

ment] process, which is supposed to be run by all these neighbors, cannot work, if there is a major breakdown of trust between Sudan and its neighbors, as there has been. That's one major problem. The possible disintegration of Nigeria is the second.

Q: You think it's that serious?

Lord Avebury: Oh, yes! We're dangerously close to that. We'll see what happens on Oct. 1, when the military regime is supposed to announce its program for transition to democratic rule, and the rumors are that they want four years to do that. And also they have to say what they are going to do about the alleged coup plotters, including former head of state [Gen. Olusegun] Obasanjo and his deputy, [Shehu] Yar A'dua, and some others sentenced to death.

Q: Do you think the policies of the regime are fostering a hardened tribal identity, in that sense of disintegration?

Lord Avebury: I think the regime itself—it's not actually the military, you're talking about the Caliphate. Now the Caliphate is a separatist idea, because, after all, if you're emphasizing that, you're rubbing in the distinction between the Muslim and the Christian sections of the country. And the ruling class is trying very hard to lay all the blame for the democratic opposition on people who don't belong to the north.

Q: What's your general assessment of Latin America?

Lord Avebury: There are ongoing problems in Guatemala and El Salvador, and I think the efforts being made by the international community, probably . . . there is quite a contrast when you look at it and you see the sheer amount of attention that Guatemala and El Salvador have received compared to conflicts elsewhere in the world—they ought to be all right. But the remarkable thing is that after you have all these agreements, shuffled and back and so on, nothing seems to change, and you still have people murdered all the time. The structures, the military structures which have caused the problem all along, have not been totally dismantled.

Q: Are there any non-governmental organizations [NGOs] that your parliamentary organization tends to work with?

Lord Avebury: Oh, yes. As far as across-the-board capabilities are concerned, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. . . . At the other extreme, you have the individual NGOs, of which there are a multitude. For example, here are some of the "Cs" listed in my computer: Christian Solidarity International, Central American Human Rights Committee, the Iraq National Committee, Caucasia, Catholic Institute for International Relations, Committee for Defense of Legitimate Rights in Saudi Arabia, etc. These are the people we deal with, multiply that by 26, and you have a large number of organizations.

Northeast India: target of British apartheid

by Ramtanu Maitra and Susan Maitra

Continuing terrorist actions and violent demonstrations over the last five decades have turned India's Northeast into a dangerous place. Large-scale introduction of narcotics and arms from neighboring Myanmar (Burma) and China has made this strategically crucial area a potential theater of violent secessionist movements.

Imbued with the British ideology of encouraging ethnic, sub-ethnic, religious, and linguistic identities—as opposed to the identity of a citizen of a sovereign nation-state—both New Delhi and the residents of Northeast India are marching recklessly along the very path prescribed by the British raj in 1862, when he laid down the law of apartheid to isolate "the tribals." While it is not clear how long this fateful road is, there is little doubt what awaits them at the end.

British mindset at work

Since India's independence in 1947, Northeast India has been split up into smaller and smaller states and autonomous regions. The divisions were made to accommodate the wishes of tribes and ethnic groups which want to assert their sub-national identity and obtain an area where the diktat of their little coterie is recognized. New Delhi has yet to comprehend that its policy of accepting and institutionalizing the superficial identities of these ethnic, linguistic, and tribal groups has ensured more irrational demands for even smaller states. It has also virtually eliminated any plan to make these areas economically powerful, and the people scientifically and technologically advanced.

A situation has now arisen in which New Delhi's promised carrot of economic development evokes little enthusiasm in the Northeast. Money from New Delhi for "development" serves to appease the "greed" of a handful and to maintain the status quo. On the other hand, fresh separatist movements bring the area closer to the precipice.

Assam has been cut up into many states since Britain's exit. The autonomous regions of Karbi Anglong, Bodo Autonomous Region, and Meghalaya were all part of pre-independence Assam. Citing the influx of Bengali Muslims since the 1947 formation of East Pakistan, which became Bangladesh in 1971, the locals demand the ouster of these "foreigners" from their soil. Two violent movements in Assam, the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) and the Bodo Security Force (BdSF), are now practically demanding "ethnic cleansing" in their respective areas.

To fund their movements, both the ULFA and the BdsF have been trafficking heroin and other narcotics, and indulging in killing sprees against other ethnic groups and against Delhi's law-and-order machinery. Both these groups have also developed close links with other major guerrilla-terrorist groups operating in the area, including the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Mivah) and the People's Liberation Army in Manipur.

Assam, unlike most other areas of the Northeast, was better integrated with mainstream India prior to independence; Assam participated in the national independence movement and contributed much to India's intellectual and cultural wealth. Today, however, instead of encouraging its sons and daughters to train themselves in science and technology, and entrepreneurship, Assam has engulfed itself in mindless bloodletting.

