7

Postcolonial Imperialism

The Friendship March – the World Peace Brigade's attempt to walk from India to China in order to promote peace between those countries – halted in Ledo, Assam, India, in January 1964. Because elements of the march's leadership supported nationalist movements within those two countries, China would not grant visas to allow the march to cross the border and the Indian government grew increasingly hostile toward the endeavor. Three weeks later and 300 kilometers from where the march ended, the Nagaland Baptist Church Council held a convention in Wokha, Nagaland, "crying in the wilderness for peace."[1] Led by the missionary Reverend Longri Ao, nicknamed the "Naga Prophet," the Council chose two of the World Peace Brigade's leaders – Jayaprakash Narayan (JP) and Reverend Michael Scott – along with the chief minister of Assam, Bimala Prasad Chaliha, to head a peace mission with the purpose of arbitrating between the Indian government and Naga nationalist insurgents in Northeast India.[2] The Peace Mission hoped to establish a platform of mutual trust from which peace could grow. However, "peace" did not correspond with "independence" – a distinction that echoed the

[1] History of Baptist missionary work in Nagaland, the formation of the Naga Baptist Church, and the church's history of reconciliation work: in John Thomas, *Evangelising the Nation: Religion and the Formation of Naga Political Identity* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2016). Quote in Nirmal Nibedon, *Nagaland: The Night of the Guerrillas* (New Delhi: Lancers Publishers, 1978), 109.

[2] Process described by I. Temjenba, speech from the 52nd Indo-Naga Ceasefire Day at Chedema Peace Hall, September 23, 2016, Chedema, Nagaland. Speech printed in the *Eastern Mirror* newspaper, viewed at the Nagaland Baptist Church Council Library, Kohima, Nagaland.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 11:11:21, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009305815.013

divergence between the aims of nationalist insurgent claimants and their transnational advocates.

That year, 1964, was not the first time the Naga Baptist Church had mediated between nationalist insurgency and Indian rule. In 1963, Scott had kept Reverend Ao abreast of his negotiations between Naga nationalists and Indian prime minister Nehru during the Friendship March; and a Naga Hills Ministers Peace Mission had taken place in the 1950s.[3] This latest effort, the 1964 Nagaland Peace Mission, was a civil society endeavor – made up of unofficial (i.e., Chaliha was not acting in his official capacity as Assam's chief minister), allegedly unaffiliated, volunteers – that sought to reconcile the question of Nagaland's political shape within, or alongside, that of India's.

Negotiations under the auspices of a civil society mission that did not officially represent either a nationalist movement or a state government seemed safely apolitical. However, the transnational network in which JP and Scott were key members was integrated into official government as well as international institutional circles of power and affiliated with a number of sometimes overlapping, sometimes contradictory movements and interests. JP and Scott were far from politically disinterested free agents – and the web of political causes that bound them extended to the Peace Mission.

SOVEREIGNTY ON THE EDGE

The Nagaland Peace Mission was a site for fashioning postcolonial state sovereignty in a classic borderland, a former edge of empire, a "neocolonial" hinterland.[4] Sovereignty is the international recognition of – and the totalizing control over – the zone of national self-determination, the political narrative that clothes power with legitimacy. Placement in a "periphery's periphery" – in a region lightly connected to its governing

[3] Michael Scott to Longri Ao, July 19, 1963, Rev. VK Nuh Papers, Dimapur, Nagaland. 1957 Overseas Planning Consultation Report, June 30–July 3, 1957 meeting in Golaghat to discuss report by Edward Singha, Longri Ao, Hazel Morris. Council of Baptist Churches of North East India Archives, Guwahati, Assam (hereafter, "CBC NEI Papers").

[4] Willem van Schendel, *The Bengal Borderland: Beyond State & Nation in South Asia* (London: Anthem Press, 2004); Maya Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Lives, Culture, and Conquest in the East, 1750–1850* (New York: Vintage, 2006); Asit Das, "The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) and Irom Sharmila's Struggle for Justice," *Countercurrents* (November 2011).

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 11:11:21, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009305815.013

capital as well as to global centers of power or governance – intensified claims of self-determination predicated on minority difference while attenuating the path of these claims to international forums. Nagaland's physical distance from New Delhi provided intellectual space for advocates who worked to reconcile Naga self-determination with Indian sovereignty. JP, Scott, and Chaliha had experience grappling with the process of constructing sovereignty for postcolonial states and nationalist movements claiming that status. They, and others who took part in the Peace Mission, found in the end that Indian sovereignty and Naga self-determination were a call and response: they were distinct political ideas, articulated by different parties; each was a direct commentary upon and a repudiation of the other.[5]

Before examining the Peace Mission and its powerbrokers, it is important to note a subject that is not centered in this narrative: factionalization within the Naga nationalist movement. The Naga nationalist leader Angami Zapu Phizo had left Nagaland in the late 1950s not only to gain international attention for the cause of Naga independence but also because he was losing control over the nationalist movement as some Nagas sought to strike a deal with New Delhi. By remaining in exile; Phizo was able to maintain symbolic leadership because he did not tarnish his authority by compromising with India; yet exile meant that he could not control the Naga nationalist insurgent movement on the ground. Each Naga negotiation with New Delhi, past and present, has created parties who signed off on negotiations and those who refused to do so, fracturing the Naga nationalist movement. Since these fissures often occurred along tribal lines, they were used by the Indian government to undermine the legitimacy of a Naga nation within a tribal society.[6] Choosing at which scale to locate a political question – national, international, regional, local, even tribal – is itself an argument as well as a matter of power relationships.[7] The Indian government has had a vested interest in defining Nagas as a set of tribal peoples rather than a nation and the Naga claim as a domestic or regional concern rather than an international

[5] On the mutually constitutive nature of majorities and minorities, see Benedict Anderson, "Majorities and Minorities," in *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the World* (New York: Verso, 1998), 318–30.

[6] Easterine Kire, *Walking the Roadless Road: Exploring the Tribes of Nagaland* (New Delhi: Aleph Book Company, 2019), 248–51.

[7] Lydia Walker, "The Political Geography of International Advocacy: Indian and American Cold War Civil Society for Tibet," *American Historical Review* 127, no. 4 (2022): 1581.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 11:11:21, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009305815.013

one – while Phizo, along with Scott, placed the Naga struggle within an international frame.

Situating the Naga claim of independence within the worldwide politics of decolonization explores global state-making processes outside the frame of the postcolonial state, by shifting focus from decolonization's promise to its limits, from its liberations to its oppressions. Yet, without nuance, critiques of postcolonial state sovereignty can slip into imperial nostalgia. Indeed, the networks that connected Nagas to international politics were imperial remnants, linked to the region through the legacies of colonial rule and missionary conversion. The primacy placed on advocates such as JP and Scott as interlocutors between nationalist movements and state governments reflected hierarchies of power within an international system being rearranged, rather than redistributed, by decolonization.[8] Their role also demonstrated the weakness of the Naga claim: that it remained the purview of unofficial advocates rather than of the United Nations.

Decolonization led to the triumph of certain nationalist claimants over others, of an India over a Nagaland. Over time, the "victors" have dominated narratives of colonies-turned-states, shaping who has received a "national" history of their independence struggle. In consequence, the narratives of those excluded from new state governments and positions of influence became local or regional rather than national or international. Yet, these historical actors continued their international activities in a variety of forms that worked around or challenged states – through civil society organizations or insurgent movements, or both. The histories of states-in-waiting and of those left behind by decolonization – both nationalists and their advocates – requires recognition that they were political and moral actors who sought liberation but were unable to delink themselves from the oppressions, past and present, that functioned as constraints.

