

1st edition of

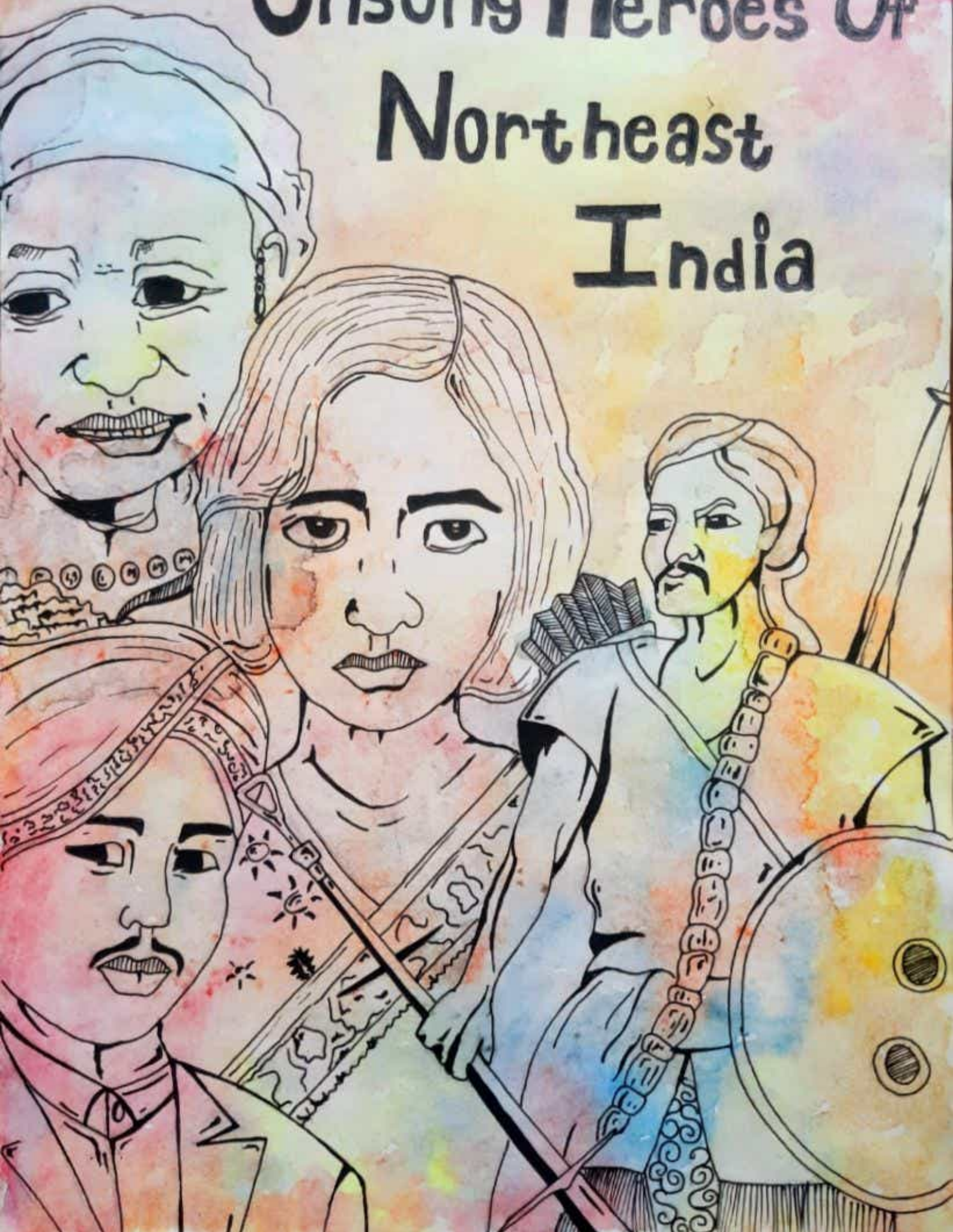
ISTORICA

PERTAINING TO HISTORY

E-MAGAZINE OF HISTORY DEPARTMENT

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Unsung Heroes Of Northeast India



Message from the students.....

We the students of history department of LCB College dedicate this magazine to the unsung heroes of northeast who played an important role in the establishment of an indigenous and sovereign society. Who fought for the rights of the people who were being suppressed by alien powers.

The main motive to choose this topic for the magazine is to bring the heroes who remained unsung for the longest time to mainstream and to educate the people about their stories and to learn from their life struggles.

