CHAPTER V
IMPACT OF BRITISH POLICY AND
THE EMERGENCE OF NAGA POLITICS

British colonial administration as an alien force had a profound socio-political impact on the Nagas. The maintenance of law and order, introduction of 'civilising' agencies such as christianity and education, development of modern means of communication, and above all, the invasion of the Nagas, a stagnant society thus far, with all progressive forces of change both within and outside the district inevitably brought about gradual transformation in Naga Hills. Obviously changes in economic, social and religious dimensions influenced the corresponding changes in socio-political life of the people. As a matter of fact, historical events of the period strongly suggest that material and social changes and socio-political change went hand in hand.

I
Socio-Political Impact

To assess the extent of colonial socio-political impact on the Nagas, it will be useful to recall the historical background under which the Nagas had to react to the given situation.
The Anglo-Naga relations of the pre-effective administration were marked by Naga opposition to the advance of the British until finally they were defeated and compelled to co-exist with their conquerors. Thus, following the futile attempt of the Nagas to oust the British occupation forces from Kohima in 1879, the British extended active administration in Naga Hills in 1881 and their rule became an established fact. Consequent upon the acceptance of British administrations over them, the Nagas came under alien rule for the first time in their tribal history.

The self-contained Naga village, which the colonial rule accepted as the administrative unit, remained basically a natural barrier to their social cohesion or forging themselves into a strong and united people. The system of village units not only divided them but also remained a permanently weakening factor which provided the British easier means to deal with them should any law and order problem arise. As for instance, the British

4. For details, see p. of this chapter.
suppressed the recalcitrant villages of Khonoma, Lazami, Rotomi and Pangsha at different times.¹

Within the district, the process of colonialism largely engaged the attention of the Nagas. The new administration subjected the people to the agencies of colonialism - administration, Christianity, education, public health, agriculture, communication - the "whitmen's burden" of civilizing their subjects.²

Meanwhile schools began to attract the Naga youths to modern education.³ Education not only awakened their socio-political awareness but also opened the doors for employment opportunities in government service as well as in mission schools and churches.⁴

3. The Naga Hills district had only 6 schools in 1883 which increased to 161 in 1947, and the number of pupils which was only 107 in 1883 increased to 17, 443 in 1946. See General Report on Public Instructions in Assam, 1883-84, 1946-49, and Legislative Assembly Debates, vol. IV, 1938, pp. 799-800.
Another facet of impact which was the outcome of colonial isolationist policy was the non-involvement of the Nagas in the freedom struggle which dominated the Indian sub-continent during the first half of the 20th century.¹ Thus when the Indian sub-continent was going through the trauma of national liberation under the leadership of the National Congress, the people of Naga Hills were going through a socio-religious movement under the leadership of the American Baptist Mission.

The colonial administration feared domination of the Nagas by the advanced communities and accordingly, as stated earlier, took measures for their protection as well as violation through constitutional provisions. This, however, resulted in the artificial separation of the people of the plains and the hills.² This colonial legacy of the fear of plains' domination became, it appears, more evident in the minds of the Nagas who, with the approach of the decolonisation of the Indian sub-continent, became more forceful in their demand for

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¹ Although in the 19th century the Nagas fought against the British forces, they were defeated. Once the British rule was imposed on them, they neither revolted against the British nor participated in the national freedom struggle.

² Rustomji, N., op. cit., p. 27.
At the same time, the process of colonialization had accelerated the formation of classes and by doing so new levels of consciousness among the people of the district. As a gradual impact of the colonial system of administration, a new Naga middle class emerged gradually. The middle class not only became economically better off through its earning opportunities as job holders but also had developed a new socio-political awareness of its own society. The new education brought its constituents in touch with the modern civilization with all its impacts. Thus, with the spread of colonial culture through Christianity and western education, there sprang up a native class of 'intellectuals'. Later events suggest that this class began to apply its minds to the problems of the Naga society as a whole. It is also clear that their consciousness eventually gave rise to the idea of Naga Nationalism. Thus the emergence of Naga elites

1. Fox Deptt. Pol-E, File No. 3(7)-1/45. Petition from the Nagas for constitutional changes.

2. Gaomburas, Dobashis, teachers, government servants, pastors and educated people, are taken together as 'intellectuals' in the context of the 1st half of the 20th century Naga Society.

become evident at the beginning of the 20th century.

