

## Advocates of Not-Quite Independence

The place of minority peoples in new postcolonial states presented the international community with a quandary: if national liberation presumed that dependent peoples deserve self-rule, what should the world's response be to peoples *within* newly independent states who demanded political autonomy? In order to move their claims onto the international stage and win the support they required, nationalist claimants – on the African continent, in India, and elsewhere across the globe – had to find and work with advocates outside their communities.

In 1960, Angami Zapu Phizo, the most prominent nationalist leader of the Naga people who claimed independence from India, journeyed to London in search of such advocacy in order to generate global support for the Naga cause. The history of internationalized Naga nationalist claims-making emerges through the complex of correspondence, journeys, identities, and friendships that made possible Phizo's journey to London. These advocates were faced with the disquieting question of states-in-waiting within the solidifying borders of newly independent states, peoples who may have, at times, seen little difference between the ambiguous "protection" of empire and the direct control of national government. Because nationalist claimants from these "forgotten" regions of the world were virtually unknown to global publics, advocates used newspapers to disseminate narratives to intended and unintended audiences, at times conflating reporting and advocacy. The attempt to internationalize the Naga claim illuminated the issue of minority peoples within postcolonial states at the height of nationalist possibility in the early 1960s. The tenuous route the Naga claim traveled also revealed the fragile limits of this process.

The advocates who populate Phizo's journey – in their roles as gate-keepers and with their connections to resources and to the press – were involved in many other political struggles. They made repeated analogies to the Algerian War, to Katanga's secession from newly independent Congo-Leopoldville, to white settler colonial rule (of apartheid South Africa, South West Africa, and the Rhodesias), painting a picture of connected conflict in the decolonizing world and of the limits of the United Nations institution as the forum for handling such conflict. However, while these advocates celebrated decolonization and national liberation in much of the African continent, the political question of “minority” peoples trapped within newly independent states posed a significant challenge for those who had supported Indian independence and joined the global anti-apartheid movement.

#### UPDATING THE “MINORITY QUESTION” FOR THE 1960S

The situation of the Nagas within postcolonial India, the efforts by their leader Angami Zapu Phizo to gain international advocacy and recognition for their nationalist claims, and the subsequent reporting on the Nagas' situation by Western newspapers brought global attention to the issue of “minority” peoples within postcolonial states. Inspired by the Naga question, in the fall of 1960 – a year when fourteen African countries became independent and the year that Phizo traveled to London seeking international assistance – the British anti-apartheid activist Reverend Michael Scott wrote the following opinion piece in the *Observer* newspaper:

More than social justice is involved in minority problems: They are as likely as any other single factor to cause war in modern times. What is going on in the Congo at the present time illustrates the danger. Many people look to the UN as our best hope of salvation in this respect. But the tragic truth is that the UN is far less able to deal with minority problems than is generally supposed, and it is becoming less and less so as each year goes by. In the past, some subject peoples have been able to make use of the procedures left over by the old League of Nations mandate system to take petitions to the UN. But as formerly dependent peoples achieve sovereignty and a seat at the UN, they, in turn, acquire the sovereign nation's ability to discriminate against its minorities with impunity. Like older sovereign states, they are protected from questioning by the doctrine of no interference in internal affairs.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Michael Scott, “A Fair Hearing for Minorities: How We Might Lead,” *Observer*, October 30, 1960.

The piece had a far-flung circulation even among interested peoples without an *Observer* subscription, as copies independently found their way into archival collections in Dimapur, Nagaland, and in Windhoek, Namibia.<sup>2</sup> In his op-ed, Scott pinpointed the limits of the United Nations both as an institution and as a system of international order. The UN institution, meant the bureaucracy set up in 1945 in San Francisco, while the UN system of international order, referred to the political organization of the postwar world reshuffled by decolonization and frozen by the Cold War.

There were extensive differences between the place of minority and/or dependent peoples in the League of Nations before the Second World War compared to their place in the United Nations, its successor institution.<sup>3</sup> The League of Nations created and administered two international oversight regimes: the minority protections system for Eastern Europe and the mandate system for the former Ottoman and German empires. Petitioning played a central role in both oversight regimes. The minority protections system provided a form of redress short of national recognition for minority populations within fourteen “new” Eastern European states. The mandate system looked outside of Europe. It was the “first effort to begin the radical project of transforming colonial territories into sovereign states,”<sup>4</sup> though not until the peoples living in those territories were “ready.”<sup>5</sup> Petitions (and the right to petition) were controversial and restricted in scope and language.<sup>6</sup> Petitions could be brought forward by individuals or groups, interested third parties, or the peoples themselves.

Since South West Africa had been a League of Nations mandate, the UN Committee on South West Africa was a vestige from the League that made its way into the UN. With this important exception, the post-1945

<sup>2</sup> In the collections of Reverend V. K. Nuh outside of Dimapur, Nagaland, and the National Archives of Namibia in Windhoek, Namibia.

<sup>3</sup> Carole Fink, *Defending the Rights of Others: The Great Powers, the Jews, and International Minority Protection, 1878–1938* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> Antony Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty, and the Making of International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 115.

<sup>5</sup> For the ever-mutating notion of “readiness,” see Partha Chatterjee, *The Black Hole of Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), 273–76.

<sup>6</sup> Jane Cowan, “Who’s Afraid of Violent Language? Honour, Sovereignty and Claims-Making in the League of Nations,” *Anthropological Theory* 33, no. 3 (2003): 271–91.

United Nations got rid of the League petitioning processes, which is one reason why the UN system can be considered a more restrictive international-legal regime than that of the League.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, circumnavigating these limitations required political savvy and gave well-connected, concerned individuals such as Reverend Scott a role in helping nationalist claimants maneuver through the interstices, the unregulated spaces, of international politics.

Nagas had been seeking United Nations intervention since Indian independence in 1947, sending letters directly to the UN Security Council and to national delegations at the UN.<sup>8</sup> Many of the letters never left India, since the Indian government attempted to control the information flow in and out of the Naga Hills.<sup>9</sup> Those that reached their designated state government or United Nations correspondent were ignored. In 1956, the Naga leader Phizo went into voluntary exile in East Pakistan as a tactical bid to fight international unresponsiveness, to put a face and a voice behind the Naga cause, and to reach a wider Western audience in order to make them know and care about what was happening in Nagaland. In contrast to international ignorance and apathy about that region, Naga nationalists closely followed and distributed international news, listening to the radio and reading press bulletins about the wars of decolonization and new nations receiving independence on the African continent.<sup>10</sup> If the United Nations itself would not listen to the Naga claim, perhaps there were people with access to that institution who would, once they met Nagas in person. In 1960, Phizo made his way to London to find out.

#### ENTER THE GATEKEEPERS

Phizo's journey to London highlighted the tactics, ideals, and logistics necessary to transport a nationalist insurgent claim into international

<sup>7</sup> Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea, 1815 to the Present* (New York: Penguin Books, 2012).

<sup>8</sup> For examples, Hongkhin to UN secretary general, November 30, 1954, and January 31, 1955. Bishnuram Medhi Correspondence File 1, Nehru Memorial Museum and Archives; Khukishe to the Israeli chief delegate to the UNO, November 1, 1949, HZ-14/71, Israel State Archive, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Thanks to Rafi Stern for sharing the latter document.

