

# THE BRITISH MUSLIM BARON

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## Lord Headley and Islam, 1913–35

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In November 1913, shortly after succeeding his cousin as Baron Allanson and Winn of Aghadoe in the peerage of Ireland,<sup>1</sup> Rowland George Allanson Allanson-Winn (1855–1935) made international headlines on publicly announcing his conversion to Islam: “Irish Peer Turns Moslem” (*New York Times*); “A Lordly Mohammedan” (*Straits Times*, Singapore); “Peer Turns Mussulman” (*Argus*, Melbourne) (Fig. 1). The *Times* in London recorded the event in the “court circular,” its official record of the British aristocracy.<sup>2</sup> Although Western conversions to Islam were rare before 1913, Allanson-Winn, known as Lord Headley, was not the first British aristocrat to become a Muslim: that distinction belongs to the third Baron Stanley of Alderley, who converted in the late 1850s and managed to keep his faith and religious views largely private from then until his death in 1903. News of Lord Stanley’s conversion did not make the *Times*’s court circular.<sup>3</sup> Whereas Stanley was born into one of the great English aristocratic families, Allanson-Winn was born into a comparatively modest upper-class family and did not inherit his peerage until shortly before his fifty-eighth birthday.

1. *Times* (London), January 14, 1913, 9.

2. *New York Times*, November 16, 1913, 1; *Straits Times* (Singapore), November 17, 1913, 9; *Argus* (Melbourne), November 18, 1913, 7; *Times* (London), November 17, 1913, 11.

3. See Jamie Gilham, *Loyal Enemies: British Converts to Islam, 1850–1950* (London: Hurst, 2014), chap. 1. Such was the incredulity that a great English gentleman like Lord Stanley would consider becoming a Muslim that the *Times* (November 16, 1859, 9) denied a report that he had done so.

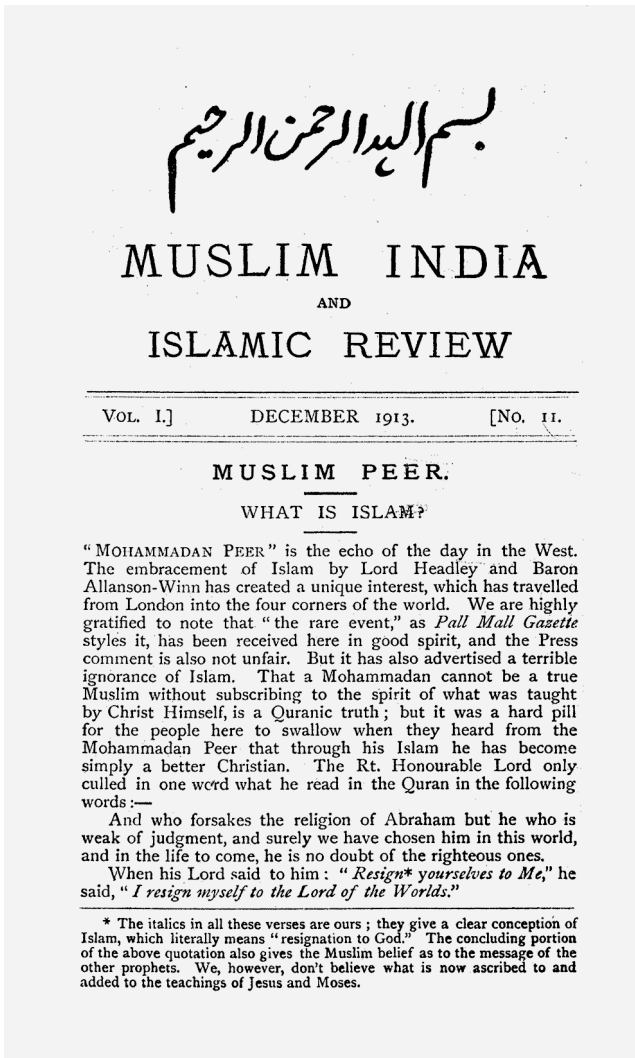
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Figure 1. From *Muslim India and Islamic Review* 1, no. 11 (1913): 401.



The lives of both these Muslim barons are poorly documented,<sup>4</sup> which is curious given the growing importance of the history of Islam in the West.<sup>5</sup> The neglect may be attributed partly to Lord Headley’s having been overshadowed, during his lifetime as well as presently, by two Muslim-convert contemporaries: William H. Abdullah Quilliam (1856–1932) and Muhammad Marmaduke Pick-

4. The fifth Baron Headley was finally added to the UK *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* in 2004: see Jason Tomes, “Winn, Rowland George Allanson Allanson-,” in *ODNB*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vol. 59, 744–46. See Gilham, *Loyal Enemies*, chaps. 4–5; and Umar Ryad, “Salafiyya, Ahmadiyya, and European Converts to Islam in the Interwar Period,” in *Muslims in Interwar Europe: A Trans-cultural Historical Perspective*, ed. Bekim Agai, Umar Ryad, and Mehdi Sajid (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 47–87.

5. See, e.g., Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, ed., *Muslims in the West: From Sojourners to Citizens* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Humayun Ansari, “*The Infidel Within*”: *Muslims in Britain since 1800* (London: Hurst, 2004); and Edward E. Curtis, ed., *The Bloomsbury Reader on Islam in the West* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

thall (1875–1936). Quilliam is significant as the first British-born missionary of Islam: he founded the Liverpool Muslim Institute (c. 1891–1908) and was the first, and he is still the only, *shaykh al-Islam* of the British Isles—effectively the leader (with the endorsement of the Ottoman sultan) of Muslims in Britain. Quilliam was also a prolific public speaker and writer about Islam and Muslim issues.<sup>6</sup> Pickthall was influential as a Muslim political activist, writer, and intellectual, whose English translation of the Qur’an has remained in print since its original publication in 1930.<sup>7</sup> Lord Stanley, born a couple of generations earlier and naturally introverted, was a “quiet” Muslim, but Lord Headley, like both Quilliam and Pickthall, was always open about his conversion and religious beliefs. While his path to conversion was reflective of others of his generation, what makes him an especially interesting and important figure is that his zeal for Islam and his public admiration of certain aspects of Muslim culture—his xenophilia—was not wholesale. Indeed, he was one of the first Western converts of the twentieth century to publicly address the thorny issue of how to practice Islam and “be a Muslim” in a non-Muslim, Christian, country such as Britain.

### Early Years

Rowland George Allanson Allanson-Winn was born in London in January 1855, the only son of the Hon. Rowland Allanson-Winn (1816–88) and Margaretta Stephana (d. 1871).<sup>8</sup> Rowland the younger was educated privately except for a brief spell at the prestigious Westminster School in London, then went up in 1874 to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he received a degree in mathematics in 1878. A keen sportsman, at Trinity he won both the middle- and heavy-weight university boxing championships. He later wrote several popular books and essays on the subject of boxing and self-defense.<sup>9</sup> After Cambridge, he was admitted to the Middle Temple but did not pursue a legal career. He was briefly a private tutor, editor of an English provincial newspaper, and, for seven years, private secretary to a Conservative Member of Parliament. On the death of his father in 1888, Allanson-Winn was heir presumptive to a 13,000-acre estate in Kerry, which was notorious for its bankruptcy, evictions, and violence. Kerry, in the southwest of Ireland, was a nationalist stronghold, but, like his forebears, Allanson-Winn was a Conservative and would not countenance the notion of an Ireland independent of

6. See Ron Geaves, *Islam in Victorian Britain: The Life and Times of Abdullab Quilliam* (Markfield, UK: Kube, 2010); and Jamie Gilham and Ron Geaves, eds., *Victorian Muslim: Abdullab Quilliam and Islam in the West* (London: Hurst, 2017).

7. See Peter Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall: British Muslim* (London: Quartet, 1986); and Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran: An Explanatory Translation* (London: Knopf, 1930).

8. The following biographical information is primarily derived from obituaries in the *Islamic Review* 23, no. 9 (1935): 322–23; *Times* (London), June 24, 1935, 9; and Tomes, “Winn.”

9. These works include R. G. Allanson-Winn, *Boxing* (London: George Bell, 1889), and Allanson-Winn and Clive Phillipps-Wolley, *Broad-Sword and Single-Stick* (London: George Bell, 1890).

the United Kingdom. After many years of working around Westminster, he decided to seek election in Ireland, and it followed that he joined the Unionists—the Irish Unionist Alliance—which was established in Ireland in 1891 to oppose plans for Irish home rule and was closely aligned to the Conservative Party and the Liberal Unionists. In the general election of 1892, Allanson-Winn was a Unionist candidate for South Kerry; inevitably, given its nationalist constituency, his campaign was a failure (he polled just eighty-six votes).<sup>10</sup>

Allanson-Winn then decided upon another career change, and at this new choice he would excel. He took a short engineering course at King's College London and, in 1896, joined Spedding and Company. This change of career also meant a new life, for it took Allanson-Winn to India, where his new employer was based. We know frustratingly little about Allanson-Winn's five (or perhaps fewer) years in India. Spedding and Company was located in Jammu and Kashmir, which was, until the 1950s, a princely state of the British empire in India, ruled by the Jamwal Rajput Dongra dynasty. Although the maharaja was Sikh, his state had a Muslim majority, hence, presumably, Allanson-Winn's inclination to borrow an English translation of the Qur'an from a friend while in Kashmir.<sup>11</sup> As Spedding's assistant engineer, Allanson-Winn oversaw the construction of the ambitious Baramulla-Srinagar road with 167 bridges and culverts across more than thirty miles of the Kashmir valley. He may have met his future wife, Teresa St. Josephine Johnson (d. 1919), daughter of William H. Johnson, a surveyor, while in India, for her father had been governor of Jammu and Kashmir.<sup>12</sup> It is unlikely, though, that Allanson-Winn had met Teresa's father, as he had died in 1883. By the end of the century, Allanson-Winn was back in the United Kingdom: in 1899, he married Teresa and they settled in Dublin. They began a large family (eventually five sons and a daughter), and Allanson-Winn started a civil engineering consultancy. In India, he had developed an interest in the science of water erosion and, in Ireland, made a name for himself as a specialist in coastal protection, a topic about which he also wrote and lectured.<sup>13</sup>

In January 1913, Rowland George Allanson Allanson-Winn succeeded his first cousin, Charles Mark Allanson-Winn (1845–1913), becoming the fifth Lord Headley in an Irish peerage dating to 1797. In England, he succeeded as eleventh Baronet of Nostell (Yorkshire) and fifth Baronet of Little Warley (Essex). He never held a seat in the UK House of Lords, because he never sought election as an Irish representative peer.<sup>14</sup>

10. *Times* (London), July 5, 1892, 13.

