



Political History of Lushai Hills since the Pre-Colonial Era

R. Vanlalmangaihsanga*

Abstract

Mizo tribes had never been placed under the rule of any governing body during the pre-colonial era. However, raids upon plain areas and capturing of slaves compelled the British Government to carry out the First Lushai Expedition (1871-72) in the hope of subduing the barbaric Mizo chiefs. This Expedition tamed the Mizo chief to a certain extent, however, the Mizo chiefs went back to their old ways and started invading their neighboring lands which led to the second expedition known as Chin-Lushai Expedition in 1889 which subsequently led to British colonization of the Lushai Hills. Chin-Lushai Expedition occurred in 1889-1890 during which the British colonized the whole of Chin Hills and Lushai Hills. British colonized the Lushai Hills for almost 40 years and Lushai Hills remain in India after independence. The issue of whether or not the Mizos joined the Indian Union in their own accord is still an ongoing debate even in the present days.

Keywords: *Mizo Tribes, British Colonization, Chiefs, Expedition, Tribal Area.*

There are various theoretical concepts on the origin of the Mizo Tribes. Most of the Mizo historians believed that the Mizo tribes originated from 'Chhinlung'. However, the precise origin of 'Chhinlung' cannot be determined although southern part of China has been the most accepted concept (Sangkima, 2004). It was believed that Mizo tribes entered Chin Hills during the 14th century and settled there till the late 16th century. From then on, they spread out all over Mizoram, Chittagong, Manipur, Assam and Tripura during which it was believed that most of the Mizo Tribes settled in the Lushai Hills (present Mizoram) during the 17th century. Chieftainship was believed to be first introduced among in the Mizo tribes during the period of 1600-1650 AD (Lalthangliana, 2009: 58). They settled in different villages under a village chief who had the sole power in all the affairs of the village. However, after the British colonization, the roles of the village chiefs as well as the administration were profoundly reformed and most of the political development occurred during the Post-colonization era.

* PhD Scholar, Department of Political Science, Mizoram University, Aizawl - 796 004, Mizoram. Email: hmangaihsangaroyte@gmail.com

Britisher and Mizos

The era of British colonization of the Mizos was, for the most part, acknowledged from the tales that were passed on through generations. It was believed that rather than commercial interest, the British entered Mizoram because Mizo chiefs used to raid their settlement in the plain areas. This study of their colonization can be credited to the proficient documentation of the British.

The first incidence of combat of the Mizo with their neighboring land was on September 1826, the territory which was under British rule. One Mizo village chief, Buangtheuva (documented by the British as “Bungteya”) along with his men travelled along the banks of Simlai river which was about 10 miles south of Tlawng lui (Dhaleshwar), and attacked the lumbers of Sylhet forest. They killed many people and even took home several slaves. This incident earned the Mizo a reputation of being a brutish and savage tribe, even in the ears of the British people (Zorema, 2018).

After this event, on the night of 16th April, 1844 Paihte chief Lalsuthlaha along with his 200 fighters attacked Kochabari in Manipur where they killed 29 people, brought home the heads of 20 people whom they had beheaded and captured six slaves from their attack. During this period, Kochabari was under the colonization of the British, so the Sylhet Light Infantry sent four companies along with Captain Blackwood to capture chief Lalsuthlaha (McCall, 1949: 40). On 1st December, 1844 the companies started their journey from Kailasahar, Tripura and reached the town of Lalsuthlaha on 9th December, 1844. After the British told him that he would be pardoned, Lalsuthlaha surrendered in the hands of the British Army. On 25th December, 1844 he was taken into custody at Silchar and instead of being granted pardon, he was sentenced to a lifetime of imprisonment. In 1847, the descendants of Lalsuthlaha attacked Sylhet where they beheaded eight people and again on 8th November, 1849 they attacked the British colonized town of Bhowgoor and burnt down several villages (Lalhruaitluanga, 2008).

On November 6th-8th, 1849 Sentlang chief Ngura and his men raided and burnt down three villages of Thado and killed several people. Colonel Frederick Lister, who at the time was a political agent in Khasi Land and was also a Sylhet Light Infantry Commandant, was sent from Cachar to capture these transgressors. On 4th January 1850, the troops burnt down Ngura’s village and liberated as many as 400 slaves. Thereafter, peace was maintained for quite some time throughout the neighboring regions of Cachar-Sylhet (Chatterjee, 1985).

