

# 1 The Quest for a Holy Community

The Jama'at-i Islami was originally the brainchild of Mawlana Sayyid Abu'l-A'la Mawdudi (1903–1979),<sup>1</sup> who founded the party and headed it for thirty-one years (1941–1972).<sup>2</sup> Mawdudi traced his lineage to an old notable family of Delhi who had been associated with the Mughal court and had later served the nizams of Hyderabad. The family took pride in the glorious days of Islam in India and was acutely aware of its downfall following the sack of Delhi by the British in 1858; they therefore harbored a dislike for British rule. Mawdudi's father was educated in law and began life as a modernist, but he eventually embraced Sufism and became a fervent ascetic. He educated his children in the Islamic tradition, insulating them from the Western culture and mores that so influenced Indian intelligentsia. Mawdudi received his early education in Urdu and Arabic, first at home and later in the traditional schools of Hyderabad, Bhopal, and Delhi. As a young man in Delhi, he studied the *dars-i nizami* curricula of the ulama with Deobandi tutors and received the certificate which would have permitted him to join that sodality.<sup>3</sup> He abandoned traditional education and the garb of the ulama, however, for an education in modern subjects. He studied English and Western thought on his own and embarked on a modern career in journalism. Between 1921 and 1924 he became involved in the Khilafat movement, which had been formed in the hope of preserving the Muslim caliphate, and for a while sympathized with the Congress party. His zeal and literary style soon caught the attention of the leaders of the Jama'at-i Ulama-i Hind (Party of Indian Ulama), who invited the young Mawdudi to serve as the editor of their newspaper. Mawdudi did not remain attached to the Jama'at-i Ulama for long, however; he eventually parted ways with the pro-Congress ulama party and embarked upon a crusade to revive Islam as the sole apodictic answer to the Muslim communal predicament in India.

Mawdudi's religiopolitical awareness had first been aroused in Hyderabad, in the Deccan, when the nizam's authority had begun to wane, and where political activism had shifted the time-honored balance of power to the Hindus. After the Great Mutiny of 1857 and the entrenchment of the British Raj, Muslim politics, religious thinking, and social organizations from Sayyid Ahmad Khan's (1817–1898) Aligarh movement to Muslim agitations in Bengal and Punjab had been directed at reversing the continuous decline in Muslim political power before the rise in the fortunes of the British and subsequently the Hindus. The eclipse of Hyderabad's magnificent Muslim culture and later of its Muslim community after the collapse of the nizam's state in 1948 was to haunt Mawdudi in the subsequent years, leaving him with a sense of desperation and urgency directed at saving Islam from decline and eventual extinction,<sup>4</sup> an attitude he shared with most Muslims of Hyderabad.<sup>5</sup> Even before the partition these themes had appeared in Mawdudi's writings.<sup>6</sup>

Mawdudi came of age just as colonial rule ended and Indian national consciousness was asserted, but the Muslims failed to salvage their status and restore the political prominence they had lost. Experiments with accommodation to imperial rule, such as those of Sayyid Ahmad Khan or Punjab's Unionist Party, had failed to stop Hindu supremacy or assuage the ever increasing anxiety of the Muslim masses about life under Hindu rule. The Muslims of India had begun to think that restoring their political power was the only way to advance their interests and extricate themselves from their predicament. Between the two World Wars Muslims turned to communalism, channeling their political aspirations and energies into the formulation of political agendas whose only strength lay in their manipulation of Islamic symbols. As a result, in the 1920s and the 1930s Islam was catapulted into the political arena, and its symbols were politicized and utilized for purposes of mass mobilization. The results were communal riots and the estrangement of some from the Congress party

However, communal agitation did not help either. The earliest organized expression of Muslim communalism, the Khilafat movement, to which Mawdudi belonged, collapsed in 1924 and with it the hopes and aspirations of the Muslims of India. The Khilafat movement was a beginning, however, that led Muslims to greater expressions of communalism throughout the following decade.<sup>7</sup>

Meanwhile, the home-rule (*swaraj*) effort, initiated by the Congress in 1924, had also come to naught. Hindu hostility and Muslim activism, which had emerged into the open in the wake of the Khilafat movement, continued to arouse the fears of the Muslim masses about their future. Following the collapse of the Khilafat movement in 1924, Muslims perpetrated acts of violence against Hindus all over India. The Hindus responded through their own revivalist movements such as the Mahasabha and the Arya Samaj, which launched aggressive anti-Muslim public campaigns. The most noteworthy of these was the

Shuddhi campaign, whose mission was to reconvert unwilling low-caste converts from Islam back to Hinduism. The Shuddhi campaign was an affront to Muslim articles of faith and by implication challenged the place of Islam in India. The campaign therefore provoked angry responses from Muslims, resulting in more communal strife. In 1925 Swami Shradhanand, a renowned Shuddhi activist, was assassinated, causing much anti-Muslim bitterness in the Indian press and among the Hindus, and a feeling of desperation and apologetic resignation among Muslims.

Mawdudi witnessed all these events. His political thinking was shaped by considering all the solutions with which Muslims experimented. Mawdudi was not initially a revivalist; he simply wanted to solve the problems of his community. The search for a solution eventually led him to conclude that Islam was the best remedy for the problem.

After Shradhanand's murder, Mawdudi plunged into the communalist movement, making a choice which determined the direction of his lifelong struggle to preserve the place of Islam in Muslim life. In 1929 he published his book *Al-Jihad fi'l-Islam* (Jihad in Islam). It was not only a response to Hindu challenges to Islam following Shradhanand's death but was also a prologue to a lifetime of religious and political effort. By 1932 the Muslim predicament had become the focus of his life. He increasingly looked to Islam for solutions and gradually adopted a revivalist approach. The result is the movement that Mawdudi's followers regard as the heir to the tradition of Islamic revival (*tajdid*) and as its greatest manifestation in modern times.<sup>8</sup>

Mawdudi's vision unfolded in the context of rapid polarization of the Muslim community. Following the Government of India Act of 1935 and the elections of 1937, the Congress began to make serious overtures to Muslims.<sup>9</sup> Some were enticed into serving as junior partners to the Congress, thus acknowledging Hindu political ascendancy.<sup>10</sup> Others in the Muslim League, which was formed in 1906 as a party for the preservation of Muslim communal interests, under the leadership of Muhammad 'Ali Jinnah (1876–1948) took the opposite course in the 1940s and demanded a separate state for Muslims.<sup>11</sup>

Mawdudi did not join either party. He started with the premise that Muslims should return to a pure and unadulterated Islam to brace themselves for the struggle before them. They should reject Hindu ascendancy and continue to lay claim to the whole of India.<sup>12</sup> He was especially perturbed by those Muslims who were willing to accommodate Hindus, and by supporting the Congress were acquiescing in the inevitability of a Hindu raj. His most venomous rhetoric was reserved for them. Irredentist as Mawdudi's views may have appeared they were communalist in form and content. Hence, his revivalist exhortations did not preclude an endorsement of the "two nation theory."<sup>13</sup> The struggle had to defend Muslim communalist interests in India and to preserve Muslim identity

in the face of imminent Hindu challenges. But first Mawdudi had to vanquish the Muslim League, which he believed to be the sole impediment to his control of Muslim communal politics.

As the creation of Pakistan became more and more likely, Mawdudi's polemical attacks on the Muslim League also increased. He objected to the idea of Muslim nationalism because it would exclude Islam from India and surrender the domain of the Mughals to the Hindus, which would make the eventual extinction of Islam all the easier. The increasingly communal character of the Indian politics of the time, and the appeal made to religious symbols in the formulation of new political alliances and programs by various Muslim groups as well as Muslim League leaders, created a climate in which Mawdudi's theological discourse found understanding and relevance.<sup>14</sup> Although predicated upon secular ideologies, the Pakistan movement was able to mobilize the masses only by appealing to Islam. Nationalism thereby became dependent on Islam and as a result politicized the faith.

A number of Muslim religious and communal organizations, some of which remained nothing more than proposals, pointed to the importance of organizations for promoting Muslim political consciousness and communal interests. The Jama'at emerged as part of this general organization of Muslim activism, which by the early 1940s had become the accepted channel for the expression of Muslim political sentiments. Rivalry with the Muslim League escalated with each step India took toward partition.