<sup>9</sup> This is why the papers of Bishuram Medhi, chief minister of Assam (1950–1957), include Naga petitions to the UN.

<sup>10</sup> Arijit Sen, "Marginal on the Map: Hidden Wars and Hidden Media in Northeast India," Reuters Institute Fellowship Paper, University of Oxford, Oxford, 2011, 5.

politics. National self-determination was a process that the “self” – the people in question – did not get to determine in a vacuum. Instead, peoples relied on the access, and its accompanying forms of external recognition, conferred upon them by advocacy networks made up of gatekeepers – individuals with the prestige, connections, and expertise to move a nationalist claim through the United Nations system of international order. While this process is most easily visible for a small movement like the Nagas, other dependent peoples that felt trapped in independent states (such as India, China, South Africa, and elsewhere) used similar tactics and often the same set of advocates: South West Africa, with its vestigial League of Nations mandate status and UN committee, is the most famous example. With a combination of political connections, moral suasion, and social prestige, advocates moved political claims and claimants across the hardening borders of postimperial and postcolonial states.

In June 1960, Phizo arrived in London after a secret journey that took him from Nagaland, to East Pakistan, and then to Switzerland, on a fake El Salvadorian passport. Four years earlier, Phizo had sneaked into East Pakistan, but the Pakistanis looked on the Naga cause with suspicion and kept his activities constrained. Neither Pakistan nor China, however inimical to India, would directly foment separatist sentiment in the region when they had to contend with their own nationalist claimants in nearby East Pakistan and Tibet. Eventually, with money and the fake passport procured – through his nephew Vichazellie (Challe) Iralu, an epidemiology PhD student studying in Chicago – Phizo made his way to Zürich under the name “Prudencio Llach,” though he considered it “a sorry fact for a Christian” to use an “assumed name.”<sup>11</sup>

While Phizo was stranded in Zürich, Challe (in Chicago) read an article in the *New York Times* about the Herero people of South West Africa<sup>12</sup> petitioning the United Nations for support against South African rule, with the help of Reverend Scott.<sup>13</sup> This was a model for how a people, small in number and politically disenfranchised, could reach the United Nations – through a Western advocate connected to but not representative of state power. Inspired by the article, Challe wrote to Scott. Scott did not reply to Challe’s first letter because he worried that

<sup>11</sup> Phizo note, June 1960, Box 28, Guthrie Michael Scott Papers, Weston Library, Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford (hereafter, “GMS Papers”).

<sup>12</sup> There are also Herero people of Bechuanaland.

<sup>13</sup> Niketu Iralu, interview with author, February 4, 2016. Also recounted in an account by David Astor from his interview with Cyril Dunn, May 10, 1975, Box 25, GMS Papers.

the Naga cause would distract him from his advocacy work for African anticolonial nationalist movements.<sup>14</sup> So Challe wrote to Laura Thompson, an American anthropologist based in Brooklyn, who had conducted fieldwork in Melanesia and Micronesia and taught Challe's wife, Tefta Zografi Iralu, at the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill.<sup>15</sup> As a result, Thompson then also wrote to Scott, attempting to persuade him to take a closer look at Phizo and the Naga question. Scott remained ambivalent. On the one hand, the Indian delegation at the United Nations had supported his Southern African causes; Scott knew that supporting the Naga cause could upset his important working friendships with Indian prime minister Nehru and with Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Nehru's sister, who had been the Indian ambassador to the United Nations and was high commissioner to London in 1960. But on the other, he felt that there might be something significant to the Naga claim.

During that spring of 1960, Scott's colleague E. J. B. (Jim) Rose of the Institute of Race Relations, a British think-tank concerned with the security questions generated by decolonization, was holidaying in Switzerland with his family. At Scott's urging, Rose visited Phizo in Zürich that May and found him "an odd, troublesome little man" but deserving of attention.<sup>16</sup> As a result of Rose's recommendation, Scott went down to Zürich in June and brought Phizo to London, bamboozling his way through passport control with his priest's collar, his over six feet of height, and his name-dropping of the eminent people who were board members of the Africa Bureau, Scott's nongovernmental advocacy organization for African anticolonial nationalist claims.

Under the label "former imperial citizen," Phizo was provisionally admitted into the UK.<sup>17</sup> Scott's patron, David Astor – son of the American heiress and British politician Nancy Astor, as well as the editor and owner of the *Observer* newspaper – brought in a collection of former colonial officials and anthropologists to confirm Phizo's identity; he also dispatched a reporter to Nagaland to investigate Phizo's allegations of Indian atrocities. Scott gave Phizo an office at the Africa Bureau, in Denison House, Pimlico, in which Phizo quickly got to work writing a

<sup>14</sup> Dunn, interview with Astor, May 10, 1975.

<sup>15</sup> Challe Iralu letter to Laura Thompson, June 20, 1959, Box 41, Laura Thompson Papers, National Anthropological Archives, the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

<sup>16</sup> Michael Scott, Personal Account, Box 5, GMS Papers.

<sup>17</sup> Pieter Steyn, *Zapuphizo: Voice of the Nagas* (London: Keegan Paul, 2002), 106.

booklet on the history and politics of Naga nationalism in order to promote his cause to a Western public.<sup>18</sup>

Phizo's arrival in London was well timed. The year 1960 was a moment of tremendous optimism in the potential of national liberation. Scott and Astor saw the need for a nongovernmental work-around to the United Nations in order to address nationalist claims within new postcolonial states. They believed that the crucial challenge for new postcolonial nation-states would be how they handled their minority populations; with the "multiplication of sovereignties," Scott thought, "what redress would minorities have against injustice?"<sup>19</sup> Scott and Astor argued that the Naga question in India's Northeast could be "a test case for the new countries" in decolonizing Africa.<sup>20</sup>

In response to this perceived need, Astor set up the International Committee for the Study of Group Rights – eventually renamed the Minority Rights Group and funded by the Ford Foundation with some support from the US Congress for Cultural Freedom, an anticommunist advocacy organization that the US Central Intelligence Agency founded and financed.<sup>21</sup> It is crucial to note that the aims of the Minority Rights Group differed from those of the "minority" for whom they advocated: Phizo and other Naga nationalists claimed independence, not minority rights protections. The Minority Rights Group drew up "memoranda and interviewed United Nations people," but its work was not considered "anybody's business in the realm of high politics."<sup>22</sup> *Whose* business, then, were national claims within new postcolonial nation-states? The question remained unanswered. The business of minority rights and the business of the Minority Rights Group were no one's priority.

The vacuum of international interest in, and ability to handle, minority rights questions was double-edged – both opportunities and challenges existed in addressing an issue that was "no one's business." This attention void gave the Minority Rights Group room and purpose to exist. In addition, the group's claim to apolitical, unbiased reporting allowed it to address contentious questions. Yet, this power and attention vacuum meant that the question of minority rights within the UN order remained off official agendas; so, while Scott, Astor, and their colleagues had

<sup>18</sup> A. Z. Phizo, *The Fate of the Naga People: An Appeal to the World* (London: The Africa Bureau, 1960).

<sup>19</sup> Scott, Personal Account, p. 4. <sup>20</sup> Scott, Personal Account, p. 4.

