

1857: Historical Works and Proclamations

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There has never been any agreement among the historians as to how to characterize the Mutiny, and by what name to call it. Yet the name 'Mutiny' has somehow stuck. The existing historiography of the Mutiny is formidable in its size and it dates right back to 1857. The corpus of printed source materials, especially the proclamations collected by the Uttar Pradesh Government (which named it 'the Freedom Struggle') and more recently the Indian Council of Historical Research (which speaks of 'the Rebels of 1857'), is also quite large.

New questions are asked by every generation, and there are still angles that have not been thoroughly probed. This is particularly true of the visions, strategies and aims of the insurgents, which stand out above all from the proclamations.

The British had a strategic vision of the Sepoy War, rooted in coherent and definite political conceptions. It is a moot question whether the sepoys and insurgents had a strategic vision of the war, or clear political ideas. The most ample source, i.e. the proclamations, do *not* speak much on the over-all strategy of the sepoys, and that omission is significant.

As far as military strategy is concerned, the British held the Punjab and Bengal, but they lost control in Hindustan, from Delhi down to Allahabad. The British strategic vision was therefore a two pronged attack on Hindustan, from the Punjab on one side and from the Bengal Presidency on the other side. The armed forces in the Punjab were ordered to retake Delhi, and the armed forces in the Bengal Presidency were assigned to clearing the Doab (the tract between the Ganges and the Jumna) and recovering British control of the strategic Grand Trunk Road (which ran through the Doab) and the Ganges-Jumna water route. The Bengal forces had the additional task of relieving the besieged white outpost of Lucknow.

The sepoys and insurgents aspired for similar strategic direction of the war, but they failed to develop an integrated command over the theatre of operations. Consequently, the princes fought their wars severally, a fact that stares at us out of their proclamations. A political failure was at the root of this military failure. The question therefore arises: what were their aims and aspirations, and what was their strategic vision? Did they have one? If so, why did their endeavor collapse?

This essay intends to explore the existing historiography of 1857, especially works that touch upon the rebels' aims and aspirations. It also seeks to suggest future directions of research on the Mutiny from the indigenous angle of vision as reflected in the proclamations issued by the rebels. Thus it will deal with two kinds of writings: (1) existing historical works on 1857, and (2) contemporaneous proclamations.

II

Debates on the Mutiny started in 1857 itself. The question that bothered the historians, all of them British initially, was whether the event was a people's uprising, or a mere mutiny. In 1867, J.W.Kaye settled the question authoritatively. He showed that the event was an entire people's attempt to overthrow an alien domination. With voluminous documentation, he demonstrated a mass psychological reaction against the innovations of a reforming, modernizing, authoritarian government. His pen sketched a people deeply alienated by the official policy in matters that concerned religion and touched upon land. The British represented a modern civilization and a white domination; the uprising represented a popular backlash, motivated by reactionary, native yearnings. Kaye had no doubt that the aims of the insurgents were counter-modern; it is a judgment that has not been effectively challenged. Priests, princes, people, all shared these aims, and they sought to restore the society that lay in their memory. Kaye knew that it was a popular war against an alien race, and he grasped the psychology of the rebellion as no one had done before, or even afterwards.¹

Indian intervention in the debate, with the same originality of historical vision, did not come until the lapse of half a century after the event. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar came out with a work that exhibited the same grasp of popular psychology. He was at the time a revolutionary nationalist and was

yet to metamorphose into the Hindu communalist of later days. The work is remarkable for its instinctive sympathy with the aspirations of the insurgents, and its convincing grasp of their aims. Like Kaye's three volumes, this volume, too, was an unself-conscious work of psycho-history. Neither historian, of course, had had any opportunity to be exposed to Freud's psycho-analytical insights. Yet Savarkar's grasp of the popular mentality, like that of Kaye, was masterly. He demonstrated that the insurgents were inspired by the vision of *Swadharma*, and *Swarajya*. These two aims, 'one's own religion', and 'one's own realm', drove the insurgents into a war of independence. This, too, is a judgement that has not been effectively challenged. Kaye has often been unreasonably dismissed as an imperialist, and Savarkar as a nationalist. Undoubtedly, one was an imperialist, and the other a nationalist. Yet no historian ever since has demonstrated the same psychological grasp of the drives and aspirations of the insurgents. These two works remain to date the greatest works of Mutiny historiography.²