Apart from the influence of western education, both regional and international events influenced the Naga society. Almost simultaneously, two major historical events emerged confronting the British Raj which directly dragged the Nagas into active involvement. One was the Kuki revolt of 1917-19 and the other the great world war of 1914-1918. In suppressing the Kuki rebellion of Manipur, the government recruited the Nagas as labour force and employed them as porters during the operation against the Kukis.\(^1\) In the first world war, a 2,000 strong Naga labour corps was sent to France which had an eye-opening impact on the Nagas who returned home with rich experience of the outside world.\(^2\) Apart from active physical participation as a labour force, the Naga civilian population was also involved in the war by their having to contribute to the war loan. In all, they subscribed Rs.65,254, which, "considering the poverty of the hills", said Reid, as a "contribution was remarkable".\(^3\) Meanwhile,

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1. For details of the Kuki revolt, see Assam Secretariat, Pol-A, December 1917, nos.39-40.


3. Assam Secretariat, Pol-A, September 1931, nos.20-94.
by the turn of the 20th century, a good number of Nagas were studying in various schools with the thrill of being able to read and write. The Naga middle class was thus in the making.

II

The Formation of Naga Club

The close of the first world war was marked by a significant socio-political upsurge amongst the Nagas. The leading Nagas consisting of Headmen, Dobashis and government servants together formed the Naga Club in 1919. The Naga club had two branches, one at Kohima and the other at Mokokchung, the two premier administrative centres in Naga Hills. The objective of the club was primarily to look after the welfare of the Nagas by the promotion of understanding, development of fraternal feeling and unity among the Nagas. It was also a common platform for them to discuss the important affairs of the Naga society. Nevertheless, later development of the club clearly testified that this organization was formed with a foresight to maintain distinctive Naga identity. Its formation thus provided the needed social and political foundation to the Naga tribes and was symbolic of the

1. Luthra, P.K., Nagaland from a district to a state, p.2.
emerging or rather incipient sense of solidarity among the Nagas. As a social organisation, it was an unprecedented step in the annals of the Nagas. Although the club was formed with the primary purpose of assisting the colonial administration in understanding the social and administrative problems of the Nagas, it also assumed socio-political responsibility for the nascent Naga Society on the plane of social welfare.

On January 10, 1929, the Indian Statutory Commission visited Kohima under the chairmanship of Sir John Simon with Mr. Clement Attlee as one of its members. The Commission asked the Naga leaders whether they would like to join the "New Reformed Scheme". In response, the members of the Naga Club, who met the Commission as 'representatives' of the Nagas, submitted a memorandum demanding that Naga Hills be withdrawn from the Reformed Scheme and kept directly under the British government. It also expressed the desire that Nagas be permitted to determine their political future when the British left Naga Hills. It stated: "You are the only people who have ever conquered us and when you go, we should be as we were."

Apart from the submission of this historic memorandum, the club as the only social organisation of the district functioned peacefully without any notable events.\(^1\) Over time, some sub-tribal organizations such as Lotha and Ao were formed in 1923 and 1928 respectively.\(^2\) These miniature tribal social organizations had no official sanction. On the other hand, a few prominent tribal leaders settled cases and disputes according to their respective local customs and traditions, and they functioned voluntarily. A concrete instance of the existence of voluntary services among the individual Naga tribes may be ascertained from the statement of Sir Robert Reid, the Governor of Assam. Speaking of his tour in Nokokchung sub-division of Naga Hills district, Reid wrote to Linlithgow: "A very interesting matter which I was able to discuss and also see something of on the spot, was a road, at present only the width of a bridle path, which the Ao tribe of Nagas have themselves cut from Nokokchung right down to Amguri in the plains. This follows an excellent and easy alignment from the sub-divisional headquarters to the plains, far better than any existing

\[\begin{align*}
1. & \text{Asoso Yenuo, op. cit., p.161.} \\
2. & \text{S.G.N., The Case of the Nagas. 1964, pp.21-22.}
\end{align*}\]
outlet. They are now anxious that the Government should bridge and metal the road and take it over so that it can be used for motor traffic. They have promised, and I have no doubt they will fulfil the promise, to provide all the necessary labour free of cost."¹ Similarly, the question that the Nagas maintained their own communication without the financial assistance of the Government was raised by Shri Amolakh Chand, M.P., in the Parliament debate in 1951. In reply the Minister of Communication, Shri Prakasa stated: "The Naga people are a very disciplined and well organised people. They have done lots of things in their villages and their territory for their own good. They have established their own courts and their own schools and have constructed many roads themselves."²

Obviously the existence of these welfare services signified that the individual tribes were all active in the development of their own community under their local leaders be it de facto or de jure. This also showed a strong tendency of growing aspect in the direction of greater social and political integration of the Nagas.

¹. Linlithgow Papers, MSS, Eur. F.125/32, see Letter from Robert Reid to Linlithgow, February 6, 1939.
III

Kabui and Kacha Naga Movement

The other popular upsurge which took place as a counter-product of British administration was the Kabui and Kacha Naga movement under the leadership of Jodanang and Gaidinliu. This movement was popularly known as 'Haraka Cult'. In 1931, Jodanang set up himself in Kambiron, Manipur, as a 'Messiah King' of the Kabui and Kacha Nagas. The initial objective of the movement was to defend and preserve their traditions and religious beliefs both from the hateful treatment of backward hillmen by their Hindu neighbours and the advance of proselytising Christianity which came in the wake of colonial administration. However, the ultimate aim was to establish 'a Naga Raj' which would be a millennium on earth where there would be no wants.

