CHAPTER FIVE- BEGINNING OF NAGA NATIONAL MOVEMENT AND CREATION OF NAGALAND STATE UNDER THE INDIAN UNION
Non-implementation of the Hydari agreement brought a great setback to the moderate Naga leaders of the NNC on the one hand, and caused a notable turning in the political history of the Naga people on the other. It were the liberal political leaders of the Nagas who were frontal and instrumental in conducting a political deal with the Indian leaders to avoid direct conflicts and armed confrontation with the Indian government and disturb the peace of Nagaland. Had the Hydari agreement been implemented, the Naga political history would have got a different turn quite opposite to that which followed soon after suspension of the Agreement by the Government of India. It brought disappointment to the general Naga people and made the extremist Naga leaders rigid and obstinate. Mr A.Z. Phizo did not delay at all to seize the opportunity, gain the confidence of the leaders of the NNC in general, and support of the people in particular. Phizo was a personality who had learnt not to bow down to enemy. He was a man of determination and hard core action. He preferred violent struggle to achieve the goal to peaceful and non-violent method. That is why he had withdrawn from the NNC whose aim at the time “was circumscribed by constitutional and democratic methods.” He had the capacity to organise the people and win their confidence. His People’s Independent League stood for sovereign Nagaland state comprising the Naga Hills, the Tuensang Frontier Division and contiguous Naga areas in Assam, Manipur and Burma (Myanmar). So long as the moderate leaders dominated the NNC, he was not virulent, dynamic and purposive. After the failure of the Hydari Agreement the influence of the moderates declined rapidly paving the way for dominance of the extremists over the control of the NNC. In the words of Yonuo “out of the failure of the Hydari Agreement the moderate received growing distrust of the people and their stand became deemingly void and of no validity or account... The extremist forces dominated the scene.” Under that very circumstance Phizo was unanimously elected as the President of the NNC in 1949. He, thereafter, lost no time to put “the house of the NNC in order and

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Phizo, the President of the NNC, championing the cause of the Naga freedom, began the national movement by conducting unilateral plebiscite as the first step in 1951. Phizo personally visited different Naga villages even in the remote areas. The people were asked whether they wanted to remain in India or to become a separate independent state. The members of the Naga Youth Movement and the Naga Women Society were employed all over the Naga Hills to collect thumb impression from all adult Nagas along with the

1 Ibid.
administration of oath that they (Nagas) would “put in their last breath to struggle for Naga independence.” Surprisingly enough the Government of Assam remained silent spectator to all these happenings, perhaps, the Government did not take it seriously. The result of the unilateral plebiscite was claimed to be ninety nine per cent of the people voted for Nagaland freedom. Thereafter, the plebiscite forms and people’s thumb impressions were sent to Delhi for the information and action of the Central Government. The Government of India, too, did not pay much attention to the course followed by Phizo and his men. Phizo met the Indian Prime Minister, Pt. Nehru in December 1951 when he came to Assam. The delegation led by Phizo expressed its viewpoint to Pt Nehru that independence was the birth right to the Nagas and the Naga people by taking part in plebiscite had explicitly expressed the view that they liked freedom. Pt. Nehru replied, “In the present context of affairs both in India and the world, it is impossible to consider, even for a moment, such an absurd demand for independence of the Nagas. It is doubtful whether the Nagas realise the consequences of what they are asking for. For their present demand would lead them to ruin.”

Such reply of Pt Nehru made it ample clear that the Government of India was not in a mood to grant the Nagas the right to self-determination. Thereafter the leaders of the NNC under the leadership of Phizo decided the course of their action where first step was taken to boycott all the elections for composition of the District autonomous Council and the representatives for the Nagas in the Assam legislature and in the Indian parliament. The election was scheduled in early 1952 and all the electioneering processes had been completed in the Naga Hills district. No Naga turned up to file nomination papers or came to the polling booths for casting their votes with the result that neither the Autonomous district council was constituted nor the Naga representatives were elected for Assam Legislative Assembly and the Indian parliament.

A question may be raised here as to why did the Naga people boycotted the general election of 1952. The answer is very simple. The Indian political leaders had not taken the Naga issue seriously, and they were of the view that the creation of the autonomous District Council “would give the Nagas a sense of participation in the administration and

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1 Cited in Asoso Yonuo’s The Rising Nagas, op. cit., p.203.
that they would gradually come down within the mainstream of India.”

But this understanding was not based on right footing. The Indian leaders had overlooked the fact that the Nagas were tribal and they had been too much worried about their future social and political identity. They had no assimilation with the Indians. The British officers had already poised their mind to go for their own impendent identity. The Simon Commission in its report had reflected that the Mizos and the Nagas were not Indians in any sense.\(^2\) The view of the Assam Government that “There is no sympathy on either side (Indians and Nagas) and any union is an artificial one resented by both the parties” had encouraged the Nagas to go for their separate political identity.\(^3\) All such misgivings had created the feeling of apathy in the mind of the Nagas towards India and a sense of insecurity. That is why they began to put much emphasis on a separate political identity of the Nagas. When the Naga issue came, the Indian leaders were badly engaged in solving the problems related to Jammu and Kashmir. They had little time to solve the Naga issue. N. Kunjru, the veteran Member of the Indian parliament, rightly remarked that the Indian leaders could not look other problems as long as they have Kashmir on their hand.\(^4\)

The government of India took up various steps to provide protection and security to the Naga’s interests in the Indian constitution, no doubt, but due to lack of proper publicity most of the Nagas living in the village remained totally unknown about what the Government of India was planning for their future. The Naga leaders who wanted to have a separate Naga Hills from Assam felt themselves neglected when they were tagged on Assam. Such feeling of the Naga leaders and the Naga people ultimately made them disappointed and forced them to begin freedom struggle whereby they boycotted the elections of 1952 to register their feeling.

