

# Survival Through an “Age of Conflict”: Marking the Trajectory of a Spanish, Ismaili Family During and After La Guerra Civil Española

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With thirty-two countries in participation, World War I marked one of the first, major events in the 20th century with active, international engagement in political conflict. Of those affected, Spain was one of six, European countries that remained neutral throughout the war. During this time, however, differing political outlooks on national governance continued breeding internally. Such events set the backdrop to La Guerra Civil Española (The Spanish Civil War) in 1936. Led by dictator Francisco Franco, Catholicism was the majority and only accepted faith tradition in Spanish society and practice was enforced nationally by the government.

Amidst such ordinances, religious minority communities continued to exist within Spain throughout the mid-20th century; born in Junagadh, India, a man named Ashad Ali Haji led one

such group known as the Ismaili Muslims. His settlement on the Iberian Peninsula led to geographic isolation from his original community back in India, yet he continued to practice Ismailism and even taught it to his children. Today, the Spanish Ismaili community spans across five generations of Haji's family, representing the first and oldest Ismaili community in Europe.

This research aims to understand how the lived experiences of a Spanish, Ismaili family was influenced by La Guerra Civil Española and how this has shaped the survival of a minority, Muslim community in Spain from the mid-20th century until today. Four, key themes have been highlighted for analysis: the community as a family unit, the role and impact of immigration and integration, the figure of Ashad Ali Haji, and belonging to a global community.