The recommendations of Lister gave a concrete shape to the Lushai policy of the British Government. The policy was the policy of Conciliation which the English followed for nearly two decades after Lister's expedition 1850. Many factors were responsible for adopting this policy.

CIRCUMSTANCES LEADING TOWARDS THE POLICY OF CONCILIATION.

Till 1850 the British Government underestimated the military strength of the Lushais because of the incomplete informations supplied by the local officers. Lister pointed out the huge fighting potential of the Lushais and their invulnerable strategy. The Government of Bengal fully realised that ordinary retaliatory measures were ineffective in checking their incursions. Lister's expedition served as an eyeopener to the Military Department, that marching of troops borrowed from north India in these inaccessible hilly terrains was of no avail. Moreover, the gains of military expeditions added little to the peace and prosperity of the Cachar plains where the Company was busy in consolidating its rule. So the British Government intended to explore means as how to overcome the frontier difficulties without coming in direct clash with the Lushais.

The authorities of the Fort William took it for
granted that those tribes, because of their intertribal feuds, would never remain calm and quite. The migratory nature of the tribes and the difficulties of jhooming would cause many troubles. But it would be absolutely useless, rather risky to get involved into their internecine feuds. Therefore, the best course, the Government considered, would be to appease the frontier tribes as far as practicable, so that the Lushais might consider the 'Sahibs' as their allies. Thus the Government of Bengal decided to select certain influential Lushai Chiefs beyond the frontier and started negotiations with them. The local authorities of Cachar recognized their independent status and adopted a custom of mutual exchange of presents. It was decided that the Chiefs would offer presents in kinds to the Government and the Government would offer five hundred rupees in exchange. Both the parties would follow the friendly lines.

It has already been pointed out in chapter I, that the British Government committed a mistake in setting Lalmir Singh against Lalchukla. Now the English gave up the policy of setting one Chief against the other and followed the principle of dynamic neutrality. The Government recognised the independent status of the Chiefs but refrained from assisting them in their inter-tribal rivalry. This attitude saved the local officers of the Company from many a involvement.

After the annexation of Cachar the Company's officials paid more attention to the internal reconstruction
of the district on financial grounds.

**THE EFFECT OF STRAINED ANGLO-BURMESE RELATIONSHIP.**

In 1855 the first Tea Estate was established at Cachar and within a decade the flourishing tea gardens spread upto its southern borders. The English keenly felt that the peace and prosperity of the tea gardens were dependent on the friendly relationship with the tribes of the outlying frontier.

Lister recommended the co-operation of the Rajas of Manipur and Tripura in controlling the Lushai affairs. But the Politics of Manipur was never smooth. Repeated troubles during the royal succession diverted the attention of the English to that princely State. Preoccupations in Manipur affairs prevented the Company from laying emphasis on the problems of the Lushais of Cachar frontier. During the early fifties Anglo-Burmese relationship became very much strained and a war was looming large. In case of possible advance the British army was to march through Arakan. The Second Anglo-Burmese War broke out in 1852 and the authorities of the Port-William got so much engaged that they disliked any fresh venture in the frontiers of Cachar of Chittagong which was
3

fraught with risk. From the stand point of military strategy the Lushais had a unique position being situated to the east of British territory and west of Burma. In fact, many of the Eastern Lushais were the inhabitants of Burma. Thus, for the security of Arakan and particularly of Chittagong, the Company favoured the policy of Conciliation.

EFFECT OF THE SEPTEMBER MUTINY.

The authorities of the Fortwilliam got a very short respite after the Second Anglo-Burman War. The Rising of 1857 convulsed the whole of north and east India and it shook the very foundations of the British Empire in India. It is very likely that the British Government under these circumstances considered the policy of Conciliation as the best policy in the North East frontier. The force of circumstances not only compelled the English to conciliate the Lushais but also they followed this policy towards all the border tribes of the Eastern frontier. After the suppression of the Mutiny, the Power was transferred from the Company to the Crown and Her Majesty's Government according to the dictates of Queen's Proclamation gave up the policy of aggression. So the British officers, because of the directives from London, did not dare any risky venture in the Lushai Hills. The personality of Lord Canning, the Viceroy, was entirely a different personality from that of Lord Dalhousie. It is obvious that the policy of Conciliation was the key note of the broad policy
During the Lister's expedition the Kukie Chief Barmoilin helped the British expeditionary force. Lister suggested negotiations with him. Many Kukie Chiefs including Barmoilin demanded British protection against their enemy, the Pois. Lister was in favour of granting protection but because of the dynamic neutrality the Government of Bengal did not sanction it.