After the 1937 defeat of the Muslim League at the polls, Mawdudi's thinking took an increasingly communalist turn, and following the Lahore Resolution of 1940, when the League committed itself to Pakistan, the Jama'at was born as the "counter-League."<sup>15</sup> Mawdudi had originally entered the political fray with the aim of halting the rise of Hindu power and converting the whole of India to Islam—to end forever the uncertainty of the Muslim place in the polyglot culture of India, but by 1940 he had accepted the inevitability of some form of partition of the Subcontinent. He therefore shifted his attention away from the Congress party and toward the Muslim League and its communalist program. Mawdudi's opposition to the League from this point had nothing to do with Jinnah's calling for Muslim autonomy. Mawdudi had simply decided that he should be the one to found and lead the Muslim state of Pakistan if there had to be one. As India moved closer to partition, Mawdudi's political thinking became increasingly clear regarding the polity which he envisioned. He had to position himself to dominate the debate over Pakistan, and to do that he needed the Muslim League's power and prominence, for he distrusted Jinnah's intentions and even more the secularist inclinations of the League's program. The fate of Islam in Kemalist Turkey and Pahlavi Iran had no doubt served as a warning to Mawdudi and to those other Muslims whose rationale for a separate Muslim state was the promise that it would preserve Islam in the Subcontinent.<sup>16</sup> Increasingly, Mawdudi re-

acted directly to the Muslim League's policies, and the Muslim League's conception of what Pakistan was to be was the subject of his strongest attacks. He denounced nationalism and berated secular politics as blasphemy (*kufir*).

In 1947, following partition, Mawdudi was escorted to safety after violence broke out in the Gurdaspur District of Punjab, where the Jama'at was based. He was taken to Lahore by units of the Pakistan army, where his struggle for the soul of Pakistan was revealed. Calling the bluff of Muslim League leaders, who had continuously appealed to Islamic symbols to mobilize support for Pakistan, Mawdudi now demanded an Islamic state where he had once dreamed of an Islamic empire. His program was no longer to save Islam in India but to have it conquer Pakistan.<sup>17</sup>

### *Mawdudi's Ideology*

Mawdudi began to set forth his views on Islam and its place in Muslim life in 1932. In the following sixty-seven years until his death he expounded his vision in numerous lectures, articles, and books, and especially in his journal *Tarjumanu'l-Qur'an*. He advocated complete obedience to Islamic law, narrowly interpreted. Political power was the measure and guarantor of the continued vitality of Islam. Mawdudi chided Muslims for having eliminated politics from religious life, which he believed to be the result of gradual deviation from Islam's true teachings. His interpretive reading of Islam and its history began with denunciation of traditional Islam and its centuries-old institutions. He argued that Islam had no possibility of success as a religion or a civilization—which he argued was meant to be its fate and the reason for its revelation—unless Muslims removed the encumbrances of cultural accretion and tradition, rigorously reconstructed the pristine faith of the Prophet, and gained power. Politics was declared to be an integral and inseparable component of the Islamic faith, and the "Islamic state" which Muslim political action sought to erect was viewed as the panacea to all problems facing Muslims.

As Mawdudi systematically mixed religion with politics, faith with social action, he streamlined the Islamic faith so that it could accommodate its new-found aim. He reinterpreted concepts and symbols, giving them new meanings and connotations. This allowed him to set down a political reading of Islam, in which religious piety was transformed into a structure of authority<sup>18</sup> Faith became ideology and religious works social action. The resulting "system"—what Mawdudi referred to as *din* (literally, "religion")—defined piety This perspective was enunciated ever more lucidly over the years and was gradually extended to incorporate the structure of Islamic faith. It was applied to every aspect of Islamic thought and practice, producing a comprehensive interpretive reading of Islam. In the hands of Mawdudi the transformation of Islam into ideology was complete.

Mawdudi's formulation was by no means rooted in traditional Islam. He

adopted modern ideas and values, mechanisms, procedures, and idioms, weaving them into an Islamic fabric, thus producing an internally consistent and yet hybrid ideological perspective. Mawdudi's vision was not modern through and through, but purported to modernity; he sought not to resurrect an atavistic order but to modernize the traditional conception of Islamic thought and life. His vision represented a clear break with Islamic tradition and a fundamentally new reading of Islam which took its cue from modern thought. In a Foucaultian sense, Mawdudi's vision was the product of a discourse with the "other," the West. His perspective was formed in response to greater Hindu ascendancy in Indian politics of the interwar period. However, for Muslims to mobilize their resources to confront the Hindu challenge, argued Mawdudi, they had to free their souls from Western influence. Hence, Mawdudi's discourse, although motivated by the Hindu challenge, was directed at the West.<sup>19</sup> His ideology showed modernist tendencies, as did his political outlook. He premised his reading of religion and society on a dialectic view of history, in which the struggle between Islam and disbelief (*kufir*) ultimately culminates in a revolutionary struggle. The Jama'at was to be the vanguard of that struggle, which would produce an Islamic utopia. In a similar vein, the Jama'at's views on government, as well as on the party's own operations, also confirmed Mawdudi's break with Islamic tradition, while the terms "revolution," "vanguard," "ideology," "democratic caliphate," and "theodemocracy," which turned up over and over in his polemic and defined the Jama'at's agenda, attested to his modernism. His ideological perspective was openly hostile to both capitalism and socialism. Capitalism was denounced for its secularism, anthropocentrism, and association with the imperialist culture which had marginalized Muslims in India, and socialism for its atheism and its worship of society in place of God. Above all, both capitalism and socialism were seen as rivals which had to be defeated before Islam could dominate the life and thought of Muslims. In practice, however, Mawdudi always remained more wary of socialism than capitalism.

Ideology compelled the action that in Pakistan assumed the form of demanding an Islamic state. The Jama'at demanded a government inspired by and obedient to the writ of the shari'ah and which would promise a utopian order that gave direction to "Islamic" social action. For the Jama'at that state would be erected according to rules and procedures stipulated by Mawdudi. Social action, however, did not imply revolution as the term is understood in the West. Mawdudi believed in incremental change rather than radical ruptures, disparaged violence as a political tool, did not subscribe to class war, and assumed that Islamic revolution would be heralded not by the masses but by the society's leaders. Revolution, in Mawdudi's view, did not erupt from the bottom up but flowed from the top of society down. The aim of Islamic revolution, therefore, was not to spearhead the struggle of the underclass but to convert society's

leaders. During an election campaign in 1958, Mawdudi summed up the Jama'at's plan of action in the following terms: "first of all it brings intellectual change in the people; secondly [it] organises them in order to make them suitable for a movement. Thirdly, it reforms society through social and humanitarian work, and finally it endeavors to change the leadership."<sup>20</sup> Once the leadership had been won over to Islam—the Jama'at taking power—the society would be Islamized and all socioeconomic maladies would be automatically cured. Education and propaganda were therefore singled out as the principal agents for furthering the revolutionary struggle. The Jama'at's efforts have always aimed at winning over society's leaders, conquering the state, and Islamizing the government. Its plan of action has been designed to augment its influence in the inner sanctum of power rather than to curry favor with the masses. Its notions of social action therefore have peculiar meanings and aims.

