Chapter Eight

NEPAL AND THE REVOLT OF 1857

Stirring events in India during the early British rule had an important bearing on Nepalese politics. Wars and conquests in India evoked lively interest in her, intrigues and disaffection among the Indian powers provided her with excitement and animation. It is no wonder, hence, that the thunder which rent the Indian sky in 1857 should reverberate in the not-too-distant hills of Nepal.

Nepal's interest in Indian events was, in the British eyes, suspect and alarming. Her geographical situation was strategically very important; her policy was, very often, prejudicial to British interests. Naturally, a watchful eye was always maintained on her. But Nepal's active participation in the 'Mutiny' was welcomed by the British as a relief from a critical state of affairs.

Situation in June 1857

The mutiny of the Sepoys at Meerut on 10 May 1857 ignited the simmering discontent of the Indian soldiers and turned it into an all-consuming fire. With lightning celerity the flame leaped forward, till at the close of June, a considerable part of North-Western Province, and Oudh had fallen into the hands of the rebels. In Lucknow, particularly, the situation was perilous. Here Sir Henry Lawrence, the
Commissioner of Oudh; was holding on grimly with a handful of European soldiers, against great odds, and with fast-receding hopes. The fall of the Lucknow Residency seemed imminent, and with it the crumbling of the British rule in Oudh.

Equally critical was the position at Gorakhpur. The neighbouring districts to its west had fallen in rebel hands; the position in the south was shaky; rebels from Fyzabad and Azamgarh were pressing upwards, flushed with success.

Stir in Nepal

The news released a frenzy of excitement in Nepal. Exaggerated reports of the success of the Sepoys, and the imminent crash of British rule gained wide currency and ready credence. The army was restless; the nobles were agitated; the lure of plunder seemed overpowering; the overtures of the rebel leaders, punctuated by the jingling of money bags, were too tempting. Nepal was astir; her martial energy was about to explode in all its accumulated fury; in the Durbar speculations were in spate. A number of nobles favoured

(1) S.C., 25 September 1857, 497.

(2) S.C., 26 June 1857, 129. Ramsay (Resident at Kathmandu) to Holmes, Officer Commanding at Segowlee, 2 June 1857, Ramsay to Wyndham, 19 July 1857, Nepal Residency Records, Vol. 12. Jang Bahadur tried to put down these speculations "not so much upon our account as upon his own and to prevent the chance of disturbance in his army." Ibid. He sought to convince the Durbar that the British were an invincible power. Ramsay to Lord Canning, 24 July 1857, Ibid.
joining the Revolt as allies of the rebels; some elected to wait and see; others preferred absolute neutrality. Jang Bahadur overruled them all; fully realising the impatience of the army, he decided to participate in the stirring event, and as an ally of the British. In June 1857 the Durbar, at the instance of Jang Bahadur, offered the services of Gurkha troops and found Major Ramsay, the Resident, too eager to accept the overture.

Offer of troops and its acceptance by the British

In anticipation of the Government's approval, Ramsay made prompt arrangements to send three thousand Nepali troops to Lucknow, Banaras and Patna, and another two hundred to Gorakhpur. The authorities at Lucknow and Gorakhpur had already made urgent requests to the Resident to send down Gurkha troops. Checking the spread of the Revolt from Gorakhpur to Champaran and Tirhoot was now a pressing necessity.


(4) S.C., 25 September 1857, 489.

(5) "... no time may be lost in sending down the Gurkha force. It is of the utmost importance to the safety of this district that they should make their appearance as soon as possible." Wylard to Ramsay, 13 June 1857, Ibid., 497; same to same, 28 May 1857, 9 June 1857, N.R., Vol. 9; Cooper, Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, Cudh, to Ramsay, 22 May 1857, Ibid.

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Lord Canning received Ramsay's "extraordinary" proceeding with a feeling of "greatest surprise and concern"; surprise, for the Resident had received no authority from Government; concern, for the conviction that the Gurkhas, if admitted to the disturbed British territories, would plunder them. Their sudden descent into the plains would, if feared, strengthen the floating rumour that Nepal was sympathetic to the rebels. The Resident was scathingly censured for his unauthorised, unwarranted, impolitic and hazardous proceedings. He was asked to convey to the Durbar that the British government did not need the help of the Nepali troops. Ramsay felt mortified; the Durbar was bitterly chagrined.

Yet, only ten days after, the British Government were seen frantically appealing to the same Durbar, through the same Resident, for the same aid, which they had so unceremoniously declined to accept before. Belated realisation dawned upon them that without this aid, Lucknow could not be saved.

Sir Henry Lawrence was authorised by Lord Canning to seek the help of Nepal as a "last necessity" and "last resource". Telegram from Canning to Lawrence, 16 May 1857, S.C., 18 December 1857, 570.

(6) Talbot, Private Secretary to Governor-General, to Ramsay, 8 July 1857, N.R., Vol. 9; Government to Resident, 13 June 1857, S.C., 25 September 1857, 488.

The Secret Committee in London "entirely agreed" with the Governor-General censuring the Resident. Secret Committee to Governor-General, 8 August 1857, 1830.
when General Havelock, on whose forces from Allahabad all hopes hinged, was miles away. The Resident having made fresh requisitions for troops, six thousand Gurkhas were soon despatched to Segowlee for Lucknow via Gorakhpur and Fyzabad. They were still on their way, marching in slow pace, laden with a long train of baggage for soldiers, palanquins for the officers, and carriages for the sick, when the defence of Lucknow collapsed, with the death of Sir Henry Lawrence on 4 July 1857. Soon after, Gorakhpur being abandoned, the Gurkhas were rushed to recover Azamgarh and Jaunpur from the rebels, the former station being considered very important as an outpost to Benaras, and as commanding the direct road from Oudh to Ghazipur and eastward.

Their activities in India

The situation in Bihar had in the meanwhile worsened. The troops at Dinapore and Segowlee had revolted; the districts of Saran, Champaran and, to some extent, Tirhoot lay at the mercy of the rebels from Gorakhpur, Azamgarh.


(8) S.C., 25 September 1857, 560. Cholera was rampant in the Gurkha camp.

