

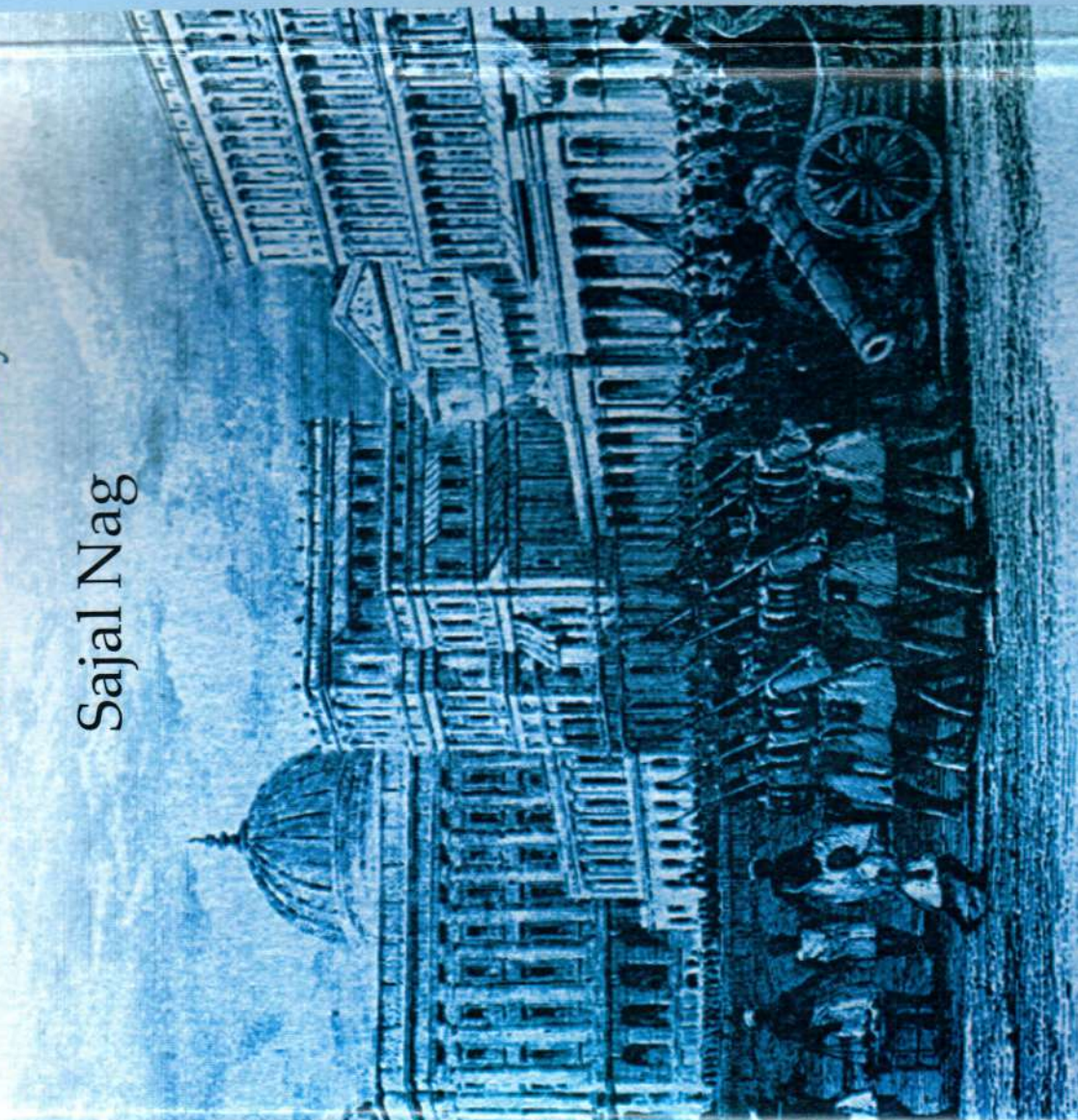
Beleaguered Nation

The Making and Unmaking of the
Assamese Nationality

Sajal Nag

The multi-ethnic state of Assam emerged to be a minefield of conflict and violence over assertions of autonomy in the 1980s. While the Assamese leaders were fighting a battle against the Bengali and the fear of immigrant Muslim domination after independence, one by one other tribal groups challenged the hegemony of the Assamese and broke free from the state: the Naga, the Khasi-Jyntia, the Mizo and the Arunachalis. They were followed by the Bodos, Dimasas and the Karbis who despite having got their autonomy are still fighting a fierce battle for complete statehood. There is a growing demand for a Ahom and Kamatapur state as well as from the smaller communities like the Rabhas, Hasong, Tiwa, Mishing, Sonowal Kachari, Thangal Kachari and Deuris, and even domiciled Gorkhas which if conceded would reduce the size of the Assamese nationality and Assamese territory to only a few pockets.

