

British Conservatism and the Indian Revolt: The Annexation of Awadh and the Consequences of Liberal Empire, 1856–1858

Matthew Stubbings

Abstract This article examines how the East India Company's 1856 annexation of the Indian Kingdom of Awadh informed British Conservative responses to the Indian Revolt in 1857 and 1858. Addressing scholarship on Britain's reaction to the revolt and political engagement with Indian empire, this study reveals that Conservatives interpreted this event with a veneration for locality and prescription. Criticism from company officials and Awadh's deposed royal family informed Conservative perceptions that British exploitation and westernization were responsible for military rebellion and popular upheaval. Principally, this reflected Conservative skepticism regarding liberal modernity as well as support for prescribed aristocratic, propertied, and established church interests in Britain. Their response, expressed in Parliament and supported in conservative periodicals, was the 1858 Queen's Proclamation authored by Edward Smith-Stanley, the 14th Earl of Derby's Conservative government. The proclamation established a lasting imperial framework which defined the crown's obligation to uphold India's political, social, and cultural differences and separation from Britain. Future Conservatives strengthened British views of India's distinctiveness by supporting perceived traditional leaders and customs over uniform western administration and education.

On 13 April 1829, Edward Law, Baron Ellenborough, president of the board of control, mused on his responsibility for India: "I said incidentally to-day, 'I will not sit here to sacrifice India to England,' a sentiment which escaped me, but which I feel to be correct, not only socially but politically."¹ This sentiment informed a career conviction and encapsulated British Conservative arguments that the East India Company's annexation of the Kingdom of Awadh in 1856 produced the Indian Revolt in 1857–58. Conservative responses to insurrection in Awadh (referred to as "Oude" or "Oudh" by British contemporaries) and across India similarly reflected a veneration for locality and prescription. Beyond the machinations of party and the deliberations of statesmen,

Matthew Stubbings is a course instructor of British and international history at Wilfrid Laurier University. He wishes to thank Daniel Gorman, Douglas Peers, Jesse Palsetia, Dane Kennedy, Angus Hawkins, and the participants of the University of East Anglia "Politics before Democracy Conference" for their constructive criticism. He also recognizes the editor and the anonymous reviewers of the *Journal of British Studies* for their invaluable support.

¹ Edward Law Ellenborough and Reginald Charles Edward Abbot Colchester, *A Political Diary, 1828–1830* (London, 1881), 13.

Indian resistance inspired broader political considerations of the nature and objectives of liberal empire.² In response, the Conservative Party reoriented British imperialism away from a liberal civilizing mission to political collaboration and cultural non-interference with India's prescribed differences and separation from Britain.

Conservative political responses challenge historiography which shows that a monolithic British culture shock and affirmation of racial superiority followed the Indian Revolt. Rather, Conservative criticism of British policy and prejudice reflects Salahuddin Malik's analysis of varied metropolitan political responses to Indian transgressions.³ In large part, Conservatives anticipated Rudranshu Mukerjee's research indicating that Awadh's annexation and property confiscation initiated wider popular and even national revolt.⁴ Informed by British and Indian critics of the company's raj, including Awadh's deposed royal family, Conservatives claimed that systemic British cultural prejudice against India's institutions and people had influenced a program of annexation, property confiscation, and religious interference preceding the revolt.⁵

Conservatives were guided by a political tradition prioritizing local custom and prescriptive right as the basis of governing authority, social standing, and religious faith. Conservative approaches to imperial rule, as to foreign policy more broadly, prioritized patriotism and national interest over whig and liberal internationalism.⁶ In the context of the British Raj, their inclination to respect place and history contrasts with what Thomas Metcalf, Catherine Hall, and Jennifer Pitts describe correctly as European liberalism's civilizing and authoritarian imperial motivations.⁷ Moreover, an analysis of Conservative engagement with the empire substantiates Metcalf's exploration of the Raj's conservative turn and ideology of racial difference after 1858.⁸ Conservatives responded to Indian events with arguments resembling an earlier political defense against liberal reform in Britain and Ireland. Although comprising a diverse parliamentary party, they shared an anxiety that political centralization, liberal democracy, capitalism, and scientific rationalism threatened traditional, mostly rural, aristocratic, propertied, and religious institutions.⁹ With little

² Angus Hawkins, "British Parliamentary Party Alignment and the Indian Issue, 1857–1858," *Journal of British Studies* 23, no. 2 (Spring 1984): 79–105.

³ Salahuddin Malik, *1857 War of Independence or Clash of Civilizations? British Public Reactions* (Karachi, 2008); Christopher Herbert, *War of No Pity: The Indian Mutiny and Victorian Trauma* (Princeton, 2008); Gautam Chakravarty, *The Indian Mutiny and the British Imagination* (Cambridge, 2005).

⁴ Rudranshu Mukerjee, *Awadh in Revolt 1857–1858: A Study of Popular Resistance* (London, 2002).

⁵ On Awadh's Royal Family and British power see also Rosie Llewellyn-Jones, *The Last King in India: Wajid Ali Shah 1822–1887* (London, 2014); A. P. Bhatnagar, *The Oudh Nights Tales of Nawab Wazirs, Kings and Begums of Lucknow* (Haryana, 2005).

⁶ Jeremy Black ed., *The Tory World: Deep History and the Tory Theme in British Foreign Policy, 1679–2014* (London, 2015), 2–3; Geoffrey Hicks, "Introduction: The View from Knowsley," in idem, ed., *Conservatism and British Foreign Policy, 1820–1920: The Derbys and Their World* (Farnham, 2011), 1–18, at 13.

⁷ Eric Stokes, *The English Utilitarians and India* (Oxford, 1963); Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Colony and Metropole in the English Imagination, 1830–1867* (Chicago, 2002); Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton, 2005); Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought* (Chicago, 1999).

⁸ Thomas Metcalf, *The Aftermath of Revolt: India, 1857–1870* (Princeton, 1967); idem, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge, 1995).

⁹ Robert Stewart, *The Politics of Protection: Lord Derby and the Protectionist Party, 1841–1852* (Cambridge, 1971); Anna Gambles, *Protections and Politics: Conservative Economic Discourse, 1815–1852*

understanding of India, however, they employed British knowledge and prejudice to interpret the revolt and define a “traditional society” loyal to imperial power.¹⁰ Edward Smith-Stanley, 14th Earl of Derby’s Conservative government authored a Queen’s Proclamation that reoriented the British Raj to a focus on India’s aristocracy, landed proprietors, and religious adherents. In subsequent decades, Conservatives strengthened an imperial framework based on the crown’s vertical association with a politically divided, socially stratified, and racially differentiated India by challenging the continued propagation of uniform western administration and English education.

COMPANY RAJ, AWADH, AND THE INDIAN REVOLT

In 1857 and 1858, Conservatives and other British critics saw the East India Company’s Awadh annexation, as well as property resettlement and confiscation, as representative of its larger assault on India’s political, propertied, and religious institutions. In particular, they blamed the prejudicial application of British rule and western practices for causing military and popular rebellion against imperial authority. Increased British prejudice aligned with the erosion of the Company’s autonomous political and trading authority by parliamentary acts in 1784, 1817, 1833, and 1853.¹¹ Reduced to a primarily administrative body until outright abolition in 1858, during the first half of the nineteenth century the company nonetheless absorbed autonomous Indian states into British India. Symbolized by Dalhousie’s “doctrine of lapse” that legitimated British annexation if an Indian ruler failed to produce a male heir, this expansion was fueled by British officials’ cultural prejudice against India’s prescribed rulers and customs. This prejudice motivated Awadh’s informal subjugation to British paramountcy established through treaties in 1801 and 1837. The company guaranteed its protection and noninterference with the Nawab of Awadh’s domestic authority as long as it remained consistent with British principles of “good governance.”¹² The latter became the pretext for justifying annexation. Lucknow residents Colonel William Henry Sleeman and Major James Outram labeled Awadh’s Nawab Wajid Ali Shah (r. 1847–1856) a corrupt, profligate, and violent potentate whose misgovernment and state-sanctioned violence alienated the population.¹³

(Woodbridge, 1999); Robert Blake, *The Conservative Party from Peel to Thatcher* (London, 1985), 19–24. On aristocratic perspectives on the empire, see also David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (Oxford, 2001), 8.

¹⁰ Bernard Cohn, “Representing Indian Authority in Victorian India,” in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger (Cambridge, 1983), 165–210; Bernard Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge* (Princeton, 1996).

¹¹ Anthony Webster, *The Twilight of the East India Company: The Evolution of Anglo-Asian Commerce and Politics, 1790–1860* (Woodbridge, 2009); Philip J. Stern, *The Company-State: Corporate Sovereignty and the Early Modern Foundations of the British Empire in India* (Oxford, 2012).

¹² For a detailed history of the East India Company’s relationship and eventual paramountcy in Awadh, see also Michael H. Fisher, *Indirect Rule in India: Residents and the Residency System 1764–1858* (Delhi, 1991), 380–86.

¹³ James Outram, *Oude, Papers Relating To: Presented to Both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty, 1856* (London, 1856).