(9) Government to Wingfield, Commissioner of Bahraich, 22 August 1857, Ibid., 580.
and the adjacent areas. The magistrates of these districts in Bihar repeatedly appealed to Ramsay to despatch Gurkha troops for succour. Two Gurkha regiments were promptly sent to Segowlee and Motiharee to instil confidence among the people, as also to check the spread of disturbance from the west. Besides, there was the paramount object of keeping the line of communication open between Calcutta and Kathmandu through Patna, Muzaffarpur and Motiharee. Late in October 1857, a Gurkha corps was posted at Sewan to deal with the rebels from Gorakhpur. Alongside, the Nepal Government undertook to prevent the rebels from crossing to the east at the Tribennee and Butwal ghat in Nepal.


(12) S.C., 27 November 1857, 434-5, 432; Raikes to Ramsay, 27 October 1857, N.R., Vol. 9. In November 1857 when Tirhoot was threatened with the Dacca mutineers, Ramsay was authorised by Government to ask for 1,000 additional troops from Jang Bahadur. S.C., 18 November 1857, 436; Correspondence between Ramsay and Samuells, Raikes and others, N.R., Vol. 12; Vol. 9; Bengal Government Mutiny Proceedings, 4 vols.; D.R.C.L.R., Vols. 5, 17; Minute by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal on the Mutinies as they affected the Lower Provinces under the Government of Bengal, 1858 (Calcutta, 1858).
Jang Bahadur in India

By November 1857, the rebels, being defeated in Delhi and other places, were flocking to Oudh and Gorakhpur, determined to make a desperate stand against the British. To put them down and to reestablish British authority in the above places, Lord Canning, after much hesitancy, accepted the offer of about ten thousand Nepali troops, under the personal command of Jang Bahadur. The troops were to serve as auxiliaries to the British forces organised under (13) Sir Colin Campbell for the recovery of Lucknow. The forces under Jang Bahadur restored the British authority over Gorakhpur, by dispersing the rebels under the self-styled Nazim, Muhammad Hossain. Leaving behind a detachment to guard Gorakhpur, Jang Bahadur reached Lucknow in March 1858. In the final recovery of Lucknow the Gurkhas played their role; also in the loot of that rich city. Towards the end of 1857 a detachment of 290 Gurkhas was sent to assist the Commissioner of Kumaon to hold his own against the


(14) G.A., 29 January 1858, 508; Reports of Brigadier MacGregor, Political Officer attached to Jang Bahadur, to Ramsay on the march of Gurkha troops to Lucknow. N.E., Vol.8.

apprehended inroad of the rebels.

The success of the Gurkhas in Bihar, Gorakhpur, Azamgarh, Jawnpore, Allahabad and Oudh justified the trust reposed on them by the British. There were some who were sceptical of their worth, others positively opposed to their entry into the disorganised British territories. Tucker, the Commissioner of Banaras, General Havelock and the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal shared the above feelings.


(17) The exploits of the Nepalese forces in the 'Mutiny' are elaborately dealt with in the Memorandum sent by Brigadier MacGregor to Government, 30 March 1858, S.C., 30 July 1858, 119. Two bound registers dealing with the same, in detail, are available at the Army Headquarters, Kathmandu, and in the Commandari Kitab Khana, Jangi Phant, Kathmandu. Both these are written in Nepali, and they tally with the Foreign Department Records. See also H.R. Nevill, District Gazettes of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh: Gorakhpur (Allahabad, 1909) 189-93; P.J.B. Rana, Life of Maharaja Sir Jang Bahadur Rana of Nepal (Allahabad, 1909) 197-214; P.C. Supp., 30 December 1859, 962-4, 966, 972-3, 1358-9.

(18) "I would most earnestly protest against any Nepalese troops being permitted to enter the country. If we cannot hold it ourselves without the aid of Nepal, it is time to leave. The appearance of Nepalese troops would produce a most injurious effect among the natives. I should be ashamed to see them at Banaras." Tucker's telegram to Lord Canning, 13 June 1857, S.C., 18 December 1857, 605; Tucker to Ramsey, 15 June 1857, N.R., Vol. 9; Secretary to Government of Bengal to Offg. Magistrate, Tirhoot, 21 August 1857, Ibid.
Lord Canning himself took months to make up his mind; acceptance of armed help of Nepal was not only unprecedented, but risky, a matter of grave political consideration, for it might be interpreted as an admission of weakness on the part of the British. It was quite a hard task for Resident Ramsay and Hodgson, the ex-Resident, now living a retired life at Darjeeling, to convince Lord Canning of the fidelity of Jang Bahadur and the urgent expediency of accepting his preferred aid. Jang Bahadur repeatedly requested Hodgson to plead on his behalf with the Governor-General. Hodgson, favourably disposed towards him, went to Calcutta and succeeded in convincing Lord Canning of the "great ability" and reliability of Jang Bahadur. He also suggested to "form a tie" on the latter by offering the western Tarai as a reward for his services.

(19) "Certain I know that Lord Canning was long held back from accepting the aid of Nepal by the prejudices of those around him till I reached Calcutta ...." Hodgson to Prinsep, 16 September 1858, H.W.B.L., Vol. 9, 103. Hodgson, living a retired life at Darjeeling, was from the first interested in the 'mutiny'. He had full confidence in Jang Bahadur, whose son-in-law was his ward at Darjeeling. Ibid., 92.

Jang Bahadur's unfriendly attitude

Jang Bahadur's attitude after he returned from Lucknow in March 1858, and more particularly during his march home, a little later, created much unpleasantness among the British officers. A cloud of misunderstanding that appeared as a sequel could hardly be concealed beneath an appearance of cordiality. He came to India, possessed with the pride of a deliverer; he was treated, the British officers subsequently complained, with impolitic latitude. The added materially to his characteristic vanity. Not till the assault of Lucknow in March 1858 was his true nature exposed. The overbearing conduct and lack of restraint of the Gurkhas under him were in sharp contrast to the gallant behaviour of the Gurkhas under the general supervision of the (21) British officers. Jang Bahadur's own haughtiness and

(21) S.C., 25 February 1859, 17. It is interesting to observe that Gurkha troops which came to India in June 1857 earned unstinted praise from British officers attached to them. S.C., 25 September 1857, 587; Foreign Department Notification, 22 December 1857, P.C., 30 December 1859, 243.