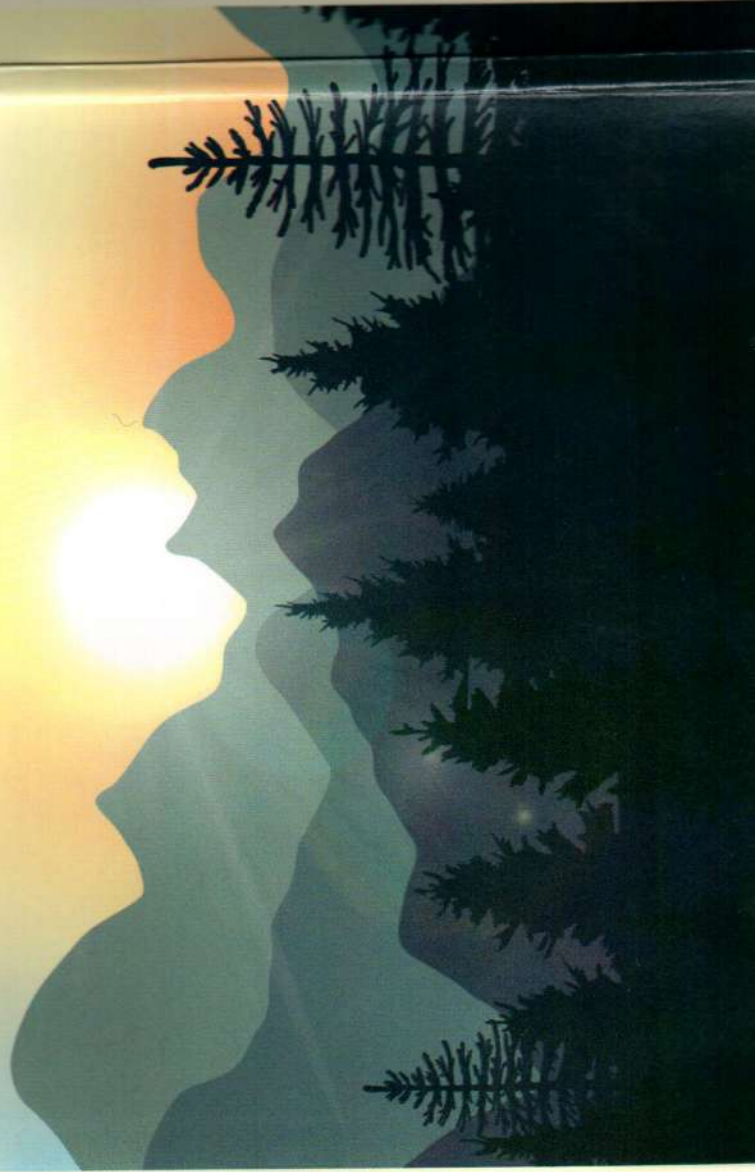
There are extremist outfits like the United Liberation Front of Assam which saw secession from India as the solution to the problem of Assamese nationality, others like the Karbi National Volunteers, United Peoples Democratic Solidarity, Dima Halao Daoga (two factions), Kuki National Front and Kuki National Army, Bodo Security Force, National Democratic Front of Bodoland resorted to violence as a mode of their assertions. Unprecedented turbulence, instability, violence, and internal displacement engulfed the entire region creating a severe crisis for the Indian state. Submerged in this ethnic cauldron, the Assamese were indeed a beleaguered nation fighting for survival amidst such multiple ethnic challenges. This book is about contradictions, conflicts, machinations, subversions, nature of state intervention and the intricate process of making and unmaking of Assamese nationality *vis-à-vis* north east India.



Force of Nature

ESSAYS ON HISTORY AND POLITICS OF ENVIRONMENT

Edited by
SAJAL NAG



The study of environmental history is no more only of forests, rivers, but also of agriculture, climate, economic practices and human culture. In recent times environmental studies as a discipline has come to the forefront with growing concerns over the ozone layer depletion but has led to investigation of the historical factors and processes of man and environment relationship and its impact. Very little was earlier known about the devastating impact on the environment of imperialism, state capitalism of post-colonial nations and the liberalization and globalization of these economies. There is no aspect of the environment which has not felt the impact of such developmental human process. Rivers have thus either dried up or are polluted with highly toxic materials, seas and oceans have become the dumping ground of nuclear and other wastes, streams are blocked, rains reduced, forest covers depleted, wildlife has dwindled, concrete jungles have replaced green fields and natural water-bodies, desertification of landscapes has happened. It has had its own impact on human life as well. Droughts, floods, dust storms, landslides, water shortage, agricultural decline and food crisis, starvation and epidemics followed. The planet earth and its inhabitants are currently in the throes of the most devastating man-made crisis for survival.

In an attempt to enhance our understanding of the environmental crisis, the present collection has essays investigating wide ranging events ranging from understanding climate from logbook of East India Company to the construction of Himalayan temples; environmental cost of damming the Damodar River to water politics of south India; impact of Tsunami of the years 1737 as well as of 2004-5; politics over earthquake rehabilitation to the Sarma movements of eastern Indian tribals.