When Dalhousie sought support from the whig government to annex Awadh, Robert Vernon Smith, president of the board of control from March 1855 to February 1858, assented despite his concern that it would likely spur domestic opposition.¹⁴ In February 1856, British forces peacefully seized the kingdom and expelled Wajid and his suite to Calcutta. Wajid refused a treaty that provided an annual pension for himself, his family, and British-approved heirs.¹⁵ In addition, the Indian government alienated Awadh's landed proprietors and peasants by introducing an arbitrary revenue settlement that enabled British officials' summary decision and property reassessment.¹⁶ In May 1857, sepoys—Indian soldiers in the British Indian army—mutinied in Meerut, northeast of Delhi, after refusing to violate their religion by using animal-greased cartridges. They ignited a wider military and popular revolt in northern and central India driven by growing popular resentment to British disregard for local customs.¹⁷ Lucknow, southeast of Delhi, was quickly attacked and seized by rebels from November 1857 to early 1858.

AWADH AND THE VOCAL CRITICS OF BRITISH AUTHORITY

Before the commencement of hostilities in May 1857, Awadh's metropolitan profile was raised by Anglo-Indians and its dethroned royal family, who associated annexation with growing British financial self-interest and cultural antagonism. Interestingly, Sleeman, Awadh's former resident (1849–1856), was the leading authority for critics of British policy during the Indian Revolt.¹⁸ Although he was instrumental in justifying Wajid's dispossession, his private correspondence, published posthumously in 1856 and 1858, expressed contempt for a “new school” of antagonistic British officials and press which advocated for an expansive annexation policy.¹⁹ Writing to Dalhousie in 1852, he contended that, although the “King is a crazy imbecile” and the people “want our government,” all revenue should remain in Awadh for its people and the royal family's benefit.²⁰ A year later, he expounded to James Hogg, previous chairman of the East India Company (1849–1852), that the Indian government had no right to annex and confiscate, and that these ambitions were encouraged by “a school ... characterized by an impatience at the existence of any native state.”²¹ In 1857, Malcom Lewis, former Sudder judge in Madras,

¹⁴ Smith to Dalhousie, 8 November 1855, Robert Vernon Smith MSS Eur. F231/1, fol. 201, Indian Office Records (hereafter IOR), British Library (hereafter BL); Smith to Dalhousie, 22 November 1855, *ibid.*, fol. 205.

¹⁵ Court of Directors Despatch to the India Political Department, 10 December 1856, Correspondence with India E/4/840, fols. 1061–65, IOR, BL.

¹⁶ Mukherjee, *Awadh in Revolt*, 38–63.

¹⁷ Biswamoy Pati, ed., *The 1857 Rebellion* (New Delhi, 2008); Smita Pandey, *Vision of the Rebels during 1857: Aspects of Mobilization, Organization and Resistance* (New Delhi, 2008); Kim A. Wagner, *The Great Fear of 1857: Rumours, Conspiracies and the Making of the Indian Uprising* (Witney, 2010).

¹⁸ Colonel W. H. Sleeman, *Diary of a Tour through Oude in December 1849, & January & February, 1850*, vol. 1 (Lucknow, 1856); William Sleeman, *A Journey through the Kingdom of Oude*, 2 vols. (London, 1858).

¹⁹ Sleeman to Bird, 10 December 1849, in Sleeman, *A Journey through the Kingdom of Oude*, 2:333; Sleeman to Hogg, 4 April 1852, in Sleeman, *A Journey through the Kingdom of Oude*, 2:357.

²⁰ Sleeman to Dalhousie, September 1852, in Sleeman, *A Journey through the Kingdom of Oude*, 2:368.

²¹ Sleeman to Hogg, 2 January 1853, in Sleeman, *A Journey through the Kingdom of Oude*, 2:387; Sleeman to Hogg, 12 January 1853, in Sleeman, *A Journey through the Kingdom of Oude*, 2:390.

questioned the British Indian administration's overt hypocrisy concerning territorial expansion. They had instigated Awadh's misrule by imposing the financial burdens of funding British civil and military personnel stationed in the kingdom. Moreover, their spurious allegation regarding the Awadh state's use of violence was hypocritical since British Bengal and Madras featured well-documented cases of torture.²² Their treatment reflected a hardening of British policy, which degraded India's elites by destroying established rights and privileges.²³ In Parliament, Erskine Perry, a whig MP for Devonport and Bombay's former Chief Justice, submitted that the Anglo-Indian press encouraged Dalhousie's unrestrained annexation for material gain.²⁴ By defying India's territorial and religious dynastic rights of succession, administrators sought to rectify the government's perpetual fiscal deficits.²⁵

Awadh's royal engagements in Southampton, London, Birmingham, Manchester, and Glasgow increased public scrutiny of British policy toward India. Contemporaries associated Queen Dowager Jenabi Auliah Tajera and heir apparent, Mohammed Hamid Allie, with other Indian magnates seeking justice and restitution from metropolitan authorities, including Sikh Maharaja Dulep Singh.²⁶ Awadh's royals used their celebrity and paid agents, including Major William Bird, Awadh's former assistant resident, and Mohammed Mashih Uddin, past court servant and company diplomat, to link British prejudice and financial self-interest with state annexation and property confiscation. In Southampton, the *Hampshire Advertiser* emphasized the royals' celebrity status, as "their magnificent appearance astonished the crowd, and they were saluted with cheers, the parties near them taking off their hats in respect."²⁷ In London, the prince and Bird attended various events, including the Smithfield Cattle Show, the Crystal Palace, a performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Princess Theatre, the Easter Banquet at Mansion-House, and the Anniversary Festival for the Metropolitan Free Hospital chaired by whig grandee Lord John Russell.²⁸ In April, they headed north to visit Birmingham's and Lancashire's manufactories. The *Morning Chronicle* reported that "along the line, Slough, Reading, Oxford, and other towns, the train every time it stopped was the object of intense astonishments to the persons who thronged the several platforms."²⁹

In February 1857, the royal family visited East India House for a meeting with the company's court of directors. Bird denied a newspaper report that the family was offered and accepted a 150,000 rupee annuity.³⁰ Amid a growing Indian sepoy

²² Malcom Lewis, *Has Oude Been Worse Governed by Its Native Princes than Our Indian Territories by Leadenhall Street?* (London, 1857), 3, 5–17.

²³ Lewis, *Has Oude Been Worse Governed*, 20.

²⁴ Perry, Speech to the House of Commons, 4 March 1856, *Parliamentary Debates* (hereafter *PD*), Commons, 3rd ser., vol. 140 (1856), col. 1885.

²⁵ Perry, Speech to the House of Commons, 18 April 1856, *PD*, Commons, 3rd ser., vol. 141 (1856), cols. 1192–1204.

²⁶ A. Martin Wainwright, "Royal Relationships as a Form of Resistance: The Cases of Duleep Singh and Abdul Karim," in *South Asian Resistances in Britain, 1858–1947*, ed. Rehana Ahmed and Sumita Mukerjee (London, 2012), 91–105.

²⁷ *Hampshire Advertiser*, 22 August 1856.

²⁸ *London Standard*, 10 December 1856; *Morning Chronicle*, 13 October 1856; *Morning Post*, 13 December 1856; *Morning Chronicle*, 14 April 1857; *Morning Chronicle*, 11 June 1857.

²⁹ *Morning Chronicle*, 2 April 1857.

³⁰ *Examiner*, 7 February 1857.

revolt in July 1857, Queen Victoria and Robert Vernon Smith invited the visiting royal family to Buckingham Palace.³¹ That summer, Bird made speeches across Britain condemning company governance and emphasizing the royal family's efforts to bring about social improvement such as raising the maternal condition of the poor.³² That same year, Mohmmad Mashi Uddin linked British cultural prejudice and greed to state annexation. He argued that, in order to satisfy their want to secure appointments for friends and relatives, British officials misrepresented Awadh's affairs to find convenient pretexts for interference:

The Mahomedan laws ... were as little agreeable to English feelings as the manners of the Court, and hence ... misrepresentation was the consequence, more especially as the residents neither had the time to investigate the subject patiently, nor the candour to make an allowance for such difference of views and opinions.³³

Awadh's royal family, along with Sleeman, Lewis, and Perry, provided a narrative for longstanding and new domestic critics to later associate British prejudicial policy with military rebellion and popular uprising in India.

CONSERVATIVE RESISTANCE TO LIBERALISM IN BRITAIN AND INDIA

In 1857 and 1858, British Conservatives attributed the East India Company's culpability for the Indian Revolt to its relationship with a whig political tradition and liberal civilizing reform. Conservatives' shared aversion to metropolitan liberal reform informed their sympathetic responses to military and popular uprisings in Awadh and across India. In a volatile decade of shifting party alignments and allegiances, these sentiments were expressed in largely partisan tones. The collapse of Viscount Palmerston's whig government (1855 to 1858), a coalition of self-defined whigs, Liberals, and Radicals, by a non-confidence vote on the Conspiracy Bill, led to the ascension of Derby's Conservative minority administration (February 1858 to June 1859). This government included former protectionists and past Young Englanders Benjamin Disraeli, as chancellor of the exchequer and leader in the House of Commons, Henry Baillie, undersecretary of state for India, and Lord John Manners, first commissioner of works. Responsible for India, the old tory Ellenborough, Indian governor general (1842–4) and president of the board of control (1829–30, 1834–5, 1841, and 1858), along with the progressive Edward Stanley, son of Derby and secretary of state for India (1858–9), added to the Conservative cabinet's diversity.³⁴

Nonetheless, mid-nineteenth century Conservatives were skeptical of liberal settlements on democratic reform, free market economy, and religious incorporation. This

³¹ Smith to Canning, 26 June 1857, Robert Vernon Smith MSS Eur. E231/8, fol. 123, IOR, BL; Smith to Canning, 10 July 1857, Robert Vernon Smith MSS Eur. E231/8, fol. 125, IOR, BL.