Pt Nehru’s Government adopted double yardstick policy in the case of tribal people of India. He expressed his feeling in the Parliament that India did not want to incorporate any territory of India “against their will and with the help of armed forces... This great republic

\(^1\) Sajal Naga, “Construction of Nationhood: Ethnic, Secessionism and Legitimisation in North East India” in Girin Phukan (ed), Political Dynamics of North East India, New Delhi, 2000, p.32
\(^3\) Sajal Nag, “Construction of Nationhood, Ethnic, secessationism and Legitimisation in North East India, op. cit., p.29.
\(^4\) Y.D. Gundevia, War and Peace in Nagaland, New Delhi, 1975, p.676.
of India is a free, voluntary, friendly and affectionate union of the states of India.” On the other hand, when ever the Naga delegation met him and asked for independent state, he refrained such demand stating that the demand was ‘absurd’. A Naga delegation met him at New Delhi in March 1952 with the same demand, which irritated Nehru, and he totally denied considering for the Nagas the right to self-determination. Again, the Naga delegation met Pt Nehru in 1952 when he was on visit to Manipur. Pt Nehru rejecting the Naga delegation’s demand categorically stated that the Government was not prepared to discuss with the Nagas on the issue of the Naga sovereignty anymore. Such reply of the Indian Prime Minister made the Nagas to understand that the Government of India could not consider their demand. Hence the NNC declared, in August 1952, not to have any truck with the Indian administration. Phizo tried to establish contact with alien powers to help the Nagas in achieving freedom.

In March 1953, the Naga leaders once more tried to meet Pt Nehru when he along with the Burmese Premier, Thakin U Nu, was at Kohima. The Naga leaders were not allowed to meet the Indian Prime Minister by the Indian bureaucrats including the Assamese Deputy Commissioner, Barkataki. The Naga leaders at the denial of their meeting with the Indian Prime Minister, which brought too much 

\[ \text{annoyance to Pt Nehru made too much hue and cry.} \]

This was a point from where more and more bitterness arose between the Indian leaders and the Naga leaders. The leaders of the NNC who had lost all faith in the Indian leaders, resorted the method of non-cooperation asking the Nagas not to cooperate with the Indian government to paralyse it. Phizo asked the Naga to give up Government jobs and to boycott all public institutions. He also forbade them to pay taxes and harass all those who sided with the government of India.

At this very juncture the government of India adopted two policies, one was the policy of arm-twisting and, on the other, the policy of persuasion. It is evident from the Government’s decision to send armed forces in the Naga Hills and declaration of Pt. Nehru in the Indian Parliament that “the force had been sent to the Naga Hills with a view to protecting the life and properties of the people and not to harass and kill them.”

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The Government of India asked the Government of Assam to be tough and stern towards the Naga leaders. The list of suspected leaders was prepared. Thereafter, the police raided the house of T. Sakharie, the General Secretary of the NNC. The monthly newspaper of NNC, the ‘Naga Nation’ was banned. Such acts of the Government of India forced the extremists to go underground. Several of the Naga villages were targeted and raided to search out the rebels. The Government deployed more police personnel and opened more police posts to control the situation and suppress the revolt of the Nagas. On the other hand, the Naga leaders also increased their anti-Indian activities even from the underground. They set up the underground Naga Government terming it as ‘Khunak Kautang Ngeukhum’, which meant ‘People Sovereign Republic of Free Nagaland’. Mr Honking, a trusted lieutenant of Phizo, was made the head of the state with fifteen Kilonsers (ministers). Thongdi Chang, an ex-military officer of India, was appointed as the Commander-in-Chief.

Phizo and his associates getting support from China and Pakistan had organised the militant organisations all over the Naga Hills. They had gone underground and continued their freedom struggle. At such juncture the Naga militants continued their struggle against the Government’s security forces and government; civil officials. Thereafter kidnapping, murder, plunder, ambushing of convey of the armed forces etc. became the order of the day all over the Naga Hills. The government of India issued a warrant in the name of Phizo and banned the NNC. Phizo who had escaped to Myanmar was arrested there. The Chief Minister of Assam, Bishnuram Medhi, while issuing a statement, made it clear that the demand for an independent sovereign Nagaland raised by the handful of Nagas could not be entertained.1 In early 1954, Medhi again declared, “The people of the Naga Hills want jobs, schools, dispensaries, new roads and as a matter of fact we have taken schemes for affording better medical and other facilities... The Nagas in Burma have accepted the Burmese constitution, the Nagas in Mikir Hills, North Kachar Hills etc. do not want independence. Why do this handful of persons want independent Nagaland? The Nagas as I have stated, are in the Indian Republic.” Thus this was sufficient hint to the Nagas who

1 M. Alemchiba, A Brief Historical Account of Nagaland, op. cit., pp. 175-76
2 Ibid
wanted independent Nagaland that the Government of India was not going to pay any heed
to their demand and the Government was ready to handle the affairs firmly and strongly.

