

THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION OF THE MIZO INSURGENCY
1965 - 1986

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C E R T I F I C A T E

Certified that the dissertation entitled 'THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION OF THE MIZO INSURGENCY ~~1965-1986~~ 1965-1986' submitted by Miss Mary Zirhmingthangi Khiangte in partial fulfilment of prescribed requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy is her original work and has been carried out under my supervision and guidance.

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P R E F A C E

The Mizo National Front (M.N.F.) under the leadership of Laldenga had waged a war against the Indian Government for over two decades. The main objective of the M.N.F. was to secede from the Indian Union and to set up an independent sovereign Mizoram State. The M.N.F. had relentlessly pursued the fulfillment of their objective by taking to guerrilla warfare.

Moreover, the insurgency movement in Mizoram was further complicated by the role of certain foreign powers, particularly Pakistan and China. The role of Pakistan and China in supporting the cause of the M.N.F. of great significance and importance particularly so in focussing the desired attention on the M.N.F. movement and its objective.

Chapter 1 deals basically with the origins of the M.N.F. movement. The deep-rooted causes which lie in history and the various other factors which contributed to the open manifestations of anger, and frustration against the Indian Government which culminated in the outbreak of insurgency.

Chapter II is a study of the gradual growth of the movement and the manner in which the M.N.F. had organised itself into a well-functioning body. It also studies in detail the exact nature of the aims and objectives of the movement and the alternative the M.N.F. would provide for the people.

Chapter III is a study of the clandestine relations which were established by the M.N.F. with certain foreign powers. It also studies the objectives of the M.N.F. in their desire to establish relations with foreign powers and also the interest of the foreign powers in the secessionist movement in Mizoram.

Chapter IV is a study of the kind of assistance that was provided to the M.N.F. by Pakistan and China and the impact it had on India's relations with Pakistan and China. It also deals with the M.N.F. and its link with the other group of insurgents in North-East India.

Chapter V is a study of the peace process which took place to bring an end to the insurgency movement in Mizoram.

Chapter VI is an overview of the outcome of the M.N.F. movement and its effects on the horizon of Mizoram.

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Chapter 1

THE ORIGINS OF THE MIZO MOVEMENT

MIZORAM - A PROFILE: LAND AND THE PEOPLE

Mizoram, prior to 1954 was known as the Lushai Hills and it formed a part of the State of Assam. It was constituted into a Union Territory on 21 January, 1972. It attained its present status as the twenty-third State of the Indian Union on 18 February, 1987.

Geographically, Mizoram is a hilly area. The hills in Mizoram run from north to south. It occupies an area of 21,087 square kms. and has a population of 4,93,757 according to 1981 Census. Mizoram consists of three major districts - Aizawl, Lunglei and Chhimituipui. It is bounded in the north by the Cachar district of Assam, in the east by Burma, in the west by Bangladesh and Tripura. Mizoram occupies an area of strategic importance, having a total boundary length of about 620 miles with Burma and Bangladesh. The Tropic of Cancer cuts through the State of Mizoram.

There is an abundance of fauna and flora in the State. Tropical trees and plants thrive on the hills. Rare Orchids are found in Mizoram and is the pride of the State. However, no minerals of economic value have been discovered yet in Mizoram. The exploitation of mineral resources have been hampered by the lack of transport communication, dearth of capital, lack of cheap-power and labour supply.

The main occupation of the people is agriculture. Paddy is the main crop of Mizoram and besides paddy, maize,

potato, ginger and a variety of fruits are grown. In Mizoram, the ownership of land is vested in the government, which issues periodic pattas to individual cultivators. The Village Council distributes the plots of land among the villagers by ballot for cultivation every year. Therefore, private ownership of land does not exist in Mizoram.¹ The agricultural system practiced most extensively in Mizoram is of the primitive type of "jhum" or "slash and burn" which proves detrimental because the top layer of soil becomes loose and soft and soil erosion takes place very frequently. The government is attempting to bring a change to the practice of "jhum" by introducing "terrace cultivation" which is ideal for the hill slopes.

By faith, the Mizos are pre-dominantly Christians. This is due to the Christian missionaries who came to Mizoram as early as 1891 and spread the goodness of Christianity. They toured the entire villages and worked hard to learn and reduce the Mizo language to writing, using the Roman script with slight modifications.² Enchanted by the new religion the Mizos clung to it with dedication and submission so much so that the entire Mizo social life has been transformed into the new Christian culture and more than ninety

1 V. Venkata Rao, H. Thansanga, Niru Hazarika, A Century of Government and Politics in North-East India vol. III - Mizoram, 1987, p. 2.

2 R.N. Prasad, Government and Politics in Mizoram, 1987, p. 64.

percent are now Christians. There are also a number of Hindus and Buddhists in the State. But this is confined to the Chakmas from Bangladesh and Riangs from Tripura.

Ethnically, there are about ten district ^{wise} tribes in Mizoram: the Lusei, Ralte, Hmar, Pawi, Chakma, Riang, Paite, Lakher and others. Each of these tribes have distinct culture and language. However, the different tribes adhere to one collective "Mizo" identity. The different tribes have attained a sense of linguistic and territorial unity cutting away any differences which existed previously. The Mizos are a close-knit homogenous society with no class distinction from social, religious and economic point of view and no discrimination on grounds of sex.³ The Mizos basically live a simple life. Educationally, the Mizos are very conscious. Mizoram occupies the second position in literacy percentage in the whole country. Education awareness was brought by the Christian missionaries to Mizoram. The percentage of literates in Mizoram according to the 1981 Census is 60%. However, though formal education is widespread in the State, there is a lack of technical education which results in students having to study outside the State.

Mizoram, today as a young State stands on the threshold of a new era of development and progress leaving behind its

3 Op. cit., p. 5.

turbulent past of two decades of insurgency. The government of Mizoram and the people in particular are now very much a part of the national mainstream of the Indian Union.

THE ROLE OF THE BRITISH

The British annexed the whole of the Mizo Hills by 1895. The roots of insurgency can be traced far back into the period of the British rule who were intent on driving a wedge between the tribals and the plains. The British followed deliberate steps to keep the tribal areas separate from the rest of India. Just as the British followed a policy of 'Divide and Rule' towards the Hindus and Muslims after the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, the British also were determined to separate the hill people from the plains. Therefore, the genesis of differences between the tribals and non-tribals lie deep in the history of India.

On 13 August 1896, the Chin Hills Regulations was framed and introduced in the Lushai Hills under the British administration. As per this regulation, no outsider other than the inhabitants of the Lushai Hills were permitted to enter the hills without the Inner Line Pass which was to be issued by the Deputy Commissioner. The Pass was subject to such limitations as may be deemed necessary. This was basically promulgated in order to control commercial relations of the British subjects with the frontier tribes, inhabiting the eastern, northern and south-eastern borders of the

Brahmaputra Valley.⁴ This measure however served to bring an awareness of racial differences between the tribals and plain people which was to widen significantly in the course of history and assume undesirable dimensions.

Again by the Government of India Act 1935, provisions were made for 'Excluded Areas' and 'Partially Excluded Areas'. The Lushai Hills fell under the categorization of "Excluded Areas" besides the Naga Hills and North Cachar Hills. The Excluded Areas were the tracts where any advanced form of government was not a possibility because of the backwardness of the area. These areas were to be administered by the Governor directly and therefore the Central nor the Provincial legislature was to have any authority to enact laws pertaining to the Excluded Areas. The Governor, however may direct any law or Act of the Provincial Legislature applied to these tracts, subject to exceptions or modifications, he deem right. There was no scope of popular participation in the government as the Excluded Areas did not have any elected representative. The Excluded Areas continued only technically within a province, but the administration of the Excluded Areas became entirely different from that of the other areas of the province for which the ministers were responsible to the elected Legislature.⁵

4 R.N. Prasad, Government and Politics in Mizoram, 1987, p. 31.

5 Op. cit., pp. 47-48.

The policy of the British in adopting the above policy was viewed with resentment by the nationalist leaders in India. It was regarded as indicative of distrust about the goodwill and consideration of the politically conscious Indians about their tribal brethren. The British kept these areas segregated and closed from the rest of the country permitting only Christian missionaries to enter the areas. The policy of the British, thus resulted in the tribals never feeling at home with the rest of the country and their inability to bring themselves into the national mainstream even after independence. It gave birth to the spirit of independence among the tribals of North-Eastern India.

Thus, with the British having had sown the seeds of segregation between the tribals and the non-tribals, it is not surprising that there arose a deep-seated resentment between them. The animosity which existed was to later manifest itself into a serious problem and due to various other factors which aggravated the situation, the insurgency broke out in the Mizo Hills.

The immediate cause of the insurgency was the occurrence of the famine which acted as a catalyst to unleash latent forces which played significant roles in the eventual outbreak of the insurgency.

THE FAMINE 1958-1959

The famine which occurred in 1958-59 occupies an

important chapter in the history of Mizoram. It gave birth to a phase in history which till today stands vivid and unforgettable in the minds of the Mizo people. The famine is locally in the Mizo hills known as Mao Tam.⁶ According to the legends of the tribesman it occurs every fifty years. It had ravaged the Mizo hills in 1862 and 1910 earlier and the next Mao Tam is predicted for the year 2007.⁷ The horrors and the havoc caused by the famine, though not written in any record is indelibly stamped in the minds of the tribesmen.

The bamboo infested forests of Mizoram, after the interval of about fifty years flower and then bear fruits. These are devoured by the rodents and due to unexplainable reasons, the rodent population multiply at alarming rate from an estimated normal litter of five to twenty. The increase in the rodent population symbolises the shadow of death which every tribesman is afraid of. The rats eat up the bamboo flowers and fruits and after exhausting all the remains of such strike out at other areas, eating up whatever came their way. Paddy fields were destroyed and rice stalks were devoured up. No cultivation was safe from the ravages of the rodents. The rats nibbled off as much as twenty acres of standing paddy crops in a single night.⁸ The attempts

6 Mao Tam : The term 'Mao' means 'bamboo' and 'Tam' means to 'die'.

7 Nirmal Nibedon, Mizoram - The Dagger Brigade, 1980, p.35.

8 Op. cit., p. 35.

of the tribesman to guard their fields proved futile in the face of such a calamity. The rodents had destroyed the tribesman physically and mentally. The total destruction of crops was followed by a famine of wide scale which brought forth starvation, deaths, miseries and hopelessness. The situation in the hills was grim and forbidding with people having to venture out in the deep forests in search of any edible leaves or roots which would to a pitiable extent give them something to eat at least. The entire hills was in dire straits calling for emergency relief measures.

THE ASSAM GOVERNMENT: ITS ROLE
IN PRECIPITATING THE CRISIS

Mizoram then was a part of Assam as one of the districts, its administration being under the Mizo Hills District Council which was controlled by the Mizo Union.⁹ The impending famine was foreseen by the leaders in the District Council and that was why on 29 October, 1958, the Mizo Hills District Council passed a resolution stating that -

With the flowering of the bamboos in the Mizo District (the) rat population has phenomenally increased and it is feared that in the next year (1959) the whole district would be affected. As a precautionary measure against the imminence of famine, following the flowering of the bamboos, the District Council feels that the government be moved to sanction to the Mizo District Council,

9 The Mizo Union was the oldest regional party. It was formed on 9 April, 1946 under R. Vanlawma.

a sum of Rs. 15 lakhs to be expended on a test relief measure for the whole of the Mizo district including the Pawi - Lakher region.

The Assam Government under the Chief Ministership of Chaliha could not fully grasp the seriousness of the situation and hence did not pay due attention to the resolution of the District Council primarily due to two reasons. First, the Chief Minister Chaliha disliked the M.U. which controlled the District Council. Second, the tradition of flowering of bamboos, the consequent increase in rat population followed by famine may not come true at all.¹⁰ Contrary to Chaliha's presumption, the famine struck at the very core of the Mizo Hills spelling destruction in every nook and corner. In spite of the severity of the situation, the Assam Government was slow to take stock of the situation and to take immediate necessary relief measures. The situation in the hills and the continued neglect by the Assam Government prompted the District Council member, Vanlalbuka into saying that 'If we continue to be neglected ... the people's feeling will be secession from Assam'.¹¹

The eventual relief measures carried out by the Assam Government proved to be of little help as such,

10 V. Venkat Rao, H. Thansanga, Niru Hazarika, A Century of Government and Politics in North-East India vol. III - Mizoram, 1987, pp. 235-36.

11 Ibid., p. 236.

because much harm had already taken place. The first relief supply started coming only in June 1960. Whatever little immediate supplies arrived, came on head loads requiring a man to carry 20 kilograms and to go fifteen miles a day and go back the same day.¹² It was an impossible task to reach the interior villages for relief supplies. The air dropping of food supplies proved impractical, because the gunny bags broke upon impact with the ground which was dry and barren. The lack of proper means of transport and communication greatly hampered the supply of government relief. The indifferent attitude shown by the Assam Government towards the sufferings and plight of the Mizos generated a feeling of alienation in the mind of the common Mizo man.

This feeling of alienation was enhanced by the fact that Mizoram under the Assam Government had not made much headway in developmental plans and progress as a whole. Mizoram being a hilly and isolated area had always been backward in terms of communication, transport, electricity, water facilities, food supply etc. and the overall development programmes carried out by the Assam Government was insufficient and lacked proper co-ordination. The 'jhum' system which was practiced by the Mizos had no alternative inspite of the government being aware of its harmful effects.

12 Nirmal Nibedon, Mizoram - The Dagger Brigade, 1980 p. 38.

Moreover, the products in Mizoram had no good market due to unmotorable means of transport. The road communication within the district and also outside the district was deplorable. The Sairang-Aizawl and Demagiri-Lunglei roads, road alignment of Aizawl-Lunglei via Thenzawl, Aizawl-Champhai roads were initiated by W.E. Knight way back in 1894-97. However, these roads were not developed and improved upon by the Assam Government. The Aizawl-Silchar road, the only link through which Aizawl has with the rest of the country was constructed only during the second world war.

Moreover, the officers in charge of the developmental plans and progress in the Mizo District were mostly from outside the District who did not make sincere efforts to work in harmony with the local people and to understand their problems. They were thus, resented by the local people and looked upon with suspicion.

The attitude of the Assam Government was regarded as 'step-motherly' towards the Mizo Hills and this feeling of mistrust was strengthened by the language question. The Assam Legislative Assembly passed the Assam Official Language Act in 1960 which declared Assamese as the State language. The Mizo Hills District Council opposed the act because Assamese was an alien language for the Mizos. In spite of the fact that the Act made provision for the use of any tribal language in the tribal areas, the sentiments of

the Mizo people were hurt. A feeling that Assam was intent on totally subjugating the Mizos was felt and this strengthened the 'anti-vai' feeling which was taking root in the Mizo psyche.¹³

BIRTH OF THE MIZO NATIONAL FRONT (M.N.F.)

The Mizo National Front (MNF) did not come into being overnight. The failure of the Assam Government in tackling the famine and its devastating effects galvanised into action dynamic personalities who were to be the main focus of attention for the next two decades or so in the Mizo Hills.

Laldenga was employed as a clerk in the District Council when famine occurred in the district and he watched with continued dismay and disappointment over the manner the Assam Government was dealing with the situation. Laldenga was a man whose name was going to be on the lips of every Mizo and the administration for a long time to come. Laldenga, prior to his appointment as a clerk in the District Council had served in the Indian Army as a Havaldar clerk and had seen more of the country than his other fellow men.

The inability of the Assam Government to provide necessary relief measures to the Mizos prompted men like

13 Vai - a term used to denote a non-Mizo especially people not from the hills.

Laldenga to come to the aid of his own people and provide necessary measures to ease the burden of the people. He inconspicuously, left the District Council and he joined a non-political organisation known as the 'Mizo Cultural Society' which was being run by John P. Manliana. The cultural society was gradually converted into a welfare organisation and it resolved to help the famine-stricken people and it came to be known as the Mizo National Famine Front (MNFF). Laldenga was elected as the Secretary of the new organisation. The front's main objective was to recruit volunteers to provide help and assistance to the famine stricken people in the interiors. The leaders of the MNFF proved their zeal for the welfare of the people.¹⁴ During the visit of the Chief Minister of Assam and Capt. Williamson Sangma, the then Tribal Areas Minister, the MNFF to show their displeasure over the callous attitude of the government staged a demonstration and procession and they also demanded immediate food supply and relief measures.

The MNFF won the hearts of the people due to their active participation in helping the people and easing their burden. The MNFF took all the credit for fighting the famine and helping the suffering people. Even the help rendered by the Government of Assam was also projected and manned by the Mizo National Famine Front. Thus the Front

14 B.B. Goswami, Mizo Unrest: A Study in Politicization of Culture, 1979, p. 142.

gained considerable popularity on account of its relief work.¹⁵

The end of the famine saw the conversion of the welfare organisation into a political party. The Mizo National Famine Front consequently came to be known as the Mizo National Front and the MNF was thus formed on 22 Oct., 1961.

The newly established MNF appointed Laldenga as the President, R. Vanlawma as the General Secretary and Rohnuna as Joint Secretary. The headquarter of the MNF was set up at Aizawl and there were two divisional head-quarters at Lunglei and Lawngtlai under Divisional Presidents. There was a further division of Divisional headquarters into blocks. The MNF later proved to be the harbinger of future political agitation and upheaval.¹⁶

However, at this stage Laldenga was not sure whether to launch a freedom movement or capture the seat of power from the Mizo Union.¹⁷ He ultimately decided to contest for the District Council elections in 1962. However the two candidates of the M.N.F. John Manliana and Vanlawma failed to get themselves elected. This, however, did not

15 R.N. Prasad, Government and Politics in Mizoram, 1987, p. 162.

16 Ibid., p. 163.

17 Nirmal Nibedon, Mizoram - The Dagger Brigade, 1980, p. 40.

deter the M.N.F. and it in 1963 in the by-elections to the Assam Legislative Assembly, the M.N.F. gave a stunning blow to Mizo Union when they captured two seats out of the three seats. The two leaders of the Mizo Union, Saprawnga and Bawi Chhuaka were defeated by the MNF candidates Manliana and Lalmawia. However, the participation of the MNF in democratic and constitutional elections was merely a plank for fulfilling the political and extra-constitutional objectives they had promised to the people.¹⁸

There was a gradual shift in the aims of the M.N.F. and the focus was now on attaining independence and sovereignty for Mizoram. The manifesto of the M.N.F. promised three things to the common man which made an emotional appeal to the uncritical and simple folk -

1. The integration of all areas, inhabited by the Mizos, lying in different political units like Manipur, Tripura, Cachar, Burma and Bangladesh but contiguous to the Mizo Hills District.
2. The secession of the Mizo Hills District from the Indian Union and to become independent.
3. The MNF would improve the social, political and economic conditions of the Mizos and would safeguard Christianity which was in the danger of being exterminated by Hinduism.

18 Ibid., p. 44.

The M.N.F. started its anti-India campaigns on organised lines with separatist and secessionist tendencies. The M.N.F. began its separatist movement on a wide scale. The catch word of the M.N.F. and its followers was freedom or 'Zalenna' from the Indian Union. The promises of the M.N.F. was so desirable compared to the harsh realities which existed in the hills that many people were swayed by the M.N.F. The prospects of a bright future in 'independent Mizoram' was a dream that all the Mizo youths sought to realise. The most popular slogan of the M.N.F. was "Mizoram for the Mizos". Laldenga openly exploited the grievances the people harboured against the Assam Government into a full scale anti-Indian feelings. Laldenga in his speeches said that the Mizos being of Mongloid origin with different dialects, culture, customs and religion from the rest of India should not remain in India. He emphasized that there was no kinship between the Indians and the Mizos and in addition, Laldenga also propagated among the Mizo people that the torture and slaughter of minorities were rampant in every part of India. He also preached that a large number of Christian Mizos, Nagas and Muslims had been massacred. He conveniently twisted the meaning of the term 'Hindustan' into that of Hindustan being a home of the Hindus where there is no place for other racial groups. He called for the Mizos to fight for their freedom from

the bondage of Indian domination.¹⁹ The continued existence of Mizoram within the Indian Union would spill the very doom of the Mizos according to the propaganda of the MNF.

On 30th October 1965, the MNF submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister of India which was signed by Laldenga, President and Liansuala, General Secretary, which stated that

This memorandum seeks to represent the case of the Mizo people for freedom and independence, for the right of territorial unity and solidarity; and for the realization of which a fervent appeal is submitted to the Government of India.

The memorandum further stated that

The Mizos from time immemorial lived in complete independence without foreign interference Their territory or any part thereof had never been conquered or subjugated by their neighbouring States The Mizos stood as a separate nation even before the advent of the British Government having a nationality distinct and separate from that of India. They are a distinct nation created, moulded and nurtured by God and nature

The Mizo people had not been able to feel at home with Indians or India, nor have they been able to feel that their joys and sorrows have really been shared by India. They do not, therefore feel Indian. Being created a separate nation they cannot go against the nature to cross the barriers of nationality. They refuse to occupy a place within India as they consider it to be unworthy of their national dignity and harmful to the interests of their prosperity.

19 Laldenga, Mizoram Marches Towards Freedom (Pamphlet), 1973.

Laldenga relentlessly pursued his policy of 'anti-vai' and through his oratory skills convinced many people into believing his propaganda. The memorandum speaks nothing other than an attempt to widen the gulf between the Mizos and the non-Mizos which had long been felt during the famine. The conception of Laldenga was narrow and limited bordering only on anti-Indian sentiments. He exploited this sentiment to the hilt and succeeding too to a large extent. The main weapon he used was to emphasize over again and again the basic differences that existed between the Mizos and the rest of the country. He refused to accept the fact that such differences were only natural and if accepted positively could go a long way in building the nation stronger.

THE ROLE OF RELIGION

The Mizos were traditionally animists. They believed in spirits and offered sacrifices for good health and harvest. The religion of the Mizos had its origin in the consciousness of their need for deliverance from physical illness and from other misfortunes which they attributed to evil spirits.²⁰

20 Rev. Liangkhaia (Mizo Historian): Report of the North East Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Areas Sub Committee, Vol. VII, pp. 1022-23.