Jang Bahadur himself behaved well till he reached Lucknow where, presumably, the itch for plunder possessed his soldiers, and vanity went to his head. Brigadier MacGregor, attached to him testified to the good behaviour of Jang Bahadur in these words:

"Assailed by the temptations of all sorts, he [Jang Bahadur] has thrown them all aside, and at once acquainted me both with the agents [of the rebels] and their promises. He has cheerfully endured privation and exposure himself and expended the blood of his soldiers in the cause of justice and humanity, and in what he has the sagacity to perceive the best interests of his own state. He has led his troops in person in battle, and they have shown the qualities which have made their name famous." S.C., 30 July 1858, 119. See also S.C., 25 September 1857, 587.
overweening presumption were subject of animadversion in the British camps, and the rapacity and vandalism of troops under his direct command went far beyond any reasonable limit. The fair name of the Gurkha soldiers were smudged during the loot of Lucknow.

Even the rebel emissaries were seen hobnobbing with Jang Bahadur's men. It was alleged that Duman Khan, a Zemindar in the Nepal Tarai, and a confirmed ally of the rebels, was employed by Jang Bahadur himself to act as a "go between" between the Nepalese and the rebel camps. Duman Khan was appointed by the rebels the Tahsildar of the territory north of Bansee in Oudh. He frequented the rebel camps and transmitted intelligence to Jang Bahadur. While the Begum of Oudh lay encamped in the Nepal Tarai, Duman Khan requested her to appoint him "Chowkidar" of the areas adjoining Bansee; he received presents from her too. The rebels tried through him to tamper with the Gurkha troops, not without Jang Bahadur's knowledge. There were even grounds to suspect that Duman Khan and his associates had, during their return to Nepal in April 1858, attempted to incite the inhabitants of Gorakhpur against the British, giving them hope that a Gurkha army would shortly march down

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from Nepal to assist them. Such a man, Jang Bahadur himself acknowledged,

"served me so excellently as to gain my entire confidence and goodwill, and therefore he was counted as one of my well-wishing and faithful servants." (24)

The Begum of Oudh offered Jang Bahadur himself Gorakhpur, Azamgarh, Arrah, Chuprah and Banaras if he joined the rebels against the British. It was reported that

"The whole energies and talent of Oudh are now devoted to attempt to buy over the Nepalese." (25)

Several ambassadors were sent to Nepal concealed as fakirs; Jang Bahadur was even tempted with the throne of Oudh.


(24) Yaddasht from Jang Bahadur to Captain Byers, Assistant Resident, 12 July 1858, P.C., 3 September 1858, 91; Yaddasht from same to same, 26 August 1858, P.C., 22 October 1858, 73.


(26) Political Relations with Nepal, contained in Narrative of Relations with Native States (Calcutta, 1862) 217.
Sir Colin Campbell was none too impressed with the Gurkhas under the direct command of Jang Bahadur; he was positively indignant at their slow march and great thirst for plunder. He was even prepared to relieve Lucknow without the Gurkha auxiliaries under Jang Bahadur, but for the political consideration that such a step would be mistaken by the defacto ruler of Nepal as an intentional slight; the result would then be anything but good. Lord Canning advised Campbell to wait till Jang Bahadur arrived, or else it was feared that Jang Bahadur would be

"... wild to find himself jockeyed out of all share in the great campaign.... The loss of this help of his would be very inconvenient, but to find ourselves on bad terms with him would be much more so." (28)

Worse was Sir Colin's feeling when Jang Bahadur

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(27) His army was "pronounced 'worse than useless' by highest military authorities." Resident to Government, 23 October 1858, S.O., 25 February 1859, 17. The Times correspondent too said that the "Gurkhas have no stomach for fighting." The Resident alleged that the bad management of the Gurkha soldiers by the British officers was responsible for this unimpressive performance at Lucknow. Ibid.; R. Temple, Men and Events of my Time in India (London, 1882). 150, 208-9.

insisted that a British Corps should escort his troops, wending their way home through rebel-infested tracts of Oudh, laden with the spoils of Lucknow. Resident Ramsey held,

"I am persuaded that when Jang Bahadur first went to the British provinces, he did so with the intention of actually assisting us, but he found himself so utterly uncontrolled and uninfluenced that he soon commenced that course of hypocrisy and deception ...." (30)

Yet the exigency was such that the British had to put up a fair face and a make-believe of comrade. Distrust would have bred mischief and misunderstanding. Having swallowed the camel, it was unwise to strain at a chaff. Above all, Jang Bahadur's cooperation was greatly needed to hunt down the rebels fleeing to the Nepalese Tarai. These flocks posed a great obstacle to the restoration of peace and order in the border territories. Indeed, the active cooperation of Jang Bahadur was in some degree more necessary at the end of the Revolt than during it.

(29) Telegram from Sir Colin to Lord Canning, 6 April 1858, quoted in Charles Ball, n. 15, 275. Russell, the Times correspondent, held that the conditions in which Jang Bahadur rendered his aid were indefinite; the British did not support his high hopes; naturally he felt to be an "ill-used man". Edwards, n. 28, 277.


(31) Secret Despatch from Court to Governor-General, 23 March 1858, 1935.
The Rebels in Nepal

The steady restoration of British authority in the regions affected by the tumult drove swarms of rebels to the Nepal Tarai. The Tarai became soon a political alsatia, a safe sanctuary of malcontents of all types. The measures adopted by the British against them were mostly infructuous, due mainly to the openness of the frontier, and the inadequacy of the border policy. The British repeatedly requested Jang Bahadur to prevent the rebels from getting asylum in his state, but without much effect. The principal rebel leaders, Nana Sahib, Bala Rao, the Begum of Oudh, along with their chief adherents, had a safe passage into Nepal, with the covert help and cooperation of the Nepalese officials on the border. These leaders made many ineffectual

(32) S.C., 25 June 1858, 112.