Subsequently, the British changed their manner of conduct in dealing with the Mizo and try to win them over with kindness. Furthermore, in December 1866, the British appointed Captain Thomas Herbert Lewin (known to the Mizos as “Thangliana”) as the Deputy Commissioner of Rangamati which was a newly relocated Chittagong Headquarters near Lushai Hills. Captain Thomas Herbert Lewin was known to be acquainted and quite fond of the mannerisms and cultures of the Mizo and his appointment was done to further strengthen the relationship between the British and Mizo. As expected, Captain Thomas Herbert Lewin gave his all for the welfare of the Mizos and even went to marry a Mizo girl

named Dari. His marriage reached the eyes and ears of the British Government much to their dismay and on 1st December 1873, he accompanied some of the Mizo chiefs to Calcutta, never to set foot in Mizoram ever again (Lalhruaitluanga, 2013). During his stay in Chittagong, he even made a book about the culture and languages of not only the Mizos but also the other tribes in the vicinity.

The British tried to remain in good terms with Mizo village chiefs as much as they could, but even so, several chiefs continued to invade and raid other villages. During 1868-1869, there were reports of several invasions and attacks of Mizo around Cachar-Sylhet. At the end of 1868, the unison of a few Mizo chiefs invaded the Naga tribes residing in Manipur. On 10th January 1869, the Mizos led by chief Lalruma invaded Norwanbund and other Mizo chiefs also raided Moniarkhal on 14th January. Kala Naga Fort was again attacked in February 1869, and many Manipuri officers and soldiers working under the British Government were killed in this incident (Lalhruaitluanga, 2008).

In light of the above events, the British decided to penalize the Mizo Chiefs. On 12th February 1869, the British troops were sent to carry out the expedition on the Lushai Hills (Lalthanliana, 2000: 21-22). The first troop headed by Mr. Barker Deputy Inspector General started their journey from Cachar, travelling along the banks of Tuirial (Sonai) river targeting the ruthless chief Suakpuilala. The second group headed by General Nuthall will travel north along the banks of Tlawng Lui, passing through Guturmukh and Bepari Bazar, seizing as many as Mizo chiefs throughout their journey. However, these groups returned unsuccessful and fruitless by the end of March 1869 (Woodthorpe, 1873: 25-27). Their failure was mainly due to the lack of proper knowledge of the land and unavailability of proper routes.

Since the British were unable to carry out a proper expedition, they instigated on taking an alternative direction and proposed signing a treaty with the Mizo chiefs to tame them and prevent further outrage. The treaty was proposed by FB Simpson; Commissioner of Dacca Division, Lord Urlick Browne; Commissioner of Chittagong Division and Sir William Grey; Lieutenant Governor. On 10th December 1869, John Ware Edgar; Deputy Commissioner of Cachar and Major McDonald; Dost Muhamed Inspector of Police along with many soldiers set out towards Lushai Hills to sign this treaty with the Mizo chiefs. The British signed this treaty with the infamous and ruthless Mizo chief Suakpuilala who had invaded the British several times in the past (Lalthanliana, 2009). However, it was soon realized that this treaty did not have much effect on the opinion of the other Mizo chief.

By the end of the year 1870 till 1871, the Mizo chiefs continuously and violently attacked Chittagong, Cachar, Tripura, Sylhet and Manipur. It was recorded that as many as 20 invasions happened during this period. Among these invasions by the Mizo chiefs, the one which seemed to be the most significant and which impacted the lives and future of the Mizos was the raid of Katlichhera and Alexandrapur by Sailam chief Bengkhuaia. Alexandrapur tea-owner James Winchester was killed and his daughter from his Meitei wife named Maria (Lalhruaitluanga, 2008), Mary Winchester was taken as captive. This led the British authority

to send a rescue troop which later goes down in history as the renowned Lushai Expedition of 1871- 72.