Captain Verner, the Superintendent of Cachar, informed the Government of Bengal on February 6, 1855 that Manries of Sukpilal had come to him and asked for British protection against the other Lushai Chiefs who had leagued together and attacked his village. Sukpilal's delegation came with the subsidy of elephant tusks which was the traditional mode of paying the tribute.

Verner told the 'mantreas' that Sukpilal and other Lushai Chiefs were independent and not the subjects of the Company; so the Government could not comply with their request. But the Superintendent assured the delegation that he would inform the authorities of Calcutta of the matter. In this connexion Verner pointed out to the Government of Bengal that when the delegation was returning to Lushai Hills they were attacked by the Government 'Aheda' people under Major Smith. They seized the elephant tusks from the delegation. On receipt
of the information Verner made a representation to Smith. Verner informed the Government of Bengal that the molesting of the Lushais by the 'Khada' people would produce a bad effect upon the simple tribal chiefs and they would be discouraged to come to Cachar. Moreover the Cachar-Lushai border was not defined and there was the likelihood of the illegal entry of the Smith's people into the Lushai territory. The killing of elephants within the Lushai country had been prohibited by an order of the Deputy Governor in 1850. Verner stressed that the prosperity of the southern portion of the Cachar district was dependent upon the friendly intercourse with the Lushai tribes.

The Government of Bengal approved of the measures taken by Verner in not giving protection to Sukpilal. They also informed the Military Secretary of the Government of India of the matter relating to Major Smith.

Immediately after the visit of Sukpilal's 'mantree', a Lushai deputation from the Moorat Raja and his brother Leung Mung Raja met the Superintendent of Cachar in his office. The delegation expressed its intentions of establishing amicable relationship with the English and said that they were anxious to trade with the inhabitants of the plains. Verner told Leung Mung Raja, the head of the Lushai delegation, that the English were willing to be on friendly terms with the Lushai tribes so long as they did not molest any of the inhabitants of the plains. In order to test the friendly
intention of the Lushai Chiefs he pointed out to the Leung Mong Raja to return the young Thado prince whom they had kidnapped during their Cachar Raid in 1849-50. Lung Mong readily agreed to this and within a few days he returned with the said Thado prince, Tangpulong.

Leung Moong then requested Werner to intercede with the Raja of Manipur, to obtain the release of Belging, the uncle of Barmolin, the Lushai Chief. Werner was now in a dilemma. He told Leung Moong that the Raja of Manipur was independent of the British Government and that it rested with him whether he would release Belging or not. But he assured Leung Moong that he would write about the matter to the Government of Bengal.

MAGA-LUSHAI FEUD AND THE SUBSEQUENT BRITISH ATTEMPT TO END THIS.

The Lushais and Nagas lived in close proximity on the frontier of Manipur State. They were traditional enemies and their tribal feuds were the dominant features of Manipur-Lushai border. The Lushais raided the Naga villages within the territory of Manipur and in retaliation the Nagas did the same thing. In one such raid the Nagas took Belging as a captive. Under the instruction of the Raja of Manipur Belging was leading a life of prisoner in the State of Manipur. The Kukie Chief Leung Moong, the nephew of Belging, seeking the release of his uncle agreed to hand over the Naga captives if any to the Raja of Manipur.
The Superintendent of Cachar was also convinced that if by the release of Bulging, the present system of warfare, carried on by the Lushais against the inhabitants of Manipur, could be stopped, a great objective would be gained. Upon this consideration Verner requested the Government of Bengal to take up the matter with the Political Agent of Manipur. The authorities of the Fort William took up the question of the release of Bulging and came to know that a negotiation was already on foot between the Lushais and the State of Manipur and the interference of the British Government was therefore unnecessary.

The Bulging incident made the Superintendent of Cachar very close with Colonel MacIlouch, the Political Agent of Manipur. Both of them agreed to the point that the cultivation of good relationship with the Lushais were indispensable for the prosperity of the frontiers of Manipur and Cachar. Verner welcomed the proposal of MacIlouch to link up Manipur with the Lushai country.