<sup>21</sup> Minority Rights Group Minutes, July 21, 1965, Box 44, GMS Papers.

<sup>22</sup> Scott, Personal Account, p. 4.

incredible scope and influence regarding minority rights questions, the role of the Minority Rights Group underscored the weakness of the Nagas' own claim. The weakness of a nationalist movement and the strength of its advocates were intertwined.

#### NATIONALIST CLAIMANTS' PATH TO INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

The primary function of a gatekeeper was to vouch for the legitimacy of a claimant from a place and people little known to the Western Anglophone world, so that the claimant could potentially enter more influential spheres of international politics. Since nationalist claimants could not, on their own, access the United Nations,<sup>23</sup> their best chance to enter the world stage was through networks of advocates – people already accepted internationally for their moral, political, or scholarly prestige in the related region or cause, who could act as gatekeepers to international forums through their personal, political, and at times financial connections. When Phizo arrived in Britain, after Reverend Scott had slipped him past immigration, he needed to establish his identity; for this purpose, David Astor asked a collection of individuals who had known Phizo in the Naga Hills before the Second World War. Anthropologist Ursula Graham Bower Betts from the Isle of Mull, retired colonial official Charles Pawsey from Suffolk, and anthropologist/retired colonial official/Naga-skull collector J. H. Hutton from Powys, in Wales, congregated in London to sign affidavits certifying that Phizo was, indeed, Angami Zapu Phizo born in the Naga Hills in the former British India in 1903.

The presence of Phizo and, later on, other Nagas, in London led to a reunion of sorts for Western experts on Northeast India, some of whom did not approve of Phizo or did not get along with each other, or both. Charles Pawsey and George Supplee, the American Baptist missionary who had worked in the Naga Hills, exchanged letters on Phizo. Supplee expressed concern about the perceived political implications of Phizo's "Che Guevara mustache," which he believed might brand him a communist.<sup>24</sup> J. H. Hutton reported to Verrier Elwin, a British anthropologist who took Indian citizenship after 1947 and became Nehru's advisor on tribal peoples, that Phizo was "a thoroughly bad hat who is

<sup>23</sup> With a few important exceptions that were granted observer status, such as the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the African National Congress.

<sup>24</sup> George Supplee–Charles Pawsey correspondence, Box 1, Charles Pawsey Papers, Centre of South Asian Studies, University of Cambridge, UK.



exploiting his people for his own benefit.”<sup>25</sup> Hutton blamed Phizo for killing his rivals in Nagaland and felt that the real reason he had come to London was to escape reprisals at home. Amidst the reminiscence of friends and enemies, all were cognizant of the international – possibly even Cold War – ramifications that Naga nationalism might cause. Elwin copied Hutton’s letter and sent it to the Indian governor of Nagaland, Vishnu Sahay. The letter was leaked to the Indian press, which presented its mention of the Cold War as proof that the Nagas were in collusion with the Chinese.<sup>26</sup>

Elwin himself disliked many of his fellow anthropologists. He thought that Western anthropologists were conspiring with the tribal peoples they studied to keep them from integrating into the Indian Union:

[Ursula Betts and her husband, Tim] were thoroughgoing imperialists and their love of NEFA was closely bound up with their antagonism to non-tribal Indians and especially to the Assamese. Both [Christoph von] Fürer-Haimendorf [anthropologist at the School of Oriental and Asian Studies in London who worked on Nagas] and the Betts were among those most anxious to separate NEFA from the Assamese and indeed if they had their way the POs [political officers] and APOs [assistant political officers] would not only not be Assamese: they would be British!<sup>27</sup>

While Elwin was not quite fair to his colleagues, he had touched on an important feature of some Westerners’ sympathy for the Naga cause: colonial nostalgia. For a “small people” like the Nagas in a “forgotten” corner of the world, the porousness of imperial boundaries and categories had allowed them more freedom than did the postcolonial Indian state. In addition, imperial notions of “the white man’s burden” undergirded the qualified support that some interested Westerners, such as Ursula and Tim Betts, gave to Naga nationalists. In contrast, for critics of empire, such as Astor and Scott, notions of the white man’s burden intensified with decolonization. Their support for anticolonial nationalism in India, Africa, and elsewhere made them feel responsible for peoples who did not feel liberated by the end of colonialism.

The act of vouching for Phizo’s and other Naga nationalists’ identities and claims gave a group of former colonial officials, anthropologists, and

<sup>25</sup> J. H. Hutton letter to Verrier Elwin, December 9, 1962, Subject File 26, Elwin Papers, Nehru National Museum and Library, New Delhi (hereafter “NNML”).

<sup>26</sup> *Assam Tribune*, December 20, 1962, Assam Tribune Office Collections, Guwahati, Assam.

<sup>27</sup> Verrier Elwin, personal notes to “AG,” concerning an undated, untitled *Assam Tribune* article, Subject File 16, Elwin Papers, NNML.

missionaries an opportunity to rehash old alliances and gripes from the time when the Naga Hills were British. The “new” politics of national liberation overlaid older imperial relationships. These older relationships were predicated on notions of protection – of a dependent people who were obliged to rely on Western advocates as gatekeepers to international politics. Paternalist ideas of the white man’s burden may have undergirded significant elements of Western support for the Naga nationalists, as they have for many global humanitarian endeavors.<sup>28</sup> Yet to discount that advocacy because of this critique accepts the Indian statist frame that has worked to undermine the legitimacy of Naga nationalist claims-making. This advocacy was a necessary first step for potential Naga recognition. Having known authorities personally vouch for Phizo – for his identity only, as Pawsey and Hutton did, or for the need to investigate his claims, as Bower Betts, Astor, and Scott did – was crucially important for Naga nationalists. It allowed them to garner global attention for their allegations against India.

In Phizo’s travelogue, many advocates stood at metaphorical and literal gates – Challe Iralu, Laura Thompson, Michael Scott, Jim Rose, David Astor – facilitating his passage. Most of them then dropped out of the story; they had served their purpose and had passed Phizo’s nationalist claim on to the next advocate.

Michael Scott was one of the advocates who did not drop away.<sup>29</sup> He was drawn to seemingly hopeless causes. While he knew that taking up the Naga question could test his relationship with Indian friends and politicians to the breaking point, he could not turn Phizo down. Phizo was the incarnation of Scott’s life project: to speak for those for whom no one else wanted to speak. Certain advocates perceived Phizo as unlikable and rude to the Africa Bureau office staff.<sup>30</sup> Scott’s Indian friends considered Phizo a violent criminal. All Phizo had were detailed, typed-out-

<sup>28</sup> Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011); Talal Asad, “Reflections on Violence, Law, and Humanitarianism,” *Critical Inquiry* 41 (2015): 390–427; Emily Baughan, *Saving the Children: Humanitarianism, Internationalism, and Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2021).

<sup>29</sup> Anne Yates and Lewis Chester, *The Troublemaker* (London: Aurum Press, 2004), a biography of Michael Scott. Scott’s rich collection of papers, now housed at the Weston Library, University of Oxford, include Anne Yates’s notes as well as those of his previous biographer, the former *Observer* journalist Cyril Dunn, who never finished his Scott biography.