1. The 'Haraka Cult' was a socio-religious movement which opposed Christianity, denounced British imperialism and the Kuki migration into the Naga inhabited areas. However, it also associated with the belief of miraculous healing, pythons, and human sacrifice—ostensibly all center round Jodanang's dream of achieving the 'Naga Raj' — free from wants and oppression. Asoso Young, op. cit., p.125.

2. Gangumei Kamei, Fifty years of Zeliangrong movement, 1927-77, pp.6-7.

3. Ibid.
The proclamation of a Kacha Naga Raj was also basically connected with the historical background. In the past, the community had suffered from oppression by the Angami Nagas of the pre-colonial period. They also had unpleasant memories of the suffering they underwent during the Kuki rebellion (1917–19). The Kukis cut up many Kacha Naga villages resulting in the loss of lives and properties. Thus the declaration of Kacha and Kabui Naga Raj was associated with bitter resentment against the Kukis and the Angamis, and was based on a determined plan to exterminate the former. The Assam Administration Report of 1931–32 confirmed the claims of Jedanang as follows: "His day and that of the Kabuis and Kacha Nagas had come at last. In three years, all would be fulfilled. He knew by his miraculous powers that during the Kuki rebellion the Kukis captured two Naga girls, and brutally murdered one and buried the other alive. Therefore, the Kukis were to be exterminated within the three years. Nagas

1. Reid, Robert, History of the Frontier Areas bordering on Assam, p.188. Prior to the introduction of British rule in Naga Hills, the Angami Nagas practised the collection of taxes on the Kacha Naga villages by sheer rights of force. Thus in one of his statements, Jedanang has expressed his dislike of the Angamis regarding them as oppressive overlords of the Kacha Nagas and Kabuis; see also An account of the province of Assam, Chap. XIII, pp.

were not to strike the first blow, but were to be absolutely ready. The first act of aggression by any Kuki was to be a signal for a general attack on them, and each Naga village was to massacre all Kukis within reach. This was to be kept an absolute secret from government and the Kukis, and anyone who revealed it would die.¹

Among his people, Jodanang was regarded as a 'Messiah' who was long expected to liberate the Nagas and to exterminate their arch enemies, the Kukis.² Accordingly, he had many loyal followers among the Kacha and Kabui Nagas, who treated him as a God and, believing that he was the 'Messiah' for whom they had been waiting for liberation, offered tributes to him.³

Coinciding with the assertion of his Messianic position, the Kukis feared reprisals and many of them left their villages and settled down at Imphal for safety, for they had apprehension that Jodanang was collecting guns with the intention of attacking them. Obviously,

1. Assam Administration Reports, 1931-32, Part I, p.11.
3. Reid, Robert, op. cit., p.167. He demanded and received tribute from his faithfuls in the form of cash and domestic animals.
they had a strong reason behind their suspicion; during their last revolt they had cut up many Kabui Naga villages.  

Meanwhile within a period of one year (1930), Jodanang had won the allegiance of his own people. In his endeavor to make a concerted attempt for the liberation of his people from the British Control, he sent his followers (Khampaie) to preach about liberation movement. The movement spread like wildfire in the Zemai, Liengmai and Rongmai Naga inhabited areas where people indulged in kidnapping and murdering the plains people for sacrifice to god. In March 1930 four Manipuri traders were killed on their way to Silchar and sacrificed to god.  

Jodanang’s movement became a real law and order problem for the Government as it created large scale disaffection and unrest among the inhabitants of Kacha Nagas, Kabuis and Kukis in the three different districts of Manipur, North Cadhar Hills and Naga Hills. Understanding the gravity of the problem, the government took strong measures to nip it in the bud. Taking prompt steps, government sent its police forces to arrest Jodanang

1. Assam Secretariat, op. cit., nos. 20-94.
3. Assam Administration Report, 1934, part II, p.3.
and his followers. Jodanang was arrested on 19 February from Cachar under section 108 of the Criminal Procedure Code. He was, however, taken back to Manipur under an extradition warrant. He was tried in the court of the political Agent, Manipur and sentenced to death on 13 June 1931 and hanged on 29 August 1931 on the charge of making human sacrifice of the Manipuri Traders.¹ After his execution, Higgins the political Agent, Manipur, visited his temple at Kamviron and destroyed it.²

Although Government had the belief that the movement would cease with the execution of Jodanang, it did not dampen the spirit of the movement. His companion, 'Rani'.³

