The British servants of the East India Company were intensely conscious that they were the successors of the Muslims as rulers in India. Certainly Muslims had been the empire builders of medieval India. By 1605 Akbar ruled over the whole of north India, by 1690 the power of Aurangzeb reached as far south as the river Kaveri. In British India many Muslims' belief that they were the natural ruling aristocracy of the country gave them a confidence in politics all the greater because they knew the British shared their belief. The achievements of the Muslim rulers were indeed great, but, like the British in India, after the demonstration of initial military superiority, their achievements were more diplomatic than martial, perpetuated by the suggestion of unlimited force rather than by its use. Muslim rule in India, like British rule, was much more of a confidence trick played on the compliant populace than its authors would publicly concede.

The reason was that Muslim rule in medieval India was established by a heterogeneous professional immigrants reinforced on occasion by further immigration (but equally on occasion threatened by it) and maintained by some co-option from among the conquered people. Muslim rule was neither a colonial rule from some central Asian homeland nor national rule by members of a victorious political nation domiciled in India. Armies of Turkish slaves and Afghans headed by the eastern Iranian chieftains of Ghur, east of Herat, conquered the Indo-Gangetic plains between 1192 and 1206. By 1221, however, the Ghurid power in Afghanistan had disappeared and the Ghurid
troops in India were isolated by the Mongols under Chengez Khan. Although the Delhi sultanate, established by the former Turkish slave Il tumish (1211-36) received some infusion of new blood from Muslim fugitives from the Mongols in Central Asia, its existence was repeatedly threatened at the end of the thirteenth century by invaders led by Mongol chiefs. At its height, however, under the Khilji and early Tughluq sultans of the fourteenth century, when the process of intermarriage had brought into being a large 'mestizo' elite served by Afghans and military slaves, the Delhi sultanate made its power briefly felt over a vast area from the Bay of Bengal to the Indus and from the foothills of the Himalayas to Madhurai in the far south.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth century there were a many number of Muslim kingdoms in India particularly in the Deccan. They were the Bahamani and then the Shahi kingdoms like the Adil Shahis, the Barid shahis, the Imad Shahis, the Qutub Shahis and the Nizam Shahis ruling over the Deccan. Even the Muslims enjoyed royal patronage and granted jagirs.

At the end of the fourteenth century however, the Turk, Amir Timur (1370-1405), sacked Delhi in a whirlwind raid and ensured that the process of disintegration of the Delhi sultanate into the regional sultanates of Gujarat, Malwa and Jaunpur, already apparent in the rein of Firoz Shah (1351-88), would not be reversed. (Delhi had lost paramountcy in the Deccan by 1347 when the Bahamani sultanate was founded.) After a period in which Delhi was a petty local principality whose chiefs, the Sayed sultans, initially acknowledged the overlordship of Timur's successors in Central Asia, the Lodi Afghans were able in the second half of the fifteenth century to reassert the authority of Delhi over an area from the Punjab to Bengal. In 1526 they fell
to the Mughal, Babur (1483-1530), ruler of Kabul, one of the several Mughal, political entrepreneurs of Central Asia trying to pick up some pieces of the former Timurid empire.

Although Babur's son Humayun (1530-56) was expelled from India in 1540 by the Sur Afghan Sher Shah, he was able to make a comeback in 1555 from the Mughal base in Kabul, with the help of forces lent by the Safavid Shah of Iran, Tahmasp (1524-76). His son Akbar (1556-1605) created an empire which included not only the Indo-Gangetic plains region, Malwa and Gujarat, but also all the Punjab, Bengal, Kashmir, Sindh, Orissa, Khandesh, the northern Deccan and Kabul, the last becoming a dependency of an essentially Indian empire. His successors, Jahangir (1605-27) and Shah Jahan (1628-58), pursued intermittently a policy of expansion at the expense of the Deccan Muslim sultanates of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur and Golkonda until Aurangzeb (1658-1707) succeeded by 1690 in occupying most of the peninsula as far south as the river Kaveri, though not without a continued guerrilla resistance by the Maratha chieftains, which ultimately fatally weakened the empire.