As a policy to befriend the Nagas a number of goodwill missions were sent to the Naga
Hills. For instance, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, the Health Minister of India, made an
extensive tour of the North-eastern region and held talks with a number of Naga leaders in
November 1953. She tried to impress upon the Naga people that their demand was
untenable. While making an appeal the rebel Naga leaders, she requested them to join the
mainstream of India. Bimla Prasad Chaliha, the President of Assam Pradesh Congress, also
visited the Naga Hills twice in 1953 with the intention to convince the Nagas that their
future was safe and secured in India. He also made it clear that the Government of India,
keeping in view strategic significance of the Naga territories, would not allow them to go
for an independent state. Prime Minister Pt Nehru himself visited the Naga Hills on
November 30, 1953 along with the Burmese Premier, Thakin U Nu to seek cooperation of
the Nagas. G. B. Mavalankar, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, too, visited the Naga Hills to
develop a mutual understanding and cordial relations with other people of India. But all
these visits and efforts to persuade the Nagas to accept India as their nation could not
convince the mind of the Naga people because of the ‘magic spell’ of Phizo which had
enchanted every Naga in the name of Naga’s independence. On the other hand, the
activities of the Naga warriors increased and they set up an underground Naga Government
in the Tuensang area in September, 1953 which has already been discussed.

Several armed gangs were installed in Tuensang area with the marked objective to
create troubles for the Government of India. The arms that the freedom fighters used
consisted of arms captured in raids on police stations and outposts of Indian security
forces, arms seized from private citizens etc. They also collected arms and ammunitions
from Pakistan and China. With such arms the Naga militants with a full determination to
harass the government officials, the Naga supporters of the Indian Government and to
pressurise the Government to accept the Naga’s demand, indulged in rebel activities all over
the hills of Nagaland. On the other hand, the Government of India was not to be cowed
down by such terror tactics. The patience of the Government was going to be exhausted.
Hence the Government of Assam was soon instructed to deal with the situation with strong
hands with the result that the Assam Government ordered the abolition of the Tribal
Councils and clamped section 144 in Kohima banning assembly of more than five members. An additional force of police was also posted at Longkhum village of Mokokchung area to maintain law and order. The Battalions of Assam Rifles were deployed all over the Hills to retaliate the rebel Nagas by burning their strongholds in the areas which were declared disturbed areas on July 20, 1955.1

The Government of India resorted all the suppressing measures to curb down the Naga rebellion. The Indian armed troops carried on numerous operations against the hideouts of the underground Nagas. The Naga freedom lighters faced the Indian jawans with courage and valour. They ambushed the army convoys where many jawans lost their lives. They applied the tactics of guerrilla warfare against the Indian troops who had been posted to different places of the Naga Hills. The Indian jawans being irritated began to harass even the innocent Naga villagers in doubt and suspicion. The Indians armed personnel burnt down their granaries, houses and destroyed properties. Several of the Naga ladies who had no hand in rebel activities were molested, beaten and raped even before their family members and relatives. In fact a battle line was drawn between the Naga militants and the Indian armed forces. The people who were the worst sufferers in the battle were the Naga villagers. They were baldly harassed and tortured by both the parties. The troops of the Indian armed forces while dealing with the villagers tortured the Nagas and forced them to disclose whereabouts of the Naga militants. In that pursuit they were badly beaten, captured and their women were insulted and molested. Some of the were even raped. Despite the instruction from the Government of India not to harass the innocent Naga people, the Indian jawans hardly cared for such instructions.2

At this juncture Mr Phizo left the Naga Hills and managed to reach London. From 1952 to 1956, the Naga people could not witness peace and progress due to armed struggle between the Naga militants and the Indian security forces. The situation somewhat took different turn after exist of Phizo from the Naga Hills. When the battle reached on the peak and the Naga people suffered a lot, the realisation came to the Naga militants that the Naga's independence could not be achieved through battle against the Indian Government. Rather it would bring more troubles and miseries to the Naga people. The members of the

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1 Asian Recorder, September 17-22, 1955, P.421.
2 Ibid., April 7-18, 1958, pp.772-73.
NNC being aware of such anarchic situation began to realise the futility of armed struggle and they thought of peaceful solution to the Naga issue.

Lawlessness and Violence were rampant in all parts of the Naga Hills including the Tuensang area of NEFA. Several good-will missions arrived in the Naga Hills with a purpose to convince the Nagas that violent movement was not the proper way to achieve the goal and the Naga's future would be safe in India, but no positive response came out from the Naga people. Even the suppressive method of the Government did not curb down the Naga rebellion.