1. Assam Secretariat, op. cit., nos.422-447.
3. Gaidinliu joined Jodanang's movement as a teenager. After the arrest and subsequent execution of Jodanang, she carried out the movement as the leader of the Kacha and Kabui Nagas. In one of his statements, Jawaharlal Nehru, a freedom fighter himself, described Gaidinliu to be the queen of the Nagas – 'Rani'. This statement of calling her 'Rani' added to her importance and later her name came to be known as 'Rani' Gaidinliu. In October 1932, she was arrested by the British Government and imprisoned for life. In 6 June 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru, then president of Indian Congress Party wrote to Sir Akbar Hydari, Governor of Assam to set the 'Rani' free. Subsequently, she was released in 1948, after Independence of India. See Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, vol.1, pp.501-502.
Gaidinliu who was regarded as his spiritual incarnation, carried on the freedom movement with a renewed fervour. In her bid to strengthen the movement the 'Rani' established the belief among her people that the Messiah King was again among them and that it was to him the Kabui Nagas owed allegiance. Thus she moved around with her escort, spreading her cult from one village to another.

Assessing the prevalent situation, on 9th June 1932, Mills, Deputy Commissioner, Naga Hills, stated his views thus: "The real danger of the movement is the spirit of defiance now abroad. Nagas who are ordinarily truthful and friendly, have been taught that officials are to be lied to and deprived of information. These lessons will not quickly be forgotten. The capture of Gaidinliu will not end the agitation. There is a warrant for murder out against her and she can be dealt with when caught. She will be succeeded by one or more 'mediums'. To be 'medium' is not an offence under any law. Yet they will continue to keep the people in a state of constant excitement, and Nagas will continue to be set over against government and

1. Assam Secretariat, Pol-A, June 1933, nos.59-315.
2. Ibid. It was alleged that with some men impersonating Jodanang she claimed he had come to life again.
Kukis. The result from the administrative point of view will be serious. Our first object is the capture of Gaidinliu. Once she is in our hands we must aim at gradually suppressing the movement by punishment, persuasion and personal influence. This will be a long task.¹

In taking counter measures, soon after the revival of the cult under 'Rani' Gaidinliu, the Governor-General-in-council sanctioned organised operations to arrest her and her followers.² The Deputy Commissioner, Naga Hills, was placed in command of the operations with the Sub-Divisional Officer, Cachar Hills and Political Agent, Manipur, ready to provide necessary assistance to him and his forces.

Consequently, taking prompt measures, the government sent the Assam Rifles to capture the 'Rani' and her party. However, on several occasions, the party escaped by evading arrest and sometimes after opening fire on the Assam Rifles. After a long and difficult operations, she was captured from Pulomi village by Captain Mecondal. Subsequently she was tried at Manipur on a charge of murder and sentenced to imprisonment for life.³

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1. Assam Secretariat, Pol-A, June 1933, nos.59-315.
2. Reid, Robert, op. cit., p.171.
   Assam Secretariat, Confidential, Pol-A, September 1936, nos.1-68.
The movement was still continued by her followers,\(^1\)
with the people of the disaffected villages claiming magical
powers to cure illnesses, holding ceremonies to commemorate
Gaidinliu and Jodanang, and confirming themselves his
followers in their refusal to pay taxes to the government.

The main followers of the cult were, however, arrested
and the movement subsided with the imprisonment of Gomhei
and Areliu, and the death of Italekpa of Lalo in jail.\(^2\)
Among the remaining principal activists, Dekeo remained
absconded until November, 1940, when he was shot by the
Assam Rifles guard at Henima while attempting to escape
from a house which they had surrounded. Italekpa, Ivongteing
and Ramjo were not pursued further for the petty character
of the cases against them. After the crackdown on the
main activists, although there were periodical rumours
of fresh attempts to revive the Gaidinliu cult, the movement
never reached the scale it did in Jodanang's day.\(^3\) As a
precautionary measure against its revival, the government
maintained its police outpost at Henima in the Kacha Naga
country.\(^4\)

\(^1\) Assam Administration Report, 1934, part I, p.1.
\(^2\) Reid, Robert, op. cit., p.174.
\(^3\) Ibid.
\(^4\) Ibid., p.175.
IV

Nagas in the Second World War

The second world war brought about a great transforming impact on the Nagas. The significance of the war for the Naga area may be seen from the statement of Lord Mountbatten: "The Battle of Kohima will probably go down as one of the greatest battles in history. It was in effect the Battle of Burma."\(^1\)