The authority of medieval Muslim rulers in India derived from their ability to control a racially, and under the Mughals religiously, heterogeneous elite and at the same time to organize successfully the internal military occupation of the country. At no time did Muslim rulers preside over a demilitarized society. A Muslim ruler was a chief, a political ring-master; as Aurangzib, succeeded in becoming a monopolist. A Dutch, Pelsaert, writing of the time of Jahangir, graphically described political India as she was until the nineteenth century:
This king (Jahangir) possesses the largest area of all the kingdoms of the world. If all these countries were justly or rationally governed, they would not only yield an incalculable income but would enable him to conquer all the neighbouring kingdoms. But it is important to recognize also that he (Jahangir) is to be regarded as king of the plains or of the open roads only, for in many places you can travel only with a strong body of men or on payment of heavy tolls to rebels. The whole country is enclosed and broken up by many mountains and the people who live in, on and beyond the mountains know nothing of any king, or of Jahangir; they recognize only their Rajas, who are very numerous and to whom the country is apportioned in very small fragments by old tradition.

In order to overcome this open competitive political society, Muslim rulers employed the instruments of the extended patrimonial household-servitors and clients linked to the family of the ruler not by ties of race, tribe or clan, but by memory of past dangers and adventures faced together, by the relationship of master and slave and by the charisma of the successful leader who is able to dispense generous patronage. Without the aid of traditional loyalties such as common ancestry may provide, and without the habits of obedience inherited from a long established dynasty (the Mughals almost succeeded in encouraging the formation of such habits), the ruler had to rely on extensive conquest to maximize the resources available for distribution among his followers and on a tactic of balance and rule between different groups of his followers. But there was always the danger that, if the patrimonial ruler's territories became over-extended, his clients and servitors would be tempted to set up on their own in areas remote from head quarters,
or that in his need to buy loyalty the ruler might deplete his own personal resources. He needed these resources to sustain his own personal army, which was used not only to control would-be rebels but also to resist outside attack. This danger became actuality in the later fourteenth century, when the governors of Gujarat, Malwa and Jaunpur broke away from Delhi; at the end of the fifteenth century, when the Bahamani sultanate became the five successor kingdoms of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, Golkonda, Berar and Bidar; and in the eighteenth century, when the Mughal Muhammad Shah (1719-48) was unable to resist the Persian king Nadir Shah and was powerless to prevent the provinces from going their own way.

Akbar, the greatest of the Mughals, perfected an instrument of rule based on patronage in the mansabdari or office-holding system, which he opened to Rajput chiefs on the same terms as Muslims. The Mughals did not, as did the Ghurids, win north India with the aid of large contingents of military slaves; they relied upon mainly free forces of often quarrelsome and sometimes disloyal Mughals, Turks and Iranians; Akbar found it necessary to put Indian-born Muslims and (after he had subdued the principal chiefs of Rajasthan) Rajputs in the balance against his immigrant followers. In the mansabdari system (elements of which he inherited from the Delhi sultans) he founded an imperial service order offering dignity and prizes beyond the reasonable expectations of would be rebels and fostering peaceful coexistence between diverse ethnic groups divided by religion. Officers were graded decimally, given a personal salary and usually (but not always) an additional rank expressed in terms of cavalry command, the emoluments of which would be related to the number of cavalrymen the mansabdar was commissioned to bring to muster.
A mansabdar was always at the disposal of the emperor, whether for military or for civil employ, and could be dismissed or transferred to other employment at will. The mansabdar’s position was not hereditary, although his sons tended to enjoy some advantage in starting up the ladder of mansabdari promotion. The pay and emoluments of high-ranking mansabdars were such that rebellion was hardly worth the hazard; in the reign of Shah Jahan, for example, the income of a mansabdar with a personal rank of 7,000 and a cavalry rank of 7,000 could amount to thirty lakh of rupees, larger than the revenue to be realized from most Rajput principalities.¹

The methods adopted for paying the salaries of mansabdars encouraged them to co-operate in the subduing or overawing of rural chiefs, clans, tribes and other claimants on the resources of the soil. Although some mansabdars received a cash salary direct from the royal treasury, many, indeed until the end of Aurangzeb’s reign, received their pay in the form of a draft on the revenues of a specified rural area. This assignment (technically jagir) was usually managed by the agent of the assignment holder (jagirdar), but in time of external peace a jagirdar would see that the chiefs in the area of his assignment were compliant. The more important jagirdars were often given civil and military commissions (faujdaris) within the area of their jagirs.