EDITORIAL

This E-Magazine is gesture of gratitude to all the Missing Heroes of North-East India, who have not received a special recognition during the Freedom Movement besides their struggles and contributions which they dedicated towards their land and country.

It is our heartfelt honour to present them in this work as a part of respect and to place them among the other freedom fighters of India who have made "India" as land of "Unity in Diversity" and as a colourful "Incredible India".

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Kamatlata Barua

Kamatlata Barua (22 December 1924 - 20 September 1942), also called Bixbala and Shaheed (martyr), was an Indian independence activist and AISF leader who was shot dead by the Indian Imperial Police of British Raj while leading a procession bearing the National Flag during the Quit India Movement of 1942.



Born: → 22 December 1924 Bokrangbari, Gohpur, Darrang district, British India (now in Bishwanath District, Assam, India)

Died: → 20 September 1942 (aged 17) Bokrangbari, Gohpur.

Movement: → Indian Independence movement.

Early life: → Barua was born in the Bokrangbari

village of the undivided Darrang district of Assam as the daughter of Krishna Kanta and Kamleshwari Barua. Her grandfather Ghana Kanta Barua was a famous hunter in Darrang. Her ancestors were from the Solaksharia Barua Kingdom (Cheta vassal chiefdom) of the erstwhile Ahom state who relinquished the Solaksharia title and continued retaining

Barua little. Her mother died when she was only five and her father, who remarried, died when she reached thirteen. She went to school till class three but then dropped out to take care of her younger siblings.

Independence activism: → Joining the Quit India Movement

Barua joined the Mrityu Bahini, a death squad comprising groups of youth from the Gohpur sub division of Assam. On 20 September 1942, the Bahini decided she would hoist the national flag at the local police station. A procession of unarmed villagers were led by Barua to do so. The police under Rebati Mahan Som, the officer in-charge of the police station, warned the procession of dire consequences if they proceeded with their plan. Undeterred by the police, the procession continued marching ahead when the police fired upon the procession. Barua was shot and the flag she was carrying with her was taken up by Mustunda Katoli who too was shot at. Both Barua and Katoli were killed in the police action. Barua was only 17 years of age at the time of her martyrdom.

Death and Commemoration: → The Fast Patrol vessel ICGS Kant Lata Barua of the Indian Coast Guard, commissioned in 1997, is named after Barua. A life size statue of her was unveiled at Gauipur in 2011. Her impassioned speech before her death, remains a source of inspiration for many. She laid down her life for the freedom of the country at the age of 17 years.



KANAKLATA BARUA
(1924 - 1942)

by - Nidarsana Dutta

TIROT SING

Tirot Sing, also known as U Tirot Sing Syiem was a Khasi chief in the early 19th century. He drew his lineage from the Syiemlieh clan & declared war & fought against British for attempts to take over control of the Khasi Hills.



Initially, the British & Sing came to an agreement - permission for the road project between Guwahati & Sylhet in lieu of regaining possession of the duars. But, Balaram Singh, Raja of Rane, disputed Tirot Singh's claims to the duars & went ahead with a party

of armed men to establish his claim. When news came that the British were reinforcing forces in Assam, Tirot Sing convened a durbar again & passed orders for the British to evacuate Nongkhlaw. The British did not pay any heed, and the Khasis attacked the British garrison in Nongkhlaw.

In the Anglo-Khasi War, the Khasis lacked firearms & had only swords, shields, bows & arrows. Therefore, they resorted to guerrilla activity, which dragged

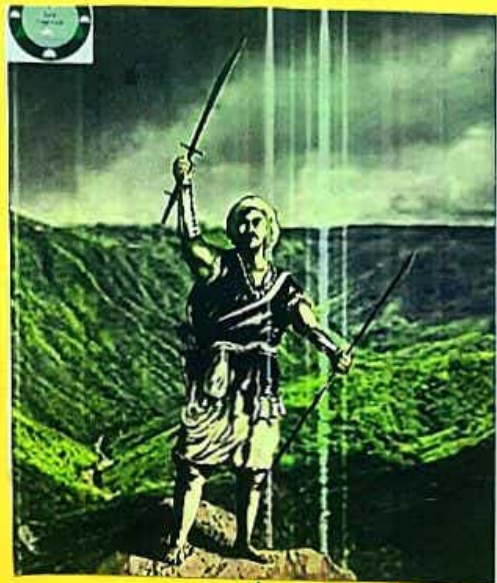
on for about 4 years. Jiroh Sing was shot at by the
eventual British & had to hide in a cave. He was eventu-
ally captured by the British in January 1833 &
deported to Dhaka.