The Nagas, who had already become loyal subject of the British, sided with them and contributed in a big way to the success of the allies in the eastern sector of India. They served the allied forces as military guides, guerrillas, regular forces, interpreters and informants.\(^2\) Since the war involved the people of the whole district, they also suffered from the ravages of war. Summing up the course of the war and its effect on the Nagas the Census of India, 1951, reported: "During the decade Naga Hills suffered the worst catastrophe in its history in the shape of the Japanese invasion of India. The Japanese came as far as Kohima town in April 1944. In their attempt to dislodge the Japanese from the hill strongholds into which they had

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dug themselves, the allies subjected Kohima and neighbouring villages to heavy aerial bombardment repeatedly. As a result most of the houses at Kohima and elsewhere were destroyed or damaged. The district has not yet fully recovered from the ravages of the second world war, e.g., the previous residence of the Deputy Commissioner at Kohima is now a cemetery. Many brave allied soldiers are buried here with the following fine and arresting tablet:

When you go home
Tell them of us and say
For their tomorrow
We gave our today. ¹

In this fateful war, three Nagas in the regular force received the Military Cross, nine the Military Medal, one the I.D.M.S., and six Naga civilians, M.B.E.² Moreover, the villagers of Lazami received a handsome cash award from the government for the capture of twenty-six Japanese soldiers.³ On the whole, Nagas won great

1. **Census of India 1951**, vol.XII, Assam Part I-A, p.54.
2. Elwin, V. **Nagaland**, pp.102-03.
3. **Political case no.13, D.R.O. Kohima, December 1945.** In all an amount of Rs.5,500 was awarded to the villagers of Lazami.
appreciation from the British soldiers with whom they fought shoulder to shoulder against the Japanese invaders. Field Marshal Slim in his book 'Defeat into Victory' has paid fine tribute to them for the loyal and consistent service rendered to the allied forces. Speaking of the Nagas he wrote: "The gallant Nagas whose loyalty, even in the most depressing times of the invasion, never faltered despite floggings, torture, execution and the burning of their villages, they refused to aid the Japanese in every way or to betray our troops. This active help to us was beyond value or praise... They guided our columns, collected information, ambushed enemy patrols, carried our supplies, and brought in our wounded under the heaviest fire—and thus, being the gentlemen they were, often refused all payments". He concludes that many a British and Indian soldiers owed his life to them, and no soldier of the Fourteenth Army who meet them will ever think of them but with admiration and affection."¹

Obviously, as a result of the war, the economy of the Nagas were seriously damaged. Pigs and poultry which formed their domestic economy were largely wiped out.²

¹ Slim, Field Marshal Viscount, Defeat into Victory, pp.341-42.
² Home Deptt. Political, File No.10/7/1944. The destruction of economy in terms of domestic animals might be accounted to the belligerent situation which compelled both friends and foes a like to rely on any available foodstuff. It is said that the Japanese forces used even wild plants like the Jungle animals.
Moreover, Kohima and the surrounding villages were totally devastated by aerial bombardment as well as ground battles. The extent of the impact of the second world war on the Nagas was lucidly expressed by Dr. J.H. Hutton in *Man in India*, in June 1946: "In Kohima, the biggest collection of houses in the administrative area of the Naga Hills not one house was left standing after the Japanese invasion, and in the District 12,000 houses altogether needed to be rebuilt... This does not sound much as compared with the damage in this country... The impact of the war prevented the planting of rice at the proper season and the people have therefore to be fed. The pigs, the stable flesh food of the country, have disappeared. There have been some 100,000 persons in urgent need of relief... But the purely material effects of the attempted Japanese invasion of Assam hills will probably, in the long run, prove to be far less important much less profound, then its moral and psychological effects..."  

The other facet of the impact of second world war was inflation which became a matter of concern to the Government. In view of the development of the region on war footing, specially for road construction, there was

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unprecedented flow of money into the region in general and to the individual public in the form of coolie wages. Speaking of the economic effect of the second world war on the region, in June 1943, the Governor of Assam wrote to the Viceroy of India: "While war has its inconveniences and dangers it has phenomenally pleasant effects on their pockets. For this is all of the worst spots for inflation in the corner of India that is feeling inflation most. In Manipur, for example, the ordinary price of a new bicycle is Rs.650 to Rs.700. As such as Rs.1,000 has been paid for one and second hand ones fetch Rs.400 and more. On the road Nagas, to whom five annas a day was wealth before the war, can still earn upto five rupees a day in places, despite the reduced work... the populace has now more money than it has any use for."\(^1\)

The second world war was undoubtedly a traumatic experience for the Nagas. Apart from the material impact, their contacts with the British, American and the Japanese and other allied forces had an immense impact on them in their socio-political aspect as well.