First Lushai Expedition (1871-1872)

On 1st November 1871, the British Army invaded Lushai Hills from two directions, namely- Cachar Column and Chittagong Column. Cachar Column was under the command of General Bouchier. The following three battalions: 22nd Punjab Native Infantry commanded by Captain Blackwood, 42nd Assam Light Infantry commanded by Colonel Rattray and 44th Assam Light Infantry commanded by Colonel Hicks- contributed 500 soldiers each totalling to a number of 1500 soldiers. In addition, 100 policemen commanded by Mr. Daly, half of the Peshawar mountain battery of artillery (500 people), 500 soldiers from the Manipuri Meitei Lords, 2764 coolie corps and accompanied by 178 elephants. With 2600 gunmen, 178 elephants, 2764 coolie and well-equipped ammunitions, they began to invade the Lushai hills from Cachar Column. Chittagong Column was under the commandment of General Brownlow and Captain T.H. Lewin, a Political Officer in Chittagong hill tract, was appointed to be his accomplice. They were arranged to make an entry from Demagiri. The soldiers were recruited from different battalions namely- the 2nd Gurkha, 4th Gurkha, 27 Punjab Light Infantry and half of the mountain battery of artillery. The number of Gunmen and ammunitions were equal to those from the Cachar side (Reid, 1976).

The British knew very well the desolation and meagerness of the Lushai Hills and they were not eager to settle in it. The British rarely colonized places that were not beneficial for them both economically and financially. Along the meadows of the Lushai Hills, the lands were used by the Mizo for cultivating and harvesting. However, as the British continued to expand their tea business, they began breaching the lands which the Mizo were using for hunting and cultivation. The Mizo felt that the British were trespassing and started invading them. Moreover, the British had access to certain armamentariums that could be stolen and harnessed by the Mizos as instruments for harvesting causing many problems for the British and pestering their workers. The British were also continuously trying to resolve this conflict but when the Mizo chiefs captured one of their own, Mary Winchester, the British seized this as an opportunity to subdue the violent Mizo chiefs by setting out into Lushai Hills with this much legion of well-equipped soldiers. Consequently, the British left the Lushai Hills without colonizing. This event of the First Lushai Expedition taught the Mizo chiefs how powerful the British were as compared to them and for about ten years, the Mizos did not invade anyone and peace was maintained throughout the land.

However, in 1883, trouble began to arise. In 1888, Lieutenant John Stewart along with his men who were having a survey 12 miles North of Rangamati, was invaded by Pawi chief Hausata killing Stewart and two of his men (Zorema, 2018). This event greatly angered the British. On 13th December 1888, a troubling incident occurred on the neighboring land of Tlabung (Demagiri) where Pakinna Rani and 21 of her village people were killed, 13 people were beheaded and 15 people were taken as slaves. This act of brutality was caused by Suakpuilala's son, Kalkhama and this event was claimed to be the reason for the Second Lushai Expedition (Lalthlengliana, 2007: 22).

The British called it 'The Expedition 1889' and began on January 1889, under the commandment of Colonel F.V.C. Tregar with a total of 1,150 soldiers. Captain J. Shakespeare was an Intelligence Officer and accompanied by many British officers and they used Demagiri as their base. They reached Lunglei without any obstacles and immediately began their construction of a fort. On 4th March, they visited Hausata's village. However, he had passed away and when they raided his grave they found the pistol of Lieutenant Stewart alongside his corpse. On completing the construction of their fort, the British left behind one British Officer and 212 Frontier Police whereas the rest returned (Raid, 1942).

The British assumed to occupy the South Lushai Hills. They decided that it was best to also colonize the two hills- Chin Hills and Lushai Hills which were situated between upper Burma and Chittagong. Immense preparations were undertaken and it was named Chin-Lushai Expedition 1889-90. The planned for the commencement of this expedition was on 5th September 1889 (Raid, 1942). Similar to the First Lushai Expedition, the British put in a lot of labour and again entered the Lushai Hills from Cachar and Chittagong. They entered Chin Hills through South Chin Hills and North Chin Hills (Lalthangliana, 2009).

