

PEACE IN NAGALAND

Eight Year Story : 1964-72

FOREWORD BY JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

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FOREWORD

I know of no other non-Naga Indian who is as qualified as Dr. Aram to speak about the advent of peace in near war-torn Nagaland, or about the efforts to consolidate that peace leading to the establishment of lasting peace in that north-easternmost State of India. He has not only stayed in Nagaland continuously for the entire period, but has also been a leading participant in the drama of peace-making which is yet to be completed. What is more : he is still at the post and carrying on his mission of peace on behalf, particularly, of the Gandhi Peace Foundation and, generally, of the Indian Sarvodaya movement. In this task he has shown the patience, understanding and impartiality of a true Gandhian.

The story Dr. Aram tells here is an objective, impartial and authentic one. Just because of these qualities of his work he might not please everyone involved in that eventful story which, unfortunately, is so little known and even less appreciated in India or elsewhere.

A word about the author. Muthukumaraswamy Aramvalarthanathan, for short M. Aram, was born in Tirunelveli but has made his home in the district of Coimbatore. He took his Master's degree in English from the Madras University, after which he went to the USA and obtained his Ph. D. in Educational Psychology from the Ohio State University. Returning to India he was appointed Professor in the Ramkrishna Vidyalaya at Coimbatore, established and run by that old veteran of the freedom movement, Shri Avinashlingam Chettiar. After a year he became the Principal of the Vidyalaya and held that post with distinction for eight years, i.e., until he joined the Delhi-Peking International March in 1963. That was his first contact with the non-violence movement of India and the world. After the Delhi-Peking March, he worked as Secretary of the Asian Regional Council of the World Peace Brigade. After the World Peace Brigade declined and its work came to an end, Dr. Aram went to Nagaland at my invitation, and as long as I was actively associated with the peace work and the Kohima Peace Centre, Dr. Aram was my most valued colleague.

I recommend this book to men and women of good-will and understanding in India and throughout the world.

Jayaprakash Narayan

PREFACE

It has been a rare privilege for me to live in Nagaland and work for peace and good-will for an unbroken period of nine years, from 1965 to date. I have been both an observer and a participant in the Nagaland drama.

In 1964-65 Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, Sarvodaya leader, was actively engaged in the restoration of peace in Nagaland. He asked me to go there for a visit. As destiny would have it, I was drawn into the Nagaland situation as a Peace Observer. Later I became the Convenor of Nagaland Peace Centre of which Shri Jayaprakash Narayan is the Founder-Chairman.

Nagaland peace effort is a thrilling story. It was inextricably bound with underground politics, overground politics and what some of us have called middle-ground politics. In the course of performing my duties, I came in close association with many Naga personalities about whom I have written in this book. Often I let them speak for themselves.

This book deals with the period of eight most interesting years, 1964 to 1972. I have called them the Year of Relief, the Year of Expectation, the Year of Disappointment, the Year of Anxiety, the Year of Lights and Shades, the Year of Lull, the Year of Overground Politics, the Year of the Centenary. I have attempted to give an objective account of the events and developments during these years.

To Shri Jayaprakash Narayan I am deeply grateful for his foreword to this book. I have been working all these years with his kind help and guidance.

I am also grateful to the Gandhi Peace Foundation and its Secretary, Shri Radhakrishna. Shri T. K. Mahadevan helped me in a variety of ways in the preparation of the manuscript and publication of the book. I am grateful to him. My thanks are also due to Shri Devendra Kumar Gupta who encouraged me to write this book.

Shrimati Minoti Aram helped me in many ways but for whose loving support and help I could not have completed this work. To my immediate colleagues and co-workers, Shri N. Ardhanari, Shri H. K. Endow and Shri J. K. Jain, I remain grateful for their assistance.

I also remember, on this occasion, my other colleagues in Mokokchung and Tuensang—Rev. Ayutenjan, Shri D. P. Sinha, Mr. H. Hesso and Rev. S. Litsose—who have been partners in a common enterprise.

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1

FIRST GLIMPSE

The month was March, the year 1965. I arrived in Dimapur which was also called Manipur Road. This is where one takes the road to Imphal in Manipur. The road runs through Kohima, the capital of Nagaland.

