

caste of both Hindus and Mussulmans. . . . Not long after this the mutinous soldiery rushed into the hall of special audience . . . and the hall of devotion, surrounding me completely, and placing sentries on all sides. I asked them what their object was, and begged them to go away. In return they told me to remain a quiet spectator, saying they had staked their lives and would now do all that might be in their power. Fearing that I should be killed, I kept quiet and went to my own apartments. Near evening, those traitors brought, as prisoners, some European men and women . . . and resolved on killing them. . . . Though I again did all in my power to reason with the rebellious soldiery, they would not heed me and carried out their purpose of slaying [some European men and women]. I gave no orders for this slaughter. Mirza Moghul, Mirza Khair Sultan [his sons], and Mirza Abul-Bakr [his grandson], who had leagued with the soldiery, may have made use of my name. . . . Whenever the soldiers or [my sons] or [grandson] brought a petition, they invariably came accompanied by officers of the army, and brought the order they desired, written on a separate piece of paper, and compelled me to transcribe it with my own hand. . . . Matters went so far in this way that they used to say, so that I might hear them, that those who would not attend to their wishes would be made to repent their conduct, and for fear of them I could say nothing. . . .

What power in any way did I possess? . . . The officers of the army went so far as to require that I should make over the queen Zinat Mahal to them that they might keep her prisoner, saying she maintained friendly relations with the English. . . . [The soldiers] plundered not only many individuals, but several entire streets, plundering, robbing, killing. . . . I was helpless, and constrained by my fears, I did whatever they required. . . . They, one day, went to the house of Queen Zinat Mahal, intending to plunder it. . . . If I had been in league with them, how would these things have occurred? In addition to all this, it is worthy of consideration that no man demands the wife of the poorest man, saying, "Give her to me, I will make her a prisoner." . . .

In all the above, which I have caused to be written from my own dictation . . . God knows, and is my witness, that I have written only what is strictly true, and the whole of what I can remember.

[“Translation of the written defense put in by Bahadur Shah,”  
in “Evidence taken before the court appointed for the trial of  
the king of Delhi,” 9 March 1858, in *House of Commons,*  
*Parliamentary Papers*, 1859, vol. 18.]

### *QUEEN VICTORIA'S PROCLAMATION, NOVEMBER 1, 1858*

Although the Rebellion failed, British resumption of power came at a terrific cost to both sides—in life, property, resources, and good will. The brutality of British vengeance, slaughter, and summary executions galled too few Britons at the time, but all

this did alert the British government to the inadvisability of allowing the East India Company to remain in active control of India. Hence on November 1, 1858, Queen Victoria made a historic proclamation, read out in as many Indian villages as possible, in which she declared that thereafter India would be governed by and in the name of the British monarch through a secretary of state. The governor-general was given the title of viceroy, or the monarch's representative; later, in 1877, Queen Victoria herself took the title "Empress of India," assuming the direct government of more than one hundred million Indians.

In a letter to Lord Derby, whom she asked to draft the actual proclamation, she requested that he communicate to her Indian subjects her promise of generosity, benevolence, and equality with all other subjects of the British Crown. In fact, general amnesty was announced as official policy, and the Queen pledged noninterference in matters of custom and religion and universal access to government service. The 24,000-man military force formerly belonging to the Company was incorporated into the British Army. The effect of the proclamation and the policies it promulgated was to favor the princes and landowners and hence to create a class of Indians loyal to the state; this "divide and rule" strategy proved effective in containing political discontent until the 1920s.

And we, reposing especial trust and confidence in the loyalty, ability, and judgment of our right trusty and well-beloved cousin and councillor, Charles John Viscount Canning, do hereby constitute and appoint him, the said Viscount Canning, to be our first Viceroy and Governor-General in and over our said territories, and to administer the government thereof in our name, and generally to act in our name and on our behalf, subject to such orders and regulations as he shall, from time to time, receive from us through one of our Principal Secretaries of State.

And we do hereby confirm in their several offices, civil and military, all persons now employed in the service of the Honourable East India Company, subject to our future pleasure, and to such laws and regulations as may hereafter be enacted.

We hereby announce to the native Princes of India that all treaties and engagements made with them by or under the authority of the Honourable East India Company are by us accepted, and will be scrupulously maintained, and we look for the like observance on their part.

We desire no extension of our present territorial possessions; and, while we will permit no aggression upon our dominions or our rights to be attempted with impunity, we shall sanction no encroachment on those of others. We shall respect the rights, dignity and honour of native Princes as our own; and we desire that they, as well as our own subjects, should enjoy that prosperity and that social advancement which can only be secured by internal peace and good government.

We hold ourselves bound to the natives of our Indian territories by the same obligations of duty which bind us to all our other subjects, and those obligations, by the blessing of Almighty God, we shall faithfully and conscientiously fulfil.

Firmly relying ourselves on the truth of Christianity, and acknowledging with gratitude the solace of religion, we disclaim alike the right and the desire to impose our convictions on any of our subjects. We declare it to be our royal will and pleasure that none be in anywise favoured, none molested or disquieted, by reason of their religious faith or observances, but that all shall alike enjoy the equal and impartial protection of the law; and we do strictly charge and enjoin all those who may be in authority under us that they abstain from all interference with the religious belief or worship of any of our subjects on pain of our highest displeasure.

And it is our further will that, so far as may be, our subjects, of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to offices in our service, the duties of which they may be qualified, by their education, ability, and integrity, duly to discharge.

We know, and respect, the feelings of attachment with which the natives of India regard the lands inherited by them from their ancestors, and we desire to protect them in all rights connected therewith, subject to the equitable demands of the State; and we will that generally, in framing and administering the law, due regard be paid to the ancient rights, usages, and customs of India. . . .

Our clemency will be extended to all offenders, save and except those who have been, or shall be, convicted of having directly taken part in the murder of British subjects. With regard to such the demands of justice forbid the exercise of mercy. . . .

When, by the blessing of Providence, internal tranquillity shall be restored, it is our earnest desire to stimulate the peaceful industry of India, to promote works of public utility and improvement, and to administer its government for the benefit of all our subjects resident therein. In their prosperity will be our strength; in their contentment our security, and in their gratitude our best reward. And may the God of all power grant to us, and to those in authority under us, strength to carry out these our wishes for the good of our people.

[From *The Evolution of India and Pakistan, 1858 to 1947: Select Documents*, ed. C. H. Philips (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 10–11.]

### SIR SAYYID AHMAD KHAN ON THE CAUSES OF THE MUTINY

The career of Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817–1898) parallels in many ways that of Ram Mohan Roy. Both men were born into families of the high social rank, and both were educated in the Persian and Arabic learning required of entrants into the service of the Mughal Empire—well after that empire had been replaced by another. Both came to know and trust British officials and to appreciate the advanced knowledge and new form of government they brought to India. Both men rejected the Christian