In the Chin-Lushai Expedition 1889-90, the number of armed soldiers at work was 8121 with the addition of certain numbers of coolie corps. Judging from the number of ammunitions and armed soldiers employed during this expedition, it can be concluded that this was more than an Expedition. During the Lushai Hills Expedition 1871-1872 and Chin-Lushai Hills Expedition 1889-1890, the amount of manpower used, their preparation and executions clearly showed that they were more than just Expeditions. They were simply naming these invasions as 'Expeditions' to triumph in diplomacy in the eyes of the world and to remain guilt-free (Doungel, 2017). In the Chin-Lushai Expedition 1889-1890, the British took over the Lushai Hills on March 1890. After the surrender of the Mizo chiefs, the British initiated the process of colonization. The British completely took over Chin Hills in 1895. The rules and legislatures for the administration of the Chin Hills and its people, "Chin Hills Regulation 1896" were issued which concluded the British colonization of the Chin Hills (Chatterjee, 1985).

There is another concept regarding the reason behind the colonization of Chin Hills and Lushai Hills by the British. According to the author L.Keivom, these poverty-stricken regions were colonized by the British mainly to prevent further widening of the French colony. During this period, the French were colonizing the regions of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam which were then known as Indo-China region. The British who were afraid the French might expand their colonization into the North-Eastern region through Burma started to settle in the Chin and Lushai Hills. As mentioned earlier, the main objective behind the broadening of the British colonization was solely to seek benefit in trading and marketing. Whether the British colonized the Lushai Hills to execute the rule of the tyrant chiefs or to cease the expansion of French colony is a question whose answer is still unknown.

Lushai Hills came under the British Rule

Lushai Hills was divided into North Lushai Hills and South Lushai Hills. Aizawl was used as the Headquarters for North Lushai Hills. On 3rd July 1890, it was taken under Assam Government and Mr. Herbert Brown was appointed as the Political Officer who will oversee all the affairs. South Lushai Hills was placed under the Bengal Government from 1st April 1891 and Mr. Stewart Murray was appointed as the first Superintendent. On 1st April 1898, British dissolved the South Lushai Hills, coalesce it with North Lushai Hills as a single providence and placed it under the administration of Chief Commissioner Province (Assam). Major John Shakespeare was appointed as the first Superintendent of Lushai Hills (Raid, 1942).

Before the British united the Lushai Hills, the matter of whether or not the Chin Hills and Lushai Hills should be put under one administration since the people belonged to the same ethnic stock was taken up for discussion. On 29th January 1892, seven British Officials at Fort William Calcutta gathered to discuss this issue which came to be known as “Chin-Lushai Conference 1892”. However, the idea of putting the Chin Hills and Lushai Hills under one administration was opposed, and South Lushai Hills and North Lushai Hills were subsequently merged (Lalthanliana, 2000: 22-23). Representatives from Chin and Lushai Hills were not invited in this conference, if there were representatives from the two hills, maybe, the future of the *Zo* people settled in these areas will surely be different.

British Administration in Lushai Hills

Before the British colonized Lushai Hills, Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation 1873 also known as Inner Line Regulation/ Inner Line Permit (ILP) was exercised for the preservation and welfare of several tribes residing in North Eastern regions of India. When the British started colonizing Lushai Hills ‘The Chin Hills Regulation 1896’ was used for administrative convenience. Since then, in certain North East regions where Inner Line Permit was not in effect, such as the Lushai Hills, Schedule District Act of 1874 was introduced. Schedule District mainly referred to the underdeveloped and underprivileged Districts which cannot be given the same administration as other districts (Doungel, 2015). As mentioned earlier, during the implementation of the Schedule District Act 1874, the Lushai Hills was under the administration of Chief Commissioner Province (Assam).

During the composition of Government of India Act, 1919, nine hilly districts where the Scheduled District Act of 1874 was implemented were put in the list of ‘Backward Tract’ which also included the Lushai Hills. From 28th August 1930, Inner Line Regulation was implemented in Lushai Hills and when the Government of India Act, 1935 was made, the districts which were included in the ‘Backward Tract’ were divided into Excluded and Partially Excluded Area. Excluded Areas means those districts which are excluded from the basic Government rules and regulations or those districts where the Provincial or Central constitutions cannot be implemented and are under the independent rule of a Governor. Partially Excluded Areas are under the governance of the Provincial or Central Government and they also have representatives in the Provincial Legislatures. Since they are a little advanced than Excluded Areas, certain Government rules can be implemented in these areas.