1. Linlithgow Papers, MSS, Bur. F.125/36, see Letter from Reid to Linlithgow, 5th January 1943.
The Emergence of N.M.C.

The closing of the second world war led the government to further organize the Naga Hills. Deeply gratified with the loyal service of the Nagas in their recent war with Japan, the British Government were willing to do anything good for the Nagas. Expressing his profound happiness over the news of Naga support to the Allied forces, Lord Wavell, Governor General of India, wrote to Amery, the Secretary of State: "I have written to Clow (Governor of Assam) asking what can be done to reward the staunchness of these people, both immediately and later. It will probably be difficult to do very much for them, but I feel we must try." He further added in a following letter: "everyone agrees that the Nagas did magnificent work in helping us." Moreover, back in Naga Hills, British officials, who had developed close acquaintance with the Nagas, were encouraging them to hold together, for the preservation of their identity. At Kohima, the official Bangalow of the Deputy Commissioner, C.R. Pawsey, had

2. Ibid., no.593, p.1110.
3. Asoso Yonou, op. cit., p.162.
become a meeting place for the Naga leaders, where they regularly discussed their common political aspirations. Their mentor, C.R. Pawsey, not only commanded their loyal respect but also had a deep love for them. With its background, the NNC came into existence.\(^1\) In April 1945, C.R. Pawsey, Deputy Commissioner, established an institution, which was thus called the Naga Hills District Tribal Council, with the aim of uniting the Nagas and repairing some of the damages done during the world war II. Later development, however, strongly suggests that these two objectives were closely followed by the British policy of helping the Nagas to have local self-government within the province of Assam.\(^2\)

On 2nd February 1946, this council met at Wokha and changed its nomenclature to that of the Naga National Council.\(^3\) The aim of the NNC was to foster the welfare and social aspiration of the Nagas, and it received official

\(^1\) Ibid., pp.159-61


\(^3\) Prakash Singh, op. cit., p.89.
patronage as a unifying and moderating influence. On 19 June 1946, the NNC had its general meeting at Wokha and the members drafted the following resolutions which were approved by the house:

(1) "This Naga National Council stands for the solidarity of all the Naga tribes including those of the un-administered areas;

(2) This council strongly protest against the grouping of Assam with Bengal; and

(3) The Naga Hills should be continuously included in an autonomous Assam in a free India, with local autonomy and due safeguards for the interests of the Nagas and the Naga tribes should have a separate electorate."\(^2\)

Thus going by this resolution, the original political objective of the NNC was to achieve local autonomy for the hills within the province of Assam and to train the Nagas for self-government.\(^3\) The resolution of the NNC was

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1. Asoso Yonuo, *op. cit.*, p.162. Opening the hall of the central tribal council on 27 November, 1946, P. Adams. The Sub-divisional Officer, Mohokchung stressed the importance of Unity among the Naga tribes. Concluding his speech: "Last of all" he said, "I should request you to stop the use of hot words, but you must remember that these words always delay the unity of your people. Try to settle all affairs and misunderstandings amicably. By doing this you will make of yourself a nation.


despatched to the President of Indian Congress Party.
Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, who in August 1946 in his letter
to the President of NNC, wrote: "I am glad that the Naga
National Council stands for the solidarity for all the
Naga tribes, including those unadministered territories.
I agree entirely with your decision that the Naga Hills
should constitutionally be included in an autonomous
Assam in a free India with local autonomy and due safe-
guards for the interests of the Nagas. As for a separate
electorate for the Nagas, I am not clear in my mind as to
how this will work. Generally speaking we are against
separate electorates as these limit and injure a small
group by keeping it separated from the rest of the nation.
But, if the Naga territory is given a measure of autonomy,
some arrangement will have to be made for their proper
representation."¹ Nehru himself appreciated the objectives
of the NNC and set down his views that the Naga Hills should
have local autonomy within the province of Assam.² Meanwhile,
in trying to strengthen its infra-structures, the NNC
encouraged the tribal councils already set up by individual
tribes and started others to administer their own local

2. Ibid.
affairs and consider possible reforms. It also published a monthly official newspaper, the Naga Nation, for a few years.¹ The NNC was initially composed of 29 members who represented the tribes on the principle of proportional representation, i.e., one member for every 10,000 population. Over time it received popular support and became a mass movement having a youth wing and a women's wing. Every man, woman and child belonged to the council. Every Naga family was expected to contribute towards the maintenance of the council on voluntary basis. Contributions ranged anything from a pumpkin to handful of paddy or from one rupee to hundred and even more. Cows and mithuns were often contributed by one or other well-to-do-family. Office bearers were paid if there was money. Every tribal council gave strong emphasis on the village, as a unit and it helped to bring the Nagas into a strongly united people even when no means of mass communication such as


* According to A.Z. Phizo, four-fifths of the members of the NNC were government servants. See A.Z. Phizo's letter to H.E. Sri C. Rajagopalachari, Governor General of India, from Presidency Jail Calcutta, 22 November, 1948.
newspapers and radio was there.\textsuperscript{1} This also showed strong public support for the NNC, its leadership and policy.