³² *Reynolds Newspaper*, 31 August 1856; *Morning Chronicle*, 6 April 1857; *Morning Chronicle*, 14 April 1857; *Morning Chronicle*, 30 April 1857.

³³ Safi Ahmad, *British Aggression in Avadh: Being the Treatise of M. Mohamamad Masih Uddin Khan Bahadur Entitled "Oude: Its Princes and Its Government Vindicated"* (Begum Bridge, 1969), 94.

³⁴ David Brown, *Palmerston: A Biography* (New Haven, 2010), 409; Albert Henry Imlah, *Lord Ellenborough: A Biography of Edward Law, Earl of Ellenborough, Governor General of India* (Cambridge, 1939), vii. On the Conservative split over Corn Law repeal and Derby's leadership see Angus Hawkins, *The Forgotten Prime Minister: The 14th Early of Derby*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 2007), 1:296–422.

reflected an evolving and diverse intellectual and political tradition of incremental reform—from Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke's early eighteenth-century Country Party to Sir Robert Peel's Tamworth Manifesto of 1834.³⁵ Foremost, they defended aristocratic, propertied, and established church interests in opposing the 1832 Reform Act and the 1836 Ecclesiastical Commissioners Act, as well as the 1846 Corn Laws and 1849 Navigation Acts.³⁶ Although the Conservative Party was a weakened electoral force after fracturing over foreign corn and free trade, it maintained that military, economic, and social institutions, rooted in local custom and prescriptive right, should not be sacrificed for liberalism's abstract and alien concepts.

The Indian Revolt provided Conservatives with an opportunity to reconstitute British imperialism with a veneration for locality and prescription. Principally, they denied British liberalism's universal applicability and progressive nature in India. While they recognized what Pitts and Hall identify as liberalism's nineteenth-century authoritarian evolution and civilizational definitions of racial difference, their contribution to defining the nature and objectives of empire after 1858 has been marginalized.³⁷ Metcalf, for example, views Disraeli's 1870s "neo-Toryism" as merely a domestic political appendage to an ideology of racial difference developed by Henry Maine's and Lord Lytton's feudalization of India.³⁸ This undervalues British conservatism's previous intellectual and political engagement with India and criticism of liberal empire. Before 1857, Conservatives derided a "whig tradition" of implementing western social, legal, and educational reform in India as propagated by James Mill, William Bentinck, Thomas Macaulay, Charles Wood, and others. Their attempts to "civilize" India through assaulting local customs and prescribed institutions alienated the population and threatened British Raj earned legitimately by conquest.³⁹ While the latter would crush the Revolt and save British India, subsequent peace and security relied on imperial authority collaborating with "traditional India."

However, with little knowledge of India's political or social customs, Conservatives applied their reverence for aristocratic, propertied, and religious interests in Britain to protect and strengthen comparable institutions in India. They countered liberalism's design to create horizontal identity affiliations through western administration and education, such as Macaulay's "class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect."⁴⁰ Instead, Conservatives promoted the crown's vertical association and reciprocal obligation with institutions representative of India's diverse and distinctive traditional society. This resembled Burke's late eighteenth-century admonishment of company expansionism, as well as his resolution that the British Parliament should honor its constituted moral

³⁵ Linda Colley, *In Defiance of Oligarchy: The Tory Party, 1714–1760* (Cambridge, 1982); James J. Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative: Reaction and Orthodoxy in Britain, c. 1760–1832* (Cambridge, 1993); Paul Alderman, *Peel and the Conservative Party, 1830–1850* (London, 1989).

³⁶ Gambles, *Protections and Politics*, 19. On the post-1832 reformed Parliaments until 1852, see also Norman McCord, *British History, 1815–1906* (Oxford, 1991), 127–74.

³⁷ Pitts, *A Turn to Empire*, 59–160; Hall, *Civilizing Subjects*, 124, 245.

³⁸ Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, 43–78. On Henry Maine see also Karuna Mantena, *Alibis of Empire Henry Maine and the Ends of Liberalism* (Princeton, 2010).

³⁹ Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, 29–31; Stokes, *The English Utilitarians and India*, 44–70.

⁴⁰ Thomas Babington Macaulay, "Minute on Indian Education," in *Thomas Babington Macaulay: Selected Writings*, ed. John Clive and Thomas Pinney (Chicago, 1972), 237–51, at 249.

obligation to defend traditional authority in India.⁴¹ In regards to the Indian Empire, Pitts and Uday Singh Mehta distinguish Burke's ideological distinction from nineteenth-century liberalism by demonstrating his cosmopolitan veneration for place and history. Moreover, George Bearce pinpoints his legacy among early nineteenth-century conservative Indian statesmen who criticized rapid modernization.⁴² While Burke's influence on conservatism peaked much later, biographers of Ellenborough, Disraeli, and Derby note how his writing shaped their subjects' political careers.⁴³ During the revolt, these statesmen criticized British financial self-interest and disregard for Indian custom and prescriptive right as representative of the destructive forces emerging in modern Britain.

BRITISH CONSERVATIVES AND THE INDIAN REVOLT

Conservatives constructed historical and contemporary parallels with Britain and Ireland to interpret events, institutions, and customs in India. For these three locales, Disraeli, Baillie, and Manners condemned whiggism's (whig political philosophy) propagation of liberal reform for political, social, and religious dislocation. Their indictment reflected a prior mutual association with the 1840s Young England movement. With over a dozen Conservative MPs, it responded to the decade's "Condition of England" question concerning industrialization's effect on society by espousing feudal ideals of noble obligation, expansive social privilege, and religious devotion. Foremost, it lambasted liberal modernity's progression of democracy, capitalism, and secularism for eroding the social bonds between aristocracy, church, and the people in Britain and Ireland.⁴⁴ While the movement expired in the 1840s, Disraeli, Baillie, and Manners incorporated its sentiments within a larger Conservative critique of liberal empire.

In July 1857, Disraeli ascribed British culpability for the revolt to the whig administration's sanction of Dalhousie's and the Indian government's "new system" of state annexation, property confiscation, and religious interference since 1848.⁴⁵ This partisan allegation reflected Disraeli's previous political and literary tracts condemning whiggism's intention to enforce metropolitan London's political and cultural domination over rural England and a distinctive Ireland. In "Spirit of Whiggism" (1836), he had warned against the "enlightened and reformed metropolis" imposing its uniform will over local authority and custom in England:

⁴¹ Burke's criticism of the East India Company is found in Frederick G. Whelan, *Edmund Burke and India: Political Morality and Empire* (Pittsburgh, 1996).

⁴² Pitts, *A Turn to Empire*, 60–63; Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire*, 20–22, 119; George D. Bearce, *British Attitudes Towards India, 1784–1858* (Oxford, 1961), 15–18.

⁴³ Imlah, *Lord Ellenborough*, 73; Hawkins, *The Forgotten Prime Minister*, 1:25.

⁴⁴ Other members included George Smythe, Alexander Baillie Cochrane, Alexander Beresford-Hope, William Busfield Ferrand, Peter Borthwick, and Richard Monckton Milnes. See also John Morrow, *Young England: The New Generation: A Selection of Primary Texts* (London, 1999), x. The term "Condition of England" was coined by Thomas Carlyle in *Chartism* (London, 1839). For Disraeli's literary engagement with this debate, see also John McAllister Ulrich, *Signs of Their Times: History, Labor, and the Body in Corbett, Carlyle, and Disraeli* (Athens, OH, 2002).

⁴⁵ Disraeli, Speech to the House of Common, 27 July 1857, *PD*, Commons, 3rd ser., vol. 147 (1857), cols. 449–64.

Let us suppose our ancient monarchy abolished, our independent hierarchy reduced to a stipendiary sect, the gentlemen of England deprived of their magisterial functions, and metropolitan prefects and sub-prefect established in the counties and principal towns, commanding a vigorous and vigilant police, and backed by an army under the immediate orders of a single House of Parliament. But where then will be the liberties of England? Who would dare disobey London?⁴⁶

In 1844, Disraeli similarly blamed a whig policy of imposing English institutions onto Ireland for destroying Protestant and Catholic cooperation, as well as inciting popular unrest:

Justice to Ireland was then said to mean, an identity of institutions with England. He believed that to be the greatest fallacy that could be brought forward. He always thought that the greatest cause of misery in Ireland was the identity of institutions with England.⁴⁷

Disraeli's derision of metropolitan centralization and transplanting English institutions abroad also applied to British expansion and cultural prejudice in India. In his Young England literary contribution *Tancred* (1847), he ridiculed English prejudice, and in particular its self-described superiority over the East.⁴⁸ Patrick Brantlinger argues that *Tancred* exhibits a "positive orientalism," contrary to contemporary interpretations of the "orient," as it contested the racial and cultural stereotyping exhibited in Mill's *History of British India* (1817).⁴⁹ Notably, Disraeli disparaged English character and action in India: "there is not a race so proud, so wilful, so rash, and so obstinate ... They have all the power of the State, and all its wealth; and when they can wring no more from their peasants, they plunder the kings of India."⁵⁰ With an eye to the company's 1846 hostilities against the Sikh Empire in the Punjab, the character Fakredeen, a Lebanese emir with ambitions to control Syria, responds to an Englishman's reproach of his constant political intrigues: "Why, England won India by intrigue. Do you think they are not intriguing in the Punjaub [*sic*] at this moment?"⁵¹

Disraeli's literary expressions were matched by his political opposition to British action in the Indian Subcontinent, including Awadh's annexation. He opposed Ellenborough's 1844 annexation of Sind and the British authorities' 1849 suppression of a popular uprising in Ceylon. Moreover, in 1853 he called for the abolition of the company or, at best, limited charter renewal, referencing its "westernization policy."⁵² Disraeli opposed Awadh's annexation and later praised former Indian

⁴⁶ Benjamin Disraeli, "Spirit of Whiggism," in *Whigs and Whiggism: Political Writings*, ed. William Hutcheon (Port Washington, 1971), 327–56, at 339.