In 1972, Meghalaya was carved out of Assam through a peaceful process. Unfortunately, peace did not last long in this "abode of the clouds." In 1979, the first violent demonstration against "foreigners" resulted in a number of deaths and arson. The "foreigners" in this case were Bengalis, Marwaris, Biharis, and Nepalis, many of whom had settled in Meghalaya decades ago. By 1990, firebrand groups such as the Federation of Khasi, Jaintia, and Garo People (FKJGP) and the Khasi Students' Union (KSU) came to the fore, ostensibly to uphold the rights of the "hill people" from Khasi, Jaintia, and the Garo hills. Violence erupted in 1979, 1987, 1989, and 1990. The last violent terrorist acts were in 1992.

Similar "anti-foreigner" movements have sprouted up across the Northeast, from Arunachal Pradesh in the east and north, to Sikkim in the west, and Mizoram and Tripura in the south. Along the Myanmar border, the states of Nagaland, Manipur, and Mizoram remain unstable and extremely porous.

London's legacy

The root cause of the problem is the conditions set in place by British rule in the Northeast since 1826 and the formation of East Pakistan in 1947. New Delhi's inability to integrate the region stems from its failure to recognize that the British raj had converted Northeast India into a human zoo, where each tribe was allowed to roam free within its "own territory," but was not allowed to cross the boundaries set forth by their British masters and establish contact with the rest of India.

The British came into the area in the 1820s, following the Burmese conquest of Manipur and parts of Assam. The area had become unstable in the later part of the eighteenth century following the over-extension of the Ahom kingdom, a Burmese-based kingdom that reached into Assam. The instability caused by the weakening of the Ahom kingdom prompted the Burmese to move westward to secure their flanks. But the Burmese action also helped to bring in the British. The British East India Company was lying in wait to see the Ahom kingdom disintegrate.

The Anglo-Burmese war of 1824-26 ended with the Brit-

ish emerging victorious. By the peace treaty signed at Yandabo on Feb. 24, 1826, the British annexed the whole of lower Assam and parts of upper Assam (now Arunachal Pradesh). The Treaty of Yandabo provided the British with the foothold they needed to annex Northeast India, launch further campaigns to capture Burma's vital coastal areas, and gain complete control of the territory from the Andaman Sea to the mouth of the Irrawaddy River.

What were London's motives in this venture? The British claimed that their occupation of the northeast region was required to protect the plains of Assam from the "tribal outrages and depredations and to maintain law and order in the sub-mountainous region." British historians campaigning on behalf of two ex-viceroy, Lord Minto and Lord Curzon, assert that the defense of the British Empire in the northeast frontier was no less important than the northwest frontier, the scene of the so-called Great Game between Britain and Czarist Russia.

But the tribal territories in the northeastern borderland cover 700 miles of the Indian frontier. These tribal belts, from 70 to 100 miles deep, are almost impenetrable by any force from the north, e.g., China. The Indo-Burmese border, though crossed by the conquering Ahoms to capture Upper Kamarupa in upper Assam in 1228, was mountainous and heavily forested. There is little doubt that the British were not concerned about the enemy; crossing such difficult and hostile terrain was simply not possible for either Russia or China.

But for the British East India Company, gaining control in the northeast of India aided in gaining access to southern China's natural wealth. Significantly, in the Treaty of Yandabo it was mentioned that the British East India Company would have access through upper Burma to chart out a direct trade route between India and China through Assam. As early as 1826, a member of the Governor General's Council said: "We may expect to open new roads for commerce with Yunan and other southwestern provinces of the celestial empire through Assam and Manipore."

The annexation of Assam was also designed to "fix" the situation in Bhutan, Sikkim (an independent kingdom till 1975 before it merged with India), Nepal, and Tibet. The British role in Tibet, as reflected in Francis Younghusband's armed invasion of Tibet during 1901-04, the subsequent invasion of Tibet by the Manchu dynasty rulers for the first time in 1910, the fleeing of the 13th Dalai Lama, and the subsequent influence exerted by the British over the Tibetan and Mongolian lamas, will be treated in future *EIR* reports. But it should be noted that the accession and isolation of Northeast India was designed to infiltrate Tibet, as part of London's greater geopolitical plan to upset China—which remains London's aim today.