The Indian countryside was extensive and Muslim agents of Muslim rulers comparatively few; their interest in local rural society was strictly a business interest in the peaceful collection with the minimum effort of the maximum share of the produce of the soil. When non-Muslim chiefs and other local claimants on the resources of the land discovered that Muslim rulers would be happy to be accepted as the latest generation of overlords and
superior revenue-receivers, they hastened to co-operate or at least to acquiesce. These chiefs and local vested interests owed their position in the country-side to earlier movements of conquering people, to grants of land by Hindu kings, to the fact that they were leaders of tribes, clans and village brotherhoods who had cleared land for cultivation. Under the Mughals this rural aristocracy was accepted into the revenue collecting system as zamindars (landholders) of various grades. Some were allowed to pay tribute without a detailed inquisition into the revenue-paying capacity of the lands over which they had zamindari rights. Others, the majority, were employed as agents for the collection of revenue, in accordance with imperial regulations governing its assessment and collection. The revenue was raised by division of the crops or by payment of a fixed rate in cash per unit area under cultivation, according to the crop, average local yields and average local prices for the crop. Such zamindars were entitled to a percentage of the revenue and or immunity from land revenue on their own holdings. These zamindari rights could be bought and sold as properties and were often conferred by the Mughal government to reinforce Mughal authority in a particular area. They did not extend to interference with the occupancy rights of the actual cultivator, so long as the latter paid the revenue demand.

The rural population under the Mughals was subject to an elaborate system of district and provincial administration, which the British were to inherit and not fundamentally modify. When the area concerned was not assignment to a Jagirdar, but managed directly by officials of the imperial treasury (diwan), a subordinate collector or 'amalguzar or collector of sarkar, the forerunner of the British district. The sarkar, however, had an executive
officer or fouzdar, who commanded the local army and whose duty it was to ensure that the revenue officials did not meet with armed resistance from the retainers kept by many zamindars. He was also responsible criminal justice. Subha (province) was the above the sarkar and subadar was its head, Nizam was the commander.

In the Mughal times Akbar and his successors presided over, where they did not personally foster, an imperial court culture, shared and contributed to by Muslims and non-Muslims alike. By the eighteenth century, the Mughal courts at Delhi and Agra had become schools of manners and good taste even for opponents and rebels. Percival Spear said ‘an observer who visited only the cities of Mughal India might have supposed that India was mainly a Muslim country.... And that Persian was the current language.’ Persian had been the court language in Delhi and Deccan sultanate, but under the Mughals it also became the language of the Hindu political elite and higher civil servants.

A gradual rejection or submergence of Mughal culture has been a feature of the modern history of India; it is well, therefore, to stress its hold over the imaginations and sensibilities not of the Muslims and Hindu ruling elite but also, and particularly in northern India, over the general urban population. While Hindu and Muslim elite showed a common fondness for the chase and for the ostentatious living, the common people of the towns joined together in celebration of Hindu festivals of Dasrah, Holi and Diwali. All classes attended celebrations at the tombs and shrines of saints and enjoyed the showy displays of the great office holders with illuminations, jugglers, rope dancers, magicians, cock-fights and bear-fights. If, after the looting of Delhi by
Nadir Shah (1736-47) in 1739, the capital lost much of its splash and glitter, the court of Oudh was able to continue the old traditions in Allahabad and Lucknow.

**Muslims before 1857**

Writing in 1871, the Bengal civilian, W.W. Hunter (1840-1900), described 'the Mussalmans' as 'in all aspects.... a race ruined under British rule.' Ignoring his caveat that his remarks applied only to lower Bengal, most historians have not only accepted his judgment as valid for that region but have also extended it to depict fate of Muslims throughout British India. Certainly British rule ruined the office holding Muslim weaver of Dacca, but not all at once. For other Muslims, in Punjab for example, British rule brought security; for some in Bombay who were engaged in shipping it brought wealth; for some in British service in the North-Western Provinces, the centre of Mughal culture, it brought more land. The only generalization possible is that gradually the British changed the form and style of success in Indian society from the military to the commercial. In so far as Muslims were left by the decline of the Mughal empire in a position to become capitalists, they could prosper just as non-Muslims could prosper.