His death anniversary, 17th
July, is commemorated every
year as a state holiday in
Meghalaya.

Hailed for his warfare tactics,
valour & uncompromised control
over Khasi Khasim against

British occupation, Utiroh sing
sylem was among the

fiercest leaders of the Anglo-Khasi war that fought from
1823 to 1833.



KUSHAL KONWAR

Kushal Konwar was a 'Satyagrahi' and Gandhian, a descendant of the Ahom dynasty. He pledged to remain a vegetarian and accepted the Shrimad Bhagwat Gita as his only companion. Ever since the Salt Satyagraha led by Mahatma Gandhi in 1931, Konwar even stopped taking salt. On 10th October 1942, hidden in the thick fog of early morning,



some people removed few sleepers from the railway line near Sarupathar in Golaghat district. A Military train passing by derailed and many British and American soldiers lost their lives. Accusing Kushal Konwar of being the chief conspirator of the train sabotage, the British police arrested him. At dawn on 15th June 1943 at 4:30 am, Kushal Konwar was hanged at Jorhat Jail. He sacrificed his life knowing as Mahatma said "He alone can be a true satyagrahi who knows the art of living and dying."

Kushal Konwar married Prabhawati while young and had 2 sons, Khagen and Nagen. Both sons have died. His late elder son Khagen Konwar had a wife, five sons and five daughters who are still alive. The late Khagen Konwar family wife and 2 sons are also still alive and live in Gauhati.

RANI GAIDINLIU

Gaidinliu was born on January 26, 1915, in present day Tamenglong district of Manipur and died in 1993. The Naga spiritual and political leader, who led an armed uprising against the British in Manipur, Nagaland and Assam, belonged to the Longmei tribe. In 1927, at the age of 13, Gaidinliu, along with her cousin Haipou Jadonang, joined the Heraka movement, which aimed at revival of the Naga tribal religion and establish self-rule of the Nagas ending the British rule.

She was arrested in 1932 when she was just 16, and was sentenced to life imprisonment by the British rule. Between 1932 and 1947, the Naga freedom fighter was kept at several prisons across the Northeast.

After being released in 1947 she continued to work for the betterment of the community. Nehru described Gaidinliu as the "daughter of the hills" and gave her the title of "Rani" for her courage. She was awarded a Padma Bhushan.

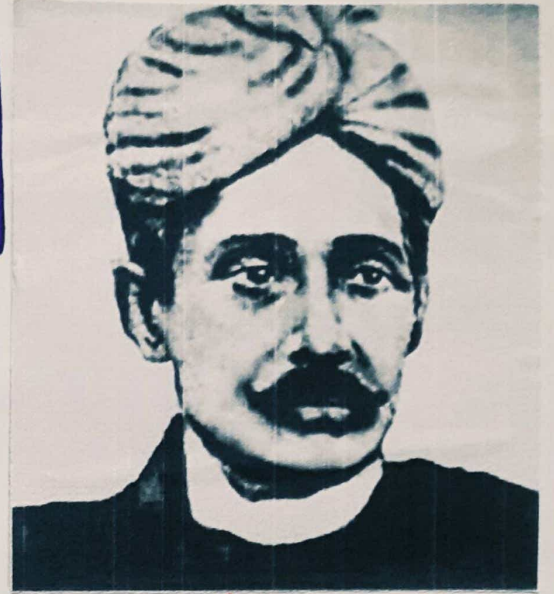
The Government of India issued a postal stamp in her honour in 1966, and commemorative coin in 2015.

— RANI GAIDINLIU —
OF
NAGALAND



by - Nidarshana Dutta

MANIRAM DEWAN



He was another hero in the freedom struggle of India. Being a pioneer in private tea business in Assam, initially he was on friendlier terms with the British. As the British opposed his interest in setting up tea garden, he turned hostile and became a fierce opponent. He had the demand that Ahom rule get restored on the soil of Assam that would help the liberty in setting up such business venture but British remained fully against this. Finally, realizing that only India, free of British Raj, could give such opportunity to the entrepreneurs, he made up his mind to fight against the mighty British. Unluckily, his plot to drive away the British people was exposed along with his accomplice. On the day of 26th February 1858, Maniram was hanged with his close associate, Peoli Baruah inside Jorhat prison.