At present this is the only land route between Manipur and the rest of India. When the road link between Silchar and Imphal is completed, it will provide an alternative communication. That will be part of the projected Asian Highway.

The Assam Mail steamed in. Dimapur was then a small railway station. Now we have a big modern set-up. At that time, however, it was unimpressive. The platform was a confusion of men and things—soldiers, civilians, crates, baskets, rods, bags, and what not. I stepped out of the confusion. There I saw the jeep from the Peace Centre waiting.

The driver introduced himself as Shanti Kumar. Son of Peace! An appropriate name for one working for the Peace Centre. Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, Sarvodaya Leader and Member of Nagaland Peace Mission had given me, in his characteristic fashion, clear and specific instructions for my journey to Kohima: "Besides writing a letter, send a telegram also. One or the other will reach. They will send you the jeep to Dimapur."

This was my first visit to Nagaland. I was all excitement.

Dimapur was then a small town with a population of about seven thousand. During the last eight years, 1965-73, it has increased to about fourteen thousand.

Dimapur is the gateway of Nagaland, its only railhead, a major commercial centre. Militarily too it is important with a

large base camp. In the last World War Dimapur was the object of Japanese advance. But they got bogged down at Kohima. Had the Japanese captured Dimapur, the course of the war would have been quite different.

We did not tarry long. Shanti Kumar had already made some purchases for the Peace Centre—'dahi', groundnut oil and vegetables among others. "They are not available in Kohima", he explained. (Now everything is available in Kohima, only the prices are sky-high.)

The few minutes' drive through the main bazar was sufficient to get an idea of this commercial centre—shops, stores, market-place, restaurants, petrol bunk, some hotels—so called. Add to these a small Circuit House, police station, army camp, some Government quarters—that is Dimapur.

That *was* Dimapur, rather. For during the last eight years of peace Dimapur has expanded tremendously as indeed the other towns of Nagaland. Some good hotels have come up too and Indian Airlines have introduced civil flights from Dimapur to Calcutta.

Dimapur is in the plains, just 500 feet above sea level. Its name is not Naga. It is Kachari. The population is cosmopolitan. You see Nagas, Kacharis, Assamese, Bengalis, Mikirs, Biharis, Sikhs, Madrasis etc.

We started for Kohima. It was a beautiful drive. The road was broad, straight and smooth. Shanti Kumar's driving was a pleasure. Steady, rhythmic, not so fast.

"How many miles to Kohima?"

"Forty-six."

We reached Nichuguard (now known more as Chumukedema). Here the Inner Line begins, all vehicles stop. Outsiders must produce their 'Inner Line permits'. The Government has introduced this restriction to check indiscriminate flow of plains people into the hills, also to check entry of foreign nationals.

"We need not stop. We are Peace Mission." This was Shanti Kumar. There was pride in his utterance. Yes, he was right. The road bar was lifted without a question. We drove on.

After Nichuguard, the road ascended. And it began to curve and wind. No longer in the plains. You got the feel of the hills. The air was cool. Some one has said "Nagaland is air-conditioned by Nature." Quite so.

The road was quite good being National Highway (N.H. 39).

At the time of monsoon, however, the road gets blocked due to land-slides.

The road winds along the bank of the river.

“What is the name of this river ?”

“Dhansiri.”

We saw a sign-post on the right : “Zeliang-Kuki.” Shanti Kumar explained, “That is the way to Peren. The Zeliang Nagas live over there.” “Over there” I saw very beautiful country.

We came to what looked like a big village. “Ghaspani,” said Shanti Kumar. Some houses, shops, tea stalls.

The road winds more and more. We were continuously ascending. We passed Pherima. Then Piphima. Here we stopped and spent a few minutes at the road-side tea shop. They served some ‘pakora’ and sweets with tea.

I came out of the shop and had a long look at the distant plains and the blue hills. It was a most enchanting spectacle. Drinking in the scenic splendour, I turned around and continued the upward journey.

Now we were in the heart of the Angami country. Angami place names mostly end with ‘ma’—Piphima, Kohima, Viswema, Khonoma, Jotsoma, Zakhama, Phesama etc. The suffix ‘ma’ actually means ‘men’ or ‘people’. But it has come to signify the place where people live. The Angamis are a major tribe of Nagaland.