THE POLITICS OF RECONCILIATION

The Naga Church was an entity that transcended the national scale of India and the regional context in which the church was embedded, because of its own global connections drawn from the history of missionary activity in the Indian Northeast. It was also the most powerful civil society organization in the region, maintaining an ambivalent relationship

[8] Robert Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2017).

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 11:11:21, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009305815.013

with the Indian government, which had worked to sever the church's ties to the United States by constraining American missionary activity. New Delhi forced the "indigenization" – the term used by American Baptists for the training and empowering of indigenous Christians to take on church leadership positions – of the Baptist Church in Northeast India decades earlier than American Baptists chose to shift leadership positions in Burma, Congo, South India, and elsewhere to people from the community in which they served.[9] Indigenization ran parallel to decolonization and was itself an attempt to manage the forms that decolonization might take.

Missionaries from the United States portrayed themselves as bastions of Western/First World civilization threatened by decolonization and Cold War crises. Gerald Weaver, an American Baptist missionary serving in Congo during the Congo Crisis in the early 1960s considered himself part of the anticommunist vanguard in the decolonizing world. As he wrote in 1961, for those "on the outside of the Unites States looking in, it seems so much easier to see that we have talked away one previous Western stronghold after another and the Communists have reaped the benefits."[10] This perspective aligned neatly with the domino theory of communist expansion and concern with American failure to adequately combat it, espoused by US administrations from Eisenhower to Reagan and employed by settler-colonial regimes in Southern Africa to justify their opposition to decolonization.[11] It displayed the anticommunist frame in which American Baptist missionaries saw decolonization, a frame that the Naga Baptist Church also used.

Kijungluba Ao, a Naga Baptist leader who would receive the Dahlberg Peace Award from the American Baptist Convention and the Padma Shri Award from the Indian government, worried that Nagas were not "very far from the dangerous disease" of communism due to the fact that the departure of foreign missionaries was "weakening our united effort to

[9] Regarding Naga Hills: F. Delano to M. D. Farnum, November 4, 1955, Reel 328. Regarding Congo: Gerald Weaver to Forrest Smith, July 17, 1960 (During the Congo Crisis), Reel 424, American Baptist Foreign Mission Society Papers, Atlanta, Georgia.

[10] Gerald Weaver to F. Smith, February 11, 1961, Reel 242, ABFMS Papers.

[11] Dwight Eisenhower, News Conference, April 7, 1954, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1954* (Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration: Washington, DC, 1960), 382; H. W. Brands, *Reagan: The Life* (New York: Penguin, 2015), 188. On opposition to an independent Zambia, Ian Smith, *Bitter Harvest: Zimbabwe and the Aftermath of Independence* (London: John Blake, 2008), 174.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 11:11:21, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009305815.013

witness for Christ."[12] Additionally, this was a pitch for money from the United States to support the Naga Church. He also said that Naga Baptists were "a community of people who were sophisticated enough to know their responsibility" – responsibility to God and responsibility to peace.[13]

Nagas saw themselves as sophisticated, civilized, and Westernized. Christian identity, connected to an increasingly politically conservative American religious denomination, was of crucial importance for Naga nationalists as well as for the Naga Baptist Church. "Nagaland for Christ!" was (and remains) a popular nationalist insurgent rallying cry. It also meant that appeals to atheist Communist China had the potential to undermine the legitimacy of the Naga nationalist movement.[14] "Maoist" as a pejorative adjective, with its atheist/authoritarian connotations, has been and continues to be a label placed on Naga nationalists by their opponents.[15] Most importantly for JP on the Peace Mission, Christian identity meant that an Indian Union that included Nagaland on equal footing with its other constituent parts had to have room in its conception of India to contain a non–Hindu-majority Indian state alongside Kashmir.[16]

[12] Kijungluba Ao to A. F. Merrill, August 2, 1966, Reel 426 K, ABFMS Papers. On Kijungluba's Dahlberg Award, the Federal Government of Nagaland wrote the American Baptist Mission Society, May 19, 1965:

> It is learnt that our Baptist Mission had decided to show honour to one of our Church leaders by awarding 'Dahlberg Peace Award.' It will be a great surprise to keep the people of Nagaland and the FGN ignored [*sic*]of the purport of the award that is going to be given to one of our citizens. I would like to request you therefore, to furnish us the details of the purport and the objectives of making this award, which we are very much aware of. Signed Isak C. Swu, Foreign Secretary, sent c/o Peace Mission.

After the Naga nationalist movement split over the Shillong Accords in 1975, Isak led one of the factions, the National Socialist Council of Nagaland; Isak-Muivah (NSCN-IM). Isak died on June 28, 2016.

[13] Kijungluba Ao to A. F. Merrill, February 22, 1965, Reel 426 K, ABFMS Papers.

[14] Nagas did receive some weapons from China, most famously when a group of Naga nationalists under General Mowu Angami walked to China in 1968, but they received only what they were able to carry back with them. Most of the weapons used by Naga insurgents were either leftovers from the Second World War or bought from Indian traders, sometimes even Indian soldiers. Marcus Franke, *War and Nationalism in South Asia: The Indian State and the Nagas* (London: Routledge, 2009), 130–33.

[15] For example, Prerna Katiya, "'We Expect an Early Solution to Naga Issue': Nagaland Chief Minister TR Zeliang," *Economic Times*, October 29, 2017.

[16] Lydia Walker, "Jayaprakash Narayan and the Politics of Reconciliation for the Postcolonial State and Its Imperial Fragments," *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 56, no. 2 (2019): 164–65.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 11:11:21, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009305815.013

The Nagaland Baptist Church Council organized the Peace Mission. After choosing its members for the mission, the Church Council set up a negotiating committee of Naga leaders, which included themselves, family members of Phizo, and the Federal Government of Nagaland, which was the dominant Naga nationalist insurgent movement in the region during this period. The church council also reached out to the Indian government, which formed its own negotiating committee under the leadership of Foreign Secretary Y. D. Gundevia.

These two committees then agreed to the Church Council's selection of the Nagaland Peace Mission: Chaliha (Assam's chief minister), JP, and Scott. This choice was not accidental; it mirrored internal World Peace Brigade proposals.[17] All three men had been active in nonviolent anticolonial nationalist resistance – JP and Chaliha for Indian independence; Scott against South African apartheid and rule over South West Africa; and both JP and Scott in the 1962 Africa Freedom Action Project in Dar es Salaam to support African liberation struggles and in the 1963 Friendship March. At the Peace Mission, Chaliha represented the regional context of the Indian Northeast; and Scott, the potential of international intervention. JP brought his status as an outsider to Indian electoral politics as well as his moral authority as a Gandhian. He hoped to speak for the idea of an Indian Union rather than for the government of India, since he did not align "state" and "nation" in his conception of Indian sovereignty, citing Gandhi for ideological backing: "Gandhiji was clear in his mind that the State could never be the sole instrument for creating the India of his dreams."[18]

The Indian government saw the Indo-Naga state-versus-nation conflict as an example of the relationship between tribal peoples and the Indian government.[19] According to Gundevia, the government's top representative in the Peace Mission talks, Indians and Nagas did not live, and had never lived, "as two nations side by side."[20] He argued that Nagas were

[17] Devi Prasad, "Notes on Conversation with Michael Scott," February 25, 1964, Box 59, GMS Papers.

[18] Quoted in Ajit Bhattacharjea, *Jayaprakash Narayan: A Political Biography* (New Delhi: Vikas Publications House, 1975), 136.

[19] The term "Indo-Naga" itself is deceptively neutral, since it implies a form of symmetry in the relationship. Those on the side of the Indian government believe that this is inaccurate and, further, that it provides Naga insurgents with the legitimacy of parity.