The 'apartheid law'

Following annexation of Northeast India, the first strategy of the British East India Company toward the area was to

set it up as a separate entity. At the outset, British strategy toward Northeast India was:

- to make sure that the tribals remained separated from the plains people, and the economic interests of the British in the plains were not disturbed;
- to ensure that all tribal aspirations were ruthlessly curbed by keeping the bogey of the plains people dangling in their faces; and,
- to ensure that the tribal feudal order remained intact, with the paraphernalia of tribal chiefs and voodoo doctors kept in place. Part of this plan was carried out through the bribing of tribal chiefs with paltry gifts.

In 1838, the East India Company assumed charge of the government of Assam, in order to enhance trade and commerce, and sacked the Ahom king, who had been its "protected prince" since 1826. In the early years, the company had often run into trouble with the tribals, and clashes between the two were routinely reported.

The decision to isolate the tribals came about in 1873 through the promulgation of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation. However, the policy of declaring the Northeast Frontier Agency (NEFA) a secluded area had been advocated long before. Section 2 of the regulation empowered the company "to prescribe and from time to time alter by notification, a line to be called the Inner Line and to prohibit any subject living outside the area from living or moving therein." Thus, the British policy of apartheid in Northeast India was implemented in the tribal area of the District of Lakhimpur in September 1875, and in the District of Darrang in March 1876.

Civil officers could extend their administrative jurisdiction no further than the Inner Line, and the governor-general-in-council prohibited all British subjects from crossing the Inner Line without a pass obtainable from the deputy commissioners of districts.

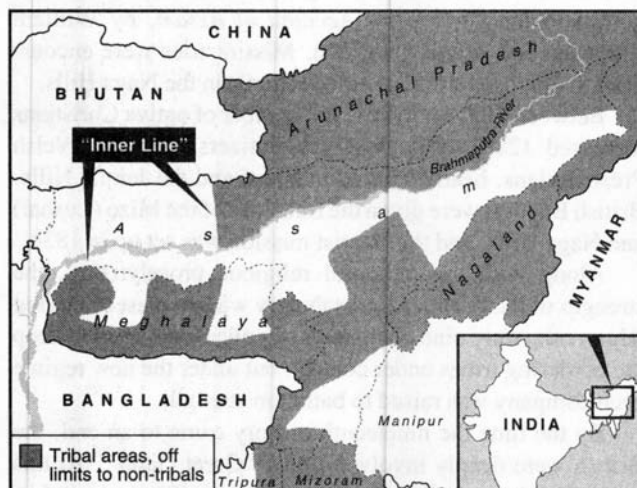
Then, in 1880, the Frontier Tract Regulation was enacted, which stated that it was expedient "to provide for the removal of certain frontier tracts in Assam inhabited or frequented by barbarous or semi-civilized tribes from the operation of enactments in force therein." It was stated that the regulation would extend to such frontier tracts in Assam as the governor general might designate. The regulation was subsequently extended to cover wider areas in the Northeast.

The Palmerston crowd at work

The British plan to cordon off the Northeast tribals was part of their policy of setting up a multicultural human zoo during 1850s under the premiership of Henry Temple, the third Viscount Palmerston. Lord Palmerston, as Henry Temple was called, had three "friends"—the British Foreign Office, the Home Office, and Whitehall. With the help of these offices and such close associates as Giuseppe Mazzini, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, and David Urquhart, Palmerston began to establish British assets throughout Europe and elsewhere. Young Italy was set up in 1831, attracting Garibaldi and

MAP 7

Tribal areas cordoned off by the British in northeast India*



* Modern borders are shown for reference.

Louis Napoleon. Young Poland and Young Germany followed. And in 1834, Mazzini founded Young Europe, billed as the "Holy Alliance of the Peoples." By 1835, a Young Switzerland and Young France were created. There was also Young Corsica, which was the mafia.

The underlying motive behind setting up these groups was evident in Mazzini himself, to whom nationality meant race, an ethnic group with a fixed array of behavior. Mazzini's organizations would demand immediate national liberation on the basis of aggressive chauvinism. Each was obsessed with borders and territory, and each found a way to oppose the concept of a sovereign nation-state. This was Mazzini's racist gospel of universal ethnic cleansing, which was implemented in full in Northeast India in 1873.

The apartheid program eliminated the Northeast Frontier Agency from the political map of India and segregated the tribal population from Assam, as the British had done in southern Africa and would do later in Sudan. By 1875, British intentions became clear even to those Englishmen who believed that Mother England's intervention in India, and the Northeast in particular, was to improve the conditions of the heathens. In an 1875 document, one missionary wrote: "At this juncture, we find our local officers frankly declaring that our relations with the Nagas could not possibly be on a worse footing than they were then, and that the non-interference policy, which sounds excellent in theory, had utterly failed in practice."