PIYALI PHUKHAN

Piyoli Phukan was the son of Badan Borphukan. Badan is considered as a villain in Assam History. He brought Miansa to Assam to destroy his motherland. At first the British came to save Assamese people from the Burmese but after the Treaty of Yandaboo in 1826, they occupied Assam. There was a massive protest against the British occupation of Assam. Badan Borphukan was a traitor though his son Piyoli along patriot. Piyoli organized people to revolt against the British. He plotted for a massive armed attack on the British. But the British smelt the conspiracy, Piyoli was arrested & hanged till death in 1830 at Jorhat.





U KIANG NANGBAH

A freedom fighter from Meghalaya, he led an uprising against the British during the 1860s. Although very little is known about his early life, historians claim that he was born before the British had annexed the Jaintia hills in 1835. "Ukiang Nangbah lived in a locality we now called Trep-pale and Kiang Nangbah's family's hut must be on the hill where Mawmusiang and Trep-pale stand" notes HH Mohamen for Shillong Times.

When the colonial govt. sought to impose taxes and interfere with traditional customs, the tribes of the Jaintia Hills began harbouring an anti-British sentiment. All hell broke loose in 1860 with imposition of house tax on his tribes inhabiting the Jaintia hills. That's when they joined forces under the leadership of Nangbah. His forces soon attacked a British police station and set fire to all its weapons.

What followed was a series of guerilla attacks which paralysed the colonial administration. In response, the British launched a full-scale military operation against Nangbah and his men. The British captured him in December 1862 after one of his men tipped off the enemy. After a mock trial, he was hanged three days later.

GOMDHARKONWAR



In 1828, Gomdhar Konwar, a prince of the Ahom royal family, his colleague Shenjay Prongchain and their followers rose in revolt against the British occupation of Assam. By end of 1828 the process extension of British dominion into Assam was completed. With the assumption of the political

power by officers of the East India Company, the ruling Ahom monarchy lost not only their political autonomy but social privileges too. The feudal structure of the society began to crumble as new measures were adopted by the Colonial rulers to strip the nobility of their rights and privileges. Their enthusiasts for their new friend, who aided them in driving out their new friend, who aided them in Assam, soon disappeared and supporters of monarchy began to organize themselves to restore the Old A.

SAMBHUDHAN PHONGLO

Born in 1850, Sambhudhan Phonglo also known as Vee Pengya Sambhudhan Phonglo was an Indian Independent freedom fighter who hailed from the small village of Langkhor in the North Cachar Hills of Assam's present-day Dima Hasao District. When the British annexed Cachar in 1832, he was very distressed because he saw this move as British treachery for employing the well known 'divide and rule' strategy of vivisectioning Dimas territory. This led him to revolt against the regime. He travelled extensively through the North Cachar Hills to protest and resist the authorities. When Phonglo had collected enough young people to form a revolutionary force, he began training them in Malsang.

The British Government grew increasingly concerned hearing about Sambhudhan's activities, and they responded harshly. In subsequent encounters, the British army witnessed Sambhudhan's growing strength and force. Eventually, the British overpowered him treacherously. He was apprehended and attacked in the deep jungle of North Cachar Hills, where he died from deep wounds.



MOJE RIBA

Moje Riba, born in Daring in 1911, lovingly called Abok-Nyji was a prominent martyr of the freedom movement.

He was arrested by Britishers in 1947 for campaigning and distribution of Congress pamphlets. He was the first person from Arunachal Pradesh to host the national flag at Dipa Village of Arunachal Pradesh on the 15th August, 1947.

He was motivated to join the freedom movement against Britishers. In an act of supporting the freedom struggle, along with the village representatives of the Daring Village, Moje Riba gathered at Diring and decided to go to Sadiya to tender support. There he met Gopinath Mondoloi and Lalit Hazarika. He was advised to join INC to work more and gather support for the party. Thus, he joined the Indian National Congress (INC). After joining INC, Moje Riba became the first INC President from Arunachal Pradesh. He led his supporters in the path to country's freedom.

Riba was the first recipient of the Tamra Palia Award in 1972 at Shillong by Government of India for his sacrifices and contributions towards freedom struggle.