<sup>30</sup> Bowers Betts letter to Lorna Richmond, January 26, 1963, Box 63, GMS Papers; Bowers Betts letter to George Patterson, January 2, 1963, Box 28, GMS Papers.

in-English allegations of atrocities, with no formal avenue of redress. The difficulty of Phizo's claim – the small size of the Naga population, the tiny amount of up-to-date information on Nagaland available to outsiders, and the problem of upsetting India – made championing Phizo irresistible for Scott.

Scott had begun his advocacy work in South Africa in 1946. Following the Second World War, he was posted to a congregation in the shantytown of Tobruk, outside of Johannesburg. His protests against racist land-tenure legislation in South Africa caught the attention of Mrs. Pandit, head of the Indian delegation to the UN. Scott first got to the UN in 1946, when Maharaj Singh, the governor of Bombay, took him on as a member of the Indian mission to Lake Success and helped him get a visa to the US.<sup>31</sup> At the UN General Assembly, Scott testified in support of Mrs. Pandit's case against South Africa's 1946 Asiatic Land Tenure and Representation Act. The Herero people of South West Africa took notice. When Britain would not let Tshekedi Khama of Bechuanaland travel to New York with the petitions of the Herero of South West Africa (there were also Herero in Bechuanaland), those South West African Hereros sent their petitions through Scott. He then testified at the UN on their behalf under the auspices of the Indian UN delegation – something he continued to do for decades.

Scott spoke as the personal representative of Chief Hosea Kutako of the Herero people in South West Africa/Namibia. He asked for international protection and recognition of South West Africa as a mandate to be held in sacred trust by the international community, not as a de facto fifth province of South Africa. He compared the lack of economic development of the South West African mandate held by South Africa unfavorably (and incorrectly) with that of the British Southern African protectorates, where "Africans are grateful that their land is protected for them."<sup>32</sup> His advocacy in the late 1940s and 1950s focused on the

<sup>31</sup> Michael Scott, interview with Cyril Dunn, October 1964, Box 77, GMS Papers. Due to US president Franklin Delano Roosevelt's support for Indian decolonization, India was a member of the United Nations (which was founded in 1942 as a wartime alliance) before the country became independent in 1947.

<sup>32</sup> Michael Scott in *Civilization on Trial in South Africa* (1950), directed by Michael Scott and edited by Clive Donner, archival copy held by the British Film Institute, London (other copies are held at the National Archives of Namibia, Windhoek, and the Smithsonian Film Archives, Washington, DC); Rob Gordon, "Not Quite Cricket: 'Civilization on Trial in South Africa': A Note on the First 'Protest Film' Made in Southern Africa," *History in Africa* 32 (2005): 457–66.

grievances of the Herero people in South West Africa and their need for international protection, rather than on independence for the territory of South West Africa. This echoed the rhetoric of nineteenth-century missionaries in Southern Africa, who viewed European empire as a source of moral and technological progress while considering settler colonialism a wicked, inequitable system.<sup>33</sup>

This type of advocacy was politically practical in the 1950s and more aligned with the interests of the board members of Scott's advocacy organization, the Africa Bureau, including captains of industry Ronald Prain of the Rhodesian Selection Trust (mining) and Jock Campbell of Booker Brothers, McConnell, and Co. (sugar), who funded the Africa Bureau.<sup>34</sup> However, it also highlighted the paternalist mode of Scott's advocacy, which often saw white settler governments, not continued empire, as the primary enemy of African liberation. Unsurprisingly, Scott had contentious relationships with younger nationalists, who began to make it out of South West Africa in the mid-1950s and eventually supplanted him at the UN. Scott served as a gatekeeper for Namibian claims-making, the older form of claims-making that asked for international protection rather than the newer form that called for national independence.

From 1947 to the early 1960s, Scott testified nearly annually in New York City before the UN Committee on South West Africa. For the first decade he served as the sole spokesperson for the people of South West Africa. In the mid-1950s, he was joined by Mburumba Kerina (Eric Getzen), who, in 1952, snuck aboard a fishing boat in Walvis Bay to be able to reach and attend Lincoln University, a historically Black college in Pennsylvania.<sup>35</sup> While an undergraduate at Lincoln, Kerina contacted Scott about joining the latter at the United Nations. Scott was ambivalent because Kerina had no invitation from the Herero Chiefs Council, but he agreed. (Later on, other South West Africans/Namibians joined Kerina and Scott in New York, representing different nationalist organizations

<sup>33</sup> Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, Vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 86–125.

<sup>34</sup> Prain and Campbell were important patrons and funders of the Africa Bureau. Correspondence about Scott's interestingly charged friendship with Prain and Campbell can be found in Boxes 44, 63, GMS Papers. Robert Skinner, *The Foundations of Anti-Apartheid: Liberal Humanitarians and Transnational Activists in Britain and the United States, 1919–1964* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 118–55, details some of the Africa Bureau's role in anti-apartheid advocacy.

<sup>35</sup> Mburumba Kerina, interview with author, May 4, 2016.

and tribal/ethnic/religious groups.) Kerina and Scott had a contentious, asymmetrical relationship. Kerina called himself Scott's "little brown boy,"<sup>36</sup> while Scott complained to Chief Hosea Kutako about Kerina's politicking, fearing that too many disagreeing South West African voices undermined their cause and that Kerina was representing himself rather than the South West African people.<sup>37</sup>

Scott was correct in elements of his assessment: Angela Brooks of the Liberian UN delegation hosted an informal summit where she tried to smooth over the differences among South West African UN petitioners (in order to facilitate her own country's advocacy on their behalf).<sup>38</sup> In addition, South Africa did its best to exacerbate and publicize internal South West African divisions.<sup>39</sup> Yet Scott also held a divergent position from that of Kerina, speaking for the Herero Chiefs Council, asking the international community for protection from South African misrule; while Kerina and other Namibian UN petitioners sought national independence. By 1960, Scott's efficacy as a gatekeeper for Namibian nationalist claims-making was on the wane. Namibians could speak for themselves, even if not with one voice.

#### REPORTING OR ADVOCACY?

After Phizo reached London in June 1960, he started writing a report on Naga nationalism and alleged Indian human rights abuses. Two years later, George Patterson, a reporter for the *Observer*, presented Phizo's report on the "Naga problem" at a public meeting where Hutton and other advocates vouched for the identities of four more Naga nationalists (Kaito Sukhai, Mowu Gwizan, Khodao Yanthan, and Yongkongangshi Longchar) who came to London to meet with Phizo. Patterson, a former missionary to Tibet, had provided information to Indian, US, and British intelligence about the Chinese invasion of Tibet (1950) and the organizing around the Dalai Lama's flight to India (1959), while based in Darjeeling and working for David Astor's *Observer* newspaper.<sup>40</sup> In 1962, he had

<sup>36</sup> Kerina, interview with author, May 4, 2016.

<sup>37</sup> Hosea Kutako letter to Michael Scott, October 6, 1955, Box 74, GMS Papers.

<sup>38</sup> Meeting between Brooks and Kerina, described in F. Taylor Ostrander (of AMAX Mining) letter to an unnamed recipient, May 31, 1961, Box 93, GMS Papers. The Liberian delegation to the UN often hosted Kerina, giving him entrée to speak.