Soon comes Kiruphema. Another example of the Angami suffix. Then Zubza. From here Kohima is not far away. Only 10 miles. Zubza was an important spot during the World War. The British-Indian forces had a major base camp here. From here the advancing parties launched forth to recapture Kohima. The Japanese planes bombed Zubza.

Now we could see the long range over which the Kohima township sprawled. With still four miles to go, I saw a road on our right.

“Where does this road go ?”

“To Khonoma. First Jotsoma, then Khonoma.”

Khonoma rang a bell in me. I had heard of it. Yes, Khonoma was the famous place of Mr. A.Z. Phizo, the pioneer of Naga nationalism. I must go there sometime, I told myself.

We made a curve, turning right. We crossed a narrow bridge. I could see an old bridge also, damaged and in disuse. Shanti Kumar stopped the vehicle. We got out and had a look.

“You see the old bridge ?”

“Yes.”

“That was blown up by the underground just before cease-fire.”

“About six months ago ?”

“Yes.”

The ceasefire came into effect in September 1964.

We were nearing Kohima. The road was broad and nice. The large township was visible. First the check-post. We didn't stop. Peace Mission never stops ! Then the Civil Hospital. The name board said 'Naga Hospital.' Then houses, shops, restaurants. Then the tri-junction or 'Police Point' as it is popularly called. Here the Dimapur road, the Imphal road and the Kohima main road converge.

We proceeded on the main road. The running commentary of Shanti Kumar continued. “This is the Cinema Hall. This is the main bazar.” Another police point. We took the side road called the Assam Rifles road. There was the Peace Centre.

I went up the steps and saw a white building with a board at the entrance : “Peace Centre, Shanti Kendra, Kezkevi Chu.” “Kezkevi” in Angami means Peace, “Chu” means centre.

In the Peace Centre there were Shri Nabakrishna Choudhury, former Chief Minister of Orissa now in Sarvodaya, Miss Marjorie Sykes, British-born Quaker well-known in Gandhian circles, and Miss Kusum Deshpande, a close associate of Acharya Vinoba Bhave and a leading member of Maitri Ashram in Assam.

There was also a Naga boy named Demping, who always wore a smile on his face, a gentle and affectionate boy—such a contrast to the several stereotypes I carried in my head about the Nagas.

2

HISTORIC KOHIMA

“First you must go to the Cemetery”, said everybody in the Peace Centre. I wondered why !

What they meant was the War Memorial Cemetery located in the historic spot in Kohima where the Second World War raged. It is in the middle of the town on the D.C.’s hillock. A huge stone cross is visible even from a distance—a major landmark of Kohima.

It is a beautifully kept Memorial park with several terraces one above the other. On each terrace there is a number of slabs and on each slab the name of some soldier who died in the Kohima battle.

There are 18 plots with 1,421 slabs—1,070 from United Kingdom, 5 from Canada, 3 from Australia, 330 from undivided India, 2 from East Africa, 1 from West Africa, 9 from Burma and 1 non-war grave.

Some slabs contain moving lines :

“Not just today but every day
In silence we remember him.”

“He died that we might live : until we meet.”

—*Wife*

“Love is like a bridge
that spans the spaces that divide.”

—*Devoted wife*

“Dearer still as the years depart
His memory lives within our heart.”

“Some day, some place we’ll meet again.”

“For each of us he did his best
Grant him, O Lord, eternal rest.”
“He died to make the world a better place
and life a worthier thing.”

Some slabs are nameless. One simply says :

“A soldier of the 1939-1945 war
known unto God.”

An occasional slab sounds a cheerful note :

“Rest ye, Merry Gentleman.”

Many must have died quite young : 20, 20, 23, 24, 31, 33.....
you see these years again and again.

We walked up the steps and ascended one terrace after another. Finally we reached the top terrace where stood a huge memorial structure with the stone cross. You read the following words :

HERE AROUND THE
TENNIS COURT
OF THE DISTRICT
COMMISSIONER
LIE MEN WHO FOUGHT
IN THE BATTLE OF
KOHIMA
IN WHICH THEY
AND THEIR COMRADES
FINALLY HALTED
THE INVASION
OF INDIA
BY THE FORCES OF
JAPAN
IN APRIL 1944

Near the stone structure was a cherry tree. A metal plate said : “The original tree was used as a sniper’s post by the Japanese and was destroyed in the fighting which raged around the Tennis Court. The present tree is a shoot from the old stump.”