However, the providential rules cannot be implemented in the Excluded Areas without the permission of the Governor. Also, the Governor can exercise discretionary power (without taking advice from the province government) as per needed (Doungel, 2015).

As stated in Government of India Act of 1935, Section 311(1), the North-Eastern region of India (erstwhile undivided Assam) and the home of Baluchistan hilly people (Tribal Areas) was defined as “areas along the frontiers of India or in Baluchistan which are not part of British India or of Burma or any Indian State or of any foreign state”. According to the above statement, during the commencement of the Government of India Act 1935, Lushai Hills (now Mizoram) was neither a part of India nor Burma (Hansaria, 1983).

Political Activities under the British Regime in Lushai Hills

Major J. Shakespear who was the first Lushai Hills Superintendents was also an expert in surveying lands. He fixed land boundaries of the various Mizo chief and between 1901-1902, he proposed the “Circle Administration” which divided the Lushai Hills into 18 Circles. Aizawl Subdivision had 12 Circles while Lunglei Subdivision had six and he also placed “Circle Interpreter” in each Circle (Raid, 1942). This “Circle Administration” was like a foreign concept to the Mizo people. Being under the British rule introduced the Mizo to several new concepts and it helped broaden their mind and outlook in many ways. This system was carried out until 1947.

Under British rule, the Mizo people were prohibited to conduct or take part in any political activities. However, the arrival of the Christian Missionaries on 11th January 1894, and establishment of a proper school on 28th February 1898, (Sangkima, 2004) brought immense change and progress in the mind of the Mizos. During the First and Second World War, many Mizo men volunteered in the British Army. Their experiences abroad gave them a feeling of envy and competitiveness and they gained immense knowledge regarding political affairs.

But, in 1928, several businessmen and intellect in Aizawl expressed their dissatisfaction and frustration towards the administration of the Lushai Hills and prompted joining the Assam Council. They sent delegates to Shillong who met Minister Rev. Nicholas Roy, the in-charge of Tribal affairs under Assam Government and Assam Governor Legal Advisor. At this meeting, the delegates were told that since the Lushai Hill was considered an Excluded Area no actions can be taken for their welfare unless and until they are under the Assam Legislature (Chhuanvawra, 2008). They advised them to return, gathered 1000 men who will be willing to join the Assam Legislature and only then they will make a decision. Upon returning home, a search began for Mizo people who were willing to join Assam Legislature. Just as they were about to gather enough men, Lushai Hills Superintendent Mr. N.E. Perry got a hold of this transgression and jailed the parties responsible for it. Among the captured were:

1. Varzabiaka, Trader, Kulikawn.
2. Saikunga, Trader, Kulikawn.
3. Thuama, Clerk Pension, Kulikawn.

4. Telela Kulikawn.
5. Laldela, Secretary, Kulikawn.

Laldela, the one responsible for filing the paperwork, was even exiled from Mizoram (Chaltuahkhuma, 2001: 41).

After the term of Mr. N.E Perry, Major A.G.McCall (1932-1942) was appointed the next Superintendent. The term of Mr. A.G. McCall was during the Second World War and summoned every Mizo chiefs in Aizawl. The British flag was hoisted outside the Superintendent Office where the Mizo chiefs were appealed to join the War against the Japanese. The Mizo chiefs accepted this invitation and declared war against Japan. Many Mizo men were volunteered in the Army during the Second World War to fight for the British. Each house was awarded Rs. 1/- whereas the chiefs were awarded Rs. 2/- by the British in aid of the War (Chaltuahkhuma, 2001: 45-46). Lushai Scouts was even established with Biata village as headquarter.

After Mr. A.G. McCall, a very peculiar man, Mr. Alexander Ronald Hume MacDonald (1943-47) was appointed the Superintendent of Lushai Hills. In the earlier days of his appointment, Mr. MacDonald intensely studied the nature of the Mizo people and was bothered by the ways the Mizo chiefs dominated the people as they wish. Since the British's colonization in India was coming to an end, he wanted to establish District Conference and to elect representatives of the people, which could stand on behalf of the Mizo in the central government for considering the political future of the Mizo people. Therefore, Mr. MacDonald released a statement stating that in each of the 20 Circles (2 ex-officio), one representative of the people and one representative of the chiefs were to be elected. The election for the representatives of the Aizawl 12 Circles was held on 14th January 1946, whereas in Lunglei six Circles, it was conducted on July 1946. Each of the two ex-officio members was carefully selected by Superintendent (Vanthuama, 2001: 14-17).