<sup>39</sup> Kozonguizi tapes 1, TPA 48.4, Tony Emmett Interviews/Papers, Basler Afrika Bibliographien, Basel, Switzerland.

<sup>40</sup> George Patterson, *Requiem for Tibet* (London: Aurum Press, 1990).

recently returned from a visit to Nagaland and Pakistan, where he had researched news stories and conducted negotiations with Mrs. Pandit and Pakistani officials in Karachi on behalf of Phizo.

David Astor personally paid Patterson's expenses as "adviser to Phizo and as a general propagandist"<sup>41</sup> and also provided the funding for the four other Naga nationalists to travel from Pakistan to London. Eventually, Astor grew ambivalent about directly supporting Naga nationalists. He decided to give the cash he had assigned to the Naga cause to the nongovernmental advocacy organization he had cofounded (the Minority Rights Group) and to pay money to Phizo "as from that body."<sup>42</sup> At Astor's urging, the Minority Rights Group employed George Patterson "as its salaried director or general secretary."<sup>43</sup>

Astor's financial support of Phizo, his *Observer's* investigative reporting on the Naga question, and his creation of the Minority Rights Group formed a tangled financial knot. The personal nature of advocacy politics meant that finances, the infrastructure of a nongovernmental organization, and newspaper publicity could all originate from the same well-placed individual. It could be easy for the multiple facets of Astor's advocacy on the Naga question to appear – and be written off – as a rich man's side project. Astor himself was aware of this when he created the Minority Rights Group to address multiple "group-rights" concerns, bundling the Naga question with that of Kurds, Basques, and Aboriginal peoples in Australia (among others).<sup>44</sup> The concept of "group rights" also neatly sidestepped questions that specific labeling – such as "nationalist," "minority," or "separatist" – inevitably raised. Creating a group rights organization to handle the Naga question ("question" being another term that sidestepped a specific political stance on an issue) also attempted to distance Astor's advocacy from the courageous and innovative investigative reporting that the *Observer* did in Nagaland (Figure 2.1).

Independent news reporting from Nagaland was no easy feat. After violence broke out in the region in the early 1950s, the Indian government unofficially banned the international media from the region. An exception was made for a carefully chaperoned group of journalists in 1960, which included Henry Bradsher, Rawley Knox, and Neville Maxwell, who were taken about to cultural dance performances.<sup>45</sup> They found the Indian

<sup>41</sup> David Astor letter to Michael Scott, June 29, 1962, Box 5, GMS Papers.

<sup>42</sup> Astor letter to Scott, June 29, 1962. <sup>43</sup> Astor letter to Scott, June 29, 1962.

<sup>44</sup> Minority Rights Group meeting minutes, July 21, 1965, Box 44, GMS Papers.

<sup>45</sup> Neville Maxwell and Henry Bradsher, email exchanges with author, February 2016.



FIGURE 2.1 Naga nationalist insurgents, 1961. Photo: Gavin Young

government's "performance" of peaceful cultural harmony difficult to watch, and drafted a satiric poem in response:

Dances and mudu, mudu and dances,  
That's how investigation advances.  
Mudu and dances, dances and mudu.  
Do not be obstreperous,  
Do as you should do.  
Mudu and dances, dances and mudu.<sup>46</sup>

Alternate lines were swapped into the poem – "Do not be fissiparous, do as you should do" – alluding to Nehru's label for separatist movements within India. Then, at the end of a performance, the dancers gave Bradsher an amulet that, on close examination, contained carefully folded

<sup>46</sup> Henry Bradsher, personal account, shared with author via email of February 7, 2016. *Mudu* is the home-brewed rice beer popular in the Naga Hills and elsewhere in Northeast India.



up lists of allegations of atrocities committed by the Indian Army in the Naga Hills, typed in English.<sup>47</sup>

A classic tale of weapons-of-the-weak-style subversion, this anecdote illustrates how Naga nationalists could use their status as a premodern tribal people to appear harmlessly apolitical to Indian authorities. At the same time, Nagas disrupted this stereotype with their reams of typed, English-language documents protesting against India and asserting their national sovereignty.<sup>48</sup> They also consciously presented themselves as modern and therefore respectable to international and Indian audiences. Elwin complained that the Nagas in London were “dressed up like members of the YMCA,” and Indian commentators grouched that the Naga nationalists wore the clothes of “life insurance salesmen.”<sup>49</sup> Naga nationalists made a point of displaying themselves as modern, English-speaking, Western-oriented, and, most importantly, Christian, in contrast to the rest of India.

Nationalists of all sorts made important sartorial and linguistic choices in demonstrating their claims in person, on paper, and in their environment – from Yasser Arafat (Palestine)’s wearing Fidel Castro (Cuba)’s military fatigues and aligning his cause visually with left-wing revolution, to new nationalist elites’ renaming cities, streets, countries, and even their own selves. Usually, this nationalist branding occurred in reaction to Western-ruled imperial pasts or current opponents. In regard to Nagas, however, India had a vested interest in portraying them as an exotic, premodern tribal people; what Ursula Graham Bower Betts called the “spear-and-feathers contingent.”<sup>50</sup> In opposition, Naga nationalists emphasized their Western-ness – a contrast that deliberately set them outside of India’s own international political self-presentation of sari-clad Mrs. Pandit speaking in the United Nations on behalf of disenfranchised South Asians and Africans in South Africa.

While Naga nationalists looked toward the Western Anglophone world, foreigners (who required an Indian visa) were not officially allowed to enter Nagaland. David Astor first disregarded India’s embargo

<sup>47</sup> Henry Bradsher, personal account.

<sup>48</sup> A massive number of similar and copied Naga nationalist documents listing atrocities allegedly committed by the Indian Army can be found in collections ranging from Naga villages (I visited personal and church collections in Kohima, Zubza, Mezoma, and Toulezuma) to the Bodleian library in Oxford, UK.

<sup>49</sup> Verrier Elwin letter to J. H. Hutton, October 20, 1962, Subject File 16, Elwin Papers; *Shankar’s Weekly*, April 1966.

<sup>50</sup> Ursula Graham Bower Betts letter to David Astor, July 15, 1966, Box 35, GMS Papers.



when another of his *Observer* reporters, Gavin Young, snuck into Nagaland through Burma in 1961. Young, an Oxford graduate – like Elwin, Hutton, and Astor himself (and most of the *Observer* staff) – was a charismatic, alcoholic foreign-news correspondent who always traveled with a Joseph Conrad novel.<sup>51</sup> He served in Palestine in the late 1940s, then picked up Iraqi Arabic and roamed the Middle East as a freelance correspondent until the Suez Crisis. In 1960–1961, he was reporting on the Algerian war and Katanga’s secession from newly independent Congo-Leopoldville when, at Astor’s urging, he flew to Burma and met up (inside the Rangoon zoo) with Phizo’s Naga contacts.<sup>52</sup> Young and his escorts then took a boat up the Chindwin River to Upper Burma and walked into Nagaland pretending that Young was a Baptist missionary.