However, the traditional religion or belief is, today of academic interest because all these primitive religious practices have since been discarded and forgotten as the Mizos have embraced a new religion, Christianity with so much dedication and submission that their entire social life and thought process have been altogether transformed to an extent which is amazing.²¹ As mentioned earlier, it was this very issue of religion which Laldenga exploited to the maximum. The Mizos, after embracing Christianity had come to be very protective about their new found religion. The M.N.F. realised immediately that if they could exploit the 'religious card' they would be successful in winning over mass support and sympathy for their cause. The M.N.F. stepped up their propaganda and declared that "They (Indian Government) have been pursuing a policy of exploitative measures in their attempt to wipe out Christianity, sole religion, and no consideration has ever been paid to our national way of life".²² In such a situation continued allegiance to the Indian Union would bring about the complete destruction of the Christian religion and eventually Hinduism would be forced upon the Mizos. This generated an atmosphere of fear, psychosis among the

21 R.N. Prasad, Government and Politics in Mizoram, 1987, p. 64.

22 MNF Declaration of Independence.

simple-minded Mizos who were ready to go any length to protect their religion. The M.N.F. besides exploiting racial and cultural differences propagated that it was only independence from India which could safeguard the religion of the Mizo from destruction. They also issued provocative statements alleging discrimination by the Indian government on religious grounds. Laldenga, who was the Secretary, External Affairs of the MNF, alleged that 'the Indian officials exclusively appointed Sundays for their official visits to Mizoram, which according to him entailed much labour and official works on Sundays as to make the Mizo Christians unable to observe Sundays.²³ These gestures were regarded as a step to pressurize the Mizo people to pay less regard to their religion. Lalthangliana also stated that 'the Mizo people do not want to be dominated by and assimilated to idol worshippers'.²⁴ The origin of insurgency was also the real result of the religious grievances of the Mizo people. Moreover, the lack of proper understanding of the Mizo people in relation to the rest of the country and the other cultures and religion made it easier for the M.N.F. to carry out their misleading propaganda. The common understanding of the Mizos was that any attempt to eradicate Christianity from Mizoram would spell the doom of their very existence since the

23 Lalthangliana, Secretary External Affairs (MNF), Government of Mizoram, Letter to Stanley Nicholas Roy, General Secretary APHLC No. 20(1) EA/66, Aizawl, 13 March 1967.

24 Ibid.



whole Mizo life and social activities mostly revolved round the Church.

FAILURE OF ASSAM GOVERNMENT IN
UNDERSTANDING THE MNF AND ITS OBJECTIVES

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The Mizo National Front after being converted into a political party took part in the political process by participating in the elections to the District Council in 1962 and 1963. The participation of the MNF within the framework of the constitutional system hoodwinked the government into assuming that the MNF was keen to exist as any other political party. They were totally unprepared for the coming secessionist movement under the aegis of the MNF. There were severe criticism levelled against the policy of the government and certain personalities as well. The most vocal was against the Chief Minister Chaliha, who was thought to be too soft to the MNF. He was accused of giving out too lenient a treatment when in 1964 he ordered the release of Laldenga and Lalnunuwawia, President and Vice-President of the MNF respectively, after they had been arrested by the district administration while returning from East Pakistan.²⁵ The Chief Minister had been assured by Laldenga that the MNF would not resort to any violent activities and that they regretted their visit to East

25 B.K. Roy Burman, Demographic and Socio-Economic Profiles of the Hill Areas of North-East India, Delhi, 1970, p. 134.



Pakistan without any valid documents. The MNF chief however foxed the Chief Minister as by not standing by the assurances which he had given to him in writing.

It was also being assessed that the Deputy Commissioner did not advice the government correctly and failed to take adequate precautionary measure. It was often stated that although a Superintendent of Police was posted in the district in 1963, he was transferred in 1964, and on the advice of the DC no other SP was posted in the district.²⁶ Clarifying the position in this regard, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, Minister for Irrigation and Power, told the Lok Sabha on March 3, 1966 that from the beginning the DC in the Mizo Hills also discharged the functions of the SP. He was assisted by the Commandant of Ist Assam Rifles, posted at Aizawl, in maintenance of law and order in the district. As the DC became increasingly busy, in 1963, he enlisted the help of an SP. But the new system was not found practical and hence the SP was reverted to the State Government.²⁷ However inspite of the explanation and justification it cannot be denied that the district officials were to an extent responsible for the events in

26 Dr. Aminesh Ray, Mizoram, Dynamic of Change, 1982, p. 157.

27 Debate on the adjournment motion on the situation in Mizo District, March 3, 1966, Lok Sabha Debates, vol. LI, Column 3728.

Mizoram. The maintenance of law and order were in their hands and their failure to make correct and prompt assessment of the prevailing situation precipitated the crisis.

THE ROLE OF THE MIZO UNION

The Mizo Union, the oldest regional party in the Mizo District was also responsible for the outbreak of the insurgency. The Mizo Union was originally a constituent part of the All Party Hill Leaders Conference (A.P.H.L.C.) who was spearheading the movement for the formation of a hill state comprising the hill states of Assam. In 1962, the A.P.H.L.C. suspended the movement in the wake of the Chinese aggression invoking the ire of the Mizo Union leaders who felt that the A.P.H.L.C. should have taken advantage of the situation to press forth their demand. The Mizo Union threatened to leave the organisation and press forth their demand for a separate State for Mizoram. On 31 August, 1963 the Mizo Union submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister demanding separation from Assam. However, the demand for a separate state for Mizoram did not yield immediate results which angered the leaders of the Mizo Union. The Mizo Union leaders sowed the seeds of hatred in the minds of the Mizo youths that the Assamese and the Government of Assam were imperialists, trying to dominate the tribals.²⁸

28 V. Venkat Rao, Thansanga, H., Niru Hazarika, A Century of Government and Politics in North-East India vol. III - Mizoram, 1987, p. 262.

Moreover, in early 1947 over the issue of joining India there was a split in the Mizo Union because all the Mizo Union leaders were not unanimous about joining India at the time of independence. The Right Wing faction within the party were against the idea of remaining with the rest of the Indian Union. About this time, Professor R. Coupland, a political scientist suggested the creation of "Crown Colony of Eastern Agency consisting of the hill areas of Assam and Burma, which would be an independent State free from the political control of India. The Right Wing faction of the Mizo Union were moved by the spirit of such ideas. The Mizo Union, however, continued with their demand for autonomy within India and this led to a virtual split in the Mizo Union between the pro-India and secessionists who wanted to opt out of India. On August 14, 1947 it was resolved that if Mizoram was to remain within the Indian Union the existing safeguards of the customary laws and land tenure etc. should continue and after a period of ten years the Lushais should be allowed to opt out of India, if they intended to do so.

The dawn of independence in the hills was confusing and chaotic with factions claiming different objectives, clashed with each other. On August 15, 1947, the independence day, the secessionists from the Mizo Union grouped themselves in the southern part of the town, collected left-over arms of the second world war and

threatened bloodshed to the Mizo Union followers in the northern part of the town who intended to celebrate the independence day by taking out a procession.²⁹ The decision of the Mizo Union who wished to remain in India was to be later rebuked by Laldenga in the MNF memorandum to the Prime Minister in 1965 as 'due to their political immaturity, ignorance and lack of consciousness of their fate, representatives of the Mizo Union, the largest political organisation at that time, and the fifty accredited Mizo leaders representing all political organisations including representatives of religious denominations and social organisations that were in existence, submitted their demand and chose integration with free India ...'

The Mizo Union therefore as a political party consisting of a group who did not wish to remain in India played a significant role in sowing the seeds of secessionist tendencies in the mind of the people. Thus, it is not surprising that a founder member of the Mizo Union R. Vanlawma was elected as the General Secretary of the M.N.F. on its inception on 22 October, 1961.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND LACK OF FACILITIES
FOR THE EDUCATED YOUTH

The rumblings of dissatisfaction which was strong among the youths as a result of the lack of opportunities

29 Dr. Animesh Ray, Mizoram, Dynamics of Change, 1982, pp. 124-25.

played a significant role in the M.N.F. movement gaining ground. The educated youths desired better lives and opportunities for themselves after moving up the education ladder. However, inspite of their enthusiasm to start a new life, there was dearth of job opportunities for them. There was no avenues wherefrom they could seek the kind of jobs their educational qualification entitled them to. This was basically due to the fact that the government did not open doors to them in the employment field. No new posts were created and the existing ones already being filled up by 'outsiders' there seemed to be a dead end for them. There arose a sense of frustration and hopelessness amongst the youth.

The Mizo youths were intelligent and hard-working and especially in the mid-1950's it was a strong desire for the youths to achieve their degrees. The Mizo youths went out to Calcutta University, Shillong etc. as there were no colleges in Mizoram then. The Mizo youths, after having spent a lot of time and money far away from home in an attempt to build better lives for themselves were disappointed over their failure to secure good jobs.

The sense of frustration prevailing among the educated youths made them vulnerable to promises of better life and job which Laldenga exploited to the full. He made promises to create a number of jobs for the youths

after making Mizoram an 'Independent Sovereign State'. He promised to eradicate any form of unemployment. Such was the kind of life Laldenga envisaged that it swayed many towards the M.N.F.

Many graduates joined the M.N.F. like Zamawia, Thangkina, Lalkhawliana, Lathangliana, Lalhrima Sailo, Lalnunmawia etc. They looked for a better life in an independent Mizoram whereby their dreams could be realised.

ROLE OF THE EX-SERVICEMEN

The role of the ex-servicemen played a significant role in accelerating the MNF movement. During the second world war about 5,000 Mizos were recruited in the army and allied services. Their life in the army was secure and comfortable but this was rudely shaken when after the war, the Assam Regiment was disbanded in 1964-1965. This resulted in unemployment and with no land available for cultivation, the servicemen became disillusioned. This proved to be a futile ground for the recruitment of the ex-servicemen into the MNF which was of immense value for the MNF. The servicemen were already at ease in the handling of arms and ammunition and use of explosives. In recognition of their contribution, they were given ranks much higher than they occupied in the army. Such gestures gave a new meaning to their lives and they were infused with a sense of pride to fight for their land.

It is ironic however to note that, they who had defended India were not engaged in a useless struggle against the very country they fought for.

ROLE OF THE EXTERNAL FACTORS

One of the most significant factors responsible for the outbreak of insurgency in Mizoram was the role of external powers, particularly Pakistan in assuring the MNF the regular supply of arms and ammunition, training facilities, financial aid and safe refuge in East Pakistan. Without such assurances and promises made to the MNF, it seems most unlikely that the insurgency in Mizoram would have assumed such gigantic proportions so as to drag the Mizo hills into a bloody era of death and sufferings. Pakistan for more than one reason was anxious to harass the Indian Government and strain her economy by encouraging the secessionist movements in the North-Eastern part of the country.

Laldenga, as early as 1963 had made a clandestine trip to East Pakistan with his trusted aides Lalinumawia and Sainghaka. They were received by top military functionaries of the Pakistan Government. The Pakistanis had already inaugurated sophisticated military bases for the Naga tribesmen. 'General' Kaito Sema of the 'Naga Army' had blazed a trail early in the previous year. The Mizo objective, too was obvious - a base, guns and some

money.³⁰ The M.N.F. chief was assured of all the three demands. Such assurances instilled a sense of confidence in the minds of the MNF to take on the might of the Indian army.

The M.N.F. besides Pakistan contacted Chinese officials for support to their movement. The M.N.F. contacted Peking through the Chinese Consulate in Dacca.³¹ It is known that Peking had extended invitations to the rebel leaders to visit China for direct discussions with the Chinese leaders.³² The Chinese officials had also assured the M.N.F. all kind of possible support to their cause. The growing nexus between the M.N.F. and the external powers will be discussed in more detail in the third chapter.

The M.N.F. also made close contacts with the other hostiles in the North-East, most significantly, the Naga Hostiles. In early 1947, the Naga leaders Phizo and Sakril visited Aizawl and resolved to fight in union against the Indian Government. Moreover, this contact 'added significance from the fact that traffic between Nagaland and China had already been established by the extremist section of

30 Nirmal Nibedon, Nagaland, Night of the Guerrillas, 1979.

31 Roy Burman, op. cit., p. 134.

32 Ibid.

the underground.³³ The Naga leaders also proposed to merge Nagaland and Mizoram after both States gain independence and that the Mizo language would become the franca lingua for the new independent State. However, this did not appeal to the Mizo leaders who were then determined to fight for a single independent country of Mizoram.

33 Ibid.

Chapter 2

THE GROWTH OF THE MOVEMENT: ORGANISATION GOALS AND METHODS OF THE REBELS

The Mizo National Front (M.N.F.) having abandoned the democratic political process in favour of secession from the Indian Union submitted a memorandum on 30 October, 1965 to the Prime Minister stating that,

The Mizos from times immemorial lived in complete independence without foreign interference. Their territory and every part thereof had never been conquered or subjugated by the neighbouring state The Mizos stood a sepeation nation even before the advent of the British. The Mizos had never been under the Indian Government and never had any connections with the politics of the various groups of the Indian opinion

During the fifteen years of close contact and association with India, the Mizo people had not been able to feel at home with India or in India, nor have they been able to feel that their joys and sorrows have really ever been shared by India. They do not, therefore, feel Indian. Being created a sepearte nation they cannot go against the nature to cross the barriers of nationality. They refuse to occupy a place within India as they consider it to be unworthy of their national dignity and harmful to the interest of their prosperity. The only aspiration and political cry is the creation of Mizoram, a free and sovereign State to govern herself, to work out her own destiny and to formulate her own foreign policy. (1)

OPERATION JERICHO

In February 1966, the M.N.F. intensified its activities and the high level party committee decided to start an armed revolution by the end of that month.² The relationship

1 See Appendix I for the full text of the memorandum.

2 Lalthangliana, The Mizo Insurgency, unpublished.

between Laldenga and the Assam Chief Minister, B.P. Chaliha had reached a dead-end and there was no communication between them whatsoever.³ Laldenga was fully aware of the fact that the time for independence had come and the need of the hour was to start the armed rebellion. The operation to be launched was code-named Operation Jericho and the primary objective of the operation was to take control of the main towns of Aizawl, Lunglei and Champhai.

The M.N.F. had organised its volunteers into seven battalions prior to 'Operation Jericho' and these battalions were named after the heroes of yore as follows:

1. Chawngbawla - 'Ch' Battalion
2. Vana Pa - 'V' Battalion
3. Taitesena - 'T' Battalion
4. Lamlira - 'L' Battalion
5. Zampuimanga - 'Z' Battalion
6. Khuangchera - 'K' Battalion
7. Neuva - 'N' Battalion which was renamed Saizahawla - 'S' Battalion.

An additional battalion 'E' battalion after Enzapauva was raised after the armed rebellion.

3 Laldenga after his release from prison as a result of his secret visit to East Pakistan on December 1963 had made a personal promise to the Chief Minister not to indulge in any anti-national activities. In good faith, the Chief Minister had ordered his release from prison. However, Laldenga's promise was not meant to be kept and he continued to occupy himself and the M.N.F. in anti-national activities much to the embarrassment of the Assam Government.

These battalions were grouped into two brigades, namely the Dagger Brigade and the Lion Brigade. The Dagger Brigade was commanded by S.S Brig. Gen. Muankima while the Lion Brigade was under the command of S.S Brig. Gen. Sangkawia. The Dagger Brigade comprised of the following battalions:

1. 'K' Battalion commanded by Lt. Col. Chuaudinga
2. 'T' Battalion commanded by Lt. Col. Vanthanga
3. 'S' Battalion commanded by Lt. Col. Biakuela
4. 'Z' Battalion commanded by Lt. Col. Halelulia, .

While the Lion Brigade consisted of:

1. 'V' Battalion commanded by Lt. Col. Lalliana
2. 'Ch' Battalion commanded by Lt. Col. Lianhuna
3. 'L' Battalion commanded by Lt. Col. Kapthuama
4. 'E' Battalion commanded by Lt. Col. ^{Don Memorial George} Dimkhawsial.⁴

The M.N.F. had made elaborate preparation for the commencement of 'Operation Jericho' and the zero hour was set for 28 February, 1966. The first major offensive was carried out at Lunglei town against the sub-treasury. A group of armed M.N.F. stormed the Assam Rifles post and took control of it. The Assam Rifles soldiers were taken as prisoners and a large quantity of arms and ammunition were captured and dispatched to the M.N.F. headquarters. The M.N.F. also stormed inside the bungalow of the Sub-

4 Ibid.

Divisional Officer and kidnapped him along with a number of non-Mizo officers. The amount looted from the sub-treasury totalled to about 16 lakhs of rupees.

The border town of Champhai was also captured on schedule . The 1 Assam Rifles Post was caught completely off-guard that they were left with no time to relay an SOS either to Aizawl or Lunglei. The entire armoury was taken by the rebels and this included LMG's, rifles, sten-guns, grenades, mortars and pistols. The swift and precise operation on Champhai which was led by rebel Eastern Commander Thangkima was a huge success.

The M.N.F. rebels attacked the capital Aizawl on 1 March, 1966. The main Treasury was attacked but the M.N.F. did not get away with much cash because they failed to break open the double lock of the vault. On the same day, the Telephone Exchange at Aizawl was attacked and all telephone lines were cut off and all other means of communications disrupted. In the M.N.F. attack carried out against the Treasury they got away with 21 rounds of .303 ammunition and 65 rounds of 45 TMG, 10 govt. rifles and two bayonets with 20 rounds of ammunition.⁵

The M.N.F. had also planned to attack the camp of the 1 Assam Rifles. However, the M.N.F. was not successful

5 Report by Deputy Superintendent of Police, J.S. Pathak, Aizawl District on 27.5.66.

in this attempt as a result of the accidental death of one volunteer Rokima, who was the younger brother of Lalnunmawia, the Vice-President of the M.N.F. party. He was killed instantly when the explosives he was handling exploded. The incident aroused some suspicion that something was going on in the capital and it alerted the Assam Rifles. This was a severe blow to the M.N.F. because Rokima who had been killed and his friends Malsawma and Zamana who were injured were specially trained to be spearheaders for the assault and no one among the commandos could take their place off-hand.⁶ As a result the plan to attack the 1 Assam Rifles Camp could not materialize.

The M.N.F. rebels had captured Lunglei, Champhai and although Aizawl was not fully under their control, they were successful enough to raise their flags in important offices and buildings. The civil administration were completely paralysed in these towns.

Declaration of Independence

Within a few hours of these incidents on 1 March, 1966, the M.N.F. declared independence from the Indian Government. The M.N.F. declared the district as 'independent Mizeram'. The M.N.F. declaration was signed by Laldenga and sixty other members. The Declaration stated that -

6 Lalthangliana, 'The Mizo Insurgency', unpublished.

In the course of human history, it becomes invariably necessary for man-kind to assume their social, economic and political status to which the laws of nature and nature's God entitles them. We hold this truth to be self-evident and that all men are created equal, and that they are endowed with inalienable human rights and dignity of human person; and to secure these rights governments are instituted among men deriving their just power from the consent of the governed and whenever any form of government becomes destructive of this end, it is the right of the people to alter, change, modify and abolish it and to institute a new government and laying its foundation on such principles and organising its power 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 of the Law of Nature

.... We therefore, the Representatives of the Mizo people meeting on this day, the first of March, in the year of our Lord Nineteen sixty-six appealing to the supreme judge of the world for the rectitude of our intention so, in the name and by the authority of the good people of this country solemnly publish and declare, that Mizoram is, and of rights 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 to 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. 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 realization of our rightful and legitimate demand for self-determination. We appeal also to all independent countries to give recognition to the Independence of Mizoram. (7)

The M.N.F. highlighted in the Declaration their grievances against the Indian Government's policy and attitude towards the Mizo District. The Declaration declared that -

Our people are despised, persecuted, tortured, man-handled and murdered without displaying justice while they preach and profess before us and throughout the world that they have instituted for us a separate administrative set-up in conformity with the principles of Democracy. To conceal their evil and selfish design religious assimilation and Hindu indoctrination they preach to have established which we cannot accept as it leads to suppression of Christianity.

SHADOW GOVERNMENT

The M.N.F. set up a shadow government and styled it 'Mizoram Saurkar' or Government of Mizoram. The functioning of the shadow government and its organisation was similar to that of the US Government. The Constitution of the Mizoram Government provided for a separate Executive, Legislature and the judiciary.⁸ The organisational set up was hierarchical in set-up in which powers were centralised at the top. The set up of the party government was as follows:

President	-	Laldenga
Vice-President	-	Lalnunmawia
Defence Secretary	-	Sainghaka

⁸ See Appendix III for the full text of the Constitution of the Mizoram Government.

Foreign Secretary - Lalhmingthanga Ratte
 Secretary of Supply - Thangkima
 Secretary of Home Affairs - S. Lianzuala
 Secretary of Publicity - Ngurkunga Palian
 Finance Secretary - C. Lalkhawliana
 Chief Justice - John F. Manliana

Mizoram was further categorised into four administrative regions and each region was under the supervision of a Chief Commissioner. The four administrative regions and the respective Chief Commissioners were as follows:

1. Northern Region - Tlangchhuaka
2. Southern Region - Hrangchhinga
3. Western Region - P.B. Rosanga
4. Eastern Region - Ngurchhina

The administrative regions were further divided into sub-areas headed by a Deputy Commissioner aided by an Assistant Deputy Commissioner. Each area had a Treasury Officer but the overall authority was vested in the Chief Commissioner. The workings of the Chief Commissioners were co-ordinated by the Home Ministry.

Parliament

The Constitution in its Preamble states that -

we, the people of Mizoram, in order to assume among the powers of the earth, separate and equal status to which the laws of nature and nature's God entitles us, form a perfect nation.

Individually under justice, secure the blessing of liberty to ourselves and to our postivity which are endowed equally by our Creator as Inalienable Fundamental Human Rights in the form of Life, Liberty and the pursuit of happiness, do ordain and establish this Constitution for Mizoram.

The Constitution provided for a Parliament which consisted of two Houses known as the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Parliament was to assemble at least once in every year.

Powers of the Parliament

The Parliament was to have sole power in matters of legislation. The power to impeach the President and Vice-President was vested in the Parliament and also to approve or object any Proclamation made by the President in time of Emergency. The Parliament had the power to Constitute Tribunals inferior to the National Refinement Court and to abolish the existing subordinate Courts.

The House of Representatives

The House of representatives consisted of members known as "AIAWH" and elected by the people of several areas known as 'BIAL'.⁹ A party member had to complete 25 years of age to become a member of the House and must be a citizen of Mizoram. The members were to hold office for a term of

9 'Aiawh' and 'Bial' are the Mizo terms for 'representative' and 'Constituency'.

five years and there were provisions for three reserved seats for the minorities. The House was to be presided over by the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker and the Speaker had the power to summon the House to meet at such time and place as he deems fit. He also had the 'casting vote' in case of a tie in the House. The Speaker of the House was Vanhela who replaced Chuilokunga and the Deputy Speaker was Chhungzawma who also replaced V.L. Nghaka.

The House of Representatives had the sole power in all money bills. The House also had the power to impeach the President, Vice-President or both by the 2/3 of the votes of members present. Any bill could originate and be introduced in the House. In case of vacancies in the representation from any 'Bial' the writs to election to fill such issue was to be done by the President. The House of Representative consisted of 29 members.