Further up there was a white wall-like structure which bore the names of scores of soldiers. This was a special memorial for 917 Hindu and Sikh soldiers and airmen of undivided India. The stones came from Dholpur. The dedicatory inscription was in English, Hindi and Gurmukhi.

Not very far from here, we saw a simple, appealing marble structure which just said :

“THEIR NAME LIVETH FOR EVER.”

The Kohima battle of 1944 was crucial. Lord Mountbatten, who was Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in South Asia declared, “The battle of Kohima will probably go down as one of the greatest battles in history.” Field Marshal Wavell, the then Viceroy of India, observed, “When the history of war comes to be written, the fight here will be put down as the turning point of the war when the Japanese were routed and their downfall really began.”

The Japanese all but captured Kohima. Except for the D.C.’s hillock, they occupied entire Kohima, both village and township. For nearly three months a gigantic battle raged between the two sides. The Japanese Commander at Kohima was Lt. Gen. Kotuhu Sato, a tough soldier who put up an excellent fight. His counterpart on the British side was Maj. Gen. John Grover.

Gen. Sato’s superior officer was Lt. Gen. Renya Mutaguchi, an ambitious military leader, who had high hopes of capturing in one sweep Manipur and Naga Hills. His troops would then pour into the plains of Assam, he imagined. In his order of the day, Mutaguchi thundered, “The day the Rising Sun shall proclaim our definite victory in India is not far off. This operation will engage the attention of the whole world.”

Along with the Japanese soldiers were also the troops of the Indian National Army. Subhas Chandra Bose, the Commander-in-Chief, issued his own special order of the day : “Comrades, officers and men of the Indian Army of Liberation, let there be one solemn resolve in your hearts—either liberty or death. And let there be but one slogan on your lips ‘Onward to Delhi.’ Victory will be yours.”

In the Kohima battle, whenever the guns became silent, the loudspeaker would boom. Some representative of the I.N.A. would call out in Hindustani, “Hindustan ke Jawan, the

Japanese army has surrounded you. Bring your rifles and come over to us. We are liberating India from the inequities and tyrannies of British rule.”

The Kohima battle lasted three months. During this period both sides lost huge numbers of men. The entire village of Kohima was destroyed.

Mr. L. Lungalang, former Chief Secretary, Government of Nagaland, was then Headmaster of the High School in Kohima. He told me, “When the Japanese invasion began we had to flee leaving everything behind. After the battle was over I was one of the first to return. The entire place was strewn with corpses, rifles, rubble. The clearing operations took several days.”

Gen. N.C. Rawley, now G.O.C.-in-C, Eastern Command, was then a Major in the Indian Army fighting in Kohima. He told me, “It was a tough battle. We put up a good fight.” Gen. Rawley won decorations for his meritorious service in the Kohima battle.

From the top of the Cemetery we got a splendid view of Kohima and the surrounding region. We could see Chedema, 5 miles away, the seat of the famous Peace Camp.

At the lower end of the Cemetery we saw a memorial stone in the shape of the traditional Naga memorial stones. It carried the following lines :

“WHEN YOU GO HOME
TELL THEM OF US AND SAY
WE GAVE OUR TODAY
FOR YOUR TOMORROW.”

The above words were boldly printed so that all passers-by could easily see. The memorial stone is close to the Police Point, the tri-junction where the Imphal road, Dimapur road and Kohima main road converge.

As you go up the Imphal road from the Cemetery, you see to your right another memento of World War Two—a huge Japanese tank. Despite many years of sun and rain the steel tank is still sturdy and strong.

Assam Regiment

On the Kohima main road about a furlong from the Police Point I saw another memorial structure, small in size but

attractive. The plaque gives a long list of officers and men of the Assam Regiment who died in the Kohima battle.

The Assam Regiment played a notable part in the war. They were the first to make contact with the Japanese at Jessami and Kharasom about fifty miles east of Kohima. I heard interesting stories about the first battle. At Jessami the Assam Regiment stopped the advancing Japanese and engaged them for many days in stiff fighting, thus giving valuable time to the Allied Forces to organise the defences of Kohima. From Kohima loads of ammunition were sent on urgent demands from Jessami. But when they were opened, they proved to be the wrong type!