(33) Ramsey at first disbelieved this report as a "very unlikely circumstance." Letter to Government, 20 March 1858, Ibid. For the movement of rebels in Nepal Tarai see S.C., 24 February 1858, 170, 186; P.C., 25 June 1858, 72; 25 March 1859, 155-61; 22 April 1859, 195-203, 325; 20 May 1859, 260-72, 370-9; 24 June 1859, 107; 16 September 1859, 109; 26 March 1859, 155; 13 May 1859, 320-6; 15 July 1859, 256-41; 23 September 1859, 49-50; April 1860, 466. Correspondence between Magistrates of Districts in Bihar and Government of Bengal.

attempts to organise an army with the help of Jang Bahadur. Their followers prowled over the bordering areas; they were safe under the protective wings of the Nepalese officers. The Nepal Tarai turned out soon to be a variable base of organised predatory activities on the British territory below. It was indisputably proved that influential zamindars Dumman Khan and Jay Kishen Puri were in league with the principal rebel leaders; they sheltered the rebels from the pursuing British troops, and took share in their spoils. In the Durbar itself an influential section of the Nepalese nobles, led by Jang Bahadur's brother, Badri Narsingh, maintained close liaison with the principal rebel leaders through their agents in the Tarai. These nobles succeeded in mustering considerable support to their stand that the

(34) Letters from Nana Saheb, Bala Rao, Brijis Kadir, the son of the ex-King of Oudh, Begum of Oudh, Benee Madho, Rajah of Gondah, Mamno Khan and others to Jang Bahadur, and the latter's reply. S.O., 27 August 1858, 97-108; P.C., 19 November 1858, 76; 15 July 1859, 229, 413; 5 August 1859, 267; 30 September 1859, 205; 30 December 1859, 560-1; 19 August 1859, 183, 193; P.C. Supp., 30 December 1859, 556-7.

(35) Major General Sir Hope Grant, Commanding field force in Oudh border to Resident, 8 May 1859, P.C., 20 May 1859, 375. See also N.E., Vol. 8. Jay Kishen Puri had many times in the past been alleged by the British officers as an abettor of the border crimes, and as an accomplice in all their predatory activities in the area. He was a confidant of Jang Bahadur. P.C., 29 July 1859, 273.
rebels should not be made over to the British. Ramsay noted,

"The more I hear and see what is passing at this Durbar the more convinced am I that the sympathy of the Sardars and of the army are rather with the rebels than with us." (37)

The British officers, engaged in suppression of the rebels on the Indo-Nepalese border, spoke in similar vein. The British government could no longer look on with equanimity. There were strong reasons to suspect that either Jang Bahadur was powerless to restrain his officers on the border from helping the rebels or he was himself a consenting party to their deeds. The British were aware that the rebel leaders were trying to win over Jang Bahadur, with alternate offers of rich spoils if he continued to protect them, and threats of condign revenge, if he delivered them up to the

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(36) P.C., 13 May 1859, 323; 22 May 1859, 267; S.C., 30 December 1859, 558-68.

(37) Ramsay to Captain Kelly, Commanding the field forces on the border, 25 March 1859, P.C., 22 April 1859, 200. In fact the local authorities in Nepal Tarai were "one and all against us" [the British], P.C., 15 July 1859, 413P; 23 September 1859, 247-8; The Friend of India, 19 May 1859.

(38) N.R., Vol. 8.

(39) The Friend of India wrote on 26 May 1859, "But in either case, whether subtle or simply powerless, the position of Jang Bahadur towards the British Government has been changed .... But lukewarm friendship, incessant intrigue, assertions without proof, promises without performance, large ambition supported by small trickeries are qualities and acts for which cultivated Englishmen, but for their indifference would have only scorn .... If our government have not yet demanded from our so-called ally an account of his conduct, it should no longer be delayed."
British. He showed

"perfect apathy and the Sardars and the army so much sympathy with the rebels, all of whom they consider should receive free unconditional pardon."

Naturally, "a strong disinclination exists here of attacking (40) them", the Resident reported. What is more, suspicion gained ground that Jang Bahadur was intentionally withholding from the British information about the movement of the (41) rebels. Naturally, Jang Bahadur's disinclination to hunt down the rebels in the rainy season was dismissed as a pretext; his remissness was deliberate; and his reluctance to allow the British troops to track down the rebels in Nepal was held as an "infringement of neutrality, not to say of good feelings and alliance."

Rumour was rampant that Jang Bahadur, with the support of the fugitive rebels, was making active preparations to swoop down upon Darjeeling, Kumaon and the border districts of Bihar; and that he had requested China to call upon Bhutan and Sikkim to join him against the British. At


(41) "I am convinced", wrote Ramsey, "that he [Jang Bahadur] knows more of their [rebels'] plans and movements than he chooses to admit." Letter to Government, 8 March 1859, 22 April 1859, 197-8. This suspicion was confirmed by the way Jang Bahadur sheltered Nana Sahib, Begum of Oudh and other principal rebel leaders. See also Political Letter from Court, 8 December 1858, 17.

(42) S.C., 26 November 1858, 72-123; P.C., 23 September 1859, 211; 31 December 1859, 2525-6, 4502-6.
this time some secret correspondence between Rani Chanda at Kathmandu and some influential persons at Lahore was intercepted. Dr. Campbell, the Superintendent of Darjeeling, took prompt precautionary measures against a sudden Nepalese break-through. The Acting Resident of Nepal, Captain Byers, however, had "implicit confidence" in the friendliness of Jang Bahadur. He emphatically asserted that Nepal had no malicious intentions of her own, nor was there any league between Jang Bahadur and the rebels. As regards Jang Bahadur's conspiracy with Rani Chanda, Resident Ramsay held the news as "a tissue of nonsense", for the Minister "would never break with us, if he can possibly help it"; and the Rani was "now spiritless and indolent and is very nearly blind", having no influence in Nepal, whatsoever. Nevertheless, the Government were alert and cautious; they took Jang Bahadur's vigorous disavowals of complicity with the rebels with a pinch of salt. Jang Bahadur was firmly told that if he shirked his "plainest duty" of