Atrocities and highhandedness committed by the Indian soldiers while dealing with the Naga various draconian Acts, which were promulgated to control anarchic situation of the Naga Hills, made the Naga people more and more anti-Indian. Charles Chasie has rightly observed that sympathy and active support of the Nagas to the Government of India began to decline because of "over and above the atrocities of the Indian Army, taking place all the time, such ill considered statements (of the Indian leaders), made the Nagas in general feel that, perhaps, there could be no proper understanding and future for the Nagas with Indian Union"¹ However, the Government of India could hardly prohibit the Indian Army from committing such inhuman acts with the result that such inhuman and inimical attitude of the Nagas has "constituted the greatest hurdle to any negotiated settlement till now."² Mr Chasie is correct in his observation.

With the active support of the Naga people the NNC under the leadership Phizo, set up Federal Government of Nagaland and hoisted its flag bearing the red, green and white colours with three stars at Phesinyu (a Rengma Village) on March 22, 1956. The NNC also issued a constitution of the Federal Government that declared Nagaland as a people’s sovereign republic. The constitution provided for 100 Tatārs (members) for the Naga parliament. Provision was made for an elected President of the Federal Republic and a Cabinet consisting of 15 Kilonsers (ministers.) The whole Nagaland was divided into four states each headed by a governor (Ahad). There was also provision for a Supreme Court to "decide all the important constitutional, civil and criminal cases referred to it by the subordinate courts.” The Naga Army was set up with a Commander-in-Chief (General), a

² Ibid.
Major General for each tribe commanding a division of 500 men Brigadiers and other officer ranks to an ordinary soldier. Besides this, magistrates, Deputy Commissioners and other officials were also appointed for various tribal areas. The Naga Federal Government also has set up the Naga Home Guards and the Naga Safe Guards. Later on these two wings were designated as the Naga army. The strength of the Naga Army, which laws 5,000 in the beginning, rose up to 15,000 by 1956.1 Thus the Naga National Council having its own government, a national flag, a constitution and Army set up, continued its struggle against the Indian Government to achieve the decided goal. On the other hand, the Government of India had already declared the Naga Hills as the ‘disturbed area’ on January 31, 1956. The Naga Hills disturbed Area Ordinance and Assam Maintenance of Public Order promulgated by the Government were in action which had empowered even the small ranks of the Indian armed forces to take punitive actions against the Naga who were found indulged in anti-national activities. Under such power the Indian jawans committed a number of inhuman acts and badly harassed even the innocent Nagas.

1 Alencvhiba, A Brief Historical Account of Nagaland, op. cit., p.184.
DISSENSION IN NNC

As stated above an arrest warrant was issues against the leader of the NNC, Mr Phizo, but he managed to escape away from the Naga Hills and reached England from where he continued his freedom struggle. But exist of Phizo from India marked a notable turning the freedom movement causing dissension among its leaders. With his exit the dominance of the extremists over the NNC soon declined and the moderates who were still viewing to solve the Naga issue avoiding violence became assertive. Too much bloodshed, measures, troubles and inconveniences of the Naga people due to direct armed clashes between the Naga freedom fighters and the Indian armed personnel had made the people upset. Despite heavy resistance and fight there was no sign of achieving Naga independence. Rather the struggle had brought more uncertainty and troubles to the Naga people. The moderates, who had been against the use of violent force from the beginning, realised that the Nagas had to change the method to achieve the goal. Hence they became vocal about peaceful method avoiding the path of insurgency and armed conflicts, though the hard-core extremists were yet determined to fight against the Government till the goal was obtained. But they had to fight on two fronts, The Indian government and its troops and the moderates. In the words of Yonuo, “the open fighting broke out near Kohima between the rival factions of the NNC i.e., one who favoured Phizoism and those who opposed it.”

Meanwhile, on September 15, 1956 six Naga delegation visited New Delhi and had discussions with Pt. Nehru to stop military operation and initiate peace talks. Pt Nehru sympathetically talked to the Naga delegation. The talks between the Naga delegation and Pt Nehru resulted in giving a dynamic turn to the Naga politics.

The Government of India, though late, had fully realised that it was not possible to uproot the Naga’s spirit of nationalism and to curb down their fight for freedom. Hence Pt Nehru while receiving the Naga delegation at New Delhi had prepared his mind to give sympathetic hearing to the Nagas’ problem. He received the Naga delegation happily and assured them that the Indian Government was ready to give the Naga people maxim...
The dissension in the NNC was a great setback to the movement of national freedom. No doubt, the fight against the government continued by the extremists, but with weaker strength and slow voice. The murder of Sakharie, one of the most veteran and foresighted leaders of the NNC could not be digested by the peace loving Naga leaders. The murder was committed with a view to dampening the courage of those Nagas who dared to go against the viewpoints of the Phizoistes, no doubt, but such policy of the extremists boomeranged. The loss of Sakharie was soon compensated by other dashing peace loving Naga leadership openly came ahead to take up the issue with the Government of India for autonomy within the Indian Union provided peace was restored in the Naga Hills. He also hinted that the Nagas would be given a separate administrative unit of their own. With this assurance the Naga delegation returned back to their home and began to work actively to bring normalcy in Nagaland by persuading the Naga freedom fighters to give up the path of militancy and accept the negotiated settlement of the Naga problem within the Indian federal system. At this very juncture Mr Shakharie was mercilessly assassinated. The murder of Shakharie was done with the intention to create mass terror among the Nagas and warn the Moderate Naga leaders not to take initiative for peace negotiation. By the beginning of 1957, the moderate Naga leaders of the NNC dissociated themselves from the path of militancy and formed a new group, namely, the Reforming Committee. Thus it became obvious that the NNC was a divided house. The Reforming Committee proclaimed, “The majority demand of the Nagas is for a separate administrative unit keeping with the Naga tradition within the framework of the Indian Union.”1 Thereafter, the Committee sent another delegation to Pt Nehru to discuss the Naga issue and decide the future course of Naga political status. Pt. Nehru was expecting the Naga delegation at New Delhi. Hence he warmly received the Naga delegation and assured the members that his Government would grant the Nagas maximum autonomies under special political unit provided peace and normalcy were allowed to exist in the Naga Hills as soon as possible. Thus the stage was set for constitutional and administrative changes in the Naga Hills, which ultimately resulted in creation of the state of Nagaland in December 1963.2