With the emergence of the NNC\textsuperscript{2} a determined efforts was made towards self-determination. The declared policy of the NNC was to fight for a separate Naga country and to develop it according to the genius and taste of the Nagas. Nevertheless, while retaining Naga as a distinctive people having their own country and home rule, it also desired that Nagaland should remain connected with India in matters of broader issues such as development, defence, finance and foreign relation and in whatever might be necessary for the benefit of the Naga. In December 1946, Imit Aliba, the president of the NNC, declared at Kohima: "The NNC stands for the unification of all the Naga tribes and their freedom... Our country is connected with India, connected in many ways. We should continue that connection. I do not mind whether future India be a Congress Government or a League Government. But as a distinctive community, as I stated before, we must also develop according to our genius and taste. We shall enjoy home-rule in our country, but on broader issues be connected with India. We must

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{1.} The case of the Nagas, NNC, p. 22.
\item \textbf{2.} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
fight for it, we must get it, keep on watching".  

Earlier, soon after the second world war, the Cabinet Mission came to India to study the political situation in the Indian subcontinent. The Naga National Council which had been formed in February 1946 to voice the Naga sentiment sent a delegation to New Delhi and informed the Cabinet Mission on April 9, 1946 that the Nagas' future would not be bound by any arbitrary decision of the British Government and that they would not accept any decision if the Nagas had not been consulted about it previously.

With the impending transfer of power, the political events of the Indian sub-continent started moving fast, the Naga leaders soon realised the necessity to spell out their political aspirations in unequivocal terms. The NNC now made clear its demand for full independence.

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2. Ibid.
3. Legislative Assembly Debates, vol.III, 1947, p.2133. The Naga demand for full-fledged independence was published in Orient Press of India, dated 23rd December 1946, according to which Messrs. A.Z. Phizo and T. Sakhrie in an interview with the special correspondent of the Azad, stated that the Nagas stand for a separate independent state of their own. The question of its authenticity was raised in the Legislative Assembly by Seth Govind Das with Jawaharlal Nehru, replying in affirmative. However, Nehru dismissed the demand, saying that that statement had no particular importance and also did not represent any substantial opinion.
The Indian National Congress had already come to know of this demand. Nehru, then President of the Indian National Congress, set down his views in his letter to the NNC President that the Nagas were backward people, who would require considerable help for their all round development and also that the land was too small to stand by itself politically and economically. When India became an independent country, it would not be possible for the British to hold on to Naga territory. Thus Nagaland would be left isolated between China and India. Therefore, Naga territory must become an integral part of India. Nehru, thus, treated Naga demand for a sovereign state rather lightly. His view of Naga political stand was that it was geographically, politically and economically not viable for Naga areas to exist as a separate country and they should be an integral part of India.\(^1\) However, from his

\(^1\) The Collected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, vol.15, pp.278-79. In his letter to the President of the Naga National Council, Nehru wrote on the future of the Nagas as follows: "It is obvious that the Naga territory in Eastern Assam is too small to stand by itself, politically or economically. It lies between two huge countries, India and China, and part of it consists of rather backward people, who require considerable help when India is independent, as it is found to be soon, it is not possible for the British Government to hold the Naga territory or any part of it. They would be isolated there between India and China. Inevitably, therefore, this Naga territory must form part of India and of Assam with which it has developed such close association..."
statement it is clear that India was yet to make the claim that the land of the Nagas formed an integral part of India.

The NNC, however, continued to stick to its demand for an independent Naga state. On 29 March 1947 the NNC sent its Memorandum for self-determination to the Prime Minister Mr. Clement Attlee, and also to Lord Simon and Mr. Churchill. However, doubting the proper representation of the Naga people as a whole, the India office did not acknowledge the memorandum. Furthermore, a delegation led by Phizo met Lord Mountbatten, then Governor General of India, with the suggestion that the new Indian Government should act as the guardian power for 10 years after which the Nagas would be free to determine their political future. No direct reply to this request was given, but in vague terms it was expressed that the Nagas should make their wishes known to the advisory committee on the aboriginal


2. Angami Zapu Phizo was born in 1900 in the village of Khonoma. He started his career as a business man, served in the INA of Subhash Chandra Bose from 1943 to 1945, was in Central Jail, Rangoon, along with other INA prisoners after the British recaptured Burma. He returned to the Naga Hills in 1945 and joined the Naga National Council later, was elected President of the NNC in 1949 and has been its leader since then. In self-imposed exile in England since 1957.

tribes which was then due to visit Kohima. On the other hand, in April 1947, in his private letter to Earl of Listowel, Secretary of State, Mountbatten wrote: "The Naga National Council in their reference to an interim Government meant an interim form of British rule. The placing of the hill tribes under a Central Indian Government would mean that they would be subject to politicians at Delhi, who would be even more unaware of their needs than the politicians in Assam, and to whom they would have no access. If they can be brought with suitable safeguards within the framework of the Assam Constitution, they can themselves expect some share in the Government there and will have access to and influence over the Government... But the main problem is the protection of these people from exploitation and the preservation of their way of living". Lord Mountbatten thus foresaw the Naga case as a socio-economic problem.