Another original insight into the mentality, vision and aims of the insurgents came with the missionary F.W.Buckler's paper read at the Royal Historical Society in London in 1932.³ Buckler, even without the sources now available, showed a surprising grasp of the ideas of the Mutineers. He showed, without quite putting it into these words, that the Mutineers were not mutineers in their own eyes. Rather, they were legitimists. Their aim was to restore the sovereignty of the Mughal Emperor. To put it in other words, the British were the mutineers. Here was an older title seeking to cancel usurpation. Buckler confirmed what we learn in a rather different manner from Kaye, and from Savarkar: that the aims of the insurgents were traditional, anti-colonial, and popular. The Mutineers had 'a political theory'; it was one rooted in the Old Regime, a Legitimist Restoration being its objective. The legitimist cause, in a not so curious paradox, was highly popular.

The centenary of 1857 saw a massive Indian intervention in the debate. There was a re-examination of the old controversy of the Red year: was it a mutiny of the sepoy alone, or a civilian uprising with a national dimension to it? Neither Kaye, nor Savarkar, would have ever made the mistake of confusing the Sepoy War with a national movement. Yet one century after the event there was a re-examination of the question. Surendranath Sen wrote an official history that concluded, carefully and with admirable restraint, that it was a war of independence that assumed a national scope in the recently

abolished Kingdom of Awadh. R.C.Majumdar, pouring scorn on the idea in a counter-official history that had been originally commissioned and then rejected by the government, dwelt on the selfish motivations of restless groups seeking to fish in troubled waters. S.B.Chaudhuri, in yet another work of the same year, highlighted the 'civil' dimension of the Mutiny, and saw in it a 'rising of the people' who sought above all to secure endangered lands. All these centenary works contained reasonable and tenable contentions about what the rebels were after, and perhaps none were all that far removed from Kaye. Certainly, none of these historians identified the uprising with the national movement that came later, not even Sen and Chaudhuri, not to speak of Majumdar. In their different ways they all retold the story from the Indian side, without quite the electrifying insight into the Indian angle of vision that had earlier come out of Savarkar's inspired re-writing of history. They dwelt on the causes and motivations, rather than the aspirations and aims, of the uprising. Collectively, the effect of their work was to establish, if it indeed needed to be established, that the Mutiny was not a mere mutiny of the sepoys.⁴

The debate moved on to another and more sophisticated level with Eric Stokes. For him the question was no longer whether the uprising was a mutiny or a civil rebellion. Rather, the question was how the mutiny turned into a popular insurrection. His originality lay in his grasp of the fact that the revolt of the peasant army lay at the very heart of the rural and agrarian uprising of 1857. He thus did away with the false distinction between the 'civil' and 'military' dimensions of 1857. But he, too, focused on the causes rather than the aspirations of the uprising. He saw the rural magnates and landowning peasants at the heart of the rebellion, and not the subordinate peasants who tended to follow the lead of the superior cultivators and magnates. His probings into the agrarian structure went deeper than those of his contemporary Ranajit Guha. The latter saw the happening as a primitive inversion which turned the lowliest into the highest. In truth, as Buckler had pointed out many years ago in his reconstruction of the legitimist standpoint of the insurgents, they aimed at the restoration of hierarchy and not at its overthrow. What they sought was not turning things upside down, but righting the illegitimate overturning of the old order by the aliens; not inversion, but re-inversion and restoration. In a broadly similar vein, Stokes saw the uprising as a traditional resistance

movement in which the locally dominant peasant lineages oppressed by the heavy land tax played the critical part.⁵ ‘Traditional resistance movement’ and ‘Inversion’, the two concepts articulated by Stokes and Guha respectively, gave a new conceptual turn to Mutiny historiography and influenced many historians.