The dissension in the NNC was a great set back to the movement of national freedom. No doubt, the fight against the government continued by the extremists, but with weaker strength and slow voice. The murder of Sakharie, one of the most veteran and foresighted leaders of the NNC could not be digested by the peace loving Naga leaders. The murder was committed with a view to dampening the courage of those Nagas who dared to go against the viewpoints of the Phizoistes, no doubt, but such policy of the extremists boomeranged. The loss of Sakharie was soon compensated by other dashing peace loving Naga leadership openly came ahead to take up the issue with the Government of India for

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peaceful solution. These leaders formed a Reforming Committee of the NNC, which declared that it was opposed to violent, military method and committed to restore peace, order and security for the Nagas as a whole. T.N. Aangami, the President of the Reforming committee took the trouble to call the first People's Convocation on 22nd August 1957. Thousands of delegations and people appeared to participate and witness the historic event. Imkongliba Ao and Jasokie Angami were made the Chairman and Secretary of the Convention respectively. The Convention adopted the following resolutions:

1. “We maintain that the only answer to the Naga question is a satisfactory Political settlement.
2. In as much as a large number of our people are still underground and there is no freedom of movement and speech under the present condition in the Naga hills districts, we feel no discussion can be held among the people preliminary to negotiation.
3. In order to create the condition necessary for a political settlement the following immediate change as an interim measure is essential. The Present Naga hill districts of Assam and Tuensang Frontier Division of NEFA along with the reserved forests, transferred out of the Naga Hills district under the reforms of 1921, should be constituted into a single administrative unit under the External Affairs Ministry of the Government of India though the Governor of Assam acting in his discretion as the Agent of the President of India, so as to ensure with our active help, a genuine general amnesty, speedy end of hostility and relief to sufferings.
4. We strongly urge the Government to implement the above proposal immediately as we, on our part, pledge ourselves to actively work together to end hostilities that the army and police can be withdrawn and the villages degrouped, and to try by all means in our power to heal old feuds so that all of us, both those now underground and those over ground, may work together for the good of our land and the free development of our people according to our own traditions.
5. We appeal to our countrymen in arms to give up the cult of violence.
6. The Convention asks for the prayers of all men goodwill, both underground and
over ground and the Government services for the achievement of lasting and
honourable peace."

The resolutions adopted by the first Naga People’s convention made it clear that the
NNC was then a divided house. Naga nationalism was bifurcated in the name of means and
methods to achieve Naga freedom. Though the extremists refused to call the moderates as
nationalists, and branded them the pets of the Indian political leaders and followers of the
Indian style of politics mortgaging the Naga national interests. On the other hand the
moderates were of the view that the extremists were playing with the lives and properties
of the Naga people to their rigid and obstinate attitude. A question may be raised here as
to whether the Naga nationalism as old as the Naga’s history or did they obtain the concept
of nationalism from the western people who came in their close contact. Nationalism is a
feeling of heart and mind where every member of the community is sentimentally attached
to patriotism. The people are ready to pay any cost demanded by nationalism. People share
common feeling, common belief, common language, common history and common
sufferings. In case of the Nagas it is very much difficult to ensure whether the Nagas had
national feeling from the very beginning. It is true that each ancient Naga village was a
tiny sovereign state where each member was committed to the cause his or her
community. Their patriotism cannot be doubted, but at the same time one cannot overlook
the fact that the Naga tribes were not united nor they had any common feeling for a nation
comprising all the Naga tribes here and there. Udayon Misra is of the view that the basic
strength of the Naga movement has been the support it got from traditional Naga
leadership at the village level, the most basic foundation of Naga Nationhood.” At the
same time he maintains that the Christianity and Western education brought a section of
Naga youths into contact with the liberal ideas of the West, and in the process, helped the
growth of the nationalistic forces by reducing to a great extent the rivalry among the
various tribes.