The Assam Regiment had to fight an increasingly unequal battle against the superior numbers and fire-power of the Japanese. When Kohima was asked for orders for a strategic withdrawal, an affirmative reply was sent, but not in code. The plane hovered over the positions of the Assam Regiment and dropped the message. It unfortunately fell into the hands of the Japanese who that evening staged a furious offensive with overwhelming force. The Assam Regiment put up a heroic fight and withdrew. The stiff resistance offered by them against great odds was of incalculable value for the defence of Kohima.

Not far from the Assam Regiment Memorial was a park, not so big, nevertheless attractive. There I saw a big memorial stone of the Naga type with a plaque embossed upon it. All the battalions and units who fought in the Kohima theatre are enumerated therein.

In the same park there was another small memorial which took you back to an earlier period in Naga history. It took you to the year 1879 when the Angami Nagas resisted British incursions into their territory. From Assam the British extended their administration slowly and haltingly into Naga Hills. At every stage they met with stiff resistance. Jotsoma, Khonoma, Kohima and other villages inflicted heavy casualties upon British intruders.

Khonoma Resists

About the year 1879 a British garrison was established in Kohima. The Political Officer, Maj. G.A. Damant, decided to undertake a tour of the surrounding villages. His first call was Jotsoma. Next it was to be Khonoma. Some villagers of Jotsoma warned him not to proceed to Khonoma, for they

suspected some secret plot.

Maj. Damant disregarded the warning and went on according to plan. He and his men were welcomed at the stone gate but when they actually entered, scores of spears were hurled upon them. Damant and some others were killed. Some were badly wounded.

Soon the news of the death of the British Officer reached Kohima. The armed men at the garrison, small in number, were worried.

The next day several hundred Angami Nagas armed with spears and guns surrounded the garrison. There was firing and counter-firing, spears were hurled, arrows were showered. The men at the garrison were desperate. They sent frantic messages for help to Imphal and Wokha.

The besieging Nagas pressed hard. They demanded that the men at the garrison should surrender but the garrison kept up the defence. Finally help arrived. When armed battalions from Manipur and Wokha reached Kohima, the Nagas left the battle scene and the garrison was relieved.

All this happened nearly a hundred years ago.

3

PEACE COMES TO NAGALAND

In March, 65, the ceasefire was six months old. The hang-over of the bad old days could still be felt.

In Kohima, in the early evening, streets were deserted, shops closed. There was uncertainty in the air. The people had doubts about the future of the ceasefire which, at that time, was extended by brief instalments only.

As I walked around Kohima, I felt, however, that life was slowly returning to normal. I talked to many people. "How was life before the ceasefire?" The invariable reply: "Terrible."

Every one was anxious that the ceasefire should continue.

"The ceasefire line in Nagaland runs through the heart of every Naga," said Mr. Kevi Yallay, younger brother of Mr. Phizo.

Baptist Convention

From 31st January to 2nd February, 1964, the third Nagaland Baptist Convention was held at Wokha, the headquarters of Lotha area. There the proposal for a Peace Mission was approved.

The convention resolution said:

"Being deeply concerned about the restoration of peace in Nagaland (the convention) welcomes the proposed 'Peace-talk' between the Government of Nagaland and Mr. A.Z. Phizo. While welcoming this 'Peace-talk' we are deeply concerned about the continued disturbances in the land, and therefore, this Third Nagaland Baptist Convention attended by more than five thousand representatives from all the tribes of Nagaland unanimously resolved to request the Government of Nagaland,

and through it, the Government of India, to open further avenues for making available the services of Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, Shri Shankar Dev, Shri Bimala Prasad Chaliha and Rev. Michael Scott, with the sole object of exploring ways and means for the speedy restoration of peace and normalcy in Nagaland, and that the Church leaders of Nagaland be requested to give every possible help and cooperation for the success of the mission."

The Wokha convention appointed a special committee consisting of Rev. Longri Ao, Rev. Shihoto, Mr. Kenneth Kerhuo and Mr. Toniho Chishi to do the follow-up work. These Church leaders swung into action with vigour and devotion.