In the meanwhile, unnoticed by historians in India and the West, a Pakistani historian had made a pioneering inquiry into the organization, aims and ideas of the insurgents. Syed Moinul Haq was perhaps the first historian to produce an intelligent and documented answer to the question whether the sepoys ever sought to provide an over-all direction to the war. He demonstrated that they had a strategic vision of what they wanted, and even an imperfect idea of how to set about it. Theirs was an attempt to provide an alternative government with a definitely located centre. What they sought to build was a collective leadership constitutionally headed by the legitimate Mughal sovereign. This was the Council for the Arrangement of the Affairs of the Country and the Army, located within the court of Emperor Bahadur Shah in the Red Fort of Delhi. The Indian name of the Council was *Jalsa-e-Intizam-e-Fauji-wa-Mulki*. It appeared that the Mutiny had a mind of its own, and that it sought to create a centre and provide a direction. But Haq attempted no detailed answer to the question why the endeavor did not ensure effective strategic integration of the war operations. That would have required a more detailed observation of the various theatres of war, and the various rebel authorities in diverse areas. What he did provide was an original and documented account of the government of Emperor Bahadur Shah and the mutinous sepoys in Delhi. Without quite putting it into these terms, he suggested that the setting up of this government turned rebellion (i.e. the sepoy mutiny) into authority (i.e. legitimate Mughal sovereignty). This is what turned the Mutiny into an Indian uprising, and made it so serious an affair for the British.⁶

The next generation of researchers on the Mutiny tended to react to Stokes, virtually ignoring Haq. The focus was on mutiny at the margins, rather than the abortive attempt to create a centre. Like Stokes, Rudrangshu Mukherjee, too, concentrated on the social basis of the uprising, and the nature of the popular participation in it. In Awadh, he found a certain commonalty of interest between dispossessed landlords and endangered peasants. This ensured that practically three fourths of the adult male population of the

occupied Kingdom rose in arms against the British. 'Theirs was not', he observed, 'a struggle to establish a new social order. British rule had turned their world topsy-turvy; their aim was to restore that world, and all therein.'⁷ In a subsequent work on the town of Cawnpore, he found that the uprising was the work of the lower orders of the town, the respectable citizens being reluctant to join in initially. The massacres of the Whites were justified by religious requirement. Mukherjee probed into the psyche of popular violence and found there a collectivity of the mind moved by hatred of an alien order.⁸

In yet another study of a 'Popular Uprising', but this one from a more specific subalternist angle of vision, Tapti Roy disagreed with the view that the collective actions of 1857 were organized along a landlord-peasant axis of mutual dependence. The popular rebellion in Bundelkhand was distinct in her opinion from the mutiny of the sepoy, the revolt of the Rajas and the rebellion of the landlords, and it was the collective action of the people of the villages which gave the uprising its popular dimension. She noted that the insurgent Ahir peasants gave strong support to the rebellious Bundela Rajput landlords: no one led, all rose together, and a collectivity arose from simultaneous outbreaks caused by divergent aims and aspirations. The popular actions in the remote villages were, never the less, autonomous. Roy disagreed with her 'imperialist' and 'nationalist' predecessors who had written totalizing histories in the form of the single linear narrative in the alternative frameworks of empire and nation. This was a general perception among the subalternists, and one without any foundation. She was too careful a historian, however, to resort to the typical subalternist notion of the primitive 'inversion' of the existing order of things.⁹

In an attempt to arrive at an aggregative rather than a disaggregative approach, Rajat Kanta Ray sought to place 1857 in the long term perspective of Indian history. Tracking the evolution of the categories 'Hindu', 'Musalman' and 'Hindustan' through the centuries, he traced how these categories came together in the composite political (rather than religious) category of 'the Hindus and Musalmans of Hindustan', and how they resorted to the legitimist notion of Mughal sovereignty to construct an alternative government in 1857. A many-stranded affair, the revolt was, simultaneously, a race war; a war of religion; and a patriotic war for the common homeland.¹⁰ Not deterred by such

complexities, the writer William Dalrymple pronounced that it was a sort of fundamentalist religious war, a *jihad*. He sought an understanding of the Mutiny from the indigenous sources, and succeeded in giving a detailed narrative account of the alternative government set up under Emperor Bahadur Shah from the documents of the Mutiny administration in Delhi.¹¹ The Mughal administration was visibly ineffective in the city and the surrounding country.

What was 1857 then? A Mutiny? A civil/popular Rebellion? A War of Independence? A Traditional Resistance Movement? A Primitive Inversion? A Fundamentalist Outbreak? There is, as we have seen, no agreement on these issues. The idea of the alternative government may, however, provide a clue. What kind of government did the insurgents set up? Their proclamations set out their ideas on this issue, helping us recapture the world from their perspective.