**KUKIE SETTLEMENT IN CACHAR BORDER.**

The authorities of Cachar were successful in establishing the good relationship of the Lushais. According to the suggestions of MacIlouch the Lushai Kukies were allowed to settle both in Cachar and Manipur. There had been the floating colonies of the tribes in the frontier of Cachar but thenceforward the Government of Bengal encouraged them to
settle within the British territory. They got the patronage of the Government. Muskets were also supplied to the Kukies became loyal subjects of the Company. The Government called those old Kukies as 'our Kukies'. The bulk of the Kukie militia which was incharge of protecting the frontier was recruited from them.

**THE SEPOY MUTINY AND THE TRIBES OF CACHAR FAMILIAR.**

Soon the British Government in India faced the serious outbreak of the Mutiny in 1857 and it seriously affected the peace and tranquillity of Chittagong and Sylhet Valley. In November 1857 the 24th N.I., mutined at Chittagong and advanced through Sylhet and Cachar. Sylhet Light Infantry under Major Byng encountered the mutiniers at Latu, in Sylhet (near the place of Kachurari Massacre). The mutineers were defeated and Major Byng lost his life in the encounter. Subedar Ajodh Singh, the famous hero of Lister's expedition, showed extraordinary courage and generalship in fighting against the mutineers. The mutineers entered Cachar and attempted to penetrate into Manipur. But they were defeated by the British continuant at various places and they fled into the jungles to take shelter among the independent Kukie Chiefs of the Lushai Hills. But, owing to the good relationship the tribal chiefs did not entertain the rebels and handed them over to the British authorities of Cachar. Munjihow, a Kukie Chief, residing south of Manipur assisted the English in capturing the mutineers. Munjihow
later on became a great friend of the English and during the Lushai Expedition 1871-72 he assisted the Government with very valuable informations. Moreover, he acted as a great force in establishing an amicable relationship with the tribals.

The Political Agent of Manipur took vigorous steps during the Mutiny to keep peace in Manipur borders. According to his advice Raja Chandrakirti Singh sent troops to check the advance of the mutineers who reached the Manipur - Cachar frontier. Some Manipuri princes, notably Narendrajit Singh, joined the rebels but soon they were captured and handed over to the authorities of Cachar. During the Mutiny the local people both the tribals and non-tribals cooperated with the Company's officials and kept the borders free from the menace of the rebels. In this grim hour McClluch, the British Political Agent at Manipur, played a very vital role in this strategic frontier. He maintained a friendly relationship with the Lushai Chiefs of Vonolel's family - a dominant clan of the Eastern Lushais near Manipur border. The Lushais also reciprocated the friendship. Because of the liberal attitude of McClloule the Lushais respected him as the great 'White Chief' and his word was a law to them.

During the period under review (1850-1870) a little change took place in the administrative pattern of independent Tripura. A few border raids within the territory of the Raja caused anxiety to the Government of Bengal. Inspite of the
assurance given by the Raja to be watchful on the border some local officers of the Company attempted to follow an aggressive policy disturbing the poise of Conciliation. But the timely interference of the authorities of the Fort William checked their aggressive designs. The Government of India in strict adherence to the policy of Conciliation realized fully that the cooperation of the Raja was necessary in tackling the Lushais of the Eastern frontier.

ABOLITION OF ELEPHANT KHEDA

It is worth mentioning in this connexion that during the Mutiny of 1857, war elephants played a vital role in the Company's army. During the emergency the supply of elephants fell short of the demand, so the Government requisitioned them from the subordinate 'Rajas' and 'Zemindars'. All those elephants were borrowed on a loan basis. Many of them so requisitioned were found dead or missing in the operations and the Government had to pay off in cash to the owners. It has already been pointed out that the Cachar frontier, was a very valuable source of elephants and the Government of India established elephant 'Khadas' there, under the Military Department. The Mutiny gave an incentive to the elephant Khada system. The Government even gave the permit to the private individuals to capture elephants in the Cachar frontier. But the system of elephant Khada was fraught with many complications. In the absence of a well defined frontier the Khada people frequently entered into
the territories of the Lushai Chiefs. The greed of catching elephants also in many cases led to the deliberate violation of the frontier. Quite naturally this practice annoyed the Lushais. Moreover the elephants were the only valuable source of income of the poor tribes. They began to consider that the 'Sahiba' were no longer considerate to their economic prosperity. The superintendent of Cachar, Captain Stewart, became aware of the danger. He repeatedly brought the matter to the notice of the Government of Bengal pointing out that the security of Cachar frontier was largely dependent upon the good relationship with the tribals and urged the Government to put a stop to the practice of elephant Kheda in Cachar border. A great controversy arose. The Commissioners of Dacca and Chittagong disfavoured the idea of the abolition of Kheda system. But the Government of India concurred with the views of the Superintendent of Cachar to conciliate the Lushais and the Governor General-in-Council passed an order for the abolition of the Kheda system.