On 22nd February, they had two long sessions with the leaders of the Naga Nationalist Organisation, the ruling party, which was holding its session at Dimapur. These leaders including Cabinet Ministers decided to welcome the peace move. The party meeting "adopted unanimously" the resolution of the Baptist Convention and "urged the Church leaders" to take the initiative to prepare the groundwork.

The Democratic Party of Nagaland, the Opposition party, also welcomed the peace proposal of the Church Convention. Four prominent leaders issued an appeal on 19th March "to all in Nagaland—overground and underground—to give serious thought to the proposal and refrain from any act in the way of the peace talk." The Democratic Party "believes all differences can be settled by peaceful methods."

The Nagaland Legislative Assembly resolved to support the Peace Mission and constituted a nine-member Committee to assist the Church leaders. The Committee was headed by the Chief Minister, Shri Shilu Ao, and included Opposition members.

Mr. Kenneth Kerhuo, being the Executive Secretary of the Nagaland Baptist Church Council, was active in implementing the various decisions taken by the special committee. A cable was sent to Mr. Phizo seeking his cooperation for the implementation of the Wokha resolution. The Government of Nagaland was requested to relax army operations to enable freedom of movement throughout Nagaland. Top-ranking underground leaders were urged to desist from any activities which would hamper the success of the "peace talk."

Circulars were sent to the Church field directors in the various

Naga areas to raise funds for Peace Mission work. Steps were taken to inform the four members of the Peace Mission "to be in readiness to come and render their services."

Rev. Michael Scott was the first to arrive in Nagaland. On 27th March he alighted unannounced at the Dimapur Railway Station. The Church leaders rushed down from Kohima to welcome him. Later he met Shri B.P. Chaliha at Shillong. There Shri Jayaprakash Narayan joined them. Shri Shankarrao Dev could not join the Peace Mission because of illness.

The first task before the Peace Mission was to bring about the cessation of hostilities. To this they addressed themselves with vigour. With the help of Church friends, they sought out the underground leaders in their various hideouts. They rode in jeeps on rough roads, they trudged on jungle trails. They braved the monsoon sometimes, and they climbed the hillocks sometimes.

Many a Naga friend has spoken warmly about the arduous labours the Peace Mission members undertook in order to secure the ceasefire. All the three were fairly old and their health was not very good.

Sakraba Agreement

Finally in May, 64, at Sakraba village in Chakhesang area, the Peace Mission members met the underground leaders and signed the ceasefire agreement. It was a great day, truly.

On 23rd May about five thousand people gathered at Sakraba. The underground Federal Government had sent six representatives to negotiate the conditions of ceasefire with the Peace Mission.

They were : Mr. Zashei Huire, Mr. Biseto Medom, Mr. Seletsu, Mr. Khriesanisa, Mr. H. Swu, and Mr. Kruzhalie.

At the public meeting Miss Veduchele, President of the Chakhesang Women Society, presented hand-woven Naga cloths to the three Peace Mission members and Shrimati Prabhavati Devi who had accompanied Shri Jayaprakash Narayan. This presenting of national cloth is a charming Naga custom.

"As the Peace Mission meets here, we shall pray for you," Miss Veduchele began. Turning to Mrs. Narayan, she said, "Elderly Lady, you are here on behalf of us women. You have exerted great strength to reach us, we are thankful to you."

Mr. Khriesanisa said the prayer. In great humility this out-

standing leader of the underground movement began : "Among those gathered here I consider myself the greatest of sinners." Turning to "our distinguished friends, three elders," Mr. Khriesanisa said, "We have great confidence in them that they will be truthful to their own reputations and the principles that lie behind their life."

Mr. Chaliha spoke next :

"The Baptist Church leaders have placed a great responsibility upon us. When this invitation came to us, it was one which no one could decline because there can be no greater work than the restoration of peace."

"We are the people who have to bring both sides nearer. We believe in the goodness in the human heart."

Then Mr. Chaliha appealed for a ceasefire.

Finally he said :

"I am your neighbour. If there is no peace in Nagaland, there will be no peace in Assam. Similarly, if there is no peace in Assam, there will be no peace in Nagaland. Our fate is tied together."