III

There are many proclamations in the massive collection of documents gathered meticulously together by S.A.A.Rizvi on behalf of the Uttar Pradesh Government.¹² Recently, Iqbal Hussain has made another important collection of the proclamations of 1857.¹³ These two collections of translated documents has made the task easier for historians. One fact has escaped many commentators. In their proclamations, the insurgents deployed the language of government. They did not deploy the language of insurgency. Yet later commentators have adopted the contemporary British usage and have dubbed it 'rebellion'. From the standpoint of the sepoys who adopted Bahadur Shah II, it was the British who were the rebels. In Cawnpore, Nana Sahib talked of the sepoy army joining 'the Government' (*Sirkar*).¹⁴ By Government, of course, he implied the Counter-government of the 'Maharaja Peshwa', under the suzerainty of the Mughal Emperor. The chiefs of Bundelkhand were assured in the typical language of the Mughals and the Marathas of the olden days: 'Those who will perform meritorious services will in lieu of them obtain suitable *jagheers* stations and titles from the *sirkar*.'¹⁵ The 'Badshahi

Government’, the Mughal prince Ferozeshah assumed, would replace ‘The British Government’; and he associated the ‘reigning disorder’ with the latter.¹⁶

An order in the name of the Mughal Emperor from the Badshahi Court, lends substance to Feroze Shah’s assumption of a restoration of Mughal authority after annihilation of the enemy. It was addressed to the officers of the Regiments, Cavalry and Artillery etc.

‘You are informed that an order from his Majesty has arrived now that those regiments cavalry and artillery which overrun (enemy) lines would receive higher salaries than the prescribed salaries of other troops. Beside ... they would also get rewards for bravery from His Majesty ... he who loses life in battle, his heirs would be provided for.’¹⁷ A reigning authority promising rewards to its faithful army in such forceful terms cannot use rebel parlance.

In the same tenor, another order issued from the same Court, in the name of Sipah Salar Bahadur, ordains that ‘by the fate-decreeing order of His Majesty’, and his ‘Benevolent Government’, ‘all people, Hindus and Muslims,’ ‘all the subalterns and sepoys’ should obey their commanders and attack the Ridge.¹⁸

As a national compact of the two religions would be forged, the ideals of governance of the mutineers become manifest in myriad ways. Thus Bakht Khan, wielding sweeping powers vested in him by the Emperor himself, issues a proclamation as the Chief Commander of the Army:

‘People belong to God, the country belongs to the King and the order of the Chief commander of the army (prevails) ... in the season of Baqar Eid, before or after, (whoever) conceals the cow, oxen and buffalo in his house and slaughters or sacrifices them stealthily, will be treated as enemy of the king and he will be condemned to death.’¹⁹

Local potentates having thrown off the British yoke emulated the Emperor and his general and adopted the same tone of authority to give good governance to their people. In his proclamation of 13th June, 1857, Nawab Ali Bahadur of Banda in Bundelkhand interdicts murders, highway robberies, infliction of injuries on travellers within his

boundaries and carrying out depredations on others and threatens the transgressors with destruction and arson. He takes care to declare rewards for those who would cooperate with his government. "If you assist the Sirkar, you will be protected and rewarded."²⁰

Or consider this. In an effort to mobilize the Zamindars against the company a proclamation dated 25 February 1858 but without bearing the name of the issuing authority calls upon the 'Zamindars', 'Malgoozars etc.', residing in the 'territories of the ever-enduring sarkar' and suffering under the exactions of 'any Amil, Chacklader or Tehsildar;' to pay their revenue directly to the 'Huzoor.' In return, 'it is incumbent on all the Zamindars, Talookdars and all other subjects of this precious sarkar to unite together and earnestly employ their best exercise in exterminating the evil disposed infidels.'²¹

Birjis Qadr goes a step further. In his Proclamation 'calling upon all to unite against the Europeans' and addressing 'the religious and faithful', he enjoins upon 'both the Hindoos and Mahomedans to direct their united efforts in the extermination of the Christians.' His 'government' which for now can only tend to the needs of 'the indigent and poor' would adequately reward, 'in shape of honour and riches', everyone who rises up in defence of his faith.'²²

Do these proclamations only spew venom and anger against the Company's government because their own governance has been or is about to be subsumed by the former? Do they single-mindedly try to mobilize the 'Hindoos and Muslims of Hindustan' only to defend their respective religions against the 'enemies of our faith'?