The political ambience during this period gave a feeling of the need to form a political party in the minds of the patriots such as Mr.R. Vanlawma, Mr. V.Rosiama, Mr. Hrangaiia and Mr. P. S. Dahrawka (Chhuanvawra, 2008). On 9th April 1946, at 2 PM, Mr. Vanlawma was sent to the office of Superintendent Mr. MacDonald to request permission to form a new political party. Unexpectedly, Mr. MacDonald readily grants their request. Initially, the name 'The Mizo Commoners Union' was given to the first Mizo political party. However, the name was perceived as excluding the Mizo chiefs, therefore, it was changed to 'The Mizo Union' which was inclusive of all the Mizo people taking in account the commoners as well as the chiefs (Vanlawma, 1989: 134-137).

In the noon of 1946, Mr. MacDonald composed a 'Draft Constitution' for the Lushai Hills. In the Draft Constitution, it was conveyed that Mizoram was to be self-governing and not be under any reign. The utmost power was to be put in the hands of the people. If this Draft Constitution was approved in the District Conference, Mr. MacDonald wanted to appeal it in the higher authority of British- India. On 7th November 1946, Mr. MacDonald planned to appeal the Draft Constitution to the representatives at the District Conference.

However, the dispute between the Mizo Union and members of the District Conference on the question of who owns the authority in Mizoram demised Mr. MacDonald's plan (Zamawia, 2007).

As the British were withdrawing from India, many British officers were apprehensive about the future of the tribes residing in Assam regions who had no similarity with the mainland Indians. British Officer Assam Governor Sir Robert Reid, former Lushai Hills Superintendent N.E Perry, former Naga Hills Deputy Commissioner Dr. John H. Hutton were very interested in implementing a semi-independent Crown Colony under the British for the people residing in the hilly areas of Assam, East Bengal and Burma. This propaganda was brought to life at around 1940 and even though these prominent British officers gave in a lot of effort, however, in 1945 when the Labour Party took over the British Government, actions were taken for immediate evacuation from India. Though the idea of forming Crown Colony was still up for discussion, however, it did not gain much attention from the British head officials.

Lushai Hills came under The Indian Union

When the British planned to left India, Cabinet Mission under the authority of Sir Clifford Cripps was sent by the British Parliament to provide guidance and suggestions in the political administration of India. On 14th March 1946, this ministry made a proposal suggesting that in the Constitution drafted by the Indian Constituent Assembly, the welfare and interest of the Tribal people should be kept in mind. The Constituent Assembly even established an Advisory Committee on Fundamental Right, Minorities and Tribal and Excluded Areas. Mr. Vallabhai Patel was appointed as the chairman of this committee. This Advisory Committee comprises of three sub-committees. Under the chairmanship of Gopinath Bordoloi, The North East Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Area Committee was formed for the welfare of the hilly people in Assam and the privilege of every citizen under democracy. The other members of this Advisory committee were- Mr. Rev. J.J.M. Nicholas Roy, Mr. Rup Nath Brahma, A.V. Thakkar and Mayang Nokcha. It was rather well-recognized as the Gopinath Bordoloi Committee (Laxmikanth, 2017: 2.1-2.3).

This Advisory Sub-committee reached Aizawl on 17th April, 1947 and stayed for three days. The arriving members were (Vanlawma, 1989: 182-183):

1. G.N. Bordoloi - Chairman.
2. J.J.M. Nicholas Roy, Assam PWD Minister - Member.
3. A.V. Thakar, Social Worker - Member.
4. R.K. Ramadhyani, ICS - Member.
5. B.N. Rau, ICS; Constitutional Adviser to the Constituent Assembly of India- Observer.
6. Tenjemaliba, Naga - Member.
7. Rupnath Brahma – Member.

