

THE SPEECH OF MR. ISAK CHISHI SWU,
Chairman,
NATIONAL SOCIALIST COUNCIL OF NAGALAND
At GENEVE U N CONFERENCE on INDIGENOUS PEOPLES
On 27 July, 1993.



Madam Chairperson
Highly respected ~~Mr. Chairman~~, distinguished representatives
and the members of the congregation.

This is the first time for the Nagas to be privileged with such exalted platform of freedom. I am exceedingly delighted to seize this occasion to introduce ourselves as a distinct people and nation to this august congregation of different nations and peoples of the world. For a nation like ours, being choked up without any outlet to the outside world, this would also mean the finest of opportunities to enable us to speak out against the flagrant violation of our inalienable right of self-existence and subjection of our people to untold bitter state of affairs for the past 40 years on account of preposterous occupation of our homeland by the Indian and Burmese armed forces.

Allow me first of all, to express on behalf of my people, the immense urge we have for the cause of the world's indigenous peoples, though our case may be different. The helpless indigenous millions are now driven to the point that borders total extinction. It has become the greatest challenge for the world to be concerned about the salvation of the down-trodden if justice is at all for every people. It is too long a time to keep the rights and due shares of the weak and the indigenous peoples deprived of. Where is peace if justice is not done ? This is the failure of the world today and it simply cannot be allowed to go at this rate. Rectification is a must if it is to exist for humanity, for to promise a future is the sacred obligation of the world to itself. This responsibility falls upon the United Nations so long as it claims to represent the world. This must be fulfilled and to this end our Naga people shall remain committed.

Permit me to say about my country. We come from free Nagaland. It is situated in between China, India and Burma. We are of distinct Mongoloid race who migrated to this present Naga inhabited compact areas from the east, a few thousand years ago. We are the first settlers of the land. Our population is about 3 millions. The size of the Naga inhabited area is approximately 100,000 sq.km.

Contd.

Nagas have their history and it does not admit of any attempts at distortion. Nagas as a distinct nation remains unconquered unadministered and independent from time immemorial though this reality is hardly known to the outside world. Only a small portion of its territory entered the recorded history of the British imperialist in 1832 when some Naga villages were invaded by the British forces. This year also marks the beginning of their war of resistance against the political campaigns and military occupations, division and destruction of their land and institution by the invading forces. The British imperialist left India and their occupied Nagaland on the 15th August 1947. The Nagas under the British occupation promptly declared their independence on the 14, Aug. 1947 a day ahead of India and it was informed to the United Nations. Thereafter it was merged with the unconquered and unadministered "Free Nagaland". It was confirmed by the plebiscite of 1951 where 99.9% voted in favour of Sovereign Independence. India refused to recognise it. Negotiations went on and arrived at "The Nine-Point Agreement" on the 27th - 30th June 1947. But within a few weeks of signing the agreement India abrogated it unilaterally. Yet peaceful approach continued from the Nagas fully believing in the declared lofty "non-violence principles" till 1954. But India deliberately despised and launched unscrupulous massive invasion on Nagaland with the sole view to exterminating the Nagas and their nation at the earliest opportunity. Since then fierce fighting started and continues till today. Thus the Indo-Naga issue is neither a question of 'separation' nor 'secession' from India. But it is a war of resistance against invasion. Because separation or secession comes only when there is a union. Nagaland was and is never a part of India nor that of Burma either by conquest or by consent. And as such ours is a case of resistance against the invasion of Nagaland by India and Burma and a case of recognition of the inalienable right of self-existence of the Naga people.

Destruction and suffering inflicted upon the Nagas in the past forty years are beyond description. Losses in terms of life and property are immeasurable - thousands were indiscriminately killed

thousands tortured to death, thousands died of starvation and diseases in concentration camps and jails. Rapings of women were daily phenomena. Burning down of villages, destruction of crops were time and again carried out - of all which outside world knows virtually nothing. In our recorded history there are about 1.5 lakh killed. What is more, unlike others, Nagaland is sandwiched between two hostile nations - India in the west and Burma in the east. Helpless innocent public are choked up without outlet to the outside world. All happenings are kept sealed off. Only reporters who served the interest of the adversary are permitted except Gavin Young (London observer) whose publication was banned by the Indian Government. We are greatly grateful to the Human Rights Organisation People for their daring intervention on occasions. Had it not been by their undaunted struggle for the cause of humanity things might have taken the worst course. Violations of human rights have been countless and nonstop. There is the horror of Indian and Burmese State terrorism in Nagaland. But it must be made known clearly that in spite of such genocide of civilian population Nagas have not retaliated against any civilian of Burma and India. Believe it or not, there is not a single case of an innocent Indian or Burmese having been killed. Even the Indian Army men who fell into the Nagas' hand were treated well. Thus, around 240 Indian armed personnel including 9 air crew captured by the Naga Army were treated with dignity and released on humanitarian grounds. Are all these signs of being terrorists as Indians maliciously termed? Absolutely not. It is wise to maintain a standard of ethics. The whole world knows how India and Burma behave notwithstanding their exalted claim in moral philosophy. Our forbearance should not be misconstrued to mean as a sign of weakness. There is limit to tolerance and it is simply no good to wait for reprisal, for forty years of patience is enough.

Nagas have been invariably confronted with the real war of massive military operations, massive political suppressions, massive economic exploitation and the endless assimilation processes. Ceaseless influx of alien people has reached alarming proportions. Our land are grabbed from all sides, mineral resources exploited. Forest are cut

down solely for selfish ends. Most of the countrysides are left barren Ruthless exploitation in the past decades by the colonial agents has dangerously tilted the ecological balance of our once beautiful richly gifted land.

The desire of the strong to dominate the weak persists everywhere, seeking pretext of various kinds through arbitrary legislation to justify the use of force. This has been the reality and it has provoked irremediable problems terribly victimising the weak and the indigenous in the name of the so-called sustainability and modern civilisation. We think the brunt we bore over the years for this real challenge of extermination merits the attention of the congregation. We do think the ordeals we have been withstanding to save ourselves from the danger of extermination deserves sympathetic support. If exploitation in any form in all fields shall not be halted no individual indigenous people would ever be saved from the eventuality of total extinction. It is a crucial challenge. It must be met. We, therefore, urge that the right of the weak people and the indigenous to self-determination be safeguarded at all costs. Without this birth right being securely in their hands they have absolutely nothing. We are inspired beyond words to see that the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact has been founded to uphold the legitimate cause of the down-trodden million indigenous. The world organisation should in no case lag behind in this issue. Many thanks.