[20] Y. D. Gundevia, "Programme for Peace Conference between the Federal Government of Nagaland and the Government of India at Chedema Village," September 23, 1964. VK Nuh Papers.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 11:11:21, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009305815.013

not a nation but a tribal people, defined in that manner in the Indian constitution as part of the 1960 negotiations for the creation of an Indian state of Nagaland.[21] In Gundevia's formulation, this status did not make Nagas unique, since there were constitutionally defined tribes "right in the Centre of India" with the same "peculiar social set-up."[22] As a tribe, the Nagas already had a form of "protected autonomy"; however, this was itself a contradictory notion: if autonomy needed to be protected, were a people functionally autonomous?

Gundevia reasoned that historically the territory of "Nagaland was a part and parcel of India."[23] Therefore, the creation of an independent Naga state would break with this history and involve changing Indian national boundaries, which was out of the question. "Boundaries are drawn slowly and we cannot redraw the boundaries unless after a war."[24] As a part of British India, Nagaland was therefore part of independent India.

Decolonization did not usually seek to alter colonial boundaries (with, in Gundevia's formulation, the important exception of the partitions of Pakistan and India in 1947 and their bloody aftermaths); rather, it enshrined them. According to Gundevia, while a "certain section of the people of Nagaland want a Sovereign State," this did not apply to all Nagas, certainly not those in the government of, and receiving salaries from, the Indian state of Nagaland. Therefore, he wanted to know "what is meant by an independent Sovereign State" when that demand did not include all Nagas, when Nagas were not a nation but a tribal people, when tribes already had particular and varying degrees of autonomy within India. In summation, Gundevia argued: British India had

[21] Academic discussions on the applicability of categories such as "tribe" and (more recently) "indigeneity" in India have a long history, and include the debate between G. S. Ghurye, *The Scheduled Tribes*: *The Aborigines So-Called and Their Future* (Bombay: Bhatkal Press, 1963 [1943]) and Verrier Elwin, *The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin: An Autobiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964) on the distinction between "caste" and "tribe," a debate that was bound up with the Indian nation-building project. A version of this debate continues between those who see tribe as a colonial construct – for example, Alpa Shah, "The Dark Side of Indigeneity: Indigenous People, Rights and Development in India," *History Compass* 5, no. 6 (2007): 1806–32 – versus those who emphasize the uniqueness of particular tribal peoples; for example, Deepek Kumar Behera and Georg Pfeffer, eds., "Tribal Situation in India: An Introduction," in *Contemporary Society: Tribal Studies, Vol. VI*: *Tribal Situation in India* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing, 2005), ix–xvii.

[22] Gundevia, "Programme for Peace Conference."

[23] Gundevia, "Programme for Peace Conference."

[24] Gundevia, "Programme for Peace Conference."

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 11:11:21, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009305815.013

historically included Nagaland. Colonial boundaries were inherited by the postcolonial state and were not to be redrawn short of war, which was an activity that occurred between two (or more) sovereign states, such as India and China, and did not include India's counterinsurgency operations against Naga insurgents.[25]

For Naga nationalists in-country (the Federal Government of Nagaland, aka the "government-in-waiting" of Phizo's group of hardline nationalists), an "independent sovereign state" meant just that: an autonomous, self-governing sovereign state with international-legal sovereignty – a status that, for the Nagas, would have to be achieved through external recognition and intervention since Naga nationalist insurgents did not occupy all of the territory they claimed, as nationalist conceptions of Nagaland included regions outside of the Federal Government's military control. To gain sovereignty, in the form of both external recognition and internal territorial dominance, they needed international oversight, and they did not fully trust either the Baptist Church Council or members of the Peace Mission to help them achieve such control. The Federal Government wanted peace talks "under the witness of the United Nations," and those talks needed to be between themselves and the government of India alone. They felt that the government of the Indian state of Nagaland, created in 1963 by constitutional amendment after Nehru's negotiations with "moderate" Nagas in 1960, should not be at the negotiating table. "No political solutions can be done under the initiative of this false state."[26]

In a manner similar to other peoples' demanding independence, the Federal Government threatened to turn to the communist world for support: "If the UN, the supreme organization of the day, is not in a position to execute its sacred charter towards the Nagas, the Nagas are strongly prepared to take aid from any quarter."[27] Here, Naga nationalists signaled the prospect of aid from Communist China and thus of a Southern-Asian Cold War front. Despite the little aid that Naga

[25] Gundevia, "Programme for Peace Conference."

[26] Scato Swu, Kedahge, Federal Government of Nagaland, to Michael Scott, April 4, 1964, Box 17, GMS Papers. ("Kedahge" was the title for the president of the Federal Government.)

[27] S. Swu to Scott, April 4, 1964. Another appeal to the UN is in "Naga's Right to Independence: Rebel Leader to Appeal for UN Recognition," May 3, 1965, Zaphuvise Lhousa Papers, Mezoma Nagaland; also, "The Govt. of Nagaland Memorandum to the Secretary General of Nagaland, United Nations New York," March 4, 1957, Zaphuvise Lhousa Papers, Mezoma Nagaland.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 11:11:21, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009305815.013

nationalists received from China during this period, this was no idle threat to India, who had lost a war with China two years prior, at which time the Chinese had voluntarily halted less than 300 kilometers away from the Naga Hills.

Another option the Federal Government of Nagaland proposed was that the "World Council of Churches sends a Fact Finding Commission."[28] The World Council of Churches had held its Third International Assembly in New Delhi in 1961, coinciding in time and place with the meeting of the Institute of Comparative Constitutional Law. The Nagaland Baptist Church Council sent a delegation to the Assembly, led by Longri Ao.[29] Many of the British lawyers who wrote the constitutions for decolonizing British African colonies and were friends of the Brigade community informally attended the Assembly, as well, and formally attended the institute's meeting.[30] The keynote address at the Delhi Assembly featured a critique of unrestrained state sovereignty. It proposed international-legal structures as an alternative, asking states to submit to the "jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice" and other "international regulations."[31]

Religion and law are distinct realms, and international law and comparative constitutional law are separate fields; yet the intersection between personnel, time, and location of these two gatherings highlighted the overlapping circles of people who inhabited these multiple spheres. Nearly all the organizations and individuals whom nationalists called upon to support their claims against empires and postimperial formations were in search of an alternative universalism to state sovereignty.[32] However, what these advocates proposed – bounded sovereignty and non-national vehicles for self-determination – contradicted the aims of

[28] Scato Swu to Michael Scott, April 4, 1964, Box 17, GMS Papers.

[29] *Assam Baptist Leader*, September 1961, CBC NEI Archives.

[30] DGTS II 4/3, Dingle Macintosh Foot Papers, Churchill College, Cambridge, UK. Dingle Foot attended both events; he was a prominent constitutional lawyer (a member of the bar or appeared in the courts of Ghana, Sri Lanka, Northern Rhodesia, Sierra Leone, India, Bahrain, Malaysia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, Nyasaland, and Pakistan), member of the British parliament, member of the Brigade community, brother of Hugh and Michael Foot, and active Anglican.

[31] Dr. O. F. Nolde, "The Future is Now," speech, New Delhi, 1961, DGTS II 4/8.1 Dingle Macintosh Foot Papers.

[32] For the concept of "postimperial formation," see Carole McGanahan, "Empire Out of Bounds: Tibet in the Era of Decolonization," in *Imperial Formations*, ed. Anne Laura Stoler, Carole McGranahan, and Peter C. Perdue (Santa Fe: University of New Mexico Press, 2007), 173–201.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 11:11:21, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009305815.013

the nationalists who hoped that the intervention of advocates would help enable their states-in-waiting to gain full national independence. At the same time, it made sense, based on the World Council of Churches' critique of state sovereignty in New Delhi a few years previously, that Naga nationalists might see that organization as a potential sympathetic intermediary.