However, contrary to the provision laid down in the Constitution, the members were not elected but selected by the President and his secretaries. The members selected were usually members of the Block units and popular members of the party. There was no atmosphere for elections to be held as envisaged by the M.N.F. Government. The legal government was in power and there was no way the M.N.F. could place their shadow government in the seat of the legitimate government. Moreover, the Declaration of Independence existed only in paper and in the minds of the

M.N.F. party-members and its supporters.

The Senate

The Constitution made provisions for a Senate according to Article 3 of the Constitution. The Senators were called 'Upa' and were to be chosen from each State called 'Bung'.¹⁰ The term of office was for six years with 1/3 of the 'Upa' retiring at the expiry of every two years. The Constitution laid down provision for nominated seats for persons having special knowledge in science, arts, literature etc. The requisite age to become 'upa' was 30 years and must be a citizen of Mizoram. The Vice-President was to preside over the workings of the Senate and was to summon the Senate from time to time and place as he deemed fit. The Vice-President also had a casting vote in case of a tie.

The Senate was also vested with important powers. The power to try the President and the Vice-President, when impeached by the House of Representative was vested in the Senate. It also had the power to return all Bills or part thereof passed by the House of Representatives for reconsideration, besides the power to ratify, reject or return for reconsideration of all State policy formulated by the Executive. The Senate could introduce any bill except money Bills and had the power to formulate certain State policy.

10 'Upa' and 'Bung' are Mizo terms for elder

The Constitution inspite of laying down certain conditions for the elections to the Senate, it was not done so in actual practice. The Senators as in the House of Representatives were selected and in actual position it was comprised of nine members -

1. Malsawma Colney
2. Vanmawia
3. Sakhawliana
4. Lalhmuaka
5. Bualhranga
6. Saikunga Sailo
7. Lallianzuala Sailo
8. Ngunnulha
9. Thangmauira

During the insurgency Lakhawliana was added to the list of Senators. Lalhmuaka became the Chief-Justice after the arrest of J. Maliana by the Indian Army. A Senator had the power to act in his own jurisdiction, as and when deemed necessary. The above set-up came under the political wing of the party which used to frame policies, and persuade the youths to join the organisation as volunteers.¹¹

The Executive

The Constitution vested all the executive powers in the hands of the President who was to be elected by the

11 R.N. Prasad, Govt. and Politics in Mizoram 1947-86, New Delhi, 1987, p. 172.

people for a term of five years.

The candidate for President had to have completed the age of 35 and must be a natural born citizen of Mizoram. He was to be eligible for the membership to both House of Parliament and must have resided at least fifteen years in Mizoram at the time of election. The President was not to hold any office under the government or any voluntary organizations.

The President was the Supreme Commander of all Armed Forces. The President had the power to declare an emergency whereby there is a grave situation or when the security of the Nation is threatened.

The President was to address both Houses of Parliament and he could summon dissolve or prorogue the House of Representatives. He could summon both Houses in times of Emergency. Moreover, he had the power to nominate members for the nominated seats in the Parliament. In case of vacancies in representation the President had the power to issue writs of Parliament in the representation in the Parliament.

The President, on the advice of the Senate had the power to appoint his Cabinet, Ambassadors, Consuls, Chief-Justice, Auditor General, Administrators and all other important appointments. The power to declare war or conclude peace was also vested in him. He also had the

authority to remove officers charged with corruption, bribery, treason or any other crimes. The power to grant pardon, remit or commute a sentence was also in his power. The President also had the power to ratify, reject or return any State policy formulated by the Senate.

The powers of the President was vast and binding. It thus appears from the organisational set up, that the M.N.F. had a hierarchical set up in which power was centralised at the top. The decisions were taken at the top and the lower units just carried out direction of the High Command.¹²

The Judiciary

The Constitution provided for a judiciary to consist of a National Refinement Court which was to function as the Supreme Court of the land with original jurisdiction and also an Appellate Court. The National Refinement Court was to be presided by a Chief Justice and other judges. The Chief Justice was John F. Manliana who was replaced by Lalhmaaka after his arrest by the Indian Army.

Amendment

The Constitution could be amended by Parliament with the concurrence of two-third votes of the members. In actual terms, the shadow government could not exercise its powers and functions it desired to. It was in reality

12 Ibid., p. 175.

only a parallel government which had no legitimacy and which had been set-up under the shadow of the gun. In spite of the M.N.F. declaration of independence, the Mizo Hills was very much an integral part of India over which there could not be any possibility of two governments ruling over it. The Shadow Government existence was merely on paper.

THE MIZO NATIONAL VOLUNTEERS

The Mizo National Volunteers (MNV) was a body organised throughout Mizoram, politically and militarily trained by the M.N.F. leaders and ex-servicemen to propagate party programmes and to take part in armed revolution.¹³ They were selected on voluntary basis and later indoctrinated with party propaganda, anti-national and religious or cultural values.¹⁴ The MNV were broadly divided into three categories -

Group A: This group comprised of youngmen who received military and political training. They were kept on alert to join the combat forces when necessary. Moreover, they were also incharge of spreading the party propaganda. The group was incorporated into the 'V' Battalion - the 'V' Battalion named itself after the hero of yore - Vanapa and it was made up mostly of young boys, the youngest being about

13 Lalthangliana, The MNF Movement, unpublished, p. 61.

14 R.N. Prasad, Govt. and Politics in Mizoram 1947-86, New Delhi, 1987, p. 173.

fourteen years of age. Even to the schemers at first glance they appeared to be a motley outfit of sorts, destined to fight for the freedom of Mizoram.¹⁵ The young volunteers were filled with their new direction in life and were ready to die for the cause they now believed in. Though they received military training, they were not equipped with weapons. Some of them carried hammers in their belts.¹⁶

Group B: The second group was made up of young women who were trained in the fields of nursing, signalling and even in the use of arms and ammunitions. They proved to be an important element in the organisation of the MNV.

Group C: This group was comprised mostly of those who sympathised with the aspirations of the M.N.F. They were the parents and young children who were willing to help in all possible means the M.N.F. and their various activities.

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

The Mizo National Front having established itself as a political force in the Mizo District after the famine had organised itself into a formal political party with

15 Nirmal Nibedon, *The Dagger Brigade*, New Delhi, 1980, p. 49.

16 *Ibid.*

specific aims and objectives for Mizoram and the Mizo people. The M.N.F. on 22 October, 1961 announced its aims and objectives -

- A : To achieve the highest freedom and to unite all the Mizos (and their inhabited areas) and to live under the one political boundary.
- B : To uplift and bring progress to the Mizo Tribe.
- C : To preserve and safe-guard the Christian religion.

Having laid down its basic aims and objectives, the M.N.F. set out to achieve the fulfillment of their aspirations. For a long time, the M.N.F. members were taught only verbally the aims and objectives of the movement. However, with the increase in rank and file it was felt necessary to produce a written document for a better understanding of what the M.N.F. stood for and its stand on various issues.

- A. TO ACHIEVE THE HIGHEST FREEDOM AND TO UNITE ALL THE MIZOS AND THEIR INHABITED AREAS AND TO LIVE UNDER ONE POLITICAL BOUNDARY

The M.N.F. emphasis on the 'Highest Freedom' pertains to freedom from oppression and subjugation under which the Mizo people had long been subjected to. The Mizo people right from their ancestors had this freedom and enjoyed the fruits of this right. However, due to the superior right of other races, the Mizo people had been subjected to untold miseries and depression. The aim is therefore to free the Mizo people from such oppression and to stand strong against

any such oppressive forces and to rid the Mizo people from all forms of subjugation. It is the inalienable right of every human to the right of freedom and as such the deprivation of that very right to the Mizo people was what drove the M.N.F. to openly declare freedom from the shackled of the Indian Government.

The Mizo Tribe includes all sub-tribes like Lusei, Hmar, Ralte, Paite, Rangte, Zo, Darlawng, Kawm, Pawi, Thado, Chiru, Aimoul, Khawl, Tanau, Anan, Puram, Tikhup, Vaiphei, Lakher, Langrawng, Chawrai, Bawng, Baite, Tlanglau, Hrangkhawl, Bawmzo, Dawn, Khumi, Khiang, Khrangte, Pangte, Khawlung, Chawngthu, Vanchiau, Chawnte, Ngenti, Renthlei, Hnamte, Tlau, Pautu, Rawite, Vangchhia, Zawngle, Tanai and others. The various Mizo tribes were all seperated into different areas like Assam, Manipur, Burma and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and besides geographical divisions they were being governed under different governments. The M.N.F. party was determined to fight the unjustifiable seperation and vowed to unite all the different tribes under the Mizo Nation.

B. TO UPLIFT AND BRING PROGRESS
TO THE MIZO TRIBE

The M.N.F. as mentioned earlier had vowed to free the Mizo people from the rule of the oppressors. They likened the life of the Mizos under the rule of the outsiders to that of a slave with no scope for any progress or

development. They believed that freedom from the oppressors is the only beginning to the achievement of progress.¹⁷

The M.N.F. was appealed to see the poor standard of living of their countrymen. It was in no way comparable with the other people who lived around them. Basic needs like food, clothes and shelter was not available to them which made the living conditions of these people pathetic. The M.N.F. placed the blame squarely on the Indian Government for having reduced the lives of the Mizos to such abject miseries.

The M.N.F. has, for a better understanding of the Mizo Tribe and to find ways and means for the upliftment and progress identified particular areas in the life of the Mizos whereby such aims can be realized, such as -

1. The position to live,
2. The Social life,
3. Cultural Life,
4. Community Health and Hygiene,
5. Roads,
6. Educational facilities.

The Position to Live

Inspite of the poor standard of living of the Mizo people, they have always relied on the fruits of their own

17 The Aims and Objectives of the MNF, published by MNF GHQ, Mizoram, 1972, p. 5.

labour. However, with the increase in population there arises more wants and needs without which it is not possible to live and survive. When there is an imbalance in the growth in population and the overall progress certain innovations have to be taken into account to lessen the gap. The M.N.F. therefore called for improving the living condition of the people by introducing specific changes in matters of -

1. Agriculture,
2. National Resources,
3. Handicrafts,
4. Machinery and Tools,
5. Foreign Trade,
6. Goodwill among the people for the general good of all.

Agriculture

The District of Mizoram, geographically is made up of hilly terrain running from north to south. Due to the hilly nature of the land, the Mizo practised the primitive type of agriculture - 'jhumming' or 'shifting cultivation' which is not the ideal type of agriculture. In spite of this eighty per cent of the Mizos are agriculturists and there was an urgent need to find an alternative to the existing system. The M.N.F. blamed the Assam Government for their indifference towards the problem faced by the Mizos. The M.N.F. looks forward for the day they will

have the authority to find such a possibility for bringing about an effective change in the field of agriculture.¹⁸

The M.N.F. in order to bring about such a change proposed the following provisions -

- (a) More ploughable land,
- (b) Terrace cultivation,
- (c) Permanent rice cultivation,
- (d) Farmers Association,
- (e) Utilize the water resources and to provide pumps and water pipes,
- (f) Emulate the advanced countries in terms of cultivation and to import machine and tools.

The Natural Resources

The M.N.F. accused the Indian Government for the lack of developmental works in the District, particularly in the field of natural resources. The Mizo Hills being very rich in natural resources has a lot of potential in this area which is yet to be exploited due to the negligence of the rulers. The M.N.F. promised to tap all the forest, river, mineral resources once freedom is achieved.

Handicrafts

The Mizos have a rich potential in handicrafts. Traditionally, the Mizos are very talented in weaving.

18 Ibid., p. 10.

knilling, carpentry etc. which under proper guidance can be channelised into becoming a major industry. The M.N.F. realising this had made it one of their primary objective to fulfill once they rid themselves from the yoke of the oppressors.

Machinery

In the use of machinery, the Mizos are still very backward and this is because the Indian Government refuses to provide them with modern tools and machineries. It is therefore the urgent need of the hour to be free.

Foreign Trade

The M.N.F. promised the people that it will look for areas for the marketing of their products outside the country and also to import goods which are not readily available in the district.

Goodwill

The M.N.F. encouraged the people to be inculcated with the spirit of goodwill for all in order to establish a strong independent Mizoram.

The Social Life

The Mizos have always been proud of their way of life - a legacy of their ancestors since ages untold. However, in recent years there has been a dramatic change for the worse which is a big shame to the people as a whole.

The M.N.F. believed that it was rule of the oppressors which brought nothing but decadence to the Mizo society. The anti-social and harmful practice of drunkenness, corruption, looting, immorality, gambling, blasphemy etc. had crept into the Mizo life which needed urgent attention. The M.N.F., in order to bring respect in the Mizo society promised to bring changes and to encourage lost virtues and eliminate all ills in the society.

Cultural Life

The Mizos since time immemorial have had a distinct cultural life which has to be protected and preserved. This is necessary in order to preserve the district's unique way of the Mizo Life. In their way of dressing the Mizos have a rich heritage in their 'puan' and necklaces.¹⁹ The M.N.F. promises to promote the cultural way of dressing and to encourage all the artists involved in such production. The dances of the Mizos like Cheraw, Khualam, Chhei Lam, Khelkawn etc. are to be popularised and protect it from losing their originality.

Community Health and Hygiene

The work to be done in this area is tremendous particularly in the villages where no doctors and medicine are available. The M.N.F. promises to take charge of the health

19 Puan : Mizo women folk wear hand-woven piece of cloth beautifully mixed in colours and patterns.

of the lesser educated and less fortunate people.

Education Facilities

There is an imbalance in the educational field. In areas like Aizawl there are about 50.9% of people who are literate while in the villages there are no provision for education resulting in the exploitation of the people. It is the duty of all the people to rid themselves of their oppressors in order to elect a government that would sincerely look into the proper needs of the people.

Roads and Communication

There is an urgent need for the proper development of roads and communication for which the M.N.F. vows to take care of.

C. TO PROTECT AND SAFEGUARD THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

The Mizo people having had accepted Christianity are very protective and sensitive on the issue of their religion. The M.N.F. main propaganda was based on their perceived threat of Christianity in Mizoram by the so-called oppressors. They emphasized on their objective to protect their religion from any inward and outward forces. The M.N.F. accused the Indian Government of deliberately oppressing the Mizo religion by the following means:

- (a) The Hindu officials force the Mizos to work on Sundays which is a sacred day for all Christians.

- (b) The Government provide week long holidays for Durga Pooja, Kali Pooja etc. whereas there is only a day holiday for Christmas and Good Friday.
- (c) In the school text-books, the syllabus contains the teachings of Hindu gods and goddesses and nothing about the Christian religion.
- (d) There is no religious freedom for the Christians.
- (e) There is a deliberate attempt to suppress Christianity from the believers.

The M.N.F. therefore took great pains to eliminate all the forces which were proving harmful to Christianity. The M.N.F. promised to establish a protective government in order to preserve Christianity which would carry out measures to wipe out false teachings about the religion from education and politics.

MEASURES ADOPTED BY THE
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

The open armed revolt carried out by the M.N.F. was a severe blow to New Delhi and the Assam Government. Coming as it did some six months after the 22 day war with Pakistan and four years after the Chinese debacle, the Mizo offensive left the Indian Government thoroughly embarrassed.²⁰

Immediate action was to be taken against the rebels. The General Officer Commanding, Eastern Command held discussions

20 Nirmal Nibedon, Mizoram: The Dagger Brigade, New Delhi, 1980, p. 77.

at Fort William, Calcutta to discuss the situation. Top intelligence and administrative authorities were also sent to Mizoram for an on-the-spot study. It was clear in the top intelligence circles that a full-fledged military operation against the rebel force would be necessary.²¹

On 2 March 1966, the whole district was declared by the Government of Assam, as 'Disturbed Area' under the Disturbed Areas Act, 1955. The Act gave the Army extensive powers so as to arrest any person without any warrant who has committed or is about to commit a cognizable offence or against whom reasonable suspicion exists. It also empowered the Army to enter and search any premises without warrant on the same dubious grounds. The Army could also destroy any arms dump, prepared or fortified shelter used by anti-national elements. With additional powers in their pockets, troops were despatched to the district to counter the insurgency which was gathering storm.

On 6th March 1966, the Government of India declared the Mizo National Front to be an unlawful organization under Rule 32 of the Defence of India Rules 1962. The declaration came after the Indian Government was satisfied that the M.N.F. had been indulging in activities prejudicial to the security of the Mizo District in the State of Assam and the adjoining parts in the territory of India. According

21 Ibid.

to Rule 32, any one who manages, promotes or attends the meetings of the organization or in any way assists its operation becomes liable to prosecution and the maximum punishment of seven years plus fine. The order further empowers the Central and State Governments to notify and take possession of the places used for the purpose of the M.N.F.

The Indian Army reached the capital on 6 March 1966 after a hazardous journey of 112 miles from Silchar in the Cachar District. To aid the Indian Army incendiary bomb and air-raids were also to be carried out in the stronghold of the M.N.F. The raids carried out by the fighter planes was a severe blow to the M.N.F. and this, to a large extent greatly demoralised their ranks. The Indian Army was to fight against an estimated 10,000 rebels with 50 per cent of them without arms and even the arms in the possession of the M.N.F. were not all automatic weapons. It did not appear to be a difficult task for the Indian Army to wipe out the rebels. However, it turned out to be a test of strength, intelligence, strategy and patience between the two adversaries. The M.N.F. took to guerrilla tactics of hit and run, ambush and sabotage.

When the brigade of the Indian Army arrived at Aizawl, they found the capital deserted and burnt to ashes as a result of the bombings carried out by the fighter jets. In an attempt to normalize the situation, the Army sent

out notices to the people to return to their homes. Communications were also restored in the capital.

Lunglei and Champhai which were still under the M.N.F. was the next line of action by the Indian Army. One battalion column set off for Lunglei and another column headed towards Champhai. The army column heading towards Lunglei threatened to bomb the town in order to completely wipe out the M.N.F. rebels who were in complete control of the town. This was seriously viewed by the Church leaders as it would result in innumerable civilian deaths. However, the Indian Army did not have to use such force since on their arrival at Lunglei found the town to have been deserted by the M.N.F. who had taken to the jungles. The town of Champhai was also taken over by the army.

By 16 March 1966, the three major towns and half a dozen smaller towns were more or less under the control of the Indian army. Understanding that their strength was no match against the might of the Indian army, the Mizo National Army (MNA) took to the jungles resorting to guerrilla tactics. The MNF, as a result had to shift their headquarters from Aizawl town to Reiek village and finally to East Pakistan which became the main base of the Mizo National Front.

THE STRATEGY OF THE MIZO
NATIONAL FRONT

Prior to the breakout of armed rebellion in the Mizo

District, the M.N.F. President Laldenga had proclaimed that the M.N.F. in order to realise its aims and objectives would take only the path of non-violence. In the M.N.F. memorandum the party had stated that 'the Mizos commit themselves to a policy of non-violence in their struggle and have no intention of employing any other means to achieve their political demands. However, in the long run this proved to be a mere cloak to cover the plans of armed rebellion which had long been since in the planning. The M.N.F. wanted to gain time so as to avoid any kind of preventive measures that could possibly be taken against them. Such measures would have proved harmful to the M.N.F. who were secretly engaged in smuggling arms and ammunition inside Mizoram from East Pakistan. Moreover, Laldenga who was a seasoned orator with charismatic appeal wanted to give practical shape to the party objectives,²² which in the initial years was to capture power in the Mizo District Council.

In the course of the M.N.F. activities the total abandon of the non-violence path is only too vivid. Following the failure of the M.N.F. in holding on to their posts in Aizawl, Champhai, Lunglei and other smaller towns, the strategy of the M.N.F. took a significant turn. The M.N.F. changed their strategy from open offensive to

22 R.N. Prasad, Govt. and Politics in Mizoram, New Delhi, 1987, p. 166.

guerrilla tactics such as ambushes, sabotage, kidnappings and intimidation. It was felt that the M.N.F. were trying to get political leverage within Mizoram through murder and black-mail. There appeared to be four objectives in their new strategy -

- (i) paralyse administration through terrorist activities,
- (ii) to show their capacity to fight back,
- (iii) to restore the morale in the rank and file,
- (iv) to force the government to come to terms with the M.N.F.²³

The M.N.F. were making an all out effort to restore the organisation to be a force, powerful to take any measures in the pursuit of their aims and objectives. The M.N.F. in order to sustain the movement, its activities and organisation levied taxes on the people of Mizoram. At the initial period, there was no fixed amount and the MNV would demand the amount as they liked. Besides money, food and clothes were also demanded by the volunteers. In 1971, October 1, the M.N.F. made a specific Tax Collection Order signed by the Finance Minister, Rualchhina. The rates were fixed and were to be levied accordingly. The manner in which the taxes were to be collected are as

23 Animesh Ray, Mizoram - Dynamics of Change, Calcutta 1982, p. 222.

follows*.

I. MIZORAM LIBERATION FUND (MLF)

- (i) From each course - Rs. 20.00
- (ii) All Those Govt. Servants - 2 p.c. from their monthly salary
- (iii) From Contractors - 2 p.c. of their tender amount
- (iv) Permanent non-Mizo business men of Mizoram per year -
 - (a) Special class - Rs. 10,000/-
 - (b) A Class - Rs. 5,000/-
 - (c) B Class - Rs. 2,000/-
 - (d) C Class - Rs. 1,000/-
- (v) Rich Men of Mizos per year:
 - (a) Special Class - Rs. 5,000/-
 - (b) A Class - Rs. 3,000/-
 - (c) B Class - Rs. 1,000/-
 - (d) C Class - Rs. 500/-
 - (e) D Class - Rs. 200/-
 - (f) E Class - Rs. 100/-

Besides the rates fixed, the sum of Rs. 20/- was to be collected from every house. There was also a fixed amount of fees to be charged -

- (i) Boat Licence Fee :
 - (a) Bigger boats that can carry 50 qtls. and above - Rs. 500/-
 - (b) Smaller boats that can carry below 50 qtls. - Rs. 300/-

* This was mainly on paper. MNF collected funds within the framework of this order but not strictly according to it.

- (ii) Trade Licence Fee : Those non-Mizos who are not residents of Mizoram but come for business purposes - Rs. 1,000/-
- (iii) Working Permit : Non-Mizos from the age of 15 yrs. onwards engaged for any work in Mizoram - Rs. 100/-
- (iv) Special Contractor Licence Fee: Who are having contract works under the Govt. of UT (Bamboo etc.) Mahal for broken periods - Rs. 3000/-
- (v) Elephant Licence Fee: Rs. 500/- per grown up elephant that can be used for works.
- (vi) Vehicle Licence Fee :
- | | |
|--|--------------|
| (a) Heavy Vehicle (TMB, Trucks etc.) - | |
| Non-Mizo | - Rs. 1000/- |
| Mizo | - Rs. 500/- |
| (b) Light Vehicle (Jeep, car etc.) | |
| Non-Mizo | - Rs. 250/- |
| Mizo | - Rs. 200/- |

Donations, duties etc. were also fixed as follows:

- (i) Contractor Donation - 33% of their tender rate
- (ii) Import and Export duty - 2%
- (iii) Royalty - according to the rate fixed by UT Govt. Forest Department
- (iv) Bazaar duty - 2% from non-Mizos
- (v) Mizoram Export duty - on the articles taken out from Mizoram 10% of their cost.