Those, like Young, who reported on the end of empires while they usually supported national liberation, were engaged in a postimperial project in spite of themselves: they connected far-flung postcolonial war zones back to their former metropolises and their careers mirrored those of imperial civil servants from earlier decades. In some ways, Young was a postcolonial version of an imperial-era adventurer who brought tales from distant corners of the world to Western elite publics. He compared the Naga struggle to that of Algeria, particularly the nationalists’ intense concern for how they “played” to an international audience.<sup>53</sup> Young praised the “disciplined Naga” who scanned the daily news from “the BBC, Voice of America, All-India Radio, Moscow, Beijing and Pakistan” and distributed it in digest form to the members of their movement.<sup>54</sup>

A few months after he published his Naga articles, Young was an eyewitness to violence between UN peacekeepers and Katanga’s “refractory mercenaries” in Congo; several years later, he watched Buddhist protests and self-immolations in Vietnam.<sup>55</sup> Besides telling fascinating stories, Young’s life and work linked Nagaland to the world’s other political-conflict hotspots – Algeria, Katanga, and eventually Vietnam – on which Young also reported with analytical verve and in dangerous

<sup>51</sup> Robert Chesshyre, interview with author, August 10, 2016.

<sup>52</sup> Steyn, *Zapuphizo*, 119.

<sup>53</sup> Matthew Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria’s Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), details the international concerns of the Algerian nationalist movement.

<sup>54</sup> Gavin Young, “The Commonwealth’s Unknown War,” part 1, *Observer*, May 1, 1961.

<sup>55</sup> Conor Cruise O’Brien, *To Katanga and Back: A UN Case History* (London: Hutchinson, 1962), 256; Gavin Young, *A Wavering Grace: A Vietnamese Family in War and Peace* (New York: Farber & Farber, 2009).

circumstances. For Young, his journey to Nagaland was not a one-off job. It formed part of a pattern of international political bushfire-jumping during the wars of decolonization in the mid-twentieth century.

Young wrote three investigative articles on Nagaland as part of a series titled “The Commonwealth’s Unknown War.” He broke the story of the extensive, ongoing guerilla war in the region and interviewed a captured Indian pilot, Captain Misra, whose sister was married to a Bollywood actor.<sup>56</sup> (The Bollywood connection and Misra’s capture by Naga nationalist insurgents may have led to this being the first time that political unrest in Nagaland made the mainstream Indian news.) Young also took a number of striking photographs of armed Naga nationalists and Misra’s downed Dakota plane, images that were repeatedly used in reporting on the Naga cause.

Young’s investigative journalism represented the success of Astor’s conflation of reporting and advocacy for Naga nationalist claims-making. Astor knew its power. He attempted to negotiate with the Indian High Commission in London, then headed by Mrs. Pandit, on the timing of the publication of Young’s articles, to try to persuade the Indian government to consider the idea of an independent fact-finding mission into Phizo’s allegations. Astor’s proposed mission would be led by Conor Cruise O’Brien, an Irish diplomat and writer (sometimes for the *Observer*) who had recently finished a controversial assignment as United Nations special ambassador to the secessionist province of Katanga in Congo.<sup>57</sup> Astor, O’Brien, and Mrs. Pandit were all old friends. Astor viewed his offer to delay publication on Young’s stories as a gesture of his good faith in his Indian friends.<sup>58</sup> Mrs. Pandit considered it quasi-blackmail by a Western meddler in a sovereign Indian affair that was none of his business.<sup>59</sup>

#### FISSURES AND FRACTURES

The disagreement between Scott, Astor, and Mrs. Pandit illustrated a central disconnect between Western advocates and their Indian partners on questions of political justice. Nehru and Mrs. Pandit were Indian leaders with constituents and direct political responsibilities, who viewed

<sup>56</sup> Young, “The Commonwealth’s Unknown War,” parts 1, 2, 3, *Observer*, May 1, May 7, May 14, 1961.

<sup>57</sup> “Record of Meeting Held at Baptist Church House, Holborn, on 24 May,” prepared by Lorna Richmond, May 31, 1961, Box 5, GMS Papers.

<sup>58</sup> David Astor letter to Mrs. Pandit, July 1, 1960, Box 5, GMS Papers.

<sup>59</sup> Mrs. Pandit letter to David Astor, June 27, 1960, Box 5, GMS Papers.

the Naga question as an Indian concern, not an international question. Indians and Westerners could work together on African decolonization matters but most definitely not on issues that exposed the limits of India's own decolonization. Indian politicians considered those issues part of India's own nation-building project. Astor and Scott were interested in how a Nagaland could be a test case for addressing the pressing questions concerning minority peoples within new postcolonial nations.<sup>60</sup> Their position on the Naga question obviously differed from that of the Indian government, but it also contrasted with that of Phizo.

Phizo wanted independence for the Nagas. He sought an international investigation or intervention as a means to achieve that end. He argued that Nagaland was not part of India and should never have been part of the territorial consignment of British India to the independent governments of India and Pakistan in 1947. For Phizo, as for other nationalist leaders, sovereignty was a form of "written, legal magic" that embodied the authority of a people to claim to be a nation that deserved a state.<sup>61</sup> He used the language of sovereignty as an incantation to span the gap between his exile in London and his nationalist ambitions.

Astor and Scott advocated for an unbiased international investigation of Phizo's claims, not for an independent Naga nation-state. It is not completely clear whether Phizo himself caught the difference between what he and what his backers wanted for Nagaland.<sup>62</sup> However, his seeming recalcitrance and perceived ingratitude for the hospitality he had received from Astor and the Africa Bureau make sense if he knew that his advocates were using him and his cause for their own ends. From this perspective, he was willing to go along with the inconsistency in goals as the price of their support, but he did not need to be grateful. Phizo cared about Naga sovereignty. Astor and Scott cared about the general issue of minority rights and the particular subject of Naga humanity, specifically, Phizo's allegations of India's human rights abuses.

India was also most concerned with sovereignty – Indian sovereignty. Mrs. Pandit found it "rather odd that a group of people should form themselves into a committee and sit in judgment between the Government of a country and a man who has committed acts of violence" – that is, was

<sup>60</sup> David Astor letter to J. P. Narayan, August 6, 1960, Box 5, GMS Papers.

<sup>61</sup> Phizo statement, Naga National Council Press Release (undated, probably 1965), Box 17, GMS Papers.

<sup>62</sup> Dunn comment, from his interview with Scott, October 1964, Box 77, GMS Papers.

a criminal – “in that country.”<sup>63</sup> As she wrote to Astor, she believed that Phizo was leading him and Scott down a rabbit hole: “I feel like Alice in Wonderland and the strange tale of Mr. Phizo gets curiouser and curiouser as also *does your part in it*.”<sup>64</sup>

Jayaprakash Narayan (JP), the Indian peace activist and civil society leader who was a friend and close colleague of Astor and Scott, also participated in the disagreement between Western advocates and Indian politicians over the Naga question. JP tried to persuade Scott and Astor of the perspective of those in India, where, with justification, “public opinion is most unsympathetic to Phizo, who is looked upon as the person chiefly responsible for the violence in Nagaland.”<sup>65</sup> While as integral a figure as Astor and Scott in the same network of transnational advocacy that supported anticolonial nationalism, JP operated across significantly more constrained political terrain. He had much more domestic political clout – and therefore public responsibility – in his home country of India than Astor or Scott did in the UK. That influence meant that he had to be careful and considerate of the possible ramifications of his political statements in a manner that his Western civil society colleagues did not. These operational constraints illustrated the asymmetrical relations between advocates from postcolonial versus postimperial states. Scott and Astor had a freedom to speak in public and in private on polarizing issues about which their Indian colleagues had to be much more reserved.<sup>66</sup> Further, for India and Indians, as JP pointed out, there were national security dimensions to the Naga question. “In view of Chinese troublemaking all along our northern borders, India is most sensitive to any separatist moves.”<sup>67</sup>

Krishna Menon (Indian minister of defense, who had previously been Indian high commissioner to the UK) also highlighted how the Naga question was a threat to Indian territorial integrity and the idea of India as a whole. If the Nagas were granted independence, “other minority

<sup>63</sup> Mrs. Pandit letter to Astor, June 27, 1960, Box 5, GMS Papers.