Misra is very much correct in his observation in regard to the Naga nationalism. There
may not be two opinions about the fact that the ancient Naga had patriotic feeling for their
community but their approach and attitude was parochial. Instead of calling them

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nationalist, it would be better to call them chauvinistic. It was the educated Naga leaders who came out of the veil of chauvinism and began to talk for Naga nationalism. But unfortunately these leaders differed in approach how to achieve national goal from the beginning of the formation of the NNC. After indulging in battles with the Indian security forces the issue whether the Naga could achieve independence by defeating the mighty Indian forces became more prominent. To the extremists there was no any other alternative to achieve Naga’s freedom other than using force while the moderates were of the view that the time was not opportune to indulge in direct fight with the Indian Government because it were the Nagas who had to suffer more. When these two divergent viewpoints could be resolved amicably, the moderates separated themselves from the extremists and followed a course of their own whereby they established close contacts with the Government of India and placed the demand for greater and autonomous Nagaland.

It is said that the rift appeared in the Naga unity due to India’s policy of divide and rule. It was the Indian political leaders who have been playing key role to keep the Naga leaders in rival groups by providing patronage to the loyal Naga leaders. The point whether there is any hand of the Government of India or the Indian political leaders to divide the Nagas is a debatable matter, which would be discussed, in the succeeding chapters. Here it is enough to say that the Naga leaders are not less responsible for creating rift in their unity and breakage in their strength. Expressing the same fact Charles Chasie says, “Some Nagas would like to point out finger of blame at the Government of India, but the Nagas, and specially the undergrounds cannot shirk the responsibility for the initial rift among the Naga leaders which finally resulted in the signing of 16-point Agreement.” The Government of India availed the opportunity to come close to the moderates and undermine the Naga nationalism by creating a separate political unit termed the Naga Hills Tuensang Area (NHTA) in 1957. When the recommendation of the Governor of Assam, Fazl Ali, that “to accept the demands of the Naga people for a change in the present administrative set up of the Naga Hills District” reached to Pt Nehru, he agreed soon for “political settlement within the Indian Union.” He also agreed to grant amnesty to the rebels. Thereafter, the Ministry of external Affairs issue the statement on 26\textsuperscript{th} September,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} Charles Chasie, The Naga Ibroglio, op. cit., p.68.
\item \textsuperscript{2} Keesing Contemporary Archives, Vol.XI, September 28- October 5,1957, p.15864.
\end{itemize}
The new political unit, NHTA, came into being on first December, 1957: separating Naga Hills from Assam. The moderate Naga leaders considered it as the first positive step in the direction of the eventual triumph, and assured the Indian Government that “All sorts of violence, dacoit, theft, intimidation, false impersonation, false propaganda imposition of fines and closing down of schools in certain areas must be stopped.” On the other hand, the extremists leaders took the creation of NHTA as a policy of the Indian government to divide and rule and strengthen the Government’s position in the Naga Hills by installing political agents from the Naga society.

Before the creation of NHTA the government of India considered the Naga issue simply the problem of law and order. The government “paid little attention to the distant border areas in the North-East of India,” and “entrusted the Assam Government so much so far the responsibility of administering the hill tribes of Assam without keeping much in mind their poignant historical relations. The carrot and stick policy of the Assam Government ... met with irritation and decisive revolt.” It was “realised at last hour about the futility of this policy and he (Pt Nehru) withdrew, gave up banking upon Assam...” ² The creation of NHTA was the realisation of the futility of such policy of the Government of India.

Tuensang Division occupied by the Naga tribes was the part of the North Eastern Frontier Area (NEFA). Now it was transferred to the Naga Hills adding the strength of the Naga people. The Act NHTA provided a number of new provisions for the Naga people empowering the Governor to administer NHTA as the agent of the Indian

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President. ¹ Creation of NHTA eased the tense situation in Naga Hills to some extent, no doubt, but it could not end the agitation carried out by the extremists. Rather they became more determined to carry on their movement. However the step taken by the Central Government to grant the Naga people a separate administrative unit received appreciation from various sections. For instance, the New York Times of 28 September 1957, appreciating the move of the Government wrote that “It was a realistic approach” and the step was “a wise one.”² The Manchester Guardian remarked that the Prime Minister’s offer to the Nagas was “a statesman like offer.”³

There is no denying the fact that the formation of the NHTA ushered in a new era in the Naga Hills. About three thousands rebels came out over ground voluntarily. Major General Koccher, the General Officer Commanding of Assam, while giving a detail report in November, 1957 about the capture and surrender of the Naga rebels said,” From January, 1957 onwards, however, increasing number of the rebels surrendered. Phizo’s sons and daughters gave themselves up on 25 April, 1957 stating that they were unable to bear the hardship of life in jungles; and his brother was arrested in August while attempting to escape to Burma.⁴ A general amnesty was granted and all underground prisoners detained for offences were released from jails. The law and order situation improved, no doubt, but it does mean that trouble was over forever. The other side picture was that there were numerous Naga freedom fighters that had not yet surrendered and they were yet determined to fight for Naga’s freedom. Hence the agitation against the Government continued.