For the many Muslims who wanted to preserve their illusions, the establishment of British supremacy in India wrought changes more real than apparent. Looking back the period after the death of Aurangzeb, the Moghal aristocracy could see that they had shared power to their increasing disadvantage with plebian-Marathas, Jats and indeed Afghan adventurers.
The British East India Company established its power and suppressed the native rulers in India. The events of 1857, for both the Muslims of Northern India and British were a trauma. The savage British suppression of the mutiny and rising, with its destruction of Delhi as a centre of Muslim culture, and the dispersion of the descendants of Akbar and Aurangzeb by execution and exile, at last forced educated Muslims to realize not only that the British were in India to stay, but also that they intended to stay on their own terms. The last illusions that they were the mayors of the Mughal palace were dissipated; the last illusions that an education in Persian and Urdu and in the Muslim religious sciences would serve both a Muslim's external and his worldly welfare were torn away. The British, though, a mere handful of men, had successfully defied the hosts of Zion, or rather of Mecca. Their behaviour in 1857 showed that success owed nothing to superior virtue; it must therefore be success of a superior technique, the sources of which could no longer be ignored.

For the British, the effect of 1857 was to make them conscious of Muslims as Muslims and to endow them, at least in British thinking about them, with a corporate political character which in British eyes Muslims had not previously possessed. Not immediately and not quite decisively, but after a lapse of a decade, the Mutiny and rising of 1857 were to usher in the period of balance and rule with the Muslims occupying one of the pans of the balance. Before 1857 the servants of the East India Company would have liked to treat India as if it were inhabited by rational individuals capable of pursuing their own enlightened self-interest; after 1857 the officials of the Crown began to regard India as inhabited by communities bound together by unreasoning sentiment and acquiring not guidance but manipulation.
For most British observers in 1857 a Muslim meant a rebel. Metcalfe summed up the typical British attitude.

The first spark of disaffection it was generally agreed, were kindled among the Hindu sepoys who feared an attack upon their caste. But the Muslims then fanned the flames of discontent and placed themselves at the head of the movement, for they saw in these religious grievances the stepping stone to political power. In the British view it was Muslim intrigue and Muslim leadership that converted a sepoy mutiny into a political conspiracy, aimed at the extinction of the British Raj.

Sir William Muir's works like *Life of Mohammed* and *The Caliphate, its Rise, Decline, and Fall* helped to foster the myth of the Muslim as always armed with the sword in one hand and the *Quran* in the other, wrote to his brother in October 1857.

'The Mussalmans, while they thought their cause had a fair chance of final success have frequently compromised themselves by flagrantly traitorous acts. At Aligarh, for instance, the Mussalmans were for a considerable time dominant; they forcibly converted many Hindus; they defied our Government in the most insolent manner; all the ancient feelings of warring for the faith, reminding one of the days of the first Caliphs, were resuscitated.

'That the proclamation,' he wrote, 'of the King of Delhi's reign should unsettle the allegiance of the Moslems was to be expected from the singularly close combination of the political and religious elements in the system of Islam.'

It would have needed minds much less knocked off balance by fear and wounded pride than those of most Britons in India in 1857 to disregard
the evidence of Muslim responsibility for mutiny and rebellion. The troopers of third Native Cavalry, among the first units to be provoked in to mutiny, were Muslim. It was they who rode off from Meerut to Delhi to set up Bahadur Shah at the head of the rebellion. Nor did the Mughals at Delhi appear reluctant to assume the role assigned to them. Bahadur Shah had no cause to love the Europeans, who were going to reduce his family after his death to retired gentlefolk living in a 'grace and favour residence' near the Qutub Minar, one of the earliest monuments to Muslim conquest in India. By nightfall on 11 May 1857, the day after the mutiny at Meerut, a salvo of twenty-one guns at Delhi announced that Bahadur Shah had assumed the mantle of Akbar, Shah Jahan and Aurangzib and that he whom most Indians, Hindu and Muslim alike, regarded as the *de jure* ruler of India had come into his own again. Within Delhi itself, it seemed almost as if the great days of the Mughals had come again. A Mughal prince, Mirza Mughal, was commander-in-chief. The remaining Muslim jagirdars in the Delhi territory, for example ‘Abd-Allah Rahman Khan of Jhaggar, Aminal-din Ahmad Khan of Loharu and Ziya al-din Ahmad (all of whom were either hanged or imprisoned after the British recapture of Delhi) were summoned to attend the royal presence. A proclamation was issued in the Mughal name calling upon all who wished to save their religion to join the troops and not to leave their religion and not to leave any unbelievers alive.6