"THE NAGALAND DRAMA"[33]

While Naga nationalists reached out to, and sought to work with, a range of nongovernmental organizations and unofficial individuals to negotiate on their behalf with the Indian government, they doubted that many of these intermediaries fully grasped the dire situation in their region. The Federal Government of Nagaland had accused the Nagaland Baptist Church Council of cowardice in its previous dealings with New Delhi, and resented the phrase "peace-talk," seeing it as cheap talk when, according to Scato Swu, the president of the Federal Government, Naga "rights are denied."[34] Scato continued, "Peace-talk [also] clearly implies a political settlement, and we [are] only prepared to have a direct talk between the Government of India and the Federal Government of Nagaland, after declaring [an] effective ceasefire."[35] They claimed that the military assistance that the Indian government was allegedly receiving from the United States and the UK after the 1962 Sino-Indian War was in reality being used to fight Naga nationalists.[36]

Media and reporting, that is, narrative dissemination for external audiences, was a battleground between nationalists and their ruling authorities. While India controlled almost all news reporting on Nagaland, Naga nationalists closely followed international media. A few days after Scato Swu heard a *Radio News* report, the Lima (Peru) Football Disaster in which a referee's controversial call led to the death

[33] "Nagaland drama": a term repeatedly used by M. Aram, in Aram, *Peace in Nagaland, Eight Year Story: 1964–1972* (New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann Publishers, 1974).

[34] Scato Swu to Kenneth Kerhuo, executive secretary of the Naga Baptist Church Council, April 4, 1964, VK Nuh Papers.

[35] Scato Swu to Kerhuo, April 4, 1964.

[36] Scato Swu to Scott, April 4, 1964. On US/UK aid during and following the Sino-Indian War, Bruce Reidel, *JFK's Forgotten Crisis: Tibet, the CIA and Sino-Indian War* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2015); Paul McGarr, *The Cold War in South Asia: Britain, the United States and the Indian Subcontinent, 1945–1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 216–43.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 11:11:21, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009305815.013

and injury of 800 people, he compared the members of the Peace Mission to referees in a football match, reminding them of the bloody stakes of their responsibility.[37] Scato's analogy to an event that had occurred on the other side of the world three days earlier showed how closely even insurgents living in the jungle followed international currents.[38] Scato also warned Scott that he was getting misleading information from Phizo (in exile in London) and Shilu Ao (chief minister of the Indian State of Nagaland), and instead needed to be in direct contact with the Federal Government of Nagaland.[39] Though they lived under martial law as well as under a media and travel ban, Naga nationalists in Nagaland paid attention to the world they sought to invite in to recognize them.

On September 6, 1964, the Federal Government of Nagaland and the government of India signed a ceasefire agreement.[40] Both sides suspended violent operations, including forced labor and population relocations (Indian government), and arms procurement and sabotage (Naga nationalist insurgents). The ceasefire created a "period of stoppage of operations, in order to promote an atmosphere conducive to peaceful occupations and free discussion" under the auspices of the Peace Mission.[41] The ceasefire agreement was the platform on which the Peace Mission's negotiations rested.

Both the nationalist insurgents and the "ordinary" Nagas who were sick of violence respected the Peace Mission because it took care to establish that it was negotiating a settlement between two (though not equivalent) political entities, which provided legitimacy to the Naga claim.[42] From the Naga perspective, equal consideration of the government of India and the Federal Government "meant that the Peace Mission recognized Nagaland; so any agreement between India and Nagaland,

[37] Scato Swu to Members of the Peace Mission, May 27, 1964, VK Nuh Papers. Letter was copied to: "(1) All authorities, Federal Government of Nagaland to understand that ours is more than a football match. (2) Executive Secretary, Naga Baptist Church Council, he is requested to ask the churches to pray all the more; for an early intervention of Jesus Christ the Prince of peace. (3) The President, Government of India, to deepen and high ten his mighty philosophy. (4) Prime Minister of India, to glorify his principles of Panch Sheel."

[38] Zapuvise Lhousa interview with author, February 10, 2016.

[39] Scato Swu to Scott, April 4, 1964.

[40] 1964 Ceasefire Agreement, in Suresh K. Sharma and Usha Sharma, eds., *Documents on North-East India: Nagaland* (New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 2006), 259–60.

[41] 1964 Ceasefire Agreement, 259–60.

[42] Author interview with Niketu Iralu, February 10, 2016. Concept in parentheses is my own.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 11:11:21, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009305815.013

was automatically international, since it was between two separate countries."[43] However, from the Indian point of view, the potential of internationalization (symbolized by Scott's presence) delegitimized the Peace Mission, even though the Indian government had been willing to sign the ceasefire agreement that brought Scott to Nagaland and provided him with the visa and permit to enter a region where foreigners were generally prohibited.

The Peace Mission's intended modus operandi was the extended truce, which it hoped to "be a protracted affair" since "public opinion takes time to assert itself fully."[44] Nagas had endured over a decade of violence. Once people knew peace, the Mission believed, they would be willing "to give anything to ensure" its continuance.[45] The Peace Mission, showing its Baptist and Gandhian roots, would bear witness – a repeated refrain – to the atrocities committed by both Naga insurgents (aka, "the underground") and the Indian military.

Peace Mission leaders went from Naga village to Naga village in beat-up jeeps over almost nonexistent roads. JP, who generally wore khadi kurtas in India and abroad, appeared in Western suits with his trademark sunglasses.[46] Scott was "so tall he had to hunch in his government World War Two white jeep. When he stood, he seemed to shoot up into the sky."[47] Most Nagas assumed that he was a Baptist rather than Anglican minister, a convenient misapprehension that Scott did not bother to correct.

Chaliha, though (or perhaps because of his status as) Assam's chief minister, kept a lower profile, mostly staying silent in meetings. He and Scott got on well; better than either did with JP, with whom Scott had always had strong differences on the Naga question.[48] According to Scott, Chaliha was a "big, quiet thoughtful man of great presence ... a devout [Hindu]. [He] put some fiber into" the moderate, pro-Indian Naga leadership "when [they were] seized with doubt. 'The Peace Mission will succeed," he said over and over again, stating aspiration so that it could

[43] Author interview with Iralu, February 10, 2016.
[44] Kijungluba Ao to A. F. Merrill, February 8, 1965, Reel 426 K, ABFMS Papers.
[45] Kijungluba to Merrill, February 8, 1965.
[46] Pictures from Nagaland are the only images I have seen of JP regularly in Western clothing during this period.
[47] Author interview with Kaka Iralu (who was eight when he met Scott), February 4, 2016.
[48] Transcript of Cyril Dunn interview with Michael Scott, March 13, 1977, Box 52, GMS Papers.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 11:11:21, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009305815.013

become fact.[49] He also kept the security dimensions alive in discussion (especially those concerning recent Chinese incursions), reminding Nagas that a civil society intervention like the Peace Mission would have been impossible in China or if Nagaland were under Chinese rule, stating, "In a Communist country there is no such freedom of speech."[50] Scott noted that, of the three, Chaliha – as a serving politician who had virulently anti-Naga constituents who were on the receiving end of the train explosions allegedly caused by Naga nationalist insurgents – took the largest personal political risk.[51]

JP worked for internal unity in the form of regional autonomy. In his political vision, regional autonomy *within* an Indian Union equaled a greater India, as more peoples could claim their home within the Indian state. He believed that the Naga nationalists did not understand what belonging to the Indian Union meant and how it differed from British colonial rule. He wrote in 1965, "Nagaland is not a colony or dependency of India, ruled and exploited by India, but just like any other Indian state, it is self-governing with its proportionate share in the affairs of the Indian government."[52] JP believed that building an India that included Nagaland would allow the Indian Union to truly call upon its Gandhian anticolonial nationalist legitimacy. For JP, the Peace Mission was an opportunity to explain the structure of the Indian Union – and their place in it – to a people who he believed did not know what they were refusing. Trying to convince Naga nationalists of this perspective, he spent much of the Peace Mission in individual, private talks with them, to the frustration of Chaliha and Scott.[53]

JP was not the only one carrying out private negotiations under the cover of the Peace Mission; the Indian government was doing the very same thing.[54] Indeed, an argument could be made that the prime purpose of the Peace Mission from the Indian government's perspective was to

[49] Transcript of Cyril Dunn interview with Scott in Shillong, October 1964, Box 5, GMS Papers.

