

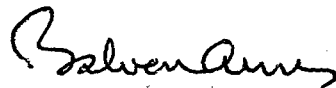
V, 447710, 4<sup>6</sup> N 81 ← N 46 M2


JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY  
CENTRE FOR POLITICAL STUDIES  
(School of Social Sciences )  
New Delhi ✓

DECLARATION

Certified that the Dissertation entitled, "Parties and Politics in Mizoram (1946-81): A Study of the Development of a Regional Party System," submitted for the Degree of Master of Philosophy has not been previously submitted for any other diploma or degree of this or any other University.

  
LAL CHINGUNGA

  
Dr. BALVEER ARORA  
Supervisor  
Associate Professor  
Centre for Political Studies  
School of Social Sciences

  
Dr. C.P. Bhat  
Professor  
Centre for  
School of

PARTIES AND POLITICS IN MIZORAM (1946-81):  
A STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF A REGIONAL  
PARTY SYSTEM

A Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the Degree  
of Master of Philosophy of the  
Jawaharlal Nehru University

by

LAL CEUNGNUNGA

CENTRE FOR POLITICAL STUDIES  
(School of Social Sciences)  
Jawaharlal Nehru University  
New Delhi  
1982



### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this work has been made possible by the help I have received from different sources. I am first grateful to the Governing Body and the Principal of Aizawl College, Mizoram, for having granted me study leave in order to enable me to do my research work on full-time basis. Such work would have been more or less meaningless without the Faculty of the Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University accepting me as a research scholar. I am particularly grateful to my Supervisor Dr. Balveer Arora for his patience and readiness to guide me through the work. I would remember him for his helpfulness and accessibility even at odd times. His learned advice has helped me to grasp things more deeply and to organise myself more effectively. The JNU Library Assistants have also been co-operative.

I am greatly indebted to Dr. Kenneth Chawngliana, Speaker of the Mizoram Legislative Assembly for helping me get many a source material and allowing me to read his doctoral thesis, from which I have got a lot of insights. Mr. F. Malsama, Education Minister of Mizoram has encouraged me and let me study his personal papers, which are of immense value. Dr. H. Thansanga, ex-Speaker and ex-Education Minister of Mizoram has enlightened me through various discussions and allowed me to consult his draft doctoral



thesis and personal notes. Mrs. L. Thanmawii, MLA and General Secretary of the People's Conference party has allowed me free access to her party documents and files. Mr. Lalsangzuela, ex-Minister and General Secretary of the Mizoram Congress (D) has given me relevant papers on his party. The personal collections of rare documents by Messrs. Hrangaiia, R. Vanlamma, James Dokhuma and V.L. Chaka have provided me a lot of primary source material. I am equally grateful to all of them.

My friends Lal Dena, Assistant Professor, University of Manipur; S.T. Ngaihte, a Ph.D. student at the Centre for Historical Studies, JNU; and L.S. Gangte, a Teacher Fellow at the Centre for Political Studies, JNU, have been of immense help to me through their constant watch on my progress and timely constructive criticisms. My roommate and friend Shelley Ngishu has been generous enough to let me use his typewriter for the typing of this work.

Lastly, I am affectionately grateful to my brothers and sisters for having spared me from bearing the family responsibilities during my research work; to my beloved wife who has not only borne with me patiently but also taken so much trouble in helping me get source material; and, to my four-year-old son Mafela and three-year-old daughter Mami who, in spite of their childish needs, have been used to obediently keeping away from me when I needed time for concentration.

Even then, I hold myself responsible for whatever shortcomings this work suffers from.

LALCHUNGNINGA



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
LIST OF TABLES	vii
ABBREVIATIONS	viii
GLOSSARY	ix
INTRODUCTION	xi
MAP OF MIZORAM	xviii
 Chapter	
ONE : SOCIO-HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF MIZORAM	1
The People	6
The Land	18
The Administration	22
 TWO : FORMATIVE YEARS OF THE PARTY-SYSTEM	 31
The transition from traditional chieftaincy to party politics	31
The Rise of a party	40
Early history and movement of the Mizo Union	51
Other aspects of the formative stage	66

		page
<b>THREE</b>	<b>: THE TWO-PARTY SYSTEM PHASE</b>	<b>82</b>
	The Elections and parties	84
	The cleavages, the mergers and the emergence of new parties	102
	The 'Mautam' famine and its impact	111
<b>FOUR</b>	<b>: THE MIZO NATIONAL FRONT (MNF) MOVEMENT</b>	<b>129</b>
	The aims and objectives of the MNF party	131
	The changing nature of the movement	137
	The Underground movement of the MNF	143
<b>FIVE</b>	<b>: THE FEDERALISING PROCESS AND ITS IMPACT</b>	<b>170</b>
	The counter-operations	
	Impact of the federalising process	178
<b>SIX</b>	<b>: CONCLUSION</b>	<b>206</b>



	page
<b>APPENDICES</b>	
I. List of political parties in Mizoram	215
II. Chronological Table	217
III. General Background of some prominent Mizo leaders	222
IV. An excerpt from Laldenga's Speech	228
V. An excerpt from Brig.T.Saile's Speech	229
VI. Persons Interviewed	230

<b>SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>231</b>
----------------------------	------------

\*\*\*

LIST OF TABLES

	page
Table 1:1 - Decennial variations of the Mizoram population	2
1:2 - Distribution, growth rate and density of Mizoram population, and literacy	2
1:3 - Mizoram Annual Budgets	4
3:1 - Valid votes polled (and the percentages thereof) by the two parties in the 1952 District Council and Assembly Elections	85
3:2 - Valid Votes polled (and percentages thereof) by the parties in 1957	89
3:3 - Comparative positions of the parties in the 1952 and 1957 Elections	90
3:4 - Valid votes polled (and the percentages thereof) by the parties in the 1962 District Council Election, in the Aizawl Sub-Division only	95
3:5 - Valid votes polled ( and the percentages thereof) by the parties in the 1962 Assembly Election	96
3:6 - Comparative statement of the positions of the two principal parties in the three elections expressed in percentage of valid votes polled	97
5:1 - Comparative position of the Mizo Union and the Congress in the 1970 District Council Election and in the 1971 Village Council Election as seen on the background of 1962 and 1963 elections	195
5:2 - Mizoram Assembly Election Results 1972, 1978 and 1979	202
5:3 - Village Council Election Results 1971 & 1975	203
5:4 - Lok Sabha Election Results (Mizoram) 1977 & '80	204
5:5 - The relative position of the national and regional parties in terms of number of seats obtained and the percentages of valid votes polled, worked out from the results of the 1972, 1978 and 1979 Assembly Elections	205



## ABBREVIATIONS

A. P. H. L. C.	: All Party Hill Leaders Conference
C. E. M.	: Chief Executive Member.
C. P. I.	: Communist Party of India
D. I. G.	: Deputy Inspector General (of Police)
D. I. P. R. & T.	: Directorate of Information, Public Relations and Tourism
E. I. T. U.	: Eastern India Tribals Union
E. M.	: Executive Member
I. G. P.	: Inspector General of Police
M. L. A.	: Member of Legislative Assembly
M. N. A.	: Mizo National Army
M. N. F.	: Mizo National Front
M. N. V.	: Mizo National Volunteer
M. S. P.	: Mizo Zirlai Pawl (Mizo Students Association)
P. C.	: People's Conference (also for P. C. (B))
U. M. F. O.	: United Mizo Freedom Organisation
U. T.	: Union Territory
Y. L. A.	: Young Lushai Association
Y. M. A.	: Young Mizo Association

## GLOSSARY

- buhchhun : peddy tax (paid to chief)
- chi chhiah : salt-tax ( 'chi' = salt, 'chhiah' = tax)
- chhiatni : day of sorrow (literally bad day)
- dak : postal system (same as its Hindi meaning)
- Dampa (Lurh, Run, Phawngpui) : they are names of the different hill ranges.
- dumpawl : blue, (the term was used by Laldenga to identify the MNF leaders who differed from him in policy)
- fathang : same as 'buhchhun'
- huhalhna : safeguard.
- huhtheihloh ral : invisible enemy ('huhtheihloh' = invisible, 'ral' = enemy)
- khawchhiar : village census secretary.
- mau : bamboo.
- mautak : melocanna rambucoides. (one species of bamboo)
- mau tan : death of the above species of bamboo.
- nula rim : youngman's visit to a girl to woo.
- pawl : group, organisation, association, etc.
- phai sen : name of a place ('phai' = lowland, 'sen' = literally 'red' but here to signify the heat of the sun)
- puichiam : priest ( usually, each village had a priest)
- ralven kawm : a saddle on hilltop which is convenient for watching the enemy's movement.
- ramhual : land-experts who assisted the chief in allotting lands.
- raw thing : bambose hamiltonii (one species of bamboo).



- sa chhiah : flesh-tax (payable to the chief and the blacksmith)
- sa dar : the animal's fore-leg (always left-side) paid as 'sa chhiah' to the chief.
- sadawt : one category of priest, as distinct from 'puithiam' and 'thlahpawih'
- thangchhuah : one who has completed the necessary rituals to earn the title 'thangchhuah'. There are two ways of earning the title, namely, 'in lama thangchhuah' which means 'thangchhuah' on the home-side. In order to fulfill the conditions, the man has to offer a number of public feasts. 'Rem lama thangchhuah' means 'thangchhuah' on the Jungle-side. The conditions are killings of rare animals including wild deer, stag, wild mithun, bear. The 'thangchhuah' couple are believed to be in a specially comfortable place in life-after-death.
- thirdeng : blacksmith. ('lalthirdeng' - chief's blacksmith)
- thuthlung : covenant (usually between God and man)
- thlahpawi(h) : a category of priest (as distinct from 'puithiam' and 'sadawt')
- tlengau : village-crier (public-crier)
- tlengaihna : Mizo social norm which may mean a combination of such virtues as chivalry, industry, perseverance, etc.
- upa : elder.
- vai : a term by which Mizos know all the non-Mongolian people (especially of India)
- voeg : street-blocks.
- zalon : 'free' (a privileged class in the chief's village who were free from paying him tax)
- zambuk : youngmen's dormitory.
- zu : local rice beer.

## INTRODUCTION

This study of "PARTIES AND POLITICS IN MIZORAM: The Development of a Regional Party System" is neither an attempt at theorising with hypothetical propositions nor a case-study with a view to evaluate or examine an existing theory of political parties. Instead, it is an attempt to analyse the basic structures and political processes that have obtained in one of the least known component parts of our federal system. It is a modest attempt at describing and analysing a particular sub-system within the broad framework of Indian party system, in the light of the current understanding of the whole phenomena of parties and party-systems. The 'Introduction' focuses on the scope and purpose of the study, types of source-material used, method of investigation, description of its approach and conceptualisation relating to the development of parties and party-systems. It also contains an outline preview of the main chapters that follow.

### A. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

Regionalism is not a new thing in India. It is as old as India itself, having taken its roots in the earliest periods of its history. Recently, it has drawn inspiration from such societal elements

as racial and linguistic identities, geographical and administrative differences, communal homogeneity and cultural distinctiveness, etc. Understood negatively, regionalism can be regarded as a threat to national identity and a constraint to nation-building. But, there is another way of understanding it, with the readiness to make necessary adaptations of the whole system. With that readiness, and with the evolution of proper system of checks and balances, regionalism may be converted from being a fissiparous tendency into a strong cementing force of the 'unity in diversity.'

In investigating the political process in Mizoram in conjunction with the question of regionalism, an attempt is made to determine whether regionalism is, per se, a threat to the federal system or that only particular types of regionalism are dangerous. This is one of the main objects of the study, others being to contribute to the sub-field of state-politics through a study of Mizo politics. Finally, the study seeks to describe how and why regionalism has taken an extreme form in the Mizo National Front (MNF) which has even made an attempt to evolve and vindicate the "Mizo Nationalism" and create an independent Mizo-Nation State; to find out what results have been produced by the federalising processes in Mizo politics and society; and, to explain how the equilibrium of leadership, regionalist sentiment and the demands of the building of Indian Nation, has ever been the main factor for maintaining stability in Mizo politics.



Commenting on why only few Indian scholars have concentrated on developments within their own states, Myron Weiner wrote in 1960 that it was because there was a feeling among them that "too much attention to state-affairs is a mark of parochial attachments" (...) and "Lack of pride in the political life of the states." He also stated that "insofar as subordinate units within a nation have received notice, it has often been because of the breakdown of the national framework."<sup>1</sup> The latter is an apt remark when connected with the case of Mizoram, because it was only since the M N F started the secession movement that real interest and concern were given towards Mizo politics. Thus, the 'slowness' in bringing regional and state-politics into the field of research investigation is more evident in the case of Mizoram.

We agree with Weiner that "the states in a federal system are important links connecting village, town, and city politics to the national political system." He stressed the importance of state politics thus,

It is at this level (state) that the struggle for office has been most intense, and that the conflicts among castes, religious groups, tribes and linguistic groups and factions are played out. It is here that economic development programmes have often appeared to falter and traditional sentiments, loyalties, and behavior intrude most into efforts to modernize (...). There is, however, one important exception to these remarks. Political behavior within the states has commanded attention insofar as it has appeared to affect India's national unity.<sup>2</sup>

- 
1. WEINER (Myron) (Ed): State Politics in India, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1962, p.5
  2. Ibid. p. 6

The collective work on eight Indian states which Weiner edited was an analysis of the political processes in those states relating the 'process' to (a) "the social and economic environment in which politics occurs" and (b) "the performance of the governments" of those states. Weiner stated that "Each study, therefore, treats the state as a constituent unit within a larger system, but nonetheless also as a separate political system."<sup>3</sup>

This study on Mizo politics also is approached from more or less the same angle, that is, relating the political process to the socio-economic environment and the interaction of parties within that broad milieu, with special focus on the development of the party system viewed from the contexts of numerical typological pattern and competition between regional parties and national parties. It is not a pure structural-functional analysis of the parties. The organisational and functional aspects of the parties are taken into account limitedly and only when they have some significant meaning in the development of the party system. Some interesting and important aspects of Mizo politics, namely, the constitutional and financial relations between the Central Government and Mizoram Government; the performance of the government in developmental projects and legislation; and the influence of the Church on Mizo politics, have been spared from detailed analysis. The study modestly aims

---

3. Ibid. p.7

at presenting a spadework or an eye-opener, on the developmet of Mizo politics in general and party-system in particular, for the period beginning with pre-party politics, that is, prior to 1946 and ending with 1981. Some works on political parties, such as, Ostrogorski's "Democracy and Organisation of Political Parties," Robert Michels' "Political Parties," Samuel J. Eldersveld's "Political Parties: A Behavioral Analysis," Maurice Duverger's "Political Parties," Chapters on Political Parties in Jean Blondel's "An Introduction to Comparative Government," various articles on political parties in Eckstein and Apter's edited work, "Comparative Politics," were read with keen interest. Interesting and enlightening though they are, most of the theoretical models, typologies and approaches presented in these commendable works were found to be inappropriate for application to the case of Mizoram, as they are concerned with developed systems while the case of Mizoram is in the developing stage. The variables which these eminent writers have made use of are not exactly fitting in the case of Mizoram. That is why "appropriate variables" have to be invented and analysis made on these. Nevertheless, Colin Leys' FO-FP-V model,<sup>4</sup> Jean Blondel's theory of development of party system from "system without party" to "multi-party system" passing through three or four stages, which has "clear association between types of party systems and levels of socio-econ-

---

4. LEYS (Colin): "Models, Theories, and The Theories of Political Parties," in Eckstein(H) and Apter(D) (ed), Comparative Politics: A Reader, New York, Free Press, 1963, pp. 309-15.

conomic development,"<sup>5</sup> have been taken note of. Johari classifies Indian Political Parties into four main categories, namely, (i) National and Secular, which has Ideologically Non-Committed and Ideologically Committed, as sub-categories, (ii) Regional, which has sub-categories namely, Communal and Non-Communal, (iii) Local and Communitarian, and (iv) Ad-hoc and Fringe.<sup>6</sup> In order to typologise the Mizo political party system, the following pattern may be most appropriate: (i) National Parties, meaning all-India level parties which may be sub-categorised into Ideologically Committed and Ideologically Non-Committed; (ii) Regional Parties which may be sub-divided into three classes such as Nationalist, Moderate and Extreme; and (iii) Local-Communal or Sub-Regional Parties. As for the sub-types of number (i), they are self-explanatory. Among the Regional Parties, some are having broad national outlook, the ruling People's Conference for instance; some are moderately regional, the Mizo Union for example and still some are extremely regional, as seen in the case of the MNF. In the southern part of Mizoram, the Pawis and Lakhers, also known as 'Lai' and 'Mara' respectively, have their own local parties. These may be included in the third type. Even then, the classification cannot be strictly applied as there have been some national parties which are more regionalist in outlook than the regional parties themselves.

---

5. ELONDEL (Jean): An Introduction to Comparative Government, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969, pp 203-11

6. JOHARI (J.C.): Indian Government and Politics, Delhi-Jullundur, Vishal (fourth Edition), 1979, p.541

## B. SOURCE MATERIAL AND METHOD

The study is mainly based on secondary source material. But, paucity of analytical works on Mizo politics compels the researcher to make use of primary sources. The published works on the Mizos, most of which are anthropological-sociological and journalistic in approach and presentation have to be used with special reservations and restraints. Much dependence is made on books on Mizo political history written by some Mizos in their own language, because they contain much of the needed data. For clarity and reliability, cross checkings and verifications have been carefully done relating to basic facts and significant observations. The primary sources include original research works, party documents, press notes, speeches, personal records, interviews, etc., which the researcher collected and conducted during January- August, 1981. Most of the statistical data are taken from various government publications, including the election results in the Union Territory period. In order to make an on-the-spot study and get the first-hand information about what actually were going on in the party conventions, the researcher attended the seventh General Assembly of the ruling People's Conference party and the second Mizo Convention called by the opposition parties, both in April, 1981. Many details are left out of account for the sake of brevity. The work is, therefore, partly empirical and partly analytical.



### C. APPROACH AND CONCEPTUALISATION

Approaches to the study and concepts of political parties have been undergoing gradual change. The pre-World War II period witnessed the popularity of what Engelmann calls "the traditional approach", meaning an approach guided by questions relating to the life histories of the parties, persons who matter in the party's movement, basic views about political society, programs and inter-<sup>7</sup>actions of parties in a country and electoral battles fought. Ostrogorski and Robert Michels are the well-known among the writers who have applied this traditional approach. With the publication of Maurice Duverger's Les Partis Politiques in 1951, with the unprecedented increase in the number of works on political parties after the second World War, and with the publication of Neumann's article "Toward Comparative Study of Political Parties" in 1956, there was a breakthrough in the approach to the study and in the understanding about political parties. The latest approaches to the study of political parties are more concerned with the process of public policy-making through the parties. This advancement in approach and conceptualisation is well summed up by Engelmann, thus,

The significance of the recent developments in statiology is qualitative as well as quantitative. Not only have we witnessed in recent years the appearance of 'Les Partis Politiques' and 'Modern Political Parties,' and of an increasing number of monographs and articles on parties; there has also been a note-

---

7. ENGELMANN (Frederick C.): "A Critique of Recent Writings on Political Parties," in ECKSTEIN and ALTER, op. cit. p.379

worthy change in emphasis and approach. The recent writings are clear evidence that stasiology is no longer restricted to political-biography-cum-political ideology, with an occasional sprinkling of Ostrogorski and Michels. Contemporary stasiology, based on the study of party structure and party systems, is power-centred and power-directed. It emphasizes the aspects of party which matter in the making of decisions within political societies. Such an emphasis has brought about the collection of empirical elements that are capable of assuring for theoretical stasiology a validity which equals that of other aspects of a theory of public policy making.<sup>8</sup>

One important characteristic of the new trend in the approach to the study of political parties is that there is no more a dichotomy between party and government in the twentieth century parliamentary party system. Cabinet, parliamentary party, electoral organisation, make up the political party.<sup>9</sup>

With this change in approach came the change in the meaning and functions of political parties as well as in the nature and determinants of party systems. Party is no more conceived simply as a body of men united for promoting national interest on some agreed principles, as Burke would like us to understand it. Recent writers like Dean and Schumann, Neumann, La Palombara, Weiner and Jean Blondel emphasise such aspects which concern with specialisation, partnership, durability, power-orientation and public policy-making process, while defining the nature of political party. As to their functions, parties are more and more conceived of as uniting, simplifying and stabilising political process, always struggling for power, providing a link between the government and the people, ever

---

8. Ibid. p.384

9. Ibid. p.383

increasing the scope of political activity and widening popular participation, presenting issues and setting value goals for the society, serving as the broker of ideas, always leading in the task of political modernisation and performing various social welfare functions. Likewise, the determinants of party system and party structure also increase with this growing importance of parties. These determinants vary in category from being historical to socio-economic and ideological. Such factors as religion, race, sub-nationalism, linguistic chauvinism, caste, attractive leader, dissidence, confederation of like-minded organisations, etc. have become very relevant in determining the structure of parties and the development of party systems. In short, Michels' "iron law of oligarchy" and Duverger's doctrine of "natural dualism" alone do not determine modern party structure and system. Parties have been fruitfully studied, in recent time, as clientele-oriented straterchies.<sup>10</sup>

Taking due note of this change in the approach to the study and conceptualisation of political parties, we study the parties and politics in Mizoram within the broad framework of Indian Federal System, which is characterised by a wide range of diversity in culture, language, race, geography, climate, etc. This investigation

---

10. Among such studies, SAMUEL J. ELDERSVELD'S Political Parties: A Behavioral Analysis, Chicago, Rand McNally, 1964, and NEGESHWAR PRASAD'S Ideology and Organisation in Indian Politics- A Study of Political Parties at the Grass-Roots, New Delhi, Allied Publishers, 1960, may be cited.

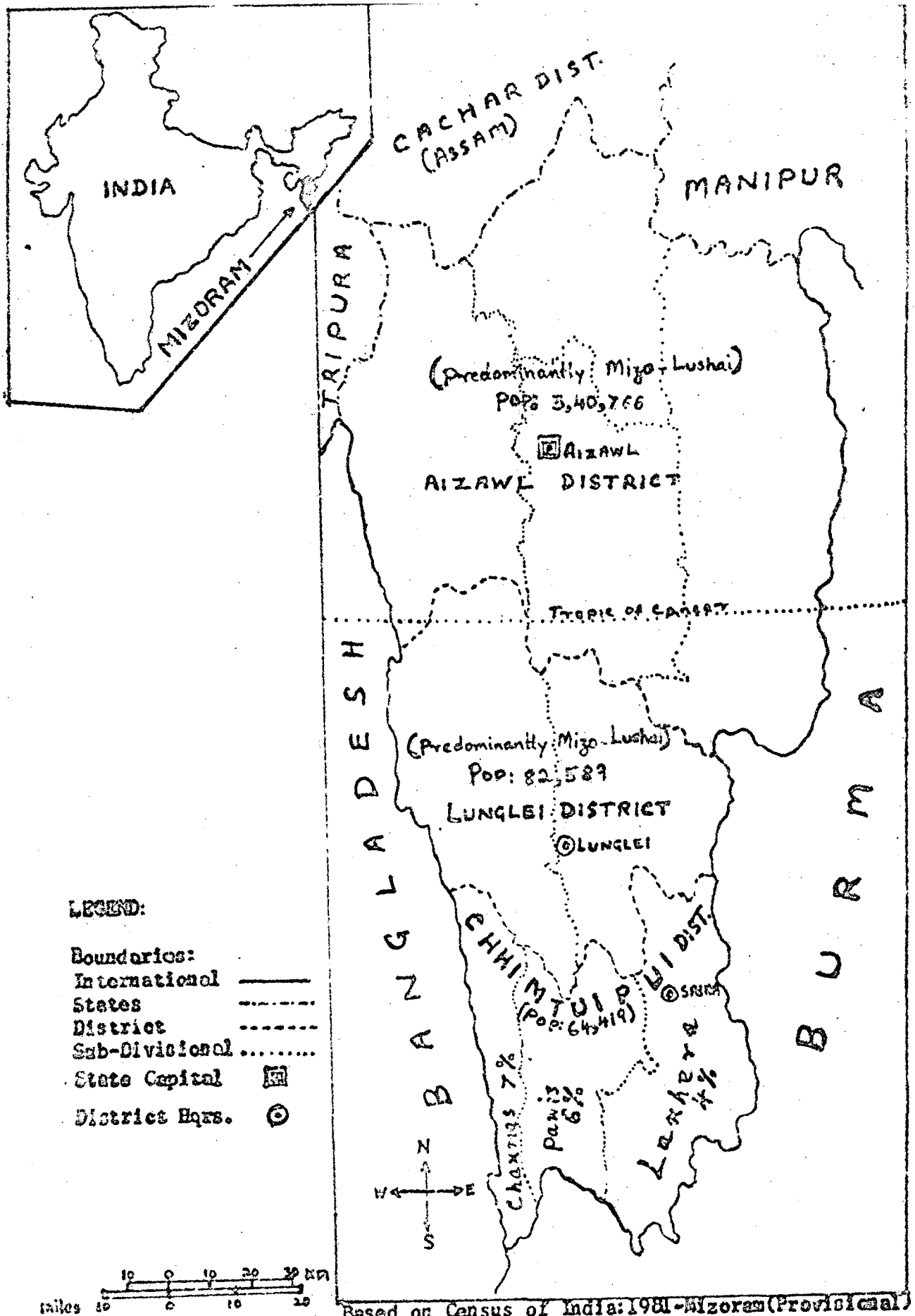
into the development regional party system in a peripheral state which is gradually being covered by the federalising process is regarded important and significant for the addition of our knowledge about the sub-systems of the Indian political system. Within this broad framework, our investigation and conclusions take into combination the insights provided by History and Sociology with the analysis of political structures and processes in Mizoram. We have taken up this study from such multi-factorial or holistic approach with the hope that it may make some contribution to the study of state politics in the broad field of Indian political institutions and system.

#### D. AN OUTLINE PREVIEW

The work is divided into six chapters, including the Concluding chapter. The first three chapters contain an analysis of the development of Mizo politics in a chronological order. But, this order is broken in the fourth and the fifth chapters because of the complexity of the topics discussed therein. The concluding chapter contains an attempt to consummate our findings and observations which lie scattered in the main chapters, within the broad aims and purposes which have been briefly noted in the Introduction; and to put in some observations on the problem which are not necessarily anticipated.

Chapter One is an attempt to present a general background of the Mizo people with interesting facts about their socio-economic conditions and their administrative development. An attempt is also made to define various terms by which the people have been known to others, with a rather long analysis of the popular theories about their origin and emergence as a distinct people. In Chapter Two, our attention is turned toward the period of transition from tribal chieftaincy to modern system of party politics, which was mainly characterised by a growing political consciousness among the general public which made a struggle for political control between the traditional elite and the emerging elite inevitable. The chapter also deals with the factors responsible for the formation of the first Mizo political party and its early life-history. Chapter Three is a stasiological study of the 'Two Party System Phase,' that is, from early fifties to early sixties. The latter part of the chapter is an analysis of the factors contributing to the rise of the Mizo National Front party. Chapter Four is wholly devoted to the MNF movement and its relations with overground parties. Chapter Five takes us to the development of party system in Mizoram in the midst of MNF underground movement and the various techniques of the federalising process which have been set going by the Governments of Assam and India. The impact of the federalising process has been dealt with at length.





Based on Census of India: 1981-Mizoram (Provisional Population Totals)

Notes: 1) Population figures taken from 1981 Census (Provisional)  
 2) % figures for tribes of Chhimi Tuipui District taken from 1971 census.

CHAPTER ONE

SOCIO-HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF MIZORAM

Mizoram, the field of this study, is one of the nine union territories of India. It occupies twenty-sixth position among the Indian states and union territories in terms of population and fourth position in terms of percentage of literacy. Chandigarh, Sikkim, A & N Islands, D & N Haveli and Lakshadweep have less population than Mizoram. Kerala, Chandigarh and Delhi have higher percentage of literacy than it. According to the provisional figures of the 1981 census, it has a population of 4,37,774 and a land area of 21,087 square kilometres. The density of population is 23 per square kilometre. The Tropic of Cancer cuts it into two almost equal halves. The whole territory is divided into three districts- Aizawl, Lunglei and Chhimituipui, which are again divided into four, two and three subdivisions respectively. While Aizawl and Lunglei do not have district level local self-government, Chhimituipui has three district councils, each for Pawi, Lakher and Chakma tribes. The District Council areas coincide with the sub-divisional areas.

According to the 1971 census, there were eighteen scheduled tribes in Mizoram who together amounted to 94 percent of the whole population. The Luseis were 72.8 percent, the Chakmas 7 percent, the Pawis 6 percent, the Lakhers 4 percent, the Imars 2.4 percent, Kuki tribes 2.2 percent and others 0.1 percent of the total population.<sup>1</sup> The Luseis are predominant in the Aizawl and Lunglei districts, the Pawis, Lakhers and Chakmas in their respective areas, while others are interspersed among the dominant tribes. All of them, excepting the Chakmas, are gradually identifying themselves as Mizo.

---

1. Statistical Handbook, Mizoram, Aizawl, 1976, pp.28-9

Table 1:1- Decennial variations of the Mizoram population

Year	Persons	Decade variation	Percentage of decade variation
1	2	3	4
1901	82,431	n.a.	n.a.
1911	91,204	+ 8,770	+ 10.64
1921	98,406	+ 7,202	+ 7.90
1931	1,24,404	+ 25,998	+ 26.42
1941	1,52,786	+ 28,382	+ 22.81
1951	1,96,202	+ 43,416	+ 28.42
1961	2,66,063	+ 69,861	+ 35.61
1971	3,32,390	+ 66,327	+ 24.93
1981	4,87,774	+ 1,55,384	+ 46.75

Source: Census of India, 1981-Mizoram (Provisional) p.28

Table 1:2-Distribution, growth rate and density of Mizoram population and literacy.

State/ District	Population 1981 census	% of total population	Decennial growth rate (%) 1971-81	Density- persons per sq. km.	% of literacy
1	2	3	4	5	6
Mizoram	4,87,774	n.a.	46.75	23	59.50
Aizawl	3,40,766	69.86	48.73	27	64.22
Lunglei	82,589	16.93	32.91	18	57.38
Chhintuipui	64,419	13.21	56.57	16	37.25

Source: Census of India, 1981-Mizoram (provisional) pp.28-33

n.a.= does not arise.

Table 1:1 reveals that, (i) the decennial population growth rate for the decade 1961-71 was lower than the average growth rate for the preceding four decades, and (ii) the decennial growth rate for 1971-81 was unprecedentedly high. An explanation of these phenomena can be suggested thus: Number (i) could be due to the MNF movement and the military counter-operations since 1966 which resulted in so many unnatural deaths and which compelled so many Mizos to go underground or to temporarily settle themselves outside Mizoram in order to escape the hardships brought about by these. Number (ii) could be due to the following: During the 1971-81 period, many developments took place in Mizoram. With the upgradation of Mizoram to the Union Territory status, more development schemes were taken up. Many MNF men came overground and many Mizos who had moved out of Mizoram in search of safer places came back. Besides these, many non-Mizos came into Mizoram as government servants, businessmen, technicians and daily labourers. Moreover, as Table 1:2 reveals, there was a tremendous increase in the Chhittuipui district population which was because of the Chakma influx. Chakma influx was again the result of the creation of a separate district for them along with the upgradation of Mizoram to a union territory status.

In terms of financial resources, Mizoram is largely maintained by the Central Government. As a district of Assam since Indian Independence through 1971, Mizoram had no direct allocation of funds from the first four five-year plans. Therefore, the plans could have real meaning in the development of Mizoram only since the fifth plan. The following table shows Mizoram's financial progress in terms of its annual budgets.



Table 1:3- Mizoram Annual Budgets

Financial Year	Amount (in crores of rupees)	Increase over previous year (in %)	Increase over base year (in %)
1	2	3	4
1972-73	17.13	n. a.	100.00
1973-74	29.78	73.80	173.81
1974-75	31.19	4.70	182.07
1975-76	39.97	28.00	233.36
1976-77	46.31	15.80	270.33
1977-78	49.77	7.47	290.52
1978-79	55.13	10.76	321.81
1979-80	78.69	42.73	359.31
1980-81	81.06	3.01	373.20
1981-82	83.59	3.12	387.97

These figures are rounded up to the second decimal.

Sources: Statistical Handbook, Mizoram, 1978 (pp.182-3) and Mizoram Finance Minister's Budget Speeches dated 24.3.1980 and 19.3.1981.

The Mizoram budget has four main heads, namely, Non-Plan, U. T. Plan, North Eastern Council Plan and the Central Plan/Centrally Sponsored Schemes. The fifth and the sixth Plan allocations for Mizoram were Rupees 45.6 crores and 130 crores respectively. The per capita expenditure and local revenue receipts as on the close of the 1980-81 financial year were Rupees 1707 Paise 77 and Rupees 6 Paise 40 respectively.<sup>2</sup>

2. Mizoram Finance Minister's Speech on 10.4.1981 at People's Conference Party's seventh General Assembly at Aizawl Dawrpui M. E. School.

Mizos suffer from paucity of historical literature. Some of the books on their history are written by themselves. These works are mainly based on oral traditions, mythology and legends passed on from one generation to another. A handful of emerging Mizo scholars have been working on the early history of the Mizos. Some British officers wrote in their own ways about the tribes living in the Indo-Burma border area. In spite of all these valuable works, a highly scientific and accurate account of the Mizo history is yet to emerge. No adequate and satisfactory answer can be obtained from the existing works alone as to the Mizos' origin, migration and social transformation. Research into their distant past is rendered more difficult since they have been known in different names by the people around them. Even at present, there is a confusion over the question of their exact common nomenclature. They are popularly known as Mizo. But, there is an emerging opinion that it is more correct to call themselves Zomi. Some suggest that 'ZO' being the root-word, there is no much difference whether the term 'MI' which is equivalent to the term 'man' is prefixed or suffixed to the root-word. Since it is generally conceivable that they have emerged as a distinct group out of a larger group, their history cannot be very exclusive. Judged from their cultural traits, customs, traditions and physical appearance, the broad fact that they are distinct from the Indo-Aryan-Dravidian races stands out. In terms of these, they are akin to the people living in South-East Asia. All of their historical accounts point to the east. The following is an attempt to present a brief historical background of the people, their land and their administration.

#### A. THE PEOPLE

The Mizos were known in different names before and after the British annexation of their land in 1891. The different names and variations in their meanings give an interesting subject of study. Lalthangliana, a Mizo historian, suggests that the "hill people living on the north west of Burma and the north east of India are known as Kuki to the Bengalis." "The earliest use of this name is," according to him, "found in 1792:"<sup>3</sup> Lewin and Rawlins also have the same opinion.<sup>4</sup> The 'hill people' could have referred to only some of the Mizo groups who lived near the Bengal and Manipur borders. At present, those group who are still known as Kuki are living in Manipur as a distinct tribe. They themselves prefer to be called Thadou. According to Lehman, Kuki could have been a term of Manipuri origin.<sup>5</sup>

'Chin' is another term, used by the Burmese (or Burman) in reference to the hill people living in their neighbourhood. However, a single definite meaning of the term is very difficult to find. Lehman wrote, thus:

The term "Chin" is imprecise. It is a Burmese word (khyang), not a Chin word. It is homologous with the contemporary Burmese word meaning "basket," but I am informed by Professor G. H. Luce of Rangoon that it is in fact an old Burmese word (khyan) meaning "ally or comrade" (Luce, 1959 b). No single Chin word has explicit refer-

- 
3. LALTHANGLIANA : History of Mizo in Burma, Aizawl, Zawibuk, 1975, p.69  
 4. LEWIN (T.H.) : Hill Tracts of Chittagong and the Dwellers therein, Calcutta, Bengali Press, 1896, p.98  
 6. RAWLINS: Cucis and Mountaineers of Tipera, Asiatic Researches, II, 1792, p.xii  
 5. LEHMAN : The Structure of Chin Society, Urbana, The University of Illinois Press, 1963, p.5

ence to all the peoples we customarily call Chin, but all-or nearly all-of the peoples have a special word for themselves and those of their congeners with whom they are in regular contact. This word is almost always a variant form of a single root, which appears as zo, yo, kšou, šou and the like. The word means, roughly, "unsophisticated." A few groups in the Southern Chin Hills have adopted a variant of the term "Chin" for themselves.<sup>6</sup>

From these observations, it appears that the hill people on the side of Bengal and Manipur were known as Kuki, and those on the Burmese side were known as Chin, and that these different names applied to the same group of people, of which the Mizos also were a part.

'Lushai' is another name given to the hill people of roughly the present Mizoram. 'Lushai' is an anglicised word, a corruption of the word 'Lusei' or 'Lushai'. The Luseis were the dominant clan of the whole group now known as Mizo. It gradually gained dominance over the other clans by virtue of its being the chiefs' clan. The dialect of this clan gradually developed into what is now known as Mizo language. It has more or less become the lingua franca of all the ethnic groups who are akin to this dominant group. Smaller sub-tribes and clans are being assimilated into a common identity of Mizo, although some of them still maintain their own dialects at the local level. The Luseis were known by the infamous term 'headhunter' because they used to chop off the heads of the victims of their raids, which they frequently carried out on the people living in the plain areas close to the hills. It is a matter of debate whether the Luseis killed just for the love of killing or they had some other

---

6. Ibid. p.3

reasons for having organised their cruel acts. It could be that their lives being dependent upon the forest resources, they wanted to scare away intruders or possible intruders from their lands. Some Mizo elders think that it was for economic reasons that their forefathers used to raid the plainsmen. They wanted to procure from them rare commodities like guns, cloth, salt, etc. But, if we further ask a question why they took human heads after killing them, there can be at least two explanations. Firstly, some superstitious chiefs used to observe certain rituals in honour of their deceased forefathers. On such occasions, they used to demand from their warriors a number of human heads in order to adorn the ceremonies. Secondly, since each village was independent under its own chief, inter village feuds were common occurrences. Life was not at all peaceful in the midst of these. A brave man in the village was an asset for the chief, and he enjoyed his blessings. For the brave man, the human heads were the symbols for his bravery, the proof of his deeds. Viewed from these contexts, it is no wonder that they frequently raided the neighbouring people. Moreover, they had a belief that if one had fulfilled the necessary conditions in one's lifetime, one could earn the title of 'thangchhuah' which entitled one to be in a specially comfortable place in paradise after death.<sup>7</sup>

---

7. 'Thangchhuah' is a Mizo term. 'Thang' means 'famous' or the spread of one's reputation among a community or over the world. 'Chhuah' means, in this context, 'completed'. Therefore, 'thangchhuah' may mean something like 'having completed the necessary tasks to gain the special public honour'.

There were two ways of gaining the title. One was by offering public feasts to the entire village for a number of times. Only chiefs and very rich people could afford this. The other was by killing a specified number of wild animals including bear, deer and wild mithun. These two ways were differentiated as 'in lama thangchhuah' (i.e. thangchhuah on the side) and 'ram lama thangchhuah' (i.e. thangchhuah on the jungle side). For an ordinary man who could not afford performing the former, there was a chance in the latter, provided he had a gun, courage and time. The forests provided hunting ground. So, they had to carefully preserve their forests lest their hunting career would be disturbed.

It was on one of the raids that in 1871, Chief Bengkhuah's men killed Mr. Winchester, a European tea-planter at Alexandrapore in the border area of Cachar District. They took his little daughter Mary into captivity. Consequent upon this incident was the Lushai Expedition of 1871-72. The Luseis were gradually subjugated by the British-Indian Expedition Force. Their land was subsequently annexed to the British Dominion in 1891 as Lushai Hills.