Events in Awadh, too, seemed to confirm the Muslim character of the rising. There the sepoys rallied under the standard of Birjis Qadir, a minor son of the exiled King of Awadh, (Wajid ‘Ali Shah, 1847-56) and his mother Hazrat Mahal (d. 1879), who was one of the Indian heroes of 1857. The Chief
Commissioner of Agra, Colonel H. Fraser (1858), advised against abandoning Lucknow after the British storm of Delhi. In September, as it would be 'reoccupied as the head of the Mahomedans rebellion'. The famous Times correspondent, William Howard Russell (1820-1907), spoke of Begum Hazrat Mahal as exciting all Awadh to take up the interests of her son and as declaring undying war against the British.

Events in the countryside pointed also to the Muslim character of the rising. 'The Mahomedans villages in the Doab and the people in the neighbourhood of Aligarh were by far the worst in the district. They seem to have risen as if by signal and certainly committed the greatest depredations.' In Aligarh 'the fanatical lower Mussalmans, Jooluhas [weavers] raised 'the cry of "Deen Deen". One Ghiyath Muhammad Khan proclaimed himself at Aligarh as subadur on behalf of Bahadur Shah II. The Muslim population of Rohilkhand, composed of the districts of Bareilly, Muradabad, Shahjahanpur, Badaun and Bijnor, had strongly resented British rule since Company annexation in 1801. They had rioted against taxation in 1816 and troops had to be called in. As already seen, Bishop Heber reported on the large numbers of unemployed Pathan cavalrymen in the area in the eighteen-twenties. Now, in 1857, Khan Bahadur Khan (1790-1859), grandson of Hafiz Rahmat Khan (1708-74), the last independent Muslim ruler of Rohilkhand, assumed the title of Nawab-Nazim (provincial governor) on behalf of Bahadur Shah II and appointed a Pathan chief, Mubarak Shah, as governor of Badaun. For nearly a year Khan Bahadur Khan ruled in Bareilly with a fighting force 'popularity estimated at 30 to 40 Thousand' and composed mostly of 'impecunious Pathans'. At Allahabad, the old capital of a principal Mughal province, after
the mutiny of the 6th Native Infantry stationed there, the discontented Muslim aristocracy and the Muslim city population joined hands and soon 'the green flag of Islam' was waving over the Kotwali. A member of the 'ulama, Maulavi Liaqt Ali (d. 1872), said to be a weaver by birth and a schoolmaster by profession, came forth to take charge in the name of the Mughal in Delhi.7

Members of the Muslim religious classes were prominent in revolt. 'The Maulavi of Faizabad' Ahmad-Allah Shah (d.1858), a natural leader of men, harassed Sir Colin Campbell’s (1792-1863) forces during the hot season’s campaign in 1858 for the conquest of Awadh, although he was without any formal military training. One Maulana Rahmat-Ali assumed leadership of the revolt in Muzaffarnagar. Suspicion naturally fell upon the followers of Sayed Ahmad Bareilly. At Patna, on 20 June 1857, William Tayler (1808-92) arrested by a subterfuge the leading reformist maulwis, Shah Muhammad Hussain (1788-1860), Ahmad-Allah (1808-81) and Wa’iz al-Haq, claiming that they were plotting a rising. A chief of jihadis from Tonk, whose nawab was an undoubted patron of the mujahiddin on the frontier, arrived in Delhi on 31 July 1857, to be followed by a contingent of Muslim warriors for the faith, who fought valiantly during the siege of Delhi.8