Thus the policy of Conciliation triumphed over all other considerations. Unlike the early phase when the authorities of the Fortwilliam frequently wavered by the contradictory reports now they became determined to follow the established policy.

LUSHAIS OF CACHAR FRONTIER.

Lister's expedition opened up the Lushai country at
the same time it gave the Kukies of Cachar frontier an insight regarding the powers of the 'Sahibs'. They began to think that the powerful 'Sahibs' had become the sovereign of Cachar in place of the old native kings and the Lushais would not dare to offend the Kukies if the English protected them. This consideration made a considerable headway in strengthening the Anglo-kukie relationship. The Kukie refugees driven out by the Lushai Chiefs easily secured the plots for settlement in the Cachar borders and because of their British citizenship they were granted protection by the Government of Bengal. The Kukies living in the floating colonies were favourites of the local administrators of Silchar. The notable Kukie Chiefs on the other hand did their best to help the English in their times of need.

Abortive Attempt at Conciliation with Sukpilal, The Lushai Chief.

By 1840 the Lushais of the Lalul dynasty became the masters of the Lushai Hills driving out the Kukies and in the beginning of the second half of the nineteenth century Sukpilal, the most illustrious member of that family emerged as a powerful personality in the hills south of Cachar. Within a few years of the Lister's Expedition he committed raids upon the Hill Tripura and on Adampur, a village in south Sylhet. At Adampur the Lushais committed gruesome murders and carried off several captives who were British subjects. In this raid Sukpilal was instigated and assisted by Gnoor Shailon, a Pytoo Chief, the son
of Lalchukla and also by Rangbhoom and Lal Hoolun. Other relatives of Sukpilal. Sukpilal was very clever and masked his offence skillfully. The local officers of Sylhet also failed to detect the real culprit. Sukpilal's complicity in this raid remained untraced to the Cachar authorities till 1864.

After the discovery of the real culprit, the Deputy Commissioner, Cachar, sent messengers to Sukpilal to return the Adampur captives. This he refused on the ground that the Kukie Chief of Cachar frontier, Vonpilen, had murdered his men and looted the property of his subjects. He also informed the Deputy Commissioner that unless justice was done within six months he himself would commence the hostilities.

The boastful bragging of Sukpilal was resented by the local officers of the Government of Bengal but at the same time they took necessary precautions to keep the borders free from the trouble. Stewart informed the Commissioner of Dacca of the existing illfeelings between the Lushais and the Cachar Kukies, and said that in case of impending hostility Mullah and Vagnoilen would join Sukpilal. The English came to know of the power and position of Sukphilal and his threats alarmed the authorities of the Fortwilliam. The Government of Bengal requested the Inspector General of Police, Lower Provinces, to chalk out a plan to deal effectively with Sukpilal. The authorities of Calcutta were in a mood to send an expedition of Lister's model immediately. But Stewart pointed out that the idea of sending an expedition should be dispensed with because the month of
April was not a suitable month for an expedition in the Lushai Hills, secondly, Sukpilal being a powerful Chief, a large scale military operations would become necessary to subjugate him. The authorities of the Fort William concurred with the views of the Deputy Commissioner and ordered the Inspector General of Police, Lower Provinces, to put a stop to his preparations against Sukpilal.

THE EMBASSY OF VAGNOILEN.

Stewart was a very intelligent frontier officer and an expert in tribal negotiations. He had more faith in diplomacy than in demonstration of force. He endeavoured to enter deep into the Lushai problem and attempted to study the grievances of the Lushai Chiefs including Sukpilal. A large number of British interpreters were sent to each and every Chief of the Lushai Hills. The Chiefs responded to the good will of the Deputy Commissioner. On April 2, 1866 the Lushai Chief Vagnoilen, residing on the south of Manipur, came to meet Stewart at his residence at Silchar. Vagnoilen put the question to Stewart whether or not he had made any such demand that Vagnoilen and his master Mulla were to pay tribute to the Deputy Commissioner, Cachar. He further pointed out that Mulla had already demanded from him an amount to be paid off to the English. Stewart could not give a correct reply to the question because he already had communicated the demand to Mulla. Any way, shrewd Stewart replied that the tribute was to be paid by
his master and not by him, and Mulla could not extort anything from him in this connexion. It is indeed very difficult to understand on what basis Stewart demanded tribute from Mulla, an independent Lushai Chief. Possibly he realised his mistake later-on and attempted to correct it by giving Vagnoilen the immunity from the tribute. Stewart did his best to entertain the Lushai delegation and they were accorded a cordial sendoff.