⁴⁷ Disraeli, Speech to the House of Common, 16 February 1844, *PD*, Commons, 3rd ser., vol. 72 (1844), col. 1011.

⁴⁸ Benjamin Disraeli, *Tancred: Or the New Crusade* (1847; repr., Teddington, 2007).

⁴⁹ Patrick Brantlinger, "Disraeli and Orientalism," in *The Self-Fashioning of Disraeli 1818–1851*, ed. Charles Richmond and Paul Smith (Cambridge, 1998), 90–105, at 92, 98, 104. On Disraeli's views on race see also Simone Beate Borgstede, "All is Race": *Benjamin Disraeli on Race, Nation, and Empire* (Zurich, 2011).

⁵⁰ Disraeli, *Tancred*, 168.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 142.

⁵² Benjamin Disraeli, *Benjamin Disraeli Letters*, vol. 6, 1852–1856, ed. Ann P. Robson, Mary S. Millar, and M. G. Wiebe (Toronto, 1997), 218; Edward Henry Stanley Derby and John Vincent, *Disraeli, Derby,*

collector and magistrate Colonel Rathbourne's unpublished articles for the *Press* denouncing Dalhousie's expansionary policy.⁵³ He emphasized privately to Derby and Stanley in 1857 that Awadh's annexation was the "paramount and proximate cause" of the revolt.⁵⁴ In Parliament, Disraeli concentrated on Awadh to expose the Indian government's prejudicial and financial motivations to enact state destruction, pension and property resettlement, and the modification of religious custom. Specifically, he asserted that Dalhousie's previous annexations of Satara (1848) and Benares (1854) deliberately disregarded the custom of adoption to perpetuating dynastic and property tenure. This reflected also wider legislative interventions concerning Hindu widow remarriage and inheritance laws.⁵⁵

Disraeli blamed financial motivations for state annexation and property confiscation in Awadh, arguing that the King of Awadh's misconduct should not be used to validate abolishing a kingdom which was a faithful ally and obeyed treaties. As a consequence, Britain's pecuniary ambition produced a national response amongst India's Hindu and Muslim chiefs:

The moment the throne of Oude was declared vacant, the English troops poured in; the Royal treasury was ransacked, and the furniture and jewels of the King and his wives were seized. From that instant the Mahomedan princes were all alienated. For the first time the Mahomedan princes felt that they had an identity of interest with the Hindoo Rajahs.⁵⁶

Next, the forceful dislocation of Awadh's soldiers serving in the British Sepoy Army effected their fall from a traditional position of privilege in society. The sepoy's past tenure and income, enabling a small proprietorship under his native sovereign as "dear to him as the tenure of a Kentish yeoman," was stripped away, and now he found "himself subjected to a hard and novel system of taxation and revenue."⁵⁷

Similarly, in February 1858, Baillie and Manners related Awadh's state annexation and property confiscation to the Indian government's abrogation of customary rights. In 1852, Baillie sponsored crown rule and parliamentary oversight to reverse the company's disregard for India's popular manners and rights.⁵⁸ His February 1858 motion on the causes of the Indian Revolt identified a Muslim conspiracy

and the Conservative Party: *Journals and Memoirs of Edward Henry, Lord Stanley, 1849–1869* (Brighton, 1978), 101.

⁵³ Disraeli to Pakington, 6 October 1857, in Disraeli, *Benjamin Disraeli Letters*, vol. 7, 1857–1859, ed. Ann P. Robson, Mary S. Millar, and M. G. Wiebe, 77–79. Disraeli's concurrence with Rathbourne's articles in the *Press* is discussed in Ann Pottinger Saab, "Disraeli, India, and the Indians: 1852–58," in *Internationale Beziehungen Im 19. Und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Wolfgang Elz and Sonke Neitzel (Paderborn, 2003), 37–52; Angus Hawkins "Derby Redivivus: Reflections on the Political Achievement of the Fourteenth Earl of Derby," in Hicks, ed., *Conservatives and British Foreign Policy*, 19–40, at 29.

⁵⁴ Disraeli to Derby, 18 November 1857, in Disraeli, *Letters*, 7:93–96; Disraeli to Stanley, 27 July 1857, Papers of Edward Geoffrey Stanley 14th Earl of Derby (hereafter DP14), 920 DER 14/145/3/31, Liverpool Records Office (hereafter LRO).

⁵⁵ Disraeli, Speech to the House of Common, 27 July 1857, *PDs*, Commons, 3rd ser., vol. 147 (1857), cols. 449–64.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, col. 467.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, col. 468.

⁵⁸ Baillie, Speech to the House of Commons, 19 April 1852, *PD*, Commons, 3rd ser., vol. 120 (1852), col. 836.

gaining support from Hindu sepoys, thus constituting a “national movement.”⁵⁹ Its root cause was the annexation policy perpetuated by a post-1833 generation of whig Indian statesmen. Unlike early nineteenth-century Indian governors, they excluded “natives” from office and encouraged territorial expansion.⁶⁰ Awadh’s annexation represented the ambitions shared by William Bentinck, governor-general (1828–35), the Earl of Auckland, governor-general (1836–42), and John Hobhouse, president of the board of control (1835–41), to seize the kingdom for British India. To Dalhousie’s great discredit, this action went beyond a “transference of power,” but effected “the dislocation of all the machinery by which the government had been conducted in that country for ages.” Most significantly, the Indian government’s subsequent reform of land tenure agitated the country’s powerful feudal nobility, as well as the farmers who sent their sons to join the sepoy army.⁶¹

Concurring with Baillie’s motion, Manners emphatically related Dalhousie’s Awadh annexation with the revolt’s personal and human consequences:

[I]f the Marquess of Dalhousie was now in exile from his country on account of ill-health, the Queen Mother of Oude lay dead in Paris—dead of a broken heart; that thousands and tens of thousands of lives, English as well as Indian, had been sacrificed, mainly owing to the insane and unjust policy of annexation.

Sympathy for the queen dowager echoed Manners’s romantic attachment to England’s feudal aristocracy and defense of Irish society against liberal modern reform. His poem, “England’s Trust” (1841), laments liberalism’s destruction of a feudal era wherein a benevolent nobility maintained social cohesion with the poor:

Each knew his place—King, peasant, peer, or priest—
The Greatest owned connexion with the least;
From rank to rank the generous feeling ran,
And linked society as man to man.
On rich and poor, on great as well as small.
Oh! Would some noble dare again to rise
The feudal banner of forgotten days,
And live despising slander’s hamless hater,
The Potent ruler of his petty state!⁶²

In 1843, Manners opposed the imposition of an alien English Poor Law to Ireland and defended the country’s traditional and distinctive society: “I implore them to desist from striving to effect such a revolution ... by accepting their traditional habits and ideas, by appealing to and governing by their unhesitating faith, and hereditary feudalism.”⁶³

⁵⁹ Baillie, Speech to the House of Commons, 16 April 1858, *PD*, Commons, 3rd ser., vol. 148 (1857–58), col. 1478.

⁶⁰ Metcalf, *Aftermath of Revolt*, 6, 15–17.

⁶¹ Baillie, Speech to the House of Commons, 16 February 1858, *PD*, Commons, 3rd ser., vol. 148 (1857–58), cols. 1480–88.

⁶² Lord John Manners, “England’s Trust,” in Morrow, *Young England*, 127–29.

⁶³ Lord John Manners, “Speech on the Poor Law in Ireland, House of Commons, 19 June 1843,” in Morrow, *Young England*, 58.

This sentiment matched parliamentary advocacy for India's nobility before 1857. In 1844, Manners voted with Disraeli in favor of tory radical Lord Ashley's motion condemning Ellenborough's Sind annexation. A year later, he questioned the Indian government's treatment of the deposed and convicted raja of Satara.⁶⁴ In 1856, Manners seconded Erskine Perry's query regarding the cabinet's sanction of Awadh's annexation.⁶⁵ On Baillie's 1858 motion, Manners defended Awadh's royal family and questioned the government's moral justification for annexation. He denied that Wajid ignored British advice to improve his kingdom, stating that the king's initiatives for a new revenue system and border force were blocked by the government. Moreover, the 1801 Treaty did not prescribe British right to annex due to misgovernment. Furthermore, the utilization of the 1837 non-ratified treaty to justify and compel Wajid's submission to Outram's "mission of injustice, spoliation, and perfidy" was "a gross deception." Therefore, in the tradition of Burke, as well as the late eighteenth-century Indian governor of Fort Williams and Tory MP Robert Clive, the deposed king should be restored to his throne as a sign of British justice.⁶⁶ Baillie's and Manners' like-mindedness with Disraeli over India were grounds for later reward. As Disraeli unsuccessfully nominated Baillie for the new Council of India in 1858, he offered Manners the Viceroyship in 1876, which the latter refused.⁶⁷ Albeit secondary actors in shaping Indian policy, Disraeli, Baillie, and Manners' vocal criticism of liberal empire contributed to Conservative perceptions of a politically feudal, socially hierarchical, and devout India.