The case for a general Muslim conspiracy was strengthened by events hundreds of miles distant from the outraged sepoys of the Bengal army or the disaffected countryside of Rohilkhand. The Muslim wilayatis, mercenary retainers of the rajas, nawabs and petty chiefs of Gujarat, were disaffected towards the British. In July 1857 there was a Muslim rebellion at Fort Dohad in the Baroda area, followed by another in month in September led by a Muslim sergeant (jamdar), Mustafa Khan.9 Sir George Campbell describes the bitter
British feelings towards Muslims which he encountered in the North-Western Provinces as follows:

"It was at Meerut that I first realized the strong feelings against the Mahomedans which had grown up in the North-Western provinces. We thought that the Mahomedans had no excuse from the caste grievance which was the immediate occasion of the mutiny and were disappointed when the Mohammedans sepoys in the regular regiments went with the rest. Then we thought that the irregular cavalry, a superior class and largely Mohammedans, would have stood by us and when a good many of them went too we felt aggrieved. When our power was completely upset in the North-Western provinces and all signs of our rule had disappeared, it was not unnatural that in some places the Mahomedans whom we had succeeded within the memory of man should try to set up in our stead, the more as the Sepoy rule was nominally that of the old Emperor of Delhi. We were very bitter against the Mohammedan pretenders".10

Nevertheless, appearances were deceptive and were recognized as such by the Governor-General, Lord Canning, and others in high places, with profound consequences for the future of Muslims in India. The original military mutinies were sparked off by the Hindu sepoys’ fear for their caste, their honour and their self-respect. The civil risings in Awadh, Bihar and Central India were mostly Hindu-led. The majority of the rebellious talluqdars of Awadh were Hindu. The Rani of Jhansi (d.1858), Tantya Tope (c.1819-59) and Nana Sahib (1820-59) were all Hindus. In the Gorakhpur region, the Commissioner, C. Wingfield (1820-92), noted that it was certain tribes of the higher castes of Rajputs who displayed the most marked hostility.11 Sir James
Qutram (1803-63) failed to raise Hindus in Rohilkhand against the regime of Khan Bahadur Khan and had to return money granted for the purpose unspent to the treasury.\textsuperscript{12}

Muslims themselves were as divided by personal, ethnic, class and regional affiliations as were Hindus and felt the same pressures. Among Muslim princes and aristocrats, the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Nawabs of Rampur, Karnul, Muradabad and Dacca remained ‘loyal’. While Nawab of Farrukhabad and the Nawab of Danda turned ‘rebel.’ Some Muslim official went one way, some the other. In the Aligarh and Rohilkhand areas they mostly joined the rebels; \textsuperscript{13} on the other hand, the districts of Muttra, a predominantly Hindu area, was held for the British by a Muslim deputy-collector and the loyalty of Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan as \textit{sadr amin} at Bijnor, in trying to hold the district for the British assisted by a Muslim tahsildar (Indian sub-collector of revenue), became part of the saga of the ‘loyal Mohammedans’ of India. Even at Patna, where Tayler was busy taking leaders of the mujahidin into custody, his principal aides were Muslims like Maula Bakhsh, Shah Kabir al-din, Qazi Ramzan ‘Ali and Saiyed Wilayat Khan.\textsuperscript{14} The Muslims of Bengal, who had certainly suffered most, economically, from British rule, did not stir. In the Punjab, Muslims joined with Sikhs and the Muslim tribesmen of Kohat to form part of the reinforcements for the British troops on the ridge outside Delhi. Charles Raikes describes them as ‘tall, sleek, good-natured quiet men, easily managed in the lines and ready to cut off the head of a brother Mohammedan in Hindostan [i.e. the North-Western Provinces] when required’.\textsuperscript{15}

The remarkably perceptive and balanced observations of Sir George Campbell, written in July and August 1857 when the conflict was at its height,
cannot be improved upon today. He emphasized that, apart from a few small risings which occurred after the British capture of Delhi in September 1857 and were provoked by British severity and persecution, the rebellion was essentially Hindustani in character, a rebellion of previously dominant classes, both stani in character, a rebellion of previously dominant classes, both Hindu and Muslim, in the North-Western Provinces 'who have been rejected by us'. It was not a general Muslim movement against the British.