(43) Secretary to Chief Commissioner, Punjab to Government, P.C., 30 December 1859, 1044-52.
(44) Ramsay to C. Beadon, 10 December 1859, P.C., 15 July 1859, 413P (Enclosure).
(45) The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal suggested a display of force on the Bihar border as a deterrent to Jang Bahadur's suspected design; for "although a rupture with Nepal is improbable, we must not continue to act as though it were impossible." Minute of J.P. Grant and his Councillors, 20 October 1858, S.C., 26 November 1858, 124-6.
suppressing the predatory activities of the rebels, and continued to shelter them, the British forces would move into the Nepalese territory to hunt down the rebels, without the requisite permission of the Nepal Government. Jang Bahadur took heed; and at the vigorous insistence of the British, Dumman Khan, "the declared and bitter enemy of the British government", but a "well-wishing and faithful servant" of Jang Bahadur, was punished by the Durbar.

Measures against the refugee rebels

Ere long, effectively checked in their predatory pursuits by the stern measures of the British, the rebels turned on the Nepalese villages for plunder. Jang Bahadur realised that by a soft policy towards these hordes, he had but reared the enemies of his own state. Sorely plagued by the deprivations of the rebels, the King of Nepal asked for the cooperation of the British to destroy these predatory

(46) P.C., 3 September 1858, 93-5; Government to Chief Commissioner of Oudh, 9 January 1859, P.C., 15 July 1859, 4133; Yaddasht from Resident to Jang Bahadur, 20 July 1859, P.C., 19 August 1859, 187; Government to Resident, 23 September 1859, P.C., 23 September 1859, 249.

Till now the British government tried to avoid sending their troops to Nepal in pursuit of the rebels; for there was fear of clash with the Nepalese on the Tarai, sympathetic to the rebels, Government to Chief Commissioner of Oudh, 9 January 1859, P.C., 15 July 1859, 4133; Foreign Department Memo. No.520, P.C., 30 December 1859, 528.

(47) P.C., 3 September 1858, 85-92; 22 October 1858, 72-6; 31 December 1858, 2086-8; 11 March 1859, 375-81. The Nepalese officers in the Tarai gave him /Dumman Khan/ "positive encouragement". P.C., 31 December 1858, 2086.
hordes, a menace to both the states. It is not positively established if Jang Bahadur personally favoured sheltering the rebels. He could hardly take drastic measures against them in the face of manifest softness of many nobles and the army towards them. Besides, punitive action could not be taken when the Tarai was, during the summer and autumn months, a deadly miasmic swamp. Jang Bahadur was obliged to keep up an appearance of friendliness with the rebels till he could, in the winter months, launch an expedition against them. Resident Ramsay himself admitted,

"I have long been of opinion that the Durbar has been trimming between the rebels and ourselves, and it has wished them to believe that it was friendly to their cause. I have also felt convinced that it has been covertly playing into their hands, and I am equally convinced that it will never openly assist them." (49)

It is not unlikely, however, that Jang Bahadur sought to wring further political capital out of the British anxiety about these rebels. He hoped to rid his own country of these predators, with the British defraying the cost of a grand military operation he contemplated to undertake. He

(48) Kharea from Maharaja of Nepal to Lord Canning, 24 January 1859, S.C., 22 July 1859, 199-200; Canning to Maharaja of Nepal, 7 January 1859, P.C., 15 July 1859, 413C.

(49) Resident to Offg. Commissioner of Gorakhpur, 17 September 1859, P.C., 30 September 1859, 209; Ramsay to Kelly, 25 March 1859, P.C., 22 April 1859, 200; 30 December 1858, 558.
desired to quench the thirst of his army by a further
dose of British liberality. He was, in short, up to kill
two birds with one stone. But the British could not be
tricked. They not only discouraged him from undertaking a
large and costly military expedition against the rebels
in the Nepal Tarai, but gave him clearly to understand
that in crushing the rebels he would not oblige the British
so much as he would relieve his own state of a horde of
plunderers.

The last two months of 1859 saw a vigorous
operation of the British and Nepalese troops in the Nepal
Tarai. The principal rebel leaders were either killed or
captured with hundreds of their followers. Many had died
earlier of starvation and disease in the pestilential swamp,
many more were hunted down, some gave themselves up, others
sneaked their way back home, a helpless horde of fugitives,
forlorn, despaired of a cause lost for ever. Brigadier


(51) P.C., 30 December 1859, 462-3; 24 February
1860, 184; 20 January 1860, 152; 2 March 1860, 247-9,
251-4; Martin, n. 22, II, 496-500, quoting The Times, 21
January 1860.

More than three thousand rebels were surrendered
by the Nepalese troops, along with their leaders, As Mammo
Khan, the Commander-in-Chief of the Begum of Oudh, Khan
Bahadur Khan of Bareilly, Mirza Feroz Bakht Bahadur, brother
of Bahadur Shah II, Ummer Singh, brother of Koer Singh of
Bihar, Jawala Prasad and others.

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Holdich, in charge of this operation, confidently asserted that the "suppression of the last of the rebellion" on the banks of the Raptee, was "most complete .... I do not believe that an armed rebel remains in the Tarai." This (52) was in January 1860.

Bala Rao, the brother of Nana Sahab, Devee Bakhsh, the Raja of Gonda, Azimoollah, Golab Singh of Birush, Har Prasad, Chuckledar of Khyrabad, Hardat Singh, Raja of Bundi, died in the Tarai of disease.

Benee Madho, the Rana of Shankarpur, was killed by the Gurkha troops. F.C., 20 January 1860, 136-49.

The Begum of Oudh, her minor son, Bajiis Kader, the two wives of Baji Rao II, the ex-Peshwa, and the wives of Bala Rao and Nana Sahib were given political asylum by Jang Bahadur. They lived at Kathmandu on a monthly subsidy of Rs.400/- granted by the Nepal Government. Commandari Kitab Khana, Nizamati Phant, Register for the years 1921 (1864) and beyond; F.C., 2 March 1860, 247-55; July 1860, 265.