ELLENBOROUGH AND CANNING'S "CONFISCATION PROCLAMATION" IN AWADH

As a prime Conservative actor in Indian affairs for thirty years, Ellenborough pinpointed official religious interference and arbitrary conduct for instigating the Indian Revolt. Moreover, he led Conservative disapproval of Canning's response to military and popular upheaval, especially in Awadh.⁶⁸ Critical of the East India Company as Indian governor general (he was recalled by the company in 1844) and at the board of control, he maintained that British paramount power relied upon collaboration with India's customs and prescribed institutions. While he was derided for initiating military interventions in Sind and Gwalior as governor

⁶⁴ Manners, Speech to the House of Commons, 8 February 1844, *PD*, Commons, 3rd ser., vol. 144 (1857), cols. 342–458; Manners, Speech to the House of Commons, 25 June 1847, *PD*, Commons, 3rd ser., vol. 93 (1847), cols. 953–59; Manners, Speech to the House of Commons, 6 July 1847, *PD*, Commons, 3rd ser., vol. 93 (1847), cols. 1371–74.

⁶⁵ Manners, Speech to the House of Commons, 4 March 1856, *PD*, Commons, 3rd ser., vol. 140 (1856), col. 1855.

⁶⁶ Manners, Speech to the House of Commons, 16 February 1856, *PD*, Commons, 3rd ser., vol. 148 (1857–58), cols. 1514–25.

⁶⁷ Disraeli to Stanley, 10 August 1858, Papers of Edward Henry Stanley, 15th Earl of Derby (hereafter DP15), 920 DER 15/25/1, LRO; Mary Lutyens, *The Lyttons in India: An Account of Lord Lytton's Viceroyalty, 1876–1880* (London, 1979), 1.

⁶⁸ Derby to Ellenborough, 15 November 1857, 920 DER 14/183/2, DP14, LRO; Derby to Ellenborough, 18 October 1857, 920 DER 14/183/2, DP14, LRO.

general, he acted independently to sack the Sagar District's entire European administration for their disrespect of local social custom.⁶⁹ In Britain, Ellenborough condemned arbitrary state punishment against Indian notables such as Ameer Ali Morad, Pertaub Singh and Bisheu Singh in 1852.⁷⁰ In that year and the next, he opposed legislative interference with Hindu widow remarriage and inheritance laws. In doing so, he apprehended the likely danger to internal peace and security if British officials disrespected India's customs, an action he labeled as the "insolence of office."⁷¹

Ellenborough's censure of Canning and his sympathetic response to Awadh's popular uprising reflected a concern for British repression and disrespect for social custom in 1857–58. Quite early, he identified interference with religion—culminating in the distribution of animal-greased cartridges—as the primary cause for the unfolding military rebellion in northern India. Moreover, he was amazed that Canning had "largely subscribed to every society which has for its object the [Christian] conversion of the natives."⁷² While Derby considered widespread conspiracy as the revolt's cause, he agreed with Ellenborough that future British policy should convey "to the people of India that there is no intention on the part of the government to temper with or disturb the free service of their religion."⁷³

As president of the board of control from February to May 1858, Ellenborough led Conservative censure of Canning's "clemency proclamation" and the imposition of martial law in Bengal.⁷⁴ When Canning's Awadh proclamation threatened large-scale property confiscation to landed proprietors who refused to declare their loyalty to the government, Ellenborough maintained that the document's severity exacerbated local discontent with a British government that had already violently repressed Awadh rebels.⁷⁵ Frederick Currie, a former judge in Allahabad, Lahore's resident, and company director, wrote to Ellenborough that the proclamation was universally condemned by local officials. Its origin was found in British and Indian papers' exaggerations of rebel atrocities and calls for retribution which had "excited the vindictive feelings of officers." As a result, the local population questioned British justice and moderation after "arbitrary and unwarrantable proceedings even by civil officers,

⁶⁹ The National Archives (hereafter TNA), Ellenborough, PRO 30/12/11, 1843, fol. 2839, Papers of Edward Law, 1st Earl of Ellenborough (hereafter EP); TNA, PRO 30/12/11, Ellenborough to Court of Directors, 15 January 1844, fol. 3010, EP. For contemporary and historical criticism of Ellenborough see also Mark Bence-Jones, *The Viceroys of India* (London, 1982), 15; Viscount Mersey, *The Viceroys and Governor-Generals of India, 1757–1947* (New York, 1971), 61.

⁷⁰ Ellenborough, Speech to the House of Lords, 29 March 1852, *PD*, Lords, 3rd ser., vol. 120 (1852), col. 246; idem, Speech to the House of Lords, 11 July 1852, *PD*, Lords, 3rd ser., vol. 143 (1856), cols. 619–21.

⁷¹ Ellenborough, Speech to the House of Lords, 2 April 1852, *PD*, Lords, 3rd ser., vol. 120 (1852), col. 555; idem, Speech to the House of Lords, 26 May 1853, *PD*, Lords, 3rd ser., vol. 127 (1853), cols. 561–64.

⁷² Ellenborough, Speech to the House of Lords, 9 June 1857, *PD*, Lords, 3rd ser., vol. 145 (1857), col. 694; idem, Speech to the House of Lords, 30 July 1857, *PD*, Lords, 3rd ser., vol. 147 (1857), cols. 1393–96.

⁷³ Derby to Ellenborough, 920 DER 14/184/2, DP14, LRO.

⁷⁴ The former, issued in July 1857, allowed clemency for soldiers not involved in assaulting British forces and civilians avoiding conflict. See also Michael Maclagan, "*Clemency*" *Canning: Charles John, 1st Earl of Canning, Governor General and Viceroy of India, 1856–1862* (London, 1962), 134–36, 143.

⁷⁵ TNA, PRO 30/12/09, Ellenborough to Derby, 9 May 1858, fol. 3131, EP.

and the number of innocent lives that have been sacrificed by the indiscriminating ferocity of the soldiers.”⁷⁶ In response, Ellenborough engaged Conservative opinion to consider Britain’s culpability for Indian events, including sympathy and restraint towards Awadh’s insurgents recently subjected to British authority. While not publically opposing annexation, he did question its rationale and considered it a direct influence on Awadh’s peculiar military and popular rebellion. As early as 1834, Ellenborough reproached Bentinck’s unwarranted and financially motivated proposal to annex Awadh. Prophetically, he submitted that, if annexation was attempted, the population’s loyalty to the Nawab would lead to an open rebellion against British occupation.⁷⁷ In a secret dispatch to Canning in April 1858, Ellenborough proposed that Awadh’s “hostilities have rather the character of a legitimate war, than that of rebellion.” Decidedly, recent annexation “naturally excited against us whatever they may have of national feeling,” as it dethroned their king, imposed a new revenue system, and deprived landholders of what they considered their rightful property.⁷⁸ This and previous censure led Ellenborough to encourage Derby and the company’s chairmen to consider replacing Canning with John Elphinstone, the governor of Bombay.⁷⁹

Ellenborough’s secret dispatch reproaching Canning became very public with its May publication in the *Times*. When Whig opponents vigorously condemned Ellenborough’s involvement in the publication, the board president resigned. The accompanying parliamentary debate addressed Canning’s proclamation and the Indian government’s legacy of annexation and confiscation. In the House of Lords, Ellenborough maintained that he acted for the local population’s best interest, including their future conciliation to British rule. Primarily, the proclamation’s wholesale abolition of proprietary right was contrary to the government’s policy of clemency and amnesty.⁸⁰ Canning’s document represented the final straw of British repression, as it confiscated private property and the means by which it supported the country’s religious and charitable institutions. Therefore, his secret dispatch was meant to curb Britain’s ruthless repression by encouraging a measure of sympathy for Awadh’s rebels.⁸¹ He insisted privately to Disraeli—after the whig assault—that only a Conservative government could defend India’s peoples from escalating animosity between Europeans and “natives.” Publishing the despatch “afforded the only hope of tranquilizing the natives and controlling our maddened people who seem to have lost all regard for human life and human suffering.”⁸²

While this controversy was rooted in miscommunication and distorted by partisan maneuver, Conservatives revealed an ideological disquiet for the state’s arbitrary

⁷⁶ TNA, PRO 30/12/09, Currie to Ellenborough, 9 April 1858, fols. 2482–85, EP.

⁷⁷ Ellenborough, Speech to the House of Lords, 5 May 1834, *PD*, Lords, 3rd ser., vol. 23 (1834), cols. 482–86.

⁷⁸ TNA, PRO 30/12/09, Secret Committee of the Court of Directors to Canning, 19 April 1858, fol. 2736–906, EP.