<sup>64</sup> Mrs. Pandit letter to Astor, June 27, 1960 (emphasis added).

<sup>65</sup> J. P. Narayan letter to David Astor, September 11, 1960, Box 5, GMS Papers.

<sup>66</sup> This asymmetry of expression is mirrored in Scott’s and JP’s personal papers. Both collections (at the Weston Library, Oxford, UK, and the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, India, respectively) are extensive, but Scott’s are much more candid and comprehensive regarding Naga claims-making and, therefore, the author draws upon them more heavily in reconstructing internal disagreements – a dynamic that mirrors the relationship between Indian and Western advocates in *States-in-Waiting*.

<sup>67</sup> J. P. Narayan letter to David Astor, September 11, 1960, Box 5, GMS Papers.

peoples within the Union would then also demand it. The Indian union would be nibbled away.”<sup>68</sup> Menon, borrowing from the early-twentieth-century anthropology that categorized the Nagas as “a collection of tribes” rather than a nation, said that they were not “a people like the Karens in Burma”; the Nagas were not “asking for national independence but for tribal independence.”<sup>69</sup> Thus, for most Indian politicians, Nagas were both a domestic matter and an international threat. They saw the Nagas as a tribal people, not a nation. Nagas represented one of many separatist challenges within India that had the potential to undermine Indian national security from within by inspiring the Tamils, Sikhs, and others; and from without by opening the border to the Chinese.

Astor and Scott had become friends with Mrs. Pandit, Menon, and JP because of their shared support for Indian independence and for the rights of Indians in Southern Africa in the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>70</sup> Scott and JP continued to be close collaborators in advocacy work for anticolonial nationalist movements into the 1960s. Behind the barbed annoyance of Mrs. Pandit, Menon, and JP toward Scott and Astor, however, was “colonial hangover”: a reaction to Brits interfering once again where they were not wanted, even if Astor et al. had been important metropolitan backers for Indian independence. International advocacy for a minority people within India upset notions of the success of India’s own national liberation. It created an avenue for meddlers from the former colonial power into the affairs of the postcolonial state. It was the backdoor for third-party intervention – a door that Indian politicians sought to keep firmly shut. Astor and Scott, on the other hand, saw their Naga advocacy as evidence that they were equal-opportunity critics of injustice. Their activism against the French in Algeria or against South Africa in South West Africa was not about personal animus against France or South Africa: rather, it was a principled stand against injustice everywhere, even in a country that was governed by their friends.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>68</sup> David Astor, memo of conversation with Krishna Menon, June 28, 1960, Box 5, GMS Papers.

<sup>69</sup> Astor, memo of conversation with Menon, June 28, 1960.

<sup>70</sup> There is a growing body of literature on transnational support for Indian independence across the liberal-left political spectrum. Examples include Michele Louro, Sana Tannoury-Karam, Heather Streets-Salter, and Carolien Stolte, *The League against Imperialism: Lives and Afterlives* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2020); Harald Fischer-Tiné, “Indian Nationalism and the ‘World Forces’: Transnational and Diasporic Dimensions of the Indian Freedom Movement on the Eve of the First World War,” *Journal of Global History* 2, no. 3 (2007): 325–44.

<sup>71</sup> Astor letter to Narayan, August 6, 1960.

The moral question of pacifism hid in the background of the disagreements between Western advocates and Indian (state and non-state) leaders. JP and Mrs. Pandit condemned Phizo because he used violence and had led an insurgency that remained ongoing; JP argued that Phizo's violence invalidated his cause.<sup>72</sup> In contrast, Indians had achieved their national liberation through nonviolent means, at least in the popular imagination. Phizo also applied the Gandhian legacy to his own cause: "Nagaland is a country of Mahatma Gandhi's dream" because "every village is a small republic and has its own councils and assemblies."<sup>73</sup> Reverend Scott himself was not a pacifist, though he espoused nonviolent protest and was a member of War Resisters' International, the largest organization of the international peace movement. He felt that there were some causes whose innate justice and lack of alternative recourse made violence justifiable.

Neither Phizo nor Scott nor JP was directly religiously motivated in their political pursuits, but they were all strongly religiously oriented. Their faith – Baptist, Anglican, Hindu, respectively – interacted with their pursuits; even the agnostic Astor called Scott his "guru in the religion of doubt."<sup>74</sup> Their faith also placed them on the First World's side of the Cold War against "godless" communism. Scott's theology was that of practice rather than preaching. While he and his colleagues grounded their politics in morality, and suffered physical and financial repercussions from grueling travel and espousing unpopular causes, they were not ideologues – nor would many in their circles consider themselves leftists.<sup>75</sup> Overarching concern with social justice had led Scott to join the Communist Party before the Second World War, but the rise of Stalin made him leave by war's end. According to retired British civil servant Richard Kershaw, the Africa Bureau itself was funded by "mandarins, ex-intelligence, millionaires," who "mistrusted the movement for colonial freedom."<sup>76</sup> Kershaw felt that "[t]hese Establishment figures wanted to

<sup>72</sup> Narayan letter to Astor, September 11, 1960.

<sup>73</sup> Phizo 1946 speech, "The Naga National Rights and Movement," Publicity and Information Department, Naga National Council (1993), 13. Document reader held by the Nagaland Baptist Church Council Library, Kohima, Nagaland.

<sup>74</sup> David Astor, interview by Cyril Dunn, c. 1975, Box 25, GMS Papers.

<sup>75</sup> Winifred Armstrong, interview by author, June 13, 2017.

<sup>76</sup> Richard Kershaw, interview by Anne Yates (undated), about the creation of Scott's Africa Bureau. Kershaw had been at the Commonwealth Relations Office and resigned due to the "winds of change" policy shifts of the early 1960s, with which he disagreed. Box 103, GMS Papers.

remedy injustice but not advance communism . . . they wanted freedom, but not at all costs” and that these “rich, tough, old fashioned imperialists” backed Scott and his projects as an “action wedge” during decolonization – an element they could use to prop open a political door, maintaining access to sites of investment as governing authorities shifted from colonial to postcolonial.<sup>77</sup>

Astor recommended Reverend Scott to US national security advisor McGeorge Bundy as the leading expert on African nationalist movements. When doing so, he was careful to emphasize that while Scott’s status as an Anglican priest, his complete “discretion,” and his unbiased political positioning allowed him to hold “the confidence of the African political leaders in all circumstances,” he was “by no means an uncritical supporter.”<sup>78</sup> Scott’s “religion of practice” – he almost always wore his priest’s collar and lacked any concern for personal financial gain – made him a safe pair of hands for his backer’s interests, while his “religion of doubt” made him a welcome interlocutor for government officials accustomed to operating in political shades of gray.