11. Ryad, "Salafiyya," 56.

12. For more on William H. Johnson, see "Obituary: Mr. W. H. Johnson," *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography* 5, no. 5 (1883): 291–93.

13. See, e.g., Allanson-Winn's "Special Article" on the subject in the *Times* (London), November 6, 1907, 3.

14. On the Headley baronetcy, see H. A. Doubleday, Duncan Warrand, and Lord Howard De Walden, eds., *The Complete Peerage, or a History of the House of Lords and All Its Members from the Earliest Times*, vol. 6 (London: St. Catherine Press, 1926), 429–31.

### Path to Conversion

How should we account for Lord Headley's conversion to Islam in 1913? By the early twentieth century, Britons were exposed to more reliable information about Islam and Muslims as a direct result of knowledge gained through colonization, exploration, emigration, and immigration.<sup>15</sup> Yet, at the time that Allanson-Winn converted, Islam was still popularly misunderstood and misrepresented, irrevocably linked in the public imagination to the recently deposed Ottoman sultan, Abd al-Hamid II (1842–1918), whose autocratic rule encouraged a belief in Britain that the Ottoman Turks were the embodiment of unjust, despotic, backward, and incompetent Muslim rule. (It came as little surprise in London when al-Hamid found an ally in the German emperor, Wilhelm II.) Leading Evangelical Christian apologists continued to make good use of popular newspapers and magazines to denigrate the character and conduct of the Prophet Muhammad and to discredit the whole fabric of Islam, which they presented as a sensual yet violent, hostile, intolerant, and fraudulent creed.<sup>16</sup> In Lord Headley's time, then, as in Lord Stanley's a half-century earlier, it was still shocking that a British peer would regard Islam as a viable faith, let alone convert to it.

The young Allanson-Winn was raised as a Protestant, in what he later called "the strict and narrow forms of the Low Church party."<sup>17</sup> With his Irish ancestry and experience of living in Ireland, he also studied Roman Catholicism but found it no more satisfactory than the "Low Church"; he drifted toward Unitarianism. That his journey to Islam was fueled by long-standing religious doubts was underscored in *Thoughts for the Future*, a short book written by Allanson-Winn but published anonymously in early 1913. Allanson-Winn had not lost faith in God, but he did confess that

the dogmas of the Christian Church—I care not whether Roman Catholic or Protestant—have repelled me ever since earliest childhood, and I don't know whether my boyish distrust of the creed as laid down by St. Athanasius was less strong than is my contempt today for the man who lays down the law from a pulpit and consigns millions of his fellow-men to everlasting perdition because they don't agree with him.<sup>18</sup>

Allanson-Winn believed that Christianity was unsuited to the age of reason and was appalled by the sectarian bigotry that in Ireland he had experienced first-hand.<sup>19</sup> This disillusionment persisted for many years but came to a head

15. See Clinton Bennett, *Victorian Images of Islam* (London: Grey Seal, 1992).

16. See Bennett, *Victorian Images of Islam*; and K. H. Ansari, "Attitudes to Islam and Muslims in Britain: 1875–1924," *Indo-British Review* 23, no. 2 (2001): 58–74.

17. "In Memoriam: The Right Hon'ble Lord Headley Al-Haj El-Farooq," *Islamic Review* 23, no. 9 (1935): 323.

18. "A. W." (R. G. Allanson-Winn), *Thoughts for the Future* (London: Walter Scott, 1913), 10–11.

19. R. G. Allanson-Winn, "Why I Became a Moslem," *Muslim India and Islamic Review* 1, no. 11 (1913): 409–10.

while he was grieving for his third son, who died at age one in 1904, and then, soon afterward, for his only legitimate daughter. He described this period in *Thoughts for the Future* as “a time when the hand of death was very near, and this world with its pleasures and pains had ceased to interest me very much.”<sup>20</sup> His anxieties were heightened by the existence of an illegitimate daughter, Laura (born the day after his twentieth birthday in January 1875), with whom he was not reconciled until after his conversion to Islam.<sup>21</sup> The mental stress of these years culminated in an emotional breakdown, and he continued to battle depression for the rest of his life. Laura’s surviving granddaughter recalled that her great-grandfather, whom she had known, was often under “psychiatric care.”<sup>22</sup> Allanson-Winn sought comfort in religion. As he explained in *Thoughts for the Future*: “I knew that my feet were on the border-land and I longed to cross the boundary and learn the truth.”<sup>23</sup>

What little we do know about Allanson-Winn’s years in India is that the Islam he directly encountered in Kashmir made a profound impression. He noted in *Thoughts for the Future* that

visits to the East have filled me with a very deep respect for the simple faith of Mahomedans, who really do worship God all the time and not only on Sunday, like so many Christians. Their beautiful trust in their Almighty and Merciful Creator, who is never absent from them for a moment of the day or night, awakens feelings of the keenest sympathy in my heart. I love to join in the devout praise of the earnest Mussulman because I know he is genuine; there is no pretence about him when he takes off the little bit of carpet from his horse’s back and prostrates himself before his Maker.<sup>24</sup>

Nor did Allanson-Winn have to return to Kashmir (or go elsewhere in the Muslim world) in order to converse with Muslims or join in their religious ceremonies. London, where he was living permanently by 1913 as Lord Headley, had attracted Muslims from around the world since at least the seventeenth century.<sup>25</sup> By the early twentieth century, London was home to transient and permanent communities of mainly Indian and Arab seafarers, students, and intellectuals, some of whom had established Muslim organizations there. Agitated by Britain’s wavering support for the Ottomans, a group of politically active Muslims hoped to stem the decline of the *umma* by pursuing broadly pan-Islamic objectives.<sup>26</sup> In

20. “A. W.,” *Thoughts*, 14.

21. Author’s interviews with Lord Headley’s great-granddaughter, February 14, 2003, and March 3, 2017.

22. Author’s interview, February 14, 2003.

23. “A. W.,” *Thoughts*, 14.

24. “A. W.,” *Thoughts*, 12.

25. See Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558–1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

26. The *umma* is the worldwide Muslim community, which at the time was headed by the Ottoman sultan as caliph or *khalifa*—successor to the Prophet Muhammad. The Ottoman caliphate had been in place since 1517.

1903, Abdullah Suhrawardy (1870–1935), an Indian Muslim lawyer and scholar, established a “Pan-Islamic Society” in London to “safeguard and represent all Islamic interests of as many Muslim peoples and countries as possible without any distinction of sect or colour or race or country.”<sup>27</sup> By 1913, the “Islamic Society,” as it was by then known, had around three hundred members composed mainly of Indians, Egyptians, and Turks, as well as some Britons, including converts like Quilliam and others who had been associated with his now disbanded Liverpool Muslim Institute.<sup>28</sup>

Although the Islamic Society was not intended to focus on missionary activity, Suhrawardy had overseen a few conversions in London. He also had attempted to purchase Britain’s first purpose-built mosque (located just outside London in the town of Woking in Surrey) as a religious center for the growing Muslim community. The Woking mosque had been built in the late 1880s by the Orientalist and traveler Gottlieb Wilhelm Leitner as part of his “Oriental Nobility Institute,” established in 1884 as “a place for Oriental scholars, including those natives of India of good family and position who desire to keep their caste and religion whilst residing in this country for official or professional purposes.”<sup>29</sup> The institute had closed following Leitner’s death in 1899, and the mosque had fallen into a state of disrepair. Suhrawardy hoped to purchase the mosque directly from Leitner’s son and heir, Henry, but failed to find sufficient financial backing.<sup>30</sup> In 1912, however, Syed Ameer Ali, a Muslim scholar and political leader, made a formal agreement with Henry Leitner that secured the mosque and an adjoining domestic building, Memorial House, for the use of Muslims.<sup>31</sup>

In October 1912, the year before Headley’s conversion, Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din (1870–1932), a lawyer and Muslim writer and missionary from Qadian in India’s Punjab province, arrived in England on legal business. Kamal-ud-Din was a convert to the Ahmadiyya, an unorthodox Muslim sect founded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835–1908). Following a series of visions in the 1880s that drew upon the Islamic belief that a messiah and a *mabdi* would come to lead Muslims against unbelievers, Ahmad had personally assumed both the *mabdi* and messianic roles. In 1889, he inaugurated the Ahmadiyya community (or Ahmadiyyat) by accepting the allegiance of his first followers—those who affirmed standard matters of Islamic belief but also swore specific allegiance to Ahmad.<sup>32</sup> Although, by the twentieth century, their primary aim was to remove popular misconcep-

27. Anon., *The Central Islamic Society* (London: Central Islamic Society, 1916).

28. “Lord Headley and the Islamic Society Dinner,” *Muslim India and Islamic Review* 1, no. 11 (1913): 427. On the rise and fall of Quilliam’s Liverpool Muslim Institute, see Geaves, *Islam*, chap. 4.

29. “Correspondence, Notes, and News,” *Imperial and Asiatic Quarterly Review* 4 (1897): 182.