The rate fixed by the Finance Department of the Mizoram Saurkar was to be binding on all the inhabitants

of Mizoram. However, in reality it was very difficult for the civilians to pay taxes due to the nature of collecting the taxes. The civilians were caught up in the war between the two forces. The M.N.F. caused severe hardships to the people by levying such taxes because at times the people were forced to make the payments at gun-point and if such payments came to the notice of the Army, they were treated as M.N.F. sympathisers and harassed often. It was the simple Mizo man who suffered the most.

The path of violence which eventually was followed by the M.N.F. was only a means to an end as Lalhrima Sailo an ex-Deputy Commissioner in the M.N.F. set up says, "memorandum and mere talks at the table would never prompt the Government of India to consider the question of secession in the real sense of the term".²⁴ Therefore the M.N.F. took up the only alternative left at their disposal and that was through violent activities for the realisation of their aims and objectives.

24 Based on an interview with Mr. Lalhrima Sailo.

Chapter III

THE MNF AND THE ROLE OF FOREIGN POWERS: THE GROWING NEXUS

NORTH-EAST INDIA AND ITS STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE TO INDIA'S SECURITY

The North-Eastern region of India is located between latitude 29 and 22 North and longitude 89°46 and 97°5 East and literally boxed by China, Burma and Bangladesh.¹ It is connected with the rest of the country through the narrow "Siliguri neck" which has resulted, in the not so distant past many causes of alienation for the people of the region. The sense of alienation from the rest of India had given rise to a kind of nationalism which has manifested itself in violent out-breaks often taking the course of guerrilla warfare particularly in Mizoram, Nagaland and Manipur. Moreover, the North-East Frontier is inhabited not by Indo-Aryans but by nomadic mongoloid tribes who have close ethnic and cultural connections with their cousins in China, Tibet and Burma.² Besides racial similarities, the dialects spoken in almost all the hills in the North-East belong to the Tibeto-Chinese linguistic fold and also to the Tibeto-Burman sub-family. These factors arouse a natural tendency in the people to look across the Indian

1 Vik Sarin, India's North East in Flames, New Delhi, 1980, p. 7.

2 Ibid., p. 10.

border for sympathy and support in their grievances against the Indian Government, rather than look to it for the redress of their problems.

The North East and its close proximity to Bhutan in the West, Tibet and China in the North and East, Burma in the South-East and Bangladesh in the South makes it vulnerable to the interests of outside powers. Despite its geo-strategic importance, the whole of North-East had been virtually cut off from the rest of the country till the Chinese invasion in 1962. No wonder, people of the region openly express their gratitude to the Chinese for waking up the authorities at the Centre from their slumber to attend to the needs of this sensitive frontier area.³ However, the measures adopted have proved inadequate and has failed to draw the North East region into the mainstream of Indian national life.

The interest generated by China and Pakistan in the happenings in the North East is an open secret. There has been clandestine understanding between the Mizo hostile, Naga rebels and extremist Tripuris with the Chinese and Pakistanis for the supply of arms and ammunition, financial aid, training facilities etc. Besides the involvement of China and Pakistan, the presence of the CIA has also been

3 Ibid., p. 9.

felt in the happenings in the North East. Significantly, before, during and after every disturbance some Indian employees of the American Consulate in Calcutta were conspicuous by their presence at the trouble spots.⁴ But the role of the CIA is less prominent compared to that of Pakistan and China.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FOREIGN POWERS
IN THE SECESSIONIST MOVEMENT LED
BY THE MIZO NATIONAL FRONT

The uprising in the Mizo Hills led by the M.N.F. had completely thrown the State Government off guard in the initial onslaught led by the rebels. The Central Government was also taken aback that a movement could take place under its very nose which was anti-national in all respects. The movement which broke out in 1966 continued for a period of two decades unleashing an era of violence, miseries, sufferings and deaths and dragged the course of Mizo History to its darkest phase. The extraordinary situation of sudden rebellion throughout the whole district required immediate action under the different provisions of law which were designed to meet such situations.⁵ The Government adopted several counter-measures to tackle the situation. The district was declared a Disturbed Area, the MNF declared

4 Ibid., p. 16.

5 Dr. Animesh Ray, Mizoram - Dynamics of Change, Calcutta, 1982, p. 164.

unlawful and several battalions of the Indian Army were detailed to bring back law and order in the district.

The M.N.F. had to take on the might of the Indian Army in its struggle to bring independence for Mizoram. It was by far no easy task for a relatively small group of insurgents to challenge the might of the Indian Army and wage a war for a period of two decades. The resources of the M.N.F. were weak and insufficient to challenge the advancing columns. However, the counter offensive carried out by the Indian Government detailing numerous battalions to the Mizo Hills were not prepared for the kind of resistance the Mizo insurgents had prepared themselves for. The Mizo guerrillas, on home soil was not an easy target, having to his advantage knowledge about the hills and terrains like the back of his palm, local support and sympathy and his ability to spot his stalker and thus plan his movements accordingly. Moreover, the intangible elements like charismatic leadership, popular cause, attainable aim and motivating ideology⁶ was on the side of the guerrillas which was definitely not to be found on the side of the Indian Army. Besides, the Indian Army had projected itself as a big bully to the common tribal people.

6 V.K. Anand, Conflict in Nagaland, A Study of Insurgency and Counter-insurgency, New Delhi, 1980, p. 9.

However, it would be wrong to conclude that the insurgency in Mizoram continued for over two decades, and faced the wrath of the Indian Army on the basis of its own inner strength, charismatic leadership and mass support. The M.N.F. led insurgency could not have sustained itself on its own for over such a long period without the support and assistance of outside powers. Coming as it did some six months after the 22-day war with Pakistan and some four years after the Chinese debacle⁷, the flames of nationalism burning in the Mizo Hills received significant interests from powers across the border in the wake of the secessionist movement.

THE ROLE OF THE FOREIGN POWERS:
THE POTENTIAL IT ENTAILED FOR THE
CAUSE OF THE MNF

The Mizo National Front was fully aware of the fact that it would be a daunting task to carry on its relentless struggle for independence depending on its own resources. The vast resources at the disposal of the Indian Army in men, weapons, communications, air support etc. were not lost on the Mizo guerrillas. The M.N.F. leaders were aware of the urgent need to establish relations with foreign powers in order to keep their banner of independence from dying out. Therefore the immediate task for receiving

7 Nirmal Nibedon, North-East India - The Ethnic Explosion, New Delhi, 1981, p. 42.

assistance and powers from outside powers was the main objective of the M.N.F. leadership. Otherwise it was suicidal to even contemplate on the part of the M.N.F. to wage war against the Indian Army relying solely on its own credit. The 'Shadow Government' of the M.N.F. had also set up the Department of Foreign Affairs to look into the possibility of opening relations with outside powers.

Moreover, the M.N.F. were fully aware of the important role the foreign powers could play in the insurgency movement in the Mizo Hills. One very important aspect of the foreign power support to the Mizo insurgency was that, it would prove to be a tremendous boost to the Mizo cause. To receive the backing of outside powers to their cause would greatly enhance their demand for secession from the Indian Union. One of the chief concern of Laldenga was to internationalize the Mizo cause and establishing relations with foreign powers hostile to India would be a notable advantage for the M.N.F. In his efforts to focus wider attention to the Mizo cause, Laldenga communicated with Pakistan Field Marshall Md. Ayub Khan and President Sukarno of Indonesia. Besides, the attempts of the M.N.F. to establish relations with foreign powers was an indirect form of pressure directed towards the Indian Government for the quick solution to the Mizo problem.

More important was the fact that the M.N.F. was in dire need of arms and ammunition. Besides verbal

support and sympathy, there was an urgent need for the procurement of arms and ammunition for the M.N.F. The materials at their disposal were insufficient and far too less sophisticated to take on the might of the Indian Army. It was vital that every insurgent was to be armed for his own defence and to carry out instructions like ambushes, raids, sabotage etc. Where was all the required arms and ammunition to come from if it was not from those powers who would like to see the gradual disintegration of India? The M.N.F. also were in need of safe refuge across the Indian border where they would be free of any offensive from the Indian Army. A safe retreat was vital for the M.N.F. after conducting operations which were against the national interest of India.

THE FOREIGN POWERS CONTACTED
BY THE MNF

With insurgency becoming a tool not only of the aggrieved but also of the foreign destabilising process for remote controlled imperialism and balancing of spheres of influence it can be expected almost everywhere, particularly in the Third World countries.⁸ In the North-Eastern part of the country, the developments which were taking place were looked upon with keen interests by certain powers who saw in the movements vast potential in the

⁸ V.K. Anand, Conflict in Nagaland - A Study of Insurgency and Counter-insurgency, Delhi, 1980, p. 9.

destabilising process of India. As mentioned earlier, the M.N.F. wanted to internationalize the Mizo cause by securing aid and assistance from foreign powers to ensure the fulfilment of their aims and objectives.

The contacts with foreign powers were conducted at the higher level of the M.N.F. set-up. The President assisted by foreign minister was given charge to establish contact and to establish relations with Pakistan and China.⁹ Pakistan and China became important factors. The relations between India and Pakistan and China has seen through much dark phases which made it natural for the M.N.F. to approach Pakistan and China for support and assistance.

PAKISTAN AND THE MNF

The M.N.F. President Laldenga and his trusted aides as early as 1962 realised the importance of the role of outside powers to support their cause. The violent outbreak, though came in the open only in 1966, had long been in the making. Laldenga had been much earlier busy in enrolling volunteers and organising units as a step to start the independence movement and to bring unity among the Mizos. The close proximity of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and the strained relations between India and Pakistan proved to be an ideal ground for the MNF to approach the Pakistan

9 S. Lianzuala, Vice-President MNF (underground).

Government for any kind of assistance which the Government may be willing to make. The M.N.F. leader Laldenga having had a full grasp of the then existing political situation had as early as 1962 contacted the High Commissioner of Pakistan at Shillong to discuss the possibility of help from Pakistan. It was on the first part of July 1962 that Laldenga made the decision to contact the Pakistani officials in Shillong. He arrived at Shillong on 62 and a meeting between Laldenga and the High Commissioner took place on 62.¹⁰

In early December 1963, Laldenga accompanied by Lalnunmawia and Sainghaka discreetly crossed over to East Pakistan. It was a comfortable journey for the trio at the end of which they were received by top military functionaries of the Pakistani Government. The Pakistanis had already inaugurated sophisticated military bases for the Naga tribesmen. The Mizo objective, too, was obvious - a base, guns and some money.¹¹

As mentioned earlier the close geographical proximity of Mizoram and the then East Pakistan was significant in the establishment of close relations between the two. Pakistan's main strategy was to foment trouble in the North East region by abetting secessionist movements in

10 Nirmal Nibedon, Mizoram - The Sagger Brigade, New Delhi, 1980, p. 45.

11 Ibid.

the area just to disrupt and strain the country's solidarity and economy respectively.¹² The insurgency in Mizoram was one of the chief outlets of the evil designs of Pakistan. The Pakistan Government agreed to provide aid and assistance, training facilities, financial assistance and safe refuge to the M.N.F. rebels.

While in Dacca on 20 September, 1966, Laldenga wrote a letter to the then President of Pakistan Field Marshall Md. Ayub Khan in which he thanked the Pakistan Government for sympathy and assistance rendered to the Mizo people in their struggle for freedom. He blamed the Indian leaders for creating border problems and supported the stand of Pakistan on the Kashmir issue. In the same letter, Laldenga desired to him to meet him to discuss -

- (i) Recognition of Mizoram's independence,
- (ii) Possibility of meeting diplomats of friendly countries,
- (iii) Passage permit for MNF persons in Pakistan including arms and explosives they may carry with them.

Whether Laldenga succeeded in meeting the Field Marshall is not known. But judging from the letter and the boldness in Laldenga's letter, it is obvious that the M.N.F. leader had more than a cordial relation with Md. Ayub Khan. The relation proved to be immensely important

12 R.N. Prasad, Government and Politics in Mizoram - 1947-1986, New Delhi, 1987.

and fruitful for the M.N.F.

Following the offensive carried out by the Indian Government the M.N.F. Chief Laldenga accompanied by his family, friends and some volunteers escaped to East Pakistan in the latter part of March 1966. The Pakistan Government accorded Laldenga a warm welcome. Laldenga and his small team of assistants were kept in Dacca and were provided with fashionable quarters in different places of the city, that is, they were shifted from one place to another for the sake of security.¹³ During their stay in Dacca, a strict vigil was kept on their movements by the Pakistani Intelligence Department. They were also asked to conceal their identities and if questioned, were to pose as Chakmas or Azad Kashmiris. They were also provided with a caretaker whose duty was to do the marketing, to look after their welfare and to spy on their movements as well.¹⁴

Inspite of close relations being maintained, precautionary measures had to be taken up by both sides so as to give proof to their clandestine relations.

The support rendered to the M.N.F. by the Pakistan Government proved to be a great moral boost to the Mizo guerrillas who felt honestly proud to have had managed to secure the support of a prominent power like Pakistan.

13 Lalthangliana: MNF Movement (unpublished).

14 Ibid.

Moreover any further attempts to contact other foreign powers would be made easier on Pakistani soil. Captured documents had also testified to the fact that 'Pakistan had rendered facilities to enable the M.N.F. to contact foreign missions in Dacca as well as facilities in ports to enable the M.N.F. personnel to visit other countries via Pakistan for furtherance of their aims'.¹⁵

Moreover, it emboldened the M.N.F. rebels to carry out and conduct operations of greater risks against the security of India. The M.N.F. were able to cross the Indian borders into East Pakistan to avoid the Indian Army operations against them. The offensive launched against the M.N.F. following the outbreak of the revolt saw large numbers of M.N.F. volunteers cross over to East Pakistan in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The M.N.F. set up their base in Chittagong and carried on operations against India from their new sanctuary.

CHINA AND THE M.N.F.

The uprising in Mizo Hills was petering out and the rebels were trying hard to regroup their forces with foreign assistance. Their contacts with Pakistan were of long standing but a new development was an effort to seek China's help.¹⁶ The root of the MNF-Chinese relations

15 Nirmal Nibedon, Mizoram - The Dagger Brigade, New Delhi, 1980, p. 125.

16 B.K. Roy Burman, Demographic and Socio-Economic Profiles in the Hill Areas of North-East India, Delhi, 1970, p.134.

took place in Dacca (East Pakistan) through the Chinese Consulate which had been taking an interest in them right from the beginning of the uprising in February 1966.¹⁷

While in Dacca, Laldenga and his close associates made further attempts to contact other foreign powers who would help them in their struggle for independence. Having had established relations with Pakistan, the M.N.F. top brass decided to approach China. The Chinese aggression in 1962 on the Indian soil encouraged the insurgents to approach China for help and material assistance. Most important too was the racial similarities between the Mizos and the Chinese. Owing to the fact that both racial groups belonged to the mongoloid stock, the M.N.F. leaders felt a sense of brotherliness towards the Chinese as against the Indians who were of completely different stock.

The M.N.F. Rowing Ambassador, Lalthangliana played a significant role in building relations between the M.N.F. and China. It was Lalthangliana who made the first contact with the Chinese Embassy in Dacca. He made way for the meeting between Laldenga and the Chinese Counsul after making personal contacts with the Counsul. It was in the year of 1968 that the way was paved for clandestine relations between the M.N.F. and China. This was a

17 Ibid.

significant development for the M.N.F. having secured the support of two powers which were hostile to India. The outcome of the understanding between the M.N.F. and China was to benefit the M.N.F. in all aspects of their struggle.

It is interesting to note here that the Pakistan Intelligence were fully aware of the secret dealings the M.N.F. had carried out with China on Pakistani soil. The M.N.F. President Laldenga was questioned by the Pakistan Intelligence Department on this issue. Laldenga told them frankly that he and his friends had visited the Chinese Embassy because China was the friendly country of Pakistan and would never do anything against Pakistan.¹⁸ The Pakistan Intelligence assured the M.N.F. President that it was not contrary to Pakistan's interests if relations between the M.N.F. and China were established. As a matter of fact, Pakistan was willing to promote relations between the two if it was deemed necessary by the M.N.F.

In an effort to step up relations, Laldenga made his first official visit to China in June 1968. Accordingly, the Government of Pakistan met the Chinese Consul at Dacca on behalf of Laldenga and prepared travel documents and did everything needful. The Chinese Government issued him a visa sending also, information about his visit to

18 Lalthangliana: MNF Movement (unpublished Thesis).

the country and the date and time of his arrival.¹⁹ Laldenga's visit to China was significant for it set the atmosphere right for future talks. Meetings were held with important Chinese officials and Laldenga succeeded in generating positive understanding to the Mizo problem. He discussed various issues with the Chinese officials and emphasized on the need for armed and political assistance for the underground government of Mizoram. Laldenga was not promised political assistance though armed assistance was assured which was to be supplied through the Government of Pakistan by instalment.²⁰

On Laldenga's return to Dacca, the next important mission to China was to be undertaken by Lalthangliana. Lalthangliana was to be sent to Peking to represent the underground government of Mizoram as an Ambassador. The Government of Pakistan issued him a stateless passport under the assumed name of Chianghnun of Sazek area in Chittagong Hill Tracts.²¹ Lalthangliana reached Canton Airport on 9 August 1968. He was accorded a warm welcome and full VIP treatment were accorded to him. During his stay in China, Lalthangliana made significant headway for the further securing of armed assistance from the Chinese. Moreover, it was agreed that Mizo National Army

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

would be given training in the use of sophisticated weapons and in the use of explosives. The Chinese extended moral and material support to the Naga, Mizo and Meitei Manipuri insurgents by arranging for their training in guerrilla warfare and subversion in training centres in Yunan Province of Mainland China and Lhasa in Tibet.²²

Laldenga, accompanied by the Foreign Minister Lalhmingthanga and other close aides visited China again in the year 1970, September. On his agenda was a meeting with no less a personage than the Chinese Premier Chou-En-Lai.²³ The Chinese leaders had made it clear to Laldenga during this visit, that there was no question of immediate recognition of Mizoram as an independent State - not for the moment at least. But the positive aspect of the visit was the categorical assurances from Chinese leaders that sanctuary and arms-training would be theirs for the asking.²⁴ For the moment the assurances of arms and ammunition was more important for the cause of the M.N.F. in their relentless struggle against the heavy odds that were against them. The Chinese Government lived up to their promise of armed assistance which was a great moral boost for the guerrillas.

22 Vik Sarin, India's North-East in Flames, New Delhi, 1980, p. 11.

23 Nirmal Nibedon, Mizoram - The Dagger Brigade, New Delhi, p. 154.

24 Ibid., p. 155.

OTHER FOREIGN POWERS

Laldenga made sincere efforts to contact other foreign powers and internationalize the Mizo cause. Having succeeded to a significant extent in establishing relations with two major powers, Pakistan and China, he turned towards the South-East Asian countries particularly Indonesia. On 20.1.1966, Laldenga wrote a letter to President Sukarno of Indonesia. In it he painstakingly outlined the recent history of the Mizo Hills and pointed out that even after the first invaders had conquered their land, "we were in a semi-independence status during the British period. Nationalism and patriotism inspired by political consciousness has now reached its maturity and the cry for political self-determination and creation of a separate homeland are the only wish and inspiration of my people"²⁵ This was a clear appeal for help and support from the people and Government of Indonesia.

THE ROLE OF THE CIA

The involvement of foreign powers, particularly China and Pakistan in the insurgency movements in the North-East, particularly in Mizoram is an open secret. Official denials have been made from all quarters but the clandestine relationships have continued to operate. In

25 Nirmal Nibedon, Mizoram - The Dagger Brigade, New Delhi, 1980, p. 56.

the midst of these clandestine operations, the presence of the CIA had also been felt and pointed at. Dhruva Majumdar, author of 'Confessions of a Journalist' states that he was put in contact with the CIA through a fellow journalist. According to Majumdar, the contact man took him to meet Edwin Peckhouse, the then United States Information Service (USIS) head in Calcutta. Peckhouse passed Majumdar on to another American called 'Bob' who paid him money and asked him to file reports from North-East India on movements of the Indian Army and 'barrack room gossip'.²⁶ He was also provided with equipment for invisible writing, a series of code for safe mailing and a post-box number in Calcutta's Bhowanipur area.

The M.N.F. leaders also realised the importance of approaching the United States Embassy in Dacca. Prior to his departure for China, Lalthagliana had conducted a meeting with the American Consul at Dacca but before anything concrete could be reached, the Consul was transferred. But soon after Lalthagliana succeeded in contacting a CIA agent who could make a great deal of contribution to the establishment of relations between the M.N.F. and the U.S. A rendezvous was set up and the CIA agent and Lalthagliana held discussions on the possibility of U.S.

26 Vik Sarin, India's North-East in Flames, New Delhi, 1980, p. 16.

aid to the M.N.F. The CIA informed Lalthangliana that the Mizoram problem was 101st in White House list of foreign problems.²⁷ The CIA agent suggested that some of the M.N.F. personnel should go to the USA to approach some influential persons to help them organise the 'Friendship Society of the Mizos' to create public opinion there.²⁸

The M.N.F. were eager to establish relations with the US even if it meant the losing its relations with China. This was true as Laldenga and Lalthangliana feared that they should go too far towards communism.²⁹ Laldenga and Lalthangliana believed also that U.S. support would be more effective than that of China politically and materially.

In the course of his meeting with the CIA agent, it was agreed that Lalthangliana should write to Mr. Fullbright, the then Chairman of Foreign Policy Making Committee of USA as he was the person who would be able to make great contribution to the cause of the Mizos. However, the attempts of Lalthangliana to establish relations with the U.S. were nipped in the bud. Laldenga refused to send any M.N.F. official to the U.S. unless he as the leader of the M.N.F. could go there first. This was basically a fear that

27 Lalthangliana: MNF Movement (unpublished thesis).

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

he would be outdone in the political field. Therefore, the M.N.F. endeavour to establish relations with the U.S. reached only the preliminary stage.

MOTIVES OF PAKISTAN AND CHINA
IN PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO THE MNF

The foreign powers, Pakistan and China proved to be, to a significant extent, the backbone of the M.N.F. and in its struggle for independence. The material assistance provided by the two countries proved to be of immense value for the cause of the Mizos. Pakistan and China not only provided material aid but financial as well. The clandestine relations established were big gains for the M.N.F. Was it to be only one-sided? What were the actual motives of these powers in providing assistance to the Mizo rebels? It was no secret the nature of relations between India and these two countries. Laldenga and his men had played their cards right and made much headway with Pakistan and China.