There are a number of opinions as to the meaning of the term 'Lusei'. First, one opinion is that it means 'headhunter' or 'headcutter', for 'lu' means 'head' and 'sei' which when equalised with 'sai' or 'sat' means 'shoot' or 'cut'. Lewin believed that this interpretation was true. Rustomji took it for granted.<sup>9</sup>

---

8. LEWIN : as quoted by LALTHUANGLIANA, whose work is cited, p.70

9. RUSTOMJI (N): Enchanted Frontiers, Calcutta, Oxford University Press, 1973, p.91

Secondly, if taken literally, it means 'longhead,' for 'lu' means 'head' and 'bei' means 'long.' If this interpretation is to be accepted, there is a further question as to why they should be called 'longhead.' One opinion is that they were called 'longhead' because they never cut their hair but rolled it up into a big knot which rested on top of their head making it appear long. This conjecture is ruled out by Lalthanliana as "a learned explanation that carries no weight."<sup>10</sup> Lalsawia, a Mizo Member of the Enjya Sabha, told me that there used to be such references to 'longhead' and 'shorthead' in order to differentiate the well-to-do from the ordinary families respectively. The term 'Lusci' (longhead) and 'Lutawi' (shorthead) could also have arisen to differentiate the chief's family and the commoner's family. Thirdly, some opine that the term 'Lusci' originated from a Burmese word 'Lu Se' which means 'people ten.' 'Lu' in Burmese means 'people' and 'se' means 'ten.' This theory is based on a Burmese oral tradition according to which there were ten distinct groups of the Burmese people who in the past had no particular names. They simply called themselves in numerical order and the Luscis were the last and the tenth group in the order.<sup>11</sup> This numeralisation of the Burmese groups might have taken place while they lived in the Kabaw Valley in the 8th-9th centuries A.D.<sup>12</sup>

10. LALTHANGLIANA : op. cit. p.70

11. SIANA (V.L.) : Mizo History (in Mizo), Aizawl, Lalthanliana, 1979, p.8

12. LALTHANGLIANA : loc. cit.



Fourthly, the Lusoi could have been the descendants of a person, Lusoi by name. Lalthangliana observed, "In the absence of any good explanation we could fall back to the most simple of all explanations that the people are usually called after the name of their noted and popular chief and so these people must have been led over by a man called Lusoi."<sup>13</sup> According to Gogin, the word 'Luchyo' is seen in the Cachar Reports which dated around 1850. This word is believed to be a mis-spelling of 'Lusoi'.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to these four theories, there are other interesting conjectures about the ancestry of the Mizos. One strong opinion among a number of Mizos is that they could be the descendants of the Jacob or Israel of the Bible. This belief is based on the existence of similarities in cultural traits and general mentality between the Jew and the Mizo. In a research carried out by Dr. K. Chhangliana for his doctoral thesis, "Christianity and the Mizo Society", 1976, he found out that this belief was originated from Chhin of Bualian who in 1931 claimed to have been told by God in a vision that Mizos are descendants of Israel. This aroused the interests of some Mizos who then began to study the Bible and various documents and came to the conclusion that Mizos are one of the lost tribes of Israel. They formed MIZO (Mizo Israel Zionist Organisation).

13. Idem.

14. GOGIN (2) : The Discovery of Zolpa, Charabandpur (Maidpur), Zomi Press, 1960, p.9.

They even sent a memorandum to the Prime Minister of Israel requesting, inter alia, the recognition of their identity, in 1974. In 1976, Dr. X circumcised a number of Mizos who claimed to be Jews. Out of 65 persons interviewed by Chawngliana, 45 held the opinion that Mizos could possibly be the descendants of Israel. Rev. Liangkhaia, (may his soul rest in peace) is said to have held the same opinion.<sup>15</sup> Lalzawna claims that the Mizos are the descendants of Ephraim, one of the two sons of Joseph of the Old Testament.<sup>16</sup> Laldenga, the MNF leader, is said to have once shared the opinion. One C. Rokhuna, a Sunday School Teachers Training Instructor of the Presbyterian Church, who has written a number of books on Israelites and their life, told the scholar in 1980 that the Government of Israel had accepted that Mizos are their people. Many Mizos, even those who do not necessarily claim to be Jews, give moral support to Israel, even though India's policy towards Israel is otherwise. Many others just do not bother, because they take it as religious fanaticism.

As in the case of the term 'Lushai' there are a number of opinions on the origin and meaning of the term 'Mizo'. One popular understanding is that the Mizos have been called, or they have called themselves, Mizo, because they live on highlands with cool climates.

---

15. CHAWNGLIANA (K): Christianity and the Mizo Society-The study of the Impact of Christianity on the Mizo Social Structure, Doctoral Thesis, University of Poona, 1978, Cyclostyled copy, pp. 275-6

16. LALZAWNA (K. V.): Mizoram Exodus, (in Mizo), Aizawl, Maranatha Press, 1980, p. 30

For, 'mi' means 'man' and 'zo' means 'high land with cool climate'. In this sense, 'Mizo' means 'hill-man' or 'highlander'. Gougin has the opinion that if the term is to carry this connotation, it should be 'Zomi' instead of 'Mizo' so that it may be grammatically more correct.<sup>17</sup>

There are more than 300 distinct groups under the blanket term 'Mizo' in terms of clan structure. Lalthangliana suggests that they came to be known as Mizo after they built ZOPUI town about 1765.<sup>18</sup> S.T. Ngaihte claims that they had been known as 'Zomi' long before they were known as Mizo. According to him, they were recorded as 'Zomi' in the Fong Chronicle. The Fong Kingdom was founded by Khuul Lee in 60 A.D. The word 'Zo' appeared in various forms as Jo, Yo, Sho, Chou, and the like. He further states that 'Zo' could have been the common ancestor of all the groups, or, the name of a dynasty which ruled China probably from 1027 to 256 B.C.<sup>19</sup> Gougin thinks that the total number of all the Zomis is around two millions and they occupy an area of about 30,000 sq.miles.<sup>20</sup>

The British Missionaries who came to Mizoram in 1894 were called by the Mizos as 'Mizosap' or simply 'Zosap'.<sup>21</sup> 'Mizo' became more popular when Mizo Union, the first Mizo political party was formed in 1946. Nanthara estimates the number of Mizos outside Mizoram at about two lakhs.<sup>22</sup>

17. GOUGIN : op.cit. p.5

18. LALTHANGLIANA: op. cit. p.71

19. NGAHTE (S.T.): History of the Zomi in Mizoram and the Surrounding Area, (M. Phil. Dissertation, CHS, JNU), 1979, pp.11-3

20. GOUGIN : op.cit. Preface.

21. LEWIN (T.H.): A Fly on the Wheel, Calcutta, Firma W.M., 1912, p.316

22. NANTHARA (C): The Politics of the Mizo Hills, (Doctoral Thesis), Delhi University, 1960, p.34

The whole matter is further confused by the fact that there were no persons recorded as Zomi or Mizo in the 1901 census, the first census conducted in the Hills. The number of Lusais, according to it, was 35,332.<sup>23</sup> This posed a problem of believing that the Zomis or Mizos had been known to be in existence as a distinct group of people as far back as around 1027 B.C. or at least the first centuries A.D. while there were no people known by the name during the 1901 census operation. Ngaite, one of the proponents of the opinion that they were a 'people' even in that distant past, would explain the problem with his theory of regression. He speaks about two possibilities. One is that they had been known as Zomi since a long time after the name of their common ancestor, Zo. When they migrated from their ancestral home, they moved in different directions in the course of which they gradually forgot their common name and began to call themselves separately after their respective clan leaders or group leaders. Another possibility is that they had formed themselves into a state society under the Pong Kingdom. But, when they came up to their hill settlements after leaving the Pong Kingdom, their already organised state society underwent a peculiar socio-economic transformation which resulted in their regression to clan-based society.<sup>24</sup>

---

23. LALTHANGLIANA : op.cit. p. 72

24. NGAITE : Op. cit. The whole of Chapter Two of his work is devoted to an analysis of this theory of regression.

K. Zawla believes that when they came to their hilly settlements in the Than Bango in the 14th century A.D., they called themselves Zami. But, one of their hunters reversed the order of the two syllables in his ballad about his successful adventure with a wild bear to make the word sound more poetic and 'Mizo' gradually became more popular than 'Zami'. The ballad runs like this:

Keimah Mizo pa, puiraw chawia,  
Sa tin kapa.

which means,

I, a Mizo man, holding bamboo spear,  
Shooter of any beast.

So, 'Mizo' is a poetical form of 'Zami' according to this opinion.<sup>25</sup>

In any case, 'Zo' appears to be the root word. Samogimes, Mizoram also is called simply 'Zoram'. There are many instances of 'Zo' being used as the equivalent of 'Mizo'. At present, Mizo is the official name of the people, since 1954, when 'Lushai Hills' was replaced by 'MizoHills' for the name of the District, by an Act of Parliament. In Mizoram, the feeling of being distinct from one another is more or less non-existent among the clans and sub-tribes of Mizo, except in the cases of the Patis, the Lakhers, the Chakmas and the Riangs.

The process of socialisation and modernisation has more or less wiped out communal feelings. But, the Mizos outside Mizoram have some difficulty in this respect. In their case, identification with the common nomenclature and assimilation of clan dialects into the Mizo language

---

25. ZAWLA (K) : Mizo Pipute leh an Thlahte Chawhia (in Mizo), (History of the Mizo Forefathers and their Descendants), Mizawl, Hmar Arsi Press, 1976, pp.8-10

will take some more time. The reasons for these could be: (i) that they live in a state which is not their own. The dominant language and culture, that is Meiteiron, and the clan dialects do not have as close connection as the Mizo language and culture have with any and every clan dialect and culture. This results in clan assertion and clan consciousness instead of in the acceptance of common nomenclature. (ii) Some of them, the Thadous for instance, had been driven out by the Lashais from the present Mizoram. They still harbour some cultural enmity against their Lusei brethren and cannot identify with them. (iii) Since clan dialects flourish among them at local level, the Lusei-Mizo used to differentiate them from other Mizos. This Lusei-Mizo chauvinism repulsed them. (iv) Since they speak more in their local dialects, they are not very fluent in the Lusei-Mizo language, which is sometimes called 'Dahlian' language. This language problem is the strongest hindrance to their identifying themselves with other Mizos. This view is also shared by Nunthara.<sup>26</sup> Now, they are gradually realising the necessity of having common name. But, they are reluctant to adopt the already developed and officialised one, namely, Mizo. Some of their leaders and scholars are suggesting 'Zoni' for their common nomenclature, which is, however, not much different from Mizo, as we have already noted. Whether 'Zoni' will evolve as the common name of all these people, embracing over the

---

26. NUNTHARA(C): op.cit. p.34

Mizoram Mizos, or the term will be applicable only to the Mizos outside Mizoram, is an important question which we cannot attempt to answer at the moment. Gougin, one of the most active advocates of the 'Zomi theory' writes.

We must prefer Zomi to Mizo. Hence there is no point for controversy on the issue-Zomi or Mizo. But then, to me Duhlian Tawng (Lusei-Mizo language) must be the common language of all Zomis because Duhlian Tawng is most advanced and popular of all the languages spoken by the Zomis(...)The Duhlian Tawng should be modified and improved so that it can become a language of a nation viz. Zomi Nation.<sup>27</sup>

In 1980, Manipur-Mizo students in Delhi formed the All Zomi Students Association, even though there had been Mizo Zirlai Pawl (Mizo Students Association), which has its branch in Delhi, of which they also are still members.

In Mizoram, the Pawis, Lakhers, Chakmas and Riangs still speak their own dialects, apart from the Lusei-Mizo language. Many of them, especially those of the interior villages, cannot communicate in the dominant language. The Pawis, also known as Laia, are the fastest in picking up the Lusei-Mizo language. The Lakhers follow. The Chakmas and Riangs are the slowest in this matter. The reason is that they adopt Bangali script, while the Pawis and Lakhers adopt Roman script as the Lusei-Mizos. The existence of these different linguistic groups, especially the Chakmas, complicates the internal politics of Mizoram.

---

27. GOUGIN: op. cit. pp. 5 & 6



## B. THE LAND

Mizos are Tibeto-Burman group of the Mongoloid race. According to one Mizo legend, all the Mizos once came out of a big hole in the earth, which had a huge rock as its cover. They call this place, "Chhinlung". 'Chhin' means 'cover' or 'lid' and 'lung' means 'stone' or 'rock.' Many Mizos believe that though a legend, it may have some factual basis. They conjecture that Chhinlung was not actually a hole in the earth, but, the Great Wall of China. Our forefathers, they would believe, remembered the Great Wall as Chhinlung, and in the absence of written record, the story of their exit from the Wall was passed on to the next generation, which lately came down to us as a legend. Others try to explain the 'Chhinlung Theory' in a bit different way. They would think that Chhinlung was how Mizos' forefathers remembered Chien-Lung or Sien-Lung, who is said to be one of the last Kings of the Manchu Dynasty which ruled over China in the 17th and 18th. centuries A.D. instead of being a hole in the earth. According to this explanation, Chien-Lung became a King in 1736, and was later replaced by a more powerful King. He fled to Burma with many followers and founded another Kingdom there. Again, his newly founded Kingdom was conquered by another powerful King and his people scattered everywhere. The Mizos are the descendants of one group of the Chien-Lung people.<sup>28</sup>

---

28. TLANGCHHUAKA: Mizoram Politik Chanchin, (in Mizo), (Mizoram Political History), Akyab, The General Headquarters, M. N. F., 1973, p.9

Lalthangliana, who has done a commendable research into the History of the Mizos from the Mandalay University in Burma has suggested that the Mizos once lived at the T'AO valley of Kansu Province on the north-west of China and north-east of Tibet 2,000 years ago. From there, according to him, they moved into Burma through the place where the borders of Burma and Tibet meet, expelling the Shan Kadus into Manipur and Burma proper. They occupied the Kabaw valley from about 8th century through 13th century A.D. While they lived in the Kabaw valley, they developed a culture of high order. They left the Kabaw valley for the Chin Hills due to the Shan penetration early in the 14th century. They settled on the Than Range and Manipur valleys till the mid-fifteenth century. It is while living there that their cultural growth suffered a heavy setback on account of the hard living conditions. In the second part of the fifteenth century, they moved farther west to the Len Range near the river Tiau and lived there till the late eighteenth century. Many of the folksongs, customs, traditional institutions and much of the literature which they possess now point to this period in their history. Towards the close of the 18th century, due to the pressure from the Pawis, the Luseis moved farther west into the present Mizoram.<sup>29</sup>

The land is hilly and thick monsoon forests cover the entire area. These render the task of building road communication difficult. That is why many parts of Mizoram remain undeveloped and inaccessible.

---

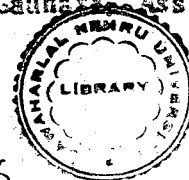
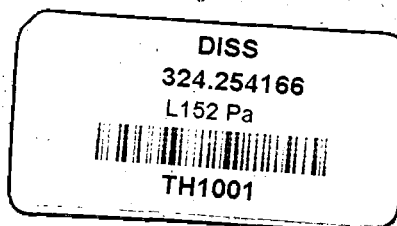
29. LALTHANGLIANA : op. cit. pp. xi & xii

The geographical conditions and the physical features of Mizoram have great impact on their socio-political life. The Mizos have been isolated from the rest of the world. Thus, they have been living a life of their own, undisturbed and unmingled by any alien culture. This resulted in their independent thinking. All these factors have been contributive to the rise of the MNF movement. On the other hand, their cultural identity has been protected by their hills and forests from the penetration of mightier cultures around them. If it were not for this protective function of their hills and forests, the Mizos may have had no chance to develop into a modern society. Agriculture by humming system is the main occupation of the people. Before 1959, Mizoram used to be self-sufficient in rice, the staple food of the Mizos. But, since 1959, the local production of rice has never met even half of the total requirement. The food shortage is met by the Government of India which incurs Rupees 65 lakhs annually through the Food Corporation of India for the transport of rice into Mizoram on subsidy. Other principal Agricultural products are ginger, potato, sugarcane, maize, etc. But, the production of these crops cannot have much effect on the economy of Mizoram due to communication and transport problems and the absence of proper system of storage and marketing. The humming system of slash and burn method devastates the forests which are otherwise rich in resources. No minerals have so far been discovered in the Mizoram soil which is said to be of tertiary class. There is acute water problem every year for more

that half of the year, because the people mostly live on hilltops and water supply system has not been very good. The land has no link with other parts of India by air or rail. The Silchar-to-Aizawl-to-Lunglei road still remains the only means of transport to and from outside. The rapid flowing rivers are of great potential for hydel power and projects of these are now being started. Industrially, Mizoram is backward. Only small cottage industries such as timber works, tailoring, bakery, motor workshops, printing press, knitting, aluminium works, etc. have been developed. In short, Mizoram economy is dependent on goods coming from outside the land.

One peculiar natural phenomenon in Mizoram which has had far-reaching impact on the Mizos' socio-economic-political life is the periodic flowering of the bamboos. Two species of bamboo, mautak (*Calocanna rambucoides*) and rawthing (*Bambusa hamiltonii*) grow in plenty. Each species flowers at fifty year interval, the gap between the flowering of one and the other is eighteen years. So, the turn of flowering of the two species takes a regular interval of 30 years- 20 years- and so on. The Mizos know by experience that rat-population suddenly increases soon after the flowering of the bamboos. The rats consume the entire paddy of the fields. This causes large scale famine. Rat havoc on paddy-fields used to be so great that there used to be no means of preventing it. This used to lead, in the past, heavy loss of life. <sup>30</sup> We will see more of this in Chapter III.

30. BAVEJA (J.L.): The Land Where the Bamboo Flowers, Gauhati, Assam Publication Board, 1970, p.63



### C. THE ADMINISTRATION

The administrative history of Mizoram may be divided into four periods. The period between the later part of the 16th century and the year 1890 may be called the Period of independent local chiefs. The 1891-1947 period was the period of British system of indirect rule. After an interim period of about four years, the District Council period began from 1952 and ended in January, 1972. The present period (i.e. 1972 till date) is the U.T. period.

#### (a) The period of independent local chieftaincy

How the Mizos began to have chiefs is very difficult to know. While living in Burma, they were in a state which was more or less similar to what Hobbes calls 'state of nature.' In such a state, might was right, and each clan was led by a particularly strong man in their constant feuds against one another. One popular story about the beginning of chieftaincy among the Luseis goes like this: There were the clan of Inante, who had no leaders. They felt very unsafe to remain without a leader, and invited one Zahmuaka, who had six sons, to become their chief. He reluctantly accepted their invitation and later became very successful. Not only he but also his sons became chiefs. It was from this family that the Lusei chiefs, who later came to be popularly known as Sailo, sprang up. Before the British annexation of Lushai Hills, the Sailo chiefs ruled the Luseis independent from one another in each village.

Though the villages under their respective chiefs may have had laws and practices different from one another, the village chiefs' administrations followed more or less common pattern. The chief was bound by customary laws. He protected the life and property of his villagers. He framed the policy of making allotment of land for jhuni. He tried cases in accordance with the existing customary laws. His authority very much depended upon his personality. Over and above his general supervision of the village life, he had to pay special attention to the maintenance of the village paths and watersprings. The normal form of penalty he inflicted upon the wrongdoer was 'fine'. The fine could be paid in cash or in kind. In cash, it ranged from Rs. 5 to Rs. 40. The equivalents of these amounts in kind were a pig and a mithun respectively. In any case, a fine of Rs. 5 from the guilty one was compulsorily due to the chief which was something like a court fee. This was known as 'salam'. Cold blooded murder was a rare incident, in which case, the chief had a special way of dealing. Though he would not assume the power over the life and death of the culprit upon himself, he would simply ignore the killing of the culprit by the relatives or their agents of the victim. If any man killed another intentionally or unintentionally and wanted to be safe from the avenger's hand, he would run with all his strength to the chief's house, and if he could reach it and hold the central post (i.e. wooden post centrally supporting the roof of a Mizo house), he was safe. It was no more lawful for the avenger

to harm him. But, the murderer would thenceforth become (with his family if he was a married man) the servants of the chief. This custom led to the existence of 'hawi'. The Mizo term 'hawi' does not have an English equivalent. Some understand it as 'slave'. But, it is not exactly so in the true sense of the term. The 'hawi' was not subject to sale or exchange as if he was a commodity or animal. Moreover, he could redeem himself or others may pay his redemption price. It was not institutionalised but a stray incident, the last resort for a helpless man to be able to live. Sometimes, the chief would not open his door for such murderer. So, the 'hawi' phenomenon should not be mistaken for the institution of slavery which we see elsewhere.

In his manifold functions and responsibilities as a ruler, the chief was assisted by a council of elders, who were known in Mizo as 'Upag'. They were not elected by the people, but the chief's own nominees on the basis of personal merit. Other permanent members of the chief's office were the 'llanggu', whose duty it was to keep the villagers informed about the public orders of the chief; 'lalthirdeng' or the chief's blacksmith; and 'khawchhiar' or 'writer' since the early 1900's. The 'llanggu' and 'khawchhiar' received a specified amount of paddy from each household annually. The 'thirdeng' shared part of the spine containing three ribs cut from any animal killed by the villager. Other officials of the chief who were of ad hoc nature were the 'ranghual' and 'zalen'. They were the privileged class whose nature of function was advisory than executive. The ranghuals were experts in the nature of the

village land. They assisted the chief on the occasion of his making land allotment policy. For this assistance, they enjoyed the privilege of selecting the plot for jhum before other villagers, and, they paid to the chief double the amount of paddy other villagers had to pay. Selection of land for jhum was usually done by lottery system. The usual amount of 'fathang,' the paddy tax due to the chief from the annual harvest of each household was six tinfuls or about fifty kilograms when reduced to clean rice. The 'zalen' were rich people who were exempted from the payment of fathang, but in turn were under the obligation of providing material help to the chief in case of need or on demand. There were three categories of priest who were called, in order of their importance, 'sadawt,' 'thlahpawi,' and 'puithiam.'

Besides the annual paddy tax, there were three other principal taxes, 'sachhiah' or 'sadar' and 'chi chhiah' or salt-tax. When a villager made a successful hunting, he had to pay, from the fourfooted animal he had killed, the whole left foreleg cut through the joint between the shoulder-blade and the spine. This was, thus, a flesh tax (sachhiah or sadar). It should be noted in this connection that the place where the animal had been killed was not important. It could be in the territory of the neighbouring chief. Even then, the flesh-tax was due only to the chief of the village to which the hunter belonged. This led Dr. (Mrs.) N. Chatterji to conclude that the zamindari



system of landholding did not exist under the Lusei chiefship and "The practice (...) goes to support the point that private ownership of land with the inherent rights thereon was not recognised by the Mizo people." <sup>31</sup> Any villager collecting salt from the chief's salt-spring had to pay some part of his collection. Failure to pay the taxes entailed punishment with the payment of 'fines' which may be different in amount. Besides these regular taxes, the chief could demand anything from his villagers. His house was constructed by the villagers on free labour.

Usually, the chief was looked upon as father of all the villagers and he normally behaved so. But, there were some chiefs who became autocratic and selfish. Riotous uprising against the chiefs rarely occurred. The means of being saved from the autocratic rule of a bad chief which the villagers could resort to was migration, which was a great threat to the chief for he would lose part of his revenue. So, few chiefs became autocratic.

The society under the traditional chieftaincy, characterised by independent and uncoordinated administrations was of primitive nature than of perfect feudalism. Had not the British or any other outsiders involved, the Mizo society may have developed into feudalism.

---

31. CHATTERJI (Mrs. N.): The Mizo Chief and His Administration, Mizami Tribal Research Institute, 1975, p.17

The period of British system of indirect rule (1891-1947)

Soon after the British annexation of the Lushai Hills in 1891, the Lushai-land was bifurcated into northern and southern parts, putting these parts under the provincial administrations of Assam and Bengal respectively. There was a political officer for each part. This de facto arrangement was regularised in 1895 by a Proclamation of the Governor-General-in-Council. On finding that the people of the two parts were of the same racial stock, having the same custom, speaking the same language, and that the geographical conditions also favoured, the Government amalgamated the two parts in 1898 and put the whole territory under the Assam Province, with a Superintendent as its administrator on behalf of the Governor.<sup>32</sup> This amalgamation of the divided Mizoram was a farsighted act on the part of the Government. This act was very significant in moulding the distinct identity and entity of the Mizo people as an organised society. Had the amalgamation not been effected, the Mizos may have been assimilated by the dominant cultures of Bengal or Assam, and remained small minority groups in different countries and states.

The year 1898 marked the beginning of settled administration of Mizoram in the modern sense of the term. The British did not abolish chieftaincy. Instead, they adopted the policy of indirect rule by

---

32. SIAMA (V.L.): op. cit. p.76

discreetly following the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of the chief's village until and unless the chief went beyond his jurisdiction. Their interest was usually protected by the colonial administrator. In turn, they were required to recognise and give loyalty to the British Crown. The whole land was divided into sixteen circles. There was one Circle Interpreter in each circle to facilitate the Government's contacts with the people in general and the chiefs in particular. Therefore, the chief's administration continued side by side the British administration, the former being only at the village level while the latter was at the whole level. A detailed analysis of the socio-political implications of this two-tier system of administration is attempted in Chapter II.

During this period, the Superintendent was a virtual dictator. There were instances of the chiefs being removed from their chiefship by the Superintendent, who could even make a new chief. The Lushai Hills was declared a Backward Area by the Governor-General-in-Council on January 3, 1921, within his power conferred by the Government of India Act, 1919. Again, the Lushai Hills was declared an Excluded Area by the Government of India (Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas) Order, 1936, on March 3, 1936 under Section 91 of the Government of India Act, 1935. As such, it was under the direct administration of the Governor through his representative, namely, the Superintendent. The Assam Provincial Legislature had no say in the administration. Funds allotted for

Lushai Hills were never voted upon by the Legislature but directly sanctioned by the Governor as administrative charges. Any sort of political activity was forbidden and the people never had the opportunity of organising themselves politically. The British system of indirect rule had significant effects on the chief-commoners relationships. Under the protective authority of the Superintendent, more chiefs became irresponsible and autocratic. The power of the Superintendent to remove the chiefs encouraged the commoners to make complaints to him against their chiefs. Thus, Chief-versus-commoners disputes multiplied. All these created more tensions under the British administration. Modern party politics took its roots in this period.

(c) The District Council Period under Assam (1952-through '71)

With the British transfer of power, Lushai Hills was incorporated with Assam. The last British Superintendent Peters created an Advisory Council consisting of elected representatives of the circles in 1948 to function for the interim period. Lushai Hill District Council was created in 1952 under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. Chieftaincy was abolished and village councils introduced in 1954. The name of the District was changed from 'Lushai Hills' into 'Mizo Hills' in the same year. The Mizo District Council and the Assam Government's administration through the Deputy Commissioner did not go together very well. Though the Mizos had three

representatives in the Assam legislature, they could have no much say in the Government's policy making. In short, the independent thinking Mizos could not very well adjust themselves with the dominant majority. The Assam Government's administration of the Mizos, which was their first and real taste of modern democratic system of administration, did much to the alienation of the Mizos from India. Not only that Assam Government could not check the secessionist tendency, it made itself responsible for many of the troubles which Mizos are now facing.

(d) The Union Territory Period (1972- )

The elevation of Mizoram to the status of Union Territory has accelerated the political development by having widened the outlook of the Mizo people in general and the public leaders in particular. Though the status has not completely fulfilled the Mizo aspiration, and there are many things to say against the merit of the administrative system inherent in the constitutional provision for Union Territory, the status has been accepted by the people as a preparatory ground for the attainment of full statehood. Further upgradation of Mizoram to full statehood with proper constitutional safeguards may go a long way in integrating the Mizo people emotionally. In the past, they have been protected from demographic and cultural invasions by the Chin Hills Regulation, 1896, the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873 and the Inner Line Regulation, 1873. Of these, the last is still popular. But, this alone may not be adequate in future.

.....

**CHAPTER TWO**

**FORMATIVE YEARS OF THE PARTY-SYSTEM**

The late 1940's may be taken as the formative years of the party-system in Mizoram because there hardly was any organised political movement in Mizoram till 1946. Dr. V.V.Rao says, " Before 1946, there was no political activity ( in Mizoram ) for all practical purposes because the Superintendent frowned upon it."<sup>1</sup> But, this observation should not be taken as to deny the fact that there was political consciousness among the Mizos even before 1946. This chapter is an attempt to analyse the political activities before the formation of political parties; the factors contributing to the growth of political consciousness and the formation of the first Mizo political parties and the development of party system; the formation of the Advisory Council and the Mizo Union Demonstrations.

#### A. THE TRANSITION FROM TRADITIONAL CHIEFTAINCY TO PARTY-POLITICS

Excluded from the jurisdiction of the provincial legislature, the Mizos never participated in any modern legislative process. The British followed the policy of not letting the Mizos handle political matters, for, they feared that could be harmful to the administration and to themselves. Nevertheless, the introduction of education and christian religion by the British missionaries made them more and more political-

---

1. RAO (V.V.) : A Century of Tribal Politics in North East India: 1874 - 1974, New Delhi, S.Chand, 1976, p.496

ly conscious. According to the 1941 census, the Numbers of christians and literates were 64 and 20 per cents of the total population respectively.<sup>2</sup> The following points serve as the evidence of the growing political consciousness among the Mizos, even before the formation of political parties:

(a) The First Manifestations

The first manifestation of the Mizos' political consciousness came in the form of public protest against the autocratic chiefs shortly before the 1871-72 Lushai Expedition, at the villages of the descendants of chiefs Vuttaia, Bolura, Bengkhuaia and Manga. It so happened that when these chiefs could remain for some time being undisturbed by other chiefs. So, they became more autocratic and selfish. They used to snatch away the valuable properties of their villagers forcibly. The commoners, too tired of their chiefs' behaviours gathered at particular places and gheraoed their chiefs. They forced some of them to abdicate. But, the commoners did not organise a long-term movement. The chiefs retaliated. The enmity between the commoners and the chiefs almost resulted in violence. But, ultimately, the commoners gave in and all the chiefs who had been forced to abdicate were reinstated.

- 
2. VANLANJIA (R) : Ka Ram Ieh Kei ( in Mizo ), (My Country and I), Mizawl, Zalen Printing House, 1972, p.48  
 LIANGKHAIA : Mizo Chanchin (in Mizo), (Mizo History), Mizawl, Mizo Academy of Letters, 1976, pp.122-23



The second significant incident took place some time in 1925. Telesa Pachuau and others approached the Superintendent with a suggestion that Lushai Hills be included in the Reform Act of 1919 so that the Mizos could participate in the Provincial Legislature and in politics. They soon landed up in jail.<sup>3</sup> Liangkhaia presents this incident in a different way. According to him, Telesa and others were protesting the Superintendent's order which, inter alia, demanded the Mizos to revive the already dying traditional institution, namely, 'ZAWLBUK'.<sup>4</sup> Whatever be the exact cause of the incident, two things are evident from this: that the Mizos had already been highly politically conscious and that the very consciousness produced stern reaction from the colonial ruler.

The third notable incident was on the 'Sons of the Soil' issue. It took place during the Second World War. The Governor of Assam had issued an order some time in 1934 to the effect that any vacant Government post in Mizoram was to be filled by Mizos if they fulfilled the minimum qualifications. By the breaking out of the War, some Mizo youths had been recruited into the offices of the Superintendent, the Civil Surgeon and the Assam Rifles Commandant, the only Government offices in Mizoram then. The War necessitated more staff and appointment of non-

---

3. GOSWAMI (B. B.) : Mizo Unrest- A Study in Politicisation of Culture, Jaipur, Aalekh, 1979, p.128

NAG (A. K.) : "The Ups and Downs of Mizo Politics," North Eastern Affairs, Oct.-Dec., 1972, Shillong, pp.43-5

4. LIANGKHAIA : op. cit., pp. 114-5. 'Zawlbuk' was youngmen's dormitory, a big house near the chief's where youngmen slept at night.

Mizos was begun. The Mizo clerks in these offices formed the Young Mizo Employees Association and protested against the appointment of non-Mizos. Some of them had to lose their jobs because of this. But, their protest was so successful in that the non-Mizos were replaced with Mizos and no further appointments of non-Mizos were made by the Superintendent (McCall). The succeeding Superintendent (Macdonald) also kept up his predecessor's practice.<sup>5</sup>

The fourth manifestation of the political consciousness was seen in the taking of political matters into a non-political social service oriented organisation, namely, the Young Lushai Association (YLA), founded by the missionaries and some local youths in 1935, which was changed into Young Mizo Association (YMA) in 1947. The leaders of the YLA were aware of the increasing disintegrating tendencies in the Mizo Society and they wanted to do something to unite the people. Yet, they could not do that politically. The YLA also was not exactly appropriate for the implementation of their idea, because of its non-political nature. They thought out a plan, which was to have a religious garb, but the real motive behind being political, namely, sowing the seed of the concept of Greater Mizoram. They initiated the Gospel Dak in 1946.<sup>6</sup>

5. VANLAWA : op.cit. pp.77-8

6. Ibid. p.81 "Gospel Dak" was the despatch of books and other articles, which were the free gifts from all corners of Mizoram, to the Mizos in Burma. The boxes containing the articles were carried by people from village to village and finally to Burma where they were distributed freely. The carrying and giving were done with religious zeal of high emotion. It is claimed that it was miraculously used of God.

Besides giving religious inspiration to the Mizos in Burma and strengthening the faith of those in Mizoram, the Gospel Dak revived the feeling of oneness among the Mizos on both sides. But, the existence of Burma and India as separate nations having become a reality, nothing more could be done politically towards the integration of the Mizos.

The YLA also took up another political question in 1945. The Superintendent had formed a panchayat for Thakthing Veng of Aizawl town by directly appointing its members for life. The YLA leaders could not tolerate this act. They lodged a complaint to the Superintendent and suggested the formation of such local bodies democratically. The Superintendent misunderstood them as disliking the British Government. The Mizo leaders made it clear that they were not having any feeling for the Government as such, but simply that they were desirous of introducing democratic type of management of affairs at the local level for mass political education. Though the Superintendent did not dissolve the panchayat immediately, the complaint was very fruitful in that the Superintendent, realising the change of political tide and the growing consciousness, lifted the ban on political activity and formed an elected body which he called "District Conference" in January, 1946. Vanlawma rightly observes that "the YLA was an important forerunner of a political party."<sup>7</sup>

---

7. Ibid. p.84

(b) Politics in the District Conference

Various considerations might have prompted Macdonald to lift the ban on political activity and constitute his District Conference. It appears that the Superintendent wanted to bring the Mizo chiefs and commoners together in the form of a democratic institution to which the British would transfer power concerning the future administration of Mizoram. Or, it may be that he wanted to look into the Mizo problems more closely with the assistance of their representatives. According to Dr. Rao, "It was brought into existence to advise the Superintendent on all matters concerned with the administration of the District."<sup>8</sup> But, since he was not a constitutional expert, the manner of its membership which he prescribed was not acceptable to the Mizo Union, the first Mizo political party formed on April 9, 1946. The Conference consisted of 20 representatives of the chiefs who were 350 in number and the same number of representatives of the commoners who were of 25,102 households. Dr. Rao's statement that this equal representation of chiefs and commoners was agreed upon by the Superintendent and the Mizo Union leaders appears to be a result of wrong information because the Mizo Union had not been formed then.<sup>9</sup>

The first election to the District Conference was held in January, 1946 with the enthusiastic participation of the people. Candidature was

---

8. RAO (V.V.) : op.cit. p.162

9. Idem.

on voluntary basis. In the case of the commoners, 'electoral college' system was adopted. Every group of ten households elected one voter from among their members. These elected voters formed the electoral college for the election of the commoners' representatives to the District Conference. In the case of the chiefs, all of them were voters.

The District Conference held its first session soon after the election, the Superintendent himself being the Chairman. Since its first sitting, the Conference took up the very controversial and sensitive issues arising out of the relations between the chiefs and the commoners. It took away the chief's power to disown any of his villagers at will and passed a resolution to the effect that whether or not the villager should be ostracised by the chief should be considered on merit by a special village committee of commoners. Election to these committees were started on February 6, 1946. The Superintendent scheduled the second sitting of the Conference on July 20, 1946, on the agenda containing such items as. (i) The Question of India Home Rule, (ii) revision of the practice of collecting rice for Primary School Teachers, (iii) the utilisation of the Government's grant of rupees 300,000 to the upliftment of the ex-servicemen, and (iv) the question of the reduction of the 'paddy tax' payable to the chiefs annually.

At the second sitting, there was lot of controversy and arguments for and against the reduction of the paddy tax to half of its existing amount (from 50 kilograms to 25). The chiefs were strongly opposed to reduction while the commoners were strongly for it, and their numbers were exactly equal. When votes were taken, one Pastor Zahlira, a commoners' representative, voted on the side of the chiefs and the commoners were defeated. Following this defeat, the Mizo Union, which had already been formed, began to take a stand demanding proportional representation of commoners and chiefs in the District Conference in place of the existing equal representation system. They threatened to boycott the next session of the District Conference if this demand was not accepted, and carried out this threat. When the Mizo Union boycotted the next session, only the chiefs and two commoners remained in the Conference. The near-to-half member sitting, however, approved the so called "Macdonald's Constitution." It contained, inter alia, provisions, for a legislature composed of the representatives of the chiefs and the commoners with powers to make laws and levy taxes, for the offices of a Judge for a term of sixteen years, an Auditor and a Minister both for a term of four years and three councillors who together would constitute the Executive. The term of the representatives would be eight years. It also provided for a Public Service Commission. Macdonald's Constitution for Mizoram was rightly described by Dr. Rao as "very clumsy and unworkable."<sup>10</sup>

---

10. Ibid. p.161

Thus, the politics within the District Conference revolved around the burning issue of the day, that is, the adjustment of the claims of the emerging Mizo elite for democratic place in the management of Mizo affairs and that of the traditional elite for their 'rightful' place. The emerging elite soon realised that they were in no position to gain dominance without an organised mass-based party. So, they formed the Mizo Union. Since then, they began to challenge the authenticity and authority of the District Conference. The transfer of power by the British being imminent, they wanted to forge a highly politicised democratic organisation which would speak for the Mizos during the transitional period. More of these when we analyse the Mizo Union Movement later in this chapter. But, in passing, it may be relevant here to enquire into what exactly was Macdonald's anticipation of the future political development of Mizoram. Some, including the MNF leaders, have taken him to be the real lover of the Mizos. All his proposals, including his 'constitution,' were pointed towards Mizoram Independence. But, others, including the Mizo Union (MU) leaders, he was a difficult-to-deal-with type of administrator, a dictator who had not grasped the reality of the situation. Some other who belonged to the latter group saw him as an opportunist. Even his proposal of Crown Colony for Mizoram was motivated by his hope to become Governor of Mizoram, instead of his concern for the Mizos' future. Neither the Governor of Assam nor the Bordoloi Committee entertained his idea of the future administration of Mizoram.

## B. THE RISE OF A PARTY - THE MIZO UNION

The formation of the Mizo Union (MU) on April 9, 1946, was the 'watershed' in the political history of Mizoram. Being the first Mizo political party, its impact on the course of events was so significant and its hold on the people so great that it deserves an indepth study. This part of the chapter is an attempt at that. We, therefore, analyse the factors that have contributed to the rise of the party and describe its organisational structure and programmes in the following paragraphs.

### (a) Factors contributing to the rise of the party

The factors which have brought the Mizo Union party may broadly be divided into four categories- historical, political, social and economic, though these aspects may overlap one another.

(i) Historical Factors: The impacts of the two World Wars were so deep and widespread that even the Mizos, who had hitherto been isolated from the rest of the world were exposed to the civilised world. The Mizos participated in the Wars in different lines. Their experiences and contacts with others did much to the widening of their outlook and to the intensifying of their desire to modernise. Throughout the First World War, the total number of Mizos involved in the actual fightings



was 7 commissioned officers, 33 non-commissioned officers and 1024 of the rank and file. Besides those who were involved in active fighting, a Labour Force of 2,000 Mizos was sent to France under the command of Lt. Col. Playfair in 1917. They came back in 1918 after earning a good name there. The Mizos' involvement in the Second World War was much more than in the First. They contributed as many as 3,000 men and women who joined the different lines of the armed forces. The Mizo chiefs formally declared war on Japan. The Lushai Scout Corps of 300 officers and men was raised for the sole purpose of defending Mizoram against possible Japanese attacks. The Corps actually joined the battle on the front-line of 500 miles stretch as 'Lushai Brigade' and won a high reputation for playing an effective role in the recapture of Kohima, Tiddim and Falam in October, 1944.<sup>11</sup> The impact of the War was felt, not only in terms of men and women actively involved, but also in terms of daily lives. The War made them all the more inquisitive and conscious. They began to ask more questions about themselves and others. The patriotism of others for their own lands inspired them. Their outlook was all the more widened. They were full of the strong desire to modernise themselves socially, politically, economically and individually. This is very clearly seen in their social songs and other pieces of literature. We may therefore suggest that had there not been the two World Wars and Mizos kept uninvolved, a Mizo political party may not have been formed even in 1946.

