PART FOUR

NEGOTIATING MUSLIM PLURALISM AND SINGULARITY
CHAPTER TWELVE

THE MUSLIM PUBLIC DIVIDED (APPROX. 1930–1960s)

Apart from the Deobandis, Barelwis, Ahl-e Hadith, Aligarhis, Nadwis and Shi’ites, many other regional and trans-regional groupings with specific ideas and organisational structures emerged, at times sharing different religious traditions; a number of new thinkers, movements, organisations and parties also evolved—messianic, missionary, quasi-fascist, Islamist, modernist, secular, most of them contesting for the agency to represent Prophetic authority as the embodiment of Islamic morality and space. We will discuss the most important ones before pursuing the historical narrative of South Asian Muslims in the context of the Muslim League.¹

**Messianism**

Long before Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938) formulated his idea of a “Consolidated North Western Muslim State” in 1930 (see Chap. 11), the millenarian Ahmadiyya had already established their power in Punjab under the charismatic leader Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835–1908) of Qadian in 1889.² In 1882, he claimed to have received a divine message, on the basis of which he proclaimed himself a mujaddid (renewer of faith who averts the process of deterioration). Initially Ghulam Ahmad strove to defend Islam from Christian and Hindu missionaries, but soon he also demanded its reformation. He claimed to be the masih-e mau’ud (promised messiah) and the mahdi, subsequently claiming to be the saviour of both Islam and Christianity. Violence was