MANOHAR

North East India is called nature's gift to India. It is mountainous, thickly forested, nourished by abundant rainfall, has massive rivers, a diverse wildlife, inhabited by a number of forest dwellers called tribes who cherished environmentalist ethos. The region has been experiencing environmental depletion which was a result of colonial policies, exploitation of its ecological and mineral resources, large scale trans-border immigration and settlement of people, establishment of plantation industry through deforestation, dependence of dairy industry on grazing and so on. Yet people of the region did not realize the dangerous stage the state of its environment had reached. There was no environmental activism, state turned a deaf ear to the little protests that emerged. Violating the traditional tribal ethics favouring environment, certain individuals and cartels have over the years ruthlessly exploited and devastated the environment of the region. In such a crisis situation environmental history can no more remain an academic discipline. It has to make an intervention and generate a movement.

With this aim in view the present collection of essays depicts the precariousness of the environmental situation and traces the history and politics of such degeneration with a view to raise the consciousness of the people of the region towards their environment and save it from further aggravation.

Playing with Nature

HISTORY AND POLITICS OF
ENVIRONMENT IN NORTH-EAST INDIA

Edited by
SAJAL NAG

Bridging State and Nation

Peace Accords in India's Northeast

Rita Manchanda
Tapan Kumar Bose
Sajal Nag

SAGE Series in Human Rights
Audits of Peace Processes

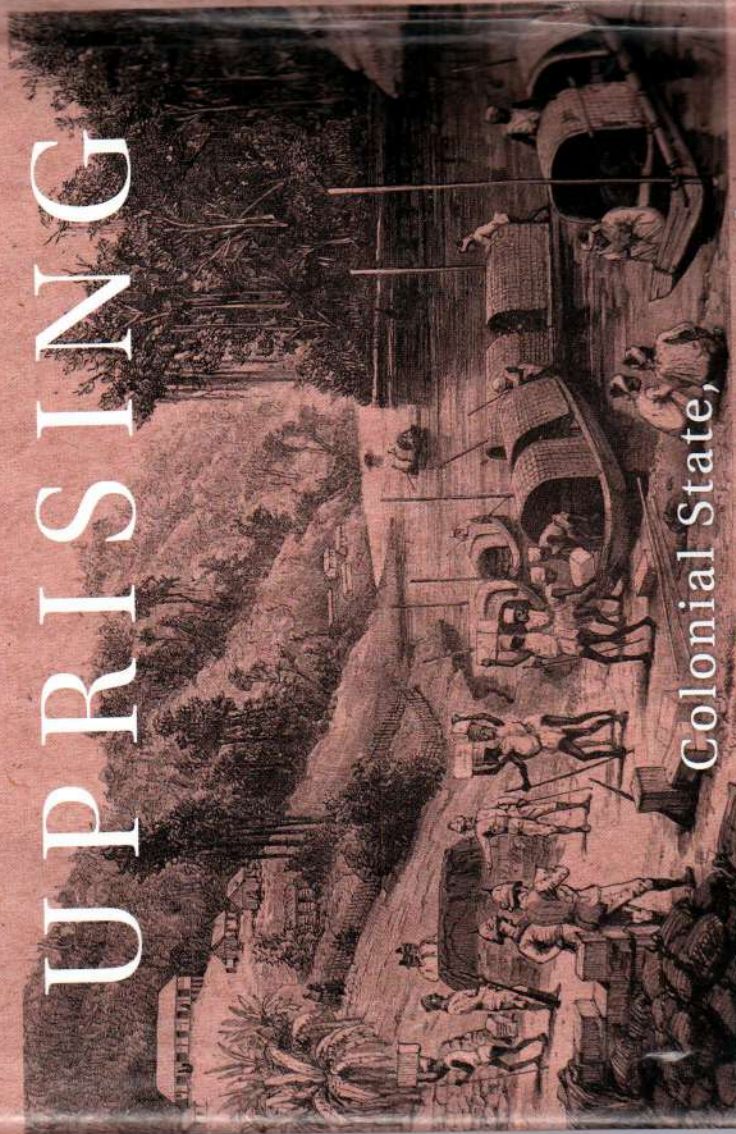
2

Series editor
Rita Manchanda



OXFORD

The UPRISING



Colonial State,
Christian Missionaries, and
Anti-Slavery Movement in
North-East India

1908–1954

In 1908, a Welsh doctor named Peter Fraser turned down a lucrative job with the British government and travelled as a Christian missionary to the remote Lushai Hills of North-east India—the habitat of a reportedly wild, headhunting tribal people. While Fraser found acceptance among the natives, he also came in conflict with the colonial state over the tribal practice of *bawi*—a practice he found akin to slavery.

This clash was symptomatic of a larger issue that marked colonialism in South Asia: the tussle between the colonial administration and the missionary institutions. *The Uprising* chronicles this conflict which witnessed Fraser, after being expelled by his own mission, petitioning and lobbying in the British Parliament and subsequently in the League of Nations through the Anti-Slavery Society, and the lasting impact it had on the lives of the Lushais.

Writing in narrative form, Sajal Nag brings out the immense historical significance of the contradictions between the colonial state and the missionary institutions, and argues that neither institution, contrary to popular perception, was a liberating agency.