---

11. LIANGKHALA : op. cit.

(ii) Political Factors: There were two main political factors for the founding of the Mizo Union. One was the tension arising out of the political struggle by the emerging modern elite for influence. The chiefs who represented all that was traditional and were a little too slow to modernise, would not easily part with their traditional privileges. The anti-chief feeling was coupled by the anti-colonial feeling which, though much less in degree than the former, was similarly significant. The chiefs and the colonial administrators were looked upon as the symbols for political repression and enslavement. The common people were tired of the evils of the colonial system of indirect rule. They were anxious to do away with the 'zalen-ramhual,' 'buhchhumi-sadar,' 'coolie' and other autocratic systems. All this is evident from the satires the Mizo Unionists composed and sang wildly in the streets and their meetings, one of which ran thus:

Bai thak ar va artui khawn  
 Leh, Lal hnung zui reng ka ming tawh,  
 Kawltu chawina daltu an ni,  
 Sazai lian pui pui an ni.  
     Zalen, ramhual a ngai tawh lo'ng,  
     Unionia "kawng dal" a ti che,  
     Ti che, Ti che,  
     Tun chinah bang tawh rawh.

Its English rendering may go like this.

Collecting dainties, fowls and eggs,  
 For chiefs and escorting them;  
 Are big punishments I'm fed up with,  
 They hinder work with the hoe.  
     Zalen, ramhual no more needed,  
     The Union say, "You're in the way".  
     They say, They say,  
     Cease, Cease to be from now.

In these circumstances, their only hope lay in forming a political party under whose banner would the people be mobilised. The other factor was the question of the Mizos' political future. The newly emerging elite would not have confidence in the Superintendent and the chiefs to decide for the Mizos' future. They had an idea that in order to demolish the old shackle and usher in a new era in Mizo history, the imminent transfer of power by the British would be an opportune moment. In order to avail that opportunity, they strongly felt it was necessary to organise a political party which would democratically speak for the Mizos. Though the founding leaders of the party invited the chiefs to join the party, the anti-chief orientation was so evident that the chiefs had no heart to join it. To them, the beginning of parliamentary type of democracy meant the end of their authority and privileges. So, there could not be a well developed rapprochement between the Mizo Union and the chiefs.

(iii) Social Factors: Among the many social factors, the spread of christianity and education may be singled out for their specially significant contribution to the formation of party. These two variables did much to the social modernisation, with which came the urge for political modernisation. According to Dr. K. Chawngliana, who has conducted a study on the 'Impact of Christianity on the Mizo Social Structure,' Though the foreign missionaries did not, and were not permitted to, in-

dulge directly or indirectly in either the national ~~and~~ regional politics, "their presence and their many activities (...) made them (Mizos) learn about the meaning of government, democratic election and many other things as practised in the modern world." <sup>12</sup> He also states that the Mizo christians had the view that the authority to establish a political party and even the date of its formation were given by God. The spread of christianity which ultimately replaced their traditional religion directed the Mizos' attention and interest to the Western advanced countries. In short, christianity turned the headhunting Mizo people into hearthunting-Hallelulah Chorus-singing people. The Christian hope of the "Coming Kingdom" inspired them to desire for a better world. Their wider contacts through christian programmes enlarged their view of the world. As for the spread of education and its impact on the rise of the political party, it was like that of christianity. Increased percentage of literacy meant increased means of mass communication, a vitally important means of social solidarity. Many Mizo youths came out of their land for further studies. When those youths came back from various universities and colleges, they followed and supported their less educated elders who had had strong interest in founding a party.

---

12. CHAWGLIANA (K) : Christianity and the Mizo Society- The Study of the Impact of Christianity on the Mizo Social Structure, (Doctoral Thesis), University of Poona, 1978, p.253

Note: Dr. Kenneth Chawngliana is one of the few Mizo Scholars. He is presently the Speaker of the Mizoram Legislative Assembly.

(iv) Economic Factors: Though the Mizos were more or less self-sufficient in food while they were ruled by the chiefs owing to the availability of fertile lands and the small number of population, their economy was agronomical. There was nothing to be compared with advanced economies. There were very few businessmen here and there. They got almost all that they needed from their jhums and the forests. Money was rare and precious. Economic transaction with outside was yet to develop. Within that rigid indigenous economy, the people were exploited by their chiefs in various ways. Besides the regular taxes and duties, the chiefs used to demand many things from their villagers. For instance, if a friendly chief was visiting, the hosting chief could ask any one of the privileged class to provide chickens, eggs, pork and meat for the entertainment of the visitor. The British were not very much interested in building up the infrastructure for the economic development of the land in the modern sense of the term. So, the people suffered from the exploitation on the part of the chiefs and economic deprivation on the part of the colonial rulers. So, it was also with a view to ameliorate the economic conditions of the Mizo people that political party was felt necessary.

Given all these factors, the establishment of the political party was only a matter of time. The crucial moment came in March, 1946 with the calling of the General Conference of the Young Lushai Association. The people were so conscious and eager to start

the political movement that they submitted a resolution to the YLA General Conference to the effect that the time was come for taking action to demolish the old system, meaning particularly chieftaincy.<sup>13</sup> Sensing the real nature of the atmosphere, the foreign missionary who was to preside over the conference refused to take the chair and one Mizo pastor, Chhuahkhama, was asked to take his place. The YLA Conference decided that the non-political character of the Association be kept up and in order to take up political question, the leaders were given freedom to start a political party. The leaders sent R. Vanlawma to approach the dreaded Superintendent with the proposal of forming a political party. He met the Superintendent at 2 p.m. on April 9, 1946 partially nervous yet firmly resolved to present his and the Mizo people's case. To his surprise and joy, the Superintendent told him he had no objection. Immediately after this meeting, two other leaders, Hrangala and Lalhunia offered themselves as the first members of the first Mizo political party which was yet to be formally established. Others who took leading part in the founding of the party were V. Kosiama and P. S. Dahrawka. Dahrawka was a government servant and did not identify himself openly with the party.

---

13. CHALTUAKHUMA : Political History of Mizoram (in Mizo), Aizawl, 1981, p.22

Thus, a party was born. It was first named "Mizo Common People's Union" and a little later changed to "Mizo Commoners' Union." But, since the name was too openly exclusive of the chiefs, the founders finally named it "Mizo Union." But, its anti-chief character was so evident that the chiefs did not join it. Thus, the party became popular only with the commoners. The first election of the party's office bearers was held on May 25, 1946 and the following persons were elected:<sup>14</sup>

PACHHUNGA - President  
 LALHEMA - Vice - President  
 R. VANLAWMA - Gen. Secretary  
 LALBUAIA - Assistant Secretary  
 LALHIMINGTHANGA - Financial Secretary  
 THANGA - Treasurer

Pachhunga (55) was a church elder and known to be the richest Mizo businessman at that time. But, he was uneducated. Lalhema (in his forties) had participated in the two World Wars. He too was uneducated. One distinctive quality that he had was that he could boldly say in public that he feared neither the chiefs nor the Superintendent. Vanlawma (30) and Lalbuaia (26) were Matriculates. Thanga was a clerk pensioner. Lalhmingthanga, son of the President Pachhunga, was 28 and educated upto Intermediate level. The draft constitution of the party had been approved by a conference of members within Circle I on April 15, 1946. The May 25 Conference finally approved it.

---

14. VANLAWMA : op. cit. p. 91 (CHALTUAHGHUNA puts the date as April 25, 1946. see his book, cited, p. 23)

(b) Aims and Objectives of the party<sup>15</sup>

The Preamble to the original constitution of the party said that the party was formed for the integration of all the Mizos in and outside Lushai Hills and that it would strive to provide a common platform for them all so that they might on one accord determine their own political future. Six specific aims and objectives were listed thus:

(i) To educate the people in order to make them understand the ways and means of achieving their rightful place. (ii) To develop better understanding and mutual benefits between the commoners and the chiefs. (iii) To bring about better harmony and stronger unity among the common people. (iv) To uplift the people, especially women, in various aspects of life. (v) To be the spokesman for the people on the basis of their collective will on all matters and at any time. (vi) To popularise the Mizo language among the neighbouring tribes and to own and publish a party organ for the purpose.

All these well summed up the socio-political conditions that brought the party into existence. However limited the scope for their achievements may be, the aims and objectives of the Mizo Union were well intended and full of purposes. It also showed that the Mizo people were politically intelligent in spite of their lack of experience.

---

15. The Original Constitution of the Mizo Union, 1946, p.1 (I am indebted to R. Vanlaluma for his making the rare copy of it available to me).



(c) Membership and Organisation

Membership of the party was open to all irrespective of sex. On entry, one had to pay not less than one rupee. Annual membership fee was four annas. Each member was issued a card. Any recalcitrant member was subject to trial of loyalty and if found deserving, a punishment to the extent of cancellation of membership for such duration befitting the degree of violation of the party rules could be inflicted. If any member went against the intent of the party's resolutions and constitution, he/she was held individually responsible for the consequence of the act.

A village formed the party's unit and a circle its block. Each unit and each block had its own Office Bearers and Committee. The Headquarters Office was at Aizawl. The Headquarters Office Bearers were assisted by a Working Committee of fourteen annually elected members from among the party members in and in the neighbourhood of the capital-Aizawl. The Office Bearers' term was three years. Each unit was represented to the Block Conference by such number of delegates nominated by the unit committee on the basis of one delegate for every unit having less than 50 members and one delegate for every 30 members from the unit having more than 50 members. The annual General Assembly was the supreme authority of the party. Each Block was represented to the General Assembly by its office bearers and five other delegates elected by the Block Conference for the

purpose. All the unit office bearers and committee members of the Aizawl Block could participate in the General Assembly. If the General Assembly was to elect the new Headquarters Office Bearers, each unit, irrespective of town or village, could send not more than two delegates. The Aizawl Block Office Bearers were, by virtue of their offices, members of the Headquarters Working Committee.

The party was well organised. It was strongly bound by the zeal of ushering a new era. It was an open party and the commoners had high hope in its programmes. They anticipated that through the party, they would be able to assert and claim their freedom and equality which had been denied to them before. The funding of the party was mainly through membership fees and voluntary contributions. The main item of expenditure was Office maintenance. The party also ran a printing press. The party did not lose sight of the economic aspect of development. It showed 'Improvements' as one of its expenditure heads, under which the party undertook to carry out such works to the improvement of Education, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Industry. Though nothing much was done on these as a party, these provided the fundamentals of the District Council's policy when the party swept the first District Council poll in 1952.

### C. EARLY HISTORY AND MOVEMENT OF THE MIZO UNION

The second half of the forties was a period of crucial importance not only for India but also for the whole world because many Imperial colonies won their Independence during these years. It was also very crucial for the Mizos. They had just open their eyes to the wide world and begun to handle modern party political affairs without proper training before. They still had many things to learn about the organisation of a party and the direction of party movement. It was, for them, a period of trials and errors. Thus, we are not too surprised to observe the following in the early life-history and movement of the Mizo Union, the first Mizo political party.

#### (a) Leadership Crisis

The party's following increased rapidly like a jungle fire under the first leadership. Reports to the first General Assembly of the party revealed that there had been 710 units and 14,500 members of the party.<sup>16</sup> This means that there was practically no village which had not felt the Mizo Union wave. The General Assembly passed various resolutions to crucial effects, including that, the Chiefs' elders be elected; ramhual system be done away with; the profession of

---

16. CHALTUANKHUMA : op.cit. p.25. He puts the date of the first General Assembly of the Mizo Union as September 24, 1946.

Village blacksmithy be open to all ; the service of the village-crier be made available to the people not exclusively reserving for the chief; the government be pressed to increase the number of porters on its roll so that the burden of coolie system may be lessened, etc. The party claimed to be the only rightful spokesmen for the Mizo people. But, all these resolutions and claims had partial validity because the party had not assumed the governmental power which was not yet possible under the existing system. The party could only 'influence' but not 'decide' in governmental matters. In that sense, it was more like a pressure group than a well developed party having or nearly having captured governmental power. But, the expectability that when parliamentary democratic system would come into existence it was only the Mizo Union which could capture power made it attractive to ambitious men. This could be the main reason for the leadership crisis. Other minor factors which had contributed to the crisis could be: (i) the growing dislike among the general membership for uneducated leadership; (ii) the exclusion of Hrangiaia, one of the founding members, from its leadership; (iii) difference of opinion as to the future political status of Mizoram. The leadership was in favour of Mizoram Independence while the intellectual group in the party were in favour of incorporating Mizoram with India. The leadership had better understanding with the chiefs and the Superintendent while the intellectual group were anti-chief and anti-British in attitude.

The second election of party office bearers was held only after hardly four months during the First General Assembly in September, 1946. If the second election was an attempt at replacing the uneducated leadership by a new educated leadership, it was a total failure. The only change was that the President Pachhunga was dropped and Lalhema (who had been Vice-President) was elected President. After this election, the office bearers met to appoint nine party councillors. Hrengaia was excluded from the councillorship because the President had personally disliked him. Pachhunga (the ex-President) remained as a Councillor. All these conditions prevailing in the party caused it to head for the leadership crisis. Hardly two months passed after the First General Assembly (the second election) when a Block Officers' Meet was called in November, 1946, in which Saprawnga, the leader of the intellectual group moved a motion of no-confidence against the office bearers of the party. Though only a Block Officers' Conference, fresh election of party Headquarters Office Bearers was held. Khawtinkhuma, an M.A. in History, Lalbiakthanga, an M.A. in Economics, and H. Vanthuama, an M.Sc. in Agriculture, were elected President, Vice-President and General Secretary respectively. Of the old office bearers, only Lalbuaia, the treasurer, remained. Since then, the Mizo Union began to actively pursue an anti-chief-anti-British-pro-India policy.

The old leaders did not want to relinquish their office to the newly elected leaders . They claimed that the election of the new leaders at the Block Officers' Conference was a violation of the party constitution and hence invalid. The constitution said that a motion of no-confidence in the office bearers could be moved only in the General Assembly of the party on a previous notice mentioning the specific ground for such motion. Since all the requirements were unfulfilled, the old leaders could not accept it. But, the new leaders also would not bow to the old leadership. This resulted in dual leadership for some time. The new leaders called an Assembly to be held on January 13, 1947, and the old leaders scheduled it to be held on February 24 the same year. The party members were confused as to whose call was to be regarded as official and genuine. But, on the eve of January 13, a compromise was reached between the two groups of leaders by which the old office bearers agreed to hold the Assembly from January 13 and the new leaders accepted the invalidation of the election of office bearers at the November Block Officers' Meet the previous year. It was also agreed that a special General Assembly would be held for the fresh election of office bearers on February 24, 1947. This compromise was then followed by the General Assembly in which another controversy came up. A fresh proposal for election of new office bearers was made on the plea that it would be unnecessarily troublesome to come again for another Assembly in February. After much debate, the delegates

accepted the proposal and fresh election was held there and then. It was more or less a confirmation of the November election with the exception that the Vice-Presidency was taken by Rev. Zairema who had Bachelor Degrees in Science and Divinity. But, the new leadership did not immediately assume office. There was another controversy over the term of the councillors appointed by the old leaders in October the previous year. The party was put under the care of the old councillors sitting as committee under the chairmanship of the first elected President Pachhunga. Vanlawma himself was made the Secretary of the Committee with an obligation to call the next Assembly as early as possible. But, before he could make any move, the newly elected leaders called the Assembly to be held at Sialsuk on April 5, 1947. The Assembly was not accepted by the councillors' committee. The Sialsuk Assembly was significant in that it marked the unbridgeable cleavage of the party between the Pro-India leaders and the pro-Mizo Independence leaders. The former gradually gained more following under its 'educated' leadership while the latter gradually evolved as a new party known as Mizo Union Council or Mizo Union (Right Wing). Before we turn to the new development and other aspects of Mizo politics of the period, we will continue the analysis of the Mizo Union Movement.

(b) Boycott on the District Conference

It has been pointed out on page 38 that since the second sitting of the District Conference, the commoners became disenchanted with it. It became more and more evident to them that so long as there was an equal representation of the chiefs and the commoners, the commoners' interests would never be served. They demanded <sup>proportional</sup> ~~equal~~ representation with a threat that if that was not brought about, they would boycott the third sitting of the District Conference. The party General Assembly of September, 1946 also passed a resolution to that effect. It also passed another resolution declaring that the Mizo Union was the only political organisation in Mizoram which had the right to speak on behalf of the Mizo people. When Macdonald called the third sitting of his District Conference to be held on November 8, 1946, the Mizo Union boycotted it as they had previously threatened. Only three commoners, who were government servants, and all the chief-members attended. The Chairman put to the members present the question whether they regarded themselves sitting there and then as truly representative of the Mizo people. One chief said they truly represented the people as all the chiefs were rulers over 200 to 300 houses. But, Dahrawka, who was a government servant sympathising the Mizo Union, thought they were not. At this, the Superintendent dismissed the sitting.



The Superintendent made a fresh bid to revive the District Conference and ordered the second election to it to be held on April 9, 1947 for the south and on April 14, 1947 for the north. The Mizo Union Assembly at Siatsuk on April 4, 1947, which marked the split of the party decided to boycott the second election to the District Conference. On April 9, Saprawnga stood among the crowd that had gathered near the SDO's bungalow at Lunglei and said, "The Mizo Union had decided to boycott the election. He who participates in the election against the will of the people would be held responsible for the consequences. Those who do not want to participate can leave the place."<sup>17</sup> Hearing these words, the crowd dispersed and all left for their respective homes. The SDO was embarrassed but could not do anything. In Aizawl, very few people participated in the election. It appears that the Superintendent had anticipated some protests. He had modified the system of election slightly but to the advantage of the commoners. In the first election, commoners elected commoners and chiefs elected chiefs. But, in the second election, each voter was given two ballot papers, one for voting a commoner candidate and the other for a chief-candidate. That meant, a commoner voter could vote for a chief of his choice and vice-versa. Since the commoners were much more than the chiefs, their position was better. But, since the equal representation was retained, the MU could not accept it.

---

17. Ibid. p.41

If the first boycott was an open challenge to the credibility of the British Officer, the second boycott was the further consolidation of the Mizo Union's hold on the people and the gradual defeat of the Superintendent and the chiefs. The Superintendent was really furious. He even went to the extent of physically slapping Saprawaga and dissolving the Mizo Union. He seized all the Mizo Union documents and money. But, the Mizo Union leaders took all these as part of their struggle. The Superintendent's action strengthened the unity and solidarity of the party rather than destroying it. Macdonald left Mizoram soon after this.

The problem that lay at the root of the antagonism between the Superintendent and the Mizo Union appears to have been this: That, all of them were aware that the days of the British in India had been numbered, and, in the event of the British transfer of power, it was going to be necessary to have a political body to represent the Mizo people. The Mizo Union leaders wanted to make the party the sole representative of the people. Macdonald wanted to make the District Conference the only spokesman for the Mizos. He permitted the existence of the party only as a discussion forum. So, when the Mizo Union boycotted his District Conference, he could not tolerate it. Had Macdonald been a politician, and the Mizo Union leaders a little more patient, the small Mizo society would not have been so sharply divided at that crucial juncture.

(c) The Mizo Union Demonstrations (December, 1948-January, 1949)

During the interim period between the British transfer of power and the actual implementation of the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, the Mizo affairs were taken care of by the last Superintendent, L. L. Peters, assisted by an Advisory Council of 35 members. The Council was an elected body which consisted of 20 commoners' representatives, 10 chiefs, 3 township representatives and 2 women representatives. Chaube says that among the hill districts of Northeast India, "The Lushai Hills District alone got an Advisory Council prior to the formation of the District Council."<sup>18</sup> But, he makes an impression that the Advisory Council was the result of the Mizo Union "Civil Disobedience Movement." The fact is that the Advisory Council was prior to the Movement and the latter more or less originated from the former. At its very first sitting on August 16, 1948, dispute arose over the chairmanship of the House. The Superintendent tried to preside over the sitting and the Unionists protested. They demanded that chairmanship should be theirs since they were the greatest in number. Thus, before any business could be taken up, the question of chairmanship had to be settled. The Government of Assam ruled that the sitting of the Council was to be presided over by the Superintendent himself.

---

18. CHAUBE (Shibanikinkar): Hill Politics in North East India, Calcutta, Orient Longman, 1973, p.164

When the sitting was resumed under his chairmanship, he asked the Council to consider the Draft Regulation for the administration of Mizoram. The Mizo Union members asked the chairman to adjourn the session in order to enable them to study the Draft in detail. They still objected to the Superintendent's chairmanship and communicated their protest to the Government of Assam. The angry Peters also queried if the Council was to be dissolved. Governor's Adviser Rustomji visited Mizoram and set the Council in order. During his stay at Aizawl, the UMFO (United Mizo Freedom Organisation) members made an issue of Government Servants' representation. The chiefs also tried to intensify the enmity between the Unionists and the Superintendent. The Council formed its committee to study the Draft Regulation in detail and submit its recommendations to the Council. The Council accepted the provisions of the Sixth Schedule in principle and suggested minor modifications. In its sitting on September 28, 1951, it passed Resolution to the effect that ramhual system and animal flesh tax payable to the chiefs be stopped. The Superintendent notified the Abolition of these on October 28, 1951. Three chiefs, namely, Lalinghlova of North Vanlaiphai, Saihuna of Mualcheng and Banglala of Sialsir publicly declared on the same day that they would henceforth stop receiving the tax. Thus, the Advisory Council substantially reduced the privileges of the chiefs, even though it could not completely wipe out chiefship. The Council was dissolved by the Assam Government's order on November 12, 1951.

The Mizo Unionists had greater strength and influence in the Advisory Council than they had had in Macdonald's District Conference. Encouraged by their ever growing support, they were anxious to put an end to all the remnants of the traditional system and usher in a new era of democratic system which they thought would be possible only with the formation of the District Council and therefore wanted to hasten that. With that aim in view, they made frontal attack on Peters himself. Early in December, 1948, they submitted an 18-point allegation against Peters to the Governor of Assam. Their main charges were: that Peters was too partial in favour of the chiefs while trying legal cases between the chiefs and the commoners; that he showed undue favouritism to non-Unionist government servants, the chiefs and the UNFO men in terms of land-grants, subsidies and various social amenities; that he was too harsh in his treatment of the undertrial prisoners; that his open backing of the UNFO which was anti-Indian pro-Imperialist organisation against the pro-India Mizo Union was a clear evidence of his disloyalty to the Independent Government of India. They felt that they could no more expect legal and political justice from him and would speak about him as a dictator. They demanded his removal from Mizoram not later than December 27, 1948, failing which, they threatened, they would organise anti-Peters anti-chief mass demonstrations all over Mizoram. When they met the Governor's Adviser with these allegations and threat, he asked them to delete the lines which talked about the threat. Hrangaia, one of their delegates, came

back to Aizawl to hold consultations with other leaders over the Governor's Adviser's request. He reached Aizawl on December 18 and was arrested before he could reach his home. Other Mizo Union leaders also were arrested and trouble started.

The party had earlier circulated its plan for the demonstrations containing all its allegations against Peters, the dateline and the justification of the strike when necessary. It had instructed its members that if the strike was necessitated, the Mizo Unionists should (i) make no more appeals to Peters' and his assistants' courts, (ii) completely disregard his and his assistants' orders and notices, (iii) make no more payments of dues to the chiefs or construct his house. The circular cautioned the partymen to (i) wait till the dateline, (ii) abstain from violence, (iii) raise slogans on facts only, (iv) maintain good relations with sympathising chiefs, and (v) have no idea of disloyalty to the Government of India. The leaders also pledged that they would face any consequences with courage and determination to make a 'lovely and happy Mizoram'.<sup>19</sup>

Peters defended himself by issuing orders and appeals counter to the Unionist pamphlets. He said that he was leaving soon on retirement and appealed the people to wait for the coming officer and the District Council and warned that any disobedient citizen would be severely punished.

---

19. Mizo Union Nawrhna Thupuan, (in Mizo), (Mizo Union Demonstration Notice), No. 31/38 of 1.12.1948. Source: Hrangaia.

But, the forces working against him had been too strong to be checked by orders and appeals. Big processions were organised in towns and villages. Slogans like, "Mizo Union for our land", "Let Peters go home," and "We demand justice," were shouted wildly in the streets. In Aizawl, Peters himself was at the head of the procession. He was said to have verbally told the demonstrators that that was an improper way of seeing him off. But, what official orders could not have checked could not either be calmed down by mere words. In the villages, people took the opportunity to show their long-hidden anger against their respective chiefs. They shouted anti-chief slogans, mob-attacked the chiefs' houses, and pulled down the structures. They stopped paying the taxes to the chiefs. They stopped going to their courts. They insisted proper rotation when demands for coolies were made. The demonstrations of civil disobedience were so widely spread that there hardly was any village in the Aizawl and Lunglei areas which was not affected by them. In the Fawi-Lakher Region, there were no demonstrations as their chiefs were more adaptable to the changing situations and the region did not have as much an experience as others in relation to the Superintendent.

Peters took serious counter-measures in the forms of public beating, fines, imprisonment, forced labour, confiscation of arms, etc. Hundreds of people, especially the Unionists, heavily suffered under the repressive counter-measures carried out by Peters and his aides. The troubles were called off by an agreement between one Mizo Union leader

R. Dengthuama and Peters on January 28, 1949. The agreement contained, inter alia the following clauses: (i) Refund of all fines on account of the demonstrations; (ii) settlement of the question of violence during the demonstrations by appropriate courts; (iii) the Unionists' undertaking that they would thenceforth abide by the orders of the rulers. When the imprisoned Union leaders were released after the calling off of the demonstrations, they seriously reprimanded their comrade Dengthuama for having signed the agreement in general and the undertaking in particular. They pressed for the addition of "if they are based on the principle of justice" to the undertaking that they would henceforth be obedient to the rulers' orders. The trouble really ended with the insertion of these words to the signed agreement.<sup>20</sup>

The causes of this Mizo Union movement were deeply rooted in the party's attempt to forge itself as the sole representative organisation of the Mizos. It had also been very much aware that it was necessary to maintain cordial relations with the Government of India and the Congress party in order to be heard by them. For this, the exposure of the last British officer was very productive and the Mizo chiefs happened to be the unfortunate section.

---

20. CHALTUANKEUNA : op.cit. p.70



The results, so far as the Mizo Union was concerned, were more of negative than of positive and practical gains. Its leaders and many innocent people suffered imprisonment and punishments unnecessarily. Peters did not go as they had demanded. Serious wounds were carved in the minds of the chiefs. It is difficult to say that these wounds have completely been healed even till today. The government servants, especially the police, were alienated from the Union, just because they were the instruments of the government in dealing with the riots. The harassed UNFO men felt strong enmity for the Unionists. The chief-commoner antagonism became extreme. All these were counter-productive for the Mizo Union. One thing that it bore evidence of was that the party had been strong enough to mobilise the masses and capable of organising a widespread movement, which had hitherto been impossible.

#### D. OTHER ASPECTS OF THE FORMATIVE STAGE

With the split of the Mizo Union in April, 1947 (page 55) there were three main political forces among the Mizos—the Mizo Union, the Mizo Union Council (the factional group) and the District Conference. The first represented the common mass, the second a few dissatisfied Mizo Union members and the third the views of Macdonald and the chiefs. We will see in the following how these three groups had reacted to the various political developments in Mizoram.

##### (a) Bordoloi Committee

Bordoloi Committee was another name for the Advisory Sub-Committee of the Constituent Assembly constituted to study and recommend on the problems of settling the northeastern tribal areas. According to Nag, it was "formed to advise on the constitutional proposals to be made for the governance of the hill tribes and other special matters."<sup>21</sup> Its members were Bordoloi (Chairman), Ramadhyani (Secretary), N. V. Thakkar, Sir B. N. Rao, Nichols Roy (Khasi), Tanjemaliba Ao (Naga), Khawtinkhuma and Saprawnga (co-opted Mizo members). While other tribal leaders were elected by their own people to the committee, the Mizo members were not. It is well-known that the Naga member did not give

---

21. NAG : op. cit. p. 44

his consent while the committee was about to submit its recommendations on Phizo's objection. The Mizo members were leaders of the Mizo Union whose policy was already well-known to the Assam leaders. Moreover, they were only co-opted and democratically speaking, did not represent the Mizo people. That is why the non-Unionist Mizos could not agree to their inclusion in the sub-committee. Vanlawma claims that he had earlier been offered the membership by Bordoloi, but had told him it should be a full-fledged one. They even suspected under-hand business in the matter. They felt embarrassed by the inclusion of the two Mizo Union leaders only on co-option and took this as an insult to the true Mizo cause and disrespect to their political rights. The Bordoloi Committee arrived Aizawl on April 17, 1947. The Mizo case was represented differently by the three already mentioned forums. At first, the Committee did not even want to entertain the Mizo Union Council and the District Conference.

(1) The Mizo Union: It submitted a memorandum which presented the case of the Mizos in Lushai Hills and adjoining areas in the following terms:

The memorandum seeks to present the case of the Mizo people for territorial unity and integrity of the whole Mizo population and full self-determination within the province of Assam for the realisation of which an appeal is made to His Majesty's Government, the Government of India and its Constituent Assembly to make a special financial provision from year to year, for a period of ten years or until such time as the Mizos shall assert that they can maintain their self-determination without this financial provision.

This memorandum was accompanied by a Draft Constitution of Mizoram which looked like a Constitution of an Independent State. It contained provisions for "Mizoram National Council" as the supreme legislative body, "Executive Council headed by a President" and the "Mizoram High Court" which was also referred to as "the National Court" as the highest judicial body. The Draft Constitution of Mizoram was, like the memorandum, also closed with the words: "This would be revisible after ten years."

A close look at the representation submitted by the Mizo Union <sup>but</sup> ~~betrays~~ the confusion of its leaders as to the exact type of administration they were dreaming of. Some of their points were self-contradictory. For example, "Full self-determination within the province of Assam" cannot mean real full self-determination. The question of the "territorial unity and integrity of the whole Mizo population" which understandably included even those Mizos outside the then Lushai Hills was not seriously taken up by the party. This was evident in that the party could accept without any hesitance a District status for only the then Lushai Hills thus forgetting their fellow-Mizos outside the Lushai Hills. This was taken as a political betrayal by the Mizos excluded from the District, and they began to dissociate themselves from the Mizo Union movement and develop clan-based identities and parties. It can also be seen from their memorandum that the Mizo Union leaders could not think of self-rule or Mizo Independence for

economic reasons. However, they anticipated criticism by others, especially the coming generations for having taken too final a decision by opting incorporation with Indian Union. That is why they put the condition of revisibility of the whole set-up after a lapse of ten years. It could also be that the condition was half-heartedly added from political expediency, for, there was a provision, in the Draft Constitution of Burma, for the right of opting out again after ten years, which made the UMFO's policy of joining Burma attractive to some Mizo leaders. There is no record of the acceptance of this condition on the part of the Indian Government. Neither the Mizo Union took up the issue after the lapse of ten years.

(ii) The Mizo Union Council: This was the faction of the Mizo Union, formed by the ousted Mizo Union leaders. The Bordoloi Committee did not want to meet them at the first instance, but later agreed to hear them. They submitted a memorandum demanding that when the British left India, the Mizos should be independent. They claimed that Mizoram was never a part of India culturally, traditionally and historically. They warned the Committee that it would be unsafe to include Mizoram within the Indian Union against the will of the Mizo people themselves.<sup>22</sup>

---

22. VANLAWMA : op. cit. p.133

The view presented by the Mizo Union Council was held by a few radicals who had no strong leadership and popular support. So far as number is concerned, their view could not be taken by the Bordoloi Committee as the will of the people. But, when the Mizo people became more and more politically conscious, they began to think that those few leaders were right and the Unionists wrong. The MNF movement bears the evidence of this. Moreover, the Mizos had no enough opportunity to weigh the political developments in terms of their acceptability in the long-run. Their unpreparedness was evident in the fact that even after August 15, 1947, they still thought that they could easily opt out of India. Many Mizos, including some leaders did not have the necessary political experience and training to be able to grasp the reality that Mizoram had all along been treated as being part of India and the Bordoloi Committee came only to make an on-the-spot study in order to be able to give advice to the Constituent Assembly as to how to set up the administration of the tribal areas as part of Indian Union.

(iii) The District Conference: The second District Conference of Macdonald, which was boycotted by the Mizo Union and which had no representatives from the south, still claimed to be the the rightful spokesman for the Mizo people. Like the Mizo Union Council, the Bordoloi Committee did not want to hear the Conference at the beginning, but only later agreed to meet them. when they did not want to enter-

tain the view of the District Conference in the first instance. Macdonald, its chairman and Superintendent, wrote a letter to Sir Andrew Clow, the Governor of Assam, telling him his opinion about the future political set-up for Mizoram. When the Bordoloi Committee gave the District Conference leave to present their view, Macdonald read out his letter to the Governor. Thus, it could be said that the representation submitted to the Bordoloi Committee by the District Conference was purely Macdonald's idea and other members of the Conference were its unquestioning supporters.

In his letter, Macdonald admitted that the Mizos were racially and socially different from the rest of Indians, that they feared being engulfed by others and that they never belonged to Assam or India. He noted that they had been administered only directly by the British Indian Government and their administration had only been a financial burden. He argued that they could not be left just to live on their own, for this would mean pushing them back to their earlier "state of savagery." He went on to state that the Mizos might prefer joining Burma which would be detrimental to Indian Union. The British and Indian laws were not applicable to them, for their social formation and values were quite different from those of the British and Indians. He warned that if they were put under the state of Assam they would only be a financial burden for the government, and if they

were not contented with their lot, they might be provoked to rebel, which was too dangerous for the government, as one-third of the Assam Riflesmen were from Mizoram and their friendly tribals around them would sympathise them in that case. So, he pleaded,

Why not go on with the British system? Keep them separate under an autocratic officer whom we shall appoint (...)  
Surely the best thing is to give the Mizos the money they need on conditions which would safeguard us(...). We will tell them that you will govern yourselves in accordance with the constitution which we approve. You will be governed by us in your foreign relations with Burma and every other Country.<sup>23</sup>

Macdonald's view was not entertained or honoured by the Committee, because they regarded that it contained, inter alia, separatist elements. This is evident from the report the Bordoloi Committee submitted to the Constituent Assembly later. Sir Andrew Clow himself confessed that he had not passed Macdonald's letter on to the Assam Premier because he had thought it unsuitable.<sup>24</sup> The reasons for the acceptability of the Mizo Union's representation and the unsuitability of the views presented by the Mizo Union Council and the District Conference may not be far to seek. The Mizo Union was a popular and integrationist party while the other two groups were not. They represented only certain sections of the Mizo people.

---

23. As cited in NUNTHASA (C): The Politics of the Mizo Hills. (Doctoral Thesis, Delhi University), 1960, pp. 191-2

24. NAG : op. cit. p.45



So, the transitional period was marked by an utter confusion among the Mizo leaders. They were aware of the Congress Working Committee's Declaration of March 8, 1947, which stated thus:

It had been made clear that the constitution framed by the Constituent Assembly will apply only to those areas which accept it. It must be understood that any province or part of the province which accepts the constitution and desires to join the Union cannot be prevented from doing so. Thus, there must be no compulsion either way, and the people themselves decide their future.<sup>25</sup>

Earlier, a meeting of Mizo intellectuals including the church leaders and teachers had been held at Aizawl under the chairmanship of Mr. Sainghinga, the Assistant Superintendent. After a long discussion, the meeting came to the conclusion that Independence would be the best policy for the Mizos.<sup>26</sup> According to Nibedon, the policy of this radical group could not be pushed through for want of a leader.<sup>27</sup> But, one can argue that it was not only lack of leadership but also lack of popularly supported political party which rendered the 'policy' impracticable.

All the proposals went with the Bordoloi Committee and since nothing concrete came up till the eve of the Indian Independence Day,

---

25. Idem.

26. CHALTUAHKHIMA : op. cit. p.44

27. NIBEDON (N) : Mizoram: The Dagger Brigade, New Delhi, Lancers, 1980, p.28

the accredited leaders of all Lushai Political Parties held a meeting at Aizawl on August 14, 1947. Fifty persons from all sections of the Mizo society participated in it. The meeting passed resolutions to the following effects:

(i) ... that owing to the unexpected acceleration of the date of transfer of power by the British Government and as the Lushais have not as yet been definitely informed in detail as to what is to be the proposed future constitution and form of administration of the District and as section (7) sub-section (2) of the India Independence Bill does not clarify the situation, it is accordingly thought necessary that His Excellency The Governor of Assam should kindly inform them in writing as to what these are to be; also whether the Lushais are at this stage allowed the option of joining any other dominion i.e. Pakistan and Burma.

(ii)... that if the Lushais are to enter the Indian Union, their main demands are : that the existing safeguards of their customary laws and land tenure, etc. should be maintained; that the Chin Hills Regulation, 1896 and Bengal Frontier Regulation, 1873, should be retained until such time as the Lushais themselves through their District Council or other parallel District Authority, declare that these can be abrogated.

(iii)... that the Lushais will be allowed to opt out of the Indian Union when they wish to do so subject to a minimum period of ten years.<sup>28</sup>

From all these, it appears that the Mizo leaders were bent on accepting inclusion in the Indian Union for the time being, with a condition of possibility to opt out again after ten years.

---

28. Superintendent, Lushai Hills, Memo. No. 6927-76 G of 21.8-47.  
I am indebted to HRANGAIA for making its true copy available.

(b) Indian Independence and the Mizo People's Reaction

When the Independence of India was announced, the Mizo Unionists, who had opted for joining Indian Union with a hope that "the Mizo people must have civil liberty through the Independence of India", were overjoyed.<sup>29</sup> They planned to organise a big rally and procession in Aizawl to celebrate the day. But, the radical group which got support mainly from the Dawrpui (Bara Bazar) area of Aizawl were determined to prevent the Mizo Union procession from taking place and to see that no Indian tricolour was flown on that remarkable day. The Unionists shouted slogans, saying, "Can we attain Independence"? "No". Some wayward youths added "We are too ignorant." The Mizo leaders who had been thinking in terms of Mizo Independence were terribly hurt. They shuddered with shame and anger when they heard these words from their own people. They organised a meeting of all like-thinking people with religious fervour and were even ready to take up arms to stop the Unionists if they actually came on procession. Vanlawma writes that the ex-servicemen and even those who were still in service were ready to help them (the radicals) if necessary.<sup>30</sup> But, the tension was calmed down and a bloody civil war was averted by the mature judgement of the leaderships of both sides. The National Flag was not

---

29. Mizo Union Pamphlet, dated July 8, 1947, p.2 (I am indebted, again, to HRANGALA)

30. VANLAWMA : op. cit. p. 142

displayed at Aizawl on the day. The Superintendent said it had not been sent to him. But, the radicals took it as their success, as they had actually detailed half a dozen sturdy youths to watch the Superintendent's office building and to pull down the flag, even at the risk of their lives, if any attempt to unfurl it was made at all. Vanlalamma explains this hardline attitude of theirs thus: " We did not say we would object the display of the flag in Mizoram for good. We were not strong enough to rebel against India. We only wanted to show our displeasure for their having imposed their will upon us when we were not quite ready( to decide our future)."<sup>31</sup> This anti-Indian attitude had to be hidden away under the rising tides of the pro-India Mizo Union Movement which has been described. The Mizo Union Council and its policy also fizzled out subsequently for want of popular support and strong leadership.

---

31. Ibid. p.146 ( Words within brackets mine)

(c) The United Mizo Freedom Organisation (UMFO)

A new political force emerged in Mizoram shortly before the British transfer of power. This force was, in a sense, an offshoot of the Mizo Union movement. Some Mizo Union members grew worried about the possible adverse effect the divisive Mizo Union orientation and movement could have on the future socio-economic and political transformations of the Mizo society. They thought that the party had gone too far in its anti-chief anti-British pro-India movement, which could be detrimental to the whole Mizo society and their posterity. They were afraid that if things were allowed to take their own courses unchecked, the developing unhealthy social conditions could be perpetuated. They could not fully agree to the alienation of the chiefs from the Mizo political movement. They felt that something needed to be corrected in the party which was then overwhelmed by the anti-chief fervour which nearly went to political fanaticism on some occasions. They realised more and more that their idea had no place in the Mizo Union and therefore decided to form a new party. The result was the UMFO. It came into existence under the leadership of L. B. Thanga and Rev. Zairema on July 5, 1947. So, the party was essentially in opposition to the Mizo Union and it was formed with a view to provide an alternative to the existing party.