The answer is an emphatic 'No'. A careful analysis of the contents of the proclamations reveals a shrewd analysis of the situation. Too much was at stake. Too many grievances awaited resolution. A great wrong had to be righted. Four main factors can be identified as the driving force behind the exhortations towards display of bravery. (1) Serious material grievances against the Company's government were highlighted. (2) 'An Indian Government' would have to be set up because it was only an Indian Government that would preserve religion, social hierarchy and caste. (3) a strategy of warfare had to be worked out to carry the battle to the enemy's headquarters. (4) the 'order of legitimate rule 'inverted' unfairly by the English would have to be restored.

We take up the third priority as the first because there is only a faint glimmer of a faulty and failed strategy evident in the Proclamations. In fact, beyond identifying Delhi, Lucknow and Bareilly as the centres of operations, the leaders evolved no overall plan. Prince Mirza Muhammad Firoze Shah in his February 17, 1858 proclamation urges 'all the Hindoo and Mahomedan inhabitants of India' to join the imperial army in Delhi, with the only exception of those 'who are in service of either Mirza Brijis Qadr Bahadoor in Lucknow and Khan Bahadoor Khan at Bareilly' because 'those rulers are themselves using their best endeavours to clear the country of all infidels.'²³ Again the pamphlet *Fath Islam* instructs the rebel sepoys to concentrate on the protection of Delhi and Lucknow since 'those two places are the asylums of the sepoys and the people high and low.'²⁴ The tract advises the construction of batteries at 8 or 10 miles distance from the two cities in every direction. The remaining sepoys under the command of the Emperor should rely on the strength of the Ghazees 'to kill and pursue the unbelieving people as far as to Calcutta.' Needless to say such a limited strategy was bound to fall flat in the face of the well conceived and masterly executed English plan of warfare. The mutineers could not integrate the country under the leadership of Delhi, and after the fall of Delhi, under Lucknow. They could never realize their project of marching to Calcutta. They were hobbled by their lack of perspicacity, practical sense and organization, and they failed to take in the revenues from the land in the countryside and deploy such resources against the Bengal Presidency.

To take up the first factor in the Proclamations, i.e. to create awareness among the people of Hindustan about their materially hapless condition, the proclamations did an effective job of it. Shrewd analysis and charged emotions underlined English oppression and the moral and material degradation caused thereby. The Azamgarh proclamation²⁵ enlists the causes of indigenous woe meticulously-(i) high land tax, (ii) English monopoly of indigo, opium, cloth etc. (iii) English monopoly of all high and well-paid public offices, (iv) imports from Britain, and (v) English opposition to the faith of the Muslim Maulvis and Hindu pundits. At one stroke a catchment area of potential rebels is identified. This consists of zamindars, merchants, public servants and sepoys, artisans and men of religion.

The Proclamation of Prince Mirza Muhammad Feroze Shah (who declares himself ‘as the grandson of Bahadur Shah Ghazee, King of India’) echoes an identical message and lists categories of subjects of the British Government who have been ruined by British policies:-a) Zamindars suffering from high land taxes, b) merchants suffering from British monopolies, c) public servants put on low pay and low position, including sepoy, d) artisans ruined by British imports, e) pundits, fakirs and learned persons of the Hindu and Muslim religions defending both the religions. But Prince Feroze Shah hurls a menacing threat at these classes- ‘...Whoever out of the above named classes, shall after the circulation of this Ishtihar, still cling to the British Government, all his estates shall be confiscated and his property plundered, and he himself, with his whole family, shall be imprisoned, and ultimately put to death.’²⁶

The third important ingredient of these Proclamations is the perceived threat of English designs to destroy ‘the difference between Mahomedans and Hindoos’, i.e. the principle of Unity in Diversity that underlay the very fabric of the traditional Indian social and political system. Bahadur Shah’s celebrated proclamation of 1857 underlined the importance of preserving the coexistence and compartmentalization of the two great religions of the subcontinent in their respective social spheres. Bahadur Shahs addresses the Rajahs of Hindustan: ‘Keeping your welfare in view, I humbly submit that God had given you your bodily existence to establish his different religions and requires you severally to learn the tenets of your own different religions, institutions and forms, and you accordingly continue firm in them.’²⁷ The British policy of ‘one food and one faith’ would erode the bonding compound of doctrinal diversity that had kept the Indian social-religious system in place so long. No religion would henceforth be safe in its demarcated sphere. All would be converted to a foreign religion unless action was taken in time.