### *The Origins of the Jama'at-i Islami, 1932–1938*

Mawdudi often said that the idea for establishing the Jama'at-i Islami came to him as he reflected on the problems the Muslims of India faced on the eve of partition.<sup>21</sup> The solution to those problems, he had concluded, would require the services of a political party that could initiate radical changes in Muslim society and at the same time safeguard its interests in India. If the Islamic state was to solve any problem, it could do so only if Muslims were organized and worked for it; they should not expect a miracle to produce a solution.<sup>22</sup> Twenty-two years of observation, reminisced Mawdudi in later years, had led him to believe that no Muslim party was likely to succeed unless it followed high ethical and religious standards and enjoined Muslims to be morally upright and to adhere without compromise to the values of their religion: "I was of the opinion that the importance [of a party] lies not in numbers of its members, but in the dependability of their thoughts and actions."<sup>23</sup> This conviction had its roots in how Mawdudi had read early Islamic history.<sup>24</sup> Mawdudi was greatly impressed by the way the Prophet organized the first Muslims in Mecca and later Medina shortly after the revelation of Islam and harnessed their energies to project the power of Islam across Arabia. For Mawdudi the success of the Prophet's mission could not be explained simply by the power of his message, nor did it owe its fulfillment to the will of God; rather it reflected the Prophet's organizational genius: "Within thirteen years the Prophet was able to gather around him a small but devoted group of courageous and selfless people."<sup>25</sup> Mawdudi thought the Jama'at could do the same: "All those persons who thus surrender themselves are welded into a community and that is how the 'Muslim society' comes into being."<sup>26</sup>

Mawdudi felt that an important aspect of the Prophet's organization had been segregating his community from its larger social context. This enabled the

Prophet to give his organization a distinct identity and permitted the nascent Muslim community to resist dissolution into the larger pagan Arab culture. Instead they were able to pull the adversary into the ambit of Islam. For Mawdudi the Jama'at, much like the Prophetic community, had to be the paragon for the Muslim community of India. It would have to stand apart from the crowd and still draw the Muslim community into the pale of Mawdudi's Islam. The Jama'at was, therefore, at its inception a "holy" community (*ummah*) and a missionary (*da'wah*) movement.<sup>27</sup>

Indian history also provided more immediate and tangible examples for Mawdudi. Since the nineteenth century, when the Fara'izi movement of Haji Shari'atu'llah (d. 1840) in Bengal had introduced its elaborate hierarchical structure of authority to Indian Muslims, organization had a central place in their politics. The penchant for organization building reached its apogee with Abu'l-Kalam Azad (1888–1958). Azad, for the first time, tied the fortunes of the Muslim community of India to finding a definitive organizational solution. In the second decade of the twentieth century he promoted in his journal *Al-Hilal* the Hizbu'llah (Party of God), an organization which he charged with the revival of Muslim religious consciousness while safe-guarding Muslim political interests. Although the Hizbu'llah never amounted to much, its *raison d'être* and the way it worked were outlined in detail and with the customary force and passion of Azad's pen. This scheme left an indelible mark on a whole generation of Muslim intellectuals and political activists across India, among them Mawdudi, who read *Al-Hilal* avidly in his youth.<sup>28</sup>

In 1920, Azad proposed yet another organizational scheme. At the height of the Muslim struggle during World War I, Azad, along with a number of Indian ulama, proposed that the Muslims choose an *amir-i shari'at* (leader of holy law) in each Indian province, to be aided by a council of ulama to oversee the religious affairs of Muslims.<sup>29</sup> These provincial amirs would in turn elect an *amir-i hind* (leader [of the Muslims] of India), a coveted title on which Azad had set his own eyes. While this scheme also came to naught, Azad proceeded to launch an independent campaign for securing the title of *amir-i hind* for himself. He instructed a few close associates who had sworn allegiance (*bai'ah*) to him to travel across India, argue for Azad's claim to the title, and take additional *bai'ahs* on his behalf. One such emissary was Mistrī Muhammad Siddiq, a close companion of Mawdudi in the 1930s who influenced Mawdudi's thinking on organization greatly and helped found the Jama'at.<sup>30</sup> The notion of an omnipotent *amir-i hind*—a single leader for the Muslims of India—enjoying the unwavering allegiance of his disciples later found an echo in the organizational structure of the Jama'at and in Mawdudi's conception of the role and powers of its amir (president or executive).

Despite Azad's widely publicized and popular clamor for an organizational



solution, Muslims did not actually initiate one until the Khilafat movement in 1919–1924,<sup>31</sup> which, for the first time, mobilized the Muslim community under a single political banner. Although the Khilafat movement eventually lost its aim and collapsed following the abrogation of the Muslim caliphate by the Turkish government in 1924, its appeal and indefatigable organizational work captured the imagination of Muslims and anchored their politics in the search for an effective organization. As a young journalist at the *Taj* newspaper in Jubalpur, Central Provinces (1920), and later as the editor of the *Jami‘at-ı Ulama-ı Hind’s* newspaper, *Muslim*, in Delhi (1921–1923), Mawdudi had been active in the Khilafat movement and organized Muslims to support it.<sup>32</sup>

The Khilafat movement’s decline left a vacuum in Muslim politics. The experience had aroused the Muslims’ political consciousness and heightened their sense of communal identity, but it had also left those it had mobilized frustrated and disappointed. Still its considerable success in organizing Muslims did not go unnoticed by those who continued to struggle for the Muslim cause. The Muslim community began to organize and call for unity to face the challenges to Islam. Keen observer as he was, Mawdudi took note of the success of some of these organizations such as the *Tahrik-ı Khaksar* (movement of the devoted; created in 1931) or the Muslim League.<sup>33</sup> In fact, the *Khaksar*, under the leadership of ‘Inayatu’llah Mashriqi (1888–1963), who was renowned for his organizational talent, had grown to be a major force in Punjab at the time. Equally instructive was Muhammad ‘Ali Jinnah’s organization of the Muslim League. Values which formed the basis of the *Jama‘at* in later years echoed Jinnah’s emphasis on solidarity, organization, morality, and perseverance: “Organize yourselves, establish your solidarity and complete unity Equip yourselves as trained and disciplined soldiers. [W]ork loyally, honestly for the cause of your people. There are forces which may bully you, tyrannize over you and intimidate you. But it is by going through the crucible of fire of persecution which may be levelled against you, it is by resisting and maintaining your true convictions and loyalty, that a nation will emerge, worthy of its past glory and history [A]s a well-knit, solid, organized, united force [the Musalmans] can face any danger, and withstand any opposition.”<sup>34</sup>

Sufism also influenced the *Jama‘at’s* organization. The Sufi order (*tariqah*)—which governs the practice of Sufism—facilitates the spiritual ascension of the Sufis.<sup>35</sup> It organizes Sufi members into a set of hierarchically arranged concentric circles, each of which is supervised by a Sufi of higher spiritual rank. The circles eventually culminate in a pyramidal structure, at the pinnacle of which sits the Sufi master (*shaikh*, *pir*, or *murshid*). This pyramidal organizational structure of the Sufi order is symbolic of the spiritual journey of the Sufis from novice to master. It not only governs the practice of Sufism but also creates clear doctrinal and intellectual boundaries around the Sufis, sequestering them from the society

at large. The spiritual seclusion of the Sufi community eliminates outside influences and promotes concentration, learning, and character. To join the Sufi order, a novice must undergo initiation and submit to a form of “conversion”—declare his commitment to the spiritual path and surrender his soul to the guidance of the Sufi master—which is popularly known as the *sarsipurdaḡi* (literally, placing one’s head on the master’s lap). The initiation into Sufism involves an allegiance (*bai’ah*), which symbolizes and confirms the Sufi’s commitment to his master. The allegiance demands of a Sufi total submission and obedience to the master, for he commands the Sufi’s soul, guiding it through the maze of spiritual experiences and mundane travails to the realization of the Absolute Truth which is God.<sup>36</sup> A Sufi order is often centered in a hospice (*khanaqah*), where many Sufis take up residence in order to be close to their master.

Committed to reforming Islam, Mawdudi had little tolerance for what he believed to be the latitudinarian tendencies of Sufism. But, despite his ambivalence toward the esoteric dimension of Islam, in the Sufi order he saw a valuable organizational model:

Sufis in Islam have a special form of organization known as *khanaqah*. Today this has a bad image. But the truth is that it is the best institution in Islam. [I]t is necessary that this institution be revived in India, and in various places small *khanaqahs* be established. Therein novices can read the most valuable religious sources, and live in a pure environment. This institution encompasses the functions of club, library and *ashram* [Hindu place of worship]. [The] entire scheme rests on selection of the *shaiikh* [master]. [A]t least I do not know of someone with all the qualifications. [I]f this task is to be undertaken, India should be searched for the right person.<sup>37</sup>

Many elements of this laudatory description were featured in the Jama’at’s original plans and governed the party’s early stages of development at Pathankot between 1942 and 1947

The Sufi order’s emphasis on the central role of the Sufi master and total submission to his example and ideas was akin to Mawdudi’s conception of the role of the amir in the Jama’at. In a letter dated March 1941, some four months before the formation of the Jama’at, Mawdudi compared membership in an “Islamic party” with the Sufi’s giving allegiance (*bai’ah*) to the master, and emphasized the primacy of the overseer of such a party in its functioning.<sup>38</sup> Mawdudi, however, made a distinction between his views and those of the Sufis by proclaiming that allegiance in the Jama’at was to the office of the amir, and not to himself personally.<sup>39</sup> Many Jama’at leaders have since lamented that as a consequence of this attitude, from its inception Mawdudi exceeded the managerial duties the amir was supposed to perform, because he looked upon his relation with the Jama’at members as that of a master (*murshid*) with his disciples

(*murids*).<sup>40</sup> In fact, for some the prospects of giving allegiance, albeit not openly, to Mawdudi was a compelling enough reason not to join the Jama'at.