Both the Pakistani and Chinese Governments had made no prior preconditions before the establishment of clandestine relations. This was a big boon for the M.N.F. who were in no position to make any deal with any government.

The primary objective of both Pakistan and China was to keep alive the secessionist movements in the North-East by encouraging and supporting the rebels, rather than

a genuine regard and sympathy for their cause and struggle for independence. The insurgency in Mizoram, Nagaland and Manipur were merely pawns in the game of power politics between powerful countries. The assistance provided to the Mizo rebels were an attempt to embarrass the Central Government of India and to wreck the unity, which India had long fought to preserve and protect, from within. Such designs were to be carried by fermenting trouble in the North-Eastern part of the country.

Pakistan's strategy in formenting trouble in the North-East frontier would appear to have three objectives:

- (i) to disintegrate the unity of the country by supporting secessionist movements in the area,
- (ii) to strain the country's economy, which would be unavoidable in the event of large-scale insurgency; and
- (iii) to lie down a number of mountain divisions of the Indian Army in these areas so that Pakistan could pursue its adventurist policy in respect of Kashmir.³⁰

Pakistan and India historically may have a lot in common and yet due to force of circumstances have a lot of differences. India had emerged a stronger and larger nation in the eyes of the world and this has been a sore point

30 Prakash Singh, Nagaland, 1972, p. 121.

with Pakistan who never have left any stone unturned to get her back on India. The assistance provided to the M.N.F. in its struggle for independence was one way of creating problems for India internally.

The Chinese aims in the Eastern sector of the country are much too sinister to be ignored.³¹ The Red Chinese Dragon raced through the blue mountains of the North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA) in the black year of 1962 like a hurricane, spitting fire and demolishing every obstacle that came in its way till it reached the foothills of Kameng, close to the plains of Assam, leaving behind a trail of death and devastation.³² The Chinese aggression of 1962 has created a deep wedge in Indo-Chinese relations which has taken much time to normalize relations. The strained relations between India and China paved the way for the willingness on the part of China to provide assistance to the insurgency movement in Mizoram.

31 Ibid., p. 43.

32 Vik Sarin, India's North-East in Flames, New Delhi, 1980, p. 6.

Chapter IV

THE EXTERNAL SUPPORT TO THE MNF: MONEY, ARMS, TRAINING AND SHELTER

With the establishment of clandestine relations between the MNF and China and Pakistan, the insurgency movement in Mizoram received a new lease of life. The relations which were established may not have been concluded at the highest level in relation to Pakistan and China, but it proved to be of immense value and a great boost to the morale of the insurgents who nursed nothing short of 'independence' for the hill district of Mizoram.

The preliminaries having been worked out between the MNF and China and Pakistan it was closely followed up for further strengthening of the relationships by repeated visits made by the M.N.F. to China and Pakistan where they were accorded a warm welcome and negotiations were carried out for further assistance. The M.N.F. having had secured the goodwill and sympathy of the foreign powers particularly China and Pakistan were keen to maintain its continuance and permanence which would invariably work out to the advantage of the M.N.F.

Following the counter-strike carried out by the Indian Army in the wake of the uprising in 1966, the M.N.F. were beaten back from the offensive they had carefully carried out. Understanding that their strength was no match for the Indian Army the Mizo National Army (MNA)

was on the run ambushing the patrols of their opponents wherever possible for they wisely took to guerrilla warfare.¹ In such a situation, the M.N.F. President Laldenga accompanied by his family, close friends and aides escaped to East Pakistan leaving behind the whole combatant force and civil government of the M.N.F. to be chased from pillar to post by the Indian Army.² It is to a significant extent ironic that the lower ranks of the M.N.F. were left behind to fight against the Indian Army without proper coordination and strategy, when the President and other important leaders had crossed over to East Pakistan.

Laldenga continued to stay in Dacca till the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971. He continued to be the undisputed leader of the M.N.F. while in 'exile' in Dacca wherefrom he directed out orders and instructions to his loyal men who continued to fearlessly fight for the independence of Mizoram. Laldenga and his company were accorded a warm welcome in Dacca after their flight from the Mizo hills. Though the Mizo underground were housed by Pakistan, taking Laldenga and his family under their special care with all facilities and amenities they did not make any written commitment nor did they give them any political support. They did not even disclose to them their real names and

1 Lalthanglian, The MNF Movement (unpublished thesis).

2 Ibid.

identities for fear of further involvement or to ensure a limited commitment.³ During their stay in Dacca, Laldenga and his aides were repeatedly shifted from one place to the other to ensure their security and to provide privacy. They were strictly instructed to avoid friends or to talk to any person in Dacca, alien or native.⁴ However, inspite of the restrictions imposed on the M.N.F., East Pakistan became the hot-seat for the operation of the M.N.F. in its anti-India activities and operations.

VISITS MADE BY THE MNF PERSONNEL TO
PAKISTAN AND CHINA

PAKISTAN:

The relations between M.N.F. and China and Pakistan, though established only at the clandestine level saw a number of visits made by various M.N.F. leaders to Pakistan and China. Besides the leaders there were a number of volunteers who crossed over to these countries in batches to undergo training in various aspects of guerrilla warfare. The frequencies of these meetings were not fixed and it was continued at irregular intervals. There was no set frequencies of the meetings.⁵ However, inspite of the visits being carried out at the clandestine levels, it went a long way in helping the M.N.F. in achieving an

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 R. Zamawia was the Defence Minister and the Army Chief for two years in the M.N.F. (underground).

important element in their objective to receive material and financial aid to their movement. The prior agreements reached between Laldenga and the officials of Pakistan and China in terms of assistance paved the way for further visits and agreements.

As mentioned earlier, the rebellion which broke out in Mizoram and the counter offensive carried out by the Government of India resulted in a large number of the M.N.F. volunteers crossing over the East Pakistan to escape the might of the Indian Army. East Pakistan which had its own interests in supporting the insurgency movement made no attempts to stop the crossings. As a matter of fact, the Pakistan President (Ayub Khan) said sometimes the Mizos were driven across Pakistan's border by Indians themselves. They have become a liability on us. What should we do with them? We have no heart to shoot them.⁶ This was a clear indication that the Pakistani Government had no intention of closing the safe passage of the Mizo guerrillas to East Pakistan. The centre of the M.N.F. activity was now at the Chittagong Hill Tracts in East Pakistan. The M.N.F. guerrillas did not take part in mass exodus to East Pakistan but the crossings were taken up in batches and small groups so as not to draw attention to themselves.

6 Nirmal Nibedon, Mizoram - The Dagger Brigade, New Delhi, 1980, p. 97.

The visits made by the M.N.F. leaders to East Pakistan was not difficult to come by. Foremost, the close proximity between Mizoram and East Pakistan acted in this favour. Besides, the Pakistani government having already had provided a safe refuge to Laldenga, his family and close associates saw no reason to refuse the other batches of the insurgents. The Chittagong Hill Tracts having become the central point of M.N.F. activities, many M.N.F. guerrillas crossed over to it for safe refuge, training and to receive instructions for operations within Mizoram. For example, in the early part of 1966, Lawmthanga Colney went to East Pakistan along with a batch of M.N.F. hostiles under Laldenga and stayed there in a M.N.F. camp Longkhar and received his training in police duties, and discipline etc.⁷ Likewise, Biakchhunga was also in the Chittagong Hill Tracts for receiving training under the experts.⁸ The movements to and fro East Pakistan took place more often than the trips made to China.

CHINA:

The Chinese connection had been established with the visit of Laldenga to China in June 1968. This was followed up with further visits in 1969 and 1970 where he met/ contacted many Chinese officials/leaders and asked for

7 Lawmthanga Colney was the brother of Malsawma Colney who was a Senator in the M.N.F. set-up.

8 Biakchhunga was a S.S. Captain of the S. Bn. MNA.

their assistance as well as armed intervention.⁹ The Chinese government had refused to the proposal of armed intervention but agreed to supply arms etc. and arrange for the training of the M.N.F. hostiles in China. These negotiations were initially conducted by Laldenga personally and later on through his emissaries.

In 1969, Laldenga, Lathnungthanga (Foreign Minister) and Zoramthanga (Secretary to the President) made an important visit to China to consider the possibility of opening land route as well as sea-route for transportation of military equipment and supplies from China to an appointed place. The visit was a landmark in the history of the M.N.F. relations with China for they were granted an audience with the Chinese Premier, Chou-en-lai, who accorded them a warm welcome. The M.N.F. delegates requested for the supply of sophisticated weapons like ground to air missiles or guided missiles. An important outcome of this meeting was that the Chinese Government was also willing to help the M.N.F. to open the land route through Burma and Kanchin.¹⁰ The Chinese government assured that they would talk to the Kanchin rebels on behalf of the M.N.F. government to help them open a land route to China.¹¹ This effort was successful and the route through the occupied area of the

9 Lalthangliana, MNF Movement (unpublished thesis).

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

Kanchins were utilized by the M.N.F. Besides this route, the higher ranking M.N.F. officials followed the Dacca-Islamabad-Peking flight services.¹²

Laldenga visited China again in 1970 with his Foreign Minister, Lalhmingthanga and were once again assured of Chinese help. Besides the top brass of the M.N.F. visits to China, there were also a number of M.N.F. guerrillas who reached China for the purpose of basic training, guerrilla tactics and handling of sophisticated weapons.

THE NATURE OF AID AND ASSISTANCE PROVIDED
TO THE MNF BY PAKISTAN AND CHINA

The M.N.F. leaders having been successful in establishing relations with Pakistan and China were promised support in material and financial means. The support which was received by the M.N.F. proved to be the main backgone in their fight against the Indian Army. Without the arms and ammunition received from the foreign powers, those which were at the disposal of the M.N.F. were insufficient and it was not possible for all the volunteers to be armed which was vital for their survival. It was during the course of certain operations like ambushes and raids on army vehicles and far flung camps that the M.N.F. were able to snatch arms and ammunition for their own purposes. The support was a vital link to their own survival and

12 S. Lianzuala, Vice-President M.N.F. (underground).

relentless fight for the independence of Mizoram from the Indian Union.

PAKISTAN:

The support Pakistan rendered to the cause of the M.N.F. was invaluable. As already stated, prior to the liberation of Bangladesh, East Pakistan was a safe heaven for the M.N.F. Besides, providing safe access, Pakistan provided aid and assistance to the M.N.F. Basically, Pakistan provided the M.N.F. volunteers military training in the training camps set up in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Military training was an important element in the grooming of the urban guerrilla who had to learn rigorous discipline, patience etc. They were also instructed in the handling of machine guns, explosives, arms etc. Besides, the provision of refuge and training facilities, Pakistan also provided financial help to the M.N.F. which though was not substantial.¹³ Moreover, some piece of land was allotted to the M.N.F. to establish Headquarters and military camps.¹⁴ The training camps which were subsequently set up were the centre for the M.N.F. guerrillas to receive their basic training. The M.N.F. insurgents based in East Pakistan conducted its activities under the watchful eye of the Pakistani government. The majority of the M.N.F. personnel in East Pakistan were

13 R. Zamawia.

14 S. Lianzuala.

concentrated in Rangamati, which was approximately about 40 kms. from Chittagong.¹⁵ The top brass of the M.N.F. and many other M.N.F. guerrillas were stationed in this area. The main headquarters was located in the Sajek Ranges, where important decisions on important issues were communicated and decided upon. The M.N.F. leader, Laldenga was based in Dacca in Mirpur Colony, where he lived with his family.

Besides the abovementioned major hide-outs of the M.N.F., there were a number of smaller camps in and around the border areas. Lt. Col. Lalliana and his group were grouped in a small camp known as Mahnuam in 1968. The 'V' Battalion was posted in Chhipui within the territory of East Pakistan. The M.N.F. training camp was also located at Longkhar where the volunteers received training in warfare.

The camps had a dual purpose of providing food and shelter and conducting the training activities of the M.N.F. guerrillas. There were many M.N.F. guerrillas who after receiving training in the camps slipped back into Mizoram to carry out anti-national activities. The training of the guerrillas had no permanent fixed routine. It had been organised when required.¹⁶ It was almost an

15 C. Zama, The Life of Capt. Lalheia, Chawnpuri Aizawl, 1982, p. 28.

16 Mr. Jhangmawia, ex-Senator MNF (underground).

impossibility to have a fixed schedule due to the fact that the insurgents on their way to these camps in East Pakistan had to be very cautious and alert to escape, the combing operations of the Indian Army. In such circumstances time and date could not be specifically maintained.

The training in the camps were conducted by Pakistani officials and agents. They belonged to the Pakistan Special Force and Military Intelligence.¹⁷ They instructed the insurgents in various aspects of sabotage, explosives, machine guns and the handling of other sophisticated automatic weapons. The old veterans of the M.N.F. also instructed the new recruits.

The camps in East Pakistan provided a 'home' to the M.N.F. volunteers, many of whom had a family too. The general condition of life in the camps were simple and much time was spent in search of food. Life was on the whole not easy but it did not dampen the spirits of the M.N.F. who bore all pain and hardships for the fulfilment of the cause they believed in. The camp life resembled military war camps but with lesser facilities and comforts. However, inspite of the drawbacks, life in the jungles camps was adventurous and doing with numerous challenges to be met. It was cordial and disciplined and seasoned with the true spirit of altruism.¹⁸ An interesting element

17 R. Zamawia.

18 Lalhrima Sailo, ex D.C. (MNF underground).

of camp life was that the M.N.F. utilized the little free time at their disposal for constructive work. Adult schools were opened where those who had missed formal schooling due to their involvement with the M.N.F. movement could make up for it. Moreover, spoken English schools were also set up.¹⁹ They also practised 'jhum' cultivation to meet their immediate needs.²⁰

The M.N.F. in regard to the buying of arms and ammunition were also given much help by the Pakistani and Chinese governments. Initially, the Pakistani government did not provide them with arms and ammunition. However, financial assistance was provided to the M.N.F. in order to sustain its needs. In the later period, though, the Pakistani government did provide them with arms and ammunition. The M.N.F. were in possession of machine guns, grenades, mortar, bombs, G3, G4 automatic weapons.

CHINA:

The nature of the support provided by China to the M.N.F. were in the form of military training, arms and ammunitions, medicine, money and clothing and uniforms. They were also given some US dollars.²¹ The M.N.F., unlike their bases in East Pakistan did not have any specific

19 S. Lianzuala, M.N.F. Vice-President (underground).

20 'Jhum' - slash and burn method of cultivation.

21 Ibid.

headquarters in China. Volunteers went to China in small groups to undergo training. In 1975, S.S. Colonel Biakuela and a group of 200 men went to China for training and remained there till January 1976. In 1977, there were more plans to send men to China for training in guerrilla warfare. In early 1968-69, Major Lalhuna, a Major in the MNA, who had prior to his recruitment in the M.N.F. served in the Indian Contingent of the UNO Army in Israel was sent to China to make further arrangements with the Chinese to train the Mizo Army in military warfare.²² The training of the Mizo insurgents were also to a limited extent carried out by the Chinese experts in the Kanchin area of Burma.²³

The M.N.F., after the liberation of Bangladesh continued to receive support from China. Batches of sturdy youngmen ticked the long and winding road to China to receive training. The arms and ammunition continued to reach the Mizo rebels. In the year 1975, there was an important event which took place at Raj Bhawan in Imphal. 51 Mizo rebels surrendered to the Lt. Governor, L.P. Singh. Along with their surrender, they laid down arms which were in their possession. The surrendered arms included 23 Chinese made sub-machine guns, 7 pistols, 2 rocket launchers, 18 rockets, 18 grenades and more than 6,000 round of ammunition. The surrender was a big boost to the Indian

22 Lathangliana, The MNF Movement.

23 Vik Sarin, India's North-East in Flames, p. 12.

forces, however the arms surrendered bore Chinese markings which were a clear indication to the fact that the Chinese were definitely helping the M.N.F. with sophisticated weapons and that it was going on at a regular scale. This was a matter of grave concern to the Indian authorities.

THE FORMATION OF BANGLADESH AND ITS
IMPACT ON THE MNF ACTIVITIES

The formation of Bangladesh in 1971 dealt a severe blow to the M.N.F. They were no longer safe in the jungles caught between the Mukti Bahini and Indian Army on the one side and its patron, the Pakistan government, on the other. Besides the external problem, the M.N.F. was riddled with internal problems which had been simmering for sometime. There was a group within the M.N.F. which comprised of the so-called 'intellectuals' known as 'Dumpawl' who felt that the M.N.F. should now adopt a conciliatory stand towards the Government of India for the solution of the Mizo problem.²⁴ The 'Dumpawl' group were in favour of solving the Mizo problem within the framework of the Indian Constitution. In the midst of all these problems, the M.N.F. had to move out of the Chittagong Hill Tracts and

24 Dumpawl - 'Blue' faction, the term originated from the prophecy of the late Pastor Chhawna. In his prophecy he spoke of his vision whereby he saw the dead body of a person (Mizoram). The top-most cover was red (bloodshed) and the second cover black (sufferings and diseases). The third cover was blue. When the red and black covers were removed the blue colour was visible and this signified a peaceful period - Lalthangliana.

the other camps to move on to safer areas.

The revolution in East Pakistan upset the calculations of Laldenga who found it extremely difficult to believe that it was no longer safe for the M.N.F. to be based in the area. In spite of the assurances given by the Pakistani military intelligence that the revolution would be crushed immediately, hectic preparations took place in the M.N.F. headquarters to call for the evacuation of all M.N.F. personnel from East Pakistan.

The M.N.F. leaders drew to a conclusion that all M.N.F. personnel were to leave East Pakistan and proceed to the Arakans in Burma. The M.N.F. had made contacts with the Burmese Communist Party (BCP) a pro-Peking guerrilla group in Burma and a safe route had been chalked out with their help. On 18.12.71 S.S. Capt. Lathiana, S.S. Capt. Lalhelia, S.S. Capt. Vanlallamta and others went to look for boats to carry them across Tattawng river.²⁵ It was no easy task but they were successful in hiring a boat capable of carrying 200-300 people. The M.N.F. stationed at Rangamati finally set sail at 12 mid-night. It was not as easy journey. They were spotted by the Indian Air Force and in a small village called Pharua, there was an exchange of fire with the Bangladesh Army for about three hours.

25 C. Zama, op. cit., p. 28.

It was decided by the M.N.F. top leaders that the sick and weak were to surrender at the Indian Camp at Sandep. They were to be led by Lalnunmawia and R. Zamawia who were also instructed to look for ways for the M.N.F. to come to the negotiating table.

On reaching Arakan (Burma), the M.N.F. were given a warm welcome and many pigs were killed in their honour.²⁶ However, it was at this critical juncture that Laldenga decided to proceed on to West Pakistan along with his family and close aides. With the departure of Laldenga imminent a "National Emergency Committee" was set up to look after the affairs of the M.N.F. in the absence of the President. Following the Committee it was decided to entrust the charge of Foreign Affairs to the President since he would be in no position to issue administrative powers. The responsibility of the administration of M.N.F. underground and overground were vested in the N.E.C. After issuing instructions, Laldenga along with his family and four aides left for Karachi taking with him Rs. 350,000/- and leaving behind Rs. 70,000/- at the disposal of the whole M.N.F. group left behind in Arakan.

The flight to Karachi was not easy. Laldenga and his wife had to use assumed names lest the Burmese Intelligence picked them up. The Pakistani Embassy in Burma was requested

26 Ibid., p. 30.

by the M.N.F. to make provisions for the escape of Laldenga and his group out of Karachi. The formalities were completed by the Pakistani Intelligence and Laldenga and his group reached Karachi by a KLM flight. On their arrival at Karachi, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISS) took charge of Laldenga's security. In fact, straight from the airport, the M.N.F. chief was driven to the ISI Guest House located near the Asghar Mall Chowk.²⁷ The M.N.F. President also had a meeting with Z.A. Bhutto. While at Karachi Laldenga managed to obtain material help and other facilities and concessions from the then Pakistan regime so as to help him and the M.N.F. hostiles in continuing their anti-State activities. The Pakistani accorded him full honour during his stay in West Pakistan. The Pakistani Government were also pleased with the M.N.F. for they had fought on their side in the war of 1971. The M.N.F. had made attacks on the camps of the Shanti Bahani at certain places. Under the supervision of Major Khawla, a surprise raid was conducted against the Shanti Bahini camp near Kawnpui river. The gun-fight lasted for about 45 minutes and the raiders were successful in snatching away 4 radio sets and they set fire on some villages and camps. In Tawnluia's words the government which gives us shelter was aware of this incident and they seemed to be very

27 Nirmal Nibedon, Mizoram: The Dagger Brigade, New Delhi, 1980, p. 174.

pleased which is very good for us.²⁸

The Mizo National Army had also carried out operations against the Mukti Bahini in July 1971 jointly with the Pakistan Services Special Group (SSG) at a place called Lungziak and captured about twenty-five automatic rifles and some guns. The enemies of their 'host' nation was regarded as their own enemies and the M.N.F. were willing to fight for the cause of the Pakistani Government. Moreover, the fall of East Pakistan would indicate the end of the safe stay on the soil of East Pakistan which would prove disastrous for them in all aspects of their security, strategy, training, movements and most important the firm backing they enjoyed. The presence of the Indian Army too acted as a catalyst for the M.N.F. to support the Pakistani Government. The M.N.F. had long since identified any Indian soldier as his staunch enemy with whom there would be no compromise.

However, the fall of the Pakistani Government in East Pakistan came sooner than the expectations of the M.N.F. President, Laldenga. It was no longer safe for the whole body of M.N.F. to stay on in the newly liberated 'Bangladesh'. The destination was now the Arakans in Burma, which became the 'home' of the M.N.F. till the end of the insurgency which

28 Tawnluia was the Brigadier General of the Mizo National Army.

came about in 1986, June. Till then, the M.N.F. had to rough it out in the Arakans which was no easy task. The Burmese Government were stepping up operations against all rebel forces which proved to be a stumbling block for the M.N.F.

THE MNF AND THE BURMESE
COMMUNIST PARTY

The M.N.F. received considerable help and support from the Burmese Communist Party (BCP). There was understanding and co-operation between the M.N.F. and B.C.P. The B.C.P. had also provided food and shelter to the M.N.F. in the initial cross over to the Arakans. The relation between the B.C.P. and the M.N.F. did not extend beyond this because there was no unified aim between the two. The B.C.P. concentrated its focus totally against Rangoon and had no motives against India, which otherwise would have drawn the two groups further together on a united stand.

However, the Burmese military government having had a lot of internal problems found it extremely difficult to successfully crush the various rebel factions fighting against it. The Karen, Kanchin and Shan insurgents have been a thorn in the flesh of the Burmese military government. The Burmese army, because of the M.N.F. close association with the rebels had not taken too kindly to the presence of the M.N.F. in the Burmese soil. This resulted in the

Burmese Army carrying out operations against the M.N.F.