CREATION OF NAGALAND STATE

Once the democratic process was allowed to take place in Nagaland under the Indian constitution, it continued till the creation of Nagaland state under the Union of Indian Republic. The second People’s Convention held in May 1958 expressing its satisfaction over creation of NHTA under the External Affairs Ministry constituted two bodies- the Select Committee and a Liaison Committee comprising eminent Naga leaders to serve the purpose. The Select Committee further constituted a Drafting Committee, which prepared

¹ For detail study of the new provisions for new political unit see the Naga Hills Tuensang Area Act, 1957, published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II, Section I, No.37, dated 30th November, 1957.
² Cited in Prakash Singh, Nagaland, Delhi, 1974, p. 106
³ Ibid.
the Sixteen Point Proposal. The Sixteen-Point Proposal contained certain important demands from the Government of India including the creation of Interim Government for the Naga people till the creation of a full-fledged Nagaland state under the Indian Union. It also demanded from the government of India to integrate the Nagas living in contiguous areas in Manipur, Myanmar and Assam with the Nagaland state and fix a permanent boundary line for the Naga people. It was the Sixteen Point Proposal which became the basis for the formation of Nagaland state. On the other hand, the members of the Liaison Committee took the initiative to meet the underground Naga leaders with a purpose to "mollify their feelings against the extreme stand and to explore the possibility of finding a peaceful solution of the conflicting issue." The underground Naga leaders flatly replied to the members of the Liaison Committee that they had to do nothing with the Indian Government, and asked them to inform the Indian Government to confirm recognition of the Naga federal Government before initiating any peace talks.

Without paying any heed to the attitude and viewpoint of the underground Naga leaders, the moderates called the third People's Convention in October 1958 and put the sixteen Point Proposal before the Convention for its approval, which was unanimously adopted. A careful study of the sixteen Point Proposal and the special resolution passed by the third Naga People's Convention condemning all sorts of violent and anti-national activities, reveals the truth that the Naga people in general had disliked the violent method to achieve the goal on the one hand, and preferred peaceful solution to the Naga issue.

Since Pt Nehru, the Indian Prime Minister decided to grant the Nagas a separate state under the Indian Union, his government accepted the Sixteen Point Proposal with some modifications. To give effect to the Sixteen Point Proposal the Government of India formulated the Nagaland (Transitional) Regulation, 1961 for the "regulation of Nagaland state under the Indian Union." It was this Regulation that provided for formation of an Interim Body consisting of forty-two members chosen by election from the tribes of Nagaland. Provisions were also made for an Executive Body to assist and advise the Governor of Assam on the exercise of public order as may be specified by the governor in this behalf. The Interim Body was assigned "the right to discuss and make

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1 Asoso Yono, The Rising Nagas, op. cit., p.229
2 Ibid.
recommendations to the Executive council on matters of administration involving general policy and schemes of development and other matters referred to it by the executive Council.”

The Interim Body was soon constituted, which represented all major and minor tribes of Nagaland. The members of the Interim Body were none, but the important Naga leaders who had been playing the role to solve the Naga issue peacefully. The Governor of Nagaland, General Shrinagesh, inaugurated the Interim Body at Kohima on February 18, 1961. Imkongliba Ao, the veteran moderate Naga leader who had been frontal in bringing both the Naga leaders and the Indian Government near to each other, was elected as the Chairman of the Interim Body. He, inviting the undergrounds to join the mainstream of the nation assured the people that the members of the Interim Body would leave no stone unturned to bring peace, prosperity and general happiness to the Naga people as a whole.  

Formation of the Interim Body and the Executive Council, which served as the de-facto Naga Legislature and Executive respectively, was a historic turn in the Naga political history. The formation resented the underground section to a great extent because it had given a decisive blow to the Naga national movement continued by the underground people. In the words of Yonuo the “acceptance of the Central Government to the moderate demand of the moderate political sentiment among the Nagas proved to be great political and physical instrument to isolate and put down those hostile elements who were still at large fighting a guerrilla campaign for the cause of their sovereignty” Hence they soon intensified their underground activities creating more troubles and inconveniences to both the Naga Interim government and the Government of India. To register their resentment and warn the moderates, the extremists assassinated Imkongliba Ao, the chairman of the Interim Body, at Mokokchung when he was coming back from his dispensary on August 22, 1961.

The murder of Imkongliba Ao, which was a direct challenge to the government of India and the moderate Naga leaders, did not dampen the courage of the Moderates. T. N.

1 Nagaland (Transitional) Provisions regulation, 1961, Section 2 (2) quoted in P.N. Luthra’s From a District to Strate, shillong 1978, pp. 9296
3 Asoso Yonuo, The Rising Nagas, op. cit., p.239.
Angami, another veteran Naga leader, accepting the challenge took over the responsibility as the chairman of the Interim Body, asked the government of India to declare the Executive Council as the Cabinet and Interim Body as the provincial legislature of the Naga people. The Government of India soon accepted the demand and increased the power and status of these interim bodies declaring them de-facto legislature and executive. Thereafter political events in Nagaland began to take fast turning. Mr Shilu Ao, the leader of the de-facto Naga cabinet, during the transitional period became active to persuade the Indian leaders to grant the Naga people a full-fledged statehood. On the other hand, the militants remained firm to their demand of a separate and sovereign Nagaland, and continued their activities.