[50] Chaliha, in transcript from "Programme for Peace Conference between the Federal Government of Nagaland and the Government of India at Chedema Village," September 23, 1964, VK Nuh Papers.

[51] Dunn interview with Scott, October 1964.

[52] "Plea for Patience in Nagaland" (Calcutta, July 1965), in *Jayaprakash Narayan: Selected Works*, Vol. 10, ed. Bimal Prasad (New Delhi: Manohar, 2000), 552–55.

[53] Cyril Dunn interview with Michael Scott, March 13, 1977.

[54] Comment by G. K. Pillai, May 1, 2016, Indian home secretary (2009–2011), on the contents of the Home Ministry's Nagaland files. These files are not currently open to researchers. Nagaland's files were housed in the Indian Ministry of External Affairs

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 11:11:21, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009305815.013

provide a public smokescreen for, and ease of access to, secret bilateral conversations with Naga nationalist insurgents who had previously been living in jungle camps. While the different parties involved in the Peace Mission had opposing interests, they all initially found the Mission a useful vehicle to serve those interests.

SCOTT'S SEVEN SCENARIOS

A week after the Peace Mission brokered a ceasefire between Naga nationalists and the Indian government in September 1964, Scott drafted a private memo to himself on seven possible forms the Indo-Naga relationship might take.[55] *The first form* would be an independent Nagaland, which the Federal Government of Nagaland believed was already the on-the-ground reality in much (but not all) of the territory they claimed. The Indian government viewed this form as secession. *Second:* Nagaland would have a status akin to that of Bhutan: officially independent but with a treaty in which India controlled Nagaland's foreign relations. *Third*: Nagaland would be an Indian protectorate with administrative autonomy (as Sikkim was from 1950 to 1973, when it was incorporated into India). *Fourth:* Nagaland and India would have a relationship comparable to that of Puerto Rico and the United States (since 1952, Puerto Rico has been an unincorporated US territory with its own constitution approved by the US Congress). Interestingly, the Indian government also made an analogy between Nagaland and Puerto Rico, though in the context of comparing the Naga nationalist movement with the Puerto Rican independence movement.[56]

Scott's *fifth* possibility revisited the Cripps plan, a 1942 attempt by the British government to head off the Indian independence movement with the promise of full dominion status after the Second World War. This plan involved a grouping of autonomous Hill States in the Northeast, modeled on the British protectorates in Southern Africa that became the

before 1972, when they were brought under the Home Ministry – hence the Peace Mission's falling under Gundevia's brief as foreign secretary.

[55] Michael Scott, internal memo, September 12, 1964, Box 17, GMS Papers.

[56] Meeting of Leonard Weiss, minister-counselor of the US Embassy, with the Indian foreign secretary, March 28, 1967. No. 246. M/O External Affairs-AMS (1959–1980), National Archives of India, New Delhi. Sanjib Baruah also makes an analogy to Puerto Rico: Sanjib Baruah, *Postfrontier Blues: Toward a New Policy Framework for Northeast India* (Honolulu, HI: East–West Center, Policy Studies, 2007).

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 11:11:21, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009305815.013

independent states of Botswana, Lesotho, and Eswatini.[57] The *sixth* possible form for Nagaland was analogous to what had been the Princely States in British India, which had been ostensibly sovereign as they were ruled by indigenous princes while subject to British authority.[58] *Seventh:* Nagaland would be "an independent sovereign state within a confederation or even within the Indian Union on terms which could still be within the provisions of Article 2 of the [Indian] Constitution."[59] This bore similarities to JP's plan for Nagaland, with the crucial addition of the words "independent" and "sovereign."[60]

Each of Scott's possible scenarios articulated the many ways that the state of India could have been constructed back in 1947, when it became independent from Britain, and amounted to a revision of the Indian Union. Some of his options looked back toward the colonial period for models of constrained sovereignty. They all attempted to reshape the idea of independence – Naga and Indian – in ways that were analytically creative but impossible as a practical matter since the Indian government felt that it had nothing to gain and everything to lose from a change in status quo.

In Scott's ideal, an "independent," "sovereign" State of Nagaland would retain the borders of the existing Indian State of Nagaland (i.e., the Naga-inhabited territories in Burma, Assam, Manipur, and NEFA would not be integrated into it). There would be a new election in which the Federal Government of Nagaland (the Naga nationalist insurgents) and the State Government of Nagaland (the government of the Indian State of Nagaland made up of Naga moderates) would both participate. This was feasible, according to Scott, because their "two constitutions are not so dissimilar as to make this adaption impossible."[61]

Subsequently, in Scott's plan, the new Nagaland determined by this election would then "voluntarily accede to the [Indian] Union." The new

[57] David R. Syiemlieh, ed., *On the Edge of Empire: Four British Plans for North East India, 1941–1947* (New Delhi: Thousand Oaks Press, 2014), gets at some proposed plans that different British colonial civil servants had for keeping parts of the Indian Northeast under British control after Indian independence, including perhaps as a League of Nations mandate like Namibia (pp. 134, 136).

[58] Priyasha Saksena, "Jousting over Jurisdiction: Sovereignty and International Law in Late Nineteenth Century Asia," *Law and History Review* 38, no. 2 (2020): 409–57.

[59] Scott, internal memo, September 12, 1964.

[60] It is relatively easy for the Indian government to create new states within the Indian union. Article Two of the Indian Constitution reads: "[T]he parliament may, by law, admit new states into Union of India or establish new states on terms and conditions it deems fit."

[61] Scott, internal memo, September 12, 1964.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 11:11:21, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009305815.013

Nagaland's external affairs (foreign relations and defense) would be handled by India "except that Nagaland would have the right to raise its own Defense Force," which would only serve in the Naga Hills but would have the "obligation of resisting any invasion of Nagaland or of India through its territory."[62] "The [new] Government of Nagaland would have representation as a State in Indian Embassies where there were special interests of the State [of Nagaland] involved. This might apply to predominantly Christian countries which have had a special association with Nagaland such as Britain and the USA" and eventually when circumstances "improve Pakistan, China, Burma, Thailand."[63] Scott articulated a conception of state sovereignty where its layers – domestic affairs, diplomacy, military – could be peeled off and apportioned to different ruling authorities, in a similar manner to the unevenness of empire in particular regions, such as the Indian Princely States. His depiction of the historic relationships between Nagaland and the United States and Britain corresponded with Nagas' ideas of the importance of their personal connections to American and British advocates but not with how official representatives of those two countries perceived the Naga people.