SPLIT IN THE MNF

The fall of East Pakistan was a severe set-back to the M.N.F. It proved to be a turning point in the history of the M.N.F. The 'Dumpawl' group who had advocated a peaceful solution to the Mizo problem within the framework of the Indian Constitution became more vocal. The M.N.F. President from Islamabad sent a letter to the M.N.F. headquarters which was read out to the National Emergency Committee. In the letter he stated his disappointment over the failure to contact other foreign countries to come to the aid of the M.N.F. Considering the high expectations that was placed in him, the leaders were highly disappointed with Laldenga. Before he left his people he had informed them that he would be of greater help to them and to the nation (Mizo) for, in Islamabad, he would be in continual touch with other countries.²⁹ Such contradictions in the promises of their leader greatly disappointed the N.E.C.

Moreover it was on the basic issue of solving the Mizo problem within the framework of the Indian Constitution that divided the M.N.F. The hard-liners led by Laldenga refused to entertain such negotiations. It was a do or die campaign. This issue ultimately resulted in the

29 Why did the M.N.F. Split? Biakchunga and Lathlanuanga, Zawlbuk Press, Aizawl, p. 3.

'Dumpawl' laying down their arms and joining the mainstream of national life. The hard-liners under Laldenga continued the ardent call for independence. However, there was ultimately a gradual softening of attitude even in the midst of the die-hard M.N.F. circle towards a negotiated settlement of the problem. There was an opening for talks between the Government of India and the M.N.F to come together which came about through the determined efforts of both sides.

The fall of East Pakistan and the stepped-up counter offensive of the Indian Army to a significant extent limited the operations of the M.N.F. Their area of movement was narrowed down which hampered the success of the plans. They were surrounded by foes rather than friends in the Arakans which was detrimental to the strengthening of the bases and hold in the Arakans. Life continued to be an endless struggle and misery.

THE MNF AND THE OTHER INSURGENT
GROUPS IN NORTH-EAST INDIA

The M.N.F's role in the North-Eastern region is omninous. The Indian Intelligence reported the role of the M.N.F. in co-ordinating the activities of insurgents in Tripura, Manipur and Nagaland. The implication of such strategy is far reaching due to the long standing links the M.N.F. enjoys in Bangladesh and the possibility that it will become a conduit for Bangladeshi arms to insurgent organisations

like the Tripura National Volunteers (TNV) and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of Manipur and the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN).³⁰

More alarmingly was the fact that the M.N.F. and TNV made certain efforts to contact the Khalistan extremists in Punjab. The M.N.F. Liason Officer in Bangladesh Col. Lalrinawma was assigned the task of going to Pakistan to contact Khalistan extremists. The object was to obtain from them 'training in the battle tactics of the Indian Security forces'. The forging of any kind of alliance with the other insurgent groups in the North-East was a serious threat to the already burning situation, and to India's internal stability. In the early phase of 1980's there was an attempt to form a united front comprising the Seven Sisters - Nagaland, Arunachal, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Assam and Tripura. It was to be called the Seven Sisters United Liberation Army (SULA). The possibility of such an organisation was an indication of the vast network that had been established among the various insurgent groups in the North-East.

The Nagas had long since maintained good relations with their Mizo brethren. In the year 1947 Phizo and Sakhrie had visited Mizoram and had vehemently spoken against the Indian domination and called for a united

30 Indian Express (New Delhi), 3 October, 1984.

struggle to end such domination. The Nagas and the Mizos had also ticked to China for training and had greatly supported one another. The unity and support among the various insurgent groups was a stumbling block for peace.

THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA STAND ON
THE KIND OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED
BY CHINA AND PAKISTAN

India's relations with China and Pakistan have not been an easy and smooth one. Good relations have been difficult to come by and the pages of history are vivid with the Chinese Aggression (1962) and the Indo-Pak War of 1965 and 1971. In spite of the lack of friendliness and cordiality in the relations between the neighbours, there were positive indications for normalising relations. It was not easy to come by but genuine efforts on all sides gave hope for the establishment of normal relations.

In the midst of all these, the kind of help and support the M.N.F. were receiving from China and Pakistan caused grave concern to New Delhi. The M.N.F. were being trained and provided arms and ammunition and were also given safe refuge. The movement spearheaded by the M.N.F. was anti-national and the support rendered to the M.N.F. by Pakistan and China was an indirect attack on New Delhi by jeopardising India's security in the North-East. The reports of the kind of assistance that was provided to the M.N.F. by the foreign powers was known to New Delhi as

early as 1974. However, no formal form of protests was conveyed to the respective governments yet.

It was only in 1979 when the then External Affairs Minister, A.B. Vajpayee visited China that India's concern over continued Chinese help to the insurgents in the North-East was conveyed. The Chinese assured India that such incidents were a thing of the past and that there was no need for India to be concerned on the issue any longer. This was regarded as a significant breakthrough by Indian officials regarding the security concerns in the North-East. However, in reality there was no concrete proof to the assurances provided by China. The M.N.F. continued to enjoy the patronage of the Chinese, though possibilities exist that it was to a lesser degree and caution.

India was also fully aware of the role of Pakistan in the North-East and its support to the insurgents particularly the M.N.F. However, the fall of East Pakistan was a major set-back to the M.N.F. and following this Pakistan's role was significantly lessened. In spite of Laldenga given refuge in West Pakistan, there was no major effort on the part of the Pakistani Government to relentlessly continue its active support to the M.N.F. Pakistan's motive in supporting the M.N.F. was directed against New Delhi, rather than a genuine concern for the hopes and aspirations of the M.N.F. India had also officially lodged a strong protest to the Pakistani Government for capitalising on the tribal uprising

in the North-East. It charged Pakistan for aiding Mizo rebels and opening bases for them in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Pakistan officials however denied such allegations inspite of the obvious support it was providing to the M.N.F.

The kind of support that the M.N.F. had received from Pakistan and China may not have been complete to the satisfaction of the M.N.F. However, the backing of both China and Pakistan gave it an international dimension which had elevated the insurgency to one of the major problems India faced and which called for immediate steps for the solution of the problem.

Chapter V

THE ACCORD AND AFTER

The turmoil which ignited the hill district of Mizoram into flames was a force to be reckoned with. The insurgency movement led by the M.N.F. was detrimental to all parties concerned and the early solution to the Mizo problem was of outmost importance. However, the road to peace in the tiny hill district was long and dreary and it was not easy to come by. Over two decades of insurgency was to come by, before peace and harmony reigned over the land of the Mizos.

However, it would be wrong to assume that there was no peace process while the insurgency movement was going on in full swing. There were genuine attempts to bring peace and stability in Mizoram and solve the problem keeping the interests of all concerned parties in mind. The peace efforts ironically, began while the M.N.F. were at the peak of their initial onslaught of the whole of Mizoram. It was not quite the exact kind of peace process that were to take place in the later years. However, it was by and large the very beginning of an attempt towards peace.

THE FIRST MOVE TOWARDS PEACE

The Mizo National Front as early as 1966 after the successful counter offensive carried out by the Indian Army made a tentative attempt towards negotiation. On 7th March 1966, Lalnunmawia, the Vice-President of the M.N.F.

communicated the M.N.F. desire for talks to the Deputy Commissioner of the Mizo District. The proposal was however sternly rejected and in turn, the Deputy Commissioner demanded the unconditional surrender of the M.N.F. within 24 hours. Such demands made by the Deputy Commissioner could not be met by the M.N.F. Moreover, the top brass of the M.N.F. could not be contacted within such a short notice to come to any positive understanding with the Government of India.

For the Deputy Commissioner, the incident of Laldenga's release from prison and his promise of good behaviour to the Chief Minister Chaliha prior to the outbreak of insurgency was still fresh and this proved to be a stumbling block for the establishment of trust.

THE SECOND ATTEMPT FOR TALKS

In spite of the failure of the M.N.F.'s attempt to come to the negotiating table, there was yet another move early in the month of December 1968. The Director of the M.N.F. intelligence conveyed to Rev. Biakuela the M.N.F. Government's desire to initiate peace talks with the Indian representatives. Rev. Biakuela told the matter at once to Rev. Zairema the then head and helmsman of the Presbyterian Church in Mizoram who took up the case without delay¹, believing that his Church would be able to bring

1 Lalthangliana, MNF Movement (unpublished thesis).

about peaceful settlement of the Mizoram problem. In order to step up the process for a meeting, M.V. Thomas, the Central Joint Director of S.B.I. who was posted in Mizoram, was contacted to make the necessary arrangements for the meeting.

The Central Government responded positively to the overtures of the M.N.F. M.V. Thomas was directed to set up a meeting with the representatives of the M.N.F. government. The meeting was agreed to be held in a certain house of South Hlilmen on 20th December, 1968. The M.N.F. representatives consisted of Zahnungthanga, the Director of M.N.F. intelligence, Lian Thianga, the Deputy Commissioner of Aizawl and Kamlova, the Assistant Deputy Commissioner. Before they came to South Hlilmen village, the military operations of that area was suspended and altogether withdrawn by the Government of India for their safety.²

At the appointed place talks were held between the M.N.F. delegation and M.V. Thomas. At the instruction of the Central Government of India, he told the M.N.F. delegation that India was always ready to have a talk with the M.N.F. Government on any status for Mizoram, except for independence.³ Cessation from the Indian Union was impossible as such a demand was contrary to the unity of India.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

The report of the meeting was forwarded to S. Lianzuala and then to the Vice-President . The Vice-President further informed Laldenga about the meeting and he expressed his personal opinion in favour of coming to terms with the Indian Government, particularly since there was intelligence report of an upcoming major crackdown on the M.N.F. However, much to the disappointment of the M.N.F. leaders who had generated much hope and goodwill, Laldenga did not attach much importance to the meeting and he refused to compromise on any issue. Laldenga was not reciprocative to the Indian Government primarily because the meeting concluded had not directly been carried out as per his order and thus was unwilling to continue any process which he had not initiated. As a result of this attitude the opening that had been established tentatively with the representatives from both sides could not yield any definite results. The Mizo problem remained as it was with no hope for an immediate solution. Insurgency was to continue unabated for the next twenty years before lasting peace could be achieved.

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH

The Church plays a significant role in the religious and social life of the Mizos. The Mizos are predominantly Christians in their religion and are very protective about their faith and will leave no stone unturned for its safeguard. The M.N.F. in its aims and objectives had promised

to safe-guard the Christian religion in the face of any challenges. With Christianity playing a significant role in the socio-political and religious sphere, the Church in Mizoram made sincere efforts to bridge the deep gorge between the M.N.F. and the Government of India. The Presbyterian Church, Synod now felt that they had a role to play to stop the growth of the deteriorating situation in Mizoram by resolving goodwill and mutual understanding between the M.N.F. and the general public and also between the security forces and the Mizo people.⁴

The Presbyterian Church Synod denounced the violent activities of the M.N.F. and called it un-Christian. Resorting to killings was against the teachings of Christ and thus, called upon the M.N.F. to put an end to such activities. The Church also condemned any such other activities which brought sufferings and untold miseries to anyone concerned. The Presbyterian Church issued a pamphlet voicing its concern on the above mentioned issues on 12.3.1966. When the Mizoram Government (M.N.F.) received a copy of the Church Pamphlet, they could not digest its contents. The Home Ministry (MNF) obstructed its circulation due to the fact that the contents of the pamphlet was against the desires of the Government of Mizoram. They warned them that if the Church leaders do not adhere to

4 Vanal Hluna, John, Church and the Political Upheaval in Mizoram, Mizo History Association, Mizoram, Aizawl 1985, p. 107.

their instructions, the laws of the country would determine their fate.⁵

The M.N.F. carried out its violent activities unabated and did not heed the advice of the Presbyterian Church. The Presbyterian Church and the Baptist Church issued a joint pamphlet on 8.9.66. They earnestly beseeched the Mizos, being all Christians, not to use violent means to safe-guard their religious rights.⁶ The issuance of the pamphlet displeased the M.N.F. leaders and they expressed their displeasure over the pamphlet. There seemed to be no solution over the deadlock and the differences which arose out of the measures adopted by the M.N.F. in the pursuance of their objective. The situation was grim and there was an urgent need to bring the two adversaries to iron out their differences.

THE ROLE OF REV. ZAIREMA

In spite of the grim situation prevailing in the hill district, there was hope that there would be a way out from all the trouble the district had been plunged into. There appeared a man who was to actively involve himself in the quest for peace. His name was Rev. Zairema who was absent during the initial strike and the immediate

5 Home Ministry (MNF) : Letter to Synod Leader, 16.3.66.

6 Presbyterian and Baptist Church of Mizoram, Pamphlet, 8.9.66.

counter-attack.⁷ He was much pained to see the vast destruction that was eating through his beloved home. On his return he immediately took up the task of establishing an understanding between the Government and the M.N.F. even at the risk of his own life.

Rev. Zairema wrote to the M.N.F. President Laldenga and stated that :

We all realise the difficult situation in Mizoram. The Government of India has no intention of withdrawing from our country, and you, on your part, are determined to drive them out. Your military forces have had frequent clashes, resulting in the sufferings of innocent men, women and children. If things continue as they are, this suffering is bound to increase in intensity

We are as anxious as you and your Government to restore peace in our country. I, therefore, have every hope that you will welcome to meet the representatives of our Churches at your convenience and co-operate with them in exploring ways and means for speedy restoration of normalcy. I shall, therefore, greatly appreciate your view of this proposed personal meeting. (8)

Laldenga responded positively to the proposal and a meeting was fixed between the M.N.F. President and the Christian Peace Committee, comprising of Rev. Zaimera, Rev. Laingurauva Ralte and Rev. H.S. Luia. The meeting was held at Sabual, which was located south of Aizawl and it was conducted with openness and mutual understanding.

7 Rev. Zairema was a graduate in Science and Theology from Serampore. He was an important Church leader.

8 Rev. Zairema: Letter to Laldenga, President, Govt. of Mizoram, Camp, 6.9.1966.

The Christian Peace Committee conveyed to Laldenga, their dismay over the violent stand adopted by the M.N.F. The M.N.F. President was quick to assure the Church leaders that the M.N.F. had taken up arms only as a last resort and in self-defence. Laldenga blamed Chaliha and accused him of facing them with a smiling face but making secret preparation to stab them in the back.⁹ The indication of the 18th Assam Rifles Battalion and a Jat Regiment against protests from him was a clear indication that Chaliha wanted to suppress the M.N.F. at any cost.

The delegation also protested against the M.N.F. action against several Church members and the threats that were directed against the Church leaders who had boldly condemned the actions of the M.N.F. Laldenga expressed regrets over the above incidents but made it specifically clear that in condemning violence and certain actions of the M.N.F. party, the Church should also condemn the Indian Government for indiscriminate bombing of civilian population and other acts of atrocities committed by the Indian Army on the Mizo people.

The delegates also raised the question of the forced fund collections that were being carried out by the M.N.F. volunteers on the poor and frightened villagers. The M.N.F. M.N.F. President promised to look into the matter and to

9 Vanlal Hluna, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

put an end to any excessive behaviour from the M.N.F. volunteers. The President also assured to look into the numerous threats which were made against the law-abiding citizens.

On the important issue of the demand of independence, the M.N.F. President refused to compromise and demanded that the Indian Government must talk to the M.N.F. at a Government to Government level. The meeting therefore ended inconclusively. However, inspite of the problems remaining unsolved, much was gained through the good offices of the brave Church leaders. The contact was useful in establishing a kind of understanding and a desire for peace from both sides.

Rev. Zairema did not give up hope. He continued in his attempts to bring the two sides to the negotiating table. On 17 April, 1967 he went to Shillong to meet Chaliha but he was not granted an audience with the Chief Minister. Undeterred he proceeded to New Delhi to meet no other than Mrs. Indira Gandhi. It was unfortunate that Rev. Zairema could not talk to her in person.

In the year 1968, Rev. Zairema drafted another letter to the M.N.F. President Laldenga beseeching an end to the insurgency. The Pastor called upon the M.N.F. leader to give up the path of violence. Rev. Zairema, along with other Church leaders set up the Peace Advisory Committee

to chalk out further steps necessary to bring peace. However, a violent incident occurred in the heart of Aizawl town where the IGP, DIG and the S.P. were brutally gunned down in cold blood while in conference. It pained the Church leaders and they condemned the shooting as 'un-Christian'.

Rev. Zairema relentless search for a way to bring the M.N.F. and the Government of India is an important chapter in the peace process of the Mizo problem. In the face of innumerable risks he sincerely worked hard to bring a compromise.

LALDENGA'S LETTER

The M.N.F. President Laldenga was desperate to contact the Government of India to initiate the peace process in solving the Mizo problem. While in Islamabad, Laldenga, through his men contacted the Indian representatives and arrangements were made for a meeting in Geneva with a certain person named Singal.

While in Geneva, Laldenga wrote a letter to the then Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi wherein he mentioned that:

I have no doubt in my mind that the solution of the Mizoram political problem will have to be achieved within the Constitution of India. (10)

10 Laldenga's letter to the Prime Minister of India, 20 August 1975, Hotel du Lac, Rotissewe Box, Coppet.

Laldenga, way back in 1975, had also nursed hopes for the solution of the Mizo problem within the framework of the Indian Constitution, though he had tried to portray to his colleagues that such a settlement was not possible. In his letter he further stated that 'since November 1973, my officials have been meeting your representatives to discuss the question of restoration of peace and normalcy in Mizoram'.¹¹ However, it is ironic that Laldenga's letter to the Prime Minister was drafted solely at his own discretion. He did not have any consultations with the other top-ranking officials of the M.N.F. Government. In fact, Laldenga wrote that, 'For obvious reasons I cannot tell them straight away that I have agreed to discuss the solution of the problem within the Constitution of India.' The fact that he kept his colleagues in the dark about his letter and the proposals he made, proved to be a significant point of differences between the hard core M.N.F. and the 'Dumpawl' group which finally broke away from the M.N.F.

However, whatever the outcome of the letter within the M.N.F. Government, it was a step towards mending fences with the Indian Government. The M.N.F. were in a disarray following the counter-offensive and Laldenga had no choice but to approach New Delhi.

11 Ibid.

THE M.N.F. -NEW DELHI TALKS, 1976

Laldenga was keen to negotiate with the Government of India to start a process of peace in the hill district of Mizoram. Laldenga had become disillusioned with the way the movement was heading. From Calogne, after drafting his secret letter to the Prime Minister, Laldenga wrote a letter to the M.N.F. Headquarters and requested Hrangchhuaka Vice-President, Chawngzuala President of the M.N.F. party, Biakchhunga Chief of Army Staff and Colonel Zamana the then Commander of the Sagger Brigade to meet him for confidential talks. The M.N.F. leaders were surprised on meeting Laldenga, the change in his stand on the issue of independence. They had a very high expectation when they started from their underground Headquarters, but on the contrary, when they came to their leader they were told that the only possible way open to them was to make a settlement within the framework of the Indian Constitution which was quite opposite to their expectation.¹² Therefore contrary to their personal opinions the delegates decided in favour of agreeing to the President's proposal for negotiations within the framework of the Indian Constitution.

Laldenga and his family arrived in New Delhi on 24th January, 1976. The process for negotiations were immediately taken up and the date was fixed for 11 February, 1976.

12 Biakchhunga : Why did the M.N.F. Split Up?, Aizawl, pp. 9-10.



On 18 February an understanding was arrived at. The parties came to terms as under :

1. A delegation of underground M.N.F. led by Shri Laldenga and comprising of Shri Tlangchhuaka, Shri Chawngzuala and Shri Biakchhunga held discussions with Shri S.L. Khurana, Home Secretary, Shri S.K. Chibber Lt. Governor of Mizoram and Shri M.L. Kampani, Joint Secretary (North-East) representating the Govt. of India at New Delhi on 11th, 13th, 16th, 17th and 18th February, 1976.
2. The delegation acknowledged that Mizoram is an integral part of India and conveyed to the Government of India their decision to accept the settlement of the problem in Mizoram within the framework of the Constitution of India. For the purpose of enabling the delegation to obtain a clear mandate and to get full authority to make an early and final settlement, the Government of India agreed to give facilities to the members of the delegation to hold a meeting with the 25 persons from Mizoram whose names have been given by the delegation, at Calcutta during the second week of March, 1976.
3. On behalf of the Government of India it was also agreed to make arrangements for consultations with five underground persons, presently under custody, out of a list of seven given by the delegation.

4. In order to avoid any outward incidents and to bring about peaceful conditions in Mizoram at the earliest, the delegation agreed to take the following steps forthwith:
 - (a) to issue instructions and ensure stoppage of all activities by their followers.
 - (b) Collection of all underground personnel with their arms and ammunition inside mutually agreed camps and to ensure the safe custody of arms and ammunition at a suitable place within each camp.
 - (c) Thereafter no underground personnel would have the camps without permission and orders with arms.
 - (d) the arms and ammunition so collected would be handed over to the Government within one month of the meeting at Calcutta referred to in para 2 above.
5. On behalf of the Government of India it was agreed to extend necessary facilities for collection of all underground personnel at the selected camps and also give a suitable subsidy to help maintain these camps. Suitable amenities in the form of medical aid and recreation will be provided. Adequate arrangements will be made by the Mizoram Government to look after these camps and provide liason machinery.
6. On behalf of the Government of India, it was agreed to continue the suspension of operation by the

security forces. Suspension of operation will, however, not apply to operations against incoming/outgoing underground personnel to or from Mizoram or those attempting to cross the International border and the maintenance of normal law and order will continue. It was also agreed that formal announcement regarding the suspension of operations would be made after understanding being reached to stop all activities from both sides.

7. The delegation undertook to establish contact with the group of underground personnel led by Biakvela and to bring them along with the arms and ammunition held by them in consultation with the Mizoram Government to a camp to be set up for them. The Government of India agreed to render necessary assistance in this regard.
8. Further talks will be held during the third week of March, 1976.

Sd/- Laldenga

Sd/- S.L. Khurana

Sd/- Tlangchhuaka

Sd/- S.L. Chibber

Sd/- Chawngzuala

Sd/- M.L. Kampani

Sd/- Biakchhunga

Dated: 18.2.76

A formal declaration of the Peace Accord was to be announced after the Calcutta Convention of the M.N.F.

THE CALCUTTA CONVENTION OF THE
M.N.F., 1976

The Calcutta Convention was held from 24 March to 4 April to discuss the following points:

1. To organise a general election of the M.N.F. since the existing term was about to end and as a result Laldenga's term of office to come to an end. Should he not be elected President in the next election the aforesaid agreement between India and M.N.F. would become null and void and a negotiation between them would have to be started all again.
2. To review the terms of agreement already signed by the Mizo delegation and the Indian representatives. Laldenga had to convince the members of the conference to accept the terms in toto.