The government of India prepared two Bills, namely, the constitution amendment Bill and the Nagaland Bill in 1962, which prepared the ground for creation of Nagaland state. Since the Government of India was determined to create Nagaland state, both the Bills were passed by the Indian parliament despite heated discussions and opposition from the members who did not like to grant the Nagas such a status. Blame was levelled against the Indian government the move that the government took up in regard to the Naga issue was due to the fact that the Government was not able "to administer " the territory "because of violence that was practiced there." Pt Jawaharlal Nehru was accused of leading the country towards disintegration and sowing the seed of disparity. P.C. Baruah, a representative from Assam in the Indian Parliament said that he would accept the Bill for creation of Nagaland state with "sorrow and pain" for two reasons, "the new state was being created cutting the limb of Assam and secondly, when all efforts were being made to put an end to the "fissiparous and disruptionist" tendencies in the country." Some one accused Pt Nehru of pursuing a policy of "appeasement in respect of the Nagas." The Indian Parliament passed the Bill in September 1962, and getting the assent of the President of India on 4th September 1962, the Nagaland state got its birth.

The question whether the creation of Nagaland state was a right direction towards national integration or not, needs close verification and analysis. It is true that the

3 Ibid.
Nagaland state was created at the time when several tribal peoples in North East India had become the aspirants of having their separate political status. To grant the Naga people a state of their own meant to invite the separatist forces following their divergent traditional, ethical, cultural, social and religious mode of lives, to come ahead with the same demand at the cost of Assam. But one should also remember that the tribal people of Northeast region special in the Naga Hills had been in prolonged isolation. No efforts were applied from the Indian side to bring them under the current of Indian nationalism. The British while living with them had also rooted separatist tendency in their mind. Moreover, the Assamese elites had established their strong hold over political and economic affairs where the tribal people who had been tagged on Assam against their will, remained the subject of negligence and exploitation. The imposition of Assamese language over these people created apathy against the Assamese’ chauvinism and their “big brotherly attitude.”

Such step motherly treatment of the Assamese elites made the tribal leaders aware of having their own separate political institutions. According to Sajal Naga at this very juncture “No other assurances and alternative suggestions could satisfy them and ultimately the political map of North-East had to be reorganised by forming separate hill states of Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland.”

Thus the creation of Nagaland state may not be considered as a wrong step of the Government of India. The politics of insurgency banking upon the moral and material support of China and Pakistan in the Naga Hills was active. The Government of India had the strength to crush down the Naga rebellion, no doubt, but such policy would have boomeranged because the question was not to suppress the Nagas, but to win them over. The members of the Indian parliament who opposed the creation of Nagaland state were either ignorant of real situation of the Northeast or were prejudicial to their approach. Refuting such prejudicial approach of the Lok Sabha members Mr S.C. Jamir, the Naga representative of the Lok Sabha, rightly said, “The creation of the Nagaland state within the Indian Union is a matter of pride for India because we have in the Nagas a brave, honest and hard-working set of people. I feel that Nagas have got a right to claim a place in

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the Union of India." Hem Baruah an Assamese member of the House also agreed that "This political settlement arrived by the Government of India with the Naga People's Convention led by Imkongliba Ao is an act of sagacity." Pt Nehru, justifying the stand of his Government in this regard said that the creation of Nagaland state would not encourage fissiparous and disruptionist tendencies, it would rather help in bringing the Naga people in the mainstream of India.

Pt Nehru was very much right in his approach. The years and political events, which took place in Nagaland after creation of the Nagaland state, proved that the Naga people except the extremists who were now in minority, began to incline more and more towards democratic processes which were set in the state and take much interest in party politics. The creation of Nagaland state provided the Naga people their own legislature, executive and bureaucracy. Article 371 (A) granted them special status by protecting their social, cultural, religious and political interests. They were given a common High Court for Assam and Nagaland. However, the expectation of the government of India that creation of Nagaland state as a positive direction to finish up the Naga insurgency could not be realised. No doubt, the creation of Nagaland state was a definite hard blow to the leaders of the freedom struggle because the leaders who had been fighting together for the same cause (Naga freedom) were sharply divided. The Naga freedom movement continued, no doubt, but the strength of the movement had weakened to a great extent. The majority of the Naga leaders giving up the path of militancy joined different rank and file of the Government that were created soon after inauguration of the new state of Nagaland on 1st December, 1963. Creation of Nagaland state opened the floodgate of progress and prosperity of the Naga people. It also opened the way for free play of party politics in Nagaland involving numerous Naga politicians and political workers on one hand, increased the wrath of those Naga leaders who were yet beyond the political involvement of the state on the other. They, while intensifying their hostile activities against the Governments of India and Nagaland both, began to blame the Naga moderate leaders as 'puppets' in the hands of the Indian politicians. The creation of Nagaland state, in fact weakened the strength of the leaders of the freedom fighters, but it hardly discouraged

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2 Ibid.
3 Ibid. Colms. 4573-75.
them. Their loyalty towards Naga freedom and their activities to achieve it could not be finished up. The rebel leaders became more busy with their affairs and established close contact with the alien governments with a view to obtaining armed trainings for their soldiers, getting arms and ammunitions and internationalising the Naga issue in the coming years. Despite all these, efforts were applied to reconcile the underground Nagas and bring normalcy in the state. The process of cease-fire and peace talks began with the underground set up under such process.