THE PEACE MISSION DERAILED

After two years of negotiations, the Peace Mission stalled. Its proposals, including Scott's plan for a new Nagaland, never distilled into a policy because they were "not really accepted by either side."[64] Eventually, Naga nationalists came to see JP as a representative of the Indian government, not an honest broker. At a public event in central India, JP said that India's fierce response to Pakistan during the 1965 Indo-Pakistan War would make the Nagas "more realistic" in their demands for autonomy. The Hindi word that JP used for "put down" or "suppress" a rebellion was translated to non–Hindi-speaking Nagas as "liquidating an insurrection," angering Naga nationalists who felt that he was threatening them if they did not acquiesce to Indian rule.[65] JP argued that he had been misinterpreted, but since his explanations failed to appease Naga

[62] Scott, internal memo, September 12, 1964.
[63] Scott, internal memo, September 12, 1964.
[64] Michael Scott, internal memo, June 5, 1965, Box 17, GMS Papers.
[65] According to quotes given by JP in the *Assam Tribune* article of February 26, 1966, "JP Resigns from the Peace Mission," the word was "dabao," used in "an interview with newsmen some time ago in Rajasthan." I have not been able to find the exact interview with the surrounding context.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 11:11:21, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009305815.013

nationalists, he resigned. After JP's official departure in February 1966 (he still participated as an unofficial adviser), the Peace Mission unraveled.

That May, the Indian government deported Michael Scott after he wrote a letter on behalf of the Nagas to the secretary general of the United Nations.[66] The next day, the Assam State Assembly succeeded in pressuring Chaliha to resign from the peace mission due to a series of train explosions attributed to Naga nationalist insurgents.[67] The *Assam Tribune* reported that Chaliha "hoped that the people would appreciate that under the new circumstances it was no longer possible for him to continue in the Peace Mission. He said that he had advised the Baptist Church Council to dissolve the Peace Mission."[68]

With the approval of the Naga Baptist Church, the Peace Mission had appointed the Nagaland Observer Team to oversee adherence to the ceasefire agreement of September 1964.[69] After the Peace Mission dissolved, the observer team took over, led by M. Aram (who had participated in the World Peace Brigade's 1963 Friendship March) and made up of members of the Sarvodaya movement, which was the Gandhian Indian civil society movement in which JP held a leadership role.[70] According to JP, Aram, a South Indian, was the most qualified "non-Naga Indian . . . to speak about the advent of peace in near war-torn Nagaland" and a "leading participant in the drama of peace-making which is yet to be completed."[71] Overseeing the ceasefire proved a thankless task since both the Peace Mission and the observer team lacked real investigative or enforcement powers regarding allegations of ceasefire violations.[72] M. Aram steered the observer team with Marjorie Sykes, a British Quaker who took Indian citizenship after Indian independence. Indian

[66] "Michael Scott Asked to Leave India," *Assam Tribune*, May 4, 1966. Assam Tribune Archives, Guwahati, Assam.

[67] *Assam Tribune*, May 5, 1966. Assam Tribune Archives, Guwahati, Assam.

[68] *Assam Tribune*, May 5, 1966.

[69] "Appointment of an Observation Team," April 6, 1965, Box 17, GMS Papers. Members: M Aram, Marjorie Sykes, Nabakrushnan Choudhury, Amalrabha Das.

[70] J. P. Narayan, *From Socialism to Sarvodaya* (Rajghat, Varanasi: Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh Prakashan, 1970 [1958]).

[71] J. P. Narayan, preface to M. Aram, *Peace in Nagaland: Eight Year Story, 1964–1972* (New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann, 1974).

[72] M. Aram to Peace Mission, May 28, 1965, Box 17, GMS Papers: "I am given to understand that not infrequently informers give false or exaggerated reports perhaps since they bring some monetary benefit. It may be good if as far as possible reports are verified before serious complaints are made."

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 11:11:21, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009305815.013

Gandhians chose Sykes because they thought Naga nationalists might respond better to the observer team if a white person was involved after Scott's departure. She lived in the Kothari Hills in Maharashtra and travelled third class on the railway nearly 3,000 kilometers to Dimapur, Nagaland. An ascetic, a "very grey, drab" woman, she took Quaker simplicity to the extreme.[73] An exacting pacifist, she believed that Naga nationalists' violent insurgency invalidated their cause.

In a 1968 letter to his friend and patron David Astor, Michael Scott blamed Indian Gandhians, British Quakers, and even the Naga Baptist Church for the failure of the Peace Mission.[74] Scott wrote that the Baptist Church "never had the confidence of the Naga people" and neither did "Miss Sykes and Dr. Aram" if they "are honest," since they never blamed India for any of the violence in the region.[75] He continued: "One or two Indians who did – e.g. Suresh Ram [who spent a year in Dar es Salaam with the Brigade's Africa Freedom Action Project] – were removed" from the Naga question.[76] Scott gave himself, Phizo, and Astor credit for publicizing the "Naga side of the story," thereby providing Naga nationalists with the leverage to negotiate a ceasefire with the Indian government.[77]

He closed his no-holds-barred letter to Astor:

> You must forgive my vehemence. But when I read of the Burmese Government presenting the Indian Army with the heads of Naga officers they had captured . . . it makes me want to throw up. The [Quakers and Gandhians] really ought to be confronted with the hollowness of this sort of holiness . . . God-fearing pro-Indians have assisted the devious attempts of India to evade the issues.[78]

Scott's impassioned attack – on JP, the Sarvodaya movement, and the Quakers who "sided" with them and the Indian government rather than with himself and Astor on the question of minority rights – displayed the compound fracture in the World Peace Brigade community's advocacy network caused by the Naga question. A nationalist claim within independent India upset the network's conceptual basis for its support for national liberation. Sharp, personal acrimony over questions of national legitimacy, state power, and use of force shattered the remnants of the Brigade community, already weakened by the limited utility of their

[73] Author interview with Jack Sutters, April 1, 2015.
[74] Michael Scott to David Astor, August 1968, Box 17, GMS Papers.
[75] Scott to Astor, August 1968.
[76] Scott to Astor, August 1968.
[77] Scott to Astor, August 1968.
[78] Scott to Astor, August 1968.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 11:11:21, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009305815.013

Africa Freedom Action Project in Dar es Salaam and by the failure of their Delhi-to-Peking Friendship March.

THE IMPERIALISM OF DECOLONIZATION[79]

Reckoning with imperial remnants – whether they were former colonial borders, former colonial officials, or ongoing paternalist ways of understanding states-in-waiting – remained a continuing theme for nationalist claims-making and its international advocacy. Charles Pawsey, the last British district commissioner to the Naga Hills, who had vouched for Phizo's identity in London in 1960, was the embodiment of these imperial remnants. In 1965, Pawsey returned to Nagaland during the Peace Mission, his travel expenses paid secretly – so he would not appear to be an Indian agent – by the Indian government.[80]

Most people attached to the Peace Mission welcomed Pawsey's presence, but for very different reasons. Gundevia, the leader of the Indian committee to the mission, claimed somewhat disingenuously that no one had invited Pawsey: that he came because "he wanted to come" as an individual with historic and personal connections to the Naga people.[81] Shilu Ao, the chief minister of the Indian State of Nagaland, maintained that Pawsey was "not a foreigner" and that he had come "as a friend" when the Naga people "asked for him."[82] Disagreeing with that viewpoint, Scott and the representatives from the Federal Government of Nagaland felt that Pawsey's arrival meant that the Indian government should allow other "foreign neutral observers" into the region, such as a potential UN observer mission, as existed in Kashmir.[83] And while the Federal Government (the Naga nationalist insurgents) welcomed the potential of foreign observation that Pawsey might portend, they found his visit "confusing." Did Nagas not have enough confidence in themselves that "they needed outsiders to solve" their problems for them?[84]

[79] The phrase "imperialism of decolonization" is an allusion to William Roger Louis and Ronald Robinson, "The Imperialism of Decolonization," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 22, no. 3 (1994): 462–511.

[80] W. L. Allinson to O'Brien, January 27, 1965, DO 133/185, British National Archives, Kew.