30. Khalid Sheldrake Effendi, “A Mosque in London,” *Review of Religions* 11, no. 9 (1912): 395–96.

31. See UK National Archives, London, Treasury Solicitor Records, TS27/520 (1910–13).

32. See Francis Robinson, “Ahmad and the Ahmadiyya,” *History Today* 40, no. 6 (1990): 42–47.

tions about their own beliefs, the Ahmadis were inclined to missionary activity and, within a year of Ahmad's death in 1908, they devised a strategy involving the publication of Ahmadi propaganda in the more universal language of English, along with the training and dispatch of missionaries.<sup>33</sup>

Once in England, Kamal-ud-Din abandoned his legal career and took it on himself to promote a fairer hearing of Islam through propaganda written and inspired by Ahmad. In doing so, Kamal-ud-Din was anxious to downplay the differences between Ahmadi and orthodox Islam. He was familiar with the British and their social and cultural mores. He therefore used public meetings and lectures, "at homes," gatherings at fashionable London restaurants and hotels, the press, and journals to spread his message. He addressed Muslim student societies, metropolitan Orientalist and literary circles, and unorthodox but broadly sympathetic religious groups, such as the Quakers, Theosophists, Unitarians, and Spiritualists. Kamal-ud-Din was not antagonistic toward Christianity or Christians and, having studied Christian theology in a missionary college in Lahore, was able to elucidate similarities between the "sister faiths" and to justify Islamic religious and social codes and practices in terms accessible to Christians. He quickly made a name for himself in England as a skilled and moderate defender of Islam. In February 1913, Kamal-ud-Din began publication of *Muslim India and Islamic Review* from his home in Kew, South West London, which reached within a year a circulation ("largely gratis") of some three thousand in Britain and India.<sup>34</sup> In August 1913, he accepted an invitation to move into the Memorial House at Woking and take charge of the mosque, to help educate the British public about Islam, and to provide religious and social support for Muslims.<sup>35</sup>

Kamal-ud-Din had made a few converts in Britain before moving to Woking by "simply [laying] a true, plain, unvarnished account of Islam before the people, and [leaving] their own hearts and consciences to do the rest."<sup>36</sup> His first British convert was Fátima Violet Ebráhim, whose Indian Muslim husband had invited Kamal-ud-Din to their home in late 1912. Ebráhim noted in 1913 that "Kamal-ud-Din has studied Christianity and therefore he is better able to make comparisons as to what is said in [the] Bible on different subjects and how Al-Koran treats the same subject, thereby proving how superior Islam was to Christianity."<sup>37</sup> She found his "logical arguments in favour of Islam and his

33. See "The Propagation of Islam in English-Speaking Countries," *Review of Religions* 8, no. 3 (1909): 104–5.

34. For the circulation figure, see H. U. Weitbrecht, "A Moslem Mission to England," *Moslem World* 4, no. 2 (1914): 198. The title *Muslim India and Islamic Review* was changed to *Islamic Review and Muslim India* with the February 1914 issue, highlighting a shift in emphasis toward broader Islamic concerns, and in January 1921 it was changed again to *Islamic Review*.

35. See "K[hwaja]. N[azir]. A[hmad].," "In Memoriam: Sir Abbas Ali Baig," *Islamic Review* 21, no. 3 (1933): 63.

36. "Emissary of Islam," *Muslim India and Islamic Review* 1, no. 11 (1913): 404, reprinted from *Manchester Dispatch*.

37. Violet Ebráhim, "One More Convert and a Noble Appeal," *Review of Religions* 12, no. 12 (1913): 520.



comparisons of Islam and Christianity . . . most interesting and convincing. . . . My eyes were beginning to open in favour of Islam and gradually I found that I was Moslem at heart.”<sup>38</sup> Kamal-ud-Din sought to educate and convert more Britons through what quickly became known as the Woking Muslim Mission. He was joined at Woking by other Indian Ahmadi missionaries who, from the start, downplayed their Ahmadi origins and promoted the mission as, in contrast with Christian churches, nonsectarian and apolitical. Their strategy was to seize upon the decline in church membership and adherence while understanding that the decline did not necessarily imply any lack of need for a stable and absolute system of belief and practice. The Woking missionaries’ arguments were directed in part at Edwardian insecurities, brought on by unparalleled industrial conflict and social discord over issues such as Irish independence and women’s suffrage.<sup>39</sup> For these reasons, Kamal-ud-Din and his staff represented Islam as a secure, progressive, tolerant moral force in the face of increasing materialism and secularity. They promoted a rational, liberal, syncretic Anglo-Islam. In mission literature, the Qur’an is referred to as the “Islamic Bible,” and the mosque as a “Muslim Church” that “welcomes Non-Muslims as well. Collections are dispensed with and healthy criticism is encouraged.”<sup>40</sup> Potential converts were constantly reminded of the Qur’anic principle (2:256) that “there is no compulsion in religion” and that Muslims pledge their allegiance both to Muhammad and to all other prophets, including Jesus.

The Woking strategy and self-representation did not go unopposed. The Christian missionary H. U. Weitbrecht Stanton, for instance, argued in the Calcutta *Epiphany* that “the form of Islam which is propagated in the Woking mission is very far from being the accepted orthodox kind.” He exposed Kamal-ud-Din as an Ahmadi and thus as part of a movement that, in his description,

represents an endeavour to reconcile Islam to a certain extent with modern thought, so as to turn the edge of the chief objections to it on the part of Christians. Islam is represented as the religion of toleration and as being the rational form of religion best suited to the enlightenment of the 20th century. The idea of the Fatherhood of God, which is utterly contrary to the teaching of Mohammed, is frequently brought in. Polygamy is represented as temporary and partial, as a concession to the needs of human nature. The existence of slavery in Islam is bluntly denied.<sup>41</sup>

If Lord Headley was aware of such criticism, it certainly did not affect his admiration for Islam. In September 1913, Kamal-ud-Din eagerly reported to the Ahma-

38. Ebráhim, “One More Convert,” 519–20.

39. On these issues, see David Powell, *The Edwardian Crisis: Britain, 1901–1914* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996).

40. “Greetings of the New Year,” *Islamic Review and Muslim India* 4, no. 1 (1916): 2; “Services and Conversions,” *Islamic Review and Muslim India* 3, no. 11 (1915): 551.

41. Weitbrecht, “Moslem Mission to England,” 204–5.

dis' Urdu newspaper *Badr* that he had received a letter from "a Lord belonging to a most exalted family." Headley, at this stage referred to anonymously in Kamal-ud-Din's letters to India, told the missionary that he had read the first issues of *Muslim India and Islamic Review*. He asked to meet Kamal-ud-Din because he was "in [his] heart a follower of that great Prophet" but was unable to "accept Islam openly."<sup>42</sup> By November, Headley moreover had read an English translation of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's *The Teachings of Islam* (1910) and, according to Kamal-ud-Din, "was wonder struck" by it.<sup>43</sup> Another Woking missionary, Mushir Hussain Kidwai, said that Headley's conversion "was no matter of sentiment but as the result of very thorough investigation and deep study."<sup>44</sup> Just as important, Headley began a frenzied correspondence with Kamal-ud-Din, who noted in another Ahmadi newspaper, *Paigham Sulb*, in early December that "it is hardly six weeks since I met [Headley] and he has written me 32 letters. . . . Four times I have been his guest and twice he has been my guest."<sup>45</sup>

Kamal-ud-Din was crucial to Headley's conversion as both missionary and mentor. Reflecting in a variety of publications on his first encounters with Kamal-ud-Din, Headley recorded that he was "much impressed" with the missionary's "quiet dignity and gracious manner" and bowled over by his explanation of Islam as a simple, nonsectarian, and tolerant faith.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, Kamal-ud-Din "patiently explained and translated portions of the Koran which did not appear quite clear to me."<sup>47</sup> Headley, furthermore, was persuaded by Kamal-ud-Din's claim that the spread of Islam in Britain could arrest the drift toward atheism there and make the country easier to govern.<sup>48</sup> A staunchly conservative "plain Englishman with [four] sons who will some day have to be provided with wives," he was pleased to hear that Islam might counter moral degeneracy in British society and facilitate a "return to . . . Early Victorian modesty":

I love modesty in a woman and, though it is the fashion to laugh at the Easterns for keeping their women veiled and secluded from the vulgar gaze, I think they are to be admired for wishing to shield and protect what they hold so sacred. . . . Some of the modern costumes for women are, to my mind, far worse and more suggestive than absolute nudity.<sup>49</sup>

42. Quoted in Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, report in *Badr*, October 2, 1913, 2, trans. from the original Urdu by Zahid Aziz for the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore (UK) website: [www.wokingmuslim.org/pers/headley/islam.htm](http://www.wokingmuslim.org/pers/headley/islam.htm) (accessed Aug. 12, 2016).

43. Quoted in Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, report in *Badr*, Nov. 6, 1913, 4.

44. M. H. Kidwai, "Lord Headley," *Islamic Review* 23, no. 9 (1935): 326.

45. Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, report in *Paigham Sulb*, Dec. 2, 1913, 3, trans. from the original Urdu into

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46. Rt. Hon. Lord Headley, "The Passing of a Great Muslim," *Islamic Review* 21, nos. 4–5 (1933): 109.

47. Lord Headley, "Why I Became a Mohammedan," *Muslim India and Islamic Review* 1, no. 11 (1913): 416.

48. Lord Headley, *A Western Awakening to Islam*, 2nd ed. (London: Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust, 1949), 72–73.