Only ‘an Indian Government’ was a panacea to this evil. Birjis Qadr (Walee of Lucknow) maintained in his proclamation of 25 June 1858 that the four things dear to every man, i.e., religion, honour, life and property, were safe only under an ‘Indian Government.’ ‘No one under this Government interferes with religion. Every one follows his own religion.’ And everyone, he adds in a significant reference to caste, ‘enjoys respect and honour according to his work and status. Men of high extraction, be (they) Syud, Sheikh, Moghal or Pathan among the Mahommedans, a Brahmin, Chattri, Bais, or

Kaith among the Hindoos, all these retain their respectability according to their respective ranks and all persons of a lower order such as Sweeper, Chumar, Dhanook or Pasee cannot claim equality with them.’²⁸

The tract *Fath Islam* enjoins upon both Hindus and Muslims to be brothers unto each other and butcher the English. ‘The Hindus will remain steadfast to their religion, while we will also retain ours. Aid and protection will be offered by us to each other. The accursed Christians were anxious to make both the Hindus and Muslims, Christians, but by God’s blessings they themselves have, on the contrary, been ruined.’²⁹ Thus the parts strove to preserve the whole to protect their own separate existence.

We began this section with the assertion that the insurgents did not describe themselves as ‘rebels’ though their opponents deployed this term to demean their efforts. They fell short of devising and implementing an effective national alternative to the bureaucratic, imperial juggernaut that was the British state in India. So they developed a new identity: a political community couched in terms of two combined religions. They sought at the same time to devise a ‘government’ of the legitimate Mughal sovereign, and to restore the rightful chiefs of Hindustan to their respective positions.

The proclamation of Nana Dondar Punt dated 6 July 1857 contains an innocuous verse ridiculing the initial reverses suffered by the Company’s troops in India:

At even-tide he intended murder and plunder

At noon neither had his body a head nor his head a cover

In one revolution of the Blue Heavens

Neither Nadir remained nor a follower of Nadir.³⁰

The name Nadir refers to Nadir Shah, the invader of India and butcher of Delhi. On a closer look the image of the revolution becomes more complex: the aim is to reinvert the inverted order imposed by the English. As has been pointed out before, ‘Here was the ultimate in revolutionary inversion: the rebels were the government, the government were the rebels.’³¹ Thus it was not a simple case of ‘turning things upside down’ and ‘turning the lowliest into the highest,’ as Ranajit Guha would like us to believe. Rather, the usurper was thrown out, and the highest was restored to his legitimate superior status.

We may conclude that the rebels inverted the inversion itself by talking of ‘firm attachment to the Sarkar.’ In firm opposition to the British coinage of ‘mutiny’ they called themselves ‘servants of the King of Delhi.’³² Instead of reviling themselves as ‘mutineers,’ they called their opponents by that name (*baghi*). They showed devotion ‘to the Government cause’ by slaying the English and defined the slaughter of Nazarenes as an act of devotion to the Emperor. Thus in his celebrated proclamation, Bahadur Shah pitted the *ahl-i-Hindu* and *ahl-i-Islam* against the ‘*ahl-i-firang*’ and exhorted his countrymen, both Hindu and Muslim: ‘Were you and we of the same mind then we might easily succeed in saving our country and faith (*apne mulk aur iman*) by destroying the English (*Angrezon*).’³³

Here was a notion of the country as a whole, wedded to the two principal faiths that had claimed the land for themselves. To name the Hindus and Muslims of Hindustan was to name the entire population of the land. In putting an emphasis on the rebels’ attachment to faith (*iman*) and their dislike of alien rule, Kaye and Savarkar were not mistaken after all. The proclamations have made that clear, as they have the underlying love of the land (*mulk*).

