress made by Islam in Germany, inspite of very limited funds and, what is still worse, of ridiculous propaganda that is being regularly carried on by certain interested persons. To-day the Muslim Association is facing the same sort of obstacle—not of course to the same degree—as did the forerunners of Islam. But with all that the religion of God is, as it must be, spreading rapidly. Money which is the soul of every organisation is sadly lacking and it would indeed be a matter of utmost relief if the generous Muslim Public give their earnest thoughts to it and contribute what little they can to the Association. (Address: Imam of the Mosque, Berlin-Wilmersdorf, Brienner Str. 7-8. In India; Financial Secretary, Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-i-Islam, Ahmadiyya Buildings, Lahore).