Before their arrival, two of Mizo Union leaders–Khawtinkhuma and Ch. Saprawnga were appointed as the co-opted members in this Advisory Sub-Committee. However, before

the arrival of the Advisory Sub-Committee members, the Superintendent Mr. MacDonald expressed his concern regarding the fact that the two newly appointed co-opted members were not qualified enough to act as representatives for the Mizo people. He also suggested Mr. Bordoloi that the District Conference members, elected by the people themselves were more qualified to be their representatives. Only after a long argument, Mr. Bordoloi permitted to see the members of the District Conference. Just before their arrival, the following members of the District Conference - Rev. Liangkhaia, Rev. Zairema, Mr. Kailuia, Mr. Vanlawma and Mrs. Lalziki were selected to appear in front of the Advisory Sub-committee (Vanthuama, 2001: 63-64).

The day after their arrival, on 18th April, 1947 the Advisory Sub-Committee members met with the delegates and discussed with each one of them. Mr. Vanthuama carried out all the translations. The Advisory Sub-Committee regarded Lushai Hills to be already under the rule of Indian Government. When Rev. Zairema raises the question if the Mizo people had the right to choose whether or not to joined the Indian Union, B. N. Rau simply stated that under the Cabinet Mission Plan, every British-India will come under Indian Union. Again when Mrs. Ziki asked the question of whether or not the Mizos will merge with the Indian Union, B. N. Rau responded by saying that they did not come to discuss the matter in question but rather to evaluate the position of the Mizo people under the Indian Union. The leaders of the Mizo Union expressed their desires to let the Lushai Hills subsist with the establishment of a District Council under the Indian Union and they even submit a memorandum on it (Vanthuama, 2001: 65-67).

The following day on 19th April 1947, the Advisory Sub-Committee met with Superintendent Mr. MacDonald. In this meeting, Mr. MacDonald proposed that the Mizo people should be given the highest power in their local administration and affairs and aid of Rs. 4,00,000/- should be provided by the Indian Government annually. After this meeting with the Superintendent, the members of the District Conference were gathered again to have a discussion. Here the members suggested several matters including their desire for Lushai Hills to continue to remain under the Assam Government. Mr. Bordoloi advised them to submit a memorandum within one month (Saprawnga, 1990: 141-142).

The meeting of the Advisory Sub-Committee on 4th July 1947, permitted the establishment of the District Council for Lushai Hills (i.e., Mizoram). However, the establishment of the District Council cannot be undertaken until the enactment of the Indian Constitution. The leaders of the Mizo Union proposed to the Assam Governor and Assam Premier Mr. Bordoloi in Shillong to form District Advisory Council for the Commonwealth of the people until the District Council comes into place (Vanthuama, 2001: 78-79). This proposal was accepted and seats for the Advisory Council members were allotted as follows (Khuma, 1999):

1. Commoner- 20 seat.
2. Chief- 10 seat.
3. Women- 2 seat.
4. Town- 3 seat (Aizawl- 2 seat; Lunglei- 1 seat).

The election for the chief Advisory Council members was held on 23rd March 1948 and the election for the commoner District Advisory members on 15th April 1948 (Thanhlira, 2012: 55). After the enactment of the Indian Constitution on 26th January 1950 the Assam Government dissolved the District Advisory Council on 12th November 1951 and announced 4th April 1952, as the election date for the Lushai Hills District Council. In this election, Mizo Union won and formed the government in the newly Lushai Hills District Council under the state of Assam. The name was changed into Mizo District Council on 29th April 1954 (Khuma, 1999).

It seems the Mizos did not have a choice and were coerced into joining the British and then the Indian government. According to Lushai Hills political history, the British conquered the Lushai chiefs by force. When it comes to defending their territory, the British Government was no match for the Lushai chiefs and so they had no choice but to surrender. Moreover, when the British were evacuating India, the Advisory Sub-committee who came to Lushai Hills gave the impression that the Mizo was already under the rule of the Indian Government. To put it simply, the Mizos were thrown under the British and Indian Government. Shortly after the Mizo came under the Indian Government, they retaliated under the leadership of MNF for Independent movement. This retaliation resulted in the signing of the Peace Accord with the Indian Government in 1986, however, till this day there is a feeling of dissatisfaction in the minds of the Mizo people which led to the formation of several groups influenced by Zo-ethnic movements.

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