During the partition of India, option was, in principle, given to the adjoining border people to join either India or Pakistan. For the North Eastern side, the Indian Constituent Assembly constituted a sub-

1. The Case of the Nagas, op. cit., p.2.
committee with the following members: Messrs Gopinath Bordoloi (Chairman), N.V. Thakkar, B.N. Rao, Ramadhyani (Secretary), Rev. Nichols Roy, Temjen Aliba Ao, and their co-opted members Pu Khawtinkhuma and Pu Saprawnga. This sub-advisory committee held its meeting in Shillong. The other members agreed to join the Indian Union, but the Naga representative, Temjen Aliba Ao, refused to do so and said: "We, the Nagas, cannot sign our names to be under India; we do not agree with it, and we resign." He then left the meeting without signing any contract with the Indian Constituent Assembly's sub-committee.¹

In May 1947, the members of the sub-committee visited Kohima and had a series of talks with the Naga National Council. However, the Nagas reiterated their stand that at the end of 10 years period under the guardianship of India, they should be left free to choose their own future. The committee took the position that they could not make any such recommendation to the Indian Constituent Assembly; the NNC maintained that they had to have a separate constitution of their own, apart from that of India. The Naga National Council tried to make it clear that the

Nagas would not accept any other kind of constitutional arrangement.¹

On the refusal of the Advisory Committee to make any suggestion to the Constituent Assembly on the question of the 10-years guardianship scheme, the NNC declared that, since the Nagas had their own constitution, the question of accepting any other constitutional arrangement did not arise. This deadlock was followed by talks with Sir Akbar Hydari, the Governor of Assam, in June 1947. The Governor being alive to the prevailing political development, assured the Naga leaders that the successor Indian Government had no sinister designs, that the Naga people would be treated as one with the rest of India and, special efforts would be made to avoid any dangers of exploitation from outside, allowing them at the same time full opportunities for development according to their own way of life and genius. As a consequence of the talks, a nine-point agreement was formulated and signed between the Government of India and NNC.²


2. For details, see Gundeva, Y.D., War and Peace in Nagaland, pp.39-62.
The 'Hydari Agreement' acknowledged the NNC's right of control over all other spheres of Naga life ranging from Naga customary laws to ownership of land and taxation. But Article 9 ran: "The Governor of Assam as the Agent of the Government of the Indian Union will have a special responsibility for a period of ten years to ensure the due observance of this agreement; at the end of this period, the Naga National Council will be asked whether they require the above agreement to be extended for a further period or a new agreement regarding the future of the Naga people be arrived at".¹ This article gave rise to another deadlock, with the NNC claiming that it ensured the Nagas' right to opt out for complete independence on the expiry of the 10-year period and the Government of India giving a totally different interpretation to it.

At this critical juncture, the opinion of the NNC was divided. A section of the Council, along with Phizo, refused to accept constitutional arrangements worked out with Akbar Hydari, because, it said, the agreement was rushed through without proper scope being given for discussion. Some members of NNC led by Phizo met Muhammad

Ali Jinnah, the Muslim League leader, Jaipal Singh, the Adivasi leader, and Mahatma Gandhi on 19 July 1947. The NNC delegation told them of the Nagas' determination to stay out of the Indian union. In reply Jinnah said: "It is a matter entirely for you to decide", and he expressed his sympathy for the Nagas. Jaipal Singh told the Nagas not to take a hasty decision. In reply to the desire expressed by the NNC delegation to declare themselves independent on 15th August 1957, Gandhi replied: "Why not now? Why wait for August 15? I was independent when the whole of India was under the British heel. You can be independent and if you have non-violence in common with me, no one can deprive you of independence."

Believing that Gandhiji had promised them independence, the NNC declared Naga Sovereign Independence on the 14th August, 1947. This implied that Nagaland had been an independent country even before India achieved her independence. The NNC conveyed the declaration of Naga independence to the Government of India and U.N.O. by cable. The U.N.O.

2. *Ibid*.
acknowledged the cable of the NNC. Nevertheless, feeling that to run a parallel Government might lead to violence, the NNC decided not to set up a parallel government. This was a genuine testimony to NNC's policy to settle the problem through peaceful means. However, before any solution could be made on Naga demand for independence, India became an independent country on 15th August 1947.¹

¹ The Case of the Nagas, op. cit., p.5; Aram, M., op. cit., p.117.