PRAMOD RANJAN BANERJEE

"My father was jailed in Dhaka Central Jail after caught in connection with Anamoy Movement. He was then shifted to Dumdum Central Jail and Andaman Central Jail. He was heard to have served imprisonment with Subhash Chandra Bose once. He got inspired from Subhash Chandra Bose in Agartala, now one of the leading schools," which was founded by S.C. Bose and inspiration of his ideals till his last breath.

Recalling his father's contribution, Partha said that Pramod, despite being born in a rich family of a zamindar, left home when he was only 12 yrs old. He had contributed in freedom struggle among which Anamoy Movement was remarkable. He also accompanied Mahatma Gandhi in his Quit India Movement in 1942.

Pramod got in job in railways at Jabalpur but left it at the age 22 and involved himself in the freedom movement. During his service, he spent his salary to aid his co-freedom struggles, especially buying them arms to fight with the British. Amidst his struggling life, he had completed his M Sc during his imprisonment in Dhaka Central Jail. He was also well-versed in 23 languages.

Pramod was in Delhi when Indira Gandhi first made an announcement to honor the freedom fighter with a Tamrapatra. Partha and his mother took the honour in Agartala on behalf of him.

THE ASSAM ASSOCIATION

The Assam Association was formed in 1903 with the purpose of upholding the commercial concerns. Prabhat Chandra Baruah, a Zamindar in Gauripur, Dhubri district was the President of the association, Manik Chandra Baruah was the General Secretary and Jagannath Baruah was the Vice-President.

Like the Indian National Congress at the time, 'The Assam Association' pursued constitutional methods for redressing the grievances of the nation population. However, its elite chontalass detoured it from taking a class stand during the partition of Bengal in 1905 when many parts of India were engulfed by public politics protests against merger of Assam with East Bengal. It was the first occasion when Assamese public opinion and action found direct articulation with a much larger 'Indian Issue'.

The Assam Association had multiple branches in prominent towns of Assam. Most of the political works and

Organisational proceedings were carried out in the English language until 1919. Their opposition to the partition of Bengal in 1905 was their first involvement after witnessing in the political movement. Though initially compatriots to the foreign rule, they eventually joined the freedom movement after witnessing the ruthless oppression of the government. They agitated against the high taxes and the increasing profits of the government due to the opium trade.

Annual sessions of the association were known as 'Azam Conference' and were conducted regularly. The formation of Azam Association is regarded as an important political development in the region. It is also considered the forerunner of the Congress Movement, as over time and with rising influence, it had fully assimilated itself in the Congress.

Phulaguri Uprising

The Farmer Uprising in the Phulaguri area of Middle Assam in October 1861 A.D. was the first ever peasant Movement in the context of Indian Freedom Movement, which took place much before the Chartist Movement took place under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. It was also the first ever non-cooperation Movement of Indian Freedom Movement because the Farmers of Phulaguri region had stopped payment of taxes to the British administration and thus openly defied the rulers.

Causes:

The immediate cause was the exorbitant taxes imposed by the British administration on the Farmers of Assam. This tea planters had been suffering from dearth of labourers. They had to bring labourers from other States at high costs. Moreover a large number of such labourers died of unhygienic conditions in the tea estates as malaria was rampant in those areas. The tea planters thought to engage the local people as labourers but as the land in the Brahmaputra valley being very fertile, the Farmers did not need to look for extra vocation too.

The Revolt :

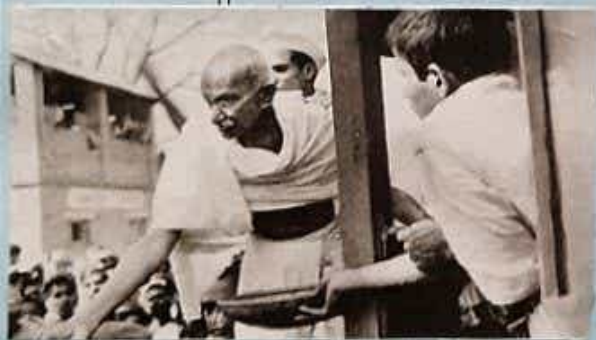
About one thousand farmers from the Phulaguiri region gathered at the court premises of deputy Commissioner of Nagaon district on September 17, 1861 AD. They intended to protest against the hefty increase in taxes. They wanted to say that there should not be taxes on betel nut trees, betel leaf, cereals, bamboo trees etc, but it bore no result.