Apartheid also helped the British to function freely in this closed environment. Soon enough, the British Crown introduced two other features—proselytization of Christianity among the tribal population and recruiting units of the Frontier Constabulary. The Land of the Nagas was identified

as "virgin soil" for planting Christianity. "Among a people so thoroughly primitive, and so independent of religious profession, we might reasonably expect missionary zeal would be most successful," according to the 1875 document, as quoted in the *Descriptive Account of Assam*, by William Robinson and Angus Hamilton. Missionaries were encouraged to open government-aided schools in the Naga Hills.

Between 1891 and 1901, the number of native Christians increased 128%. The chief proselytizers were the Welsh Presbyterians, headquartered in Khasi and the Jaintia Hills. British Baptists were given the franchise of the Mizo (Lushai) and Naga Hills, and the Baptist mission was set up in 1836.

Along with this peaceful religious proselytizing, the strength of the Frontier Constabulary was increased. During Ahom rule, only nine companies of police were used to keep the bordering tribes under control, but under the new regime each company was raised to battalion strength.

By the time the nineteenth century came to an end, the British were deeply involved in the "Great Game." At this point, Northeast India became the theater of a new gambit. The British plan was to set up a buffer state between China-Central Asia-Russia, and British India. The British split Bengal and joined part of it to sparsely populated Assam, in order to form a Muslim-majority state as the western flank of the buffer state.

The ill-effects of the partition of 1905 began to show up in subsequent years. There was a large-scale migration of people from Bengal into Assam. The Census Report of 1931 says: "Probably the most important event in the province during the last 25 years—an event, moreover, which seems likely to alter permanently the whole future of Assam and to destroy more surely than did the Burmese invaders of 1820 the whole structure of Assamese culture and civilization—has been the invasion of hordes of land-hungry Bengali immigrants, mostly Muslims, from the districts of Eastern Bengal and in particular Mymensingh."

Under this British set-up, enormous animosity was fostered between the Bengalis and the Assamese, as the "tribals" now had reason to harden their stance against the "plains people." In the 1911 census, the Muslim population of the Assam Valley was only 355,320. This number had grown to 1,305,902 by 1941, according to the Census Report, the last taken by the British. A large number of violent incidents in Assam and Meghalaya in recent years are directly related to this settlement issue, and tensions have been further exacerbated by a large wave of Muslim migrants fleeing into Assam from instability in neighboring Bangladesh.

The ultimate apartheid in the Northeast came with the partition of India and the formation of East Pakistan, which in 1971 became the independent nation of Bangladesh. With the partition of Bengal, Northeast India became practically isolated, connected to the mainland through a narrow corridor running between Nepal and Bangladesh. The southern Northeastern states have no railroads and are accessible from the mainland by road, air, and sea. There is no railroad

in Tripura, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Manipur, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh. The hilly terrain, and New Delhi's continuing faith in the British policy subsumed under a blanket of security concerns, makes the building of railroads extremely difficult. Broad-gauge railroads exist up to Guwahati in truncated Assam, and a meter-gauge railroad is presently under construction to connect eastern Arunachal Pradesh with the mainland by rail. However, all the other Northeastern states, which are now without railroad, will continue to depend on roads, air, and sea to link up with the mainland.

These British policies provide a clue to why Northeast India has remained a bubbling cauldron and vulnerable to secessionist movements. Why the British continued supporting such a policy can only be understood from their own stated policy, as formulated in 1944 by Prof. Reginald Coupland, a fellow at All Souls College in Oxford, three years prior to the partition of India. In a three-volume study of British Indian history, Coupland, a student of Lords Palmerston and Curzon, said: "India is a geographical unity, it is not divided by such physical barriers as have fostered the growth of separate nations in Europe. Its unification under British rule has not only made all Indians feel themselves to be Indians; it has saved India from the fate which political and economic nationalism has brought on Europe. The Partitionists threaten to throw India back to the condition it was in after the break-up of the Mughal Empire, to make another Balkans. This would negate the development of democracy in India. Partition would also prevent a free India from taking her due place in the world as a great Asiatic power; for it would probably mean disruption into several States ranking with Egypt or Siam."

Insurgent groups in Northeast India

by Madhu Gurung and Ramtanu Maitra

Bodo Security Force

Name of group: Bodo Security Force (BdSF). BdSF is contemplating changing its name and calling itself the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB).

Headquarters: The group operates mainly from camps inside neighboring Bhutan. Known camps exist in Daipan and Sardamjhanter along the Indo-Bhutan border. It also has bases along the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh Indian state border. It enjoys support of the local Bhutanese who are hostile to the Nepalis.

Founded: 1986.

Locations of operations, areas active: Assam-Bhutan border; Kokrajhar and Udalguri along Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border.