Despite its roots in the Islamic tradition, the Jama'at-ı İslamı is a modern party. Its structure, procedural methods, and pattern of growth reflect modern ideas and attest to a successful accommodation of modernization within an Islamic milieu. It has managed to escape the decay that has, for instance, reduced the Congress party, the Muslim League, and the Pakistan People's Party to patrimonial and dynastic political institutions, and in the case of the last two led to debilitating factionalism. The Jama'at has rather created mechanisms, bureaucratic structures, and management that have thus far withstood the pressures of the fractious and patrimonial system in which it operates. This organizational strength owes much to the European models on display in the 1930s—fascism and, even more, communism.<sup>41</sup> Mawdudi had avidly studied these models. As a result, the Jama'at was never a "party" in the liberal democratic sense of the term—translating popular interests into policy positions; it is, rather, an "organizational weapon"<sup>42</sup> in the Leninist tradition, devised to project the power of an ideological perspective into the political arena. While Mawdudi differed with Lenin in seeking to utilize this "weapon" within a constitutional order, its structure and functioning closely paralleled those of bolshevism.

Smith writes that Lenin replaced the working class with the party, as the vanguard without which the working class would be unable to gain political consciousness and become a revolutionary movement.<sup>43</sup> Lenin's party worked on the principle of "democratic centralism, [wherein] rank-and-file members [were] strictly subordinate to the leadership . . . decision making was to be 'central' in formulation, with rank-and-file members copying out orders received, but that higher bodies were to be 'democratically' accountable to the membership at periodic meetings."<sup>44</sup> Propaganda, while designed to further the cause of the revolution, also acted to reinforce group solidarity within the party, forming the basis of a well-knit administrative party and network of cadres.<sup>45</sup>

For Lenin the vanguard was won over by the doctrine and then charged with the task of maneuvering the masses into position for the struggle against the economic and political order.<sup>46</sup> The Jama'at fulfilled the same function with the difference that it focused its attention not so much on organizing the masses as on maneuvering the leaders of society. This was a significant departure from the Leninist model and one that muddled the meaning of revolution in Jama'at's ideology. Mawdudi defined revolution as an irenic process, one which would occur once the leaders of the society were Islamized. Although he used the term "revolution" to impress upon his audience the progressive image of his discourse, he did not view it as a process of cataclysmic social change. Rather, he used revolution as a way of gauging the extent of differences between an Islamized society and the one that preceded it.<sup>47</sup> As a result, Mawdudi's "organizational weapon" was never as lucidly defined as Lenin's was. For Mawdudi, the

Jama'at was both a "virtuous community" and a political party. It would bring about change by expanding its own boundaries and waging a struggle against the established order, but with the aim of winning over leaders rather than the toiling masses. The mechanisms and working of the process of change therefore remained less clearly defined, reducing its strength considerably. What the role of the party in realizing the ideology should be was, however, essentially the same.

The similarity between the two movements is not just conjectural. Mawdudi was familiar with Communist literature,<sup>48</sup> and true to his style, he learned from it, and from the Communist movement in India, especially in Hyderabad, in the 1930s and in the 1940s, when the Communist-inspired Telangana movement seriously challenged the nizam's regime. Mian Tufayl Muhammad, Jama'at's amir between 1972 and 1987, recalls a conversation in which Mawdudi commented: "no more than 1/100,000 of Indians are Communists, and yet see how they fight to rule India; if Muslims who are one-third of India be shown the way, it will not be so difficult for them to be victorious."<sup>49</sup> In later years former Communists joined the ranks of the Jama'at, bringing with them additional expertise in the structure and operation of Communist parties.

That the Jama'at's and Lenin's ideas about the "organizational weapon" were similar confirms that the relation of ideology to social action in Mawdudi's works closely followed the Leninist example. Mawdudi argued that in order for his interpretation of Islam to grow roots and support an Islamic movement he had to form a tightly knit party. An organizational weapon was therefore the prerequisite to making Islam into an ideology and using religion as an agent for change. "No particular event prompted the creation of the Jama'at," recalls the senior Jama'at leader, Fazlu'rrahman Na'im Siddiqi; "it was the culmination of the ideas which Mawdudi advocated and the agenda which he had set before himself since 1932."<sup>50</sup>

Mawdudi first proposed an organizational solution to the political predicaments of Indian Muslims in 1934: "The erection, endurance and success of a social order requires two things: one, that a *jama'at* [party or society] be founded on that order's principles and second, that there be patience and obedience to that *jama'at*."<sup>51</sup> His notion of a *jama'at* was not clear at this stage; its boundaries were vague for the most part. It reflected Mawdudi's desire to invigorate the Islamic faith and re-create a rigorous, virtuous community (*ummah*) as a force for change and a bulwark against the political marginalization of Indian Muslims. It could not remain abstract for long. The definition of the *jama'at* had to be narrowed from an amorphous community to a concrete entity. Although Mawdudi knew this, he failed to appreciate the need to draw a clear line between holy community and political party. Consequently, the Jama'at has since its inception remained committed to both its avowedly religious and its essentially sociopolitical functions.

This division first became manifest as Mawdudi became more and more involved in Indian politics from 1937 onward. When politics led him to depend on an organizational solution to the quandary before the Muslim community, his agenda and plan of action became increasingly confused. Political exigencies blurred the distinction between a revived *ummah*, defined in terms of greater religious observance, and a communally conscious political party dedicated to social action. It was not clear whether Muslims were supposed to take refuge in the spiritual promise of the holy community and withdraw from Indian society, or whether they were to immerse themselves in social action with the hope of reversing the fortunes of their beleaguered community. For Mawdudi the dichotomy between social action and spirituality, between the party and the *ummah*, was unimportant: the two would eventually be one and the same. A party would be a vehicle for harnessing the political power of the Muslims, not only by virtue of its organizational structure but also by the power of its moral rectitude. The strength of the party would emanate as much from its structure as from its embodiment of the Islamic ideal. In Mawdudi's eyes, just as safeguarding Muslim political concerns required turning to Islam, so enacting the dicta of Islam would ipso facto lead to political action. Religion had no meaning without politics, and politics no luster if divorced from religion. Mawdudi saw the connection between Islam and politics not as a hindrance but as an ingenious idea, an intellectual breakthrough, of using Islamic ideals to reshape the sociopolitical order.

Integrating Islam and politics was of course not a new idea, but it had thus far found no institutional manifestation in Islamic history.<sup>52</sup> Throughout the ages, Muslims were even aware that the two were inherently incompatible. They paid lip service to the political directives of the Islamic revelation, but more often than not they separated religious institutions from political ones, lest politics corrupt the faith. Political leaders had sought to mobilize Islam in the service of the state, but rarely sought to extend the purview of their faith to include politics. For Muslims, the integration of religious and political authority in the person of Prophet Muhammad, like every aspect of the Prophet's mission, was a unique and metahistorical event. The Medina community was not institutionalized in the structure of Islamic thought, nor in the body politic of the Islamicate.<sup>53</sup> It rather remained a normative ideal, one which has surfaced time and again, in the form of Muslim chiliasm and atavistic yearning. The historical development of Islam—into what has been termed “traditional” Islam—was, therefore, predicated upon a de facto delineation of the boundary between religion and politics and a sober understanding of the relative weight of normative ideals and the imperatives of exigent realities in the life of man. The historical reality of Islam was even canonized in Islamic political doctrine, in lieu of the normative ideal of a holistic view of Islam. Muslim theorists from al-Mawardi (d. 1058) to al-Ghazzali (d. 1111) implicitly sanctioned the separation

of religion and politics using the largely symbolic institution of the caliphate. Insisting upon the continuity between religion and politics is, therefore, an innovation of modern Islamic political thought.