In Reverend Scott’s formulation, the onus was on the international community, the UN institution, and the UN order to eradicate injustice before oppressed peoples had no choice but to resort to violence. He recognized the limitations of presenting himself as a savior or gatekeeper for oppressed peoples but continued to perform in that mode. In his own words,

[T]he human race needs to be saved from those who would save the human race from itself . . . [S]o long as man looks for a Savior, whether it be Christ or Buddha or Gandhi, and fails to look within himself, not relying upon Saviors, Saints, or Heroes to bring him Salvation, is there any hope that he can be saved?<sup>79</sup>

While advocating for nonviolence, he also used the prospect of violence as blackmail to get the international community to act. In the end, these contradictions, which were embodied in Scott’s political philosophy or “religion of doubt,” were incapacitating, not just for him but also for many others who took on the roles of advocates and gatekeepers for nationalist claims in international politics.

<sup>77</sup> Kershaw interview by Yates (undated).

<sup>78</sup> David Astor letter to McGeorge Bundy, September 21, 1962, Box 5, GMS Papers.

<sup>79</sup> Michael Scott to David Astor, April 3, 1960 (capitalization in original), Box 5, GMS Papers.

The job of the gatekeeper was to open the gate for a nationalist claim to pass through and then drop away, not to make himself or herself the essential ingredient for the claim's success.

John Davies, then the Anglican chaplain at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg and eventually the bishop of Shrewsbury (UK), pinpointed this tragic paradox of the advocate for anticolonial nationalism: "The enslavement of the 'white liberal' is his sense of indispensability: it is necessary, but difficult, to shake this off . . . if necessary by leaving." Anticolonial nationalists were doomed until they got "far more real power, including the behind-the-scenes power which so often remains white while the more conspicuous power is taken by blacks." Regarding the role of the advocate, he wrote, "One *must* speak, one *must* protest, one *must* do all that one can. Yet every time one does so, one is in effect supporting this conspiracy to keep blacks silent and powerless."<sup>80</sup> Davies's point – concerning the double-edged nature and eventual incapacity of advocacy – held across geographies of land, space, and power beyond the specific dynamics of apartheid South Africa.

Advocacy was a fragile business. The disagreement over the legitimacy of the Naga claim between Scott and Astor, on the one hand, and Mrs. Pandit and JP, on the other, showed in reverse how vital Indian support had been for Scott's advocacy work in Southern Africa. In a similar manner to other international advocates (including Scott), JP also took on the role of gatekeeper for anticolonial nationalists in Southern and Eastern Africa in the early 1960s, appearing with Julius Nyerere (of Tanzania/Tanganyika), Kenneth Kaunda (of Zambia), and Jomo Kenyatta (of Kenya) at rallies and testifying on their behalf at the United Nations. In addition, he advocated for disenfranchised peoples within India, which was the frame in which he placed the Naga question. JP and his Indian colleagues found Scott and Astor's support of Phizo dangerous because it was breaking apart an alliance between Western advocates and the Indian politicians who had supported their shared political justice projects.

## CONCLUSION

India and Indians played an integral role in international advocacy on behalf of anticolonial nationalist liberation movements. Therefore, the

<sup>80</sup> All quotes in this paragraph are from John Davies, "A Note to Friends in SA and Elsewhere," January 1971 (emphases in the original), Box 5, GMS Papers.



arrival in London of Phizo, a Naga nationalist, destabilized the network of concerned individuals who combined moral prestige with political connections to advocate for disenfranchised peoples within international politics. The bureaucracy of the United Nations institution may not have had room for minority peoples, but it had space for advocates such as Scott and JP to speak in favor of particular anticolonial nationalist claims – as long as they were brought into the room by state backers within the UN General Assembly. While advocates in international politics spoke in favor of anticolonial nationalists, their advocacy held imperial undertones – of paternalism, of elite responsibility, of speaking for those who were not allowed to speak for themselves – that could undermine the autonomy of the causes for which they served as conduits. Phizo came to London during the summer of 1960, a moment when new nations were becoming independent every week and the potential of a liberated postcolonial world seemed strongest. Yet a national claim from *within* a postcolonial state – especially India, the postcolonial state that served as the model for peaceful national liberation – dimmed the promise of national liberation even then.

The early 1960s was a transitional period when categories of “people,” “nation,” and “state” were fluid. Who was a minority and who a nation seemed to be subject to flexible interpretation. This perceived mutability created the space for well-placed individuals to navigate between nationalist claims and international politics without having the power or responsibility of actual national representation. During this period, most advocates of anticolonial nationalist liberation agreed upon the legitimacy of an independent Algeria from France as well as upon the illegitimacy of an independent Katanga from Congo-Leopoldville and of South African rule of South West Africa. They sought to spread that consensus to other questions, to nationalist claimants within independent states (such as Nagaland and Tibet) that did not enjoy the same supportive international consensus. Importantly, Astor and Scott believed that their “meddling” in Nagaland could be a possible model for advocacy interventions on behalf of minority claimants elsewhere around the globe. They and Phizo repeatedly compared the Naga question to anticolonial nationalist conflicts on the decolonizing African continent – particularly those in Algeria, Congo, and South West Africa. JP himself often made analogies between Tibet and these same African conflict zones.<sup>81</sup> More

<sup>81</sup> 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): 147–69.

than direct comparisons, the repetition of injustices perpetuated in Algeria, Congo/Katanga, and South West Africa functioned as an invocation of legitimacy for particular nationalist claims.

Despite their differences of opinion regarding Naga nationalism, two months after Phizo arrived in London, JP reached out to Scott about the Naga question and recommended tabling it until they could talk in person at the “War Resisters International conference next Christmas.”<sup>82</sup> JP was “very much looking forward to meeting” Scott again, who, he wrote, seemed to be “growing younger judging by [recent] photos!”<sup>83</sup> JP and Scott had work to do together, to find nonviolent solutions to global decolonization, and their work was predicated upon mutual friendship and shared beliefs in the importance of peaceful national liberation and political justice. For JP, peoples who pursued their independence peacefully were more deserving of Scott’s attention than the Nagas: “Phizo and other Nagas like most ‘good Christians’ seem to believe in violence.” JP emphasized to Scott how important the latter’s personal Indian connections were for accomplishing his advocacy work; that the Nagas were waging armed insurgency; and that the range of global problems facing international advocates like themselves was broad.

On the agenda of the upcoming War Resisters International Conference was the formation of a World Peace Brigade, an international civil society organization that JP and Scott would lead. Their mission was to help decolonization escape its “entrapment in violence.”<sup>84</sup> They had significant work to do; JP did not want that work derailed by what he perceived as the distraction of the Naga cause.

<sup>82</sup> All quotes in this paragraph are from: J. P Narayan letter to Michael Scott, August 10, 1960, Box 5, GMS Papers.

<sup>83</sup> Narayan to Scott, August 10, 1960.

<sup>84</sup> Albert Bigelow, “Some Reflections on the Conference to Establish the World Peace Brigade,” 1961, Box 2, World Peace Brigade North American Regional Council Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI.