The UMFO party spelled out the following as its aims and objectives: (i) Integration and maintenance of good understanding with the ancestral brothers in Burma and with fellow tribesmen around Lushai Hills. (ii) Evolution of the highest form of civil liberty and economic prosperity in Mizoram by means of democracy and to fight any form of fascism. (iii) To esteem good relations and positive understanding between chiefs and commoners. (iv) Restriction of outsiders' entry into Mizoram. (v) To attain the highest form of religious freedom. (vi) Encouragement of developments in all aspects of life. (vii) Lightening of tax and cooile burdens. (viii) To put all Mizo people, chief and commoners, under the authority of the District Council.<sup>32</sup> According to Lalmawia, who later replaced L. B. Thanga as its president, the party's objective Number One was changed in October, 1947, thus: "Any country that can best further and safeguard the interests of the Mizo people shall be joined."<sup>33</sup> This fact reveals that the Mizo leaders were still thinking in terms of option for joining any country even after Indian Independence. This also shows that many Mizos had been really unprepared to catch up with the rapid political developments of the days.

---

32. Original Constitution of the Mizo Union Zaleena Pawl, which was the other name for the United Mizo Freedom Organisation. It remained a part but distinct group of the Mizo Union. Hence the name.

33. In an interview with him at his Aizawl residence on July 23, 1981.

Membership and Organisation: The UMFO party was more or less a 'group' in the Mizo Union before it formally constituted itself as a separate party. Those who joined the new party from the Mizo Union did not have to pay the membership fee afresh. But, those who joined it directly had to pay a membership fee of eight annas. The whole family could be registered as members of the party if one of the family members paid one membership fee. Thus, it was an open party. Only minors, who were below fifteen in age were debarred from its membership. The party Headquarters was at Aizawl. There were sub-headquarters at Lunglei and Champhai. The Headquarters Office Bearers were assisted and advised by a Working Committee of 24 members. This was the party high command. The Lunglei and Champhai Sub-Headquarters also had such Working Committees of 20 and 14 members respectively. Each village was a unit, and each circle a block. The members of the unit elected two delegates to the annual General Assembly of the party. The Block Officers were permanent delegates to the General Assembly. The unit was represented to the Annual Block Conference by its Office Bearers and three other elected delegates.

Its Movement and Support: The party's support came from three main sections who together had one common factor-i.e. anti-Mizo Union feeling. They were ex-Mizo Unionists, the ex-Mizo Union Council members and the chiefs. When its founder-president L.B.Thanga left

politics to join the Government Service in September, 1947, Lalmawia, a retired Burma Civil Service Officer was elected President of the party. With his joining the party, the party became a pro-Burma party. Lalmawia tried hard to popularise his policy of joining Burma instead of India on the claim that the Mizos were culturally, socially, economically and geographically closer to Burma. Moreover, the provision for right to secede after ten years contained by the Draft Burmese Constitution was very attractive to them. They published copies of the Draft Constitution and tried to convince the people that if they joined Burma, they could opt out again after ten years which would not be possible from India. This made the party attractive to many Mizos and it began to gain some following. The party organised political training camps which many people attended. Lalmawia himself led goodwill mission to Burma where he received VIP treatment. But, since the party concentrated its activities in the town areas, its support was mainly from the town dwellers. Since Lalmawia did a lot for the creation of the Regional Council for the Pawis and the Lakhers, those people gave support to the party even though they did not join it formally. The party President himself was elected to the Advisory Council from the Aizawl town constituency. He was supported in the council by two Pawi-Lakher Region members and a woman member.



The party could not make much progress in the villages. There could be many reasons for the weakness of the party in comparison with the Mizo Union, of which the following may be mentioned:

(i) The villagers had no opportunity to hear the UMFO leaders because they were totally occupied in their anti-chief campaigns. The UMFO leaders also had no means and time to visit the village areas. Its admission of chiefs as members made it unattractive to the villagers.

(ii) The party lacked collective leadership. It depended on the individual leadership of Lalmawia. This made it a weak party as against the Mizo Union which had had a collective leadership of some solidarity.

(iii) The Mizo Union had been holding the support of the villagers, who composed over 90 percent of the whole population by capitalising on the villagers' anti-chief feeling. Moreover, the Mizo Union's option for joining India was strongly upheld by the Congress leaders.

(iv) The Burmese friendliness with the UMFO leaders was only apparent than real. U Nu was aware that the UMFO was a minor party and was not very hopeful that it could win popular support. Besides, he did not want to unnecessarily annoy his friend Nehru. Moreover, the Burmese Government was not so willing to have the Mizos as it had had enough problems with the Kachin and Karen tribes.

So, the UMFO dropped its policy of joining Burma in due course and began to carry out its activities within the Indian Constitution.

CHAPTER THREE

THE TWO - PARTY SYSTEM PHASE

(1950's to early 1960's)

Maurice Duverger speaks about two different kinds of dualism: technical dualism and metaphysical dualism. By the former, he means the existence of two rivals whose difference concerns only secondary aims and means and both sides accept the same general political philosophy and fundamental bases of the system, and by the latter, he means the existence of two parties whose rivalry concerns the very nature of the regime and the fundamental concepts of life. He also assumes that bipartism is natural, for he observes, thus:

(The two-party system seems to correspond to the nature of things, that is to say that political choice usually takes the form of a choice between two alternatives. A duality of parties does not always exist, but almost always there is a duality of tendencies. Every policy implies a choice between two kinds of solution: the so-called compromise solutions lead one way or the other. This is equivalent to saying that the centre does not exist in politics: there may well be a Centre party but there is no centre tendency, no centre doctrine.)

We have noted that there were three political forces in Mizoram during the visit of Bordoloi Committee in April 1947. Of these, the District Conference was not a political party and the Mizo Union Council, the factional group of the Mizo Union, was insignificant in comparison with the dominant Mizo Union. Therefore, so far as party system was concerned, the Mizo people had the "usual two alternatives"

---

1. DUVERGER (M) : Political Parties, New Delhi, B. I. Publications, 1979, pp. 214-5

for their "political choice" only since the formation of the United Mizo Freedom Organisation one month before the Indian Independence. But, even after the existence of the two alternatives, the two-party system developed a little later, only after the UMFO could really become a challenge to the Mizo Union and the development of the system was more real when the UMFO was merged into the Eastern India Tribal Union in 1957.

This chapter is an analysis of the political interactions as they obtained under this two-party system with special attention to the election politics, the cleavages and mergers of the parties. Other developments such as the hill-state movement in the Northeast and the impact of the 1959-60 Famine are observed in passing in connection with the development of the party system. The period under our observation in this chapter ends with 1962. During this period, there were three General Elections to the District Council, Assam Assembly and the Lok Sabha; and three Village Council Elections.<sup>2</sup> Other important events during this period were: Nomination of Saprawnga as an M.P. and its public celebration in August, 1950; Nehru's visit in April, 1953; and Captain Sangma's visit in 1960. Nehru was given a warm public welcome. He assured, in his public speech at Aizawl, that the Mizos would get the benefits of the development programmes of Independent India.

---

2. The Elections to the District Council, Assembly and Lok Sabha were held 1952, 1957 and 1962, and the Village Council Elections were held in 1954, 1957 and 1960.

The visit of Captain Sangma, who was then a Minister for Tribal Areas Development in Chaliha's cabinet, was in connection with the famine which covered the whole of Mizoram. The District Council passed a Resolution to the abolition of chiefship in Mizoram and with the approval of the Resolution by the Assam Assembly, chiefship came to an end in Mizoram with effect from August 16, 1954. "Lushai Hills" was changed into "Mizo Hills" in the same year. The period also saw the rise of new political parties such as the Mizo Union (Right Wing), the EITU, the All Party Hills Leaders Conference (APHLC), the Mizo District Congress Committee and the Mizo National Front (MNF).

#### A. THE ELECTIONS AND THE PARTIES

It is said that certain Mizo tribes had practised election to the chiefship in the long past. But, modern form of election was introduced into Mizoram by the British missionaries and administrators. Therefore, though election itself was not a new thing to the Mizos, its being a contest between parties was something in which they had little experience. Yet, in spite of that, elections to the various legislative bodies in which they have participated indicated that they were politically conscious, active and alert. Since under democratic system, elections are the occasions when parties are most manifest in existence and performance, we shall attempt to analyse and give observations on the first three constitutional elections in Mizoram.

(a) The 1952 Elections

Elections to the District Council, the Assam Assembly and the Lok Sabha were held simultaneously in Mizoram in the beginning of 1952. There were 18 constituencies for the District Council and three for the Assembly. Mizoram and Cachar District of Assam together formed a Lok Sabha constituency. All the 18 District Council constituencies and the three Assembly Constituencies were contested by the Mizo Union and the UMFO. There were seven independent candidates for these. There was no Mizo candidate for the Lok Sabha. Of the 18 District Council constituencies, 15 were taken by the Mizo Union. The UMFO got only the lone joint seat for the townships of Aizawl and Lunglei. The two Fawi-Lakher Region constituencies were taken by the pro-UMFO local candidates of the region. All the three Assembly seats also were bagged by the Mizo Union. In terms of the votes polled, the Mizo Union's position was very safe.

Table 3:1- Valid votes polled (and the percentages thereof) by the two parties in the 1952 District Council and Assembly Elections.

Party	District Council		Assembly
Mizo Union	30,672	(76)	29,108 (69)
U M F O	7,532	(18)	9,069 (31)
Total :	38,204	(94)	38,177 (100)

Source: CHALTUAKHUMA- Political History of Mizoram (in Mizo), Aizawl, 1981, pp.77-8

There were six nominated seats, two for the chiefs, one for women, one for Government servants and other two. The members from Pawi-Lakher Region supported the UMFO because Lalmawia, the party President had played an active role in the creation of the Separate Region. They were given Regional Council in 1953. In terms of comparison, the UMFO had not been able to pose a real danger to the Mizo Union. The lone UMFO member Pachhunga, elected from the town constituency was a prominent member (the first Mizo Union President who had been ousted). He won by <sup>small</sup> marginal votes. The UMFO president Lalmawia himself lost to his Mizo Union opponent by getting less than half of the votes polled by his rival. The weakness of the UMFO appears to have been the party's lack of collective leadership, its unpopular policy of 'joining Burma' and its association with the chiefs. Though weak, the fact that it was the only party in contest with the Mizo Union significantly shew that the two-party system was developing. Over and above its popularity, the Mizo Union could attain the dominant position due to the following:

The Mizo Union Strategy: The party took great care to win the first elections and made preparations long before the date. It adopted a democratic method of farsighted tactic from the stage of making candidates. Four months before the date of election (i.e. September 11, 1951), the 32-member party central committee held a meeting to consider the method of selecting the party's candidates for the eleven

District Council constituencies in the Aizawl sub-division. The committee selected by secret ballot eleven persons from among the headquarters leaders. Those persons toured the eleven constituencies in groups of three, each group visiting three constituencies. The Block Committee also selected in like manner such number of persons from among the Block leaders. When the headquarters leaders toured the areas, they were compared with the local leaders, one against one. The one who got the highest vote was made the final candidate of the party for that constituency, irrespective of his place of residence. This process of making party candidates resulted in producing six townsmen and five village-men candidates. They were all returned in the Election. This very strategy was contributive to the success of the Mizo Union party, because it made the party well-known to the village-folk, whom the UMFO could not reach. This process also bore witness to the fact that the villagers were no inferior to the townsmen in making practical political calculations for the achievement of positive results.

Having attained the position of absolute majority in the District Council, the Mizo Union central leaders held a number of preliminary meetings to consider the formation of the Executive Committee of the Council. First, the party nominated Saprawnga and R. Thanhlira for the post of the Chief Executive Member. But, the former was made a parliamentary Secretary in the Assam Government and the latter was nominated to the Rajya Sabha. The central leaders of the party then nominated



Lalbuaiia for the post, for the approval of the larger body of the party leaders consisting the councillors and the Block Officers. When such meeting was convened in April, 1952, there came up a proposal to compare the central leaders' nominee Lalbuaiia with another senior leader Lalsawia. After long deliberations, the matter was decided by secret ballot and Lalsawia won by <sup>two</sup> marginal votes. Nominations were made for the other offices in the Council and all the party's nominees were formally elected in the House. The District Council was formally inaugurated on April 26, 1952, but, could start functioning only from June 23, 1952.

The District Council's term was five years. During its first term, the Mizo Union made some important achievements. It reduced the paddy-tax payable to the chiefs to half of its previous amount. It abolished the flesh-tax, the honey-tax and the salt-tax in 1953. In the same year, it passed Trading by non-tribal Act, which made some restraints on non-tribal traders in Mizoram. But, this Act was rejected by the Assam High Court because it had the view that it violated the principle of the right to equality enshrined in the constitution. The District Council also took the Mizoram Forest Reserve under its purview. Thus, the first District Council term was a record of achievements of some of the Mizo Union's aims and objectives. But, the Mizo Unionists themselves began to realise that they could exercise no much power under the Council.

(b) The 1957 Elections

It was the 1957 Elections which marked the near perfection of the two-party system. The third party which made its appearance on the scene was insignificant. The breakup of valid votes polled by the two main parties was almost fifty-fifty. In 1957, the number of the elective Council seats was increased from 18 to 22 and the number of the nominated seats was reduced from six to two, the total number of seats remaining 24. The UMFO fared much better than in the previous Elections. It retained the township constituency and bagged seven out of the 14 constituencies in the Aizawl Sub-division. The two members from the Pawl and Lakher Region continued to support the UMFO. It also took the Aizawl East and Lunglei Assembly constituencies. The Mizo Union retained seven constituencies in the Aizawl Sub-division and four in the Lunglei Sub-division and the Aizawl West Assembly seat. The Mizo Union (Right Wing), a faction of the proper Mizo Union, contested for all the Assembly seats and the 14 Aizawl constituencies, but failed to get any. The following table shows the respective positions of the parties.

Table 3:2- Valid votes polled (and p.c. thereof) by the parties in 1957.

Party	District Council	Assembly
Mizo Union	20,511 (50)	19,771 (46)
U M F O	18,069 (43)	19,954 (46)
Mizo Union (RW)	2,933 (7)	3,872 (8)
Total :	41,513 (100)	43,597 (100)

Source : CHALTUANKHUMA, op. cit. pp 89-90

We may, therefore, make an attempt to show in the following table the differential positions of the parties in the 1952 and 1957 Elections:

Table 3:3 - Comparative positions of the parties in the 1952 and 1957 Elections.

Party	District Council			Assembly		
	1952 (% of v.v.)	1957 (% of v.v.)	Difference (% of v.v.)	1952 (% of v.v.)	1957 (% of v.v.)	Difference (% of v.v.)
Mizo Union	76	50	-26	69	46	-23
U M F O	18	43	+25	31	46	+15

v.v. = valid votes.

It is clearly seen from this table that the major portion of the votes lost by the Mizo Union went to the UMFO and only a small portion of them went to the factional party, the Mizo Union (Right Wing). We have seen in the previous table that the Mizo Union (Right Wing) polled 7 percent and 6 percent of valid votes in the District Council and Assembly Elections of 1957 respectively. We can therefore observe that the 1956 split of the Mizo Union was to the advantage of the UMFO than to the advantage of the factional party. It only weakened the Mizo Union and strengthened the UMFO. Thus, the split was highly responsible for the rise of the UMFO. Had all the votes lost by the Mizo Union gone to the factional party, the result would have been the existence of the more or less equal two parties in addition to the Mizo Union which would still continue to enjoy the support of the simple majority of voters. In that case, three-party system would have developed instead of two-party system.

The UMFO's progress was still greater in terms of the number of seats in the District Council and the Assembly. Out of the 22 elective seats in the District Council, the party captured 8. With the support of the two members from Pawi-Lakher Region, it enjoyed the support of half of the elected members. The Mizo Union's majority position was upheld by the two nominated members. The UMFO also took two out of the total three MLA seats. Though the Mizo Union split was the main factor for the rise of the UMFO, there were other significant reasons for the increasing strength of the party, the more important of which were as follows.

(i) The Mizo Union party which ran the District Council for the first term did make certain remarkable achievements by putting an end to various social constraints along with its abolition of chiefship. But, the chiefs were completely alienated from the party and they all supported the second party, the UMFO.

(ii) The UMFO dropped its unpopular policy of 'joining Burma' in 1954 and adopted the more popular policy of 'hill state' for the hill areas of the Northeast.

(iii) The time space between the split of the Mizo Union and the elections was too short (September 27, 1956 and January 25, 1957). There was no time for the Mizo Union to recover from the shock of its split and many voters turned to the UMFO simply out of confusion about the Mizo Union Movement.

(iv) In 1957, the Mizo Union could no more apply the democratic method of selecting its own candidates as it had done in 1952. Discontent, discord and personal rivalries had set into the leadership of the party. There were some prominent leaders who were compelled to contest the elections in 1957 from the constituencies in which success was the most unlikely for them.

(v) The Mizo Union leaders in the District Council Offices had displeased many people including their own partymen. Some of the elders we interviewed indicated that the wives of those leaders could have been highly responsible for the displeasure of the partymen who came from villages to apprise their leaders at the headquarters of their respective problems. The leaders could neither remain free of loopholes and irregularities in their handling of public affairs. Chaube writes, "After the abolition of chiefship in the district, charges of malpractices in the distribution of lease on urban lands were levelled against the Mizo Union."<sup>3</sup> While certain social constraints were demolished along with the removal of the traditional elite, some other social evils unknown to the Mizos hitherto began to increase through political nepotism under the leadership of the so-called democratic elite. This phenomenon was counterproductive for the Mizo Union party in general.

---

3. CHAUBE(Shibanikinkar): Hill Politics in North East India, Calcutta, Orient Longman, 1973, p.164

(vi) Having achieved its most popular but unwritten objective, namely, the abolition of chiefship, the Mizo Union no more had that strong binding force of the anti-chief sentiments of the people. Moreover, having captured political power, it busied itself in the allocation of values and the rewarding of its members and gave secondary importance to the further consolidation of its hold.

However, the Mizo Union formed the Executive Committee of the District Council. The UMFO men were encouraged by their sizeable number and attempted two no-confidence motions against the shaky Mizo Union Executive Committee, one in 1957, the other in 1958. But, they failed to pull down the Committee. The UMFO also lost one District Council seat and one Assembly seat on account of the death of its sitting members, during the second term of the District Council. Other important events during the second term of the District Council were as follows: The Mizoram Forest Reserve was handed back to the Deputy Commissioner in 1958. The District Council took over the management of the Primary Schools from the state government in 1961. Its Phaisen development plan was prevented from being implemented by the Cachar Forests Authorities in 1958, and Mizoram-Cachar border-line was shifted far into Mizoram side. Bamboo flowered indirectly causing large-scale famine in Mizoram. So, the second District Council term was a sad record in Mizoram History.

### (c) The 1962 Elections

The 1962 Elections marked a significant turn in the development of the party system in Mizoram. The number of the contesting parties increased to four. But, in spite of this increase, the tendency was to a reversion back to the one-dominant party system rather than <sup>a development</sup> to the multi-party system. The UMFO and the Mizo Union (RM) had been merged into the Eastern India Tribals Union (EITU). The Congress made its first appearance in the Mizoram Elections, thus making a penetration of an all-India level party into the hitherto purely regional party system.<sup>4</sup> The Mizo Union and the EITU contested the District Council Election separately and the Assembly Election jointly under the banner of the All Party Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC).<sup>5</sup> The Mizo National Front (MNF) also contested four District Council seats. There was a Mizo candidate for the first time for the Mizo District-Cachar constituency of the Lok Sabha. Though almost all the Congress and MNF candidates lost their security deposits, their presence proved costly for the EITU, and the overall result was the regain of its dominance by the Mizo Union. Out of the 22 elective seats in the District Council, it captured 16. The EITU could retain only the one township seat. But, the

---

4. The Mizo District Congress Committee was formed by A. Thanglura and Lalsawia on June 15, 1961.

5. An account of the party alliances of the days is given in sub-heading B of this chapter.

three Pawi-Lakher Region members of the Tribal Union continued to support it. One seat was taken by a pro-Congress Chakma and the remaining one by an independent candidate.<sup>6</sup> Of the seven constituencies in the Lunglei Sub-division, four were for the Pawi-Lakher and Chakma Areas. All the remaining three were bagged by the Mizo Union. The break-up of votes polled can be shown only in the case of the 15 constituencies of the Aizawl Sub-division, for the data for Lunglei constituencies are not available.

Table 3:4 - Valid votes polled ( and the percentages thereof) by the parties in the 1962 District Council Election, in the Aizawl Sub-division.

Parties:	MU	EITU	CONGRESS	MNF	IND.	Total
Valid votes polled.	25,078 ( 50 )	14,338 ( 29 )	6,492 ( 11 )	1,186 ( 2 )	2,588 ( 5 )	49,683 (97)

Source: CHALTUAKHUMA, op.cit.: pp.100-1

In order to know the exact position of the Mizo Union, the valid votes it polled in the three Lunglei constituencies (which are not available) should be added to the number shown against it hereabove. This will

6. VANLAWMA (R): Ka Ram leh Kei, (in Mizo), Aizawl, Zalen Printing House, 1972, pp.201-2 (Its English title: My Country and I)



clearly show that there was a reversion back to the one dominant regional party system. This was possible because the Mizo Union could maintain its solidarity while the supports which had been rallied round the second party were divided among the second and the two new parties and the independents. The Mizo Union's votes were more than all the votes of the other parties including the independents put together.

In the Assembly Election, the EITU-APHLC candidate was elected for the Aizawl East Constituency against his Congress rival. The MU-APHLC candidate was elected for the Aizawl West constituency against another Congress rival. The Lunglei Constituency was contested by the three parties separately and the Mizo Union candidate was elected. The following table shows the positions of the parties in the 1962 Assembly Election.

Table 3:5 - Valid votes polled (and the percentages thereof) by the parties in the 1962 Assembly Election.

Party:	APHLC-MU	APHLC-EITU	CONGRESS	Total
Valid votes polled:	21,653 (47)	14,934 (32)	9,789 (21)	46,376 (100)

Source: CHALTUANKHUNA, op. cit. pp.101-2

On close analysis of the results of the three elections, we may note the following in the rise and fall of the parties during the 1952-62 periods:

(i) The Nize Union, which was dominant by 1952 was considerably reduced in 1957 and again rose to its dominant position by 1962. But, its 1962 position was not as sound as its 1952 position.

(ii) For the UMFO (later EITU), the 1962 Elections show its move back to its 1952 position in terms of the number of votes it polled and the number of seats it captured with the exception that in 1962, it took one Assembly seat which it had not been able to do in 1952.

(iii) The 1957 Elections marked the zenith of the two-party system. The following table will make these three points clear:

Table 3:6 - Comparative statement of the positions of the two principal parties in the three Elections, expressed in percentages of valid votes polled.

Party	District Council			Assembly		
	1952 (% of v.v.)	1957 (% of v.v.)	1962 (% of v.v.)	1952 (% of v.v.)	1957 (% of v.v.)	1962 (% of v.v.)
M U	76	50	55 (approx)	69	46	47
U M F O	18	43	29*	31	46	32*

v.v. = valid votes polled.

\* These figures indicate percentages of votes polled by EITU.

As to the impacts of the new parties on the system we may make the following observations: That, the APIILC could have no much impact as it could not forge itself as a purely distinct party. The MNF was just born to have any considerable effect on the development of the party system. Their respective positions in the 1962 Elections were insignificant. But, the emergence of the Congress party was more meaningful because it considerably weakened the second party, the EITU/UMFO. The Mizo Union's position remaining more or less constant, the weakening of the second party was really disturbing the system. The Congress polled 11 percent and 21 percent of the valid votes in the District Council and Assembly Elections of 1962 respectively. This was the beginning of the problem of regional parties versus national party.

The sum-total of all these impacts was that the Mizo people were exposed to more political problems than before. Besides the problem of determining the merits and the demerits of the national as well as regional parties, the questions of hill-state and Mizo state cropped up. The ten-year period of 'experimentation' having been well over, there developed among the concerned Mizo leaders a feeling that the time had come for them to re-evaluate their socio-political conditions in the new light given by the various developments and their experiences during the period. The general mass were somewhat disappointed with the Government of Assam in particu-

lar and with the Government of India in general. The growth of this feeling against the Government in the minds of the Mizos is lucidly put by a Mizo who prefers to remain anonymous, thus,

Money spent for the Mizos did a little improvement as the schemes and their execution were not suitable to the local conditions. Slow progress in communication, inadequate supply of infrastructure to increase food production (...) deteriorated the feeling of the Mizo people towards the goodwill of the Government. The Government of India's treatment of the Nagas and the christian missionaries made the Mizos suspicious. Therefore, it is hard to say that the Mizos have confidence on Indian Government due to the Assam Government's dealing with the Mizos and the Mizo District Council, particularly in financial matters.

These remarks represent the general feeling of the Mizos especially in the sixties, and it was this feeling which was made use of by the MNF for a driving force of its separatist movement since the later part of the sixties.

Coming back to the Election Results, one may ask why the Mizo Union could regain its dominance in 1962 after gradually declining since the late fifties. An explanation may mainly lie in the solidarity of its leadership and hardcore membership. The EITU was so popular by 1960, because of its tremendous works in relieving the famine stricken people. But, there was a serious rivalry among its leadership and

---

7. I am indebted to Mr. H. Thansanga for allowing me to consult his personal notes for the preparation of his doctoral thesis, "Government and Politics in Mizoram". This quotation is taken from his note, "Comment on Indian Government by a Mizo"

when new parties like the MNF and the Congress were formed, many EITU leaders and members joined either of the two, while the Mizo Union membership remained undisturbed. Moreover, its 'hill state' policy, which had been expressed in clear terms since 1960, attracted many people.

(d) The Village Council Elections (1954, '57, and '60)

With the passing of the Lushai Hills (Village Council) Bill and its approval by the Assam Government, the Village Councils began to be formed from August 16, 1954. The results of the first Village Council Elections, that is, 1954, revealed the fact that the Mizo Union was at its peak. The relative strength of the parties as expressed in percentages of seats captured out of the total number were: Mizo Union- 86.06 percent, UMFO- 9.9 percent, Independents- 3.5 percent, Mizo Women Union- 0.14 percent, and Tribal Union (Pawi-Lakher local party)- 0.2 percent.<sup>8</sup> Soon after the Election, the UMFO lodged election complaint questioning the validity of the election results in about 30 villages on the allegation that the ruling party had misused its power in order to create undue advantage for itself, in carrying out the election operations. The District Council appointed a three-man commission to investigate into the complaint and the commission suggested repoll in about ten villages. The District Council authorities did not imple-

---

8. 'Zoram Hriattirna' ( a local periodical), Dated August 31, 1954, p.12

ment the commission's recommendation and the UMFO launched a civil disobedience movement in protest against the callousness of the District Council authorities. They refused to pay any tax to the District Council. Though there was no repoll, the District Council authorities began to take more care since the UMFO civil disobedience movement. But, the UMFO could not prolong the movement because it was not strong enough. Since data is not available for the 1957 Village Council Election, we are not in a position to make any factual analysis. But, the year saw the election to the District Council in which the UMFO did fairly well, we can therefore suggest that its position in the Villages might also have been a little better than in 1954, though it had not beaten the Mizo Union. According to Vanlawma, the EITU became gradually popular after the 1957 Elections, and, just before the 1960 village council election, its expectation of winning the majority was very high owing to the tireless efforts its leaders had made in connection with the relief works for the famine stricken people of the entire Mizoram. But, the internal rivalries among its leaders proved costly for the party.<sup>9</sup> When the elections were held, it could hold only 83 villages as against the Mizo Union's 280 villages. Partyless village councils were formed in 18 villages.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the popularity of the Mizo Union in villages never suffered serious setback during those years.

---

9. VANLAWMA (R) : op. cit. p.200

10. NUNTHARA (C) : The Politics of the Mizo Hills, (Doctoral Thesis), Delhi University, 1980, p.138

## B. THE CLEAVAGES, THE MERGERS AND THE EMERGENCE OF NEW PARTIES

We have noted in the immediately preceding pages that the dualism of the system during the period under our observation was, in the Duvergerian sense, one of 'technical' rather than 'metaphysical' nature. The Mizo Union and the UMFO (later EITU) differed only in the secondary aims and means. Neither of them ever disputed over the type of society to be evolved, since both of them accepted the formation of a liberal democratic state society as the fundamental goal of all the political movements. We have also stated, but not in very clear terms, that even at the height of the two-party system, there were party splits and mergers, which strengthened the two-party system instead of weakening it. We have observed that there was a strong tendency towards multi-partism by the 1962 Elections with the emergence of new parties. The following is an attempt at analysing the party splits, mergers and emergence to their root causes, in order to throw more light on the various developments which had significant impact on the party system.

### (a) The Split of the Mizo Union

We have discussed in detail the first split of the Mizo Union which took place soon after the party was formed (see Chapter Two- pages 51-55). The second split, which occurred in September, 1956 had one thing in common with the first one, namely, personal rivalries which resulted in groupism in the leadership of the party, though there

were other different factors in both the cases. Since the replacement of Lalbuaia by Lalsawia as a nominee of the party forum for the post of Chief Executive Member soon after the 1952 District Council Election, there had been internal friction in the party. The internal friction which had already been there developed into a factional tendency when in 1954, Lalsawia was replaced as CEM by Saprawnga, who was then a Member of the Assam Assembly, at the party High Command's directions. It was not a mere replacement of the CEM, but a drastic reshuffle of the Executive Committee. Saprawnga removed Hrangaiia and Sangkunga, the first Executive Members, and installed Lalsawia himself and Lalbuaia as EM. R. Thanhlira, who was then the President of the Mizo Union, did not approve of Saprawnga's act. He was understood to have said, "How is it that Lalsawia is unfit to be CEM and fit to be EM, and, if he is acceptable as EM, how is it that he is unacceptable as CEM?"<sup>11</sup> Hrangaiia and Sangkunga, the ousted EMs, had made personal agreement with Lalsawia that none of the three should join Saprawnga's cabinet even when invited. They were utterly embarrassed when Lalsawia later join Saprawnga cabinet as an EM. But, he too still had other reasons to feel let down by Saprawnga's group. When the party president Thanhlira resigned, Chhunga was installed as provisional president instead of letting Dr. Khawma.

---

11. VANLAWIA (R) : op. cit. p.179



Lalsawia's brother, then Vice President of the party, take the charge of the President. Out of these developments grew two groups in the leadership of the party. At the party General Assembly on September 27, 1956, the provisional president Chhunga put to the vote of the delegates the question of which group's leadership was to be accepted. The majority of the delegates took side with the Saprawnga-Chhunga group. Thus, the split was confirmed and Lalsawia faction came to be known as Mizo Union (Right Wing).<sup>12</sup> Some previous Mizo Union leaders like Vanthuama and V.Thanga joined the faction-party. As already mentioned, it contested the 1957 Elections as a third party. It may be conjectured here that had Lalsawia not joined Saprawnga cabinet incurring the displeasure of his possible partners Hrangaiia and Sangkungu, and had he formed, instead, a purely new party together with them, the new party might have replaced the UMFO, or there might have been a three-party system. But, it had not been so. This shows that Hrangaiia and Sangkungu did not fully share Lalsawia's enmity with the Saprawnga-Chhunga group.

Different people give different reasons for the 1954 cabinet reshuffle. According to Chaltuakhuma, the party-men had the impression that members of the District Council's Executive Committee had been too independent of the party's control. So, they wanted to replace them. Not only that, they were regarded to have been communal.<sup>13</sup>

---

12. Here, the term 'Right' is not used in an ideological sense. It was adopted by the members of the faction in order to claim that they were the genuine Mizo Union.

13. CHALTUAHKHUMA, in an interview on April 16, 1981.

Vanlawma gives a completely different picture of the reshuffle. He blames the ambitiousness of Saprawnga for it. He makes a very bad public impression of Saprawnga by saying that he was a 'powerful' man who wanted to become the Chief Executive Member than to remain a parliamentary secretary in the Assam Government, and the Mizo Union could find a way-out for him.<sup>14</sup> This is a very serious view about the character of Saprawnga. Whether it has a solid foundation or not is not to be determined here. But, the fact that he could continue to be CEM through the third District Council term proves that he was a leader of high calibre. Vanlawma's understanding of him as a calculating opportunist appears to be an extreme view based on personal rivalry. Lalsawia himself has a different version. He admits that some of his clansmen were appointed in certain District Council's posts but denies that there was undue favouritism for his own clansmen. Partly agreeing to what Vanlawma says about Saprawnga, he narrates the following as the immediate cause of the reshuffle:

"V.L. Tluanga, a Lusei, was appointed as Special Officer of the District Council by a selection board. Then, one article was published in Zoram Thupuan, a local paper, on April 24, 1954, alleging that Hrangala Ralte, then EM in-charge Village Council Affairs, was trying to convert the District Council into a kind of family council by seeing that only

---

14. VANLAWMA (R) : op. cit. pp.178-9

his own relatives were appointed in various posts of the Council.<sup>15</sup> The writer of the article put only 'V.L.' at the end of the article. Somebody suspected V.L. Thuanga and filed a defamation case against him. But, the court could not find any evidence that it was written by the Council's Special Officer. But, some members of the Council still demanded termination of his appointment. Hrangala threatened resignation if V.L. Thuanga's service was not terminated there and then. Lalsawia could not agree to their demand on the ground that service termination would amount to contempt of court, since the court declared V.L. Thuanga not guilty. Lalsawia argues that his colleagues in the Council and the party were purely determined to blackmail him, and that they themselves appointed his own clansmen in order to make it a ground of finding fault with him later. He goes on saying that though he accepted Executive Membership in the Saprawaga 'cabinet', the 'enemies' continued to molest him by assigning him the work which they thought was the least impressive.<sup>16</sup>

---

15. The individuals concerned, as the article alleged, were Chalhira, Laldenga (the present MNF President), Lianhuna and Christmashunga. In answer to Chawnga's questions over the controversial article at the Council session on May 8, 1954, Hrangala stated that Chalhira and Laldenga were neither his relatives nor clansmen and he had not been present in the selection board meeting which appointed them. Lianhuna was his clansman but not close relative. Christmashunga was not his relative or clansman. He had been present in the board meeting selecting the latter two. (See Zoram Hriattig-na, August 15, 1954, p.1)

16. In an interview with Lalsawia at his M.P. residence in North Avenue, New Delhi, on September 23, 1981. He said there and then that it was because he found it too unbearable to continue to be with the other leaders that he broke away from the party.

(b) An Alliance of the Mizo Union with  
the Assam Pradesh Congress

To the Mizo Union General Assembly of March 1, 1952, was put a question whether or not the party's MLAs<sup>17</sup> could join or support the Assam Pradesh Congress at the parliamentary level. The general reaction of the delegates to the question was one of surprise, and they could not decide there and then. They authorised the party leaders to take decision as they thought fit. The leaders subsequently decided in the affirmative, though some of them, including the president himself, did not really favour the idea.<sup>17</sup> Saprawaga, who was the leading figure in support of the decision, was soon made parliamentary secretary in the Government of Assam. Nag writes, "The Mizo Union's parliamentary level association with the Assam Pradesh Congress proceeded smoothly. The relationship (...) was so good that the Mizo Union lent full support to the Assam Government's demand for a Greater Assam before the States Reorganisation Commission in 1954-55."<sup>18</sup> This was only a tactical alliance made by the Mizo Union in order to develop a smooth working relation with the Assam Government.

---

17. VANLAWIA : op.cit. p.178

18. NAG (Anit Kumar): "The Ups and Downs of Mizo Politics," North Eastern Affairs, Shillong, October - December, 1972. (The exact page number cannot be given here as the material used was a handwritten copy).

(c) The EITU and the APHLC

The Tribal Union was formed in December, 1952, when the tribal political leaders held a conference at Tura at the initiative of Capt. Williamson A. Sangma, then Garo Hills District Council CEM.<sup>19</sup> In Mizoram only the people of the Pawi-Lakher Region joined the party in the early fifties. But, when the tribal leaders held a meeting at Aizawl soon after the Mizo District Council Election of 1957, the leaders of the Mizo Union, the UMFO and the Mizo Union (Right Wing) also became more interested in joining the party. They were, however, having different ideas as to how far they would commit themselves to it. It then came to be known as Eastern India Tribal Union, having a programme of forming a tribal state, usually called 'hill state,' of the North-east including the whole of Manipur and Nagaland, and the tribal areas of Assam and Tripura. In other words, the 'hill state' which the party envisaged comprised all the non-Assamese non-Bengali areas. The party supported the Congress Government of Assam. The UMFO and the Mizo Union (Right Wing) merged themselves with the EITU. Lalmawia was given Parliamentary Secretary post in the Assam Government. This aroused the jealousy of the Mizo Union which had been supporting the Congress Government on

---

19. RAO (V.V.) : A Century of Tribal Politics in Northeast India, New Delhi, S. Chand, 1976, p. 516

its own, while maintaining a rapprochement with the EITU. As a result, A. Thanglura, the Mizo Union MLA, was made Chief Parliamentary Secretary. The EITU's policy of hill state gradually gained supporters in Mizoram while the Mizo Union, which had no clearcut policy concerning the political status for Mizoram, was on the decline. Eminent original Mizo Union leaders such as Thanklira, Lalsawia and Dengthuama joined the EITU. But, it soon became clear that these men could not work together closely and smoothly.

If the fifties were the years of friendly relations between the Assam Pradesh Congress and the local regional parties in the whole of the Northeastern Region, politics took a new turn on April 22, 1960, when the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee declared its decision that Assamese should be the official language of the Assam state. The All Assam Hill Leaders Conference at Tura on April 28, 1960, under the chairmanship of Rev. R.M. Pugh vehemently opposed the APCC declaration. They promptly lodged a complaint to Chaliha and pressed him not to accept the APCC decision. But, Chaliha straightly told the tribal leaders that the Assam State Language Bill would be introduced in the next Assembly session in order to materialise the APCC decision. Sangma, Chaliha's cabinet member, again convened a conference of all the political party leaders of the hill districts in Assam on July 6, 1960. Only the Nagaland parties did not attend. On this occasion, the EITU

resolved to withdraw its support from the Assam Congress Government. The EITU leaders had earlier thought of withdrawing their support from the Congress Government over the inaction of the government concerning a large-scale famine in Mizoram. But, they had had different views among themselves. But, when the common danger came in the form of the Assam State Language Bill, all of them were strongly united again under the new name, All Party Hill Leaders Conference. This new forum brought about some degree of unity in Mizoram between the EITU and the Mizo Union. The APHLC renewed the hill state politics with fresh vigour. It has played a vital role in the formation of the present state of Meghalaya. But, its impact on Mizo politics soon began to dwindle partly because the EITU and the Mizo Union could not really come together and partly because of the rise of the Mizo National Front. The Mizo Union also separately withdrew its support from Chaliha's Government not only because of the Language Bill but also because of its strained relation with Chaliha over the implementation of the famine relief programmes. Its MLA, A. Thanlura wanted to remain with the Congress and formed the Mizo District Congress Committee with Lalsawia. Since then, the Mizo Union adopted a policy of Mizo State and in order to check that movement, Chaliha blessed the MNF which advocated Sovereign State of Mizoram. Thus, the Mizo leaders were pawns in the hands of Chaliha in his game of checking the hill state movement.

### C. THE "MAUTAM" FAMINE (1959-60) AND ITS IMPACT

We have noted in Chapter Cio (see page 21) that in Mizoram, bamboos bear flowers at fifty year interval. "Mau" means bamboo and "tam" means death of the bamboo, as such, any plants. So, "mautam" means the death of all the bamboos after they bear flowers. The Mizos know by experience that when the bamboo flowers, rat population increases and the rats eat away all the paddy in the jhums causing severe famine in the following year. It is more serious when the mautak (melocanna bambucoides) bears flowers and dies. The theory is that when rats eat the bamboo seeds, their fertility increases resulting in sudden increase in their number. Eaveja writes, "The bamboo fruit is much relished by rats. The fruit acts as a fertility pill to the female rats. The rats thus eat away all the crops. The rat menace increases to such an extent that it requires an army to destroy them."<sup>20</sup> When the bamboo is about to bear flowers, it stops its production of young shoots. L. B. Thanga says that the 'mautak' flowered and died in 1862, 1911, 1959 and will flower again in 2007; and the 'rawthing' species flowered in 1861, 1929 and 1977. He writes, "The Mizos have for ages dreaded the flowering of bamboos. They have noted that the flowering of bamboos was invariably followed by an unprecedented increase in rat population in the country-

---

20. BAVEJA (J.D.) : The Land Where The Bamboo Flowers, Gauhati, Assam Publication Board, 1970, p.63



side which, in turn, created havoc on the standing crops leading ultimately to famine.<sup>21</sup> The 1959 bamboo-flowering caused failure in the annual harvest of paddy. The famine that followed caused untold sufferings among the Mizo people and its impact was strongly felt not only economically but also politically.