The Calcutta Convention after careful debate passed three important resolutions:

1. The Mizoram National Emergency Convention should have the power of the General Assembly of the Mizo National Front.
2. Laldenga was re-elected President of the M.N.F. and Flangchhuaka as the Vice-President.
3. The Convention also accepted in principle the proposal for the settlement of the Mizo problem within the framework of the Indian Constitution, and the

President was to pursue the matter in this respect.¹³

The Convention having agreed to the above resolutions authorised the President to negotiate with the Government of India. Following this, negotiations were held on 1 July, 1976 and agreement arrived at. It read as follows:

1. A delegation of the underground Mizo National Front Party led by Shri Laldenga and comprising of Sarvasri Flangchhuaka, Chawngzuala, Biakchhunga, Biakvela, Zoramthanga and Rualchhina had a series of discussions with Shri S.L. Khurana, Home Secretary, Shri S.K. Chhiber Lt. Governor of Mizoram and M.L. Kampani Joint Secretary (North-East) representing the Government of India.
2. The M.N.F. delegation acknowledge that Mizoram is an integral part of India and conveyed to the Government of India their resolve to accept a settlement of all problems in Mizoram within the framework of the Constitution of India.
3. In order to bring about a climate of understanding and an atmosphere of peace and tranquility in Mizoram at the earliest, the delegation agreed to abjure violence and suspend all activities. In furtherance of the above objectives, the underground delegation agreed to collect all underground personnel with their

13 Biakchhunga, op. cit., p. 17.

arms and ammunition inside mutually agreed camps within one month after their establishment and also agreed to hand over arms and ammunition to the Government of India.

4. The Government of India also decided to suspend operations, thereafter, by the security forces. Such suspension, however, would not apply against underground personnel attempting to cross international border and to the maintenance of law and order.
5. It was agreed to continue the talks further.

Sd/- Laldenga

Sd/- S.L. Khurana

July 1, 1976

July 1, 1976

The agreement was widely welcomed by the people of Mizoram who believed that the violent phase was over. The Government of Mizoram had declared 7 July, 1976 as a Thanks Giving Day and there was much celebration in the hills. However, it was short-lived. The July Agreement failed to be implemented.

Within the M.N.F. there was a lot of resentment over the Calcutta Convention. There was a number of delegates who were strongly against the proposal of settlement within the framework of the Indian Constitution. Moreover, they resented the manner in which the Convention was conducted, which according to them was a Convention where one man's idea reigned supreme. Laldenga, on his part, in order to bring about a reconciliation between his men played a double

game. He ordered the circulation of a tape-recorded speech whereby he claimed that the understanding reached with the Government of India was not final. Moreover he asked his men not to give up arms but to continue their fight for independence. Such instigation was a clear violation of the July Agreement and the Indian Government took a serious view of the new development. The Government of India called for the immediate implementation of the July Accord but Laldenga pleaded for more time so that a unanimous agreement could be reached within the M.N.F. In such a situation there was no alternative but to declare the July Agreement as null and void. It was a great set-back for the peaceful solution to the Mizo problem. Moreover, the question in everyone's mind was the trustworthiness of Laldenga. What assurance was there that he will not play a double game next? However, inspite of the set-back the peace-process ran into, there was a renewed effort from both sides to come to the negotiating table. Laldenga in reality could not afford to maintain a period of lull in the talks. His stay in New Delhi was so as a guest of the Indian Government and any lapse in the peace talks would result in his being asked to leave the country. Such a situation would be disastrous for the M.N.F. and any move on their part to contact and regain the confidence of the Indian Government.

TALKS BETWEEN THE MNF AND
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, 1977

The General Elections in 1977, saw the emergence of the Janata Party and its eventual rise to power in the Indian Political scene. Under the new Government, Laldenga was eager to start the negotiations once again. The first meeting between the M.N.F. and the Indian representatives under the New Janata Government took place on 18th May, 1977. The M.N.F. delegation was headed by Laldenga, Zoramthanga and Lalrinchhana. The Indian Government was represented by S.L. Khurana, M.L. Kampani and Srivastava. In this meeting the Indian delegation strongly insisted on the implementation of the July Agreement, 1976. Laldenga once again proved to be evasive and did not make any positive assurances to the Indian Government over the implementation of the July Agreement. A dead-lock took place. Following this the Government of India issued an order of expulsion from India and the date for his expulsion was 6 June, 1977.

Laldenga was caught off-guard by the order and he decided to come to terms with the Government of India. He wrote a letter to the Prime Minister, Morarjee Desai whereby he stated that, 'I respectfully write this letter to inform you that with honour I accept the citizenship of India and as much I came to Delhi to hold talks with the Government of India to seek peaceful solution to the political problem of Mizoram within the Constitution of India.¹⁴

14 Laldenga's Letter to the P.M. of India, dt. 30.7.1977.

Responding positively to Laldenga's request, a meeting was held on 2 August 1977.

In the ensuing meeting, the Prime Minister asked the exact nature of the political demand of the M.N.F. Laldenga was not willing to state the political demand without prior consultations with his colleagues. The Prime Minister was surprised at his reply. After all, what was the Calcutta Convention held for? Moreover, after going underground for so many years what was the problem of stating the political demand without any prior consultation with his colleagues? The statements of Laldenga proved the utter lack of genuine desire to solve the Mizo problem. He seemed more keen on negotiations than actual solving of the Mizo problem.

The second meeting took place on 5 August, 1977. In this meeting Laldenga affirmed his agreement to abide by the 1976 agreement. The M.N.F. and the Government of India were to draw up a draft scheme of Peace Camps for the rehabilitation of the M.N.F. returnees and also to draw out sites for the Peace Camps.

In pursuance of the meeting with the Prime Minister, Laldenga and his colleagues met the Home Minister Charan Singh on 31 August 1977. The meeting was largely aimed at comparing the draft schemes and to evolve a working solution after the comparison of the draft schemes. However, the

negotiation ran into troubled waters once again over this vital issue. The Indian delegation demanded that the M.N.F. should lay down their arms before the political talk while the M.N.F. delegation demanded, on the other hand, a political talk to be held before their arms could be laid down. The difference of opinion could not be ironed out thus resulting in the breakdown of talks once again.

Laldenga was once again notified to leave the country by November 11, 1977. However, Laldenga was not willing to leave the country. In a last resort he wrote to the then Home Minister Charan Singh utterly humbling himself and projecting himself as a true nationalist. Laldenga said that 'you had been kind enough to assure us that if we give up our secessionist ideology and accept the constitution of India, hand over our arms and live like loyal Indians you would forgive and forget the past.'¹⁵ He also promised to lay down arms by 26 January 1978. Following his letter, the order for his expulsion from India was sympathetically withdrawn.

The proposals of Laldenga were not accepted by the National Council of the M.N.F. The utter lack of a unanimous agreement within the M.N.F. led to the breakdown of talks. The Government of India on 20 March, 1978 announced

15 Laldenga's letter to the Home Minister, dated 14.11.77.

the breaking up of talks with Laldenga. He was arrested along with his son as chargesheeted for waging war against the Government of India.

The peace talks between the M.N.F. and the Government of India seemed to run into rough weather everytime the solution to the problem was at hand. It was unfortunate that negotiations could not produce the desired results.

TALKS BETWEEN THE MNF AND THE
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA: 1980

The change in the political scene in India in the 1980 General elections brought fresh hope for the Mizo problem. The reinduction of Mrs. Indira Gandhi as the Prime Minister was seen as a ray of hope for the restoration of negotiations to solve the Mizo problem. The new government at the Centre made fresh proposals for the resumption of talks. Foremost, the Government dropped all charges against Laldenga and he was released. The talks were resumed and discussions held between Laldenga and Mrs. Gandhi's emissary G. Parthasarathy. Laldenga made several demands in the talks. He demanded full statehood for Mizoram, special constitutional positions guaranteeing the State complete autonomy, dismissal of the Sailo Ministry, the appointment of a Council of advisers to the Lt. Governor headed by Laldenga himself, inclusion of all the areas inhabited by the Mizos but lying in other States of the Indian Union and independent countries like Burma and

Bangladesh, a separate flag for Mizoram, membership of Mizoram in the U.N., separate university for Mizoram, besides others.

The demands were many and extensive and it was impossible for the Government of India to concede to them. The Government agreed to grant Statehood and a separate university but made it specifically clear that the Lt. Governor alone should have the power to control finance, law and order, and internal security. Laldenga, in turn, pressed hard for his other demands. This resulted in the Government of India losing all faith and trust in him and following this, the Government terminated all talks with Laldenga on 12 January, 1982. The M.N.F. and its military wing were banned under the unlawful activities Act on 20 January, 1982. The official announcement accused the M.N.F. that it had openly declared as its objective the formation of independent Mizoram, comprising the Union Territory of Mizoram and the adjacent Mizo and Kuki inhabited areas of Assam, Manipur and Tripura, has been continuing its activities to achieve the end and bring about secession of the said areas from the Union of India.¹⁶

On 22 January, 1982, the Home Minister said that, Laldenga had used the talks as a cover to undermine the

16 V. Venkata Rao, Thansanga H., Hazarika, Niru, A Century of Government and Politics in North-East India, vol. III, Mizoram, p. 252.

lawfully constituted authority in Mizoram and that he was intransigent in his attitude and never wished to settle the matter.¹⁷ The Government of India once again issued a notification for Laldenga to leave the country. The Government was firm and not willing to drag unfruitful negotiations any longer. Laldenga finally left India on 21 April, 1982 for London. His long stay in India for over a period of seven years served no purpose and the Mizo problem was left unresolved.

THE PEACE ACCORD, 1985

Laldenga offered Peace Talks yet again in 1985. By then there had been notable changes in the Indian political scene. Mrs. Indira Gandhi was assassinated in 1984 and she was succeeded by her son, Rajiv Gandhi as the Prime Minister of India following fresh general elections. Moreover, in the Mizo Hills the Congress (I) led by Lalthanhawla had been swept to power with an absolute majority. With the Congress (I) in power in New Delhi and Aizawl, much importance was given to the problem of Mizoram and with both governments being committed to the resumption of talks, Laldenga was requested to return to India, which he did so on October 29, 1984.

No time was wasted and hectic preparations were made for the talks. The official talks were resumed on 17

17 Ibid.

December 1984 and continued till the 23 December, 1985. During the ongoing talks operations from both sides were suspended to facilitate the smooth functioning of the talks. It was now or never. There was much expectations and hope that the outcome of the talks would finally bring an end to the era of insurgency in Mizoram.

Finally on 25 June, 1986 a political agreement was signed in New Delhi between the M.N.F. President, Laldenga and the A.I.C.C. (I) Vice-President, Arjun Singh. First and foremost, it was agreed that the existing Congress (I) Ministry would be dissolved and a Coalition Ministry would be formed consisting of the M.N.F. and the Congress headed by Laldenga. It was to the credit of Lalthanhawla, the Chief Minister of Mizoram that such an agreement was made possible. He placed more importance towards his duty to serve his people than to hold on to the reigns of power as the Chief Minister. In the new Ministry he was the Deputy Chief Minister. The new Ministry was to comprise of five Congress (I) Ministers and four M.N.F. Ministers.

The historic moment for the people of Mizoram came about on 30 June 1986, when the main accord was finally signed. It was signed by R.D. Pradhan, the Union Home Secretary on behalf of the Government of India and by Laldenga on behalf of the M.N.F. It was also signed by Lalkhama, the Chief Secretary of the Mizoram Government on behalf of the Mizoram Government. The end of insurgency was

finally at hand and there was much rejoicing all around.

THE POST-ACCORD PERIOD

The outcome of the Accord signalled an end to the era of insurgency which had shadowed Mizoram for over two decades. Mizoram was gripped by an euphoria which touched the hearts of every Mizo, young and old alike. It heralded in the era whereby Mizoram was now ready to join the national mainstream after an isolation period of more than twenty years.

Inspite of the basic ideals of the M.N.F. having been abandoned in the final Accord, there was an all out sense of positivism that the new direction in which Mizoram was headed will usher in an era of peace and progress. There was an optimistic attitude towards the future.

The interim Government headed by Laldenga as the Chief Minister, Lalthanhawla as the Deputy Chief Minister were sworn in on August 21, 1986. The Chief Minister Laldenga in consultation with the Deputy Chief Minister Lalthanhawla appointed Sainghaka as Minister Education, Rural Development and Social Welfare; R. Thangliana was Minister Supply and Transport; Vaivenga Minister of Health, Law, Judicial and District Council Affairs, C.L. Ruala Minister Agriculture, Soil and Forest; Zormathanga Minister P.W.D. and L.A.D.; Rualchina Minister Land, Revenue and

Industry; and Tawalua Minister Rehabilitation, PHE and Printing and Stationary. The Government of Mizoram for the rehabilitation of the underground personnel brought out schemes such as Agriculture, Horticulture, Dairy, Grocery Shop, Bakery unit, Cottage Industries etc. The investment of Rs. 2,000/- per individual was also estimated.

The bill for the granting of full State status to Mizoram was passed by an absolute majority in the Parliament. The President of India also assented the Mizoram Statehood Bill 1986, on August 14, 1986. Mizoram became the 23rd State of the Indian Union on 20 February, 1987 thus bringing together the tiny hill district and the Indian Union together as one United Nation.

Chapter VI

CONCLUSION: RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

The end of the insurgency generated a lot of hope that the new State of Mizoram would usher in peace, progress and development. The heralding in of peace, after years of bloodshed and sufferings, softened the hearts of many and made it easier to forget the turbulent past. However, besides the fact that peace returned to Mizoram, and that the M.N.F. returned from the jungles to join the national mainstream of life, how far can it be said that the M.N.F. had succeeded in achieving its objectives?

A general look at the final outcome after the Accord would suggest that the M.N.F. had failed to achieve any of its objectives. The M.N.F. since its origins in the early 1960's had always focussed its entire attention on the attainment of independence from the Indian Union. Much blood had been shed for this purpose. However, the M.N.F. far from achieving its objective was contented to settle the Mizo problem by accepting the new status of a State to be conferred on Mizoram after formal procedures. The objective of an independent State of Mizoram seemed to be a far cry from the eventual status of a State within the Indian Union.

Moreover, Laldenga who had earlier demanded that talks between M.N.F. and the Indian Government must be on

a 'government to government' level had ~~weakly~~ consented to solve the Mizo problem, within the framework of the Indian Constitution as per the wish of the Indian Government.

In his letter to the Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi on 20 August 1975 he had specifically mentioned his desire to solve the Mizo problem within the framework of the Indian Constitution. Also, in the Calcutta Convention of the M.N.F., 1976 he had prevailed over his colleagues and men to accept the Indian Constitution as the only means through which the Mizo problem could be solved.

Laldenga, in reality had realised the utter hopelessness of the insurgency movement and he knew that the Government of India would never grant independence to Mizoram. Such a move would prove disastrous to the internal security of the whole country and particularly to the North-Eastern Region. Laldenga fully realised the finality of the Government of India's stand that the talks between the two parties could be held only if the Indian Constitution was to be the main basis of agreement. The acceptance that Mizoram is an integral part of India and that all Mizos are Indians was an important element on the part of the M.N.F. before any constructive peace process could be initiated. There was no possibility of holding talks between the two parties if the M.N.F. was to emphasize any kind of difference in terms of nationality and an attempt to maintain its stand that it was a separate government.

More importantly, as mentioned earlier the end of period of insurgency gave rise to great optimism that the quality of life would improve for one and all. In spite of the jubilation over the signing of the Accord, it is important to consider the fact that, whether all the causes of the insurgency in the early sixties have been eradicated and whether there arises any possibility of insurgency raising its ugly head all over again in the Mizo Hills. Moreover, is the so called threat of exploitation from the non-tribals no longer to be feared?

Over the years, Mizoram has seen a number of changes taking place in various sphere of life - industry, agriculture, indigenous crafts, farming etc. This is not to suggest however that Mizoram is self-sufficient and well on the road to progress. The basic issues of poverty, unemployment, lack of basic facilities do exists today as it did so twenty years before. But it is difficult to imagine that such factors could be channelised once again to bring about a mass upsurge. Basically, because the people in general are more educated and understanding and not gullible to believe that all such problems will be eradicated when the Mizos are left to themselves in an independent state. Moreover the question arises that if Mizoram becomes independent, how will the State manage its finances? What are its resources? Mizoram being totally landlocked would not have been able to survive on its own without depending on the goodwill of its neighbouring countries.

Moreover, the leaders representing the people of Mizoram do not have to abide by the orders and ordinances of another set of leaders as it was the case in the District Council which was responsible to the Assam Government. After becoming a Union Territory in 1972 and a State in 1986, there was a general feeling that the Mizos leaders would directly look to the needs of the people without having to wait for any kind of confirmation from elsewhere.

The threat of exploitation from the non-tribals gradually appears to have been side-lined as a major factor of unrest in the State. It was, in reality a kind of 'perceived' threat on the part of the M.N.F. They exploited this factor as a means to suit their own end in order to appeal to the masses and do build up a support to their cause. They played up the fear of the people to a larger magnitude than it actually existed. Today, in Mizoram there is a normal working condition where Mizos and non-Mizos work side by side and in the absence of any kind of propaganda to draw a rift between the cultural barriers the sense of alienation does not appear prominently to bring about an unhealthy sense of relations.

Laldenga was a man of charismatic appeal who had full sway over his followers. However, at the same time, it appears to be true that he was a man who was very ambitious and who changed his political strategy whenever it suited

him and his goals. The M.N.F. was an organisation firmly in his control and which was used by him to further his own political goals. Critics have accused him of using the M.N.F. as a means for his own glory and personal ambition.

The Accord and its implementation saw Laldenga at the helm of the political affairs as the Chief Minister of Mizoram. However, for the rest of the returnees life was not easy for them. There were adjustment problems to their new way of life after years of living in the jungles. Moreover the rehabilitation programme could not really meet the demands of placing every returnee on his feet. There were financial shortages which hampered the programmes. Thus, a lot of unhappiness over the issue cropped up among the returnees who had no alternative but to depend on the goodwill of the government. An organisation formed by his former guerrillas called the 'Remna Run Chhuak Association' had written a memorandum to the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in January 1987 complaining about the State Government's lethargy in carrying out rehabilitation schemes.

The insurgency movement in Mizoram has come to a full circle. There arises a situation in Mizoram whereby, the State Government is now being accused of being discriminatory towards the Hmars, an ethnic tribe belonging to the Kuki - Chin family. The Hmars have organised themselves

into a militant group known as the Hmar Peoples' Council and are fighting against the so-called State Government's callous attitude towards its demand for an autonomous Hmar District comprising Hmar inhabited areas of Mizoram, Manipur and Assam. This presents an ironic situation where a sub-tribe of the Lushais has demanded to be united with its brethren spread out in the three States. It may be recalled the similiar demand that had been made by the M.N.F. for a 'Greater Mizoram' comprising the areas of Manipur, Burma, Tripura and Mizoram.

The Hmars having had taken up arms are now engaged in militant activities. In spite of the 'hit and run' policy adopted by the H.P.C., the organisation is still in its infancy and is regarded as a law and order problem. The significance of the H.P.C. movement however lies in the fact that the Mizo Hills is once again faced with a situation which has left a section of its people unsatisfied and who are willing to lay down their lives for the upliftment of their cause. The seed of resorting to violent means for the pursuance of one's objective has been sown by the M.N.F. which is looked upon as the only alternative by certain groups who feel that they are discriminated against.

The M.N.F. outright anti-Hindu campaign during its violent phase and the propoganda carried out against the so called 'Hindu Threat' seem to have lost all its meaning and direction in the present context. It is ironic that

while in the underground, the M.N.F. expressed fears about the 'Indianization' of the Mizos and had constantly lashed out against the Congress for being a pawn of a 'vai' dominated political party.

The international dimension of the Mizo Insurgency gradually ebbed out. Laldenga on his part, ever since the mid-seventies had made conciliatory gestures towards the Indian Government and it was a well-known fact that the Indian Government was aware of the nexus which existed between the M.N.F. and China and Pakistan. Laldenga, in an attempt to project the genuine desire for negotiations, in all possibility must have ordered the frequent trips to China and Pakistan to lessen down as there is a gradual slowing down of M.N.F. forays to the friendly countries, particularly so after 1975. However, the M.N.F., depending on its resources would not have been able to sustain itself. Its life-support depended on the arms and ammunition which China and Pakistan provided.

The foreign powers on their part did not seem to have achieved their objective in providing aid and assistance to the M.N.F. because the very leader they had supported approached the Indian Government, on his own, to solve the Mizo problem, within the framework of the Indian Constitution. The nexus between the M.N.F., China and Pakistan was the axis for exerting pressure on New Delhi,

which was thus put in a situation calling for concerted action for dealing with an insurgency movement, supported by her long standing 'unfriendly' neighbours - China and Pakistan.

But, now almost after five years of the Accord, the inter-ethnic relations in the North-East, including Mizoram, have not become peaceful and harmonious. The Accord, though an important step in the direction of peace, was in itself not enough. The follow-up action in the direction of enduring peace, needs to be undertaken at this stage.

APPENDIX 1

MNF MEMORANDUM

MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED TO THE PRIME MINISTER
OF INDIA BY THE MIZO NATIONAL FRONT, GENERAL
HEADQUARTERS, AIZAWL, MIZORAM ON THE 30th
October, 1965

This Memorandum seeks to represent the case of the Mizo people for freedom and independence, for the right of territorial unity and solidarity; and for the realization of which a fervent appeal is submitted to the Government of India.

The Mizos, from time immemorial lived in complete independence without foreign interference. Chiefs of different clans ruled over separate hills and valleys with supreme authority and their administration was very much like that of the Greek City State of the past. Their territory or any part thereof had never been conquered or subjugated by their neighbouring States. However, there had been border disputes and frontier clashes with their neighbouring people which ultimately brought the British Government to the scene in 1844. The Mizo country was subsequently brought under the British political control in December, 1895 when a little more than half the country was arbitrarily carved out and named Lushai Hills (now Mizo District) and the rest of their land was parcelled out of their hands to the adjoining people for the sole purpose of administrative convenience without obtaining their will or consent. Scattered as they are divided, the Mizo people are inseparably

knitted together by their strong bond of tradition, custom, culture, language, social life and religion wherever they are. The Mizos stood as a separate nation even before the advent of the British Government having a nationality distinct and separate from that of India. In a nutshell, they are a distinct nation, created, moulded and nurtured by God and Nature.

When British India was given a status by promulgation of the Constitution Act of 1935, the British Government having fully realised the distinct and separate nationality of Mizo people decided that they should be excluded from the purview of the new Constitution and they were accordingly classed as an EXCLUDED AREA in terms of the Government Order 1936. Their land was then kept under the special responsibility of the Governor-General-in-Council in his capacity of the Crown representative; and the legislature of the British India had no influence whatsoever.