49. Headley, *Western Awakening to Islam*, 49.

Headley was primed for conversion by autumn 1913 but felt unable to convert publicly due to family pressure (none of his family converted). He later reflected that “members of my family came to me with expressions of the gravest concern because I had deserted the religion of my fathers, and they assured me most positively that salvation was impossible for me now that I had taken the terrible step.”<sup>50</sup> On the afternoon on November 16, 1913, Kamal-ud-Din announced Headley’s conversion during an Islamic Society meeting at the cosmopolitan Frascati’s Restaurant in London. The Egyptian writer and political activist Dusé Mohamed Ali, who was then on good terms with Kamal-ud-Din (they later fell out), claimed that the missionary had not secured Headley’s permission to announce the conversion publicly. According to Ali’s account, on the morning of November 17, Kamal-ud-Din was shocked to find the press “filled with sensational news” of Headley’s conversion and went directly to Ali’s apartment for advice. Ali recommended that Kamal-ud-Din “see Lord Headley at once and show him the papers and make what apologies he could for his indiscreet use of the letter [confirming Headley’s conversion].”<sup>51</sup> Ali’s biographer suggests that he might well have exaggerated his role, “yet it seems plausible that with [Ali’s] large experience of Britain and the British, Khwaja Kamal ud-Din would have used him as a confidant.”<sup>52</sup> Whatever the case, Headley and Kamal-ud-Din did forge a close personal relationship in 1913 that lasted until the latter’s death almost two decades later. And only days after the public announcement, Kamal-ud-Din

fulfilled the long-cherished, heart-felt wish of Lord Headley that I spend a night at his house. What affection, what friendship, and what eagerness to serve! He set up my bedroom himself, lit the fire, made the bed. When I rose in the morning and was about to start prayer, he appeared in his night garments bringing me tea and grapes. Before I used the bathroom, he checked the hot and cold taps himself, in the manner of a servant.<sup>53</sup>

There may be some truth in Ali’s view that, after the Islamic Society meeting, Kamal-ud-Din had cause for panic over how the story of Headley’s conversion “created a unique interest, which has travelled from London into the four corners of the world.”<sup>54</sup> The conversion was certainly a coup for Kamal-ud-Din and the nascent Woking Muslim community, and he wrote to the head of the Ahmadi in Qadian that “God has changed the fortunes of Islam by granting us

50. Al-Haj Al-Farooq Lord Headley, “The Strength of Islam,” *Light* 6, no. 13 (1927): 5.

51. Quoted in Ian Duffield, “Dusé Mohamed Ali and the Development of Pan-Africanism” (PhD diss., Edinburgh University, 1971), 423.

52. Duffield, “Dusé Mohamed Ali,” 423.

53. Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, report in *Paigham Sulb*, December 4, 1913, 4.

54. “Muslim Peer,” *Muslim India and Islamic Review* 1, no. 11 (1913): 401, and see 403–13 for a selection of press reports.

just one man.”<sup>55</sup> Indeed, he noted in *Islamic Review and Muslim India* that several people, including “three highly respected members of the nobility,” had followed Headley’s lead toward the end of 1913 and now, in 1914, the mission office was “flooded . . . with inquiries about Islam.”<sup>56</sup> For the Ahmadi *Review of Religions* in India, Headley’s conversion was a sign that “there has begun an awakening to Islam in the West. The gloom which Christian misrepresentation had spread over the West has begun to disappear and people are becoming more and more alive to the truth of Islam.”<sup>57</sup> The community in England welcomed their newest member with open arms. Headley, now also known by his Muslim name Al-Farooq, joined forty Muslims at the Woking mission’s central London headquarters for *juma namaz* (Friday prayer) on November 28, 1913.<sup>58</sup> Following an announcement from Kamal-ud-Din that five more conversions had taken place, Headley “rose to address the congregation” and “was greeted with loud cheers and the clapping of hands, but one of the leaders of the community . . . called for silence and impressed upon the worshippers the necessity for preserving a reverential attitude.”<sup>59</sup>

### Why Islam?

What exactly did Lord Headley, along with others of his generation, find in Islam and in Muslim culture that led not simply to admiration of Islam but to their own conversions? Headley’s conversion, fortunately, is well attested in the surviving sources, which are mainly Muslim missionary publications and published personal testimonies. Both kinds of evidence raise methodological problems, but these are not insurmountable. The missionary publications were partisan—written and edited with an ideological bias and in part deployed as propaganda. As long as the influences and biases of these sources are acknowledged and understood, however, the contributions from and about converts like Headley offer rich and varied insights into the motivations for and the process of conversion, as well as into their lives and concerns as Muslims in a non-Muslim country. Invaluable information on the British Muslim community, including its philosophy, activities, and the attitudes of outsiders toward it, are also available in these materials. Some scholars of religion have cast doubt on the ability of conversion testimonies to illuminate the conversion process. Writing in the 1970s, Brian Taylor and James Beckford, for example, each argued that testimonies are almost exclusively

55. Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, report in *Paigham Sulb*, January 6, 1914, 4.

56. [Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din], “What Is Islam?,” *Muslim India and Islamic Review* 1, no. 12 (1914): 441.

57. Ebráhim, “One More Convert,” 519.

58. “Al-Farooq” (meaning “he who distinguishes between right and wrong”) was the epithet given to the second caliph, Umar b. al-Khattab (c. 583–644).

59. “Press Notes on the Conversion of Lord Headley,” *Review of Religions* 12, no. 12 (1913): 529–30, reprinted from *Sheffield Evening Telegraph*.

produced retrospectively, are temporally variable, and are socially constructed in terms of both ideology and vocabulary.<sup>60</sup> Beckford found that there is in testimonies a formal, public, or even “official” conception of appropriate features of the conversion experience.<sup>61</sup> On the other hand, all autobiographical and biographical writing constructs or reconstructs experience—and John Lofland and Norman Skonovd have shown that problems arising from the “moulding” or “structuring” of testimonies can be overcome: “The conversion experience *itself* is partly molded by expectations of what conversion is about or ‘is like,’” and hence there is the probability of finding in testimonies a good fit between “real” experiences and paradigmatic accounts.<sup>62</sup> Lewis R. Rambo has emphasized that the writing of testimonies can be an integral part of the conversion experience, because testimony (made and remade) is an opportunity for the convert to demonstrate both the transformation that his or her language has undergone and the reconstruction of his or her biographical self-understanding.<sup>63</sup>

The October 1913 issue of *Muslim India and Islamic Review*, published in the weeks prior to his conversion, included an extract, titled “How to Be Free from Fear and Grief,” taken from Allanson-Winn’s anonymous book *Thoughts for the Future*. The article, attributed to an author called “A. W.,” expressed admiration for the spirit of Islam and for “the fact of the real presence of God” among Muslims, which, as Kamal-ud-Din had taught Allanson-Winn, engendered fearlessness of death (a feature especially important to a man who had been traumatized by the death of his son and daughter).<sup>64</sup> In his British Muslim Society “President’s Address”—published in the January 1915 issue of the journal, which in 1914 had been renamed *Islamic Review and Muslim India*—“Saifur-Rahman Sheikh Rahmatullah Farooq Lord Headley” wrote that he had accepted Islam because it had given him “happiness in misery and strength when the forces of evil seemed about to overwhelm” him.<sup>65</sup> Headley outlined the motivations for his conversion in two articles published in the next issue of the *Islamic Review*. In a contribution titled “Simplicity in Religion,” he welcomed Islam as a simple, monotheistic, and, above all, classless faith, free of leaders and bodies bidding for temporal power. Islam, he argued, was

60. Brian Taylor, “Conversion and Cognition: An Area for Empirical Study in the Microsociology of Religious Knowledge,” *Social Compass* 23, no. 1 (1976): 16–21, and “Recollection and Membership: Converts’ Talk and the Ratiocination of Commonality,” *Sociology* 12, no. 2 (1978): 316–24; James A. Beckford, “Accounting for Conversion,” *British Journal of Sociology* 29, no. 2 (1978): 249–62.

61. Beckford, “Accounting for Conversion,” 260.

62. John Lofland and Norman Skonovd, “Conversion Motifs,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 20, no. 4 (1981): 375.

63. Lewis R. Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 137–39.

64. “A. W.” (R. G. Allanson-Winn), “How to Be Free from Fear and Grief,” *Muslim India and Islamic Review* 1, no. 9 (1913): 355–57.

65. Saifur-Rahman Sheikh Rahmatullah Farooq Lord Headley, “British Muslim Society: President’s Address,” *Islamic Review and Muslim India* 3, no. 1 (1915): 9.

free from sacerdotalism with its attendant dogmas and greed for power, [so] we must concede that the government of a nation or empire would go on more smoothly if such a peaceful religion were universally adopted. . . . The spirit of Islam soars far above petty jealousies and the racial distractions of East and West.<sup>66</sup>

In the contribution titled “The Religion of the Future,” Headley claimed that “freedom from the weird dogmas of the various branches of Christian Churches came to me like a breath of pure sea air, and on realising the simplicity, as well as the illuminating splendour, of Islam, I was as a man emerging from a cloudy tunnel into the light of the day.”<sup>67</sup> Still, he wrote retrospectively in 1926 that, however powerful he had found the arguments made for embracing Islam, his

was no sudden conversion, because from childhood’s earliest days my whole nature had been in revolt against the ruthless cruelty of the Supreme Being as represented by the Christian God, an almighty and omnipotent ruler of the universe who was so like a tyrant that he required heavy bribes before he would save one from perdition.<sup>68</sup>

With the news of his conversion spreading around the world, Headley was forced to respond to his many critics in letters and essays defending and explaining his motivations and beliefs. He argued in the *London Budget* that “in England we pride ourselves on our love of fair play, and it does seem to me as unfair to condemn the tenets of any particular religion without knowing anything about them as it would be to condemn an accused man without hearing his defence.”<sup>69</sup> He told the *London Observer* that “there has never been any desire for notoriety or publicity on my part; but in this case, if my action is the means of making people tolerant and broad-minded, I am quite prepared to put up with every kind of ridicule and abuse.”<sup>70</sup> Responding to accusations that he was an “apostate,” Headley wrote that, “since I had never believed in the baptisms and creeds of the Christian religion as being *necessary to salvation*, it can hardly be argued that I deserted a Faith which never appealed to my intelligence or my heart.”<sup>71</sup> In another exchange, a correspondent to the *Daily Mail* argued that Headley was wrong to condemn Christian intolerance of other religions, because

66. Lord Headley, “Simplicity in Religion,” *Muslim India and Islamic Review* 1, no. 10 (1913): 377–81.

67. Lord Headley, “The Religion of the Future,” *Muslim India and Islamic Review* 1, no. 10 (1913): 381–84.

68. Lord Headley, “Healthy Signs of the Times,” *Islamic Review* 14, no. 9 (1926): 348.

69. Lord Headley, “Growth of Modern Christianity,” *Muslim India and Islamic Review* 1, no. 10 (1913): 414, reprinted from *London Budget*.