⁷⁹ TNA, PRO 30/12/09, Ellenborough to Derby, 9 May 1858, fol. 3099, EP; TNA, PRO 30/12/09, Ellenborough to Derby, 15 May 1858, fol. 3194, EP.

⁸⁰ Ellenborough, Speech to the House of Lords, 11 May 1858, *PD*, Lords, 3rd ser., vol. 150 (1858), col. 411.

⁸¹ Ellenborough, Speech to the House of Lords, 14 May 1858, *PD*, Lords, 3rd ser., vol. 150 (1858), cols. 601–3.

⁸² TNA, PRO 30/12/09, Ellenborough to Disraeli, 17 May 1858, fol. 3206, EP.

negation of proprietary rights in India.⁸³ In that same debate, Conservatives invoked British and Irish history to defend Ellenborough's conduct. They criticized Canning's assault on Awadh's proprietary right as contrary to established custom in Britain, Ireland, and India. Henry Herbert, Earl of Carnarvon, under-secretary of state for the colonies, believed the proclamation had an underlying presumption of guilt, and that its confiscation measure had no parallel in Scotland or even under Cromwell's iron rule in Ireland.⁸⁴ Derby asked his fellow Lords to imagine their response if Parliament

should pass an Act in reference to their respective counties confiscating to the Crown all 'the proprietary rights of the soil.' Their tenure being thereafter that of copyholders under the Crown, with no guarantee for the future security of their possessions; I rather suspect they would imagine. ... that they must look sharply about them or else they would soon have not an acre left.⁸⁵

James Whiteside, attorney general for Ireland, judged that the proclamation contravened both international law and the rights of war applicable to a conquered Awadh. The level of confiscation, amounting to "transferring the property of a nation," was unheard of in India or Britain.⁸⁶ Stanley emphasized the proclamation's "arbitrary" and "indiscriminate" nature, and affirmed the *taluqdars'* (large landed proprietors) hereditary landed title. If it was correct that all land in India belonged to the government and could be legally confiscated by the state, the same applied in England.⁸⁷ Sympathetic Conservative responses to arbitrary annexation and land tenure reform in Awadh reflected a wider apprehension of liberal empire's prejudicial legacy and its future objectives to westernize India.

THE QUEEN'S PROCLAMATION AND CONSERVATIVE RAJ

The Conservative government's Queen's Proclamation, which was promulgated across India in November 1858, repudiated liberal civilizing reform and reoriented the British Raj along positions complementing local and prescribed differences. It was an ideological supplement to the 1858 Government of India Act, which itself replaced the East India Company with crown rule managed by a secretary of state and an imperial (Indian) civil service. The act resembled the whig government's aborted 1857 legislation, although it established a larger advisory council for the secretary of state representing British service experience across India's presidencies.⁸⁸ The proclamation, seen later by Indian nationalists as a liberal document affirming

⁸³ Hawkins, "British Parliamentary Party Alignment and the Indian Issue," 95.

⁸⁴ Carnarvon, Speech to the House of Lords, 14 May 1858, *PD*, Lords, 3rd ser., vol. 150 (1858), cols. 618–19.

⁸⁵ Derby, Speech to the House of Lords, 14 May 1858, *PD*, Lords, 3rd ser., vol. 150 (1858), col. 649.

⁸⁶ Whiteside, Speech to the House of Commons, 17 May 1858, *PD*, Commons, 3rd ser., vol. 150 (1858), cols. 844–51.

⁸⁷ Stanley, Speech to the House of Commons, 17 May 1858, *PD*, Commons, 3rd ser., vol. 150 (1858), col. 750.

⁸⁸ Brown, *Palmerston*, 406; Barbara D. Metcalf and Thomas R. Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India* (Cambridge, 2006), 102.

the 1833 Indian Act's pledge of equitable employment for "whatever race or creed," emphasized India's internal differences and separation from Britain.⁸⁹ Implicitly, it acknowledged that a British mentality to westernize India—an approach that enacted "high-handed" reforms to governance, administration, and cultural practice—had caused popular disquiet and endangered imperial rule. The proclamation therefore prescribed that, in exchange for the crown's acknowledgment and protection of their political status, proprietary rights, and religious convictions, all of the country's princes, landed proprietors, and spiritual leaders were obligated to propagate peace and good government in subordinate collaboration with British authority.⁹⁰ While the crown remained British, it now also became Indian. An imperial, yet national institution pledged to protect India's political, social, and cultural diversity from the unwarranted diffusion and uniformity of western civilization.

In August 1858, Derby forwarded to Stanley, now secretary of state, an outline of a royal proclamation to India.⁹¹ It represented consultation with Ellenborough, Stanley, and the Palace on reconstituting British power upon a national basis in India. As early as 1829, Ellenborough advocated crown rule for India, showing a historical continuity from the Mughals and facilitating India's princely and popular support for the government.⁹² In March 1858, he recounted to James Mangles, previously the company chairman, events in Awadh, and proposed that the British should interfere "as little as possible" in Indian states since "the feelings of the people will be with the Chief 'chastised,' and not with us who punish him ... even for their benefit."⁹³ In April, he recommended to John Lefevre, civil service commissioner in charge of examinations for British Indian civil servants, that candidates be tested on Hindu, Muslim, and English law principles, and taught how the two major Indian communities generate their revenue.⁹⁴ To the court of directors, Ellenborough submitted that Charles Wood's 1854 Education Despatch, which promulgated a liberal program of national western education, caused deep resentment among India's lower classes. Foreshadowing the development of princely colleges later in the century, he proposed that education be placed on a more "national character" by instructing higher classes and encouraging their incorporation into the British Indian army.⁹⁵

Following Ellenborough's May 1858 resignation, Stanley negotiated the India Act and Queen's Proclamation. Stanley agreed to enter Derby's government as Ellenborough's subordinate at the board of control (offered later the Colonial Office) with the understanding that it was a stepping stone towards becoming India's governor general if Canning resigned.⁹⁶ This informed a vested interest in implementing a

⁸⁹ This view was expressed by Indian National Congress president and Liberal MP Dadabhai Naoroji. See also Dadabhai Naoroji, "Sir M. E. Grant Duff's Views about India," part 1, *Contemporary Review* 52 (July/December 1887): 221–25.

⁹⁰ "Proclamation by the Queen in Council," 11 August 1858, 920 DER 15/27/1, DP15, LRO.

⁹¹ Derby to Stanley, 6 August 1857, 920 DER 15/5/1, DP15, LRO.

⁹² Ellenborough, 13 November 1829, in Ellenborough and Colchester, *A Political Diary, 1828–1830*, 131; Ellenborough to Victoria, 18 January 1843, in *History of the Indian Administration of Lord Ellenborough: In His Correspondence with the Duke of Wellington*, ed. Lord Colchester (London, 1874), 64–65.

⁹³ TNA, PRO 30/12/09, Ellenborough to Mangles, 20 May 1858, fol. 1369, EP.

⁹⁴ TNA, PRO 30/12/09, Ellenborough to Lefevre, 25 April 1858, fol. 2909, EP.

⁹⁵ *Times*, 2 August 1858.

⁹⁶ Stanley, 25 February 1858, in Derby and Vincent, *Disraeli, Derby and the Conservative Party*, 158.

new imperial system which resolved the sources of Indian unrest. At the India Office, Stanley admitted British culpability for the revolt in private correspondence and public statements. In November 1858, he told Canning that the government could not retract Ellenborough's earlier personal condemnation, as compulsory land sales did alienate Awadh's people.⁹⁷ In December he proposed to Derby that authorities should stop "the enormous evil of selling up native proprie[ships] for small errors," which created lifelong enemies to the government.⁹⁸ In February 1859 Stanley repudiated territorial annexation and property tenure resettlement as future components of British policy. He argued in Parliament that there was no reason to continue annexations, "which ... ha[ve] undoubtedly in a great degree been the cause of the present disaster," and that any land reform must acknowledge that tenure diversity is rooted in local habits and ideas.⁹⁹

Stanley also advocated for British recognition of India's customary differences. In September, he acknowledged to Canning that past Indian discontent was largely instigated by Britain's lack of respect for religious custom.¹⁰⁰ A month earlier, Disraeli had agreed with Stanley's response to a deputation of Christian missionary societies, maintaining that "no steps should be taken ... to give to the opinions of Europe an apparent preference over those which were found existing in the country."¹⁰¹ In December, Disraeli and the queen commended Stanley's recommendation that the Royal Military College's graduating cadets respect local customs in India:

Examine native habits, native ideas, native character; do it in a spirit of fairness, and you will gain at least this ... that you will avoid that ignorant and unwise contempt for all this is Asiatic, which, political and personally, does Englishmen so much harm in the East.¹⁰²

Revealing Racial Ascendency in India: Conservative periodicals and the Revolt

Conservative positions found support within *Blackwood's Magazine*, the *Quarterly Review*, and *John Bull*. These stalwarts of conservative opinion published articles from politically diverse contributors with experience in India who associated the worst forms of civilizing reform and British racial ascendency with territorial annexation, property confiscation, and religious intolerance.¹⁰³ In November 1858, Robert Hogarth Patterson, the editor and proprietor of Disraeli's newspaper, the *Press*, submitted to *Blackwood's* that Indian upheaval was instigated by the errors of "high-

⁹⁷ Stanley to Canning, 19 November 1858, Letters from Lord Stanley as President of the Board of Control MSS Eur. Photo Eur. 477/22, IOR, BL.