In the history of Anglo-Lushai relationship the embassy of Vagnoilen occupies an important place because this was the first of its kind. Formerly, the Lushai delegates met the officers of Silchar with a different motive. But the embassy of Vagnoilen was a direct response of an independent Chief to the offer of goodwill of the British Government. Mr. C.T. Buckland, the Commissioner of Dacca, admitted that the embassy indicated certain amount of good feelings on the part of the Lushais. The Deputy Commissioner, Cachar, also realised this.

**Stewart and the FortWilliam.**

But the suspicious officers of the Government of Bengal at first did not attach much importance to the Stewart Vagnoilen meeting and enquired of the Deputy Commissioner whether Vagnoilen was a spy of Sukpilal, who had come to gather information regarding the possible Lushai expedition. Stewart dispelled the fears of the superior officers by his negative reply. Moreover he pointed out that in any case it would be unwise to antagonise the Chief, Mullah. He further made it clear to the authorities
of the Fortwilliam that there was sufficient justification
of the existing ill feelings between the Cachar Kukies and
the Lushais of Sukpilal's clan. The Cachar Lushai villages
originally belonged to the mother of Sukpilal. In any future
advance against Sukpilal the Lushais would form a league against
the English.

MULLAH'S REPRESENTATION TO STEWART.

In the meantime the Cachar Lushai Chief Munjihow
communicated to the Deputy Commissioner that he would initiate
negotiations with the recalcitrant Chief Sukpilal. In his
venture he needed financial assistance to the core of ten
thousand rupees. The influence and integrity of Munjihow was
open and above board and the Government of Bengal readily agreed
to his proposal. When the arrangements with Munjihow was a foot
two Lushai deputations reached Silchar one from Mullah and the
other from Sukpilal. The Mullah party expressed their willing-
ness to remain friendly with the English at all cost. The
Deputy Commissioner was very pleased with the delegation and
a reward of rupees five hundred was presented to the Mullah
Party. Clever Stewart, tactfully following the policy of
Bismarck, attempted to isolate Sukpilal from a powerful neighbour.
The present Chief of Mullah was a young lad and because of his
minor age he had not absolutely command over his powerful
subordinates. Stewart took the advantage of this political
weakness and attempted to bolster up the guardianless young Chief.
But this was a difficult task because Mullah bore enmity against the English. Only a few years ago Lister launched a massive offensive against his father. But Stewart, from the very beginning of his assumption of the charge of the Deputy Commissioner, realised the merit of winning over the minor Chief, did his best in this direction and ultimately succeeded. The assurance given by the Mullah party at Silchar illustrated the success of the diplomacy of Stewart.

**The Arrival of Sukpilal's Delegation at Silchar.**

Hardly the Mullah party had crossed the Cachar borders on December 24, 1866, the delegates from Sukpilal headed by his 'Mantry' reached Silchar and met Stewart officially. On enquiry, the Delegation tried to evade the question of the Adampur captives detained by Sukpilal. Finally they disclosed that their master was a bit afraid that the English might hold him responsible for the death, marriage, missing or sale of the captives. But Stewart assured that Sukpilal need not be afraid because the 'Sirkar' would duly consider the case of dead and married captives. In case, the married captives declined to come back, they would be allowed to stay with their husbands. The evasion and duplicity of the crafty minister of Sukpilal made Stewart angry and he refused to accept the presents of Sukpilal and informed the leader of the Delegation that the 'Sirkar' was displeased with his master. Unlike Mullah Party this party was not rewarded.
Although Stewart was very firm in his dealings with the Delegation he entertained a hope that Sukpilal would soon be prevailed upon by the embassy of Munjihow and he informed the Government of Bengal to that effect. Sukpilal being the very important Chief of the Lalul dynasty, the Deputy Commissioner was disinclined to show any powerful demonstration against him because that would counteract the policy of Conciliation. He considered it better to win him over through diplomacy.