70. Lord Headley, “Why I Became a Mohammedan,” *Observer* (London), November 23, 1913, 4.

71. Al-Hajj Lord Headley, *The Affinity between the Original Church of Jesus Christ and Islam* (Woking, UK: Trust for the Encouragement and Circulation of Muslim Religious Literature, 1927), 11.

if a Moslem in any really Moslem land were to do as Lord Headley has done and announce his conversion to Christianity his life would not be worth a day's purchase, and his death would be justified by the express teaching of the Koran. Such is Moslem "toleration"; converts are only allowed to live where the strong arm of Christian justice can protect them.<sup>72</sup>

In the spirit of his mentor, Kamal-ud-Din, Headley retorted that,

to refute the idea that true Moslems would murder a brother so foolish as to renounce the faith of Islam, I may quote one line which appears in the Holy Koran immediately after one of the most beautiful and impressive passages in the Book: "Let there be no compulsion (no violence) in Religion." No true Moslem would have any feelings but of deepest pity and sorrow for a deserter from the fold presided over and tended by our Gracious Shepherd and King.<sup>73</sup>

The cornerstone of Headley's argument, and one that he pursued doggedly for the rest of his life, was that, in the original teachings of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, these were "sister religions, only held apart by dogmas and technicalities which might very well be dispensed with."<sup>74</sup> Among the latter were, first, *atonement*, which, Headley argued, was unnecessary in Islam, "because God can *directly* and instantly forgive transgressions when we ask Him with true repentance"; second, *salvation*, which Islam did not deny "to those who do their duty to God and their neighbours, whatever they may think on other subjects"; and, third, *intercession*, which was not recognized in Islam, "because we feel that, belonging to God, we are ever in His hands at every moment of the day or night."<sup>75</sup> "I am just the same in my beliefs as I was twenty years ago," Headley could therefore claim, adding that "I consider myself . . . a far better Christian [after conversion to Islam] than I was before."<sup>76</sup> As he explained in a letter to the *Pall Mall Gazette*:

I have only one [religion]—surrender and submission to God, and beneficence to all His creatures—for this is the meaning of the word "Islam." It seems to me that Christ also taught this, which explains why it is impossible to be a good Mahomedan without also being a good Christian.<sup>77</sup>

72. Quoted by Lord Headley in "Further Misrepresentations," reprinted in *Islamic Review and Muslim India* 2, no. 3 (1914): 98–99.

73. Headley, "Further Misrepresentations," 99.

74. Headley, "Why I Became a Mohammedan," 4. Note that, once again, Headley's argument is in the vein of Kamal-ud-Din.

75. Lord Headley, "What Is Dogma?," *Islamic Review and Muslim India* 4, no. 4 (1916): 147, 149, 150. By "other subjects," Headley meant "the atonement, a belief in the Divinity of Christ, the sacraments, and the Trinity."

76. Headley, "Why I Became a Mohammedan," 4.

77. Lord Headley, letter to *Pall Mall Gazette*, reprinted in *Muslim India and Islamic Review* 1, no. 11 (1913): 407.

This position was vigorously rebuked, especially by Christian clergymen, to whom Headley responded at length:

I affirm that you can be a most excellent follower of Christ's teaching and obey it in the spirit without ever having heard of baptism or the Lord's Supper, and without believing in the Divinity of Christ or the Trinity. Surely, it is far more important to carry out in your life those divine precepts enjoined by Christ than to rely on a mere form like baptism for salvation? . . . I feel sure that half the people who outwardly profess these opinions merely do so for appearance sake. . . . To my mind the real Christian is the man who tries to show it in his life by obedience and submission to God and endeavouring to do his duty to his neighbours, and by avoiding anything of the nature of a lie.<sup>78</sup>

Weitbrecht Stanton, keen to propagate the idea that Christianity and Islam were worlds apart, retorted in the *Moslem World* that

it is sufficiently obvious that a nominally Christian Deist who is ready to swallow the historical contradictions of Islam, has but a very short step to take in order to become a Moslem; and having already emptied the Christian faith of its specific content, he may regard himself, as Lord Headley professes, to be still a Christian after he has embraced Islam.<sup>79</sup>

### A British Muslim in Britain

What became of Lord Headley after the initial publicity surrounding his conversion had faded tells us much about what it meant to be a Muslim in Britain at that time. As an establishment figure, he felt able and called upon, from the day that his conversion was announced, to “make it his very sacred and delightful duty to explain to all his friends what, according to his lights and intelligence, he believes constitutes the faith of Islam.”<sup>80</sup> Moreover, he “felt very strongly” that, with the guidance of “men of broadminded intelligence” like Kamal-ud-Din, he should “assist in bringing the East and West to a more harmonious position.” According to the *Muslim India and Islamic Review*,

the question had often presented itself to him in this form: “How can the Muslim faith—so beautiful in its touching simplicity and grace—be ‘Westernised’ so as to be brought into practical touch with Western ideas?” Or, in other words, how can we Western[er]s apply ourselves so as to gain a better and truer comprehension of what Islam really means?<sup>81</sup>

78. Headley, letter to *Pall Mall Gazette*, reprinted in *Muslim India and Islamic Review*, 408.

80. “Lord Headley and the Islamic Society Dinner,” 429.

79. Weitbrecht, “Moslem Mission to England,” 201.

81. “Lord Headley and the Islamic Society Dinner,” 428.



Headley pursued these objectives tenaciously, through his association with the Woking Muslim Mission, until his death in 1935.

Early on, the Woking mission was “receiving calls nearly every day for interviews, which can do in a short time what cannot be done by many lectures or books.”<sup>82</sup> The number of converts swelled sufficiently during 1914 for Kamal-ud-Din and Headley to establish a British Muslim Society (BMS, later renamed the Muslim Society of Great Britain [MSGB]), with Headley as president. The BMS had the support of several British converts who had been connected to the Liverpool Muslim Institute, including Quilliam, its founder. Headley explained at the first public meeting in December 1914 that the BMS’s first objective was “to show all those we come in contact with that our religion is not exactly antagonistic or hostile to . . . Christianity” and, second, to

give most careful attention to the very difficult and delicate task of showing that a universal adoption of the Faith by Western nations is *possible* without seriously interfering with the manners and customs of the West or the spirit of the teachings we find in the Quran. There is so much adaptability in Islam that we may hope to surmount any difficulties which may arise.<sup>83</sup>

The adaptability or “elasticity” of Islam was a quality that Headley, like Kamal-ud-Din, was anxious to promote. Headley advised BMS members that it would be

injudicious in the extreme to lay down too many hard and fast rules at starting. If we attempt to insist on the strict observance of minor points we shall . . . lay ourselves open to charges we make against our Christian brethren, who insist that certain ceremonials and beliefs in dogmas are *necessary* to salvation. . . . We want to enable people to see for themselves the beauty and simplicity of Islam—matters of form and ceremony which are not of vital importance should be left for future consideration.<sup>84</sup>

Almost fifteen years later, Headley was still urging members of the BMS that

it is hard to conceive how our blessed Faith can make satisfactory advance in, say, England, without certain insignificant modifications of forms or ceremonies to suit the new environment. In other words, it must be recognized that different conditions and temperaments require special handling.<sup>85</sup>

82. “Notes,” *Islamic Review and Muslim India* 2, nos. 11–12 (1914): 530.

83. Headley, “President’s Address,” 9–11.

84. Headley, “President’s Address,” 13–16.

85. Lord Headley, “Islam, the Guide to Modern Religious Thought,” *Islamic Review* 17, no. 6 (1929): 192.

Headley started his educational program with the basics of Muslim life, focusing on some of the “five pillars” of Islam.<sup>86</sup> Kamal-ud-Din and others at Woking encouraged observance of the second “pillar”—worship (*salat*)—five times daily. The *Islamic Review* (under its various titles) contained intermittently “a schedule of times of sunrise and sunset . . . for the benefit of our Muslim brethren in the British Isles,” and a guide to Muslim prayer was distributed to converts in 1914. (Often reprinted, later editions contained photographs of Headley and other British Muslims demonstrating specific prostrations.)<sup>87</sup> Still, Headley as much as other converts struggled to reconcile the demands of *salat* with their working lives. By 1915, Headley concluded that “it is quite impossible for the busy city man to pray Muslim fashion five times a day at appointed times: the opportunities for prostration and conventional devotion can not be found.” He therefore advised the busy city man that a Muslim who “sends up a silent prayer that the Holy Spirit of Allah may *in all things direct and rule his heart* [will] surely . . . be accepted Above, even though he has not had the opportunity of humbly placing his forehead on the ground.”<sup>88</sup> This advice he modified just a year later, suggesting instead that public worship in a mosque should be “supplemented by household or family prayers, where the household can be readily assembled, say, twice a day.”<sup>89</sup>

At the time, London had no purpose-built mosque. By 1916, Headley was lobbying the government to build a mosque in memory of Muslim soldiers who had died fighting for the British empire and to serve London’s growing Muslim population,<sup>90</sup> but the India Office considered it “unthinkable for a Christian government to be a party to erecting a mosque in a Christian country.”<sup>91</sup> Headley resumed his campaign after the war, supported by other Muslims and by sympathetic, influential friends. During a visit to India in 1928, he received a donation for the project of approximately £60,000 from the ruling *nizam* of Hyderabad, which led to the formation of a Nizamiah London Mosque Trust Fund and the purchase of a site for the building in West Kensington.<sup>92</sup> Although construction costs spiraled out of control and little progress was made in Headley’s lifetime, assets from the fund were transferred to a Central London Mosque Trust in

86. The five pillars are the profession of faith (*shabada*); worship (*salat*); almsgiving (*zakat*); fasting and abstinence during Ramadan, the month in which the Qur’an was revealed (*sawm*); and the pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*).

87. See “Notes,” *Islamic Review* 15, no. 3 (1927): 88; and Al-Hajj Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, *Islam and the Muslim Prayer*, 7th rev. ed. (Lahore: Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust, 1960).

88. Headley, “President’s Address,” 14.

89. Lord Headley, “The Muslim Ritual,” *Islamic Review and Muslim India* 4, no. 1 (1916): 20.

90. Lord Headley, letter to the editor of the *Daily Graphic*, reprinted in *Islamic Review and Muslim India* 4, no. 4 (1916): 146.