The lesson of Islamic history and the logic of the traditional Islamic perspective clearly eluded Mawdudi, who like most revivalist thinkers was driven by faith and the promise of a utopia modeled after the Prophet's community. Contemporary revivalists, Shaikh writes, have "approached the notion of [political] power not as a quantity that is intrinsically corrupting, apropos say of Christian doctrine, but as God's most eminent instrument for Man in the service of Divine justice, a legitimate pursuit without forfeiting morality."<sup>54</sup>

The political circumstances of the repartition years and the frustration Mawdudi shared with his coreligionists only added to his inability to see the inconsistency in combining religion and politics, holy community and political party. Organization, he believed, would harmonize spirituality and politics, and would provide a panacea for Muslims. This conclusion further underscored the Janus face of the *jama'at*, as an exemplary community which would be the repository of Muslim values, and as a party which was to spearhead their drive for power. This contradiction tore the *Jama'at* between the conflicting requirements of its claim to pristine virtuosity and the exigencies of social action. The inability to resolve this confusion satisfactorily has been the single most important source of tension in the *Jama'at*, and hence the impetus for continuous clarification of the party's religious role, social function, and political aims.

### *The Emergence of the Jama'at-ı İslamı, 1938–1941*

Mawdudi's organizational solution took shape between 1938 and 1941, the years when Indian politics had become hopelessly polarized between the Congress and the Muslim League. In the face of the mounting crisis Mawdudi exhorted Muslim parties and organizations to unite, but his exhortation fell on deaf ears. India continued to slide toward partition, and the only parties that thrived were the Congress and the Muslim League. Mawdudi had no confidence in their ability to realize Muslim goals, and he was even less sanguine about the prospects under the aegis of the smaller Muslim parties and organizations that cluttered the political scene. The gap between the religious and the political aspects of their program, Mawdudi believed, made them ineffectual; they were either too secular in their outlook, as was the case with the Muslim League, or too preoccupied with purely religious concerns, as was the Tablighi *Jama'at* (Missionary Society).

In venomous invectives against the Congress party and its Muslim allies, such as the *Jami'at-ı Ulama-ı Hind*, and against the Muslim League, the *Khaksar*, and other Muslim parties, Mawdudi belabored their shortcomings in an attempt to gain support, but it soon became apparent that he had to do more than excoriate his rivals; he had to establish a party that could relay his ideas to the masses and

harness their energies in promoting his cause. Later Mawdudi recalled the idea of the Jama'at as having been "a last resort," necessitated by the collapse of the social order in Muslim India.<sup>55</sup>

Accompanied by a small group of friends and followers, Mawdudi arrived in Lahore in January 1939. During the preceding three months, he had been stationed in the small village of Pathankot in East Punjab, where he had established a Muslim religious and educational institution called Daru'l-Islam (abode of Islam),<sup>56</sup> which he hoped would help revive Islam in India and thereby promote Muslim political power. He then decided to abandon the isolation of Pathankot and to take Daru'l-Islam to a major metropolitan center with a large Muslim community. But when he reached Lahore, he soon decided that the situation was too acute to await long-term solutions, and he abandoned the Daru'l-Islam project.<sup>57</sup>

Lahore sharpened Mawdudi's focus, leading him not only to drop his insouciant attitude toward political activism but also to escalate his already incessant fulminations against the Muslim League in his journal *Tarjumanu'l-Qur'an*.<sup>58</sup> His expositions on Islam and Muslim politics often served as the pretext for tirades against colonialism and the Raj as well, which soon created problems for him with the provincial authorities. In the September 1939 issue of the *Tarjuman*, for instance, Mawdudi wrote an article entitled "Aqwam-ı Maghrib ka 'Ibratnak Anjam" (The poignant lesson of the fate of Western nations) in which he castigated the Raj and discouraged Indians from supporting the British war effort; that issue of the *Tarjuman* was censored by the press branch of the Punjab government.<sup>59</sup>

In the same month Mawdudi accepted a teaching position at Lahore's Islamiyah College, but afraid of restrictions on his freedom of speech, he refused to take a salary.<sup>60</sup> His openly political classroom lectures were popular with the students.<sup>61</sup> A number of prominent Jama'at members were students at the college at the time and became Mawdudi's followers after hearing his lectures.<sup>62</sup> The lectures, however, raised the ire of the college administration, and of the Unionist Party government of Punjab, which found them inflammatory. Troubled by his rising popularity, it urged the college to dismiss him.<sup>63</sup> The college administration sought to curb his tongue by offering him a salary, but Mawdudi left the college in the summer of 1940, convinced that the cause of Islam would not fare well so long as the government was hostile to it.

Mawdudi wrote and traveled extensively during this period, delivering numerous lectures on the relation of Islam to politics. His audience was, by and large, composed of Muslim intellectuals, and because of that his discourse remained focused on educational concerns. During his tours he frequently visited Muslim schools such as the Aligarh Muslim University, the Muslim Anglo Oriental College of Amritsar, the Islamiyah College of Peshawar and the Nadwatu'l-

Ulama in Lucknow The accolades of the intellectuals greatly encouraged him and gave him confidence to discuss his ambitions more openly.<sup>64</sup> It was to them that, in 1939–1940, he first publicly proposed the creation of a new party, viewing it as the logical end of any struggle in the path of Islam, and the harbinger of a successful revival (*tajdid*) movement.<sup>65</sup> In a letter to Zafaru'l-Hasan (d. 1951) of Aligarh Muslim University, dated A.H. 23 Rabi'u'l-Thani 1357 (1938–1939),<sup>66</sup> Mawdudi wrote of the political predicament before the Muslims and the Muslim League's inability to formulate a solid ideological position to solve it. Alluding to his personal ambitions, he wrote that "preferably, such Muslim luminaries as 'Allamah Mashriqi, Mawlana Husain Ahmad Madani, Dr. Khayri, Mawlana Azad Subhani or Mr. Durani should initiate and lead this effort," but because they were not "likely to provide the necessary guidance," the mantle of leadership, Mawdudi implied, would by default fall on his shoulders.<sup>67</sup> The names cited by Mawdudi ran the gamut of Muslim political opinion. Having found them incapable of providing the leadership necessary, Mawdudi was suggesting that he alone was able to give Muslims the leadership they needed. His lines to Zafaru'l-Hasan also revealed the extent to which his thinking was influenced by the politics of the Muslim League. For "the envisioned veritable organization" of which he wrote to Zafaru'l-Hasan was to "serve as a 'rear guard' [written in English] to the Muslim League."<sup>68</sup> The consolidation of the Jama'at's agenda was thus predicated upon the vicissitudes of the League's politics.

Mawdudi's aim was to significantly alter the balance of power between Muslims, Hindus, and the colonial order. It was not "winning in elections"—a clear reference to the Muslim League's strategy and objectives at the time—that interested him, but rather the revamping of the cultural and hence political foundations of the Muslim community of India, vesting Muslims with the ability to find a solution to their political weakness. This goal required great sacrifice and moral dedication which he did not believe the Muslim League, with its half-hearted commitment to Islam, to be capable of.<sup>69</sup> What the Muslims needed was a cadre of dedicated, morally upright, and religiously exemplary men who would both represent the ideals of the Islamic order and be prepared to achieve it.<sup>70</sup> The need for a "vanguard" became even more apparent when the Muslim League's Lahore Resolution was passed in 1940. That resolution formally advocated a separate state for Muslims in northern India and presented a whole new arena—a Muslim state—for Mawdudi's ideas to operate in. It also showed that the Muslim League increasingly dominated Muslim politics, which in turn pushed him into launching his party to prevent the League from consolidating its hold over Muslims. Thenceforth, the policies of the Muslim League would become the Jama'at's calling, and Jinnah's conception of Pakistan would be the single subject of Mawdudi's invective.