[81] Record of Proceedings, Peace Talks, Khensa, Nagaland, February 24, 1965. VK Nuh Papers.

[82] Proceedings, Peace Talks, February 24, 1965.

[83] Proceedings, Peace Talks, February 24, 1965.

[84] Proceedings, Peace Talks, February 24, 1965.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 11:11:21, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009305815.013

Each party identified Pawsey as an "advocate" – but was unsure which side he backed. Whom did Pawsey represent? He had standing at the Peace Mission negotiations as a former colonial official, brought in by the current, postcolonial government, with personal ties to individual Nagas. He had an interest in peace for a people, region, and situation for which he had borne responsibility. He had overseen the 1947 handover of the Naga Hills to the newly independent Indian government while knowing that many Nagas had rejected that transfer of power. Pawsey, a man in his seventies with sufficient means to retire comfortably to a Grade II-listed sixteenth-century, six-bedroom home in the Suffolk countryside, did not travel all the way to Nagaland simply because the Indian government had paid him to do so.

Yet, "hiring" a retired colonial official to use his personal influence with members of a minority people to promote the government's point of view demonstrated the continuing imperial rather than postcolonial nature of the independent Indian state. In the words of Phizo's nephew Challe, from the Naga nationalist perspective, "Made in England [was] a very apt label" for independent India.[85] Simultaneously, the Naga nationalist claim had its own imperial remnants, particularly that of its political geography as an excluded hill region where the British had ruled with a lighter footprint than elsewhere in India, and of the religious influence of Christian conversion that had created global connections that did not pass through New Delhi. Elements of Naga nationalist claims-making, the dynamics of the Indo-Naga relationship, and the paternalism of advocacy all had imperial origins, even as its participants sought to create new political possibilities that did not turn back the clock to empire.

CONCLUSION

Reverend Michael Scott's deportation from India in May 1966 marked a complete turnaround from decades earlier when the Indian delegation at the UN had made possible his advocacy on behalf of Namibian nationalists. After his deportation and the demise of the Peace Mission, Scott kept on searching for an international-legal solution for the Naga question within India as well as for the broader issue of minority peoples within the United Nations order. Since 1960, Scott and other advocates had

[85] Challe Iralu to Laura Thompson, September 5, 1959, Box 41, Institute of Ethnic Affairs correspondence file, National Anthropological Archives, the Smithsonian, Washington, DC.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 11:11:21, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009305815.013

repeatedly tried to place the Naga case before the UN, writing to that organization's secretary general, to its Ghanaian and Algerian UN delegations, and to nongovernmental organizations that had a strong UN observer presence.[86] These requests did not receive support, for various reasons: no one wanted to "strain the international fabric" unnecessarily; there was fear that the continuous Indo-China border dispute might cause a US-China war;[87] and only a state could petition the UN, not a human rights organization.[88]

In 1973, in response to these roadblocks, Scott argued in a letter to Neville Maxwell – who had visited Nagaland on a journalist mission of 1960, and who wrote a report on the Naga claim for David Astor's Minority Rights Group[89] – that "India's policy [towards Nagaland] is a form of post imperial colonialism" since it based its claim "to Nagaland on the original British military occupation."[90] Therefore, he wrote, "the rest of the world" should not accept India's "claim to leadership in the Third World's 'anticolonial struggle.'" Postimperial colonialism differs semantically from postcolonial imperialism, but both terms highlight the forms of imperial relations rerouted and reasserted after national independence. "Postcolonial" labels a chronological period after formal empire, while "postimperial" denotes the ongoing practical and theoretical systems of what had been imperial domination.[91]

On the question of disenfranchised peoples within postcolonial states, Scott, in the same letter to Maxwell, saw a "new type of colonialism emerging": "The rights of indigenous peoples are not recognized by international law or the United Nations ... [Because of South West

[86] Michael Scott to U. Thant, UN secretary general, October 26, 1965; Keith to Michael Scott (on the prospect of Ghana's involvement), November 21, 1965; Roger Baldwin (of the International League for the Rights of Man) to A. Z. Phizo, December 2, 1960; Michael Scott to Ahmed Ben Bella, May 20, 1963; all in: Box 28, GMS Papers. Roger Baldwin to Gershon Collier of the UN Committee of 24/Mission of Sierra Leon to the UN, October 21, 1966, asking if he would bring the issue "of the Naga peoples in India" to the Committee of 24 as a "colonial problem," Box 35, GMS Papers.

[87] Keith to Scott, November 21, 1965. [88] Baldwin to Phizo, December 2, 1960.

[89] Maxwell also wrote a revisionist account of the Sino-Indian War. His various writings and activities had earned him persona non grata status with the Indian government. Neville Maxwell, *India, the Nagas, and the Northeast* (London: Minority Rights Group, 1973); Neville Maxwell, *India's China War* (Random House, 2000 [1970]).

[90] Michael Scott to Neville Maxwell, September 15, 1973, Box 28, GMS Papers.

[91] In literary theory, there is a debate between the usage of "post-colonial" versus "postcolonial" on how best to capture the temporal specificity as well as the ongoing power relationships incapsulated in these terms; see Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds., *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (London: Routledge, 2003 [1995]).

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 11:11:21, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009305815.013

Africa/Namibia's historic mandate status], South Africa is the only country where the internal minority problems are investigated by the UN."[92] Scott continually placed Namibian nationalism vis-à-vis South Africa within the frame of minority peoples within postcolonial states because, as the original spokesman for the Herero people of (what became) Namibia, he knew well the ethnic divisions within the Namibian nationalist claim. He also took the long view that the importance of the original South West African mandate was that it prevented the Namibian claim from being subsumed by the African National Congress and into the South African liberation movement.[93]

Maxwell linked his reply to Scott back to the issue of the postimperial (rather than postcolonial) nature of the independent Indian state: "The STATE is the basic unit of the international community, law is tailored to its requirements, and so minorities in conflict with the STATE have no recourse in the UN or anywhere else."[94] For Maxwell, this was a statement of fact about the United Nations order, good or bad; for Scott, rectifying this inequity represented his life's work. This was an argument between advocates, not nationalists.

Nationalists whose nationalisms were prefaced by the modifiers "minority" or "sub" were those who Gavin Young, the *Observer* journalist who first broke the Naga story to a mainstream Western audience, called the "consequential victims of national liberation."[95] Young was also an agent with MI6, the British secret foreign intelligence service, as were many of the *Observer*'s international correspondents. Empire and its dissolution, national liberation and its limits, advocacy and international observation – through scholarship, journalism, intelligence work, or some combination of the three – were intertwined. Advocates and nationalists participated in imperial modes of power at the same time that they fought against them. The imperialism of decolonization mirrored the paternalism of advocacy. The inability to address the question of, and to come up with an adequate label for, minority peoples within postcolonial states was the limit and the consequence of national liberation – celebrating the creation of new nation-states

[92] Scott to Maxwell, September 15, 1973.
[93] Mburumba Kerina interview with author, May 4, 2016; also, Cyril Dunne to Michael Scott, January 20, 1977, Box 78, GMS Papers.
[94] Neville Maxwell to Michael Scott, October 31, 1973, Box 35, GMS Papers. Capitalization in original.
[95] Cyril Dunn interview with Richard Kershaw, undated, Box 103, GMS Papers.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 11:11:21, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009305815.013

required eliding the continued presence of those who did not fit or did not see themselves as fitting into that particular state-like shape.