As regards Nana Sahab, nothing could be, nor has yet been, established with certainty. It is, however, proved that he lived in Nepal for quite some time, and at the knowledge of Jang Bahadur. The British strongly suspected the latter of concealing him. Their remonstrances and cajolery to get possession of Nana from the custody of Jang Bahadur were all infructuous. F.C., 22 July 1860, 208; 23 September 1859, 250; Ramsay to Beadon, 3 September 1860, N.R., Vol. 12.

In Thapathali (Kathmandu) there is one inscription which describes the gift of some lands by Sai Bai, the wife of the ex-Peshwa.

As a "substantial proof of its gratitude" and "confiding friendship" the British government retroceded to Nepal the whole of the low lands between the rivers Kali and Raptee, and the whole of the low lands lying between the river Raptee and the district of Gorakhpur, which were formerly wrested from Nepal by the Treaty of Segowlee in 1816. The territory was two hundred miles in length and of varying breadth. Jang Bahadur's services were acknowledged in glowing terms; he was made a G.C.B.

Why Jang Bahadur Cooperated

It is pertinent to analyse the motives which prompted Jang Bahadur to aid the British when he had ample opportunity to throw his whole weight against them. The primary reason lay in his firm conviction of the great power of the British government, which, he realised, was certain to retrieve its position in spite of the initial setbacks. He was shrewd


(54) P.C., 23 September 1859, 8; Pudma Jang Bahadur Rana, n. 17, 218-21, 226-8. The Times commented on 7 July 1858 that "these old quasi-eclesiastical orders were considered proper for strong practical jokes."

(55) "Jang Bahadur knows British power thoroughly and thinks that he might do some temporary harm to the British government; but eventually Nepal would have to pay heavy retribution." Ramsay to Lord Canning, 24 July 1857, N.R., Vol. 12.

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enough to see that friendliness with the British had paid him good dividends; indeed, he could have hardly consolidated his power, by being hostile to them; much of the chaos in Nepal in 1837-46, he knew, was due to her too provocative foreign policy. The British in 1857 were a formidable political power, whose strength, he realised, lay rooted in their national institutions and character. Supporting the rebels would have meant backing the wrong horse. There was much to gain now by being friendly to the British and much to lose being otherwise; this he firmly believed.

He could have remained neutral if it were not for the superior consideration of exploiting this crisis of the British to his own advantage. From the very outset he placed himself in a bargaining position; and behind the façade of his ostensibly unconditional offers of aid, there lurked "embarrassing hints of expectations" from the British government; his preferred help was not without strings. He coveted Tulsipur and Chanda in Oudh, with the dual motive of

"This government [Nepal] had a strong belief that if ... any other sovereign were to reign in Hindustan, even for ten years, the British government again reduce it to subjection." Resident to Government, 5 June 1857, S.C., 25 September 1857, 487. Jang Bahadur gave Ramsey three reasons for his aid. First, to show the fidelity of his government to the British; secondly, to prove his conviction of the latter's invincibility; and thirdly, to get the British support for the perpetuation of his régime. S.C., 29 January 1858, 377.

appeasing those who opposed his pro-British policy, as also to earn lasting fame as one who had extended the territory of his country without paying any heavy price for it.

"He cannot, however, refrain from saying that he hopes, in the event of their [Gurkhas] doing us good service, the Governor-General will play into his hands a little, by giving his government a small strip of territory, say a piece of the Tulseapur district in Oudh .... This he says will set him right with his countrymen who may otherwise call him to account for assisting us with his army, without securing some little advantage for his own country," reported Resident Ramsay. (57)

Throughout this eventful period (1857-58) Jang Bahadur's main aim was to impress the British with his personal loyalty and cordiality to them. To overcome their hesitation in accepting his aid, he even offered his wives


"I have many enemies in Nepal who accuse me of befriending the British government to serve my own private purposes, and who believe that I should sacrifice my country to further my own and my brothers' personal views - show them that this is false - Give me izzat in the eyes of my own country and of the world .... I ask nothing for myself individually, but I desire that it should be handed down to posterity that during my Ministership, I obtained for my country, from the British government, an extension of her dominions, however trifling that may be. This will silence all my enemies now and will give me great name hereafter." Same to same, 25 November 1857, N.R., Vol. 12.


(59) Ibid., 424.
and sons as hostages. The interests of the British, he averred, were identical with those of his self and his state; their enemies were his enemies, their friends, his too. He successfully led the British to view him as the person solely responsible for the services of his country. He impressed them with the idea that he had not only withstood the dazzling temptations of plunder, and had restrained the army, but also risked his own life and régime by an inflexible pro-British policy in spite of its unpopularity among his own men. He hoped that once the British were convinced of his personal responsibility and risk in the matter, they would, as a matter of obligation, support him and his friendly régime in times of crisis. What is more, they would not object to his cherished design of assuming the de jure sovereignty of Nepal.

(60) Ibid., 423.

(61) He [Jang Bahadur] observed that whatever tends to strengthen the British will elevate the Nepal Government, and that his own employment in our provinces will not only give him a great name personally and will add to his own reputation, but will also raise the Gurkha character." Resident to Government, 17 July 1857, Ibid.

(62) "I know", said Jang Bahadur to Resident, "that upon the success of the British arms and reestablishment of the British power in India, its government will be stronger than ever, and that I and my brothers and my country will all then benefit by an alliance with you, as your remembrance of our past services will render our present friendship lasting and will prevent you ever molesting us." Resident to Government, 10 December 1857, S.C., 29 January 1858, 377. (cf. P.J.B. Rana, p. 17, 216.)
For some time past Jang Bahadur was scheming to get at the throne; this the British government knew. By matrimonial relations he had carried himself up to the precincts of the Royal family; by wringing defacto sovereign power from the puppet King he had ascended the summit of authority. Only the formal assumption of the throne was a desideratum. Yet this he did not dare realise without the approval of the British. The latter, as would be shown (63) hereafter, had consistently opposed this. The 'mutiny' now came to Jang Bahadur as a veritable boon. He could hope to exploit the great anxiety of the British for his aid; he could play upon their fear; he could bargain his neutrality or demand a heavy price for his help. This was the opportune time to squeeze the British acquiescence in his schemes. Lord Dalhousie, the ex-Governor-General, had clearly realised this when he wrote,

"... if the Government suppose that Jang Bahadur is doing all that he is doing 'for love', they are mightily mistaken. Jang's drawing a bill upon them - at long date perhaps - but one which they will be called upon to pay, in return for value received, some day or other, as sure as fate. The Jang has long been obviously working his way to the munsud of Nepal .... Jang Bahadur was the ruler himself ... when the time and the opportunity come, the Rajah will have an accident of some kind, Jang will appear as Rajah, and the British government will be expected to show its gratitude for aid in Oude by recognising, if not aiding in turn, the new dynasty in Nepal." (64)

(63) On this point see Chapter Nine, pages 369-76.