Again a limited number of persons went to meet Herbert on October 9, 1861 AD, handed over a petition asking for relief to the people from the exorbitant taxes. But Herbert rejected this polite and humble petition too. This left the people with the Hobson's choice of embarking on non-cooperation with the British administration. They decided not to pay any tax to the British administration any more. Thus the first ever non-cooperation movement was launched in the Phulaguiri region of Assam in October, 1861 AD.

As many as 600 people gathered in the Namghat of Phulaguiri on October 16. The agitationists became very excited over the turn of the events. One group from among them proceeded towards Raha and they attacked the Police Station there. After that, they proceeded in the direction of the government treasury with an intention to plunder it, but they were obstructed by some boys on the way. The agitationists also gathered again in order to review the situation. Campbell surrounded these unarmed people and started firing upon them, leading to the instant death of 39 persons and 100 serious injuries. All of them taken to Nagaon jail.

Gandhi's Assam Visit

On the birth centenary of Gandhi, an Assamese anthology on Gandhi's four trips to Assam was published. Slightly titled Mahatma in Assam and brilliantly curated by two Gandhians, Omoo Kumar Das and Liladhare Barua, one can learn much from it about Gandhi's tussle with Assam. Of his four visits to Assam on - 1921, 1926, 1934 and in 1946. Even before Gandhi arrived in Assam, his call for Non-Cooperation had created havoc for the European tea planters. The life of the tea plantation workers had taken a turn for the worse. In Southern Assam, things had turned violent. When he visited Gandhi was accompanied by, among others, Krishna Das whose Seven Month with Mahatma Gandhi. Being an inside view of the Indian Non-Cooperation Movement of 1921-22 is one of the finest accounts of Gandhi's first to Assam.



Gandhi was received on the bank of the Brahmaputra by thousands of cheering people led by several eminent Assamese public figures including Nalin Chandra Borochoi and Tarunram Phukan. They would now have to help Gandhi to make him familiar with Assam rich natural and dietary heritage and with its industrious population. For the next two days Gandhi stayed with Tarunram Phukan a leading Congressman, the first Assamese barrister. Gandhi spoke to a gathering of no fewer than 25,000 people and his speech in Hindi was translated into Assamese by Phukan and in the end, Gandhi asked the crowd to throw the foreign garments that they were wearing into the fire. He himself lit one small heap. A frenzy seized the entire crowd and they consigned whatever they wore to the flames. Das conceded that his "pen fails to portray the fit of divine enthusiasm that seized the audience." Gandhi's public speech next day on unusual subject. Years earlier, in Hind Swaraj (a book he wrote in 1909) he inadvertently described the Assamese as a wild and savage tribe. Gandhi now offered a public apology for being a poor student of history and for being so little head about the region. Gandhi then travelled to several other towns. His train journey to Litchar through

through the stunning mountainous route was full of excitement. He could see the province's wonders: its ancient heritage; the magnificent bhakra-putra; "blessing" of annual floods; monsoon, plants, crops and accounts of opium smoking. Gandhi was bowled over by Assam's scenic beauty. That landscape would even inspire Mahadev Desai, Gandhi's secretary; to write poems. He learnt about the varieties of cotton, silk and dye produced there. The Assamese skill of weaving touched him deeply. Of the many treasures that were shown to him, Gandhi was greatly impressed by Hastiuidyarnava, an 18th century illustrated elephant-treatise. Everywhere he went, he spoke to Assamese men and women and even the Marwari merchants, who had monopoly over trade. At Dibrugarh, the centre of Assam's plantation world, Gandhi met the planters, the actual rulers of Assam. Gandhi made another three short trips in 1926, 1934 and 1946. These were more organisational. But by 1946, Gandhi had to handle Assam's domestic political misfortunes with political imbroglio, Gandhi sided with Assam and asked the people to remain steadfast.

Meanwhile, Assam's Gopinath Bordoloi-led Congress government created an extraordinary political and humanitarian crisis by evicting recent settlers from Bengal (East Bengal). These large-scale evictions had moderate sanctions from Gandhi. On January 22, 1947, at a prayer meeting in the North-Western Frontier Province, Gandhi was asked about these evictions. Holding in mind Gandhi's views on Hindu-Muslim question, Gandhi reiterated that he could not endorse any forcible occupation of government lands. He admitted that his views were based on whatever he had seen in Assam in 1946. However, Gandhi acknowledged that the Assam government would be "guilty of crime against humanity" if it had indeed evicted lawful residents. He also expressed his readiness to hear another perspective so that he could even advise an impartial commission of enquiry.



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