The Pathans and Rajputs and Boondelas whose countries have been acquired within the last fifty years (in the decline of the Mohammedan power great Hindu zamindars were in much of the country the really powerful men) have made a considerable, but I believe it will be found not a really formidable figure; while the Mohammedans and zamindars of Bihar and part of Benares whose subjection to us is of a date twenty years earlier, have generally not joined in the rebellion at all.16

He pointed out that the Muslim communities most given to religious fanaticism, the fara'izis in Bengal and the Mappillas in South India, had not stirred. He believed that there was no active sympathy on the part of 'the professors of the Mohammedan religion'. Even in the North-Western Provinces where, he conceded, 'the mass of the Hindustani race has wavered in their allegiance', he denied that Muslims rose in revolt as a body and as a matter of religion and class, although he thought that probably most of the 'native' civil servants who went over to the rebels were Muslim. 'The Mohammedans have, I think, behaved better than might have been expected, considering their antecedents and position; and that the result, far from bringing to light a chronic Mohammedan conspiracy, has been to show that
we have not in that class of our subjects that formidable danger that has been sometimes apprehended. As for the Mughal at Delhi, Bahadur Shah was simply set up by our army (that is, by the mutineers from Meerut).

The Governor-General himself had, even earlier than Campbell, entered a caveat against interpreting the rising as essentially Muslim. Writing on 5 June 1857 to Vernon Smith (1800-73), President of the Board of Control, he said that the revolt began as a Hindu movement of men honestly afraid for their caste; although there is evidence, he says, that twenty-six regiments have bound themselves against the government, and that some outbreak was meditated, it cannot have been such an outbreak as has now occurred, and which for a time took the shape of a caricature revival of the Mohammedan Empire. This phase of the affair is, I believed due simply to the fact that the men of the Regiments which were so grossly mismanaged at Meerut, and those who suffered punishment were chiefly Mohammedans and that Delhi unguarded by a single European, was close at hand. Now that the rebellion has lost all distinctive character it is not more Mussalman than Hindu.

A formal assessment made for Canning early in 1859 under the title 'Note by L. Bowring [1824-1910] on the causes of the Mutiny and on the part taken in it by the Mohammedans' held to the same judgment. ‘Considerable prevalence,’ it noted, has been given to the report that the Mohammedans were the prime movers of the revolts, that a conspiracy on their part of long standing has been concocted under the eyes of the Government and that the sepoys were their dupes and blind instruments. This is an assumption rather than a fact. It is true that the Mahomedans in many parts of India are ill-disposed towards the British Government and have at various times excited
disturbances, as for example the Moplahs in Madras and the Ferazees in Bengal. It is also true that every Mohammedan would gladly see the day when his faith should again be in the ascendant and would infinitely prefer Mohammedan to British rule. But allowing this to be an accurate exposition of their secret rule. But allowing this to be an accurate exposition of their secret aspirations, it cannot militate against facts which tend to show that the Mohammedans only took a partial share in the mutiny and that after its development.  

Bowring then goes on to say that there is nothing in the correspondence seized since the first outbreak to prove the complicity of Muslim chiefs prior to the Barrackpore outbreak and that, although the rebellion took on a Muslim appearance when Delhi was seized by the mutineers from Meerut, ‘there is nothing whatever to show that the sudden seizure of Delhi was anything but a fortuitous circumstance and there is evidence that the people and sepoys were quite unprepared for the arrival of the Meerut mutineers’. Bowring notes the quiescence of Muslims in Bengal and the active loyalty of Muslims in the Punjab and acknowledges the debt of the British to those Muslim chiefs, the Nizam of Rampur, who were distant from the British troops and could have done the British much injury had they not remained ‘staunch’. The leaders of the rising were non-commissioned officers, not Muslims of rank, ‘thus showing that the mutiny was in truth a military revolt and not a national insurrection’.

Thus the Muslims in India played an important role at the time of the great mutiny and in the national movement that we should not forget their role in this respect. Because they lost their all privileges and lost all most importance. Therefore they joined their hands against the English.
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