**THE LUSHAIS AND THE CHITTAGONG AUTHORITIES.**

The local authorities of Chittagong faced many difficulties in running the administration of the hill tracts covering a large part of the territory east of Chittagong. Murderous raids were supposed to be committed by the Lushais who inhabited the hills to the still further east, north east and south east, and who were generally known by the common name 'Kukie'

By a special enactment, Act XXII of 1960, the administration of the Hill Tracts was separated and brought under the control of a Superintendent. In June 1860 Captain Magrath of the Madras Artillery was appointed the first Superintendent. His headquarters were at first at Burkal and next at Kasalong. In December 1860 and January 1861, he was chiefly engaged in making an arrangement for the expedition into the hills against the Lushai Chief, Rutton Poea, which was headed by Captain Raban. The country of Rutton Poea was in the vicinity of the north east
of Burkhal. Rutton Poea submitted at once without resistance. From May to July 1961 measures for Conciliation were attempted by Magnath but without success. He was succeeded by Captain Graham in September 1861. Within few days of taking his charge, Ruttonpoea and his subordinate chiefs Loola, Liengmoor, Banpoye and Moora submitted and negotiations were afoot for the submission of the Howlong and Syloo Chiefs. The boundary created by the Act XXII of 1860 for new jurisdiction very often confused the local officers. It is needless to point out how much difficulty it created for the uneducated wild tribes. The tracts of country described in the Schedule annexed to Act XXII of 1860 were formerly known as the 'Kansa Mahal' (cotton estate) and the inhabitants were called 'Joomaas'. These joomaas consisted of Muga and other cognates tribes, mixed with them were the Chakmas (a large number of them are still the resident of the Lungle subdivision of Mizo Hills district), Reangs, Bonjoos (a warlike tribe greatly helped Captain Raban in his mission against the Rutton poea), Moorongs, Tipperahs further to the east are the Khoomes, Shindus, Syloos, Ruttonpoea, Howlong and Lackar, known under the general name of Kukies.

BRITISH ALLY RUTTON POEA.

Rutton Poea's clan although numerically weaker was the richest of all because his country was more favourably situated for trade with the people from the plains. Submission of Rutton Poea and his friendly gestures produced a good effect
on the Anglo-Lushai relationship.

Rutton Poea was the head of Thanloa clan of the Lushais; he played the same role on a magnified scale in the Chittagong frontier as Munjihow did in the Cachar border. His friendship indeed paid a good dividend and Captain Lewin, the Superintendent Chittagong Hill Tracts, utilised his services to make an intensive study of the Lushai problem.

**SPECIAL ADVANTAGES OF CHITTAGONG FRONTIER.**

Unlike Cachar, the problem of Chittagong frontier was not so complicated. The Hill Tracts of Chittagong, though a hilly region, consisted of the lower ridges of the western points of the Lushai Hills. The Cachar frontier was not navigable whereas the Chittagong frontier was navigable to a great extent by the rivers like Karnafuli and Kolodyne. Moreover, rainfall in Chittagong is less than that in Cachar which registers one of the heaviest in the world.

Chittagong came under the British Administration in 1760 and since then a sound system of administration developed there. Besides, Chittagong was the strong army base of the English. Because of these natural and political advantages the local officers of Chittagong could effectively control the tribes beyond their adjudicated frontier.

**LEWIN AND THE LUSHAIS.**

In pursuance of the Policy of Conciliation adopted by the Government of Bengal the local officers of Chittagong
endeavoured their best to conciliate the Lushais of Chittagong border. The pioneer in this respect was Levin, a very efficient frontier officer of high calibre. He formulated the Lushai Policy in these words:-

"Let us not govern these hills for ourselves, but administer the country for the well-being and happiness of the people dwelling therein. What is wanted here is not measure but a man".

The above idea was the guiding principle of Levin. Because of his broad approach and catholicity of mind he was loved by the Lushais and on the other hand he asserted a very powerful influence upon the tribals of the Chittagong frontier. He had a passion for the development of the wild children of the hills and with a missionary zeal he devoted his life for them. In short, he was the first British officer who could penetrate into the hearts of the Lushais.

LEWIN'S PROPOSAL FOR AN ANNUAL FAIR AT KASALONG TO INFLUENCE THE LUSHAI CHIEFS.