91. As quoted in A. L. Tibawi, “History of the London Central Mosque and the Islamic Cultural Centre, 1910–1980,” *Die Welt des Islams* 21, nos. 1–4 (1981): at 195.

92. Lord Headley, “The London Nizamiah Mosque Trust Fund,” *Islamic Review* 17, no. 9 (1929): 340–42.

the 1950s, eventually contributing to the building of the mosque that overlooks Regent's Park in London today.<sup>93</sup>

Headley was less vocal about the third pillar of Islam—*zakat*, the alms paid annually by adult Muslims—than he was about daily worship. Muslims were assessed for *zakat* at 2.5 percent of capital assets over a minimum known as *nisab*. The third pillar appears not to have been discussed at Woking as readily as some of the others, nor does it feature in the pages of the *Islamic Review*. Only a minority of the growing Woking Muslim community—which had reached several hundred converts—appears to have paid *zakat* in this period. For those who did, the amount depended on individual circumstances. Earnest J. Sadik Bromley, for example, admitted after his conversion in 1932 that “I am a working class man, therefore my means are not sufficiently large to give a great deal in alms, but I shall, according to my income, send you 5 per cent. of my total income each quarter.”<sup>94</sup> Despite his titles, even Lord Headley was not a rich man and indeed was declared bankrupt in 1922.<sup>95</sup>

As for the fifth “pillar” of Islam—the *hajj*, or pilgrimage, to Mecca—few British Muslims (not even Quilliam and Pickthall) were able to make the journey. Supported by Kamal-ud-Din, Headley was eager to make the *hajj* soon after his conversion, but plans to visit Mecca in 1914 were thwarted by the outbreak of war in Europe.<sup>96</sup> Headley persisted and, almost a decade after his conversion, was in Mecca as possibly the first Englishman to enter the city without subterfuge: he arrived in Arabia with Kamal-ud-Din in July 1923 as guest of the king of the Hejaz, Sayyid Hussein bin Ali. Once in Mecca, Headley had as comfortable a pilgrimage as could be arranged. He arrived by chauffeured car, slept on the king's own camp bed in the desert, and, considering that “no English head would survive the trial” of the scorching sun, was granted permission to leave his almost totally bald head unshaven if covered with “a large turban.”<sup>97</sup> Reader Bullard, the newly appointed British consul in Jidda, agreed that “it would have been asking for death for an Englishman of sixty to go seven times round the Kaaba

93. See Tibawi, “History,” 193–208.

94. Earnest J. Bromley, letter to the editor, *Islamic Review* 21, nos. 1–2 (1933): 30.

95. *Dundee Courier*, May 17, 1922, 7. Headley's bankruptcy followed on a curious train of events: in 1921, Glenbeigh Towers and Castle on his Irish estate, which supplied the family rent-roll, were in the words of one newspaper “looted and burned to the ground by Sinn Feiners.” A family friend remarked that “Lord Headley is now land poor, and his two unmarried sisters have lost everything” (*Sunday Times* [Perth], Sept. 18, 1921, 23). Headley's wife Teresa had died in 1919, and in February 1921 he “quietly married” the Australian writer Barbara Baynton (*Mail* [Adelaide], Feb. 12, 1921, 1). The second marriage was a

failure; Headley sought a divorce. During bankruptcy proceedings, he stated that he had “agreed to settle certain Irish property upon his bride, and that she had arranged to pay him £1000 per annum but had only paid one instalment of £250” (*Sunday Times* [Perth], Feb. 24, 1924, 12). Headley filed for divorce on the grounds of desertion (Baynton had returned to Australia), but the couple eventually reached a settlement and, agreeing to a separation in May 1924, remained married until Baynton's death in 1929 (*Register* [Adelaide], May 8, 1924, 11).

96. Lord Headley, “Pilgrimage to Mecca,” *Journal of the Central Asian Society* 11, no. 1 (1924): 20.

97. *Times* (London), Aug. 30, 1923, 7.

(the shrine at Mecca) in the Hejaz sun.”<sup>98</sup> On first meeting Headley, Bullard was respectful and described him as “a dear old gentleman,”<sup>99</sup> but he grew increasingly impatient with the British pilgrim:

It was rather amusing to see this pink-and-white old gentleman decked out in the costume which pilgrims to Mecca have to wear. . . . I confess that it gave me secret pleasure to see the old man fumbling round his middle for a stubby lead pencil or for his pipe, in obvious anxiety the whole time lest his costume should disintegrate altogether.<sup>100</sup>

The summer of Headley’s pilgrimage was notable for the Lausanne Conference, at which the postwar fate of Turkey was finally decided. British intelligence agencies monitored Headley’s movements. Ever the British patriot (and probably aware that he was under surveillance), Headley went to great lengths at receptions in Port Said and Cairo before his *hajj*, and afterward in Jidda and London, to dismiss rumors that his presence in Arabia had any political significance.<sup>101</sup> He emphasized that it was a purely religious experience, one that had (despite his privileged position) shown him the “wondrous brotherhood of Islam—I never quite understood what it really meant until this pilgrimage was over, but now I do so most thoroughly.”<sup>102</sup> Despite his statements to the contrary, the *New York Times*, in the fall of 1923, reported that, “doubtless,” Lord Headley’s “social position also gives his hajj a semi-political complexion at a time when British prestige in the Mohammedan world is somewhat impaired.”<sup>103</sup> Steering clear of politics had been difficult for a British Muslim when Turkey (the seat of the caliphate) had been at war with Britain, and doing so remained hard, in the interwar years, when Britain’s role was pivotal in the dismemberment of the vast Ottoman empire. Headley was remarkably absent from most of the pro-Turkish debates and demonstrations led by, among others, Pickthall and Quilliam, between the outbreak of World War I and the Lausanne Conference. Rather, when war was declared in 1914, which led to a swift anti-Turkish and anti-Islamic backlash in the British press and in British society, Headley warned the BMS that “we must not enter into the field of politics, for if we do so we shall be certain to come to grief, either through internal dissensions or through collision with some outside authority.”<sup>104</sup> Converts like Pickthall ignored Headley’s advice, but the latter was obstinate and only rarely signed a resolution (of which there were scores) calling on the British government to guarantee the preservation of the Ottoman empire or, later, Turkish independence.<sup>105</sup>

98. Reader Bullard, *Two Kings in Arabia: Letters from Jeddah, 1923–5 and 1936–9*, ed. E. C. Hodgkin (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, 1993), 6.

99. Bullard, *Two Kings in Arabia*, 5.

100. Bullard, *Two Kings in Arabia*, 6.

101. UK National Archives, Foreign Office Records, FO/686/134 (1923); *Times* (London), Oct. 26, 1923, 10.

102. Headley, “Pilgrimage to Mecca,” 21.

103. *New York Times*, Oct. 21, 1923, 3.

104. Headley, “President’s Address,” 12.

105. See Gilham, *Loyal Enemies*, chap. 6.

The intelligence reports compiled during Headley's *hajj* in 1923 inevitably evidence imperialist attitudes toward his Indian Muslim companions and contain bitter personal swipes at his own character. The British high commissioner for Egypt and Sudan, Viscount Allenby, filed a report from Cairo describing Headley as "the well-known English pervert to Islam" but admitted that, at reception committees for the Woking delegation in Port Said, Alexandria, and Cairo, "Lord Headley showed himself as an ardent Moslem and the speeches which he made revealed great devotion to the Mohammedan faith."<sup>106</sup> Consul Bullard was increasingly harsh in his letters, especially after a second meeting with Headley in August 1923, arguing that Headley

knows no more about Islam than I do about Chinese metaphysics, but he believes that the rather vague notions about being good and brotherly which he holds are the essence of Islam, so he calls himself a Moslem, and as the Moslems of England (most of them Indians or Egyptians) don't catch a peer of the realm every day of the week they make much of him. This flatters his innocent vanity. He quite preened himself as he told us how he had been met and cheered and dined in Egypt, and how, before he left England, he had been asked to broadcast a message about the pilgrimage.<sup>107</sup>

Headley was received warmly, however, by the press on his return to Europe. He gave interviews and also several lectures, one of which, delivered at the Central Asian Society, concluded: "I know that my brothers in the East love me and I love them. I don't say that I don't love you of the West also—I do, for I am one of you; but I love my Muslim brothers all over the world quite as much as I love anybody."<sup>108</sup> He presented a "talk on his recent experiences at Mecca" for the early BBC radio station "2LO London" before the year was out,<sup>109</sup> and he was pictured in the *Times* of London showcasing pieces, presented to him by King Hussein, of the "Holy Carpet" that covers the Kaaba.<sup>110</sup>

Beyond the "pillars" of Islam, Headley sometimes discussed Islamic prohibitions publicly, though not always successfully. He pointed out to the BMS in 1914, for example, that, because "drinking [alcohol] in moderation is the custom" in Britain, "it is too much to expect any sudden change." He recommended "self-control" but was himself arrested on a charge of drunk and disorderly behavior in 1916.<sup>111</sup> In court, the police constable who had arrested Headley recalled that "the defendant, who was under the influence of drink, placed his arm around the neck

106. UK National Archives, FO/686/134.

107. Bullard, *Two Kings in Arabia*, 5–6.

108. Headley, "Pilgrimage to Mecca," 32.

109. *Radio Times*, November 30, 1923, BBC Genome Project website, genome.ch.bbc.co.uk/schedules/2lo/1923-12-04#at-21.10 (accessed July 24, 2016).

110. *Times* (London), August 31, 1923, 12.