Time and again he hinted to the Resident that as a reward for his personal effort during the crisis, the British government should recognise him as an independent sovereign of at least a part of Nepal, as they had done Golab Singh (Raja of Jammu and Kashmir), of a part of the Punjab. The British government made no bones about their utter disapproval of his lofty projects. Jang Bahadur took it to heart; he was grieved; he never forgot this nor forgave the British, his disobliging allies.

There were other reasons too. The temper of the Nepalese army was so restless and excited, that it could hardly be kept in bounds. Shortly after the Revolt broke out in India, a serious mutiny was likely to flare up at Kathmandu but the timely intervention of the Resident, and Jang Bahadur's politic deference to his advice, averted it.

(65) "Maharaja Golab Singh's name was so repeatedly mentioned by the messenger of Jang Bahadur... and the favours he has received from us by being recognised as the independent sovereign of Cashmere (which Government Jang Bahadur considers that we bestowed upon him for services rendered in the Sikh wars) was so constantly dwelt upon that I suspected Jang Bahadur had some such ambitious project in his hand." Resident to Government, 17 July 1857, S.C., 27 November 1857, 423.

(66) See Chapter Nine. Jang Bahadur went to India with this hope, and returned frustrated. His policy regarding the rebels in the Tarai may partly be attributed to his grievance against the British on this score.

(67) A discontented soldier tried to excite the army against Jang Bahadur. Many disaffected elements sought also to work up the feelings of the army against the Minister. Jang Bahadur was determined to execute the intriguers. Ramsey firmly dissuaded him, warning him that such a rash step would

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Jang Bahadur's power rested greatly on his popularity with the army; the army was the prop of his regime and, hence, to humour it, was his cardinal maxim. Had the excited soldiers not been employed by the British, Jang Bahadur would have failed to restrain them from the lure of plunder of the British districts. An army out of control would have dealt serious injury to Jang Bahadur's absolute regime; more than that, their inroads into British territory would have brought on Nepal the fatal wrath of the British government. The more the Nepalese soldiers were syphoned off to India as allies of the British, the greater was the security of Jang Bahadur's position in Nepal; Jang Bahadur's enemies in Nepal were seeking to exploit the stir in the army to grind their own axes. Indeed, the extreme eagerness and vigorous insistence with which Jang Bahadur repeatedly offered his troops, suggests that he was as much concerned
goad the army to a mutiny. Jang Bahadur took heed and thus was averted what was certain to lead to a bloody civil war to the immense injury to Jang Bahadur and his regime. S.C., 26 June 1857, 129; 29 January 1858, 26.

(68) "It seems to be forgotten that although Jang Bahadur is virtually the sovereign of Nepal, and nominally possesses despotic power, he only holds that power by humouring the army; and that in twenty four hours after he lost its goodwill he would be a helpless fugitive if he escaped from the country with his life." Ramsay to Tucker, Commissioner of Bahar, 11 November 1857, N.R., Vol. 12; S.C., 26 March 1858, 120.

over the effect of the Indian Revolt on his soldiers and on his régime as the British themselves were on theirs.

Significance

If the Revolt of 1857 was a most "fortunate occurrence" for the British in India, it was scarcely less so for Indo-Nepalese relations in general and for Jang Bahadur and his rule in particular. The revolt could certainly be the readiest weapon of Nepal to gravely injure the British government in India. Instead, it turned out to be the strongest of the ties, binding the two governments in future. For long the British government were obsessed with the idea that Nepal was lying in wait for a favourable opportunity to strike at them. For long they were apprehensive that a prolonged war or a serious internal upheaval in India would goad the Nepalese to wreak their vengeance on the British government. The wound inflicted on Nepal in 1816 was open for long; the decade preceding 1846 bore this out too truly. No wonder the British were at first greatly concerned that their gravest crisis would be seized by Nepal as her signal opportunity. This fear turned out to be baseless.

The Revolt of 1857 provided a touchstone to Jang Bahadur's professed fidelity to the British government; and it served, more than anything else, to convince them how much he

(70) See Chapters Four, Five and Six.
valued their friendship. It was the last great woe of the Company in India, and the last opportunity of Nepal to exploit the distress of the British. The event also provided a test to the British policy of 'let alone' in Nepal, followed since 1842, and cemented with the ascendancy of Jang Bahadur. That the latter kept peace and extended help, was an ample vindication of the soundness of that policy. Consolidation of Jang Bahadur's power was partly facilitated by the British policy of non-interference. To them, he owed some obligation, and them he helped. It was the reciprocation of mutual faith and obligation; more than anything else it bound the defacto ruler of Nepal and the British government by the ties of mutual indebtedness.

Admitting that the help of Nepal brought but a "moderate accession" to the military power of the British during the crisis, its moral effect was by no means negligible. Resident Ramsay himself admitted this thus,

"There can be no doubt that the presence of the Gurkha army in British provinces under Maharaja Jang Bahadur's command had a fine moral effect, but their services in a military point of view were not what had been expected from them." (71)

The very fact that this powerful Hindu kingdom actively collaborated with the "infidel Christians" against its coreligionists, acted as a damper for the rebels, and

(71) Political Relations with Nepal, 217.
correspondingly as a moral-booster for the British. The extent and effectiveness of Nepal's help to the British is indeed not so important a matter as her active cooperation with those whom she dreaded as her traditional enemies. The signal proof of Jang Bahadur's fidelity to the British lies, in fact, in restraining his people from seizing what they regarded as the golden opportunity of Nepal to pay off old scores against these enemies.