On September 2, 1868 Levin wrote a letter to the Commissioner of Chittagong, Ulich Brown, that an annual 'Mela' (fair) should be held at Kasalong for a closer contact with the Lushais. He, however, pointed out that this 'Mela' would not help the commercial intercourse. The object of the 'Mela' was primarily political to bring about more intimate and friendly relations which had hitherto been beyond the direct influence of the English. Levin said that a display of certain amount of military
force would impress the Lushais about the powers of the Government. He stated that the cordial reception given to their Chiefs, and the sports, amusements and festivities would supplant the place of the undignified money gifts. In short, this annual assemblage of the Lushai Chiefs within the British territory on a festive occasion would serve the purpose of strengthening the policy of Conciliation.

The Government of Bengal readily agreed to the proposal of Lewin and actively helped to make the Kasalong fair attractive. From this time onward the Kasalong fair played a vital role in the Anglo-Lushai relationship.

**AN OMINOUS SIGN : KANAI SINGH.**

It is evident that the British Government being convinced of its utility, doggedly followed the policy of Conciliation as the best possible measure for the security of the North East frontier. The affairs in Tripura were less troublesome and the co-operation of the Raja of Tripura became an established fact. The local authorities of Chittagong under the stewardship of Levin took keen interest in the Lushai affairs. Levin with a missionary zeal worked for the welfare of the Lushais. In Cachar, however, the border affairs were not so smooth, the local authorities did their best to establish a friendly relationship with the Lushai Chiefs. Some Chiefs responded to the call but Sukpilal, the great Syloo Chief of considerable influence living in the close proximity of the
Cachar frontier, could not be so easily induced. The sad memory of Lalchukla haunted him and he could not fully trust the English. He began his political bargain. The Embassy of Munjihow failed miserably. The law and order situation beyond Cachar frontier further took a very dangerous turn because of the troublesome succession of Manipur throne. Kanai Singh, a 'Manipur Rainputra' (Prince) who had taken refuge among the tribals of Cachar border, made an attempt to seize the throne of Manipur by force. The local authorities of Cachar suspected that Sukpilal aided Kanai Singh. During the cold season of 1869 a series of daring raids were committed on Cachar and Sylhet borders by the Lushais. It was widely believed by the local officers that Sukpilal had a hand in those raids. He was an accomplice of Kanai Singh's gang and attempted to divert the attention of the British Government from Manipur to the Sylhet frontier.

When the situation was thus surcharged with suspicion and fear Kanai Singh and Sukpilal's men jointly raided the Tea Estate of Monierkhal at Cachar in January 1869. Kanai Singh decamped with money and the Lushais with the captives. The emergence of Kanai Singh and his intrigue with the Lushai Chief worsened the Anglo-Lushai relationship. The authorities of the Fortwilliam got alarmed. The ambition of Kanai Singh cast a dark shadow upon the frontier of Cachar and the hitherto uninterrupted policy of Conciliation suffered a temporary
setback. The Government began to ponder over to devise means to meet the changing situation.

The Munierkhal raid affected the security of the tea plantation of Surma Valley and it seriously jeopardised the interest of the European tea planters. The Government had obviously the obligation to protect the tea Industry. This raid was not merely an offshoot of the law and order problem of Cachar but it affected the growing economy of the area. This raid was followed by other raids in quick succession to aggravate the situation. The tea merchants and the English newspapers of Calcutta raised such a hue and cry over this issue that the Government was at the cross roads as to the strict adherence to the policy of conciliation at all costs. After all, the political principle is never a dogma. The basis of Conciliation was the selection of some influential Chiefs living in the immediate neighbourhood of the British frontier, commanding the routes of entrance. Those Chiefs were pacified with various concessions, like presents and allowance in order to prevent incursions. But when it was found that simple friendly gestures failed to convert a notable chief, whose friendship was considered to be highly desirable, and when it was also disclosed that Sukpilal was going actively against the British interests, the authorities of the FortWilliam decided to modify the cherished policy.
Notes on Chapter II.

B.J.P. is the abbreviation of the Government of Bengal, Judicial Proceedings.

I.F.Pol.A is the abbreviation of the Government of India, Foreign Department, Political Proceedings (A).


4. B.J.P. February 27, 1880. No. 36. OP. Cit.

5-7. B.J.P. April 12, 1855. No. 95. Mr. Verner, the Superintendent, Cachar, to the Secretary, Government of Bengal.

8. B.J.P. April 12, 1855. No. 97. Mr. Grey, the Secretary, Govt. of Bengal to the Secretary, Military Department Govt. of India.