Mawdudi's perception of himself as the only leader capable of delivering



Muslims from their predicament became increasingly more pronounced.<sup>71</sup> He harbored ambitions to lead Indian Muslims as a scholar, renewer of the faith, and supreme political leader. His insistence on distributing his works far and wide in this period was part of an effort to establish his claim to the leadership of the Muslims.<sup>72</sup> His opinions were compiled in the three volumes of *Musalman Awr Mawjudah Siyasī Kashmakash* (Muslims and the Current Political Crisis), in which he opposes both accommodating the Hindu-led “composite nationalism” of the Congress party and the pro-British and secular Muslim nationalism of the Muslim League. Many have concluded that Mawdudi therefore favored preserving the unity of India under Muslim rule, after a wide-scale conversion of the population to Islam, but this is not the case.<sup>73</sup> While at an earlier time Mawdudi might have thought on an all-Indian scale, by the time he settled in Lahore in 1939 he believed that the social and political ascendancy of the Hindus in India was irreversible.<sup>74</sup>

His firsthand observation of the decline of the last bastion of Muslim power in southern India, the Hyderabad state, experiences with the Shuddhī campaign, and the Congress party’s attitude toward the Muslims following the Khilafat movement had convinced him that Muslims were destined for a servile coexistence with the Hindus, a future in which he wished to have no part. Nor had he high hopes for the wide-scale conversion of Hindus to Islam, nor did he command the Jama‘at to undertake such a mission. Between 1938 and 1947, although the Jama‘at continued to operate across India, Mawdudi’s attention was increasingly focused on the Muslim-majority northwestern provinces. He might have preferred the Muslims to rule a united India, but faced with the prospects of a Hindu political order he was in no way opposed to the idea of India’s partition and actually began to tailor his program to take advantage of such an eventuality. In the December 1938 issue of the *Tarjuman* he adumbrated “two nation” theories of his own within the context of a united India: “We are a distinct people whose social life is based on a particular ethical and cultural norm. We differ in fundamental ways with the majority population. [N]o compromise or reconciliation will be possible.”<sup>75</sup> Although Mawdudi did not speak of partition, he was acquiescing to the political realities of the time. His plan, much like those of his contemporaries, was initially set in the context of a united India. Its inner logic, however, nudged Muslims closer and closer to partition. In later years Mawdudi, reflecting on his thinking during this period, stated that he never opposed the Muslim League’s demand for partition but rather was against the party’s secularist attitude: “Our concern then [1941–1947] was Islam, and the ability of those who sought to represent it.”<sup>76</sup>

Mawdudi’s view of his own leadership was formed not in competition with the ulama or the *pirs*, or with other self-styled Muslim leaders such as Mashriqī, Mawlana Muhammad Iliyas (1885–1944), or Azad, but in rivalry with Jinnah, the *qa’id-i a‘zam* (supreme leader) of the Muslim League. Mawdudi shared Jinnah’s

concern for the future of Indian Muslims and their rights to cultural and social autonomy, but parted with Jinnah in that the former looked to Islam as the principle legitimating force in Muslim politics whereas the latter appealed to the normative values of the Indo-Muslim tradition. Mawdudi's vision had little room for compromise on Islamic ideals, whereas Jinnah defined the Muslim community in broad and latitudinarian terms. Mawdudi, no doubt, viewed the anglicized style and the secular beliefs of Jinnah with contempt and no doubt eyed his power and popularity with a certain degree of envy

Jinnah's success as a political leader had convinced Mawdudi of his own potential. For if a Westernized lawyer could sway the masses in the name of Islam,<sup>77</sup> then a "true" Muslim leader could certainly attain even greater success. "Abu'l-A'la not only compared himself to Jinnah," recollected Abu'l-Khayr, Mawdudi's elder brother, "but also viewed himself as even a greater leader than Jinnah."<sup>78</sup> Jinnah's power, Mawdudi had concluded, was tenuous—predicated upon Islam, to which the Muslim League leader had no real attachments. Shaikh writes that, confronted with Congress's claim to representing Muslims as well as Hindus, Jinnah's strategy was "to affirm that, Congress could not represent Indian Muslims because it was not representative, that is to say typical, of Indian Muslims."<sup>79</sup> Taken to its natural conclusion, the argument could be turned against Jinnah by Mawdudi, who could assert that he and the Jama'at were more representative and "typical" of Muslims than the anglicized Jinnah and the secularist Muslim League. Mawdudi said of Jinnah's enterprise: "No trace of Islam can be found in the ideas and politics of Muslim League [Jinnah] reveals no knowledge of the views of the Qur'an, nor does he care to research them yet whatever he does is seen as the way of the Qur'an All his knowledge comes from Western laws and sources His followers cannot be but *jama'at-i jahiliyah* [party of pagans]."<sup>80</sup> The term *jama'at-i jahiliyah* was no doubt coined to make the contrast between the Muslim League and the Jama'at-i Islami more apparent. If the argument of affinity as a basis for representation could win the day for the Muslim League against Congress, all the more could it justify the Jama'at's claim to leadership of the Muslims.

Mawdudi also saw the Muslim League as essentially a one-man show, in contrast to his movement, which was more disciplined and therefore better poised to manipulate Muslim politics. The Jama'at, Mawdudi believed, was what the League pretended to be and was not.<sup>81</sup> Mawdudi thought that the League's appeal came not from the intransigence of the Congress party or that of the Raj in the face of Muslim demands, nor from the dynamics of the struggle for independence, but from its appeal to the religious sensibilities of Muslims. The use of Islamic symbols in enunciating Muslim communalist demands had become so pervasive that, by the mid-1940s, the Muslim League resembled "a chiliastic movement rather than a pragmatic party"<sup>82</sup> Mawdudi clearly took the League's

rhetoric at face value and concluded that Islam—and not only the cultural norms of the Indo-Muslim traditions—formed the crux of Muslim politics and provided those who claimed to represent it with legitimacy. From this it followed that the Jama‘at was the only party equipped to deliver to the Muslims what the Muslim League had promised them. Having understood the politics of the Muslims of India solely in terms of Islam, Mawdudi became oblivious to the actual political dynamics of his community, a blind spot that continued to characterize his approach to politics during his years in Pakistan. Convinced of his eventual domination of Muslim politics, he groomed the Jama‘at to be the “true Muslim League”<sup>83</sup>—the “rear guard” of which he had written to Zafaru‘l-Hasan—and prepared it to take advantage of the League’s expected demise.<sup>84</sup> The Jama‘at was therefore opposed not to Pakistan but to the Muslim League. It was the expectation that Mawdudi would become its leader and not the partition of the Subcontinent that led him to oppose the Muslim League both before and after the creation of Pakistan.

Jinnah’s meteoric rise enticed Mawdudi into politics, giving him the false expectation that as soon as his message was heard by the Muslims of India, and, later, of Pakistan, he would enjoy even greater prominence. The Jama‘at was created, in part, to disseminate Mawdudi’s message and catapult him into a position of power. Jinnah’s example therefore both guided and misguided Mawdudi. It reinforced his political ambitions and effectively committed him to communal politics, the end result of which was the creation of Pakistan.