⁹⁸ Stanley to Derby, 15 December 1858, 920 DER 15/25/1, DP15, LRO.

⁹⁹ Stanley, Speech to the House of Commons, 14 February 1859, *PD*, Commons, 3rd ser., vol. 152 (1859), cols. 358, 370.

¹⁰⁰ Stanley to Canning, 8 September 1858, Letters from Lord Stanley as President of the Board of Control MSS Eur. Photo. Eur 477/8, IOR, BL.

¹⁰¹ Disraeli to Stanley, 13 August 1858, in Disraeli, *Benjamin Disraeli Letters*, 7:230.

¹⁰² *Times*, 11 December, 1858; Disraeli to Stanley, 30 December 1858, in Disraeli, *Benjamin Disraeli Letters*, 7:307; Stanley to the Queen, 16 December 1858, 920 DER 15/25/1, DP15, LRO.

¹⁰³ Stephen Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain: The Nineteenth Century* (Chapel Hill, 1981); A. Aspinall, *Politics and the Press, c. 1780–1850* (Brighton, 1973); Alvin Sullivan, *British Literary Magazines* (Westport, 1983).

handed red tapists” over land rights.¹⁰⁴ In December, Thomas Campbell Robertson, former Indian civil servant and governor-general council member, attributed recent violence to popular resentment of new metropolitan theories and practices which initiated English civil and property reforms since the 1830s. Similar to Ireland a century earlier, these reforms were applied with a disposition that dealt “roughly with whatever stood in the way of a favorite scheme.” Specifically, civil courts confiscating the property of hereditary proprietors angered the peasant population, which was strongly connected to its ancient rulers.¹⁰⁵

Although the *Quarterly Review* was initially convinced that Awadh’s annexation benefited the population, it became critical of British policy in 1858.¹⁰⁶ Articles blaming Britain for the revolt’s national and racial character included the radical journalist and English education advocate Henry Mead’s proposition that British anger regarding rebels murdering officers should consider that these actions were necessary objectives for “natives” involved in a “patriotic war.”¹⁰⁷ As company officials’ felt cultural superiority informed the cartridges’ incident, Awadh’s annexation informed the sepoys’ sense of “defilation” by an “antagonistic race.” It removed their last chance of “being governed according to his own laws in a land ... unpolluted by the foreigner.”¹⁰⁸ In July, the *Review* referenced letters from the Liberal Christian missionary Rev. Alexander Duff claiming that sepoy grievances could not be separated from those of the general population.¹⁰⁹ Duff submitted that western race antagonism and increased civilizational refinement triggered the Revolt. European prejudices which deemed “native” interactions abhorrent further led to an attack on the country’s propertied and aristocratic classes.¹¹⁰ No part of British rule was more hated than land assessment institutions, including the revenue official’s summary proceedings, the civil court, and resumption committees. Awadh was the latest example, where confiscation followed annexation, and property rights were treated with reckless indifference to destroy the country’s aristocracy.¹¹¹

John Bull strongly associated British race antagonism with a disregard for religious and property rights in India.¹¹² It noted the prevalence of two schools of European thought regarding the local people, one advocating for their equality and the other recommending European “caste privilege.” *Bull* preferred the former since the latter—supported by Dalhousie—caused resentment and violence similar to

¹⁰⁴ R. H. Patterson, “Lord Canning’s reply to the Ellenborough despatch,” *Blackwood’s Magazine* 84, no. 517 (November 1858): 623–34, at 625.

¹⁰⁵ Thomas Campbell Robertson, “The Gangetic Provinces of British India,” *Blackwood’s Magazine* 76, no. 466 (August 1854): 183–205, at 187–92; Thomas Campbell Robertson, “The Indian Mutiny and the Land-Settlement,” *Blackwood’s Magazine* 84, no. 518 (December 1858): 701–7, esp. 701, 704–7.

¹⁰⁶ *Quarterly Review* 102, no. 204 (October 1857): 534.

¹⁰⁷ *Quarterly Review* 103, no. 205 (January 1858): 265. For Mead’s views on education see also *London Quarterly Review* 3 (October 1854): 159–80, at 159.

¹⁰⁸ *Quarterly Review* 103, no. 205: 255–58.

¹⁰⁹ *Quarterly Review* 104, no. 207 (July 1858): 228. For Duff’s role in propagating English education in India see also D. H. Emmott, “Alexander Duff and the Foundation of Modern Education in India,” *British Journal of Education Studies* 13, no. 2 (May 1965): 160–69.

¹¹⁰ *Quarterly Review* 104, no. 207: 229.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 255–62.

¹¹² *John Bull*, 13 June 1857, 376; *John Bull*, 4 July 1857, 424; *John Bull*, 24 October 1857, 680.

Ireland and the southern United States.¹¹³ With regard to Awadh, *Bull* submitted that state annexation and land right adjustments were legally and morally wrong.¹¹⁴ They supported Stanley's attempts to bind European and Indian feeling by promoting understanding of India's history and language.¹¹⁵ *Bull* further argued that the importance of the Queen's Proclamation centered upon its religious neutrality and condemning the "greedy expectations of race ascendancy."¹¹⁶ These periodicals thus blamed British prejudice for the Revolt; their sympathy for Indian rebels imitated the tone and objectives of the Queen's Proclamation. In defining an alternative framework based on the Crown's vertical associations with India's difference, the proclamation remained a counterpoise to a persevering liberal, civilizing empire later in the nineteenth century.

DIFFERENCE OVER UNIFORMITY: CONSERVATISM AND INDIA, 1860S TO 1870S

Stanley and the Conservatives resigned from government in June 1859, not to return until June 1866. Meanwhile, Canning, Wood as Indian secretary and John Lawrence as viceroy negotiated a pre-revolt liberal civilizing project with the Queen's Proclamation.¹¹⁷ Their continued efforts to propagate western administration and English education across India were challenged by the Conservative secretary of state Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, Viscount Cranbourne (from 1868 the Marquis of Salisbury), and Viceroy Richard Bourke, Earl of Mayo. Disparaging the liberal ascendancy in England and Ireland, they were skeptical about fostering European civilization as the basis of imperial control in India. Instead they sanctioned British protection and support for a diverse princely class and rural peasantry (*ryot*), thereby strengthening an imperial framework dedicated to maintaining difference over uniformity in India.

Wood and Canning upheld the importance of religious neutrality and rewards for loyal Indian princes and landed proprietors as key imperial objectives. Wood resisted the English Christian missionary lobby over Bible classes in Indian government schools, believing his own 1854 national system of secular education, funded by grant-in-aid payments, to be the scheme inviting least resistance.¹¹⁸ In Awadh, Wood and Canning established a land settlement which largely overturned the post-annexation reforms and secured *taluqdar* proprietary right.¹¹⁹ Canning toured the subcontinent rewarding *sanads* (deeds of land or title) to India's princes and large proprietors, thus affirming their position as subordinate feudatories to British rule.¹²⁰ Moreover, he convinced Wood, who initially proposed small-scale

¹¹³ *John Bull*, 21 November 1857, 744; *John Bull*, 19 December 1857, 808; *John Bull*, 23 January 1858, 56.

¹¹⁴ *John Bull*, 6 March 1858, 112.

¹¹⁵ *John Bull*, 11 December 1858, 787; *John Bull*, 18 December 1858, 809.

¹¹⁶ *John Bull*, 24 July 1858; *John Bull*, 11 December 1858, 72.

¹¹⁷ R. J. Moore, *Sir Charles Wood's Indian Policy* (Manchester, 1966).

¹¹⁸ Wood to Clark, 3 January 1961, Sir Charles Wood MSS Eur. F78, vol. 7, fol. 4, IOR, BL, Wood Collection (hereafter WC), University of British Columbia (hereafter UBC).

¹¹⁹ For a narration of this disputed settlement see also Moore, *Sir Charles Wood's Indian Policy*, 180–88.

¹²⁰ Wood to Canning, 19 December 1859, Sir Charles Wood MSS Eur. F78, vol. 3, fol. 4, IOR, BL, WC, UBC.

annexation for “a good hill station or two” to expand areas for European settlement, to legitimate the dynastic right of adoption and stop Dalhousie’s “doctrine of lapse.”¹²¹ However their considerations did not extend to the large south-central Kingdom of Mysore, subjected to British administration in 1831. Determined to keep the territory within British India, Wood and Stanley discouraged the aging raja’s adoption of a new heir.¹²² Beyond losing substantial revenue to the central government, Wood, Canning, and later Lawrence’s objections to the resumption of Indian rule was predicated on the superiority of western law and administration, which at that moment was being redesigned by Henry Maine and others.¹²³

Subsequent Conservative appointments challenged this consensus on Mysore and continued westernization across India. In 1861, Ellenborough recognized the continued strength of civilizational prejudice among the English in India. There remained “two parties”—one committed to “govern[ing] India for the English,” and another, led by the governor general, adhering “to the Queen’s Proclamation—which desires ... to do equal justice to the Hindoos and Mussulmans as well as to the English, and ... to respect the religion of the people.”¹²⁴ In 1866, he again lamented the “very strong party” which denied the career advancement of “natives” in judicial and administrative positions.¹²⁵ Salisbury and Mayo acknowledged and challenged the latter party’s civilizational prejudice in applying western administration and education in India. Salisbury is described as a proponent of British imperial moral despotism and authoritarian liberalism developed after the Revolt.¹²⁶ Nonetheless, Salisbury censured adverse British actions in Ireland and prejudice against the New Zealand Maori.¹²⁷ His views on European racial superiority, especially his “Black Man” label of Liberal MP Dadabhai Naoroji, have overshadowed his deep skepticism of liberal modernity, particularly its erosion of aristocratic leadership in Britain and India.¹²⁸ In this way, a critique of western administration informed Salisbury’s reinstatement of Indian rule in Mysore. Contrary to Wood, he proposed that the raja’s adopted son could be the eventual state ruler with proper European guidance and education. In a memorandum to Derby and the cabinet, he agreed

¹²¹ Wood to Canning, 26 June 1860, Sir Charles Wood MSS Eur. F78, vol. 3, fol. 176, IOR, BL, WC, UBC; Wood to Canning, 26 July 1860, Sir Charles Wood MSS Eur. F78, vol. 3, fol. 257, IOR, BL, WC, UBC; Canning to Wood, 13 June 1860, Sir Charles Wood MSS Eur. F78, vols. 1–4, index, IOR, BL, WC, UBC.