Then the Church leaders and the public withdrew and the meeting continued in private. Mr. Khriesanisa and Mr. Biseto Medom explained in detail the Federal stand on the ceasefire. Mr. Biseto said, "From the outset, we have sought that India retain her honour and maintain her prestige. Today I have placed great faith in the two Indian members that they will uphold the pristine beauty of ancient India."

Shri Jayaprakash Narayan said :

"As far as we three are concerned, we shall pursue this task with the utmost impartiality. We shall take no sides. The only side we shall take is the side of the right as it appears to us.

"It may appear that this problem is a political problem. Basically it is a human problem and a spiritual problem. Our task is to create mutual understanding, to open hearts."

Mr. Narayan continued :

"I have noticed that every meeting in Nagaland began with a prayer. This deeply religious character is a sign of great hope.

"You are aware that our leader Mahatma Gandhi considered Jesus Christ as one of his masters. Therefore, friends, it is this kind of Christianity and human love and friendship that exists in the hearts of the leaders of India also. It is this fact that makes me hopeful."

Then Mr. Narayan proceeded to discuss matters regarding the ceasefire.

The Sakraba meeting was a success. The underground leaders agreed to the draft proposal for ceasefire.

Biseto Medom : "We have discussed in detail. We shall agree to a ceasefire when your proposal is accepted by the Government of India in Delhi."

Zashei Huire : "We have studied the draft proposal and the Government has accepted it."

B.P. Chaliha : "There is one clarification—that patrol shall continue on the Burma border."

Zashei Huire : "That is a delicate matter as it implies that India controls the Naga frontiers."

Finally the draft agreement was signed by the three Peace Mission members and the six Federal representatives. It was only a preliminary agreement.

During June and July, 64, the Peace Mission was able to finalise the terms of ceasefire to the full satisfaction of both sides. On 10th August, the Peace Mission received a communication from the underground leaders which said :

"Whereas the Nagas thirst after genuine peace with a sole aim to re-establish a warm Indo-Naga friendship by effecting an immediate ceasefire, we the representatives of the Federal Government of Nagaland after serious considerations to your proposals, have signed once for all the final terms enclosed herein."

The signatories were Mr. Zashei Huire, Mr. Biseto Medom, and Mr. L.Z. Zhenito.

The Peace Mission forwarded this communication to the Governor, Shri Vishnu Sahay. On 14th August Shri Vishnu Sahay sent a communication to the Peace Mission signifying his acceptance of the ceasefire terms. He said :

"The Government of India have noted with great sympathy the distress brought to the inhabitants of Nagaland by the present state of conflicts there. The programme for development, for more schools, more hospitals, more roads, better agriculture—all these measures which will make life a fuller and happier one for the people of Nagaland is being retarded.

"The Government of India welcomed, therefore, the steps intended to bring about peace in Nagaland."

Shri Vishnu Sahay further stated that the Government would depute representatives "with whom will be associated the

representatives of the Government of Nagaland to take part in talks with the leaders of the underground."

Ceasefire terms

The main portion of the Governor's letter set out the terms for suspension of operations which were identical with those in the underground communication :

"The Security forces will not undertake

- (a) jungle operations;
- (b) raiding of camps of the undergrounds;
- (c) patrolling beyond one thousand yards of security posts;
- (d) searching of villages;
- (e) aerial action;
- (f) arrests; and
- (g) imposition of labour by way of punishment."

During this period "fines connected with allegations of complicity with underground activities will not be imposed."

The underground side, on their part, will "undertake to suspend:

- (i) Sniping and ambushing;
- (ii) imposition of fines;
- (iii) kidnapping and recruitment;
- (iv) sabotage activities;
- (v) raiding and firing on security posts, towns and administrative centres; and
- (vi) moving with arms or in uniform in towns, villages and administrative centres wherever there are security posts and approaching within one thousand yards of security posts."

The underground also gave the assurance that their personnel "will refrain from moving with arms or in uniform in towns and villages and within a radius of one thousand yards of security posts."

Both sides agreed that should there be any encounter by chance or mistake, they would observe the rule, "No firing unless first fired on."

It was also agreed that the Security Forces would patrol the international border only to a depth of three miles as the crow flies from the frontier.

The underground gave the assurance that no arms would be imported from abroad during the period of ceasefire.

The ceasefire agreement also stipulated arrangements for movement of army convoys and road patrolling.