### *The Early Years, 1941–1947*

In the April 1941 issue of the *Tarjuman*, Mawdudi invited all those who were interested in forming a new Muslim party based on Islamic ideals to a meeting in Lahore.<sup>85</sup> On August 26, 1941, seventy-five men, most of whom had not known Mawdudi previously,<sup>86</sup> responded to his invitation and gathered at the house of Mawlana Zafar Iqbal.<sup>87</sup> The Jama‘at was officially formed after each of the seventy-five, following the example of Mawdudi, stood up and professed the Muslim testament of faith (*shahadah*)—thereby reentering Islam and forming a new holy community.<sup>88</sup> The constitution of the Jama‘at and the criteria for membership were all duly agreed upon during the course of that first session of the party, which lasted for three days. While all those who attended this gathering were familiar with Mawdudi’s articles in the *Tarjuman* and therefore by virtue of their presence concurred with his views on the simultaneously religious and sociopolitical function of the Jama‘at, they were not in agreement over the manner in which the party was to be governed. Some of those present favored an amir, as did Mawdudi who told the gathering, “Islam is none other than *jama‘at*, and *jama‘at* is none other than *imarat* [amirate].”<sup>89</sup> Others advocated a ruling council. Among those who favored an amir there was little

concord regarding the extent of his powers. Mawdudi with the help of a number of those present struck a compromise: the Jama'at would be led by an amir with limited powers—a *primus inter pares*.<sup>90</sup>

The debate then turned to the selection of the party's first amir. The founding members agreed that, in the interests of minimizing the corrupting effects of politicking, no one would be permitted to forward his own candidacy. In addition to Mawdudi another possible contender for the office of amir was Muhammad Manzur Nu'mani, a Deobandi religious leader, who was the editor of *Al-Furqan*, a respectable religious journal in Lucknow. Nu'mani had known Mawdudi since a visit to him at Pathankot in 1938 and believed that he and Mawdudi had jointly conceived of the idea of the Jama'at after the two read Sayyid Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali Nadwi's biography of the revivalist jihad leader Sayyid Ahmad Shahid (1786–1831).<sup>91</sup> Nu'mani had used his journal to support Mawdudi's call for the Jama'at and his influence to get prominent men such as Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali Nadwi to attend the first session of the Jama'at.<sup>92</sup> Nu'mani therefore wielded considerable clout in that first session, and as his differences with Mawdudi in later years indicate, he was not uninterested in being the Jama'at's leader. Amin Ahsan Islahi, too, was a strong contender for the position of amir.<sup>93</sup> As the editor of *Al-Islah*, a student of Sayyid Sulaiman Nadwi (1884–1953) and Hamidu'ddin Farahi (d. 1930), and an instructor at the Madrasatu'l-Islah seminary (*daru'l-'ulum*) of Sara'ı Mir in United Provinces, he was a towering figure among the Jama'at's founders. Islahi was not under the sway of Mawdudi's intellect and had, in fact, in the 1937–1938 period taken issue with some views expressed by Mawdudi which had led to an open and spirited debate between the two.<sup>94</sup>

However, most of those present felt that since the Jama'at was Mawdudi's idea and brainchild he should serve as its first head,<sup>95</sup> and a committee was formed to nominate Mawdudi and Muhammad ibn 'Ali Kakwarwi for the office of amir.<sup>96</sup> Mawdudi was elected by a majority of the founding members on August 27, 1941.<sup>97</sup> Their mandate was not religious; they simply chose the best manager among them to lead the party.

After the meeting in Lahore the founding members dispersed to recruit new members. Nu'mani and his journal again propagated the Jama'at's cause and invited new members into its fold, efforts which soon led Nu'mani to claim the party's leadership.<sup>98</sup> Those who joined were drawn from among those who were disturbed by the direction Muslim politics had taken, who objected to the Congress party's Muslim Mass Contact Campaign, which was designed to create support for the Congress party among Muslims, and who regarded as dangerous the domination of Muslim politics by Congress and the Muslim League. Many of them thought that Muslims lacked effective leaders and were attracted by the Jama'at's anti-British rhetoric, which they had missed in the Muslim League's

platform.<sup>99</sup> Many had been influenced by Azad and the fiery articles of *Al-Hilal*, and then deserted him after Azad's decision to embrace the Congress party,<sup>100</sup> to find solace in the Jama'at.

Mawdudi had sent invitations to join to some fifty senior Indian ulama, including Manazir Ahsan Gilani, 'Abdu'l-Majid Daryabadi, Qari Muhammad Tayyib, and Husain Ahmad Madani, all of whom declined.<sup>101</sup> Young ulama, however, were well represented among the early members of the Jama'at. Sixteen joined in 1941, six from *Madrasatu'l-Islah*, four Deobandis, four Nadwis,<sup>102</sup> and at least two of the *Ahl-i Hadith*. By 1945 the Jama'at boasted some 224 ulama members, 60 of whom continued to teach at various religious seminaries.<sup>103</sup> Some of the Jama'at's most loyal and dedicated members such as Mian Tufayl and Malik Ghulam 'Ali also joined the party at this time. They proved to be Mawdudi's staunchest supporters and became leaders of the Jama'at in Pakistan.

Given the diversity of its membership and the stature of many as ulama and votaries of different schools of Islamic thought, in its early years the Jama'at did not become a centralized movement, nor did its amorphous structure permit its effective control by the amir. It operated by gaining a consensus on its objectives: to imbue Muslim character with religious values and to serve as an alternative to both the Muslim League and the Congress. Great emphasis was placed on moral rectitude and education in these years, confirming the party's view of itself as essentially a holy community. The Jama'at sought to shape Muslim politics by encompassing society as a whole; winning elections was not as yet an overriding concern. It viewed its strategy as a more fundamental and definitive solution to the intractable problems which beleaguered the Muslim community. Hence, from its inception the Jama'at saw education and propaganda as central to its program, even if at the cost of an effective political agenda.

Some six months after the Jama'at was founded, Mawdudi and Nu'mani decided to leave Lahore. They were afraid that their nascent party would be engulfed by the Pakistan movement. Emulating the Prophet's example, the new party had to withdraw from the larger society, lest its ideological purity be compromised.<sup>104</sup> At first Sialkot, a small city in West Punjab, was considered as a base, but later leaders turned to Pathankot and the site of the *Daru'l-Islam* project.<sup>105</sup> On June 15, 1942, the Jama'at moved to Pathankot.<sup>106</sup>

The Pathankot years (1942–1947) were a time of organizational and intellectual consolidation. A significant number of the Jama'at's members also moved there to form strong personal, intellectual, and organizational bonds, away from the tumult of national politics. Pathankot provided time for learning, debate, and intellectual creativity. Many of the Jama'at's members belonged to different religious schools of thought, and the impact of the debates between Deobandis, Nadwis, *Islahis*, and the *Ahl-i Hadith* during this period was later to appear in some of the ways Mawdudi read Islam and its place in society.

Both leaders and members periodically emerged from their holy community to travel across India from Peshawar to Patna to Madras, holding regional and all-India conventions, addressing audiences, and establishing a nationwide organizational network.<sup>107</sup> These itinerant gatherings were a source of new recruits and sympathizers for the party and permitted the Jama'at to remain in the political fray despite its seclusion in Pathankot. The strategy was also successful in diversifying the Jama'at's ethnic and geographic base of support. In 1946, of the party's 486 members, 291 were from Punjab, 60 from United Provinces, 36 from Hyderabad, 31 from Madras, 14 from Delhi, 12 from central India, 10 from North-West Frontier Province, 9 from Bombay, 8 from Sind, 7 from Bihar, 6 from Mysore, and 2 from Bengal.<sup>108</sup>

By 1947 the Jama'at boasted at least one member in every Indian province except Assam, Baluchistan, and Orissa.<sup>109</sup> Its leaders, as reflected in the geographical distribution of the central consultative assembly (*markazi majlis-i shura'*) between 1945 and 1947, however, remained predominantly North Indian and from Muslim minority provinces. Of the sixteen shura' members in those years, four were from Punjab, three from United Provinces, one from Delhi, one from Bihar, two from Hyderabad, and one from Bombay.<sup>110</sup> Changes in the national representation were significant, the more so in that the number of members from areas that were inherited by Pakistan increased in these critical years. In 1947, 277 requests for membership were submitted to the Jama'at, 136 of which were accepted. Some 50 percent of the applications came from Pakistan's future provinces, as were 40 percent of those accepted into the Jama'at.<sup>111</sup>

Moving to Pathankot brought out a problem latent in the Jama'at's structure. The powers of the amir had been left undefined by the founding members, and Mawdudi saw his position as that of a spiritual and political leader of an ideologically committed movement. Many others, however, regarded the office of the amir as that of director or overseer. As a result, the obedience which he demanded from members was not always forthcoming, especially from those who saw themselves as Mawdudi's equal, or even superior in religious matters, and who had a religious education. The communal life at Pathankot brought the tension between Mawdudi's leadership and the perception of it among members into the open, and led to defection in the ranks. Nu'mani, for one, a Deobandi religious leader and the editor of *Al-Furqan*, thought himself superior to Mawdudi in piety and scholarship.<sup>112</sup> While he had acquiesced to Mawdudi's election to the office of the amir, at Pathankot he began to challenge Mawdudi's authority by demanding that Mawdudi relinquish control to the Jama'at of the royalties of the *Tarjuman* and his celebrated book *Risalah-i Diniyat* (Treatise on religion, 1932)<sup>113</sup> and by questioning Mawdudi's own moral standing and piety.