9-10. B.J.P. April 12, 1855. No. 97. Superintendent, Cachar, to the Secretary, Government of Bengal.

10A. I.F.Pol. A. March 18, 1853. No. 107. Political Agent, Manipur, to the Secretary, Government of India, Foreign Department.

11. B.J.P. July 5, 1855. No. 245. Political Agent, Manipur, to the Secretary, Govt. of India, Foreign Department. See also India, Foreign Department, Political Proceedings 18th March 1853, No. 107. Political Agent, Manipur, to the Secretary, Foreign Department.

On January 1853 the Lushais invaded Kainai, near Kala Naga thus endangering the security of the Manipur-Cachar Road. Captain McClouch, the Political Agent of Manipur took a serious note of it. - I.F.Political 18th March 1853. No. 107.


15. "Manjihow, ....... was the Kukle raja who in 1857 rendered us much assistance when the Chittagong mutineers entered the district. He acted against them with his own followers in concert with us, succeeded in taking a great number of Prisoners, and recovering a large sum of money, part of the plundered treasury of Chittagong and was rewarded by the presents amounting to Rs. 5000 in all, and the Mutiny medal."

B.J.P. January 1867. No. 79. Deputy Commissioner, Cachar, to the Commissioner Dacca.


17. B.J.P. April 1862. No. 282. Extract from the proceedings of the Govt. of India, in the Home Department (No. 1777 under the date 7th April 1862) "Observations - The Governor General-in-Council sees no objection to throwing open the forests to private parties for the purpose of catching elephants.......

B.J.P. March 1861 No. 283. Lt. Colonel H.W. Norman, Secretary to the Govt. of India, Military Department to the Officiating Commissary General; letter dated 22.3.1862.


20. See the Appendix B. Sukpilal is the incorrect transliteration of the Lushai word 'Suk Poe Lal' or 'Chuk Poe Lal'. Sukpilal was the leader of the Western Lushai Clan till his death.


24. B.J.P. April 1866. No. 104. Deputy Commissioner, Cachar to the Commissioner, Dacca. Also see India, Foreign Department, Political A. March 1869. No. 319 A. Appendix A. p.15 Capt. R.Stewart to the Commissioner, Dacca. (May 2, 1866).

26-27. B.J.P. June 1866. No. 79. Commissioner, Dacca to the Secretary, Govt. of Bengal. After the death of Mulla (the Chief against whom Lister headed the Expedition) according to the Lushai custom his minor son Vanpilal succeeded his estate. Vagnoilen was the subordinate chief to the Raja of Mulla.

28. "The deputation does not appear to have been of any great importance, but it indicated certain amount of good feelings". B.J.P. June 1866. No. 79. Supra.

29-30. Ibid.

31. B.J.P. June 1866. No. 81. Captain Stewart to the Commissioner, Dacca.


33. B.J.P. January 1867. No. 80. A. Mackenzie, Under Secretary, Government of Bengal to the Commissioner, Dacca. Lieutnant Governor sanctioned Rs. 10000.00 to be given to Minjihov but warned Major Stewart not to take any European Officer beyond the Cachar border.

34-36. B.J.P. January 1867. No. 82. Deputy Commissioner, Cachar, to the Commissioner, Dacca. Stewart made an arrangement in 1864 that there shall be mutual exchange of presents between the 'Sirkar' and the Chiefs for fostering good relationship. The Chief would present in kind (elephant teeth etc.) and the 'Sirkar' rupees five hundred (Rs. 500.00) in cash.

37. B.J.P. April 1862. No. 226. Annual Report of Administration, Commissioner, Chittagong to the Secretary, Govt. of Bengal.


41. Ellwin V. - "North East Frontier of India" Introduction. pp.XXXXI.

42. B.J.P. November 1868. No. 71. Captain T.A. Lewin to Lord Ulich Brown, the Commissioner, Chittagong.

43. B.J.P. November 1868. No. 74. Secretary, Government of Bengal, to the Commissioner, Chittagong.


46. "The Plantation in Cachar seems to have been more successful, and the system has been put on a better footing than anywhere else, and it will be a subject of very great regret if this enterprise is seriously checked."

B.J.P. November, 1871. No. 207. Minute of Sir G.Campbell, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal.*

See also India, Foreign Department, Political A. August 1871. No. 492. (From Bengal Government, letter No. 2368, 22. 5. 71. Enclosure No. 1. Minute of G.Campbell pp. 3-6.)