(a) Economic Impact of the Famine

The intensity of the adverse effect of the natural calamity on the economy of Mizoram may be understood better if we first look at the economic structure of the hills. The hillyness of the land rendered almost insurmountable road communication problems. All the lands are not cultivable due to differential fertility and topographical inconveniences. These problems are coupled by the destructive 'slash and burn' method of 'shifting cultivation' system adopted by the Mizos since time immemorial. In the fifties, about 90 percent of the Mizoram population were cultivators. In bigger villages, there is no enough compact land area to accommodate the jhums of the whole village and patches of paddy fields could be seen on different sides. This, in turn, disturbed the fertility cycle. The villagers had to spend hours together for coming and going to and from their jhums.

---

21. L. B. THANGA : The Mizos: A study in racial personality, Gauhati, United Publishers, 1978, p.173

owing to the steepness of the land and the distance between their villages and their jhums. They, therefore, had less time for work. Since the system is unscientific, it requires more labour and is very unproductive. The jungles and jhum-areas are infested with anopheles mosquitoes. Those whose jhums are too far from home stay at their jhums during the week days and come to their villages only at weekends, to attend church and Sunday Schools. Thus, the traditional economy of the Mizos was agronomic and dependent on nature. When the ecological balance is slightly disturbed, it can mean total breakdown of the economy. Thus, the rat-havoc on paddy in 1959 seriously affected the Mizo economy, from which Mizoram has not really recovered. Even after the rat-havoc was over and the people began to resume their normal way of cultivation, many plots of the fertile lands were found to be unsuitable for cultivation due to the presence of many deep and big holes in the earth which had been dug by the villagers themselves in their search for the jungle yam, which provided them food during the days of famine. Progress, if there had been any, was completely halted by the famine and its consequent effects, as every Mizo had to struggle hard just to survive.

(b) Political Impact of the Famine

The District Council timely anticipated the flowering of the bamboo and the resultant famine. It encouraged, long before 1959, flat-land cultivation as rat-havoc was usually not seen on such fields. It liberally issued passes for holding lands in the 'Phai-gen' area, on the north-western corner of Mizoram along the Cachar border, with a hope that if the whole of this flat-land was cultivated, the famine problem would be much less. They had no hesitation in allotting the lands there because the Lushai Hills Superintendents also used to treat that part as belonging to Lushai Hills. But, the Forest authorities of Cachar District raised objections, and eleven Mizo settlers were arrested by an order of the Hailakandi court, in 1958. Chhunga and Lalsewia, the Presidents of the MU and EITU respectively, issued a joint appeal to the Mizo people, describing the act of the Hailakandi court as an insult to the whole of Mizo people, asking the Mizo people to assert their rights on the lands and to generously donate funds to help fight the cases of the eleven Mizo settlers.<sup>22</sup> The Mizos could not carry on their cultivation there due to the continued objection by the Cachar Forest authorities and the biased attitude of the Cachar Civil authorities. Moreover, the District Council could take no further actions as the then Mizo District Deputy Commiss-

22. See the leaflet entitled, "Mipuite Hhena Pawl Hruaitute Ngenna", printed in Mizo, (Joint Appeal to the People by Party Leaders), dated Aijal 19-8-1958.

leader himself stood in their way. He claimed that he was the appropriate authority over the allotment of the lands. He withdrew the Government's funds and machines given in the form of grant-in-aid for the cultivation of the flat-lands. He dissolved the Mizo village councils there and restored plainsmen's system of village headmanship. Vanlawma blames Saprawnga to have taken too soft a stance on the issue.<sup>23</sup> Following all these incidents, the Mizoram-Cachar border-line was shifted far into the Mizo territory. This was another gross injustice done to the Mizos which has so far not been corrected.

The Mizo political leaders were all the more activated when the bamboos actually flowered in 1959. The EITU capitalised on the sufferings of the people by constantly blaming the Mizo Union District Council for inaction. Lalmawia alleged that the Deputy Commissioner was instructed by the District Council Authorities not to declare Mizoram as a famine area. He claimed that the visit of Sangma was due to his earnest request: "Sangma was surprised and shocked," he said, "when I let him see the empty granaries and the clean unused rice-pots of the villagers, by actually taking him to their houses." "The people felt ashamed," he continued, "of having nothing to eat, of course, for none of their fault." He said that Sangma straightaway directed the Deputy Com-

---

23. VANLAWMA : op. cit. pp.186-7

missioner to prepare a relief plan to the tune of rupees three crores immediately. He claimed to have contacted the Burmese Government for a purchase of 10, 000 tons of rice which the Burmese Government was willing to supply with all the transportation and airdropping free of charge. The Deputy Commissioner rejected the offer.<sup>24</sup>

The famine problems had adverse effects on the relations between the Assam Congress Government and the Mizo Union District Council in general and between the Mizo Union leaders and Chaliba in particular. In order to understand the situation better, we may quote from the works of three non-Mizos, for what they have said about this:

Chaube wrote thus:

The poor communication in the District hampered the supply of Government relief. The estrangement between the Chief Minister and the Mizo Union had meanwhile reached at bitter stage. Shri Chaliba told the author in an interview that he had received charges of corruption against the District Council. A part of the relief items was channelled through the government officials. The Mizo Union demanded that the whole relief operation be carried through the District Council. Soon the Government charged the District Council of non-co-operation. With the official blessings a Mizo National Famine Front was set up by some former followers of the Mizo Union. Relief turned out to be a salient form of patronage in the famine stricken hills.<sup>25</sup>

---

24. LALNANIA: In an interview with him at his residence on May 16, 1961.

25. CHAUBE (S): op. cit. pp.164-5. The author learnt Chaliba as having said, "I don't trust the Mizo Union." "The Mizo Union leaders had equally strong views about him" wrote Chaube in his footnote.

Anil Kumar Nag, a Staff Correspondent of the Calcutta based "Amrita Bazar Patrika" wrote in 1972 thus,

The initial bottlenecks and red-tapism regarding the relief measures very belatedly taken up by the Assam Government caused serious discontentment among the people. And the fact that the Mizo Union, an associate of the Congress party, was at the helm of affairs in the District Council, gave the M.N.F. additional handle to direct the campaign mainly against the Mizo Union.

Cases of starvation deaths officially reported by the District Council were denied by the Assam Government. And gradually the relationship between the Chaliha Government in Assam and the Mizo Union led Autonomous District Council reached the lowest ebb.

The Mizo Union leaders who were at the beginning staunch supporters of the Congress Government gradually drifted away and became more and more critical in their public utterances. Discontentment grew bigger and bigger in the minds of the people. Meanwhile, those who were running the District Council were not very happy either. They felt that the Government did not pay much attention nor did they attach so much importance to the District Council as expected. The first shock was experienced when very unnecessary questions were raised whether the District Council members were entitled to occupy the Inspection Bungalow and such likes. Simple issues were allowed to remain undecided for longer period than necessary.

Against this background, when the Mizo Union parted company with the Congress party following sharp differences on the famine relief and the State Official Language issues in 1960, the Mizo National Famine Front transformed itself into the Mizo National Front and raised the demand for "Sovereign Independence of Greater Mizoram."<sup>26</sup>

Nirmal Nibedan puts it this way,

Saprawnga was worried as the flowers (of bamboo) started falling into the undergrowth and were blown all over with the wind. The Mizo Union sent an SOS and then a delegation to the plains for expert advice. The Assam Government sent an entomologist who camped for a couple of nights at Aizawl finding no evidence whatsoever to connect the increase in the rat population to that of the flowering of the bamboo groves (...). What the Assam Government could have done and never did was to take some kind of normal precautionary measures.

26. Nag (A.K.): op. cit. (Page number cannot be given as only handwritten copy is available to the author)

The Chief Executive Member and his colleagues wanted an immediate supply of rice to be stocked in the interiors, knowing full well that at the height of the crisis they would not be able to move the foodgrains to the interiors for lack of proper roads. The Assam administration, in its typically slow and indifferent manner, had not grasped the situation.<sup>27</sup>

All these, as we see, point to one common factor, that is, the indifferent attitude of the Assam Government towards the Mizo people. This step-motherly treatment was felt by the Mizos, and it drained their confidence in the Government. The Deputy Commissioner, who was in a sense the representative of the Government to the Mizo people, was noted for his inefficiency and unconcerned attitude. He seemed to be totally ignorant about the history and social structure, the likes and dislikes of the people whom he came to serve. Even if he knew all these, he was not bothered. We have pointed out elsewhere that it was only when a cabinet minister visited Mizoram after the people had exhausted their stock of rice that the Deputy Commissioner got to real work. This treatment on the part of the Government in their time of need even led many Mizos to think that it was all advertently meted out to them in order to humiliate them. In fact, Assam Government was so ungrateful to the Mizos for it was they who had supported the Assamese dream of Greater Assam in the mid fifties. If the Government had realised that it represented India to the Mizo people in a sense, it should have taken care not to boost up the anti-Indian

---

27. NIPEDON(Nirmal): Mizoram: The Dagger Brigade, New Delhi, Lancers, 1980, pp. 34-5

feeling amongst them. And, so much of the Mizo problem which we have to-day could have been avoided. It appears to the author that so far as the interlinking of the Assamese politics and Mizo politics were concerned, the Assamese wanted to have good relations with the Mizos only to strengthen their support as against the danger posed by the Bengali politics. In other words, the Assamese leaders of the past wanted to have the support of the Mizos only when it suited their political interest. When it came to developing them or helping them in times of need, they tried to evade their due responsibilities. The 'divide and rule' policy adopted by Chaliha in relation to the Mizos has brought untold sufferings and many constraints to economic development in its train. The Assamese people of today are reaping the bitter fruits of the seeds their fathers have sown in the fifties. The Language Bill added fuel to the fire which had already been fervently burning in the Mizo minds. A large share of the blame for the centrifugal tendencies in the whole of the Northeast India is due to the Assamese leaders of those days. It is interesting to note that all those undesirable developments took place soon after the end of the ten-year period which every right thinking Mizo leader permitted himself to experiment with the Government of Assam, though this could be a mere coincidence. However, a fertile ground was set for the rise of a Mizo party which was extremely oriented to separatist line of thinking.



(c) The Rise of the Mizo National Front

Though economic grievances brought about by the slow pace of development in general and the 1959-60 famine in particular have played significant role in the emergence of the Mizo National Front (MNF), we cannot claim that these were alone the causes of its emergence. There were many other strong factors which compelled the Mizos to nurture a separatist line of thinking. These were deeply buried in their history, geography and other socio-cultural aspects. It, therefore, becomes necessary to look into all these in order to properly understand the rise of the militant MNF party.

(i) History: Historically, the Mizos had only one thing in common and that also in a very much varying degree when compared with the other communities of India. This was the British domination. There is no record of the Mizos having had share in the glorious past of India and its civilisations. They had played no part in India's struggles, be they against the invading rulers or the exploiting British Raj. They had never been conquered or subjugated by any Indian Rajas. They had completely been out of the Indian mainstream. Their experiences with the British also took different form, partly because of their distinctive cultural traits and partly because of the geographical conditions of their land. To them, the British, as such the whiteman, has two images-one angelic and the other diabolic. The missionaries gave them Christianity and elementary

education, and with them, much of their political education. These two became the strong foundation stones for the modernisation of the Mizos. In fact, it was these two factors which have made them a 'people'. Thus, the first image of the British in the Mizo minds was impressed by the missionaries. The second image was a natural growth out of the inherent characteristic of the colonial administration. The colonial administrators, for their own interest, had to subject the natives to their overlordship. They had to divide and rule them, cajole and threaten them in order to make them submissive, restrict and push them down when they had their own ambitions in order to nip in the bud any possible 'danger' to the colonial system. Even then, the Mizos cannot truly share the extreme anti-British feeling which has been seen elsewhere in the country. The colonial system of administration has had a penetrating psychological influence that even till today, anything superior or civilised is taken to be symbolical of the 'whiteman'. This difference of historical experience with the British between the Mizos and the rest of Indians gave the Mizos a feeling of being distinct and separate. In fact, as already seen before, a number of the Mizo leaders and common people were in favour of remaining a British Crown colony than joining any newly independent country- be it India or Burma or Pakistan, during the transitional period. The historical fact that it was the British not the Indians who had open the eyes of the Mizos to modernity has made the Mizos socially receptive to the cultural influence of the West. It has seen the marriage of the Mizo culture with the Western culture which has made the Mizos repulsive to the dominant Indian culture.

(ii) Administration: Closely related to History is the way the Mizos were administered. The colonial administration realised its initial mistake and amalgamated the South and the North Lushai Hills soon after the annexation. But, many Mizo ethnic groups were still left outside the amalgamated Lushai Hills. It might well have been imperative to have the 'wild hill tribes' and their land divided up among the various states and principalities in order to subjugate them and prevent them from posing a danger to the security of the neighbouring rulers and people. But, it is a demand of democratic principle to reorganise the administration so as to put the same stock of people under a common system of administration. This demand was left unfulfilled before the British left and the Government of Independent India has done nothing in order to correct the wrong done by the colonial rulers. That is why we see the Mizos scattered over different states and countries eventhough they occupy a definitely distinct and compact stretch of land today. The Mizo leaders have pleaded for the righting of this wrong but to no avail so far. Instead, the colonial arrangement of boundaries simply for administrative convenience has been allowed to become a political reality which the Mizos have not really been able to accept. When the MNF declared that it would seek the unification of all the Mizo groups and the integration of the areas they occupied, it was too appealing to the general Mizo people. The idea of 'Greater Mizoram' was well suited to the dream of the Mizos.

(iii) Racial and Linguistic Difference: The Mizos are racially and linguistically different from Indo- Aryan-Dravidian groups. They belong to the Mongoloid stock and speak a language which had Tibeto - Burman origin. It is evident from their physical appearance, language and customs that they have more things in common with the people of the South-East Asian countries than the other Indians. This is a strong factor differentiating them from the rest of Indians. It is a common experience for them to be taken as Thai or Chinese or Japanese at places they visit within and outside the Indian Union. Sometimes, the fellow - Indians have to be 'convinced' with a long description of their background and state that they are Indians. They fear that they may be assimilated and their racial identity lost. The MNF tried to arouse a sense of 'nationalism' on this racial-linguistic distinctiveness. The Assamese Language Bill of 1960 alienated the Mizos all the more.

(iv) Social Difference: Mizo society is a patriarchal society. It used to be man-dominated society in the past. But, the spread of Christianity and Education has emancipated the womenfolk. The fair sex is playing an increasing role in the modernisation of the Mizos. It is a free society where there is equality in the true sense of the term. There is neither caste system nor dowry system. The social life is highly westernised and Christianised. There is practically no distinction between high and low except when formality demands.

People are free and frank and informal while dealing with one another. Officers and their vehicle drivers eating on the same table. Ministers and ordinary citizens rubbing shoulders with one another on 'chhiatni-thatni, a peon presiding over a committee where his official boss may be just an ordinary member, the so-called uneducated teaching a Sunday School class of 'educated' or preaching to a congregation of more educated men and women, are not uncommon sights in Mizoram.<sup>28</sup> The Church and the powerful social organisations are playing this vital role of social equaliser. These social conditions present a very sharp contrast to the caste and class conscious Indian way of life. This social difference provide a good ground for the MNF to emphasise the need of separation from the whole of Indian Union, as a key to the preservation of this social equality.

(v) Psychological Factor: The individual and social behaviours of the Mizos are strongly governed by the principle of 'tlawngaiha' which is an untranslatable term standing for many things such as chivalry, industry, perseverance, and all that virtues pertaining to the principle of self-negation and concern for other's welfare. It is this principle which compels them to render social and individual services for others without looking for reward. Their personal and social

---

28. 'Chhiatni' means 'day of sorrow' it is usually applied to refer to the day a family member dies. 'Thatni' is just the opposite- 'Day of joy'. The two terms are compounded in order to generally refer to special occasions of the family-whether for sorrow or for joy.

values are deeply rooted in it. In other words, it is this social norm by which they measure their Mizoness. Thus, their value system is different from that of the dominant communities in India. They hold the view that the extremely commercialised value system is a negation of this Mizoness. They have developed the bad image of India made in their minds by their close neighbours out of proportion and they take anything Indian to be guarded against, as something tricky, fraudulent and foul. This makes them despise the plains people though they realise that they are much better-off economically. One Member of Parliament said to his fellow members once like this, "These (Mizos) are simple-hearted and genuine people, not the like of you and me who do not always say what we mean."<sup>29</sup> This exactly is how the Mizos think about themselves and others. This fundamental difference in behaviour makes them reluctant to accept things Indian. It is said that Laldenga himself was psychologically repulsed by the behaviour pattern of dominant people of India which made him want to take the Mizos separate from others. In May, 1947, one of the Mizo thinkers released a pamphlet in which he pointed out that it was very dangerous to join India as the 'vais' could not be made real friends of the Mizos and they were much more selfish than the British.<sup>30</sup> These communal pride and prejudice are very strong.

29. The comment was made by one Mukherjee in the Lok Sabha on March 3, 1966. (See Parliamentary Debates Lok Sabha, 3rd Series, Vol. 51 March 1-15/66)

30. See HMARTANPHUNGA's pamphlet "Valho Zawn Nge I duh Mahnia Din" dated Ajjal 5.5.47. (The title means, "Which do you prefer-Joining the vais or standing on your own?") 'VAI' is how the Mizos call the Indo-Aryan -Dravidian people.

(vi) Geographical Factor: Given all the aforesaid circumstances, it would still be near impossibility for the Mizos to have started secessionist movement if Mizoram were not strategically located. More than seventy percent of its boundary is international. Their land is only a portion of a vast stretch of hilly area protruding into Burma and Bangladesh which is mostly occupied by their racial kins. This strategic location, with its thick forests and hilly conditions favour a guerrilla type of movement. We have pointed out in Chapter One that it is these geographical conditions which have kept the Mizos isolated from the rest of India and it was this long isolation which have made them develop independent thinking.

For all these reasons, the situation was favourable enough for the emergence of a new political party which was militant and vocal about the separations of Mizos and Mizoram from the mainstream of India. According to Vanlawma, many a Mizo had been nurturing a separatist feeling since a long time but kept undercurrent. The MNF was the manifestation of this feeling in an organised form. Some socially conscious people had formed social organisations on an implicit separatist sentiment. The Mizo Cultural Society in 1959 and the Mizo National Famine Front in 1960 were such organisations.<sup>31</sup> When the famine was over, the latter was converted into Mizo National Front, a political party, on October 22, 1961.

---

31. VANLAWMA (R) : op. cit. pp.193-98

Nibedon would think that it was their fear of losing their ethnic identity which prompted the Mizos to form the MNF.<sup>32</sup> According to Goswami, the frustration of certain section of the Mizo people since the transfer of power by the British to the Government of India, and, "a lag in the minds of the Mizos in identifying themselves as Indians," which was created by a "lack of civilizational pull and poor interaction of the plains-men with the hill people," provided the social background for the rise of the MNF.<sup>33</sup> Thinking that an opportune moment has come for him, Laldenga resigned from his post of Account Assistant in the District Council's Office and was soon made President of the MNF. His charisma and oratory appealed the emotion of the Mizo people. Thus, the MNF emerged out of the political grievance, economic dissatisfaction, socio-cultural apprehension and the sensitive emotion, of the Mizo people.

When the party came into existence, it drew following from among the members of the UMFO/EITU and the Mizoram Congress. Many ex-service-men joined the party and its movement. Those who participated actively in the violent activities carried out by the party generally belonged to the 20-35 age-group. The Mizo Union was not much affected.<sup>34</sup> In fact, the Mizo Union stood alone as a party in opposition to the MNF ideology and movement.

---

32. NIBEDON (Nirmal) : North-East India-The Ethnic Explosion, New Delhi, Lancers, 1981, p.38

33. GOSWAMI (B. B.) : Mizo Urest: A study in politicization of culture, Aalekh, 1979, p.84

34. CHALTUANKHUNA : op. cit. p.99



According to Dr. V.V.Rao, "the MNF was able to enlist the tacit sympathy and open support from all types of persons." The factors for this "large scale rebellion," according to him, were: the disbandment of the Mizo dominated Second Battalion of the Assam Regiment in 1964, the presence of a large number of discontented ex-chiefs and unemployed youth, the readiness of the Pakistani Government to help the MNF, Chaliha's blessing of the MNF in order to weaken the Mizo Union, the anti-Assamese anti-Indian feeling sown by the Mizo Union itself, the growing number of juvenile delinquents, and the Assamese Language issue. He understood the MNF movement as a popular movement rather than being a stray incident of lawlessness perpetrated by a few section of Mizo people. He wrote, "the number of persons that participated in the revolt was some thousands, and not a few as was stated in the Press."<sup>35</sup>

---

35. RAO (V.V.) : op. cit. p. 504-5

## CHAPTER FOUR

THE MIZO NATIONAL FRONT (M.N.F.) MOVEMENT

For fifteen long years, Mizo politics has been dominated by the MNF movement. The movement is significant not only in determining the trends in the Mizo political development but also in relation to our national political system. Having posed, as other like-movements elsewhere, a crucial challenge to our constitutional and political systems, the MNF factor deserves a special attention of political scientists and constitutionalists. In order to understand the movement, it is necessary ~~we~~<sup>to</sup> look at it from the neutral ground. In the last part of the preceding Chapter, we have noted that the MNF was brought into existence by the working-together of many factors, thus making it clear that it was not just a by-product of economic grievances. We are more or less contending in this Chapter that the case having been so, the solution to the Mizo problems may lie in the righting of the wrongs done to the Mizos, taking into account all the factors we have highlighted. It would be fair to remember that the MNF movement was, at first constitutional and peaceful. It turned into a violent one in March, 1966, five years after the party was founded. With its adoption of violent means, and the Government's declaration that the party and its subsidiary organisations were outlawed, the movement became 'underground'. After a hard armed-struggle of ten years, the MNF realised the unfeasibility of violent means. They "acknowledged that Mizoram is an integral part of India" and "conveyed(....) their decision to accept the settlement of the problem in Mizoram within the framework of the Constitu-

tion of India." <sup>1</sup> After the MNF made an undertaking to this effect in February, 1976, its movement no more points toward secession but to a political settlement which will be acceptable both to the MNF and the Government of India. But, all these good turns have so far not yielded any practical results. Various persistent constraints to the progress of the peace-dialogue have led to a number of deadlocks. The MNF can no more think in terms of Sovereignty of Mizoram since the signing of the 1976 February Agreement, which others call 'Press Statement' or 'Understanding' or 'Communique.' But, they are not going to be satisfied, as it appears, with the status of an ordinary state. So long as the 1976 February Agreement and the subsequent documents stand valid, with the MNF's subscription to them, there can be no question of self-determination for the Mizos. But, the problem of finding solution to the Mizo problem is still there because there still is the a gap between the bargaining points on the two sides. There also is a difference in approach to making peace. While the Central Government approaches the problem from the constitutionalistic-legalistic angle, the MNF emphasize more on the broad socio. political considerations. This fundamental difference in approach appears to be the root of all the constraints to the progress of the dialogue between the Government and the MNF. In this Chapter, we make an attempt to analyse the MNF movement with special attention to its objectives, change in its nature, its relations with other parties and its armed-operations.

---

1. NIBEDON (N) : Mizoram-The Dagger Brigade, New Delhi, Lancers, 1980, p. 263

A. THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE M. N. F.

The Mizo National Front came into existence on October 22, 1961. Its Constitution spelled out the following as the party's aims and objectives:<sup>2</sup> (i) Integration of all the Mizo ethnic groups under one government possessing the highest degree of freedom. (ii) Upliftment of the status and the development of the economic conditions of the Mizo people. (iii) Safeguard of the Christian religion. These Aims and Objectives are elaborated in the cited booklet, which may briefly be analysed, as follow.

(a) The First Objective

The party understands that the Mizos enjoyed political independence and freedom since time immemorial. But, these were lost when more powerful people came and ruled over them since the later part of the nineteenth century. The party calls this a 'foreign rule' and seeks the doing away with this politically. That is why they have an idea of Independent Mizoram. It also claims that the present dispersion of the Mizo groups over a vast area, some parts of which belong to foreign countries, is the result of the irresponsible determination of the administrative areas by the British Colonialists. It believes that unification of all the scattered Mizos is a significant step to the attainment of 'freedom'. The Mizos are a close-knit people. They cannot really accept the present state and international boundaries around their land which were demarcated without them.

---

2. MNF Pawl thiltumte Hrihfiagna (in Mizo), MNF party's Aims and Objectives - A Commentary, MNF publication, November 16, 1972, p.1

(b) The Second Objective

The MNF party blames the 'foreign rule' for the poor economic conditions prevailing in Mizoram. It points out six major aspects of the Mizos' socio-economic plight, namely, the economic, public, cultural, health, educational and communication. In order to raise the economic conditions, the party suggests change in the method of rice cultivation from primitive way to scientific method. It realises the necessity of cultivating cash-crops, exploitation of natural resources, pursuit of technical know-how in order to be able to manufacture high quality goods, and the development of profitable foreign trade, in the building of the economic infrastructure for Mizoram. It urges the people to work hard to make rapid strides in industrial development, following the example set by the Japanese. The Mizo public life, the party contends, before the 'foreign infiltration' was blameless, pure and unpolluted. It blames the non-Mizos in the neighbourhood of Mizoram as having introduced into Mizo society such social evils as gambling, adultery, prostitution, usury, etc. It emphasises the need for the undoing of the gradual social degeneration, and for the restoration of the cherished social ideals which were the basic foundations of the Mizo public life in the past. It teaches the people that the process towards the achievement of these noble goals can be started only when an independent welfare State of Mizoram is born. The party also aims at the preservation of whatever is appreciable in the Mizo culture and customs, maintaining their distinctive traits.

The party expresses its concern over the poor public health system so as to stir public feeling against the Government. It contends that the unhygienic conditions of many Mizo villages are due to the step-motherly treatment the people received from the 'foreign government'. The poor general health conditions and the short life-span of the Mizos are, according to the party propaganda, the evidence of the evil of the 'foreign domination'. The party does not leave out the field of Education also in order to propagandise against the Assam and Indian Governments. It says that the Mizos are put in very difficult situations not because of their choice. Since they have been put under different countries and states, they have to learn the official languages of those states and their mother-tongue has not found proper recognition in the school-curricula. It argues that the compulsion to learn the languages of the dominant groups is a means to assimilate them, which is very dangerous for the identity and entity of the Mizos as a distinct group. It also claims that Mizo history and traditions have not found proper place in the school syllabi. All these, the party would say, are the concerted efforts on the part of the dominant peoples to have the 'Mizo Nation' divided so that they may not be able to assert themselves. The party also claims that it is the Indian rule in Mizoram which has been responsible for the poor conditions of road communication.

(c) The third Objective

The party believes that Christianity is a God-given and the right religion for the Mizos and calls the Mizos fortunate because by this religion, they have come to know the 'only true God' in the midst of the worship of idols and strange gods and goddesses. The party stresses the need for the defence of Christianity from its enemy within and without. It regards the Buddhism of Burma and the Islamism of Pakistan as unsuitable for the Mizos. It takes Indian secularism as a 'tricky way of Hinduisation'. The official visits to Mizoram by Indian officials and dignitaries particularly on Sundays, the comparatively less holidays in honour of Christian holy-days and festivals, the imbalanced inclusion of Hindu literature in the children's school textbooks, are taken by the party as instances of disrespect for Christianity and the weakening of its force in the name of secularism. The party warns the people that so long as the 'Indian yoke' is there, their religion is in danger. It suggests prevention of heresies from taking roots in the church and spreading.

These are the original aims and objectives of the party. If we relate them to the conditions prevailing in Mizoram at present, we will definitely realise that most of the societal factors, especially the economic, which the MNF has been trying to politicise upon, have more or less been undergoing changes so as to weaken their validity as reasons to feel wronged. With the direct financial relations between the Central Government and Mizoram, many development projects have mushroomed



on the entire land. Though it may be too early to predict the social impact of these economic developments, it can well be contended that they are beginning to have far-reaching effect in the integration of the Mizos. The Mizos realise that they are lagging too far behind their past economic counterparts elsewhere in India, and they heartily welcome the generous financial subsidies and grants made to them by the Central Government. This has changed the political atmosphere too. When the people see that real goods are being delivered, they cannot but appreciate, and the MNF are gradually being dragged into an awkward position. The people cannot really understand why these welfare schemes should be blocked when the party no more aims at Independence. Yet, the question whether the economic means of winning the confidence of the Mizo people is really successful can be fully answered only when we see how it is utilised and how it affects the general public. It can only be said, at present, that the Central Government is fulfilling, step by step, the economic demands of the MNF, though it may not necessarily mean to make violent means fruitful. This indirectly supports the popular view among the Mizos that mere words do not open the ears of the leaders at the Centre. Some Mizos have even called the roads in Mizoram which have been metalled or constructed only after the MNF movement started as "Laldenga's Roads." <sup>3</sup> This is a sorry state of affairs which should never be allowed to be repeated, if Mizos are to be treated as true citizens of India.

*it depends upon how the Indian govt will settle*

~~at least today~~

3. GOSWAMI (B. B.): The Mizo Unrest, Jaipur, Aalekh Publishers, 1979, p.178

If the original contentions of the MNF are still relevant, it is in terms of the aims and objectives it has spelled out which do not fall under the economic categories. The Mizos' apprehension of cultural assimilation through educational policy, language policy and the manipulation of the apparently harmless principle of secularism, is still very great. This fear of assimilation may be baseless, but, the fear is very real. The Mizos are a minority in all respects, that is, racially, culturally, linguistically and religiously. If they are to be made to feel at home in the Indian Union, economic development alone may have a limit if not coupled with maximum freedom of cultural-religious exercise and pursuit. Religion being an extra-territorial affair, it may be necessary sometimes that the Mizo Christians have to maintain certain relations with Christian organisations in other countries; Indian Christians have faced some trials and troubles concerning the Government's regulation of their relations with such foreign bodies. If this sensitive affair is allowed to be handled by careless people, it can have very adverse effect on the federalising-integrational processes. The Mizos being dominantly Christians, this factor is all the more relevant in their case. Whether the Mizos will feel more alienated from or associated with the mainstream of Indian life very much depends upon the quality of Central leadership.

## B. THE CHANGING NATURE OF THE MOVEMENT

The MNF movement was peaceful and constitutional before March 1966. The party contested four seats in the 1962 District Council Election but secured a very low poll. None of its candidates got elected. It captured the two Assembly seats in the 1963 bye-election by a comfortable majority of votes. The MNF was encouraged by this victory. It influenced the Chief Minister to see that the Mizo Union MLA R. Thonhlira was appointed a member of the Assam Public Service Commission so that they could have another opportunity to contest the third seat in another bye-election. But, the party lost to the Mizo Union in the following bye-election. In the 1963 Village Council Election, the MNF took 145 villages out of the total of 411 and stood second to the Mizo Union which held 228 villages.<sup>4</sup> During those years, the MNF professed to have abjured violence and publicised its resolution to carry on its struggle for freedom by non-violent means. Emphasising these, Laldenga wrote, thus,

The Mizos are religious and peace-loving(...) They do not want to adopt violent means in any way (...) since violence could result in untold destruction of life and property, which in turn could leave indelible black scar in man's history(...) They remember the futility of violence as seen in the instances of Kashmir and Nagaland(...) The Mizo leaders realise that Mizoram being a landlocked country, there is no hope of Mizo military victory over India...<sup>5</sup>

4. NUNTHAKA (C): The Politics of the Mizo Hills, (Doctoral Thesis), Delhi University, 1980, p.128

5. LALDENGA : Mizoram Marches Towards Freedom, Zoram, Govt. of Mizoram (MNF) Press, p.51 in its Mizo Version.

However, it was an open secret that the MNF was preparing itself for an armed movement. The Party President Laldenga and Vice-President Lalnunmawia were arrested in December, 1963, on charges of illegal crossing of international boundary into then East Pakistan for the purpose of meeting with the Pakistani and Underground Naga leaders there. Sainghaka, the Chief of the Mizo National Volunteers (MNV), also was known to have gone with them but could escape arrest. The two top MNF leaders were later released when they undertook in black and white that they would thenceforth confine their political activities only within the geographical and legal jurisdiction of the Indian Union.

Many youths joined the party's Volunteers Force which was virtually an army with all the hierarchy and command that we find in the regular military administration. Any ex-serviceman having had some military experience elsewhere would be given a 'rank' in the Force. A number of MNV battalions were raised with much enthusiasm. It was an open secret that the MNF was collecting arms and ammunitions from foreign sources. In the beginning of 1965, Laldenga himself publicly said that while the party was for non-violence, there was no lack of arms supply if the situation demanded.<sup>6</sup> This was a clear indication that the party was being prepared for violence if necessary.

---

6. Laldenga made this public statement at Village Kawapui on the occasion of the raising of a new MNV battalion. Hundreds of MNV Force men and women were marching past by the MNF flag and the President who took their salutes. They were holding bamboosticks as substitutes for rifles. The author was an eyewitness to these.

All these preparations having been well on, an unfortunate incident took place towards the close of December, 1965, which foretold the people that something serious could and would happen in Mizoram in the near future. One 'Colonel' Laimana of the MNV was shot dead with an automatic weapon by the Special Force of the MNV for they had understood him to have informed the Assam Rifles about the MNF's arms collection. So, when the MNF started an armed-movement on March 1, 1966, close observers were not very surprised.

The MNF's taking to arms has at least three versions. One is that the leadership, though unwilling to start the armed-movement, could not resist the strong insistence on making an armed-strike on the part of the common membership. The second version is that Laldenga could not resist the hawks in the party leadership who strongly pressed for the start of the movement. The third version is that the MNF was out and out for violence but was only buying time in order to collect more weapons and to find more excuses for the strike. Whatever the truth about all this, the fact remains that in 1963-64, the hawk-group did not get on very well with the dove-group, the latter being majority then. But, it appears that some change took place inside the party some time in 1965-66 that more of the leaders and members of the party favoured direct resort to arms. However, the armed-movement of the MNF was not a mere accident. Once it was started, the MNF began to put all the blame on the Government as having called for such movement by its provocative attitude.

The leaders alleged that the Central and Assam Governments in general and Home Minister G.L. Nanda and Chief Minister R.P. Chaliha in particular, were only callous and provocative in the way they responded when the MNF leaders put forth their demands and suggestions. They ( ) themselves as having tried all the peaceful means of fulfilling tical aspirations of the Mizos. They stated again and again th all their peaceful moves had met with total failure, they were ed to resort to arms much against their original choice. One pamphlets contain the following words:

All the attempts to effect peaceful negotiation and set the principle of fairness have become futile. The fate people has now been clear. The intention of India is to all the leaders who work for freedom, and suppress the order to discourage them so that they dare not speak ab dom. Therefore, the only way that remains for national is to declare independence and form Mizoram Government

This self-justification on the part of the MNF may sound quite from the point of view of the Governments of India and Assam. B impartial observer, it is not completely baseless. Had the res Governments taken enough care in handling the situation that g developed in Mizoram in the late sixties, and had they been re some special concessions for the Mizos in terms of economic co and political adjustments, they could have avoided incurring s for putting down the armed- movement of the MNF, and the loyal cent people would not have suffered so much unnecessarily.

---

7. Mizoram Politik Chanchin. (Political History of Mizoram). (in a pamphlet published by the MNF, December 29, 1973, p. 52

When the MNF struck, not a few people began to question the legitimacy of their resort to an armed-struggle. The Church leaders condemned the violent activities of the party. They not only issued pamphlets and instructions to the Church members but also personally contacted the MNF leaders with the hope that they might be convinced back to the path of non-violence. They tried to make it clear to the MNF that violence is incompatible with the teaching of Christ. But, far from being convinced, the MNF tried to make its position clear by saying that there was no confusion about Christian teaching and resort to arms for political struggle. They held the opinion that violence was a political necessity in self-defence and described their strike as a pre-emptive move in anticipation of the suppression of the Mizos' rights by military force. They would understand their movement as a war between two 'nations' and in such a case, even God permits use of arms and resort to killings as found in the Jewish history also. They argued that Christ's teaching about the illegitimacy of the use of sword is only in connection with the establishment of spiritual kingdom. It is fully legitimate, according to them, to use 'sword' in order to establish an earthly kingdom. "If there is nothing wrong in the Government of India's use of arms", they asked, "why should the MNF's resort to it be questioned?"<sup>8</sup>

---

8. ZORANTHANGA: Zoran Zalenna Lunghum, (The Foundation of Zoran Liberation) (in Mizo), MNF Publication, 1980, p. 33

This reveals an interesting fact about the place of religion, namely Christianity, in the Mizo political thinking. To a great number of them, Christianity and violent uprising are two contradictory things that cannot at all go together. Those people hold the opinion that even if Mizoram has to be liberated, it will be through moral force rather than armed-force. But, to another considerable number, politics is an earthly affair which should and cannot be mingled with religion. In other words, religious standard cannot be brought into politics and as such use of arms may be permissible if the political situation demands. To this latter group, which includes even the MNF, religion is not a constraint to an armed-movement. Far from being so, it is an inspiration for men to rise up in claiming their rightful place in the whole society of mankind. If this thought is brought to the extreme, violence can even be taken as a necessary means to the achievement of a religious cause. Men who have this thought can be very dangerous. The MNF was dominated by such kind. This indirectly suggests that solution to the Mizo problem does not lie in their religion. In other words, we cannot expect the MNF to be submissive to authority just because their religion demands them to be peaceful. Far from this, we must remember that they fight for 'our land and Christ' as evident from their various documents. So, if the MNF problem is to be tackled fruitfully, it is through political considerations and calculations, not by ethical appeals.



## C. THE UNDERGROUND MOVEMENT OF THE M. N. F.

Whether it was a result of circumstantial compulsion or it was a deliberate political choice, the MNF movement had to become underground since its declaration of Mizoram Independence at midnight of February 28-March 1, 1966, which was followed by the Government's declaration that the MNF party and all of its subsidiary organisations were unlawful under Rule 32 of Defence of India Rules, 1962. In the following paragraphs, we make an attempt at presenting the main incidents and trends in the MNF underground movement.

### (a) The Declaration of Independence

The MNF's declaration of Mizoram Independence worded in the style of the American Declaration of Independence, said, inter alia, thus.

In the course of history, it becomes invariably necessary for mankind to assume their social, economic and political status to which the laws of nature's God entitle them. We hold this truth to be self-evident that all men are created equal and that they are endowed with inalienable fundamental human rights and dignity of human persons and to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed and whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these, it is the right of the people to alter, change, modify and abolish it and institute a new government laying its foundation on such principles and organise its powers in such forms as to them shall seem most likely to effect their rights and dignity. The Mizos, created and moulded into a nation and nurtured as such by nature's God, have been intolerably dominated by the people of India in contravention to the laws of nature.

For these and all other innumerable causes, we declare to the candid world that India is unworthy and unfit to rule over the civilised Mizo people who are created and moulded into a nation and nurtured as such and endowed with territorial integrity by nature and nature's God.

We, therefore, the representatives of the Mizo people, meeting on this day, the first of March, in the year of our Lord, 1966, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name, and by the authority of the good people of this country, solemnly publish and declare, that Mizoram is, and of right ought to be, free and independent; that they are absolved from all allegiance to India and its parliament and all political connections between them and the Government of India is and ought to be dissolved, and that as free and independent State, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent State may of right do. And, for the support of this Declaration, we mutually pledge to each other with a firm reliance on the protection of the Divine Providence, our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honour.

We appeal to all freedom loving nations and individuals to uphold human rights and dignity and to extend help to the Mizo people for the realisation of our rightful and legitimate demand for self-determination. We appeal, also, to all independent countries to give recognition to the Independence of Mizoram.