The early years of the Jama'at were a time of great financial difficulties and personal sacrifices, the more so for those who had left city living for the

provincialism of Pathankot. Discrepancies in the way the amir and other members lived, therefore, quickly became an intractable problem. While other residents lived spartan lives, Mawdudi maintained a separate house, a servant, and amenities not available to others.<sup>114</sup> The irritation this situation caused was sufficiently pronounced to permit Nu'mani to manipulate it to his advantage. Nu'mani demanded that the publication royalties, which Mawdudi claimed were providing his livelihood, be turned over to the Jama'at for the benefit of all members. The very notion of a holy community precluded differences in the members' standard of living and the separation of personal affairs from group interests. The Jama'at, argued Nu'mani, was not an extension of Mawdudi, but should encompass his whole livelihood—as Mawdudi had demanded of other members.<sup>115</sup> Mawdudi retorted that both the journal and the book had been his personal undertakings long before he conceived of the Jama'at. The party, argued Mawdudi, had no propriety rights over his scholarship.<sup>116</sup> For both Mawdudi and Nu'mani, raising this issue challenged the authority and person of the amir.

Nu'mani then followed this initial assault with another. He contended that Mawdudi's beard was not the right length, his wife did not cover herself properly before their male servant, Mawdudi himself had not been prompt for dawn prayers, and, generally, his piety was not in keeping with what was expected of the amir of a holy Muslim community.<sup>117</sup> Mawdudi rather apologetically conceded that his behavior and that of his wife were not always ideal, but they had changed their ways to accord with what the position of the amir required of them. However, suspicious of Nu'mani's ambitions, Mawdudi remained unrepentant and refused to acknowledge the charges brought against him as a reflection on his moral standing and as sufficient cause to warrant his resignation.<sup>118</sup> Nu'mani then pressed the Jama'at to convene a special session of the shura' to decide the argument.<sup>119</sup>

Nu'mani had, in the meantime, consulted with a number of Jama'at members, notably Amin Ahsan Islahi and Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali Nadwi, regarding the issues at stake. Convinced that he had support for his position, Nu'mani sought to use the shura' session that met in October 1942 to unseat Mawdudi altogether. In response to the complaints which Nu'mani placed before the shura', Mawdudi offered either to resign from the office of amir or, alternatively, to dissolve the Jama'at. Nu'mani and his supporters opted for dissolution. The shura', however, was not prepared for that and moved to Mawdudi's side. Nu'mani's faction, consisting of Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali Nadwi, Muhammad Ja'far Phulwari (briefly the deputy amir of the Jama'at), and Qamaru'ddin Khan (the secretary-general of the Jama'at at the time) resigned from the party.<sup>120</sup> The defectors were few in number, but significant in status.

Defeated, Nu'mani began a public campaign against Mawdudi in his journal

*Al-Furqan*, claiming that since he had been responsible for enlisting the support of so many for the Jama'at, he now had the moral responsibility to inform them of the reasons for his resignation from the party.<sup>121</sup> Privately, too, Nu'mani worked diligently to convince others to leave. He was not successful; the organizational structure proved strong enough to withstand Nu'mani's challenge, and the members' notion of what a holy community was proved to be far more permissive and supple than Nu'mani had expected. As Islahı put it, 'I am not fanatical enough to jeopardize the future of Islam over the length of Mawdudi's beard.'<sup>122</sup>

The crisis Nu'mani precipitated, however, did expose an important dilemma for the Jama'at: What was the proper mix in emphasizing ideological principles and serving organizational needs and political aims? The shura', in the first of a series of decisions, voted to strengthen the organizational structure of the party and serve its interests and still further confirmed the primacy of the amir, somewhat resolving the initial ambiguity regarding his role and the extent of his powers. Nu'mani's resignation, meanwhile, gave Mawdudi greater room to maneuver and to establish his leadership over the party. Assured of the backing of the shura', Mawdudi set out to spread the reach of the Jama'at. He traveled across India, presenting the Jama'at's ideological position and inviting Muslims to support it. The imprint of Mawdudi's views on the party became increasingly more pronounced. The Jama'at's convention in Dharbanga, Bihar, in 1943, for instance, turned into a forum for the discussion of Mawdudi's theory of divine government (*hukumat-i ilahiyah*).<sup>123</sup>

Mawdudi was elected to the office of amir again in 1945 at the party's first all-India convention.<sup>124</sup> Thenceforth, the Jama'at came increasingly under the control of Mawdudi, a trend already evident in his speech following his election to a second term as amir, in which he repeatedly underlined the primacy of his office in the organizational design of the Jama'at.<sup>125</sup>

The Jama'at conventions were of some consequence in Muslim political circles, sufficiently so to boast the attendance of Mahatma Gandhi at one of them.<sup>126</sup> They also helped the Jama'at to grow and to find a following. Eight hundred people attended the Jama'at's first all-India convention in Pathankot in 1945, ten times more than those who had gathered in Lahore to form the party.<sup>127</sup> The number was still modest, but given the Jama'at's forbidding ideological demands, it was nevertheless noteworthy.

Expansion was not, however, free of problems. Organizational development lagged behind the increase in membership. A good deal of attention at conventions between 1943 and 1947 was devoted to resolving internal problems, usually revolving around discipline and ethics.<sup>128</sup> The Jama'at was repeatedly purged during this period of its less than fully committed members. In 1944 Mian Tufayl, the secretary-general of the Jama'at at the time, reported to the shura' that 300



members—over 50 percent of the membership—had been expelled from the party, and he set down sterner criteria for new members.<sup>129</sup> Still, in 1947, 135 new members joined, and 85 left the party.<sup>130</sup> The lion's share of Mawdudi's speeches before the Jama'at conventions at Allahabad and Muradpur in 1946, and again in Madras and Tonk (Rajasthan) in 1947, was devoted to lamenting poor morale and discipline and emphasizing character building.<sup>131</sup> Mawdudi had clearly favored swift expansion so the party would be large enough to influence the highly fluid and rapidly changing Indian political scene. But the problems of discipline that threatened to nip the notion of holy community in the bud compelled him to greater caution. As early as 1943 he declared that the pace of growth of the Jama'at should be restrained, a declaration which was thenceforth repeated along with every lament over the party's problems of morale. Despite his openly political orientation, Mawdudi was clearly committed to the holy community idea as well.

These organizational difficulties only augmented Mawdudi's powers. Emphasis upon ideological unity and especially organizational discipline favored vesting greater powers in the office of amir. Some members were not reconciled to Mawdudi's preeminence in the party. Islahi, for example, time and again registered his opposition, most vociferously at the Jama'at's Allahabad session in 1946.<sup>132</sup> However, despite sporadic expressions of concern, the consolidation of power in the office of the amir continued unabated, especially as partition necessitated effective leadership at the party's helm. During the Jama'at convention in Tonk in 1947, the shura' ceded some of its powers to the amir, notably control over finances.<sup>133</sup>

Paramount at this time was the question of Pakistan. Since the Jama'at's establishment, the party had not taken a clear stand on the issue. Despite its vehement opposition to the Congress and favoring of communalism, it had viewed close association with the Muslim League as detrimental to its integrity and autonomy. Hence, the party had favored Pakistan to the extent of advocating the case for an Islamic state but had remained aloof from the Muslim League-led Pakistan movement. When partition materialized, Mawdudi decided in favor of it but rejected the idea of retaining a united organizational structure for the two countries, arguing that the needs of the Muslims and hence the agenda of the Jama'at would be so different in India and Pakistan as to make the operation of a united Jama'at-*i* Islam*i* unfeasible. He set the Jama'at of India free from his command and became the amir of the Jama'at of Pakistan. The breakup in the party limited its power but brought it more effectively under Mawdudi's control. The new Muslim state presented the Jama'at with greater opportunities and new problems, the resolution of which would determine the pattern of the Jama'at's subsequent development and how its organizational structure, ethos, and political agenda took shape.