111. Headley, "President's Address," 13–14.

of a woman. The witness cautioned him, and the defendant replied abusively. The defendant was taken to the station, resisting violently.” The *Times* reported that, “in the witness-box the defendant declined to take the oath [on the Bible], stating that he would swear ‘on his honour and as a peer of the realm.’” Lord Headley “could swear on his honour as a gentleman, an Englishman, and a peer of the realm that he had drunk no more than two bottles of stout and a cup of coffee afterwards. He had been brought up on stout and should continue to drink it, but his religion forbade excess.”<sup>112</sup> Amid much public ridicule,<sup>113</sup> he appealed his conviction unsuccessfully and paid a fine but maintained that “possibly my position as an English Muslim offered irresistible attractions for assault from below”—“below” meaning the police.<sup>114</sup> Headley admitted in the *Islamic Review* that “*even the moderate use of alcohol in certain conditions and on certain temperaments may easily lead to disaster,*” adding that “I have therefore given up the use of all stimulants—even my favourite beer—in the hope of setting a good example and avoiding giving offence to any one.”<sup>115</sup>

As the public face and voice of British Muslims for most of the interwar years, Headley was used to criticism, notably from Muslims abroad, who misconstrued his public statements regarding the adaptation and “modernisation” of Islam. One correspondent wrote in 1927 that “it is being insinuated here in Ceylon that your Lordship, in conjunction with your brother Al-Hajj Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, had permitted the British Muslims to freely partake of *bacon and beer*.”<sup>116</sup> Headley denied the claims but boldly declared that “*the essentials of our Faith are of paramount importance and that other matters, such as those connected with food, forms and ceremonies, are trifling by comparison.*”<sup>117</sup> Criticism also came, increasingly, from Muslims within Britain, as British Islam fragmented along sectarian lines due to immigration and the growth of a more culturally and ethnically diverse Muslim community in Britain.<sup>118</sup> The growth of sectarianism in the Muslim world was also becoming problematic. Only a year after Headley’s conversion, the Ahmadiyyat split into two groups as a result of disagreement about who should succeed Mirza Ghulam Ahmad’s successor, Hakim Nur-ud-Din, following the latter’s death in 1914. Preexisting divisions within the Ahmadiyyat led to formal establishment of the liberal “Lahori” and conservative “Qadiani” sects.<sup>119</sup> Kamal-

112. *Times* (London), December 11, 1916, 5.

113. See, e.g., “An Irish Moslem,” *East and the West* 15 (1917): 107.

114. Lord Headley, “Warnings,” *Islamic Review and Muslim India* 5, no. 10 (1917): 421–28, at 422.

115. Headley, “Warnings,” 428.

116. Lord Headley, “Strength of Islam,” *Islamic Review* 15, no. 11 (1927): 420.

117. Headley, “Strength of Islam,” 421; italics in the original.

118. On the history of British Muslim converts and sectarianism, see Jamie Gilham, “A Passage to Conversion,” in *Critical Muslim 10: Sects*, ed. Ziauddin Sardar and Robin Yassin-Kassab (London: Muslim Institute/Hurst, 2014), 99–114.

119. See Spencer Lavan, *The Ahmadiyyah Movement: A History and Perspective* (Delhi: Manohar, 1974); and Robinson, “Ahmad.”

ud-Din aligned himself firmly with the Lahoris, while his assistant, Chaudhry Fateh Muhammad Sayal, left the Woking mission to establish a Qadiani community (*jama'at*) and mission in South London.<sup>120</sup>

The Ahmadiyya crisis was badly timed for the Woking mission but did not deter Headley from propagating his new faith. He did not refer to himself openly as an Ahmadi, let alone a Lahori, though the Islam to which he had converted was the liberal rationalist kind that his mentor Kamal-ud-Din espoused, and in 1928, Headley contributed the foreword to a popular booklet written by one of the founders of the Lahori Ahmadiyyat, Maulana Muhammad Ali.<sup>121</sup> Serious friction between the Lahoris and Qadianis in London did not surface until Headley's twilight years. In 1926, his friend the BMS secretary, James William/Habeeb-Ullah Lovegrove, fulminated against some "Indian Ahmadia people," by which he meant Qadianis, who had joined him on stage during a debate in London. Lovegrove reported that the Qadianis had refused to take a cup of tea from or shake hands with the organizing party's female president: "Idiots! The Muslims are in the position they are now through the retardation of the so-called priestly class. Christianity was the same and all religions have suffered. Islam is a manly religion, simple and supreme. Be Muslims at heart and ignore the bigots!"<sup>122</sup> In general agreement with Lovegrove, Headley wrote to a Muslim friend—the text of the letter was published later in a Lahori Indian newspaper, the *Light*—that he deeply regretted the "scintilla of friction between us equally true Muslims":

I have seen fights between the Sunnies and the Shiahhs and I firmly believe that there are certain fanatical Wahabis who would cheerfully decapitate the Khwaja [Kamal-ud-Din] and me, and also you my Brother, because we are not sufficiently orthodox to satisfy their own ideas of "Holiness"—they would cut off our heads to save our souls!<sup>123</sup>

In 1927, Headley warned the BMS that, while Islam had nothing to fear from outside,

what may cause obstruction and delay is the attempt to establish fresh sects *within* the great fraternity of Islam. . . . The Sunnis and the Shiahhs and Wahabis have all very decided views, and may almost be looked upon as "sects," and in very recent years the Ahmadis, followers of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, proclaim the advent of their leader, whom they regard as the "promised Messiah." These latest reformers [the Qadianis] insist that all those who refuse to acknowledge . . . Ahmad as the Messiah shall be "deprived of the light of faith" and, further, that the rejec-

120. See Gilham, *Loyal Enemies*, 138–40.

121. Lord Headley, foreword to Maulvi Muhammad Ali, *Islam: The Religion of Humanity* (n.p.: 1928). Maulana (Urdu) is the title of a Muslim religious scholar.

122. Habeeb-Ullah Lovegrove, "Translation of the Quran," *Light* 5, no. 14 (1926): 4.

123. Lord Headley, "Lord Headley on Mulla-mindedness," *Light* 5, no. 20 (1926): 5.

tion of . . . Ahmad “means the rejection of the Holy Prophet Muhammad himself.” It strikes a blow at the solidarity of Islam which is to be greatly deplored. One cannot find fault with the Ahmadis (*Qadianis*) for thinking anything they like (it is a free country), but one may reasonably object to being excluded from the ranks of the faithful at the behest of a small number of zealous adherents of a certain idea.<sup>124</sup>

For Headley, the Qadianis’ rejection of other Muslims was not in the spirit of Islam, which he defined as “toleration.” Indeed, he had recently told the imam of the new Qadiani London mosque that he “could not subscribe to the views he promulgated because they savoured too much of the intolerance we complain of in [Christianity], and might almost be inspired by the spirit of the Athanasian Creed which most of us unite in condemning.”<sup>125</sup>

Headley returned to the dangers of sectarianism when invited to give the presidential address in 1927 at the All-India *Tabliq* (preaching) Conference in Delhi:

I am absolutely at a loss to understand the causes of the trouble brewing in our atmosphere on sectional grounds. And let me be frank to tell you one thing: Don’t entertain any hope of success in the spread of Islam, especially in the West, if you carry your religion to them with all such sectional spirit, so rife in this country. . . . Sectarianism is the chief trouble in Christendom; they are divided more or less in five hundred sects. People there regard these divisions and sub-divisions as a curse of the official faith in the West. Should we carry to them that which also smacks of the same curse?<sup>126</sup>

While in India, Headley also fielded numerous criticisms of the Woking Muslim Mission. Besides fresh allegations of Ahmadi influence and intrigue, as well as nepotism, it was claimed that the mission was “a ‘one man show’” under Kamal-ud-Din.<sup>127</sup> Headley listened and then explained to the BMS, on his return to England in 1928, that the proposed new mosque in London would need to be “entirely non-sectarian.”<sup>128</sup> Accordingly, Kamal-ud-Din, although in poor health and now based in Lahore, instructed that the Woking mission and its offshoots, including the *Islamic Review*, were to be “amalgamated and transferred to a Board constituted on non-sectarian lines.” But, the installation of Maulana Muhammad

124. Al-Hajj Lord Headley, “The Strength of Islam,” *Islamic Review* 15, no. 7 (1927): 245–46.

125. Headley, “Strength of Islam.” 246.

126. Lord Headley, “The Presidential Address of Rt. Hon. Al-Hajj Lord Headley (El-Farooq),” *Islamic Review* 16, no. 3 (1928): 119.

127. The Calcutta *Moslem Chronicle* regarded the board of the Nizamiah Mosque Fund as “too much of a family affair” and pointed out that “public work of the sort done by the Woking Mission and supported by funds subscribed by the public should be above all suspicion of nepotism.” Reprinted in *Muslim World* 19, no. 1 (1929): 76.

128. Al-Hajj Lord Headley, “Is Our House in Order?,” *Islamic Review* 16, no. 9 (1928): 329.



Ali as vice-chairman under Lord Headley, not to mention the registration of the trustee deeds in Lahore, did little to dispel rumors that the mission remained a Lahori affair.<sup>129</sup>

Tensions about the Ahmadi leadership and about internal dissension continued within both the Woking mission and the BMS/MSGB, especially after Kamal-ud-Din's death in 1932. Arthur/Ahmad Bennett resigned as MSGB secretary in 1934, complaining publicly of "indirect Ahmadi influence" at Woking.<sup>130</sup> But, as a respected senior member of the Woking community and as founding president of the BMS/MSGB, Headley appears to have kept these difficulties under control. It was only after his death (and, indeed, immediately after) that matters came to a head in the summer of 1935. Headley was succeeded as MSGB president by his good friend Sir Omar/Hubert Rankin, whom he had personally introduced to Islam, and, within a month of his election, Rankin called for the MSGB to be completely dissociated from the Ahmadiyya. The majority of members rejected his proposal on the grounds that, in the spirit of Kamal-ud-Din and Headley, the society strove in any case to represent the collective interest of all Muslims in Britain, irrespective of sectarian, ethnic, or other differences.<sup>131</sup> Rankin resigned, and the society reformed with a new executive committee.<sup>132</sup> It is worth adding—in the context of a symposium on xenophilia—that Rankin went on, beginning in 1944, to practice Theravada Buddhism. In explanation, he said that he had "always hated and loathed the Christian religion. The Moslem religion is a fighting one, so I dropped it and became a Buddhist."<sup>133</sup>

### Final Years

Despite his advancing years, Headley continued to juggle writing and speaking engagements at home with international travel as an unofficial ambassador of British Islam. In his seventies, he accompanied Kamal-ud-Din on tours of South Africa (1926) and India (1927 and 1928), partly to solidify relations with Muslims overseas but also to raise funds for a mosque in London. He remained a trustee of the fledgling Nizamiah Mosque Fund, as well as president of the MSGB and chairman of both the Woking Mosque Trust and the Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust. By the early 1930s, however, Headley was in poor health and, although he wrote for the *Islamic Review* and the *Light* on occasion and attended and spoke at MSGB and Woking events, his presence was less consistent than it had been over the previous twenty years. Strangely, then, it was at this moment

129. Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, "Future Administration of the Muslim Mission, Woking," *Islamic Review* 17, no. 12 (1929): 426–27.