This Declaration was signed by sixty-one men of the MNF. An underground 'Government of Mizoram' was formed by the same men following an adoption of the provisional 'Constitution of Mizoram' which provided for a Presidential form of Government with two Houses of the 'Legislature'. The provisional Constitution opened with the words: "The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of Mizoram and the Holy Bible is the Foundation of her Administration". The Preamble ran thus,

We, the people of Mizoram, in order to assume, among the Powers of the Earth, separate and equal station to which the Laws of nature and nature's God entitle us, for a perfect Nation's individuality under Justice; practise our chosen Religion freely; and secure the blessings of Liberty to ourselves and posterity which are equally endowed by our Creator as inalienable Fundamental Human Rights in the form of Life, Liberty and pursuit of Happiness; do ordain, establish and present ourselves this Constitution for Mizoram.<sup>10</sup>

---

9 & 10. RAO (V.V.): A Century of Tribal Politics in North East India, 1874-1974, New Delhi, S. Chand, 1976, pp. 503-4; and James Bokhara's Collection of MNF Documents (Hereafter referred to as JD Collections) Book No. 5.

It was a short Constitution, containing only four chapters. It provided for a Legislature of two Houses-the House of Representatives and the Senate for the term of five years and six years respectively; an Executive under the leadership of the President who should be directly elected for a term of six years; a Judiciary at whose apex was the "National Refinement Court" with a Chief Justice and three other Judges. Chapter Four contained provision for the amendment of the Constitution by two-third votes of the members of both Houses.

The MNF opted for the Presidential type of Government for obvious reasons. They knew full well that theirs was going to be a guerrilla movement and parliamentary type of organisation was too unwieldy for such type of movement. They preferred Presidential type of Government for it facilitates prompt decision and quick movements. According to one ex-MNF leader, "a popularly formed dictatorship" was just suitable for the underground movement. However, the pattern of the organisational hierarchy under the Presidential system was not very popular among the Mizo people, for, the designation of 'Secretary' instead of 'Minister' commanded less authority in the minds of the Mizos who were used to parliamentary terms. The principal Departments of the "Mizoram Government" were Home, Finance, Defence, Supply, Information & Publicity. For civil and revenue administration, the whole of Mizoram was divided into four Chief Commissioner's areas, namely,

Western Area (Dampa), Eastern Area (Lurh), Northern Area (Run) and Southern Area (Phawngpui). In normal situation, The Finance Minister was to locate himself in the Western Area, the Home Minister in the Eastern Area, the Defence Minister in Northern Area and the Supply Minister in the Southern Area.<sup>11</sup> Each of the Western, Eastern and Northern Areas was subdivided into four Deputy Commissioner's areas, and the Southern Area into five. The Deputy Commissioner was assisted by a staff consisting of an ADC, a Revenue Officer, a Supply Inspector, a Relief Assistant, a Sergeant Constabulary Force, a Police Constable, a Time-Scale Clerk, an Account Assistant and a peon.

Soon after the MNF went underground, the Mizo National Volunteer Force was converted into the Mizo National Army (MNA) on the model of the <sup>USA</sup> ~~American~~ military organisation. The MNA consisted of two Brigades- the Lion Brigade and the Dagger Brigade. The Lion Brigade had the CH, L, S, and V Battalions. The Dagger Brigade had the K, T, and Z Battalions.<sup>12</sup> The State Security Agency (SSA) was the Intelligence Wing of the MNF 'Government.' Other special wings of the MNF outfit were the Special Force, the Commandos, the President's Special Body Guards, and the Suicide Squad, formed from time to time as the situation demanded. These special wings consisted of men specially selected by the top leaders. They received special treatment and training.

11. MNF Presidential Order No. MS. 4/57/114 of September 26, 1967. (JD Collections). The Designation of 'Secretary' was soon changed to 'Minister.'

12. These letters stand for Chawngbawla, Lamlira, Saizahawla, Vanapa, Khuangchera, Taitesena, Zempuinanga, all Mizo legendary heroes.

The underground MNF has two main forums, namely, the Party and the Government. Functionally, the two are intricately intertwined that it is very difficult to distinguish one from the other. But, the distinction is necessary in order to fully understand the movement. While the MNF as a party is willing to negotiate for settlement of the Mizo problem, the MNF 'government' continues to enforce its 'laws' and collect its 'taxes'. When situations demand, new organs or forums will be created, as for instance, the National Emergency Committee, formed when East Pakistan fell in December, 1971. Now, the National Council is the highest body of the party which have a final say on all important matters.

In order to sustain themselves, the MNF took to the practice of collecting 'taxes' and 'donations' from all walks of life. The rates of these as given by Goswami are: 5 per cent of the income from the government employees; 10 per cent of their profits from the merchants; 1 per cent of the value of their work from the contractors; and rupee one per head per annum from every Mizo youth.<sup>13</sup> Besides these, drivers and non-Mizes coming from outside are required to pay 'road taxes' and 'entry fees' which may amount to even hundreds of rupees. But, it is a fact that all the Mizes and non-Mizes do not pay these amounts. Even those who do do it under threat or compulsion in most cases. Payment out of will is neither ruled out. In the circumstances, some unscrupulous youths would take advantage and collect money in MNF's name.

---

13. GOSWAMI (B. B.) : op. cit. p.162

When the MNF went underground, it urged the employees of the Government and the District Council to leave their jobs and join the 'service' of the underground 'government.' But, very few complied. In order to spread their propaganda, the leaders addressed villagers and school children and teachers in the interiors. Sometimes, in order to win the sympathy and confidence of the public, they would fight some social evils like drinking, gambling, etc. Once in the early seventies, their presence was very much felt by the people in these respects, when they strictly carried out their order prohibiting brewing, selling and drinking of 'ZU', a Mizo term for alcoholic drinks. Villages and towns were clean of these social evils for a period of time and Government police and social reformers accepted that they were surpassed by the MNF in the anti-social evil campaign. Since its declaration of Mizoram Independence, the MNF derecognised any authority established under the Constitution of India, and as such, it vehemently boycotted the 1967 General Elections. The Government postponed the District Council Election but was determined to conduct the Assembly and Parliamentary Elections. The MNF was, on its part, equally determined to sabotage the elections. According to the letter issued by its 'Home Minister' to all the 'Chief Commissioners,' the people should be asked not to cast their votes, if at all possible. In case it became unavoidable, the people should cast their votes in such a way that their votes would become invalid. "The people should in no

way cast blank votes," so said the instruction.<sup>14</sup> All the prominent political figures were told by the MNF not to offer themselves as candidates for the Elections. In the first round of the Assembly Election, only Mr. A. Thanglura was a candidate and he was declared elected unopposed for the Aizawl East Constituency. He was the founder of the Mizoram Congress. There were no candidates for the other two seats. When nothing happened to A. Thanglura, a second round of the election was held and J. Manliana, ex-Assam MLA and ex-MNF Chief Justice was elected unopposed for the Aizawl West Constituency. For the Lunglei Constituency, Lalchunga Chinzah was elected against a lone opponent. Even there, voting was minimal. For the parliamentary election, Mizoram was still combined with the Cachar District in order to form a constituency. There was no Mizo candidate. Polling was very low and in some places voters had to be forced out of their houses in order to make them cast their votes. Mrs. Chanda (Congress) was again elected.<sup>15</sup> The postponed District Council Election was held in April 1970. Results of this and party alliances by this time are discussed in the following pages.

---

14. SAINGCHAKA'S Letter to all the MNF Chief Commissioners No. 9. GM(H)-Pol/67/7 Dated January 27, 1967. (JD Collections)

15. VANLAWMA (R) : Ka Ram leh Kei (My Country and I), (in Mizo), Aizawl, Zalen Printing House, 1972, p. 264

(b) The MNF and other parties

The period from 1962 through 1965 was a period of contest between the already well-grounded Mizo Union and the emerging MNF. The Eastern India Tribal Union (EITU) had sharply receded to the background. The Congress, being an all-India level party was not very attractive to the regionalist Mizos. Other minor parties came and went, and their existence was negligible. So, the Mizo Union, which was then ruling the District Council and enjoying the support of 55 per cent of the total 411 villages, having one MLA; and the MNF which had 35 per cent of the village councils in 1963, two MLAs<sup>5</sup> and no member in the District Council, were the main contending parties in Mizo politics. The contest between these two parties may be best seen from their performances in the Elections. In the 1962 District Council Election, the MNF contested only four seats and lost in all, while the Mizo Union bagged 16 out of the total 22 constituencies. In the 1963 Assembly bye-election, the MNF candidate for Aizawl West constituency defeated his Mizo Union opponent by a margin of 1,736 votes. In Lunglei constituency, polling was very low (approximately one-fourth of the total electorate). There also, the MNF candidate defeated his Mizo Union rival by a margin of a little over one-thousand votes.<sup>16</sup> In the 1964 Assembly bye-election, 55 per cent of the electorate cast their votes in the four angular contest out of which the Mizo Union candidate defeated his nearest rival the MNF candidate by a margin of 808 votes. Congress and EITU lost their deposits.

---

16. Ibid. p.213



The reasons for the MNF victory in 1963 and defeat in 1964, and the Mizo Union defeat in 1963 and victory in 1964 could be these: In 1963, the Mizo Union failed to assess the strength of the youthful MNF. It had no clearcut policy. It had more or less dropped its policy of Hill State and had not yet adopted the new policy of Mizo State. But, the MNF's policy of Mizo Independence was very attractive to the Mizos. Moreover, the relations between the Mizo Union and the Assam Government was at its lowest ebb. Chaliha patronised the MNF in order to weaken the ruling Mizo Union. In 1964, the Mizo Union had adopted a clearcut policy of Mizoram State and taught the people that this was much more feasible than the MNF's policy of Independence which was too ambitious and likely to invite untold sufferings for the people. They launched a massive campaign on this theme while the MNF, which had captured the two Assembly seats one year before remained confident and did nothing much in regard to electioneering. Moreover, the Congress and EITU were one with the Mizo Union in opposing the MNF's policy.

However, it should be noted that in spite of its defeat in the 1964 bye-election, the MNF wave was sweeping not only the entire Mizoram but also the Mizo occupied areas of other states and countries. Its military-like organisation of volunteer force was too appealing especially to the youths. Since its victory in the 1963 bye-election, the MNF demanded dissolution of the Mizo Union dominated District Council and the holding of fresh election, which was to fall due early in 1967. It is apparent that Chaliha, though well-disposed to the MNF,

could not commit himself to the party to the extent of dissolving the duly elected Council. It also appears that causing one Mizo seat in the Assembly to lie vacant by seeing that its sitting member was given some other assignment was all that Chaliha could do in order to pacify the MNF.

In this connection, it is relevant to take up the question whether a constitutionally elected government in a state or district which still enjoys the support of the majority of sitting members in the House could or should be asked to step down before the expiry of its normal term so as to make an opportunity of fresh trial of mandate between the ruling party and the emerging party which has some reasons, in terms of its recent victories in bye-election or parliamentary election, to claim that it has captured the support of the majority of the electorate, or that the ruling party is in the process of losing the people's mandate, as indicated by the results of such elections. This question is very relevant to Mizo politics. The MNF demanded dissolution of the District Council in 1963, as said just now. The Steering Committee formed by the alliance of the five opposition parties demanded the dissolution of the U.T. Ministry and the Assembly after the election of its common candidate against the candidate of the ruling People's Conference party to the Lok Sabha in January, 1980. Now, it is understandable from mass media reports that Laldenga is demanding the ouster of Brig. Saile's ministry as a pre-requisite for settlement.<sup>17</sup>

---

17. See UNI, PTI Report, "Mizo National Front Banned" in Indian Express, January 21, 1982, front page. (New Delhi).

So far as our political experiences are concerned, it appears that the central Government can take either course of action - 'retention' or 'dissolution' of the state government in question. We have seen, in recent years, in the instances of the dissolution of non-Janata state governments in 1977-78 and the dissolution of non-Congress(I) governments in the states soon after the party came back to power in 1980; that the Central Government is more inclined to take the latter course. But, some state governments ruled by the party other than that rules at the centre are spared. Mizoram presents the case very clearly. One fundamental reason, in reference to Mizo politics, for this can be that the state branch of the party ruling at the centre does not have a prospect even if the regional party dominated Assembly is dissolved. A secondary consideration can be that a stable and strong party, which can be expected to deal effectively with the MNF forces stands the best chance of getting the Centre's blessings, be it a regional non-Congress(I) party. The Mizoram Congress (I) appears to be less competent in this matter than the ruling People's Conference. These may have been the determining factors in the minds of the Central leaders for having retained People's Conference government in Mizoram though it lost in the 1980 Lok Sabha election and the Mizoram Congress(I) strongly demands its dissolution.

*too bias*

(i) The Tripartite Meeting: In March, 1965, the Mizo Union, the MNF and the EITU party leaders held a meeting in order to evaluate together the political developments in Mizoram. The political situation then was very tense as the Mizo Union was trying to observe a Hartal on March 18, 1965, to emphasise its demand for Mizoram State, which the MNF strongly objected. In the meeting, the EITU and the Mizo Union leaders expressed their willingness to subscribe to any mutually agreed principle of maintaining peace and tranquility and asked Laldenga (MNF) what his stand was. He is said to have stated there and then that "the MNF was not in a position to retract even by a single step (...) that it was too late now (...) and that there was no secret that 'independence' was always possible."<sup>18</sup> Having reached no point of agreement, the meeting was closed with an appointment to meet again. The subsequent meeting also could not yield any positive result and the MNF and Mizo Union leaders parted with the latter pledging that they would not stand in the former's way, should it start its armed movement.

(ii) The MNF and the Mizo Union: Even with its leaders' pledge with the MNF, the Mizo Union was an 'obstacle' in the MNF's movement, just because it was a ruling party loyal to the Indian Constitution, and as such, they suffered a lot from the MNF. In the circumstances, younger blood in the Mizo Union had an idea of arming themselves in order to counter-act the MNF movement. The Assam Government, which had all along patronised

---

18. CHA TUAKHUMA : Political History of Mizoram, (in Mizo), Aizawl, 1981, p. 106

the MNF was now ready to give arms to the Unionists.<sup>19</sup> But, the idea could not be materialised, because, Ch. Chhunga, the party President objected to it. To him, the solution of the Mizo problem does not lie in armed struggle between Mizos and Mizos. However, village defence parties were instituted at villages where Mizo Union was powerful. Many Mizo Union members particularly suffered at the hands of the MNF, because it was the only party which was openly opposed to the movement. The MNF branded the Mizo Union leaders as the number one enemies of Mizoram. Their relation was so strained at times, that the MNF even thought of eliminating some of its leaders (Mizo Union). When this idea was brought to light, by the party's intelligence service, even Ch. Chhunga was infuriated. He had to write a long, carefully worded but painful note to the MNF, thus,

I do remember what I said to your leaders in our discussions at my residence, which we held as many as three times. I used to say, there and then, that we would be able to maintain our quietude to a certain extent even if you should start the movement, but, there would come a time when the land and the people have suffered too much, at which point, I dare not say that I would not stand up to oppose you, and rather think I would surely stand up.

Now, I am seriously asking myself, 'Has the time I was talking about really come?'<sup>20</sup>

Escalation of the tense situation to the extreme was averted, thanks to the mutual restraints on both sides and the Church's intervention.

---

19. Ibid. p.108

20. An excerpt from Ch. Chhunga's letter to Sainghaka, then MNF Home Minister, dated January 11, 1967, copies of which were sent to Laldenga and Llanunmama. (JD Collections).

(iii) The MNF and the Congress: The MNF and the Mizoram Congress were formed in the same year, 1961 (October 22 and June 15 respectively). Being a national party, the Congress did not attract following and had to remain a minor party till 1970. Its leadership was not cohesive as it was composed of men who had earlier defected from other parties for different reasons. Its founder A. Thanglura spent most of his time at Shillong, because he has his residence there. Its relation with the MNF before 1970 was not very cordial, yet, it was not as cold as the Mizo Union's relation with the MNF. The MNF felt that the presence of an all-India party in Mizoram was not a very good sign. But, it did not oppose it as vehemently as it did the Mizo Union.

The Mizoram Congress changed its strategy in the late sixties. Taking advantage of its being the branch of a party then ruling at the centre, it began to play a mediatory role between the Central Government and the MNF. It adopted the policy of 'Peace and Security' which was exactly the need of the hour. It boldly criticised the army excesses in their dealing with the general people while carrying out the counter-operations. This tactic of the Congress was very productive and its following increased considerably. Its relation with the MNF was so smooth that some would even call it an overground MNF. The people took it to be the only party which had the courage to speak on their behalf against the dreaded army. It was these two factors which were mainly responsible for its capture of majority support in the 1970 District

Council Election. After the Mizo Union was merged into the Congress in 1973, the party put more effort into the mediation between the Central Government and the MNF. This, sometimes, dragged the party into a strained relation with the army. In June 1979, the Congress and other four parties together formed the Steering Committee, a loose alliance, in opposition to the ruling People's Conference. In November, 1980, the Congress withdrew from the alliance as it could not agree with the other opposition leaders to the idea of recalling all the sitting opposition MLAs<sup>21</sup> at the request of Laldenga, who was learnt to have said that such an act on the part of the opposition parties would strengthen the MNF's position vis-a-vis the Central Government's stand, and that it would have a positive impact on the course of the peace-talk between the Government and the MNF. The Congress, which was dominated by the stalwarts of the erstwhile Mizo Union, could not see any point in the MNF Chief's request. Their relation with the MNF is based on the principle of ending the fifteen-year long trouble in Mizoram. Theirs is not a total blind support to Laldenga and his MNF party. In this respect, they fundamentally differ from the other opposition parties, especially the People's Conference(B). These parties can join hands only in opposition to Brig. Sailo's People's Conference.<sup>21</sup>

---

21. The other four opposition parties in alliance with the Congress were People's Conference (B), having four MLAs; Mizoram Janata, having two MLAs; the Mizo Union and the Mizo Democratic Front, having no MLA. The Congress had five MLAs.

(iv) The MNF and the People's Conference: The People's Conference, a regional party with positive national outlook, was formed under the leadership of Brig. Thenphunga Sailo (Retired), on April 17, 1975, with an aim, inter alia, "(...) to prepare grounds for the peaceful solution of the Mizo political problem."<sup>22</sup> In the March 1977 Lok Sabha Election, the party's candidate was returned for the lone Mizo seat in the House. He polled 52.93 per cent of the total valid votes. His nearest rival, the Congress candidate polled 37.7 per cent. The other two candidates, Mizo Union and Mizo Democratic Front, forfeited their security deposits.<sup>23</sup> In the May 1978 Assembly Election, contested by five political parties and some independents, the People's Conference came out with a thumping majority so far as seats were concerned. It captured 23 seats out of the total 30. But, in terms of votes, it had only 38.69 per cent of the valid votes, which was 63.12 per cent of the electorates.<sup>24</sup>

Besides its strong leadership, the party's friendly relation with the MNF in the beginning did much to its elevation to that dominating position. Virtually replacing the Congress as a mediator between the Central Government and the MNF, when the Congress fell at the centre, the PC leaders not only participated in some of the talks between the Government

---

22. Constitution of the People's Conference, Chapter Two.

23. Source: General Elections to the Lok Sabha-1977, Mizoram (A Statistical Report), Chief Electoral Officer, Mizoram, Aizawl, p.10

24. Source: General Election (Mizoram Assembly) Results, 1978: Prepared and published by the Information Centre, Press Information Bureau, Govt. of India, Aizawl, 1.6.1978; p.5



and the MNF, but also exerted their influence on both sides in order to let them resume the talks, when there was mutual suspicion between them which resulted in a deadlock in June 1977. The relation between the MNF and the PC was so close, in those days, that some time before the 1977 Lok Sabha Election, the MNF President Laldenga was learnt to have instructed his men at Aizawl to help the PC achieve success in the election so as to smash the Congress.<sup>25</sup> The arrest of seven PC leaders, including Brig. Saile, during the Emergency was thought to be the Congress' bid to check the rising PC party taking advantage of its friendly relation with the MNF, which was a significant factor in achieving success in Mizo politics in those days.

When the PC came to power in the 1978 Assembly Election, its relation with the MNF began to turn sour. Though the PC men affirmed again and again that they would be ready to step down from power if such act would result in ending the trouble in Mizoram. But, mutual suspicion began to develop between the PC and the MNF mainly because of the then Mizoram Janata leaders. This deterioration of their relation plus personal grievances against Brig. Saile brought the PC to a major split in October, 1978. The MNF also suffered a major split by this time. The breakaway group of PC formed the People's Conference (B) and the MNF men who came overground as a result of the split in the party joined the People's Conference. One fact which is very

*only lips service  
not in real hearts*

25. Engvanguinne MNF a lo phir? (Why the MNF Split) (in Mizo); a pamphlet published by the MNF Returnees Rehabilitation Committee, Aizawl, Zawibuk Press, p.21

clear to the people in this connection is that those men who had joined Brig. Sailo's party on his friendly relation with Laldenga had to withdraw their support and loyalty from Sailo when the two leaders' difference came to be evident. Consequentially, the group in the MNF who had no more confidence in Laldenga had to come out and join the People's Conference of Brig. Sailo. Since then, the People's Conference in general and Brig. Sailo in particular has been openly criticising the MNF, which with the moral support of the PC (B) and Janata, has been bold enough to plan for the assassination of Brig. Sailo and some of his trusted men. As a result of the 1978 October split of the PC, fresh election had to be held in 1979, in which the PC again came out victorious. The PC(B) bagged only four seats. The PC's loss of the Lok Sabha seat in the 1980 Election was due to the common front formed by all the opposition parties as a Steering Committee.

*great treason just for stomach*

(c) The MNF Armed Operations

Nibedon writes, "The MNA was operating in a manner strikingly similar to the Uruguayan Tupamores or the Irish Republican Army, and had consolidated their 'cells' in the urban areas." 26 The MNA operations have been of varied characters. Some have been offensive while others have been defensive. They have also been anticipatory or retaliatory. They have been mostly confined to Mizoram except for some few incidents in the bordering states and countries. Following its declaration of Mizoram Independence, the MNV launched a widespread massive attack on the security forces at various important places. These operations were collectively called "Operation Jericho." The security post at Champhai, a town on the Burma border, was swiftly and safely taken by the MNV at midnight of February 28-March 1, 1966. At Lunglei in the south, the MNV took away rupees 18 lakhs from the government treasury, kidnapped the SDO and other officers and ransacked the PWD office one hour after midnight. At Aizawl, the MNV could take only rupees twenty-thousand, a few arms and ammunitions from the government treasury early in the morning of March 1. The Deputy Commissioner ordered indefinite curfew

---

26. NIBEDON(N): Mizoram: The Dagger Brigade, New Delhi, Lancers, 1963, p.106

all over the Aizawl town area and the sitting of the District Council also had to be adjourned indefinitely. The civil wing of the MNF 'government' with Laidonga had to move to a safer place towards the south. Kelasib, a town between Aizawl and Silchar was taken by the northern commander of the MNV with guns. On March 2, there were heavy crossfires at all important posts in Mizoram. Lunglei fell to the MNV at 010 hours on March 3. Time had almost run out for the defenders of Aizawl town, when the whole town was in flames as a result of air-strauffing by India's Hunter jets. Nibodon writes, "Operation Jericho was successful in so far as all important towns, except Aizawl, were eventually run over by the jubilant volunteers. There was a near total blackout of events to Assam and the rest of the world."<sup>27</sup> When the Indian Army had occupied the more important places, the MNF men had to go underground. They reorganised the MNV under the new name Mizo National Army (MNA), the organisation of which has already been described. Since then, the MNA has been carrying out its guerilla operations as directed by the MNF headquarters which shifted from place to place and finally to a place at the trijunction of the Mizoram-Burma-Bangladesh borderlines.

Other more widely known armed-operations of the MNA are briefly discussed in the following paragraphs.

Once in early February, 1967, the commander of the Sikh platoons stationed at Tualbung village, on the north-eastern side of Aizawl,

---

27. Ibid. p. 69

did a very foolish thing to hurt the religious sentiment of the local people. When the local elders approached him to ask him to instruct his men properly so that they might keep decent manners, he bluntly told them he would not just be bothered even if they came with their Jesus Christ. His words reached the MNF's ear and the 'Vanapa' battalion was assigned the task of teaching the Sikh platoon commander a lesson. The MNA men had no need to survey the security post, for the local people often visited it doing odd jobs for the army men. Soon after midnight, in the early hours of February 11, the MNA men opened heavy fires from the front side of the army camp, while from behind the MNA "Captain" Lalhlana and his comrade emptied the trenches with sprays of bullets from their automatic sten-guns and with the grenades left by the fleeing soldiers. The MNA casualties were two dead and two wounded. The security forces' casualties were heavy but not publicised. This incident is remembered by the Mizos with awe. It boosted the MNF's morale. The heroes of Tualbung Operation are highly spoken of among the Mizo youths.

The year 1967 witnessed three other major operations. "Operation Gideon" was a heavy ambush laid by the 'Vanapa' battalion on May 5. The time was two-thirty in the afternoon, the place, near Zanlawn village on the Aizawl-Silchar main road, a saddle between two hillocks, where the British Expedition troops also had to face an ambush. The

army convoy was heavily attacked causing a loss of a number of lives, vehicles, 13 rifles, one sten-gun and a revolver. On May 23, "Operation Safeguard" (Operation HUMHALLINA, in Mizo) was pulled off by the MNA near village Bikhawthlir, about 70 kilometres from Silchar towards Aizawl. In the ambush, fifteen soldiers were known to have been killed by the MNA. They took 12 rifles, two sten-guns, and one LMG. Meanwhile, "Operation Crusade" was being carried on over the Mizo-inhabited areas of Manipur state under the over-all command of the Lion Brigade commander. The purpose of this operation was to consolidate the MNF's influence over the area. It lasted from the beginning of the year till August. While the Operation Crusade was going on, the MNF headquarters planned another major operation, known as "Operation Monsoon." According to the original plan, attacks should be made on as many places as possible at the same time during the monsoon season. But, since the Operation Crusade was over later than planned, Operation Monsoon could not be implemented.

On March 3, 1968, the 'Chawngbawla' battalion of the MNA carried out an offensive attack called "Operation Refinement" on the 6<sup>th</sup> Maratha Regiment in the Aizawl Zone. In the clash between the two, at 0745-0830 hours, the Regiment's company commander and several others were killed by the MNA. During the monsoon season of that year, the MNA carried out another famous operation in Burma. The Chin Hills Operation, or the "Operation Dikna" as the MNF called it was planned by the Vice-President of the

MNF. The President Laldenga did not approve it. The MNA ransacked important places in the Chin Hills Area of Burma including Tiddim, Falang, and Tuibual; and captured many arms and ammunitions and large sums of Burmese currency. The Operation strained the relation between the MNF and the Burmese Government all the more. The idea behind the Chin Hills Operation was to divert the Burmese Government's attention from the bid made by the MNF 'Ambassador' Bualhranga and 800 selected men of the party to cross the international border through Manipur and Burma into China. Nibedon writes about this operation thus.

The object of the ambitious Chin Hills Operation was to open a new front and to spark the fire of revolt in that part of the mountains. It was to demonstrate to New Delhi and Rangoon that their arbitrary international demarcations were only a figment of their own imaginations. For the tribesmen, the hills were an unbroken stretch. The immediate objective was to create a diversion for the Burmese troops to enable the boys under "ambassador" Bualhranga to make it to the KIA sanctuaries.<sup>28</sup>

So far as these two objectives of the MNF were concerned, the Operation was only partially successful. It could well divert the attention of the Burmese troops from Bualhranga and his boys. But, the "ambassador" could not cross the Burmese border into China due to the unfavourable natural conditions of the area. Bualhranga, who is the Vice-President of the ruling People's Conference Party and an MLA told the scholar that they

---

28. Ibid. pp.132-3 . KIA stands for Kachin Independence Army, who fought for the Independence of the Kachins from Burma.

had made a mistake, so far as their plan to cross over into China was concerned, for they had not taken into account the monsoon rains. Chindwin river was in flood. Many of his boys were down with malaria and diarrhoea. The soil contained some chemical substances which easily ate away the soles of their boots.

"Operation HNUHTHEIHLON RAL" or (Invisible Enemy) was another bid to cross an international border from East Pakistan into India through Tripura state in June, 1970. It was planned that heavy destructions of roads and bridges would be effected on the way. The Zampumanga battalion of the MNA was assigned the task of blowing up the Dungur Dam on the Tripura side. The MNA boys were also told to get cloths and medicines wherever possible. The Indian Intelligence got wind of the bid and saw that the plan was foiled. But, the frustrated Operation Hnuhtheihloh Ral caused a lot of disturbances in Mizoram in the month of August that year.

The other two MNF armed operations were a little different from the rest in that they concerned with Government Officials no less than the Lieutenant Governor and the Inspector General of Police themselves. On March 10, 1974 Sunday morning, Mr. S.P. Mukherjee, the Lt. Governor of Mizoram was on his way from a tour back to Aizawl. When his motorcade came to a place called 'BALVEN KAWN', exactly the place where the MNA had carried out the Operation Gideon, in 1967, at about 0900 hours, the MNA sniper's bullets hit the L.G.'s car. The administrator was lightly



wounded on the leg. His life was spared because one Mr. R. L. Thanzawna, a senior Mizo officer, travelling with the L.G. covered the L.G.'s body with his own body, and the MNA men would not touch Thanzawna because he was their own "national"<sup>29</sup> The attempt on the L.G.'s life was made in retaliation of the arrest of one MNA battalion commander Haleluia by the Indian Army at the Republic Day Ceremony at Kolasib town. Haleluia was moving with the Education Minister after a promise of safe-conduct by the civil authority in order to tie up "with Laldenga's peace feelers thrown in Kabul."<sup>30</sup> It appeared that there was a gap between the civil and the military authorities.

Towards the end of 1974, the MNF issued an order to all the 'Vais' in Mizoram to "quit" Mizoram before January 1, 1975.<sup>31</sup> Many 'vais' left Mizoram in fear of the MNF's action. Even the senior officers posted there thought it better to evacuate their wives and children. Security measures were tightened. Checkposts were located at short intervals along the main roads. Rigorous checks were made on all vehicles passing to and fro through the checkgates. On one of such checks, one army major unnecessarily annoyed the Junior Minister of the Mizoram Government. His behaviour was so insulting and humiliating to the Minister that words about it spread far and wide. This hurt the Mizo pride, and the MNF took

29. Ibid. p.188

30. Ibid. p.186

31. By the term 'Vai' the Mizos mean all the non-Mongoloid races in India

it as an advantage for pulling off one of its most deadly schemes. It was January 13, 1975. The MNF official executioner "Captain" Lalhleia, code-named "MC 351," and five other men of the "Suicide Squad" dressed themselves as policemen. They took one government jeep parked near the road and came in full speed to the IGP office complex. Entering the gate, the man at the wheel kept the vehicle loudly churning and turned back to the main gate. Lalhleia quickly moved into the IGP's chamber, where the IG was holding a conference with one DIG and one SP, to review the law and order situation. It was 1615 hours. Suddenly, Lalhleia appeared and in a moment a few bursts from Lalhleia's automatic weapon did the three senior officers to death. The fast-moving killer and his friends sped away much faster than how they had come, and the hurried firings from the guards could not hit them.

Whether the MNA are carrying out their dreadful deeds haphazardly or carefully has been summed up by Nibedon thus,

(...) Killings (carried out by the MNA) were not haphazard, as it would appear to anyone who cared to be a close observer. The guerillas were choosing targets with great care. The innocents were not in their gun sights. This was exactly why the law enforcement agencies were often embarrassed. For the deprivations of Kapchhunga's group were extremely difficult to deal with in a close knit tribal society and where the slenhs knew that kinship ties often cut across political alignments.<sup>32</sup>

---

32. Ibid. p.168 ( words within brackets mine)

If these remarks were about the modus operandi of the MNF before the last quarter of the seventies, they could be quite right. But, now a change is noted in the manner the MNF operates. This has been especially so after some overground parties like the People's Conference (B) and the Mizo Zirlai Pawl (Mizo Students Association) have identified themselves openly with the MNF. Since 1979, there have been a number of incidents in which innocent lives have been taken and public properties and buildings have been wantonly destroyed. Laldenga said that some of these acts could be his men's doing and some other not.<sup>33</sup> Opposition parties allege that these are acts of sabotage on the part of Saio's Government. But, the Government on the other hand claim to have all the evidences that these have been done by the MNF and their overground instruments. It appears that the MNF is gradually losing its public moral support which it used to enjoy in the past, because of the acts of excesses committed in its name. The guerilla movement of some purpose of the past has more or less become a terrorist movement during the past two or three years.<sup>34</sup>

---

33. As Laldenga told the author in an informal talk in June 1980.

34. NIBEDON (N): "The Guerilla Country" Probe India, January 1982, New Delhi, pp 21-7

CHAPTER FIVE

THE FEDERALISING PROCESS AND ITS IMPACT

The federalising process has come to Mizoram in three main forms, the military assertion of political authority, the constitutional reorganisation of the administration and the economic construction. All the three forms have been applied in order to bring the Mizos closer to the centre or the 'mainstream' as some-body may like to say. In order to present the full drama of Mizo politics, the policy, method and practical consequences of this federalising process cannot be left out. This chapter is, therefore, an attempt at analysing the various counter-operations under this process and their impact on the Mizo socio-political life and their party system.

#### A. THE COUNTER-OPERATIONS

The first type of counter-operations we will take up are the military ones which can broadly be divided into the Counterstrike proper and the Operation Security, which differed from each other a little in purpose and manner of carrying out.

##### (a) The Counterstrike Proper

By the "Counterstrike Proper" we understand the military operations in order to check the MNF armed uprising in March 1966. Nibedon observes, "Like Operation Jericho, the implementation of Operation Counterstrike was fascinating, a little more ruthless, perhaps, and definitely better equipped." <sup>1</sup> The policy of the Operation Counterstrike was

---

1. NIBEDON (N): Mizoram: Dagger Brigade, New Delhi, Lancers, 1980, p.106

clearly stated by G.L.Nanda, the then Home Minister in his speech in the parliament on the calling attention motion in connection of the trouble in Mizoram on March 2, 1966. He assured the angry Members "stern action to crush the rebels with all the forces at our command."<sup>2</sup> In spite of the timely warnings from the M.P.<sup>s</sup> who were concerned enough that there could be a commission of grave mistakes if the counter measures were not taken with utmost care, the Governments of Assam and India were committed to implement the 'strong arm' policy. Prepared to face a 'war' no less than that between independent states, the army columns began to move towards Mizoram shortly after the MNF had pulled off the Operation Jericho.<sup>3</sup> Had the Home Minister been well informed, he would have known that it was not all the Mizos who were in the movement, and he would have realised that it would not be necessary to use "all the forces at his command." The angry Chaliha spoke almost in the same tone as the Home Minister's. He said that the MNF leaders were "all betrayers; and betrayers will have to be dealt with in an appropriate manner"<sup>4</sup> But, when the practical side of 'dealing in an appropriate manner' came in the hands of the army, it was pointed to all the Mizos and the 'betraying MNF leaders' were not much dealt with.

---

2. Ibid. p.78

3. It was known to all the Mizos along the Aizawl to Silchar main road that the army first came with heavy artillery. But, the heavy weapons were pushed back after hours of coming into Mizoram when they saw that they were not necessary.

4. NIBEDON: loc.cit.

In order to enable the armed forces to implement the strong arm policy of the Operation Counterstrike effectively, the whole of Mizoram was declared a 'disturbed area' on March 2, 1966. The Armed Forces Special Powers Act (Manipur and Assam), 1958, was brought into force. With this legal backing, the army began the Operation Counterstrike with all the strength at its command. The immediate aim, namely, recapture of the district headquarters from the MNF hands and restoration of communications, was achieved about a week after the MNF's Operation Jericho was started. But, the real consolidation of authority and restoration of normalcy came much later.

The army column advancing from Silchar to Aizawl along the main road on March 4 and 5 had to clear a number of road blockades made by the MNF. But, they did not have heavy encounters. The MNF only sniped at them to delay their movement. By March 8, the army could start encamping at Bawngkawn, a village on the fringe of Aizawl town, which was a gateway to Aizawl, Lunglei and Champhai. Because of its strategic location, the place gradually became the permanent Brigade Headquarters. After putting down the MNF at Aizawl, the army column was bifurcated, one moving towards Champhai and the other moving towards Lunglei. The first column had to tackle with few road blockades and one ambush, which left three soldiers wounded. The column moving towards Lunglei faced tough ambushes which resulted in a good number of casualties.

By mid-March, 1966, some ten major towns and villages were more or less under the control of the army. But, the MNF still held their sway in the interiors. Tlabung was recaptured only late in the month. Even though the army had established itself at almost all important towns and villages in Mizoram, the Home Minister Y. B. Chavan had to admit in the parliament, on November 18, that the armed movement had not been completely put under control.<sup>5</sup> According to one Mizo Union leader, who made his observation on December 2, some thirty villages out of the total 730 in Mizoram felt safe. Restoration of normalcy being the need of the hour, the army who were assigned the important task seemed to be unbriefed about the other aspects of the 'mission'. They thought that all the Mizos were rebels. Whether provoked or not, they irrationally tortured, killed and robbed many people who had no part at all in the movement. They raped women wherever they moved. They did not take care to make distinction between 'rebels' and innocents. Such a campaign brought unprecedented sufferings in Mizo history and sent out a wave of fear, humiliation and shame which soon engulfed the entire land. All these had serious effects on the Mizos that the army, which had been despatched presumably to claim Mizos as Indian citizens did more to their further alienation than to their integration. More of this later in this chapter.

---

5. Ibid. p. 102



(b) Operation Security

"Operation Security" was the name for the infamous mass grouping of villages which was started with the beginning of the year, 1967. It was carried out to see that the military control of the situation was all the more sure, and to restore the day-to-day civil administration gradually, beginning with such grouped villages. Nibedon writes about the idea behind and the intentions of the Operation Security, thus,

Operation Security was intended to bring the villages into protected perimeters to snap the supply lines to the guerillas. In actual practice, it was an attempt to subdue the tribesmen by strictly controlling the rations so that no food was funnelled out to the men in the jungles.

The fundamental aspects were threefold. It was intended to isolate the insurgents from the people; make the zone difficult, even treacherous, for underground movement; and enable the Security Forces to operate on a wide expanse for a very long period to wear out the rebels without the civilian population coming in the way.<sup>6</sup>

The idea of this type of counter-revolutionary operation seems to have been the product of Sir Robert Thompson's brain. The British had applied it under Gen. Briggs' command in the name of Operation Starvation in Malaysia in 1951.<sup>7</sup> The Americans had done it on a limited scale in Vietnam; the British had done it in other forms in India as well.<sup>8</sup> Now, the Indians were doing it in their own territory. The implementation of the scheme was so swift and precise that the people were taken by surprise.