In other words, the Mizos had never been under the Indian Government and never had any connection with the politics and the policies of the various groups of Indian opinion. When India was in the threshold of independence the relation of the Mizos with the British Government and also with the British India were fully realised by the Indian National Congress leaders. Their top leader and spokesman Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru released a press statement on the 19th August 1946 and stated: "The tribal areas are defined

as being those along the frontier of India which are neither part of India, nor of Burma, nor of any Indian State, nor of any foreign power". He further stated: "The areas are subsidised and the Governor-General's relation with the inhabitants are regulated by sanads, custom or usage. In the matter of internal administration the areas are largely left to themselves". Expressing the view of the Indian National Congress he continued, "Although the tribal areas are technically under the sovereignty of His Majesty's Government, their status, when a new Constitution comes into force in India, will be different from that of Aden, over which the Governor-General no longer has executive authority. Owing to their inaccessibility and their importance to India in its defence strategy, their retention as British possession is most unlikely. One view is that with the end of sovereignty in India the new Government of India (i.e. Independent Government of India) will enter into the same relations with the tribal areas as the Governor-General maintains now, unless the people of these areas choose to seek integration with India".

From the foregoing statement made by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and the Constitution Act of 1935, it is quite clear that the British Government left the Mizo Nation free and independent with the right to decide their future political destiny.

Due solely to their political immaturity, ignorance and lack of consciousness of their fate, representatives of the Mizo Union, the largest political organisation at that time, and the fifty accredited Mizo leaders representing all political organisations including representatives of religious denominations and social organisations that were in existence, submitted their demand and chose integration with free India imposing condition, inter alia, "THAT THE LUSHAI WILL BE ALLOWED TO OPT OUT OF INDIAN UNION WHEN THEY WISH TO DO SO SUBJECT TO A MINIMUM PERIOD OF TEN YEARS".

The political immaturity and ignorance which lead the Mizo people to the misguided choice of integration with India was a direct result of the banning by the British Government of any kind of political organisation till April 1946 within Mizoland which was declared 'a political area'.

During the fifteen years of close contact and association with India, the Mizo people had not been able to feel at home with Indian or in India, nor have they been able to feel that their joys and sorrows have really ever been shared by India. They do not, therefore, feel Indian. Being created a separate nation they cannot go against the nature to cross the barriers of nationality. They refused to occupy a place within India as they consider it to be unworthy of their national dignity and harmful to the interest of their prosperity. Nationalism and patriotism

inspired by the political consciousness has now reached its maturity and the cry for political self-determination is the only wish and aspiration of the people, ne plus ultra, the only final and perfect embodiment of social living for them. The only aspiration and political cry is the creation of MIZORAM, a free and sovereign state to govern herself, to work out her own destiny and to formulate her own foreign policy.

To them independence is not even a problem or subject of controversy; there cannot be dispute over the subject or could there be any difference of opinion in the matter. It is only a recognition of human right and to let others live in the dignity of human person.

While the present world is strongly committed to freedom and self-determination of all nations, large or small, and to promotion of Fundamental Human Rights; and while the Indian Leaders are strongly wedded to that principle - taking initiative for and championing the cause of Afro-Asian countries, even before the World Body; particularly deploring domination and colonisation of the weaker nations by the stronger, old or new, and advocating peaceful co-existence, settlement of international disputes of any kind through the medium of non-violence and in condemning weapons that can destroy the world, and in general wishing of good will towards mankind, the Mizo people firmly believed that the Government of India and their leaders will remain true

to their policy and that they shall take into practice what they advocate, blessing the Mizo people with their aspiration for freedom and independence per principle that no one is good enough to govern another man without that man's consent.

Though known as head-hunters and a martial race, the Mizos commit themselves to a policy of non-violence in their struggle and have no intention of employing any other means to achieve their political demand. If on the other hand the Government of India brings exploitive and suppressive measures into operation, employing military might against the Mizo people as is done in the case of the Nagas, which God forbid, it would be equally erroneous and futile for both the parties for a soul cannot be destroyed by weapons.

For this end it is in good-will and understanding that the Mizo Nation voices her rightful and legitimate claim of full self-determination through this memorandum. The Government of India, in their turn and in conformity with the unchallengeable truth expressed and resolved among the text of HUMAN RIGHTS by the United Nations in its august assembly that in order to maintain peace and tranquility among mankind, every nation - large or small - may of right be free and independent, shall set the Mizo Nation free to work out her own destiny, to formulate her own internal and external policies and shall accept and recognise her political independence. Would it not be selfish motive

and design of India and would it not amount to an act of offence againsts humanity if the Government of India claim the Mizoram as a part of their territory and try to retain her as their possession against the national will of the Mizo people, simply because their land is important for India's defence strategy? Whether the Mizo Nation should shed her tears in joy to establish firm and lasting friendship with India in war and in peace or in sorrow and in anger, is up to the Government of India to decide.

Sd/- Lianzuala
General Secretary,

Sd/- Laldenga
President,

Mizo National Front, Mizoram

Dated Aizawl, the
30th October, 1965.

APPENDIX 2

MNF DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

In the course of human history it becomes invariably necessary for mankind to assume their social, economic and political status to which the Law of the Nature and Nature's God entitles 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 person; and to secure these rights Governments are instituted among men deriving their just power from the consent of the governed and whenever any form of Government become destructive of this end, it is the right of the people to alter, change, modify and abolish it and to institute a new government and laying its foundation on such principles and organising its power in such forms as to them shall see most likely to effect their rights and dignity. The Mizo, 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 of the Law of Nature.

The leaders of the Mizo Nation had, many a time, verbally and in writing, put forward to the Government of India, their desire of self-determination for creation of free and independent Mizoram for bringing about protection of Human Rights and Dignity, which the Mizo, by nature, ought to have, but the Government of India, violating the

Charter of the United Nations and its Universal Declaration of Human Rights re-affirmed in the Principles of Bandung Conference, have ignored the Voice of the Mizo people and are determined to continue domination and colonisation ruling over us with tyranny and despotism by instituting self-designed administrative machinery with which they endeavour to mislead the world to win their confidence.

Our people are despised, persecuted, tortured, manhandled and murdered without displaying justice while they preach and profess before us and throughout the world that they have instituted for us a separate administrative set up in the conformity with the principles of Democracy. To conceal their evil and selfish design religious assimilation and Hindu indoctrination they preach to have established which we cannot accept as it leads to suppression of Christianity.

To prove this, let facts be submitted to the candid world :

1. They have instituted government to rule over us in our own country without any respects for Human Rights and Dignity even in the fact of the present candid world which is committed to these rights and dignity.
2. They have been pursuing a policy of exploitive measures in their attempt to wipe out Christianity, sole religion, and no consideration has ever been paid to our national way of life.

3. They have been preaching throughout the world as if they have instituted a separate administrative machinery in conformity with the principles of Democracy to conceal their policy of generation of our national morality and of assimilation while what had been instituted for us is a pattern of colonial administration.

4. They refuse not only to procure supply of food and arrange other forms of assistance in times of famine, but also prohibited us from seeking and receiving assistance from friendly countries, which resulted in the death of many people.

5. They have established a multitude of offices and sent hitherto swarms of Indian officers, who had an immoral life cruelly appeasing our women-folk to commit immorality with them by taking advantage of their official capacity and of the position they occupy in the administrative machinery.

6. Taking the advantage of economic frustration of the people they subject us to economic slavery and force us to enter into the door of poverty.

7. Curbing freedom of expression, our patriots are arrested and kept in jails without displaying any form of justice.

8. The export facilities which we used to enjoy during the pre-Indian domination, has been totally closed.

9. Without exploring our country's economic resources in agriculture, industries and mining and giving no consideration for their development, they maintain suppressive measures against our economic right.

10. Realising the importance of our country to India in its defence strategy, the Government of India is establishing military basis throughout our country and thereby creating an atmosphere of cold war while nothing is done for its economic and social development.

11. In spite of our repeated appeal for peaceful settlement of our rightful and legitimate demand for full self-determination, the Government of India is bringing exploitive and suppressive measures employing their military might and waging war against us as done in the case of the Nagas and the Kashmiris.

12. Owing to absence of medical facilities in our countries, our people died without having medical treatment and attention.

For these and all other innumerable causes, we declared 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 Mizo people, meeting on this day, the first of March, in the year of our

Lord, nineteen sixty six appealing to the supreme Judge of the World for the rectitude of our intention so, in the name and by the authority of the good people of this country solemnly publish and declare, that the Mizoram is, and of rights 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 to Government of India is and ought to be desolved 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 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 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.

LALDENGA

Lalnunmawia	Lianzuala	Sainghaka
Thangkima	Lalhmingthanga	Zamawia
Bualhranga	Sakhawliana	Lalchhawna
Saikunga	Ngunhulha	Lallianzuala
Thangmawia	Vanmawia	Ngurchhina

Tlangchhuaka	Chuailokunga	V.L. Nghaka
Thangzika	Kawlremthanga	Hlunsanga
Vala	Thanghuta	Dokhuma
Thangkhuma	Hnuna	Thangbuaia
Thanghuaia	Lalluta	Lalchuanga
Thatthiauva	Vanhnuaitanga	Lalchhawna
Kapthanga	Challiana	Pachhunga
Rochhinga I	Rochhinga II	Vankunga
Vanlalliana	Thanglawra	Rangkhuma
Duma	Zanenga	Lalnundawta

Lalkhawliana

Ngurkunga

Lalhmuaka

Malsawma

Hrangchhinga

Zoramthanga

Chhunzawna

Rosanga

Lamputa

Vansiama

Vanlalzika

Zamanthanga

Rohmingthanga

Lalhruaia

Lalkhawhena

APPENDIX 3

CONSTITUTION OF
THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF MIZORAM

PREAMBLE

We, the people of Mizoram, in order to assume among the powers of the Earth, separate and equal status to which the laws of Nature and Nature's God entitle us, form a perfect Nation's Individually under Justice, secure the blessing of Liberty to ourselves and our posterity which are endowed equally by our Creator as inalienable Fundamental Human Rights in the form of Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness, do ordain and establish this Constitution for Mizoram.

CHAPTER I

LEGISLATURE:

Article 1. There shall be a Parliament which shall consist of two Houses known respectively as the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Parliament shall assemble at least once in every year.

POWERS

Sec. 1. The Parliament shall have the sole power in all legislation.

Sec. 3. The Parliament shall have the power to remove the President, Vice-President or both on impeachment.

- Sec. 3. The Parliament have the power to approve or object any Proclamation made by the President in time of Emergency.
- Sec. 4. The Parliament shall have the power to determine administrative divisions as is considered necessary for the administration.
- Sec. 5. The Parliament may by law constitute Tribunals inferior to the National Refinement Court and also abolish the existing subordinate courts.

Article 2. The House of Representatives shall be composed of members called 'AIAWH' chosen by the people of several areas called 'BIAL' and the term of office shall be five years. There shall be three nominated seats reserved for minorities. No person shall be an 'Aiawh' who shall not have attained to the age of 25 years and a citizen of Mizoram.

- Sec. 1. The House of Representatives shall choose Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the House.
- Sec. 2. The Speaker, from time to time, shall summon the House to meet at such time and place as he deems fit.
- Sec. 3. In case of a tie in the House the Speaker or the Deputy Speaker acting as such shall have a casting vote.
- Sec. 4. When vacancies happen in the representation from any 'BIAL' the writs to election to fill such vacancies shall be issued by the President.

- Sec. 5. The House of Representatives shall have the sole power in all money bills.
- Sec. 6. Any Bill can be originated and introduced in the House of Representatives.
- Sec. 7. The House of Representatives shall have the power to impeach the President, Vice-President or both by the two-third of the votes of members present.

Article 3. The Senate shall be composed of two Senators called 'UPA' chosen from each State called 'BUNG'. The term of office shall be six years, but one-third of 'Upa' therefore shall retire at the expiry of every two years. There shall be four nominated seats for persons having special knowledge or practical experience in science, arts, literature etc. No person shall be a 'Upa' who have not attain to the age of 30 years and a citizen of Mizoram.

- Sec. 1. The Vice President shall be the President of Senate in his full capacity.
- Sec. 2. The Senate shall choose its President protempore in the absence of the Vice-President or when he exercises the office of the President of Mizoram.
- Sec. 3. The President of the Senate shall summon the Senate from time to time to meet at the time and place as he deems fit.

Sec. 4 In case of a tie in the House, the President of the House shall have a casting vote.

POWERS:

Sec. 5. The Senate shall have the power to try the President and the Vice President for both, of the Mizoram when impeached by the House of Representatives. The trial shall be presided over by the Chief Justice, of the National Refinement Court.

Sec. 6. The Senate shall have power to return all Bills or part thereof passed by the House of Representatives for reconsideration.

Sec. 7. The Senate shall have power to ratify, reject or return for reconsideration of all State policy formulated by the Executive.

Sec. 8. The Senate shall have the power to introduce any bill excepting money bills.

Sec. 9. The Senate shall have the power to formulate certain State policy.

CHAPTER - II

EXECUTIVE:

Article 4 There shall be a President of Mizoram chosen by the people of Mizoram for a term of five years from the date on which he enters upon his office. All the executive powers shall be vested in him.

- Sec. 1. No person, except a Mizo, a natural born citizen, who shall not have attained to the age of 35 years and qualify for the member of the Parliament and been fifteen years of resident of Mizoram at the time of the election shall be eligible to the office of the President. The President shall not hold any other office under the Government or any other voluntary organisations.
- Sec. 2. The President shall be the Supreme Commander of all Armed Forces.
- Sec. 3. If the President is satisfied that a grave emergency exist, whereby the security of the Nation is threatened, he may, by Proclamation, declare a National Emergency.
- Sec. 4. The President shall address both Houses of the Parliament assembled together at least once in a year.
- Sec. 5. The President shall have the power to summon both Houses of the Parliament in time of emergency.
- Sec. 6. The President shall have the power to dissolve or prorogue the House of Representatives.
- Sec. 7. The President shall have the power to nominate for the nominated seats in the Parliament.
- Sec. 8. The President shall have the power to issue writs of election when vacancies happen in the representation in the Parliament.

- Sec. 9. The President shall have the power to select members of his Cabinet, appoint Ambassadors, Consuls, Chief Justice, Auditor-General, Administrators and all other important appointments, with the advice of the Senate.
- Sec. 10. The President shall have the power to conclude treaties or to declare war.
- Sec. 11. The President shall have the power to remove civil officers from office on impeachment for, and conviction of treason, bribery, corruption or other higher crimes and misdemeanors.
- Sec. 12. The President shall have the power to grant pardon remit or commute the sentence of any offence in all cases.
- Sec. 13. The President shall have the power to ratify, reject or return any State Policy formulated by the Senate.
- Sec. 14. The President shall, from time to time, give both the Houses of the Parliament information of the State policy for their consideration.

Article 5

There shall be a Vice-President of Mizoram for the same term with the President, chosen by the people.

- Sec. 1. Any person having no qualification as laid down in Art. 4, Sec. 1 shall not be eligible for a Vice-President.

- Sec. 2. In the event of the occurrence of any vacancy in the office of the President, by reason of his death, resignation, removal or inability to discharge the powers and duties of the said office, the same shall be elected within six months.
- Sec. 3. The Vice-President shall be the President of the Senate in his full capacity.

CHAPTER - III

JUDICIARY

- Article 6 There shall be a National Refinement Court which shall function as the Supreme Court of the land.
- Sec. 1. The Court shall function with original jurisdiction and also an Appellate Court.
- Sec. 2. The National Refinement Court shall consist of the Chief Justice and other Judges shall not be removed from office till they are fit to hold such office.

CHAPTER - IV

AMENDMENTS:

- Article 7 This Constitution may, from time to time, be amended by Parliament with the concurrence of two-third votes of the members.

APPENDIX 4

MEMORANDUM OF SETTLEMENT

Preamble

1. Government of India have all along been making earnest efforts to bring about an end to the disturbed conditions in Mizoram and to restore peace and harmony.

2. Towards this end, initiative was taken by the late Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi. On the acceptance by Shri Laldenga on behalf of the Mizo National Front (MNF) if the two conditions, namely, cessation of violence by M.N.F. and holding of talks within the framework of the Constitution of India, a series of discussions were held with Shri Laldenga. Settlement on various issues reached during the course of the talks is incorporated in the following paragraphs.

RESTORATION OF NORMALCY

3.1. With a view to restoring peace and normalcy in Mizoram the M.N.F. party, on their part, undertakes within the agreed timeframe, to take all necessary steps to end all underground activities, to bring out all underground personnel of the M.N.F. with their arms, ammunition and equipment to ensure their return to civil life, to abjure violence and generally to help in the process of restoration of normalcy. The modalities of bringing out all underground personnel and the deposit of arms, ammunition and equipment will be as

worked out. The implementation of the foregoing will be under the supervision of the Central Government.

3.2. The M.N.F. Party will take immediate steps to amend its Articles of Association so as to make them conform to the provision of law.

3.3. The Central Government will take steps for the resettlement and rehabilitation of underground M.N.F. personnel coming overground after considering the schemes proposed in this regard by the Government of Mizoram.

3.4. The M.N.F. undertakes not to extend any support to Tripura/Tribal National Volunteers (TNV), People's Liberation Army of Manipur (PLA) and any other such groups, by way of training, supply of arms or providing protection or in any other manner.

LEGAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND OTHER STEPS

4.1. With a view to satisfying the desires and aspirations of all sections of the people of Mizoram, the Government will initiate measures to confer Statehood on the Union Territory of Mizoram, subject to the other stipulations contained in this Memorandum of Settlement.

4.2. To give effect to the above, the necessary legislative and administrative measures will be undertaken, including those for the enactment of Bills for the amendment of the Constitution and other laws for the conferment of Statehood as aforesaid, to come into effect on a date to

be notified by the Central Government.

4.3. The amendments aforesaid shall provide, among other things, for the following:

- (I) The territory of Mizoram shall consist of the territory specified in Section 6 of the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganization) Act, 1971.
- (II) Notwithstanding anything contained in the Constitution, no Act of Parliament in respect of -
 - (a) religious or social practices of the Mizos,
 - (b) Mizo customary law or procedure,
 - (c) administration of Civil and Criminal justice involving decisions according to Mizo customary law,
 - (d) ownership and transfer of land,

shall apply to the State of Mizoram unless the Legislative Assembly of Mizoram by a resolution so decides:

Provided that nothing in this clause shall apply to any Central Act in force in Mizoram immediately before the appointed day.

- (III) Article 170, Clause (1) shall, in relation to the Legislative Assembly of Mizoram, have effect as if for the word 'sixty', the word 'forty' has been substituted.

5. Soon after the Bill for conferment of State-hood becomes law, and when the President is satisfied that normalcy has returned and that conditions conducive to the holding of free and fair elections exist, the process of holding elections to the Legislative Assembly will be initiated.

6. (a) The Centre will transfer resources to the new Government keeping in view the change in status from a Union Territory to a State and this will include resources to cover the revenue gap for the year.

(b) Central assistance for Plan will be fixed taking note of any residuary gap in resources so as to sustain the approved Plan outlay and the pattern of assistance will be as in the case of special category States.

7. Border trade in locally produced or grown agricultural commodities could be allowed under a scheme to be formulated by the Central Government, subject to international arrangements with neighbouring countries.

8. The Inner Line Regulations, as now in force in Mizoram, will not be amended or repealed without consulting the State Government.

OTHER MATTERS

9. The rights and privileges of the minorities in

Mizoram as envisaged in the Constitution, shall continue to be preserved and protected and their social and economic advancement shall be ensured.

10. Steps will be taken by the Government of Mizoram at the earliest to review and codify the existing customs, practices, laws or other usages relating to the matters specified in clauses (a) to (d) of para 4.3 (II) of the Memorandum, keeping in view that an individual Mizo may prefer to be governed by Acts of Parliament dealing with such matters and which are of general application.

11. The question of the unification of Mizo inhabited areas of other States to form one administrative unit was raised by the M.N.F. delegation. It was pointed out to them, on behalf of the Government of India, that Article 3 of the Constitution of India prescribes the procedure in this regard but that the Government cannot make any commitment in this respect.

12. It was also pointed out on behalf of the Government that as soon as Mizoram becomes a State,

- (i) the provisions of Part XVII of the Constitution will apply and the State will be at liberty to adopt any one or more of the languages in use in the State as the language to be used for all or any of the official purposes of the State;
- (ii) it is open to the State to move for the establishment of a separate University in the State in

accordance with the prescribed procedure;

(iii) in the light of the Prime Minister's statement at the Joint Conference of the Chief Justices, Chief Ministers and Law Ministers held at New Delhi on 31st August, 1985, Mizoram will be entitled to have a High Court of its own, if it so wishes.

13. (a) It was noted that there is already a scheme in force for payment of ex-gratia amount to heirs/dependents of persons who were killed during disturbances in 1966 and thereafter in the Union Territory of Mizoram. Arrangements will be made to expeditiously disburse payment to those eligible persons who already applied but who had not been made such payments so far.

(b) It was noted that consequent on verification done by a joint team of officers, the Government of India had already made arrangements for payment of compensation in respect of damage to crops; buildings destroyed/damaged during the action in Mizoram; and rental charges of buildings and lands occupied by the Security Forces. There may, however, be some claims which were preferred and verified by the above team but have not yet been settled. These pending claims will be settled expeditiously. Arrangements will also be made for payment of pending claims of rental charges for lands/buildings occupied by the Security Forces.

Sd/- LALDenga, 30.6.86
on behalf of

Mizo National Front

Sd/- R.D. PRADHAN,
30.6.86

Home Secretary,
Government of India

Sd/- LALKHAMA, 30.6.86
Chief Secretary
Government of Mizoram

Date: 30th June, 1986

Place: NEW DELHI

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

The Memorandum of Settlement contemplates the following sequence of events:

1. Coming overground of M.N.F. personnel and depositing of arms, ammunition and equipment by them in accordance with the time bound programme as already agreed upon between the Ministry of Home Affairs and the M.N.F. delegation.
2. The M.N.F. Party should take immediate steps to amend its Articles of Association to make them conform to the provisions of law.
3. Government will initiate steps for rehabilitation of M.N.F. personnel coming overground.
4. After completion of action under paragraphs (1) and (2) above, a Constitution Amendment Bill will be introduced in Parliament for the grant of Statehood and other consequent legislative measures to be taken up.

5. After the Bill becomes law, preparation for delimitation of constituencies and holding elections to the State Legislature will be taken on hand when the President is satisfied that normalcy has been restored.

Sd/- LALDENGA, 30.6.86
on behalf of
Mizo National Front

Sd/- R.D. PRADHAN
30.6.86
Home Secretary
Government of India

Sd/- LALKHAMA, 30.6.86
Government of Mizoram

Dated: 30th June, 1986

Place: NEW DELHI.

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