The British were not unaware of the ulterior motives of Jang Bahadur in rendering the help. Yet political exigencies suggested the prudence of playing into his hands for a while. They had little hesitation in rewarding him with a territory which belonged formerly to Nepal, and was "unimportant" to themselves, particularly when it was seen that such a gift was certain to

"ensure the British the warmest support of Jang Bahadur and of Sardars, and will put the troops into great good humour." (72)

A moral backing to Jang Bahadur and a sop to the army were essential at this time to enable the former to pursue his friendly policy in spite of strong opposition in the Durbar. Jang Bahadur needed this backing; and in their own

(72) Ramsay to Edmonstone, 21 July 1857, 29 November 1857, N.R., Vol. 12. Ramsay, however, gave no hopes to Jang Bahadur in this regard. He told the latter that the cession of "an inch" of British territory was "utterly out of the question", and that Golab Singh's case was no precedent for him. Secret Letter from Court to Governor-General, 17 March 1858, 1933.
interest, the British gave it to him; this had the natural effect of strengthening his power. The trust which the British reposed on him, the signal honour they did him by conferring a title, the grand reception accorded him while in India - all these left on his countrymen the indelible impress of his firm alliance with the mighty British power. This impression served to discourage his opponents, and gave a spurt to his prestige among his people. Never before in his country did he loom so large as a friend of the British.

The Revolt was thus a great event in Jang Bahadur's personal life. It was a vindication of his policy too. He showed to his countrymen that his friendship with the British had earned them territory, wealth and honour without causing any impairment of their much-cherished national independence, while his predecessors' policy of hostility towards the British had earned them nothing but chaos, commotion and concern. Jang Bahadur thus gave a new turn to the policy of the government of Nepal. The idea of profiting at the cost of the British yielded place to that of gaining with their friendliness. He sought to convince his people that there was as much to gain by peace and cordiality with the British as to lose by intrigues and hostility towards them.

The Nepalese soldiers who served in the Revolt carried with them lively memories of 'mutiny' days, the companionship of the 'Sahib', the latter's trust and
comradeship, and above all the munificence of the British government. This was a wholesome experience; the British, after all, were not devils - incarnate, the Nepalese realised.

The Revolt left a lesson as much for Jang Bahadur as for the British. As for the former, the grim determination and fortitude with which the British crushed what was likely to be their death-blow, served to convince him all the more thoroughly of the invincibility of that power. Such a power must be befriended, or there was peril, Jang Bahadur realised.

"The Resident is of opinion that this expedition strengthened our prestige immensely throughout the Nepalese dominions and that the Gurkhas have a far higher appreciation of and respect for our power now than they ever entertained before." (74)

He had closely identified his interests with those of the British, hoping that they would always actively support his regime in Nepal.

(73) The Nepalese soldiers were given salary at a much higher rate than they received at home. Besides, they were paid Battu. "... the liberality of our government in this respect has occasioned quite a sensation among them [the Gurkhas]." Resident to Government, 27 June 1857, S.C., 25 September 1857, 524; 27 August 1858, 109-21; 26 November 1858, 56-66; See Chapter Ten, page

(74) Political Relations with Nepal, 217.

"I am persuaded that a deep-seated conviction of the hopelessness of any attempt to conquer us will prevent this country [Nepal] from ever willingly going to war with us, ayé! even at a time like this." Remsey to Canning, 24 July 1857, N.R., Vol. 12.
As for the British, they realised that his despotic power notwithstanding, Jang Bahadur could not in his own interest be unfriendly to them; the policy of peace and cordiality was not only an objective of his state but a necessity for him. In fact, the exigencies of his position "must make the reality and appearance of a personal connection with us [British] of value to him." (75)

The British government encouraged Jang Bahadur's increasing dependence upon them, for his strong regime had arrested the restless instincts of Nepal, and his friendly policy towards the British was conducive to the peaceful relations between the two states. The Western Tarai was restored to Nepal as an acknowledgment of and as a "lasting memorial" to Jang Bahadur's services and as evidence of the British government's appreciation of his friendly policy (77) hitherto pursued.


(76) "These are great services rendered to us in our utmost need. We are unwilling to imagine the position in which we should have been without this aid from the Maharaja, still less to think of the course which events must have taken had the Maharaja taken advantage of our distress and directed against us the force he has employed in our defence." Secret Despatch of the Court to Governor-General, 17 March 1857, 1933. Here 'Maharaja' stands for Jang Bahadur. He received this appellation from the King in August 1856. The King came to be called 'Maharajadhiraj'. On this point see Chapter Nine, page 372-3

(77) Governor-General's Despatch to Secret Committee, 10 June 1858, 24; Lord Canning to Maharaja Jang Bahadur Rana, no date, S.C., 27 August 1858, 125.
The circumstances in which Jang Bahadur rendered this aid showed the British that prejudices against them were still strong in the Durbar, and that it was only his masterful personality which kept these prejudices subdued.

Yet, much as they appreciated Jang Bahadur's services, they gave no encouragement to his many artifices to commit them to his pretensions and lofty schemes of de jure sovereignty of Nepal. He was treated as Minister of Nepal, very powerful and friendly, but no more.

This was the first time when the British accepted the armed help of Nepal, hitherto distrusted as a 'bad neighbour'. It was an extreme measure of urgent political necessity, adopted with utmost reluctance and greatest hesitancy. Besides satisfying the vanity of Jang Bahadur, the measure provided a vent to the pent-up martial instincts of his army; such an outlet was as much desired by Jang Bahadur as it was thought politic by the British to provide him with. The Revolt of 1857 is thus a landmark in the history of Indo-Nepalese relations.

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Lord Canning knew well that this would enhance Jang Bahadur's influence in Nepal. In such influence, Canning admitted, there was much gain and no loss.

(78) Governor-General's Despatch to Secret Committee, 10 June 1858, 24.