---

6. Ibid., p.107

7. RANGASAMI (Amritha): "Mizoram: Tragedy of our own making," Economic and Political Weekly, April 15, 1978, pp. 653-62 (Bombay)

8. NIBEDON: op. cit. p. 105

The scheme was worked out under the provisions of the Defence of India Rules, 1962 and the Governor's Ordinance called the "Assam Maintenance of Public Order, 1953." Under the scheme, a number of smaller villages were grouped into a bigger village or a village whose location was strategically more important. These were commonly known as "Grouping Centres." The centres were initially given free rations. The residents were compelled to construct a barricade with bamboos and/or young planks all around the centre. The people were thus forced to give up their cultivation works and be confined in and around the Grouping Centres. This was supposed to be effective in isolating the underground MNF from the entire people and the barricades were supposed to prevent the entry of the armed guerillas into the villages. But, far from being so, the fencings did not prevent even the grazing cows and loitering pigs from going in and out. It only devastated the forests around the centres as all the available young trees and bamboos had to be cut down for making the barricades. Identity Card was issued on huge expense to every man and woman of the centres. Dusk to Dawn curfew was imposed in those centres and the villagers had to deposit their Identity cards at the security checkpoint while going out of the centre and collect them on time while coming back. While going out, the resident had to undergo thorough checkings with the security personnel at the checkpoint. Movement was restricted. Any villager leaving the village for a while had to get a Movement Permit from

an authorised officer. As such, the Grouping Centres were reminiscent of the Communist Concentration Camps. They were of four categories. There were 19 Protected and Progressive Villages (P.P.V.), 40 New Grouping Centres (N.G.C.), 26 Voluntary Grouping Centres (V.G.C.) and 17 Extended Loop Areas (E.L.A.), altogether 102 centres.<sup>9</sup> The process of grouping of villages lasted till 1972. Prior to the grouping of villages, there were 764 villages in Mizoram. The entire populations of 516 villages were moved into these 102 centres. Thus, the total number of villages was reduced to 350, of which 102 were grouped centres and 248 were ungrouped villages. The two towns of Aizawl and Lunglei were not affected. In Aizawl sub-division alone, 95 per cent of the rural population were involved in the grouping. The total number of people involved was 2,36,162, that is, 73 per cent of the Mizoram population. The Government spent only Rupees 16.6 lakhs annually for the rehabilitation of the displaced persons.<sup>10</sup>

---

9. GOSWAMI (E.B.) : The Mizo Unrest; Jaipur, Aalekh, 1979, p.176  
 10. NUNTLERA (C) : "Grouping of Villages in Mizoram" Economic and Political Weekly (Bombay), July 25, 1981, pp.1237-9

(c) The Other Aspects of the Federalising Process

Operations Counterstrike and Security might have demoralised the MNF to a great extent. But, it remains a fact that the Mizo people were deeply hurt by these operations. If the first phases of the federalising process have driven the MNF guerillas into their jungle lairs, the later phases, which have come in the form of constitutional reorganisation coupled with drastic economic injection, which are understandably meant to root out the Mizo problem, have been having far-reaching impact on the Mizo society as a whole and on the MNF especially. The Union Territory status which has been given to Mizoram since January 21, 1972, is just suitable for fulfilling the political aspirations of the Mizos to some extent, for augmenting the economic development, and at the same time for maintaining a close watch and tight control over the socio-politically dissenting Mizos of the strategically located Mizoram. We have seen in Chapter One (page 4) how Mizoram budget increases over the years. We have also seen how the plan allocation has unprecedentedly increased while the local revenue is not even worth mentioning. All these are meant to accelerate the pace of the economic development which had been neglected by the Assam government and retarded by the MNF movement. Various subsidies for basic production and different rehabilitation schemes, especially those meant for the MNF returnees are examples of the central government's brainchild which are supposed to have effective federalising force.

## B. IMPACT OF THE FEDERALISING PROCESS

The Federalising Process which has come in such various forms as already mentioned has far-reaching impact on the MNF, the Mizos as a whole, and the development of the party system in Mizoram. Some are indirect effects while others are direct results of the process.

### (a) Impact on the MNF

The operation Counterstrike immediately checked the progress of the MNF's Operation Jericho and asserted the political authority over the Mizo-land. The MNV was no match for the Indian Army in terms of man-power and equipment. At first, it was estimated that the MNV had 10,000 men with arms. But, when the army actually moved in, they came to know that the MNV fighting forces were never more than 4,000, half of whom were without arms. Realising their comparative weakness, the MNV adopted a guerilla-type of hit and run warfare, and avoided heavy pitch-battle with the incoming army. When the Operation Counterstrike had dispersed and dislocated the MNF outfit, the Operation Security came in to see that the army's hold on the strategic towns and villeges was secure. The MNF realised that it could do nothing to check the Operation Security and just kept watch on its progress from its jungle hideouts. Moreover, the MNF was caught unaware when the Operation Security was launched at very short notice. It had no time to prepare.

nor it had means to fight, to check the Operation. Also, the MNF leaders were sober enough to realise the serious repercussions it could have, had they attempted to check the operation, because the innocent civilians would suffer too much. The grouping of villages did not completely isolate the MNF guerillas from the people. It was a fact that they even had their share of the rations supplied to the civilian population by the army. Though seemingly workable, the C-I-B (Curfew-Identity Card-Barricade) system was not very effective in checking the MNF movement while the moral public support was still strong. The more the law-enforcement technique is stringent, the more the burden of the enforcer becomes. It appears to the author that the army could not really cope with the problems of the scheme. In any case, it was a costly scheme. Therefore, it was bound to failure in the long-run. What was more important, in checking the MNF movement, was the winning-back of the Mizo people's confidence and trust to the Government. Unfortunately, the Operations Counterstrike and Security were negative in this respect.

However, all the three main forms of the federalizing process taken together, have indirect results in the MNF movement, and these came to be felt only gradually over a period of time. We may take notice of these results in three ways, namely, causing the MNF to look for a strong foreign base; inducing the MNF leadership to sue for peace; bringing in serious crises in the MNF organisation.

Realising that the army's grip of Mizoram would be more and more tightened, the MNF ultimately shifted its headquarters to a strategical place at the trijunction of Mizoram-Burma-Bangladesh border (It was East Pakistan by that time) from where it could easily move into either Burmese or Pakistani territory. It also established 'diplomatic' relations with Pakistan and China, stationing its 'ambassadors' at Dacca and Peking. Laldenga and his family and a few aides lived near Dacca. From there, the MNF made contacts with representatives of various countries including UK, USA, France, Burma, China, Japan, Pakistan, Nepal, Indonesia. It also contacted the representative of the United Nations. The main purposes of these foreign contacts were to gain worldwide publicity and sympathy, to obtain material and political support and to have their 'Independent Mizoram Government' internationally recognised. But, the MNF failed to achieve its much desired goals so far as international support was concerned. The 'foreign Minister's Speech' on the occasion of the first anniversary of 'Mizoram Independence' (March 1, 1967) made the MNF's 'foreign policy' very clear. His words (paraphrased):

We want to maintain our independence. We do not simply depend on foreign powers and aids. If any country, of any ideology, is ready to help us, we cannot refuse. We cannot think of its ideology. We must assert our might ourselves. There is danger in foreign interference as found in the instance of US interference in Vietnam. The most important factor is unity and solidarity among our own people. With or without others, we must maintain our sovereignty.

Many ask me, "Why not invite China to help us, we are perishing at the hands of the Indian army anyway"? (...) Is that desirable? We cannot invite China or USA to solve our problem. Even if they can, we may be dominated by them again, for that power which can destroy India can become a power against our liberty.<sup>11</sup>

These words, read in parallel with Laldenga's famous saying, "If my house is in flames, I would not hesitate to use even muddy water to put down the fire, if the clear water has run out," clearly bring out the dilemma of the MNF leaders.<sup>12</sup> As Laldenga himself was aware of the danger involved in adopting the violent means, the 'foreign minister' also was aware of the possible complication if and when big powers were allowed to interfere in their affairs. The statement of the 'foreign minister' also reveals the fact that the MNF movement was not at all instigated by other powers in order to serve their selfish interests, whether political aggrandisement or economic expansion.

Another important aspect of the impact of the federalising process on the MNF movement is a change in the leadership attitude from that of an irrational hardliner to that of a pragmatic and flexible compromiser. We have seen this change in the MNF's leadership since the middle part of 1969, when Laldenga sent his Intelligence chief Vanlalngaiia to effect contacts with the Indian and/or Assam Intelligence. The peace move was accelerated further when East

---

11. Excerpt from the MNF 'Foreign Minister's Speech' dated March 1, 1967. Source: A collection of MNF documents, James Dokhuma (henceforth written 'JD Collections')

12. Laldenga's saying quoted here still rings in the memory of the Mizo people.



Pakistan was liberated by the joint efforts of the Bangladeshis and India. The early seventies saw more serious efforts at making peace. These efforts came from three quarters, from Laldenga himself who was then hopping around the European and Asian countries, from the Indian Government who, through their intelligence network, have been watching the gradually disorganised MNF movement, and from the MNF headquarters in the Arakan Hills. The result of all these efforts was the signing of the 1976 February Agreement at Calcutta, which has already been described elsewhere. The next step now is what exactly should be the final point of compromise between the MNF which has been demanding, inter alia, special status and provisions for Mizoram within the general framework of the Indian Constitution, and the Central Government which is committed to see that 'armed insurrection does not pay'.

The leadership crises, which have seriously shocked the MNF organisation and adversely affected its movement could still be regarded as the indirect impact of the federalising process. With the general amnesties declared, the more arrests of the MNF men made, the more surrenders by the guerillas, and Laldenga far from the headquarters, the MNF organisation suffered more and more problems, and its movement was gradually squeezed. The 'intellectual group' in the party began to lose confidence in the leadership of Laldenga, who had to have them arrested and finally dissociate them from the party.

charging them to have been disloyal to the leader and the party's cause. This group had to part company with Laldenga in the heat of the Bangladesh war. They were popularly known, in Laldenga's own term, as "DUMPAL GROUP." <sup>13</sup> The MNF Vice President, minister, MP's and senators were also there in the group. In June, 1978, that is, two years after Laldenga and others had publicly expressed that they were willing to start the peace-talk and that they could accept settlement of Mizo problem within the framework of the Indian Constitution, there developed a serious crisis in the party. With Laldenga's image going very low, there came up three distinct groups in the MNF. These three groups differed from one another on the questions of leadership and settlement within the Indian Constitution. The first group led by the then MNA chief Biakohunga were open to the idea of settlement but could no more put their trust in Laldenga. The second group which had the 'Chawngbawle' battalion commander Kawivala as their spokesman still had confidence in Laldenga's leadership. They seemed to have been agreeable to anything if Laldenga remained their leader. The third group were a little mysterious. They believed in the 'IBUTHLUNG' (covenant) of a charming lady Parchi by name, according to whom, God would give

---

13. DUMPAL is a Mizo term for Blue. They were called DUMPAL in order to differentiate them from the loyal ones.

them victory if they would reorganise themselves in such a way that the spiritual and the political powers were combined in a single leader. She talked in terms of a theocratic independent Mizoram state with a purely new Mizo Church or Religion. Those who were influenced by this idea were known as "Thuthlung Pawl".<sup>14</sup> The Vice-President Tlangchhuaka himself became the High Priest and the leader of this group. It appeared that they did not think in terms of making settlement within the Constitution of India but in terms of fighting on, with or without Laldenga, renewing their strength from the new-found hope. According to their belief Tlangchhuaka, who was the High Priest, should also be the President. These three groups seriously struggled for leadership and as a consequence, there were mass arrests of one group by the other, coups and counter-coups within a few months time in the second half of 1978. The situation was tense that close observers in Mizoram feared violent showdown among the groups. In the midst of the crises, Laldenga was dethroned at least once.<sup>15</sup> The presidentship rotated among different persons in swift successions. At last, Kawl-wela group (pro-Laldenga) combined with the Thuthlung Group isolating those who were seriously against Laldenga, who ultimately had to come overground. Therefore, those who still remained at the headquarters were the hardcores of the MNF who still accepted Laldenga's leadership.

---

14. 'Thuthlung' means 'covenant' and 'pawl' means 'group'. Here, the 'covenant' was what Parchil claimed God had made with her.

15. Evangelism MNF e Lo Phir? (Why the MNF Split?) (in Mizo), a pamphlet published by the MNF Returnees Rehabilitation Committee, Aizawl, Zawibuk Press, 1979, p.49

(b) Impact of the Federalising Process  
on the Mizo Society as a whole

The various forms of the federalising process have had impact in many ways on the lives of the people economically, socially and psychologically. The Counterstrike, the Operation Security, the upgradation of Mizoram to a Union Territory status and the sudden augmentation of the development schemes have brought tremendous changes in Mizoram to which the people have not been able to adjust themselves smoothly. In the following paragraphs, we make an attempt at analysing the economic, social and psychological impacts of this process.

(i) Economic Impact: The main occupation of the Mizos was shifting method of jhurning cultivation. Eighty to ninety percent of the population solely depended upon this. Mizoram had not really recovered from the shocks of the 1959-60 famine when the MNF started its armed movement. To make the matter worse, the unwise policy of village-grouping was adopted by the Assam government. Dusk-to-dawn curfew was imposed throughout Mizoram for years together. When a number of villages were grouped at a place, there was no enough land for cultivation around the place. The curfew reduced the working hours of the Mizo cultivator almost to half. All these rendered the already unproductive method of cultivation still more unproductive. Mizoram

had no industrial product. Its natural conditions rendered communication very difficult. This in turn made fruitful exploitation of its rich forest resources and inter-state trade almost impossible. The local agricultural products, such as ginger, chillies and other cash-crops did not have proper market system. Prices for these were very fluctuating because the producers were at the mercy of the Silchar merchants, who dictated the prices at their whims and fancies. Slow transportation from the place of their production caused them to be competitively weak. It was an usual sight that lots of ginger got rotten along the mainroads just because of lack of profitable market. Crop processing plants could not be started due to lack of energy. Mizoram got only a few kilo-watts of electricity from Meghalaya through Assam. In these circumstances, disruption of their jhumming system without giving them an immediate substitute system of economy or without first building the economic infrastructure could be too costly for them. And this was exactly what was happening, when the Operations Counterstrike and Security were implemented. The massive road-construction projects undertaken by the Border Road Task Force (BRTF) gave but a meagre substitute for making a living, that also only along the mainroads. All these made the Mizos more dependent on things coming from outside through Silchar. But, transportation of essential goods into Mizoram was utterly slow and irregular because of the 'Convoy' system.

When the people were thus extremely impoverished, the Central Government began to pump in money through various plan-schemes, Centrally Sponsored Schemes and the North Eastern Council. Mizos did not benefit much from the first four Five-Year Plans because they were under Assam. It was, therefore, only from the fifth Plan that Mizoram got direct allocations and direct benefits from the Plans. It may be too early now to assess the achievements of these various schemes. Success will much depend upon the selection of priorities. If the developmental funds were not largely directed towards the building of the economic infrastructure which would most benefit the Mizo people, the financial capital that goes into Mizoram will only bring economic advantage to the already developed feeder states. For instance, Mizoram has to import around 70 per cent of rice, the Mizos' staple food, which is upto the tune of 40,000 metric tones, through the Food Corporation of India, which spends some Rupees 65 lakh annually for the stocking of the commodity mainly from Punjab and Haryana. Mizoram Government has to incur a financial loss of about Rupees 1.25 crores on the transportation of this to the interiors.<sup>16</sup> If it is so in the case of the commodity the

---

16. Mizoram Finance Minister Shri Lalhingthanga's Paper, "Socio-Economic Condition of Mizoram Union Territory in a Nutshell and Suggestion for Improvement," published in Seminar on Strategy for Planned Economic Development of Mizoram, Organised by the Directorate of Information, Public Relations and Tourism, Govt. of Mizoram, Aijal Club, September 26, 1980. (see p. 16)

production of which involves 85 per cent of the population, one can well imagine how Mizoram is to depend upon goods produced and coming from other parts of the country. It would also be necessary, if development is to be achieved with the least disparity among the beneficiaries, to take care that the circulation of the financial capital is not confined only to the town areas and a few sections of the population. The per capita expenditure is known to have risen almost to the tune of Rupees 2000 per annum, which may be one of the highest in the whole country. Yet, it is another thing whether or not the common citizen gets the economic benefit worth this amount. Though we do not have data for this, there is a general impression that due to this heavy injection of central funds, the gap between the "haves-more" and the "haves-less" is becoming wider and wider, the former comprising only a small section of the people. If this trend is not timely checked, the generous financial support the Central Government renders to the Mizos can bring about undesirable socio-economic transformation in the Mizo Society, which when coupled with the political uncertainties, may invite more serious problems than the MNF movement. In order to exploit the rich forest resources and establish industries it is necessary to tap the highly potential hydel power. When the hydel projects which have recently been taken up are completed, they can work miracles in developing Mizoram economically.

(ii) Psychological Impact: The Mizos had experienced the horrors of 'headhunting' stage, inter-village feuds, resistance wars with the incoming British-Indian troops and the Superintendent's anti-Mizo Union campaigns. But, the wave of the fear sent out by the counter-operations of the Indian Army had no precedent in degree and magnitude. House-checkings, arrests, interrogations, tortures and killings were almost daily incidents in the hard days of the sixties and early seventies. Every Mizo was a suspect. There was practically no freedom of speech. Neighbours feared neighbours. The Security Forces were ironically the objects of common people's fear. Children ran at their sight. They were generally looked upon as harassers, torturers and rapists. The MNF also were made desperate by their hard jungle lives and they committed excessive acts here and there. There developed a fear-psychosis among the common mass. Many thinking people preferred to remain silent and passive, lest they incur the displeasure of the Security Forces or the MNF. The Mizo's life of those days has been appropriately compared to a piece of iron between the hammer and the anvil. People really groaned and moaned in the difficult circumstances. In the heart of their hearts there was a deep-seated feeling of resentment, fear and insecurity.

It was this epidemic of fear-disease which prompted the Mizoram Congress to adopt the policy of 'Peace and Security'. But, it could relieve the people's burden only by little. Then came Brig. Thanphuga Saito who retired from the Indian Army in 1974. Seeing how the Mizo



people suffered under the military high-handedness, he formed the Human Rights Committee which submitted many well documented complaints against the excesses of the Indian Security Forces in Mizoram. As the President of the HRC, Brig. Saile wrote, thus,

It must be accepted that the present trouble in Mizoram is not military problem. It is a political problem and consequently a human problem—a battle of the hearts. The most ruthless measures were (...) the so-called grouping centres, reminiscent of a concentration camp. The Security Forces have tried to intimidate the public with all manners of atrocities and ill-treatment. However, this strong-arm method has not brought about any solution. On the contrary, it has driven solution even farther away. It has only engendered bitterness and hatred against the Security Forces and consequently, India.<sup>17</sup>

It was only after the Human Rights Committee submitted its memorandum containing these words that the Government of India realised the need of changing their 'strong-arm policy. Grouping of Villages, which Brig. Saile described as a 'misconception' was discontinued when the Assam High Court issued an order of stay to the Mizoram Government which was making preparations to carry out another grouping-operation. Therefore, it was only some time after 1975 that the Mizos began to shed their fear-psychosis. Yet, it may take some more time in order to completely wipe out the fear that the Mizo people harbour in their hearts.

---

17. Memorandum Submitted to the Prime Minister of India, by the Human Rights Committee, Mizoram, Aizawl, 1974, page 2.

(iii) Social Impact: The Mizos have a free and classless society, where there is so much social interaction through the church activities, various voluntary social organisations, special occasions like marriages and deaths, mutual visits and gossipings, etc. The counter-operations gave serious shocks to these social customs and institutions. The uprooting of many villages and their combination with unfamiliar villages and places through the Operation Security greatly affected their social relations. The imposition of curfew disrupted the open and free social contacts the villagers were accustomed to. The permit system of movement limited the inter-village contacts. Sometimes, church services and many other social functions had to be suspended or restricted, in the name of 'S E C U R I T Y', which was the watch-word of the army, who usually cared less about the social disruptions it could cause. Though there was a provision for relaxation of curfew to enable the villagers to perform the inevitable social functions as visiting the bereaved family when a person died, or attending the marriage ceremonies, there were times when this provision also was restrictedly used. In some villages where the security personnel dominated everything, there were occasions when marriages were not celebrated, and burial of a dead person unattended. In the free Mizo society, a young man can visit a girl casually or with a view to woo her for his wife. This custom is known as 'NULA RIM'. 18

---

18. 'NULA' means an unmarried young girl and 'RIM' means a visit between the sexes, though girls rarely visit boys to 'rim'.

The night-curfews obstructed the practice of this custom, as night is the best and the usual time for such visits, because everybody is busy during day-time. The indirect result of this was that when curfews were relaxed for a night or part of the night for the unavoidable customs, young people took advantage of it for making their own pleasures. The more important indirect result of the conditions was that the Mizo people as whole had the impression that the security forces, as such India, were oppressors of the freedom-loving Mizo people. A simple observation we can make in this connection is that though there were times when security must be given top priority, there were more occasions when citizens' lives were restricted unnecessarily. Also, there were too many instances of army excesses in the enforcement of law and order. If the security forces had minded more of the human aspect of the affairs, they would have earned a better name and would have avoided becoming the main reason for the intensification of the Mizos' feeling of alienation. It appears that it was because of the realisation of this fact that the attitude of the security personnel towards the general public of Mizoram has changed in later part of the seventies, and now, civilian - army relations have improved a lot. The erosion of the Mizos' respect of soldiery is summed up by Brig. L. Saino, thus,

What an irony of fate that has come about in Mizoram. I remember before 1966 the Mizo people respected and admired the soldiery. Hundreds of young Mizos wanted to join the Indian Army. Today, position has been reversed altogether.<sup>19</sup>

---

19. Memorandum Submitted to the Prime Minister of India, by the Human Rights Committee, Mizoram, Aizawl, 1974, p.2.

Another significant aspect of the impact of the federalising process on the Mizo social life is the gradual social stratification. The economic aspect of the process, namely the increased injection of financial capital into Mizoram without economic infrastructure has given ample opportunity to profiteers, black-marketeers and corrupt officials and politicians. The result is that corruption tremendously increased. Those who could seize the opportunities are becoming better and better-off. Those who were not in a position to do the same are more and more deprived of the material benefits of the various economic schemes. This economic disparity reflects in the social relations. The economically influential persons are influential also socially. All these adversely affect the religious and social institutions, resulting in schism, groupism and tensions in these institutions. The cumulative effect of all these developments is that the strong social force which the Mizos used to have has been considerably weakened and individual assertion and influence have gone up. In short, the classless society of the Mizos is disintegrating and a socio-economically stratified Mizo society is developing.

(c) Impact of the Federalising Process  
on the party-system

The aspects of the federalising process whose impact is most felt so far as party-system in Mizoram is concerned are the deeper penetration of the Congress party into Mizo politics and the upgradation of Mizoram to a Union Territory status which has enabled the Mizos to have their own Legislative Assembly. This part of the chapter is an attempt at analysing the developments that have been brought about by these two aspects, of which two are noticeably clear and significantly important, namely, the crisis of the hitherto regional party system and the re-emergence of a stable regional party system in a new form.

(1) The Crisis of the Regional Party-System: We have noted that till some time after the MNF started its armed-movement, Mizo politics was dominated by the regional party, Mizo Union, commanding an unbroken majority in the District Council. The MNF which had a good prospect to become an alternative party had to go out of the overground political picture. The only major party which could enter into a real competition was the Congress. Its chance was all the better because the Mizo Union and the MNF were at an extreme enmity with each other. The period during which the Congress gradually kept rising at the cost of the Mizo Union, which began from 1967 and lasted till 1977, may be called the "period of crisis" for the regional party system.

Elections to the Lok Sabha, the Assam Assembly and the Mizo District Council fell due in 1967 and the Village Council Elections in 1966. Of these, the Elections to the Lok Sabha and the Assam Assembly were held in 1967, but, as already described, were not very meaningful, the MNF movement being at its peak. The District Council Election could be held only in 1970 and the Village Council Election in 1971. These two elections became significant as they marked the rise of the Congress party and the corresponding decline of the Mizo Union:

Table 5:1 - Comparative positions of the Mizo Union and the Congress in the 1970 District Council Election and in the 1971 Village Council Election as seen on the background of 1962 and 1963 Elections.

Party	District Council		Village Council	
	1962	1970	1963	1971
Mizo Union	16 (72.2)	9 (41)	228(55.6)	66(42)
Congress	n.a.	10 (45.4)	16(4.0)	48(30)
United Mizo Parliamentary Party (Ad-hoc Mizo Union-Congress 'D' alliance)	n.f.	n.f.	n.f.	23(14.6)
Others	6 (27.3)	3(13.5)	167(40.4)	21 (13.4)
Total:	22 (100)	22 (100)	411(100)	158(100)

- Notes: i) Figures indicate number of seats obtained in the case of the District Council and the number of villages in the case of the village councils.  
 ii) Figures in brackets indicate percentage of seats obtained or village councils captured.  
 iii) n.a. stands for 'not available' and n.f. stands for 'not formed'.

Source: NBNTHLRA (C): The Politics of the Mizo Hills, Doctoral Thesis, Delhi University, 1980, pp.138 and 143.

As seen from the table, the period between 1962 and 1970 recorded a sharp fall for the Mizo Union from its dominant position in 1962, and a steep rise for the Congress from a more or less non-existent position in 1962, so far as the District Council Elections were concerned. The same trend was observed in the case of the Village Council Elections also. The 1971 village council election was peculiar and significant in the sense that the competition between the regional Mizo Union party and the national Congress party was all the more intense than before that the Mizo Union had to accept an alliance with the Dengthuama group of the Congress in order to check the rising Congress party, and this loose alliance captured 23 villages. The reason for the rise of the Congress during this period has been elaborately explained in the previous chapter under the sub-heading, 'The MNF and the Congress'. But, one thing that is noticed here is that in spite of its relatively better position in the 1970 District Council Election, the Congress captured less villages than the Mizo Union in the 1971 village council election. This could be mainly due the leadership crisis in the party. The party was vertically divided between two rival leaders, Dengthuama and Hrang-chhuama. The Mizo Union leaders tactfully played on this division and captured more villages. The reason for the gradual unpopularity of the Mizo Union has mainly been its anti-MNF orientation (See 'The MNF and the Mizo Union' in Chapter IV). This period is significant as it marked a change in the party system in Mizoram from purely regional into a contest in which a regional party and a national party were involved.

As to how the presence and popularity of the Congress in Mizo politics, which Rajni Kothari calls "party penetration" were possible may be viewed from different angles and varied answers may be suggested.<sup>20</sup> In the opinion of the writer, the MNF factor was mainly responsible. This is because of the following: When the Mizo Union, which was a regional and the first Mizo political party, dominated the Mizo political scene, the national party had no chance of coming up. The Mizo Union, though regional, was a moderate party highly oriented to national integration. There was no need for party penetration in order to strengthen the integrational forces, as the same could be done through the principle of "federal consensus", that is, the national party-run Central Government co-operating with a regional party whose orientation was more or less the same so far as national questions were concerned.<sup>21</sup> So, it was only when an extremely regional party, namely the MNF, came up assuming a dominating stature that the need for strengthening the Congress party in Mizoram was felt. But, paradoxically, it was by means of 'befriending' with the MNF that the Congress grounded its support-base. Therefore, we may safely observe that though we can talk in terms of 'party penetration' resulting in a 'crisis of the regional party system' the basic force behind the rise of the Congress still was the strong regional sentiment of the Mizos which could not be expressed through the MNF and/or the Mizo Union for the time being.

---

20. KOTHARI (R): Politics in India, New Delhi, W. H. Patwardhan (Orient Longmans), 1970, p. 201

21. The term is used used in Kothari's sense. Ibid., pp. 195-6



(ii) Party-system in the U.T. period (1972-'81): The crisis of the regional party system did not end with the 1971 village council election. It continued even after Mizoram was upgraded to a Union Territory, though the first Assembly Election recorded Mizo Union's victory. The upgradation of Mizoram to a Union Territory status has resulted in the expansion of the Mizos' political outlook, more serious competition among the parties, and hence, opened more scope for political movements and indirectly for party penetration. This constitutional development may have done something in fulfilling the Mizos' aspirations and accelerating the federalising process. But, if one hopes to see increased popularity of the Congress corresponding to this constitutional development, one is likely to be disappointed. Instead of transforming the Mizo politics from its state of being dominated by regional sentiment into a politics dominated by a national party, regionalism still is the strongest force in Mizo politics, though it may change its shade from time to time.

In the 1972 and the first Mizoram Assembly Election, the Mizo Union obtained overwhelming majority in terms of seats. But, in terms of votes, the Congress votes combined with that of the third parties were more than the Mizo Union votes. The Mizo Union's position became shaky when the Congress effected a merger of the third parties into it in 1973. The Mizo Union leaders merged the party into the Congress in January, 1974, justifying their act as a means to end the age-old rivalry

between the traditional elite and the modern elite and to open wider opportunity for Mizo participation in the national politics. Yet, it appeared that the Mizo Union leaders had not convinced many of their followers, especially those in the villages, and they had to spend much time trying to make the 'merger' workable. The Mizo Union ministry was turned into a Congress ministry overnight. Two original Congress leaders were inducted into the ministry, one as a senior member and the other as a junior member. Those Mizo Union leaders and members who could not accept the merger could neither revive the party to re-attain its former stature. The original Congress leaders were neither happy, because they played secondary role in the organisation and policy-making of the merger Congress. In short, the merger Congress was Congress only in form but Mizo Union in spirit, it lack the necessary solidarity. The end-result of all these developments was a changed mood of the general public. They could not completely identify with the Congress because it represented, at least to them, the dominant Indian culture, which was looked upon with apprehensive mind. The Mizo soil was not yet fertile enough for the growth of the Congress party. Its mere presence could be tolerated. It could draw support for its smooth relationship with the MNF. But, when it came to its dominance, it was different. The Mizo people began to look for a viable alternative regional party and the situation was advantageous for the rise of Brig. Thenphunga Saïlo's People's Conference party, a regional

party in a new form. Besides this public desire for change of Mizo political leadership, other relevant factors favouring the emergence of the People's Conference party were: the inefficiency of the old leaders in handling the changed situation; the proclamation of national emergency; the old leaders' (especially those of erstwhile Mizo Union) past enmity with the MNF; the military highhandedness and the leaders' helplessness against it; the human rights committee formed by T. Sailo and his personality and rank in the army; and, the arrests of emerging political leaders under the provisions of the infamous MISA. The People's Conference was then formed under the leadership of Brig. T. Sailo on April 17, 1975, on the principle of regionalism with positive national outlook. It gained an easy victory in the 1977 Lok Sabha and 1978 Assembly Elections. It suffered major split in October, 1978, that is, after hardly five months of its coming to power. To the factional group of the party, led by the Speaker of the Assembly, the split was the result of a difference in their policy towards the MNF. To the main group (Sailo's group), it was the result of the presence of too many aspirants for executive posts in the party. Both of the factors seemed to have contributed to the party's heading for the crisis. A Presidential rule was declared in Mizoram and the People's Conference of Sailo again came out victorious in the 1979 April Election. All the opposition parties formed an alliance in the form of Steering Committee and got their common candidate returned in the 1980 Lok Sabha Election against the ruling People's Conference party's candidate and demanded,

since then, the dissolution of the People's Conference dominated Assembly claiming that the party no more enjoyed popular mandate. But, the Congress Government at the centre has spared the Mizoram Assembly from dissolution and Sailo's government still enjoys stability. There is no sign of any possible single alternative party to replace the present People's Conference ministry. The factors for this could be that: the opposition camp is sharply divided into two groups, namely regionalist and Congress; the open challenge of Brig.T.Sailo to the MNF president Laldenga; the excessive destructive activities that have recently been carried out by the MNF and their overground sympathisers; and the businessman-like handling of the Mizo economic problems by the People's Conference ministry. Besides these, the Chief Minister has been having a clean public image so far as 'corruption' is concerned. The forces behind the formation of the opposition Steering Committee which were very strong when the alliance was formed on June 29, 1979, have dwindled with the Congress backing-out of it over the question of recall of the opposition MLAs at the request of the MNF president Laldenga. The four MLAs of the People's Conference (B)- as the breakaway group from Sailo's People's Conference are called- resigned in August, 1981, thus necessitating a bye-election. The relative strength of the parties may best be seen from the results of the elections held during this period, which are shown in the following tables.

Table 5:2 - Mizoram Assembly Elections Results: 1972, 1978 and 1979.

Party	1972		1978		1979	
	No. of seats	% of V.V.P.	No. of seats	% of V.V.P.	No. of seats	% of V.V.P.
1. Congress	6	29.2	4	21.97	5	23.92
2. Mizo Union	21	38.9	0	7.03	0	8.16
3. Mizo Labour Party	0	13.38	*	*	*	*
4. Socialist Party	0	2.9	*	*	*	*
5. People's Conference **			23	38.69	18	32.73
6. Janata **			1	15.39	2	13.10
7. Mizo Democratic Front**			0	1.6	0	0.57
8. People's Conference 'B' **			**		4	13.63
9. Independents	3	19.5	2	15.32	1	7.89
<b>Total:</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>103.88</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: v.v.p. stands for valid votes polled.  
 \* stands for 'ceased to exist'.  
 \*\* stands for 'not yet exist'.

Sources: i) Report on General Election to Mizoram Union Territory Legislative Assembly, 1972, by Shri Surendranath, Chief Electoral Officer, etc. Elections Department, Govt. of Mizoram.  
 ii) General Election (Mizoram Assembly) Results, 1978, prepared and published by the Information Centre, Press Information Bureau, Govt. of India, Aizawl, dated 1.6.1978  
 iii) Mizoram U.T. Results - Election to the Legislative Assembly, 1979, prepared and published by K. Lalreia, on behalf of the Information Centre, Press Information Bureau, Govt. of India, dated May 5, 1979.

Table 5:3 - Village Council Elections Results: 1971 and 1975

Party	Figures indicate no. of v/c taken by the party.	
	1971	1975
1. Mizo Union	66	14
2. Congress	48	124
3. United Mizo Parliamentary Party (Mizo Union -Congress (D) alliance)	23	*
4. Public (i.e. party-less) candidates	13	*
5. Equally shared by Mizo Union and Congress	4	*
6. Mizo People's Party	∞	1 (Luengmual)
7. Independents	4	24
Total:	158	163

Source: MUNIHARA for 1971 Results and THANSANGA (D) for 1975 Results. The former has been quoted previously. The latter is awaiting a doctoral degree on his thesis 'Politics and Government in Mizoram' from the University of Gauhati.

Note: \* stands for 'ceased to exist';  
∞ stands for 'not yet exist'.

Table 5:4 - Lok Sabha Election Results (Mizoram) 1977 and 1980.

Party	1977	1980
	(% of v.v.p.)	(% of v.v.p.)
1. People's Conference	52.93	42.00
2. Congress	37.70	n.a.
3. Mizo Union	8.47	n.a.
4. Independents	1.48	n.a.
5. Steering Committee	n.a.	58.00
Total:	100.58	100.00

Note: v.v.p. is for 'valid votes polled';  
n.a. is for 'not arise'.

Sources: i) General Elections to the Lok Sabha-1977 Mizoram, A Statistical Report, Chief Electoral Officer, Mizoram, Aizawl.  
ii) Statistical Reports on General Election to the Lok Sabha, 1980, Mizoram, Chief Electoral Officer, Mizoram, Aizawl.

Table 5:5 - The relative position of the national and regional parties in terms of number of seats obtained and the percentage of valid votes polled worked out from the results of the 1972, 1978 and 1979 Assembly Elections.

Category	1972		1978		1979		Average	
	% of V.V.	% of seats	% of V.V.	% of seats	% of V.V.	% of seats	% of V.V.	% of seats
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Regional Parties	52.28	70	47.32	76.60	55.09	73.30	51.56	73.30
National Parties	32.10	20	37.36	16.60	37.02	23.30	35.50	20.00
Independents	19.50	10	15.32	6.60	7.89	3.30	14.32	6.60
Total:	103.88	100	100	99.30	100	99.90	101.38	99.90

Note: v.v. stands for 'valid votes polled.'



CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

To date, there have been twenty-three political parties and five party-alliances in existence in Mizoram.<sup>1</sup> Of the twenty-three parties, four are national and the rest regional. Among the national parties, only the Congress has been able to enjoy sustained support because of its liberalism and adaptability to peculiar local conditions. The Janata formed its branch in Mizoram. However, it gradually became unpopular on account of its decline at the Centre and its rigid character and centralist poise. The leftist parties have been tried on Mizo soil but found no place to thrive. The reason for this, according to Thangridama, is the opposition of the Church to such parties. The Mizo people take the leftist parties as anti-Christian.<sup>2</sup> This popular antipathy towards the leftist parties among Mizos is mainly due to the curtailment of religious freedom and persecution of Christians in some socialist countries. The CPI, though it exists, is very insignificant in Mizo politics. Many regional parties have failed to emerge as major parties and have been swallowed up by others. Few of them have been able to dominate Mizo politics for any length of time. The Mizo Union, the United Mizo Freedom Organisation, the Mizo National Front and the People's Conference may be counted as major regional parties in their respective periods. Some of the regional parties are

---

1. See Appendix Y for a complete list of the parties.

2. Thangridama, one of the founders of Socialist Party in Mizoram, in an interview at his residence on August 17, 1981.

essentially communal, confined as they are to specific tribal communities. They, therefore, constitute a form of sub-regionalism. The Mara Freedom Party of the Lakhers or Maras, the Chin National Front of the Pawis or Lais, and the United Pang People's Party of the Pangs are such parties.

The on-going process of integrating the Mizo tribes into the polity has gone through four stages, viz.- the migratory stage; the Saile chiefship; the British administration, and the democratic movement initiated by the Mizo Union. The process has taken different forms at different stages. It has become most direct, most scientific and most comprehensive at the last stage. The Mizo Union's role in popularising the concept of 'Mizo' with a view to evolving a greater Mizo society has been very significant. It has indeed put up Mizo Integration as one of its main objectives. However, the objective was partially achieved when Lushai Hills was carved out from the Mizoland in order to form a District under Assam. The MNF, apart from its policy of Mizo Sovereignty, revived the re-unification objective and thereby gained considerable support from Mizos within and outside Mizo District. The Mizo Union did not pursue the objective because it was too eager to end chiefship and usher in a new era of democratic polity at a District level. Mizo Re-Unification still is the dream of the Mizo people, however unrealistic and impracticable it may seem to external observers. The fact that this dream or aspiration is a very

strong factor in Mizo politics is borne out by its being incorporated as one of the main objectives in the programmes of the parties including the Mizoram Congress. It is also a fact that in the process, frictions and tensions have arisen among the Mizo ethnic group which are mainly based on language problem.

Christianity and Education introduced by the British missionaries provided the basic foundation of Mizo political consciousness. The British colonial system of indirect rule, which curbed the powers of the chiefs vis-a-vis the British administrators but made the chiefs more autocratic towards the commoners, provided the springboard for launching a mass political movement through the Mizo Union party. That is why the first stage of the Mizo political movement had to be oriented against the institution of chiefship. It turned out to be anti-British colonialism with the inspiration of the Indian national movement. It was these circumstances which made the termination of the first stage of the Mizo political movement possible by a mere provision of District status under the Assam Province. For, the establishment of the District Council served a dual purpose, viz. satisfying the Mizo Unionists with a commitment that chiefship would be abolished through the Council, and, satisfying the Assam leaders because such arrangement would fulfill their dream of 'Greater Assam' as against the Bengalis' dream of 'Greater Bengal'.

The termination of the first stage of Mizo political movement with a provision for District Council and the subsequent abolition of chiefship left the separatist commoners and the ex-chiefs disgruntled. The result was a political struggle between the radical Mizo Unionists on the one hand, and the reactionary ex-chiefs and the separatist commoners on the other. The former group soon attained a dominant position. The latter groups, identifying with the United Mizo Freedom Organisation, assumed the role of an opposition party. However, the opposition party could not topple the Mizo Union because they had no strong common ground. While the ex-chiefs were first anti-Mizo Union, some of them were pro-Burma, some pro-British and others were for Mizo Independence. The opposition forces then tried to stabilise their support by taking up a new programme, viz. hill-state demand. This also gradually became unpopular when the Mizo Union incorporated the demand for Mizo State in its revised programme. Moreover, the Mizo Union stood more advantageous position because it was regarded as the vanguard of the commoners democratic movement against the unwanted system of chiefship, and because of its firm belief in the integration of Mizos with the rest of India. The moderate regionalism moulded by the Mizo Union has played a dominant role in the Mizo political development. Though the Mizo Union has become, after twenty-year period of dominance, a vir-

ually a non-entity, its doctrine of maintaining a balance between regionalism and centrism remains as a strong factor in Mizo politics. When capable leadership can be built on this strong foundation, a high degree of political stability can be expected. The dominance and stability of the present People's Conference government also can be appropriately observed from this angle.

Our analysis therefore has led us to suggest that regionalism is essentially a very strong element in Mizo political thinking and behaviour. We have shown that the factors responsible for this phenomenon are- the absence of socio-cultural linkages between the Mizos and the rest of India; the dissimilarities in historical experiences; the racial, linguistic and religious differences; geographical conditions; economic deprivations; and, direct and indirect communal discrimination. The Mizo Union carried the regionalist sentiment of the Mizos to a limited extent. The MNF extended it to the point where the Mizo society could not practically contain it. Yet, it is still so strong that even the national parties have to adapt themselves to it. The Regionalism as adopted by the Mizo Union in the past, and by the People's Conference at present, was and still is compatible with an integrated Indian federal polity, for it strikes a balance between extreme regionalism and extreme centrism. It was the lack of

understanding of this fact on the part of the Congress government of Assam in the early sixties that alienated the moderates in the regionalist camp. The then Assam Government was indirectly responsible for the rise of the extremist-regionalist force which developed into a significant threat to the Indian federal system.