This traditional patriotism, backed by religious fervour, could not evolve the organization necessary to fight the world’s biggest colonial-bureaucratic state. The insurgents declared Delhi, Lucknow and Bareilly as the centres of their operations, but could not integrate these operations militarily or politically. What emerges from the Mutiny historiography is the lack of the integral organization of modern nationalism. They could not evolve a strategy to counter the integrated strategy of a modern colonial state. For the Mutiny was not a nationalist war. Prince Feroze Shah proclaimed it to be an Indian Crusade. In that specific sense, it was a ‘war of independence.’ That is what Savarkar had meant all along and nothing more than that.

This historiographical essay has sought to dispel certain current and old misconceptions. A current misconception is that the Mutiny was a fundamentalist outbreak. This is not true. Historically, Indian society was a syncretic society. The conception of ‘the Hindus and Musalmans of Hindustan’ reflected this fact in the most positive political manner ever. Another contestable notion is that the event of 1857 was a rebellion or, more narrowly, a mutiny. This is based on the internalization of the British

point of view. From the point of view of their opponents, it was a legitimist war, meant to cancel a foreign usurpation of the legitimate Indian government by force (e.g. Buxar) or fraud (e.g. Plassey). Underlying all this was the love of the land, the preference for its time-honoured social structure, and the yearning for one's own religion and one's own realm. But it was too late. Modernity, globalization, imperialism, nationalism, had put paid to the conceptions of 'the Reigning Indian Crusade.'

End notes:

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3. F.W.Buckler, 'The Political Theory of the Indian Mutiny', Royal Historical Society Transactions, series 4, vol.V, 1932.
4. S.N.Sen, Eighteen Fifty Seven (New Delhi 1957); R.C.Majumdar, The Sepoy Mutiny and the Revolt of 1857 (Calcutta 1957); S.B.Chaudhuri, Civil Rebellion in the Indian Mutinies (Calcutta 1957).
5. Eric Stokes, the Peasant and the Raj, Studies in agrarian society and peasant rebellion in colonial India (Cambridge 1978); Ranajit Guha, Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in colonial India (Delhi 1983); Eric Stokes, The Peasant Armed. The Indian Revolt of 1857, ed. C.A.Bayly (Oxford 1986).
6. Syed Moinul Haq, The Great Revolution of 1857 (Karachi 1968).
7. Rudrangshu Mukherjee, Awadh in Revolt 1857-1858, A Study in Popular Resistance (Delhi 1984), p.157.
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10. Rajat Kanta Ray, The Felt Community: Commonalty and Mentality before the Emergence of Indian Nationalism (New Delhi 2003).
11. William Dalrymple, The Last Mughal (Penguin India 2006).
12. S.A.A.Rizvi (ed.), Freedom Struggle in Uttar Pradesh:Source Material, 7 vols. (Publications Bureau, Uttar Pradesh, 1957, hence FSUP).

13. Iqbal Hussain (ed.), 'Proclamations of the Rebels of 1858' (Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi, 2007).
14. Hussain, 'Proclamations', document no.14.
15. Ibid, document no. 33.
16. Ibid, document no. 22.
17. Ibid, document no. 2.
18. Ibid, document no. 4.
19. Ibid, document no. 7, p.19.
20. Ibid, document no. 11.
21. This seems to be the territory of the Peshwa in Central India and Bundelkhand.
Ibid, document no. 42.
22. Ibid, document no. 41.
23. Ibid, document no. 3.
24. Ibid, document no. 18, p.62.
25. Ibid, document no. 44.
26. Ibid, document no. 22.
27. Rizvi (ed.) Freedom Stuggle in Uttar Pradesh, vol. 1, pp.442-443.
28. Hussain, 'Proclamations,' document no. 17, p-52.
29. Ibid, document no. 18, pp 68-69.
30. Ibid, document no. 13.
31. Ray, The Felt Community, p. 473, n.25.
32. *FSUP*, vol.III, p.109.
33. Ray, The Felt Community, p.544. Ahl-i-Hindu = Nation of Hindus. Ahl-i-Islam =Nation of Islam. Ahl-i-Firang =Nation of Franks, i.e., Europeans. 'Nation' (ahl, qaum) is used here in the medieval sense, as in Shakespeare: 'Shylock: He hates my sacred nation.' Another example: qaum-i-sikkan, nation of Sikhs. Ahl (Arabic), Qaum (Persian): Nation, People.