¹²² Wood to Canning, 6 September 1860, Sir Charles Wood MSS Eur. F78, vol. 4, fol. 134, IOR, BL, WC, UBC; Wood to Canning, 3 February 1860, Sir Charles Wood MSS Eur. F78, vol. 2, fol. 118, IOR, BL, WC, UBC.

¹²³ For a detailed account of this reform, including Maine’s Law Commission and Code of Civil Procedure see also Moore, *Sir Charles Wood’s Indian Policy*, 82–85, 174.

¹²⁴ Ellenborough, Speech to the House of Lords, 9 July 1861, *PD*, Lords, 3rd ser., vol. 164 (1861), col. 596.

¹²⁵ Ellenborough, Speech to the House of Lords, 28 May 1866, *PD*, Lords, 3rd ser., vol. 183 (1866), col. 1307.

¹²⁶ Paul R. Brumpton, *Security and Progress: Lord Salisbury at the India Office* (Westport, 2002), 10.

¹²⁷ Allan Warren, “Lord Salisbury and Ireland, 1859–1887: Principles, Ambitions and Strategies,” *Parliamentary History* 26, part 2 (May 2007): 203–22, at 204–7.

¹²⁸ Corinne Comstock Wilson, *The House of Lords and Ideological Politics: Lord Salisbury’s Referential Theory and the Conservative Party, 1846–1922* (Philadelphia, 1995). On Salisbury and Naoroji, see also Antoinette Burton, “Tongues Untied: Lord Salisbury’s ‘Black Man’ and the Boundaries of Imperial Democracy,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no. 3 (July 2000): 632–61, at 633.

that the raja forfeited his territory by treaty due to past oppressive rule. Nonetheless, he critiqued the severity of the punishment and disputed whether annexation and direct western administration benefited the people.¹²⁹ With regard to a new western system of laws and administration being applied in Mysore or elsewhere across India, he quipped that “it is admirable no doubt for the government of Europeans [yet] its delays, its cost, and its unyielding precision, and its disregard of their traditional ideas, is intolerable to Orientals.” Moreover, he ridiculed “the superstitious pedantry, with which Englishmen at Calcutta are pertinaciously trying to force every western notion upon Eastern minds.” In seeking to overturn local institutions and customs, he concluded that these reforms were “one of the greater hindrances to true progress in India and may someday constitute a serious danger.”¹³⁰

Salisbury was concerned that too much administrative uniformity in India posed a danger to imperial rule. In Mysore he proposed that the future raja and his officials should be encouraged to adapt European administrative practices to local circumstances.¹³¹ As Salisbury resigned from government over the Second Reform Act (1867), Stafford Northcote, Conservative secretary of state for India (1867–68), overruled his council and Lawrence by consenting to the adopted raja’s ascension to the throne in 1881.¹³² Salisbury, again Indian secretary from 1874 to 1878, approved efforts by Robert Bulwer, Earl of Lytton, viceroy from 1876, to achieve princely collaboration over the 1877 Imperial Assemblage. Affirming and aggrandizing Queen (now Empress) Victoria’s crown rule, Lytton rewarded princely India with gifts and honors, although his attempt to create an Indian Privy Council failed.¹³³ Salisbury reasoned that these initiatives strengthened an alternative “oriental” basis of imperial power, as it mitigated the potential dangers of English-educated Indians, labeled Macaulay’s “deadly legacy,” and Anglo-Indian racial ascendancy.¹³⁴

Mayo similarly challenged Macaulay and Wood’s legacy of English higher education by promoting vernacular and princely instruction. His experience as an Irish landowner and Conservative chief secretary for Ireland informed an Indian viceregal policy to place education upon a national basis in India.¹³⁵ A friend and political ally of Disraeli, he criticized the imposition of English institutions and values, especially regarding land tenure, onto Ireland. He eventually opposed Ireland’s secular national education system which was unpopular with both Anglicans and Catholics, and

¹²⁹ Cranbourne, “Memorandum on the Mysore Question,” 10 October 1866, 920 DER 14/56/1/1, DP14, LRO.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Northcote to Lawrence, 20 April 1867, John Lawrence MSS Eur. F90/28, fol. 18, IOR, BL. The Second Reform Act doubled the electoral franchise, including by adding a section of the working class. See also McCord, *British History*, 255.

¹³³ Lytton’s proposal called for a consultative body comprising of high ranking British officials and Indian princes led by the viceroy. Although rejected, it became the genesis for the title “councillors of the empress.”

¹³⁴ Lytton to Salisbury, 11 May 1876, in *Personal and Literary Letters of Robert First Earl of Lytton*, ed. Lady Betty Balfour (London, 1906), 20; Salisbury to Lytton, 13 July 1876, IOR NEG. 11688/1, fol. 133, BL; Brumpton, *Security and Progress*, 15.

¹³⁵ William Wilson Hunter, *The Earl of Mayo* (Oxford, 1891), 10–13, 104–17; George Pottinger, *Mayo: Disraeli’s Viceroy* (Salisbury, Wiltshire, 1990), 29, 133–44.

supported expanding Catholic university education.¹³⁶ He also agreed with Ellenborough's disdain for English higher education and its social filtration in India, and argued that state instruction should be placed on a "national character." Specifically, he embraced Stanley's 1859 disapproval of Wood's 1854 grant-in-aid system for catering to wealthy Hindus at the expense of the poor. In response, Mayo supported the establishment of princely colleges in Kathiawar (Rajkumar College) and Ajmer (Mayo College), as well as vernacular education for Bengal's *ryot* and minority Muslim population.¹³⁷ At the turn of the century, vernacular education was sponsored by Conservatives, including Mancherjee M. Bhownagree, MP for Bethnal Green N.E., and George Curzon, viceroy of India.¹³⁸

CONCLUSIONS

Public and official criticism of the East India Company's 1856 Awadh annexation informed British Conservatives' perceptions that a liberal civilizing policy and prejudicial mentality instigated military and popular uprisings across India in 1857 and 1858. The Conservative government's 1858 Queen's Proclamation sought to reorient Indian empire away from a civilizing force, and toward an imperial framework explicitly prescribing the crown's protection and collaboration with India's princes, landed proprietors, and religious adherents. This represented a substantive Conservative challenge to liberal empire and a unique contribution to British governance and perceptions of India. Contrary to liberal authoritarianism and pseudo-scientific explanations of race, Conservatives applied a veneration for place and history and skepticism of western modernity to define and enforce political, social, and cultural difference in India. Later in the nineteenth century, these perceptions of difference informed not only Conservative and wider British opposition to the next generation of liberal reformers in the Indian National Congress, but also a coherent strategy to maintain empire through strengthening the crown's vertical associations with princes, peasants, and minorities. With orientalist and colonial administrators, competing metropolitan political philosophies and party statesmen defined the conditions of power and prejudice within the British Raj. Conservatives' ability to transpose their insular patriotic and national inclinations to design a lasting imperial framework provides a basis to question liberalism's primacy in shaping British policy in India.

¹³⁶ Mayo (Naas), Speech to the House of Commons, 22 July 1859, *PD*, Commons, 3rd ser., vol. 155, col. 304; idem, Speech to the House of Commons, 10 March 1868, *PD*, Commons, 3rd ser., vol. 190, cols. 1382–84.

¹³⁷ Mayo, September 1869, MS 7490/9/15, Richard Burke, 6th Earl of Mayo Papers (henceforth MP), Cambridge University Library (hereafter CUL); Home Department, Indian Government to Argyll, 8 February 1870, MS 7490/1/4, MP, CUL; Mayo, 26 June 1871, MS 7490/9/39, MP, CUL; Mayo, 11 November 1870, MS 7490/71/7, fol. 6, MP, CUL.

¹³⁸ John R. Hinnels and Omar Ralph, *Sir Mancherjee Merwanjee Bhownagree K.C.I.E. Order of the Lion and the Sun of Persia, 1851–1933* (London, 1995), 12; N. Krishnaswamy and Lalitha Krishnaswamy, *The Story of English in India* (Delhi, 2006), 70.