130. *Genuine Islam* (Singapore) 1, no. 1 (1936): 28.

131. See *Young Islam* (Lahore) 2, no. 16 (1936): 2.

132. See Gilham, *Loyal Enemies*, 204–6.

133. "Sir Hugh Rankin, 3rd Baronet," *Daily Telegraph* (London), May 2, 1988, 21.

that he briefly reentered the political arena, impelled into action by the rise of Indian nationalism, which threatened his unshaken belief in the benevolent British empire. He corresponded on the subject with Winston Churchill, after hearing him lecture at the Albert Hall in March 1931. Churchill was championing Indian Muslims as a bulwark against Gandhi and the Hindu-controlled Indian Congress, which threatened the future of British rule in India.<sup>134</sup> Headley wrote in agreement with Churchill, emphasizing that the Qur'an forbade sedition. He went on to connect Churchill with several Muslim societies, including the India Defence League.<sup>135</sup>

Headley had married Catharine Bashford (d. 1947) just a month after the death of his second wife in 1929. The union stabilized Headley's precarious financial position, and in 1931, the couple moved out of London to a country house in Wiltshire, but he also spent more time abroad to recuperate from illness. Headley was well enough to attend both Eid al-Fitr (the feast concluding Ramadan) at Woking in January 1935 and Eid al-Adha (the sacrificial feast celebrating the end of the hajj) in March.<sup>136</sup> But he was absent in June from the MSGB's annual celebration of the Prophet's birthday in London, because he was by then incapacitated and living in a nursing home. Headley died there on June 22, 1935, of nephritis and prostate obstruction. According to his obituary in the *Islamic Review*, "a few minutes before he breathed his last, Lord Headley scribbled a note for his son and heir and which ran: 'means permitting I should like to be buried with my brother Khwaja [Kamal-ud-Din].'"<sup>137</sup> But Kamal-ud-Din was buried in Lahore, and Headley was interred instead in the Muslim section of Brookwood Cemetery, near Woking, with the imam of the Woking mosque officiating.<sup>138</sup>

Obituaries were published in newspapers around the world.<sup>139</sup> The warmest tributes were naturally from the Woking and Lahori Muslim communities. The *Islamic Review* asserted that, "next to Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, Lord Headley was the one personality who may rightly be described as the founder of the Woking Mission":

Lord Headley's death has left a gap which time alone can fill. To say that he was popular would be belittling his character. . . . The whole of the Muslim world has mourned the passing away of one of its most distinguished sons and condolence meetings have been held from Japan to America, messages of sympathy and condolences have reached us and

134. See Warren Dockter, *Churchill and the Islamic World: Orientalism, Empire, and Diplomacy in the Middle East* (London: Tauris, 2015), 200–214.

135. Dockter, *Churchill and the Islamic World*, 208–9.

136. "The Eid-el-Azha (1353 A. H.)," *Islamic Review* 23, no. 5 (1935): 162.

137. "In Memoriam: The Rt. Hon'ble Lord Headley," 324.

138. *Times* (London), June 26, 1935, 19.

139. See, e.g., *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, June 22, 1935, 11; *Advertiser* (Adelaide), June 24, 1935, 15; and *Straits Times*, July 5, 1935, 16.

glowing tributes have been paid to the memory of the dead—a wonderful recognition of his services indeed, but would it make up the loss the Muslim Community has suffered?<sup>140</sup>

In Lahore, the Ahmadi youth newspaper *Young Islam* concluded that

his Lordship did most energetically and actively plunge himself into the service of the cause. Indeed it is not the slightest exaggeration to say that the acceleration which the organised movement of propagation of Islam achieved in England in its very infancy is due mostly to the great personality of Lord Headley.<sup>141</sup>

The enduring legacy of Lord Headley is his extensive body of writing on Islam and Muslims. His essays, published lectures, and books were by no means consistent in quality, nor was he a great scholar in any field, but neither did he claim to be. His strength was in writing short pieces (his books were poorly edited, and the narrative disjointed and long-winded) that spoke to other converts—particularly, as we have seen, essays about being a Muslim in the West and explanations of Islam for new converts and non-Muslims. His speaking and writing in defense of Islam were patchy and, as befitted a religious convert, generally uncritical of his adopted faith. He was a regular contributor to the *Islamic Review*, writing some eighty articles, poems, and letters for that journal between 1913 and 1930 and, despite frequent bouts of depression and other illnesses later in life, contributing in every year except 1919. Some of these contributions were adapted from, or became lectures for, the BMS and other organizations and then were republished as occasional papers (with titles like “Why I Became a Muslim,” “Warning against Drink,” and “What Do We Believe?”) for the Woking mission’s Tract Series.

Subsequently, these pieces were assembled into three books, the first of which, *A Western Awakening to Islam* (1914), was published less than a year after Headley’s conversion.<sup>142</sup> His other two books, both polemics, are *The Three Great Prophets of the World: Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad* (1923) and *The Affinity between the Original Church of Jesus Christ and Islam* (1927).<sup>143</sup> A British Christian missionary journal, the *East and the West*, suggested in the year of its publication that the latter was “mainly an attack on historic Christianity . . . purely Moslem propaganda”: “Lord Headley takes over into his exposition of Islam specifically Christian conceptions, such as the Fatherhood of God, thereby giving it a spurious attraction. He endeavours to clothe Mohammadanism in a Western twentieth-

140. “In Memoriam: The Rt. Hon’ble Lord Headley,” 324–25.

141. *Young Islam* 2, no. 3 (1935): 2.

142. Lord Headley, *A Western Awakening to Islam* (London: Phillips, 1914).

143. Lord Headley, *The Three Great Prophets of the World: Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad* (Woking, UK: Islamic Review, 1923); Headley, *Affinity*.

century dress.”<sup>144</sup> The reviewer was uneasy on account of Headley’s assertion that more Westerners would follow him into Islam: “There lies the danger. There *are* many people to-day in England alone who know virtually nothing of Christianity, and knowing even less of Islam they believe anything they are told.”<sup>145</sup> In a 1929 review of “Ahmadiya propaganda,” James Thayer Addison claimed that the Lahori missionaries Kamal-ud-Din and Maulana Muhammad Ali were “excellent controversialists, keen, coherent, and not too scrupulous,” but, “as to the mental endowments of Lord Headley and Mr. Lovegrove, the less said the better.” Addison concluded, with some justification, that all of these “writers succumb to the partisan temptation to make uneven comparisons. They always compare the Moslem ideal or ‘the Spirit of Islam’ with the actualities of Christianity.”<sup>146</sup>

Soon after Headley’s death in June 1935, the Aga Khan, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah, presided over a meeting of Muslims in London “to mourn the loss of Lord Headley.” A “Headley Memorial Council” was established “to determine the best form of permanent memorial and to collect funds for the purpose,” but nothing came of the initiative, and Headley’s life and work disappeared from public consciousness.<sup>147</sup> As a stalwart of the Woking and London Muslim communities for more than two decades, Headley deserved a memorial in his lifetime, even if he was not faultless as a Muslim convert and encouraged Westerners with little success and much ridicule to consider Islam as an alternative to Christianity. He showed what it meant to be and live as a Muslim in a non-Muslim country. That he was largely forgotten for more than half a century after his death is unsurprising: first, his Islamophilia, then his public conversion to Islam, and finally his promotion of his faith were never wholly accepted by the British establishment. He faced an uphill challenge—a challenge undiminished even now—to persuade other Westerners to respect Islam, let alone to welcome Muslims among them. Although still a neglected figure, today Headley is again venerated by the Lahori Ahmadiyyat, with a page dedicated to him on its UK-branch website (“The pride of place among Woking’s converts goes to Lord Headley”).<sup>148</sup> His writings too are being revived and invoked now by other Muslims—both converts and born Muslims—as well as by non-Muslims eager to document and honor the history of Islam and the checkered history of xenophilia in the West.<sup>149</sup>

144. “Review of *The Affinity between the Original Church of Jesus Christ and Islam* by Al Hajj Lord Headley,” *East and the West* 25 (1927): 373–74.

145. “Review of *The Affinity*,” 374.

146. James Thayer Addison, “The Ahmadiya Movement and Its Western Propaganda,” *Harvard Theological Review* 22, no. 1 (1929): 5.

147. *Times* (London), July 16, 1935, 13.

148. Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha’at Islam Lahore (UK) website, [www.wokingmuslim.org/pers/headley/islam.htm](http://www.wokingmuslim.org/pers/headley/islam.htm) (accessed: August 12, 2016).

149. See, e.g., “Famous Islamic Figures,” Facebook, [www.facebook.com/132290866861580/photos/pb.132290866861580.-2207520000.1456089820./416432831780714/?type=3](http://www.facebook.com/132290866861580/photos/pb.132290866861580.-2207520000.1456089820./416432831780714/?type=3) (accessed July 22, 2016). See also “The Irish Lord Who Converted to Islam,” *Regular Joe* (blog), December 20, 2014, [josefoshea.blogspot.co.uk/2014/12/the-irish-lord-who-converted-to-islam.html](http://josefoshea.blogspot.co.uk/2014/12/the-irish-lord-who-converted-to-islam.html) (accessed Aug. 11, 2016). Headley’s three books on Islam are all now back in print, republished by Kessinger Publishing and other presses.