In these circumstances, the Mizo soil is not conducive to the development of all-India parties. Among the all-India parties, the Congress(I) is in the most advantageous position to make significant penetration into the Mizo politics. Its obvious stature at the national level, its secular outlook and its adaptability to local conditions have made it more or less attractive to the Mizos. Yet, it cannot forge itself into a stable dominant party in Mizoram. Dr. C. Nanthara explains this phenomenon as being due to the absence of "structural linkages" between the tradition-bound village areas and the highly modernised central areas. His elaboration of this explanation leads us to understand that "all-India political parties are finding it hard to strike real roots in the hills (Mizo hills)" because the tradition-bound "countryside" is more inclined to accept the "glorification of Mizo culture and stress on Mizo tribal (ethnic) identity propounded by the MNF" (than to fall in line with the pull of the integrational politics of the all-India parties).<sup>3</sup>

---

3. NANTHARA (C) : The Politics of the Mizo Hills, A Doctoral Thesis submitted to the University of Delhi, 1980, pp. 361-2. (Words within brackets except 'ethnic' mine)

Dr. Kenneth Chamngliana observes that the Mizos "generally viewed the all-India political parties as anti-Christian and looked at them with suspicion." <sup>4</sup> These observations of the two Mizo scholars have certain foundations. However, a more comprehensive observation which we have been trying to deduce from this analysis is that the all-India political parties have less chance of consolidating their support in Mizoram because the regionalist sentiment, strengthened by many different socio-political factors, has made the Mizos highly intolerant of dual central control, that is, control through the administrative machinery and through the party. In other words, the Mizos want to politically maintain themselves within the maximum autonomy compatible to the federal system, unhampered by tight party control and undue interference from the Centre. Therefore, it is neither only the disparity in modernisation between the periphery and the centre, nor only the people's impression of the national parties as anti-Christian, that has made the Mizos suspicious of national parties. Rather, it is their aspiration for a maximum possible political autonomy, that has made them dislike national parties. This is why the national parties have not been able to provide lasting alternatives in Mizoram though the regionalist camp is sharply divided.

---

4. CHAMNGLIANA (K) : Christianity and the Mizo Society: The study of the impact of Christianity on the Mizo social structure.  
 A Doctoral Thesis submitted to the University of Poona, 1978.  
 (Cyclostyled copy), p.270



The federalising process and, as such, any process towards integrating the Mizo people, is more likely to be successful if it is conducted with due recognition of this sentiment. Any process, which ignores it is likely to yield unwanted negative results, for, it can push the Mizos to regionalist extremism, which, instead of strengthening federal ties, may only multiply the tendencies which are dangerous to our federal system. The danger is still very great with the pending solution of the MNF problem.

We, therefore, observe that the political development of the Mizos has essentially been the development of a regional party system. The various techniques of national party penetration have not been very fruitful. It appears that in order to ensure certain degree of stability, the Centre may have to apply the 'federal consensus' principle and co-operate with popular regional parties for some more years. The Congress(D) has been trying to appeal to the Mizos for support by adapting itself to the peculiar conditions of Mizoram. However, it can collaborate with regional parties only to the point where it would stand to lose its identity as a national party. Herein lies the inherent problem of fitting the national party into the Mizo milieu. Its chance is further reduced when there exists a stable well-organised regional party under capable leadership which can implement Congress programmes better than the local Congress.

party itself. This would tend to disprove the belief that the Central Government will be less concerned about the problems of the Mizo people if the party in power at the Centre is not running the administration in Mizoram also. It is likely that Mizoram will be given statehood in the near future which " would bring the Mizos further into the national mainstream and act as a counterpoint to the secessionist Mizo National Front." <sup>5</sup> This will go a long way in fulfilling the Mizo aspiration. Yet, it will remain to be seen how far it will go in solving the M N F problem.

It is hoped that this analysis, presented in clear and simple terms will give us more insights into political processes in Mizoram. Prospect is there for others to take up further studies in various sub-fields such as, Local Self-Government System, Administration under the District Council, Union Territory Administration, Grouping of Villages and its socio-political Impact, Rural-Urban Power Equation, Lack of Technical Education and its socio-political Impact, Christianity and Mizo Politics.

---

5. "Statehood for Mizoram likely soon." Sunday (Magazine), 25-31, July, 1982. Atanda Hazar Publication, p. 7

APPENDIX ILIST OF POLITICAL PARTIES THAT HAVE COME INTO EXISTENCE IN  
MIZORAM, WITH THE YEARS OF THEIR FORMATIONA. National Parties

- 1) Congress (1961)
- 2) Socialist Party of India (1971)
- 3) Janata (1977).
- 4) Communist Party of India ( 1979 ? )

B. Major Regional Parties

- 1) Mizo Union (1946)
- 2) United Mizo Freedom Organisation (1947)
- 3) Mizo National Front (1961)
- 4) People's Conference (1975)

C. Minor Regional Parties

- 1) Mizo Integration Party (1971)
- 2) Mizo National Union (1971)
- 3) Mizo Labour Party (1972)
- 4) Mizo People's Party (1974)
- 5) Mizo Democratic Front (1976)
- 6) Mizo Convention (1982)

Appendix I contd.D. Factional Parties

- 1) Mizo Union Council (1947)
- 2) Mizo Union Right Wing (1956)
- 3) People's Conference (B) (1978)

E. Communal Parties

- 1) Tribal Union (Pawi and Lakher combined) (1948)
- 2) Mara Freedom Party (only Lakher or Mara) (1963)
- 3) Chin National Union (only Pawi) (1963)
- 4) Paite National Council (only Paite) (1962)
- 5) Chin National Front (only Pawi) (1963)
- 6) United Pang People's Party (Pang and kin tribes) (1974)

F. Party Alliances

- 1) Eastern India Tribal Union (1957)
- 2) All Party Hills Leaders' Conference (1961)
- 3) United Mizo Parliamentary Party (1970)
- 4) Mizo Integration Council (1973)
- 5) Steering Committee (1979)

APPENDIX II

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

- 1891 : British Annexation of Mizo Hills.
- 1935 : Young Lushai Association formed.
- 1946 (Apr. 9) : Mizo Union party formed.  
(Sept.) : First Mizo Union Assembly held.
- 1947 (March) : First split in the Mizo Union.  
(April) : Advisory Sub-Committee of the Constituent Assembly visited Aizawl; A.Z. Phizo visited Mizoram.  
(July) : United Mizo Freedom Organisation formed.
- 1948 (April) : District Advisory Council Election held.  
(Dec.) : Mizo Union Civil Disobedient Demonstrations.
- 1952 (Feb.) : District Council given to the Mizos; First General Elections ( MP, MLA, D/C) held.  
(March) : Mizo Union MLAs joined Assam Congress Parliamentary Party.  
(April) : Nehru visited Aizawl; Lushai Hills Village Council Bill Passed.
- 1954 (April) : 'Lushai Hills' changed to 'Mizo Hills'.  
(August) : Chieftainship abolished; First Village Council Election held.
- 1957 (Feb.) : Second General Elections held.  
(Oct.) : United Mizo Freedom Organisation and Mizo Union (Right Wing) merged into Eastern India Tribal Union.

Appendix II contd.

- 1959 : Bamboo flowered ; Mizo Cultural Society and Mizo National Famine Front formed.
- 1960 : Capt. W. A. Sangma, then Assam Minister for Tribal Areas Development, visited Mizoram; Third Village Council Election held.
- 1961 : Assamese Official Language Bill passed; All Party Hills Leaders' Conference formed; Mizo District Congress formed.
- (Oct.) : Mizo National Front formed.
- 1962 (Feb.) : Third General Elections held.
- (Oct.) : Mass resignation of Tribal MLAs.
- 1962 : Fourth Village Council Elections; MLA bye-Election held; Mizo Union began to think in terms of Mizo State.
- 1964 : MLA bye-Election on R. Thanhlira's resignation.
- (April) : MNF leaders met Home Minister G. L. Nanda.
- 1965 (April) : Saprawnga resigned from Chief Executive Membership of Mizo District Council to demonstrate his disapproval of the party's threat of direct action against the Assam Government.
- (Oct.) : MNF leaders met Prime Minister L. B. Shastri
- 1966 (Jan.) : MNF leaders appeared before Tarlok Singh, Member of Planning Commission.
- (Feb.) : MNF leaders met Assam Governor Vishnu Sahay and also appeared before Pataskar Commission.
- (March 1) : Laldenga declared 'Independence of Mizoram'
- (Mar. 26/3) : Parliamentary Debates on calling attention motion on trouble in Mizoram.

Appendix II contd.

- 1967 (Feb. ) : Grouping of Villages started; MP and MLA Elections held.
- 1970 (April) : District Council Election (which had been postponed) held.
- 1971 (Jan.) : Mizo Union-Congress (M) alliance successfully moved no-confidence motion against Congress (I) Executive Committee of the District Council.
- (March) : Congress (I) CDM resigned under threat of no-confidence motion; Mizo Union-Congress (D) alliance put Mizo Union candidate in the post of CDM; Thangridema, a Socialist Party candidate contested parliamentary bye-election but lost.
- : Fifth Village Council Election held.
- (Sept.) : 1. Mizo Union General Assembly divided over the issue of 'Union Territory or State.'
- 1972 (Jan.) : Mizoram declared as a Union Territory by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi at Aizawl.
- (April) : First Mizoram Assembly Election held.
- 1973 (March) : Socialist Party and Mizo Labour party merged into Congress.
- (May ) : Some Mizo leaders visited Manipur at the request of the Mizo Integration Council; Mizo Union leaders took the decision of merging the party into Congress.
- 1974 (Jan.) : Merger of Mizo Union and Congress announced.
- (March) : Lieutenant-Governor S. P. Mukherjee wounded by MNF snipers.
- (June) : Human Rights Committee of Mizoram formed by Brig. Thenphunga Sailo.

Appendix II contd.

- 1975 (Jan.) : Inspector General of Police G.H.Arya and one DIG and one SP killed by MNF .
- (April) : People's Conference party formed under the leadership of Brig.T.Sailo.
- 1976 (April) : Mizo Democratic Front formed.
- (May) : Six leaders of the Mizo Democratic Front arrested under Maintenance of Internal Security Act.
- (June) : Seven leaders of People's Conference party arrested under the same Act.
- 1977 (Feb.) : Prime Minister Indira Gandhi visited Aizawl.
- (March) : People's Conference swept the Lok Sabha Election in Mizoram.
- (May) : The First Mizoram Legislative Assembly dissolved (its due term having come to an end) and President's Rule imposed; Mizoram Janaka Party formed.
- 1978 (May) : Election to the Second Mizoram Assembly held (People's Conference won majority); Joint meeting of all opposition parties held with an objective of lodging complaints on the last election.
- (Oct.) : Ruling People's Conference Party split; House dissolved, Second President's Rule imposed.
- 1979 (April) : Mid-Term Assembly Election held; People's Conference again won majority.
- (June) : PWD -SDO R.C. Chaudhury killed by MNF; Joint meeting of all opposition parties held; Steering Committee formed by the opposition parties.



Appendix II contd.

- 1980 (Jan.) : Steering Committee's candidate defeated ruling party's candidate in the mid-term Lok-Sabha elections.
- (July) : Central Government and Laldenga announced cessation of operation.
- (Oct.) : People's Conference started asking for full-fledged statehood for Mizoram.
- (Nov.) : Congress withdrew from Steering Committee.
- 1981 (March) : Laldenga proceeded to MNF Headquarters via Aizawl after 15 years of absence from Aizawl and 9 years of absence from MNF headquarters.
- (Aug.) : Four People's Conference (B) MLAs resigned "to strengthen the hands of Laldenga in his negotiations with the Central Government."
- 1982 (April) : Mizo Covention formed with a merger of the People's Conference (B), The Mizoram Janata and the Mizo Democratic Front; Laldenga left India as the talks on MNF problem were called off and MNF declared unlawful by the Central Government.

APPENDIX III

## GENERAL BACKGROUND OF SOME PROMINENT MIZO LEADERS

1. CHALCHUNGA Lawrence: He belongs to the Kalte sub-tribe and is a grand-son of thangchhuah couple. His father, Joseph Chalien-chiang is one of the first Mizo compounders. Born on November 22, 1922 at Tlabung in South Mizoram, he studied upto B.A. in Gurucharon College at Silchar (Assam); was President of the Hill Students' Federation in 1944. He began to take interest in politics since his college days. He had seven months' naval training experience in 1942. He began his political career through the Mizo Union party, and became its President from 1954 till 1972. He was elected Member of the Mizo District Council and then Assam M.L.A in 1959; resigned in 1963 as a protest against the Assamese Language Bill. He became Chief Executive Member of the District Council in March, 1971 for a short period. He was the first Chief Minister of the Union Territory of Mizoram and remained so throughout the first full term of the Mizoram Assembly. He is a mature politician known for his seasoned approach to political problems. Farming is his favourite pastime. He has now retired from active politics due to ill-health. He has four sons and seven daughters.

2. LALDENGA : He is a Fawi by sub-tribe. He was born on June 11, 1926, of devout christian parents at Pukupui village in South Mizoram. His name means, "one who was born on Sunday." He had to discontinue his school education in 1944 on account of the Second World War. He later joined the Indian Army and ended up as a havildar-clerk. After leaving the Army, he took up a cashier's job in the office of the first Mizo (then Lushai) District Council in 1954. While in District Council's Service, he took active part in socio-cultural affairs. He and his friends together formed the Mizo National Famine Front in 1959. The Front was converted into a political party as Mizo National Front, and he, having resigned from his post, became its first President. He has the qualities of an orator and charismatic leadership.

3. LALMANIA : He is Khiangte by sub-tribe. Born on September 1, 1913 at Theiriat village in South Mizoram. His father Thankunga was the first Mizo christian convert in the South (1899) and later became a Pastor. His mother, Darthuemi was the daughter of the famous Mizo prophet who was said to have seen in visions that whitemen would come from across the seas and that the Mizos would do well in accepting the message they would bring, namely, Christianity. Like Chalchhunga, he also had thangchhuah grand-parents.

He had a brilliant student's career; passed B.A. with Honours in Economics at high second class from St. Edmund's College, Shillong, under the Calcutta University in 1941. He joined the British Indian Army as Emergency Commission Officer in 1941, was regularised in 1942 and served in the 10 Baluch Regiment in Karachi and in the Ordnance Corps, was transferred to Burmese Service combining civil and army duties in 1945. In 1946, he left the Army and joined Burmese Civil Service Class One; resigned in 1947 (July) and came over to Mizoram; entered politics as the Vice President of the United Mizo Freedom Organisation in August of the same year. He later became the party's President and popularised 'join Burma' policy and then 'Hill State' movement. He was a Member of the Advisory Council from 1949 to 1952; Elected Member of the Mizo District Council in 1957 and in 1961; Assam MLA in 1953 bye-election and again in 1957, and became Parliamentary Secretary from 1957 to 1960. After retiring from active politics, he continued to involve himself actively in various social services. He was declared 'Best Home Guards Commandant' in Assam' in 1965. He had to leave his function as a news correspondent for Amrita Bazar Patrika on account of his being kidnapped by the MNF in 1966. He has retired from active politics. His hobby includes photography, reading and composition of songs. He has three daughters but no

son.

4. LALSANIA : He belongs to the Lusei sub-tribe. He is the son of a Pastor. Born at Serkawn in South Mizoram on November 3, 1919. Passed Intermediate of Arts from Calcutta University. Joined the Royal Indian Air Force as airman during the Second World War. Joined the Mizo Union Movement and became the first Chief Executive Member of the Mizo (Lushai) District Council. He later left the Mizo Union and joined the Eastern India Tribal Union which was for the 'Hill State'. He was one of the founding fathers of the Congress in Mizoram (1961) and the People's Conference in 1975. He was elected to the lone Mizo seat in the Rajya Sabha in 1978. When the People's Conference party suffered a serious split, he took side with the factional group, known as People's Conference (B) but maintained his support to the Congress (D) at the Parliamentary level. His hobby includes indoor games, reading and translation of English novels into Mizo. He has one son and five daughters.

5. SALO, Thenphunga: He is the son of Chief Vanchauva of Lunglei, South Mizoram. Born on January 1, 1922. He had a very brilliant student's career. Joined the Army before completing his Intermediate of Science course at Serampore College in Bengal during the Second World War. He was detailed to join the Chin Hills Guerilla Force against Japanese invaders. Joined

the Assam Regiment in 1944 and was sent to Burmese front again. He came over to India in 1947. He is the first Mizo officer to have been promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. He was promoted to full Colonel in 1963 and then to Brigadier in 1966. He was the Commandant of the Assam Regiment Centre, Shillong, and Brigade Commander of the 190 Mountain Brigade in N.E.F.A (now Arunachal Pradesh). He is a holder of the Ati Vishist Seva Medal. He retired from service in 1974, founded Human Rights Committee of Mizoram in the same year and began to challenge the army atrocities against innocent civilians in Mizoram. The People's Conference party was formed in 1975 and he became its first President. During Emergency, he was arrested with some of his party colleagues. With the People's Conference victory in the 1978 Assembly Election, he became the Chief Minister of Mizoram and remains so till date.

6. SAPRAWNGA (Ch) : He is a Chamngtha by sub-tribe. Hence the initial 'Ch'. Son of Tala who passed Lower Primary School. His mother was an illiterate. Born on November 17, 1914 at Lunglei in South Mizoram. He passed B.A. from Serampore College in Bengal. Served as teacher in Jorhat Christian High School in 1941-'42. joined War Service during 1943-'45. He entered into politics through the Mizo Union in 1946. He was President of South Lushai

Educational Association from 1945 to 1950. Headmaster, Lunglei High School from 1949 to 1951. He was nominated Member of the Provisional Parliament of India. He became Assam MLA in 1952 and was made Parliamentary Secretary. He was also a Member of the District Council from 1952 to 1972, and Chief Executive Member of the Council from 1954 to 1964. When Mizoram was made a Union Territory, he was again elected as MLA and became a Cabinet Minister from 1975 to 1977. He is an active christian and presently holds the office of the Treasurer of the Zoram Evangelical Fellowship. He is now one of the leaders of the Mizoram Congress (I). He is interested in agriculture. He has one son and five daughters.

APPENDIX IV

AN EXCERPT FROM LALDENGA'S PUBLIC SPEECH AT  
ZEMADANK HELIPAD ON AUGUST 26, 1981.<sup>1</sup>

He (God) out of love and fondest endearment made Mizo hnam.<sup>2</sup>  
He gave us this land and laid its boundaries. This Zoram<sup>3</sup> rightly  
is a gift we receive from God for our habitation and sustenance.  
Let us, therefore, remind ourselves that this land of ours is our  
greatest heritage from God (...) (Commenting on his 'Talk' with the  
Government of India, he went on). It appears in general that some-  
thing like the Nagaland government can be worked out, yet, we do not  
feel that therein will be the survival and security of our hnam(...)  
Our proposals to the reaching of settlement are not for the greatness  
of Zoram so that it may hold its head over other people. They are to  
the effect that we can be part of the secular, socialist and democra-  
tic India contentedly and with peace of mind. They are not made out  
of a mind for isolating Zoram, rather, they are made so that we may  
participate in it with true peace of mind. We a small stock of Zofa<sup>4</sup>  
cannot at all become part of millions of Indian people, unless we first  
put our feet on a firm and even ground. For we may become a lost hnam,  
swept away by the cultural waves of other people. Therefore, I feel  
it is a high time that the Government of India and the people become  
aware with us that we are seeking for a safeguard that our hnam may  
grow and develop along with our participation in their system.

- 
- Notes: 1) The original text is in Mizo. Translation done by the author.  
2) Mizo word 'hnam' can mean 'nation', 'tribe', 'clan', etc.  
3) It is a short form of 'Mizoram'.  
4) 'Zofa' is another way of saying 'Mizo'.



APPENDIX V

AN EXCERPT FROM BRIG. T. SAILO'S PUBLIC SPEECH ON THE OCCASION OF THE CELEBRATION OF THE PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE VICTORY IN THE ASSEMBLY ELECTION OF 1979, AT ASSAM RIFLES PARADE GROUND, AIZAWL, ON MAY 5, 1979.

(T)he Mizo people are deeply wedded to the concept of Regional Party as opposed to All India Party. I want to take this opportunity of once again clarifying our party stand vis-a-vis the All India Party. For some very valid and special reason we want to retain Regional Party. Though regional in character the People's Conference Party has a positive national outlook and stands fully committed to the integrity and solidarity of the Indian Union and will work towards strengthening the fibre of national unity and territorial integrity. Further, we have a working understanding with the ruling party at the Centre—the Janata Party. We have pledged full co-operation with the ruling party both inside and outside Parliament in their pursuit of the principle of secular democracy based on respect for human rights and the protection of the interests of the tribal groups and other backward classes and religious minority. This last election is a victory of Regional Party over All India Party.

APPENDIX VI

## PERSONS INTERVIEWED

- Bualhanga : Ex-MNF leader, now Vice-President of People's Conference Party, Bungkawm (Dawrpui), Aizawl.
- Chaltuakhuma: Ex- MDC (Mizo Union Party), Electric Veng, Aizawl.
- Colney, Hrangthanga: Ex-MNF Leader, President of Mizoram Janata, Macdonald Hill, Aizawl.
- Colney, Malsama: Ex-MNF Leader, Tuikual, Aizawl.
- Hiato, S : Chief Executive Member, Lakher District, Saiha .
- Hiphei : MLA Mizoram, Aizawl.
- Hrangzia: One of the founders of Mizo Union, once President of Mizoram Congress, Khatla, Aizawl.
- Khawtinkhuma: Ex-Mizo Union President, Ex-Minister, Mizoram U. T., Dawrpui, Aizawl.
- Lalmawia: Ex-President of IMFG, Ex-MLA (Assam), Zarkawt, Aizawl.
- Lalsawia: MP (RS), North Avenue, New Delhi.
- Pallei, S: Ex-Chairman, Lakher District Council, Saiha.
- Pakunga, A. V.: Tuikual, Aizawl.
- Sangkhuma, R. D.: Ex-MLA (Mizoram), Chandmari, Aizawl.
- Thangridema: Ex-Speaker (Mizoram), Dawrpui, Aizawl.
- Thansenga, H.: Ex-Speaker, Ex-Minister (Mizoram), Chandmari, Aizawl.
- Tlangchunga: Ex-MLA (Mizoram), Zarkawt, Aizawl.
- Venlamma, R.: Founder Secretary of the Mizo Union, Republic Veng, Aizawl.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

## A. SECONDARY SOURCE

- Blondel (J) : An Introduction to Comparative Government. London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969.
- Baveja (J. D.) : The Land Where The Bamboo Flowers, Gauhati, Assam Publication Board, 1970.
- Carcy (B. S.) & Tuck (H. N.): The Chin Hills, Vol. I, Calcutta, Firma KM, 1976 (Reprint)-(First Ed. 1932)
- Chatterji (Mrs. N.) : The Mizo Chief and His Administration, Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute, 1975.
- Chauhe (S) : Hill Politics in North East India, Calcutta, Orient Longmans, 1973.
- Davergar (K) : Political Parties, New Delhi, B. L. Publications, 1979
- Eldersveld (S. J.) : Political Parties: A Behavioural Analysis, Chicago, Rand McNally, 1964.
- Goswami (B. Z.) : Mizo Unrest- A Study in Politicisation of Culture, Jaipur, Alekh, 1979.
- Gougin (T) : The Discovery of Zoland, Churachandpur (Manipur), Zomi Press, 1980.
- Johari (J. C.) : Indian Government and Politics, Jullundur, Vishal, 1979.
- Kothari (R) : Politics of India, New Delhi, Orient Longmans, 1970.
- Lalthangliana (B) : History of Mizo in Burma, Aizawl, Zawlbuk, 1975.
- Lelmar : The Structure of Chin Society, Urbana, The University of Illinois Press, 1963.
- Lewin (T. H.) : A Fly on the Wheel, Calcutta, Firma KM, 1912.
- Lewis (T. H.) : Hill Tracts of Chittagong and the Dwellers Therein, Calcutta, Bengali Press, 1963.

- Nichols (R) : Political Parties- A Sociological Study of the Oligarchic Tendencies of Modern Democracy. New York, The Free Press, 1966.
- Nibedan (N) : Mizoram: The Dagger Brigade. New Delhi, Lancers, 1980.
- Nibedan (N) : North East India-The Ethnic Explosion. New Delhi, Lancers, 1981.
- Ostrogorski (M) : Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties. (Translated from French by Frederick Clarke) Vols. 1 & 2, London, Macmillan, 1902.
- Palombara (J. Ia) : Political Parties and Political Development. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1966.
- & Weiner (M)
- Prasad (N) : Ideology and Organisation in Indian Politics- A Study of Political Parties at the Grass-Roots. New Delhi, Allied Publishers, 1980.
- Rao (V. V.) : A Century of Tribal Politics in North East India, 1874-1974. New Delhi, S. Chand, 1976.
- Rawlinson : Cocis and Mountaineers of Tibet. Asiatic Researches II, 1792.
- Rustonji (M) : Enchanted Frontiers. Calcutta, Oxford University Press, 1973.
- Shakespeare (J) : The Lushai Kuki Clans, Part I & II. Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute, 1975.
- Thanga (L. E.) : The Mizos: A Study in racial personality. Gauhati, United Publishers, 1976.
- Weiner (M) : Party Building in a New Nation: The Indian National Congress. The University of Chicago Press, 1967.
- Weiner (M) : Sons of the Soil: Migration and Ethnic Conflict in India. Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1978.
- Weiner (M) (Ed.): State Politics in India. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1966.
- Woodthorpe (R. G.): The Lushai Expedition 1871-1872. Calcutta, Firma KLM, Indian Reprint, 1978.

## B. PRIMARY SOURCE

I. Unpublished Theses and Dissertations

- Charngliana (M) : Christianity and the Mizo Society-The Study of the Impact of Christianity on the Mizo Social Structure, University of Poona, 1976. (Doctoral)
- Ngaikho (S.T.) : History of Zomi in Mizoram and the Surrounding Area, Jawaharlal Nehru University, 1979. (M.Phil.)
- Nunthara (C) : The Politics of the Mizo Hills, Delhi University 1980. (Doctoral)
- Thansanga (H) : Government and Politics in Mizoram, Gauhati University, 1981. (Doctoral Draft)

II. Published Work in Mizo Language

- Chaitanhhma : Political History of Mizoram, Aizawl, 1981.
- Lalsawma (K.V.) : Mizoram Ekodug, Aizawl, Maramatha Press, 1980.
- Liangkhala (Rev.) : Mizo Chanchin (Mizo History), Aizawl, Mizo Academy of Letters, 1976.
- Siana (V.L.) : Mizo History, Aizawl, Lalrinaliana & Sons, 1979.
- Vanlana (R) : Ka Ram leh Kai (My Country and I), Aizawl, Zalen Printing House, 1972.
- Zawla (M) : Mizo Pinate leh en Thichte Chanchin (History of the Mizo Forefathers and their Descendants), Aizawl, Hmar Arsi Press, 1976.

III. Articles in Edited Works  
& Academic Journals

- Apter (D. E.) : "Political Parties-Introduction," in Comparative Politics: A Reader, Edited by Harry Eckstein and David E. Apter, New York, The Free Press, 1963.
- Bergmann (F. C.) : "A Critique of Recent Writings on Political Parties" in Eckstein and Apter (cited)
- Lays (C) : "Models, Theories and The Theories of Political Parties" in Eckstein and Apter (cited)
- McDonald (H. A.) : "Party Perspectives: A Survey of Writings" in Eckstein and Apter (cited)
- Nag (A. K.) : "The Ups and Downs of Mizo Politics" in North Eastern Affairs-A Quarterly Study of Trends and Events, Shillong, Oct.-Dec. 1972.
- Nag (A. K.) : "Christianity and the Role of Church in Mizoram" in North Eastern Affairs, etc. Annual, 1973.
- Neumann (S) : "Toward a Comparative Study of Political Parties" in Eckstein and Apter, (cited).
- Pakem (R) : "The Changing Power Structure of the Political Institution of Chieftainship in Mizoram," in The Journal of The North-East India Council for Social Science Research, Vol. V No. II October, 1981.
- Prasad (R. N.) : "Evolution of Party Politics in Mizoram," in North Eastern Affairs, etc. Annual, 1973.
- Wainer (M) : "Parties in Indian Politics," in Eckstein and Apter (cited)
- Mildavsky (A. B.) : "A Methodological Critique of Duverger's 'Political Parties,'" in Eckstein and Apter, (cited)

IV. Articles in Dailies  
& Periodicals

- Balachandran (P. P.) : "The Mizo Problem." Hindustan Times, Sept. 21, 1981.
- Banerjee (S) : "Many Imponderables in Mizoram." Times of India,  
Sept. 27, 1980.
- Bhaumik (K) : "Laldenga Changes Tactics." Times of India,  
Nov. 29, 1981.
- Dev (S. G.) : "Unquiet Mizoram-The Jinxed Peace Talks." Statesman (Delhi), Feb. 13, 1982.
- Ghosh (S) : "The Insurgency Game." Sunday, July 22, 1979.
- Ghosh (S) : "Mizoram: The Chess Game for Peace".  
Sunday, Aug. 24, 1980.
- Ghosh (S) : "Uneasy Calm Before the Storm." Sunday, Feb. 14, 1982.
- Gupta (S) : "From Jungle Fighters to Gentlemen." Express Magazine, Jan. 17, 1982.
- Gupta (S) : "Fight a guerilla like a guerilla." Express Magazine, Jan. 31, 1982.
- Hrahnel (Zothan-  
pari, Miss) : "Puppet Leader or Committed Rebel ? (Interview)" Society, February, 1981.
- Hrahnel (Zothanpari,  
Miss) : "Memories of Mizoram." Express Magazine, Nov. 29, 1981
- Jafa (J) : "Wooling the Mizo Public." The Statesman, Mar. 9, 1982.
- Kalbag (C) : "Mizoram-Is Laldenga Fooling Mrs. Gandhi?" New Delhi, Oct. 27-Nov. 9, 1980.
- Kalbag (C) : "Mizoram- Laldenga's War-Dance." India Today,  
Dec. 31, 1981.
- Lalchungnunga : "Mizo Christians in Majority." (Letter to Editor).  
Indian Express, Feb. 11, 1982.

- Malik (K. N.) : "Government to get tough with Mizo Insurgents", Times of India, Jan. 2, 1982.
- Mitra (P) : "Mizoram lacks basic infrastructure," Economic and Political Weekly, Mar. 13, 1982.
- Mitra (S) : "Mizoram- A State of Violence," India Today, July 16-31, 1979.
- Mukherjee (S) : "Laldenga- No Peace Yet," Contour, Mar. 16-22, 1980.
- Nivedon (N) : "The Guerilla Country," Probe India, January, 1982.
- Nunthara (C) : "Grouping of Villages in Mizoram," Economic and Political Weekly, July 25, 1981.
- Rengasani (Anrita) : "Mizoram: Tragedy of our own making," Economic and Political Weekly, April 15, 1978.
- Rengasani (Anrita) : "Mizoram: The limits of military approach," Indian Express, Jan. 29, 1982.
- Saksena (M. S.) : "Real Problems of the North-East," Times of India, Mar. 12, 1982.
- Sen (S) : "Mizoram: Upheaval in the making," India Today, Oct. 15, 1981.
- Singh (R) : "Laldenga's Demand for Greater Mizoram," Indian Express, April 7, 1981.
- Singh (S. N.) : "The Seven Sisters," India Today, Oct. 1-15, 1980.
- Suri (S) : "Towards National Identity (Regional Forces not a Threat)," Times of India, April 13 and 14, 1982.
- : "Slipping in the Mizo Hills," (Weekly Notes), Economic and Political Weekly, June 24, 1967.
- : "The North-East in Turmoil: The Search For Peace with honour," Himmat (Special Supplement) (The article appears to have been written on May 9, 1980, but, the date of publication of the copy is not indicated.)



- : "Tripura - The Mizo Connection" (Current Events),  
India Today, Aug. 16-31, 1980.
- : "People's Conference to oppose Laldenga." (Special  
Correspondent's Report). Times of India, Sept. 20, 1980.
- : "Mizoram : Contending Factions." Economic and Political Weekly, Jan. 17, 1981.
- : "'Statehood for Arunachal, Mizoram likely.' (Special  
Correspondent's Report). Times of India, Feb. 4, 1981.
- : "Laldenga's bid for solution to Mizo Problem,"  
Patriot, Mar. 3, 1981.
- : "North-East- Dangers Persist." Delhi Recorder,  
Mar. 15-Apr. 14, 1981.
- : "Face to Face: Laldenga-'Our Demands will not threaten  
India's Integrity." New Delhi, April 13-26, 1981.
- : "Remove Saïlo before Talks, says Laldenga",  
Indian Express, Sept. 16, 1981.
- : "Dealing with MNF." (Editorial) Indian Express, Jan. 16, 1982.
- : "Centre had offered statehood to Mizoram" (UNI Report)  
Times of India, Jan. 25, 1982.
- : "Confrontation" (Comments). Patriot, Feb. 9, 1982.
- : "Saïlo seeks Congress-I help to end Mizo Insurgency"  
(UNI Report). Times of India, Feb. 16, 1982.
- : "The Government does not trust the people of Mizoram"  
(Conversation). Sunday, Feb. 28-Mar. 6, 1982.

V. Government Publications:

Statistical Handbook(s), Mizoram . Aizawl, Department of Economics and Statistics, Government of Mizoram, 1974, 1976, 1978, 1981.

Parliamentary Debates -Lok Sabha, 3rd Series, Vol. 51 March 1-15, 1966.

Report on General Election to Mizoram U.T. Legislative Assembly, 1972, Chief Electoral Officer, Government of Mizoram.

General Elections to the Lok Sabha-1977 Mizoram( A Statistical Report) Chief Electoral Officer, Mizoram.

General Election (Mizoram Assembly) Results 1978, Press Information Bureau, Aizawl, Government of India.

Mizoram U.T. Results- Election to the Legislative Assembly, 1979, Press Information Bureau, Aizawl, Government of India, May 3, 1979.

Statistical Report on General Elections to the Lok Sabha 1980, Mizoram, Chief Electoral Officer, Mizoram.

Seminar Papers on "Strategy for Planned Economic Development of Mizoram," Directorate of Information, Public Relations and Tourism, Government of Mizoram, Sept. 26, 1980.

"Mizoram Towards Peace," New Delhi, Lancers (on behalf of Directorate of Information, Public Relations and Tourism, Government of Mizoram), 1980.

"States of our Union-Mizoram," Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1979.

Political Parties vis-a-vis Recent Killings in Mizoram, P. B. Rosanga, Minister of Agriculture, Government of Mizoram, 1980.

Khaw sawikhawm leh hriau hnanga inrikrapna hian Mizoramah ramna leh huanha a thlen thei lo, Directorate of Information, Public Relations & Tourism, Government of Mizoram, May 25, 1979. (Village Grouping and armed terrorism cannot bring peace and security to Mizoram)

Stop Killing, Violence, Brig. T. Sailo's Radio Talk, DIFR & T, Mizoram, Mar. 25, 1981

Prime Minister Morarji Desai's Speech at Aizawl, DIFR & T, Mizoram, Nov. 1978.

Brig. T. Sailo's Message to the underground MNF, DIFR & T, Mizoram, May 2, 1981.

## VI. Party Documents

### a) Mizoram Congress

- : Mizoram Congress (I) Constitution, 1978.
- : The Need, Objectives, Structure and Functions of North Eastern Congress (I) Co-ordination Committee, 1981.
- : Lalthanhawia, Mizoram Congress (I) President's Memorandum to the Prime Minister of India, Dated Jan. 25, 1980.
- : Mizoram Congress (I) Ieh Inbiakna (Mizoram Congress (I) and the Talk), Pamphlet Dt. May 23, 1981.
- : Lalsangzuala, Mizoram Congress (I) General Secretary's write-up, Dated July 19, 1980.
- : Congress to bul leh a Tum (Foundations and Objectives of Congress), Paper of Mizoram Congress Seminars held at different places in Mizoram during Feb.-April, 1981.

### b) Mizo National Front

- : MNF Pawl thiltumte Hrilnfiahna (MNF Party's Aims and Objectives-An Explanation), Dated Nov. 16, 1972.
- : Mizoram Politik Chanchin (Political History of Mizoram), Dec. 29, 1973.
- : MNF Presidential Order No. MS. 4/67/114 of September 28, 1967.
- : Saingheka, MNF Home Minister's Letter to all the MNF Chief Commissioners, No. 9. GS. (H) -Pol/67/1/ Dated Jan. 27, 1967.
- : MNF Foreign Minister's Speech, Dated Mar. 1, 1967.
- : Zoram Zalonna Lunaphum (The Foundation of Zoram's Freedom), 1980.
- : Mizoram Marches Towards Freedom (Laldenga's Masterpiece).

c) Mizo Union

- : The Original Constitution of the Mizo Union, 1946.
- : Mizo Union Nawrhma Thupuan (Mizo Union Demonstration Notice). No. 31/38 of Dec.1, 1948.
- : Mizo Union Pamphlet, Dated July 8, 1947.
- : Mipuite hnena Pawl Bruatitute Ngorna (Appeal to the people by party leaders), Dated Aug. 19, 1958.
- : Mizo Union Thupuan (Mizo Union Notices), Nos. 31/50 of Aug. 18, 1950 and 31/51 of Aug. 31, 1950.
- : Draft Constitution of Mizoram, submitted to the Constituent Assembly in 1946.
- : Mizo Union Thupuan Pasarihna (The Seventh Mizo Union Notice), Dated July 28, 1947.
- : Mizo Union Dinman (The Position of the Mizo Union), Pamphlet Dated Aug. 9, 1947.
- : Tunlai Mizo Union Dinman (The Present position of the Mizo Union), A pamphlet issued by R. Vanlawma as the Party's General Secretary, Dated Dec. 2, 1946.

d) People's Conference

- : Constitution of the People's Conference, 1981. (Amended).
- : People's Conference's Policy leh Hriat atana Thata (People's Conference's Policy and other relevant matters), 1979.
- : Enqvangin Nge? (Why?), (Pamphlet), 1979.
- : People's Conference Hruaitute Chanchin (Histories of People's Conference Leaders), 1977.
- : Public Speech by Brig. T. Saile at A.R. Ground, Aizawl, on May 5, 1979.

e) Others

- : (Original) Constitution of Mizo Union Zalenna Pawl, (which was another name for the United Mizo Freedom Organisation), 1947.
- : (Original) Constitution of Mizo Democratic Front, 1976.
- : Memorandum submitted to Prime Minister of India by the Steering Committee of Mizoram, Dated Sept. 2, 1981.
- : Proceedings of a meeting of the accredited leaders of all Lushai Political Parties, held at Aizawl on Aug. 14, 1967.
- : A Joint Memorandum, submitted to the President of India by Mizoram Congress, People's Conference (B), Mizoram Janata Party, Mizo Union, Mizo Democratic Front, 1980.

VII. Other Sources

- : Superintendent, Lushai Hills Memo. No. 6927-76 G. of 21.8.47
- : Zoram Uriattina (A Local periodical), Dated 31.8.1954
- : Encwawingna MNF a lo phir? (Why the MNF has Split?). (A pamphlet published by the MNF Returnees Rehabilitation Committee, Aizawl, 1979)
- : Ch. Chhunga's Letter to MNF Home Minister Sainchaka, Dated 11.1.1967
- : Hmartawndung's Pamphlet "Valho Zawn Aoe i duh Nabaia Dis" Dated 5.5.1947.
- : The Draft New Constitution of Burma, published by the IBFO dated 8.10.1947.
- : Memorandum, submitted by the Human Rights Committee of Mizoram to the Prime Minister of India, 1974.
- : Memorandum, submitted by Ch. Chhunga, Chief Minister of Mizoram to the Prime Minister of India on the subject of settlement and demarcation of the northern boundary of Mizoram

- : Background Papers (Oct, 1980) published by The Build Documenta-  
tion Centre, Bombay.
- : Bhen Lincobun (National Foundation), Mizo Students' Union  
Annual Magazine, Shillong, 1980.
- : Report and Papers: First Session-odn - Seminar on Mizo History,  
History Association of Mizoram, Aizawl, 1961.
- : Laldenga's Public Speech at Zombark Holipad on Aug. 26, 1961.