Michael Scott captured the drama he depended upon in his role as a gatekeeper for nationalist claims in international politics through an excerpt from the third act of George Bernard Shaw's *Man and Superman* (1903), which he copied into a personal file where he kept his own poetry:

> This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap; the being a force of nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. And also the real tragedy in life is the being used by personally minded men for purposes which you recognize to be base ... All the rest is at worst mere misfortune or mortality; this alone is misery slavery hell on earth.[96]

Scott and his colleagues in their transnational network of advocacy achieved significance through the causes they espoused. Those causes either "succeeded" and outpaced the need for their advocates, or "failed" – and the work of the advocates proved futile. Transnational advocates often deemed nationalists themselves "ungrateful" (if their claim succeeded and they no longer needed to cooperate with advocates) or "difficult" (if their claim failed and they continued to require advocacy).

Phizo also appreciated George Barnard Shaw. Writing to his nephew in January 1960 while stuck in East Pakistan en route to Zürich, Phizo quoted from *The Devil's Disciple* (1897), a play that Shaw set during the nationalist movement that was the American Revolution. Shaw portrayed rebellion against the British empire alongside the factionalizing caused by a family inheritance: "The worst sin towards our fellow creatures is not to hate them, but to be indifferent to them: that's the essence of inhumanity."[97] Phizo knew that international indifference would sink the Naga claim – that Nagas needed to be recognized as sovereign in order to be recognized at all: "[A]ny organization without a sovereign territory cannot be articulately universal in its human scope. ... Whether we call it a political aim or national ideology, it makes very little difference."[98] As a practical matter, Phizo saw advocates as the first step toward shaking off

[96] George Bernard Shaw, "Man and Superman," in *Bernard Shaw: Collected Plays with Their Prefaces*, Vol. 2, ed. Dan H. Laurence (London: Max Reinhardt, 1971).

[97] Quote by Shaw, in A. Z. Phizo to Challe Iralu, January 2, 1960, Box 41, Laura Thompson Papers.

[98] Phizo to Challe, January 2, 1960.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 11:11:21, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009305815.013

the world's indifference in order to gain international recognition. In contrast, advocates perceived themselves as the stewards, the gatekeepers, of nationalist visions, seeking to constrain unbridled nationalism and channel the forces of decolonization. Phizo's demand for sovereignty was the dream they sought to constrain, while his use of the word itself was what spurred them to action.

Autonomy in the form of constrained sovereignty or non-national self-determination remained persistently undefined since there were no international institutional mechanisms for its recognition (as Phizo pointed out). Mrs. Pandit, India's diplomatic spokeswoman who was sidelined from politics after the death of her brother, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, in 1964, had believed that the Nagas were leading their Western advocates down a rabbit hole: "I feel like Alice in Wonderland and the strange tale of Mr. Phizo gets curiouser and curiouser."[99] She was alluding back to a remark that her brother had made in 1950 regarding Kashmir, in which he said that "all kinds of attempts are made to leave the real world behind and to look at it through some looking glass, where everything is inverted."[100] Referring to the prime minister's statement at the time, Zafarullah Khan, then Pakistan's Foreign Secretary and UN representative, later a judge on the International Court of Justice, switched up the allusion – where it is the image that is inverted, not the mirror itself – and accused Nehru of refusing to recognize that India's fissiparous tendencies bore a resemblance to anticolonial nationalist claims across the decolonizing world.[101]

However, Nehru did know better. He had expressed in private correspondence to Assam's chief minister, Chaliha, in 1960 that the Naga Hills needed the "largest possible autonomy" because any other attitude "will be contrary to what is happening in Africa."[102] "New States, big and small – and some very small – are appearing on the scene every few weeks as independent States." Therefore, he could not "oppose full autonomy"

[99] Mrs. Pandit to David Astor, June 27, 1960, Box 5, GMS Papers.

[100] Mrs. Pandit was evoking one of Nehru's famous press statements "over this Kashmir episode," which he called a piece of "Alice in Wonderland business" where "all kinds of attempts are made to leave the real world behind and to look at it through some looking glass, where everything is inverted," *India Opinion* (Natal), September 8, 1950. Digital Innovation South Africa collections, UKZN. Available at http://disa.ukzn.ac.za/indian-opinion-1950-1961.

[101] Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, *The Kashmir Dispute* (Karachi: Pakistan Institute of International Affairs, 1950), 9.

[102] Jawaharlal Nehru to B. P. Chaliha, June 25, 1960. Jawaharlal Nehru Papers SG (post 1947). Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, File 704, Part 3.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 11:11:21, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009305815.013

for the Naga Hills. Yet, he wrote to his chief ministers, in spite of the need to show the world that India supported self-determination, an Indian state of Nagaland would be a "special type of State" within the Indian Union.[103] In Indian Nagaland, Nehru wrote, "Naturally [Naga] autonomy will be limited because of law and other conditions."[104] In addition, Zafarullah Khan himself did not see East Pakistan or Baluchistan when he looked at Pakistan through the looking glass of national self-interest, where nationalist claims within one's own country and against one's own sovereignty were inverted and, therefore, could not possibly be "legitimately national."

Advocates derived their status from the perception that they stood outside of national or personal self-interest. Scott believed, as he wrote in 1977, that "the most powerful weapon" he wielded for his causes was "selflessness."[105] He did "not go to Nagaland to fight for the Naga cause. [He] went to try and make it possible for diametrically opposing groups of human beings to confront one another in argument and reason it out."[106] Selflessness, apolitical positioning remained key: "If one acts disinterestedly something miraculously comes out of it. The Nagas do get a bit of respite. South Africa does have to begin to change. It is not miraculous as usually understood. It is the normal process of creation."[107] Scott's aims were both more modest and more revolutionary than peace. First, to provide breathing space within obdurate conflicts; and second, to remake the United Nations order so as to enable it to recognize as legitimate the political claims of peoples within states in international politics.

For Scott, this revision of world order was a "creation," "a battle against [human] intractability, stupidity, self-centeredness." The advocate was "only free in the sense of being able to help or hinder the process. Ego trips [did not] help much" though they are good stories, and "can be humorous, heroic and even beautiful at times." Drastic innovations in world order were necessary, though rare, because there were not enough saints in politics, people in the Brigade community, individuals who "were willing to give themselves unreservedly to this life."[108] Scott's own inverted reflection in the mirror of self-interest missed how much

[103] Jawaharlal Nehru to chief ministers, August 1, 1960, Jawaharlal Nehru Papers SG (post 1947), File 705, Part 2.
[104] Nehru to Chaliha, June 25, 1960.
[105] Michael Scott to Cyril Dunn, January 27, 1977, Box 17, GMS Papers.
[106] Scott to Dunn, January 27, 1977. [107] Scott to Dunn, January 27, 1977.
[108] All quotes in this paragraph are from: Scott to Dunn, January 27, 1977.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 11:11:21, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009305815.013

his mission resembled an ego trip, though one from which he did not receive much personal or material benefit. It was also a mission from which he was sidelined in 1966, with his deportation from India and the end of an international-legal strategy for Namibian independence, which he had helped to spearhead.

Seeking forgiveness for his failures, he wrote Laura Thompson, the anthropologist and fellow traveler in advocacy who had first brought Angami Zapu Phizo to his attention in 1960. She absolved him but hinted that he may have outstayed his remit: "You have surely done infinitely more than your share and the problem now is to see that none of your work is lost so far as the Nagas and the South West Africans are concerned."[109] In the end, however necessary that people such as Thompson or Scott were, or perceived themselves to be, they had to leave, as Thompson pointed out: "The burden of leadership" must shift "to native shoulders."[110] Indigenization – of Christian or of advocacy mission work – was a necessary decolonization, with all of that process's promise, limits, and impossibilities.

[109] Laura Thompson to Michael Scott, October 16, 1966, Box 41, Laura Thompson Papers, National Anthropological Archives, the Smithsonian, Washington, DC.
[110] Thompson to Scott, October 16, 1966.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 11:11:21, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009305815.013