

Socio Economic Impact of Mizoram Insurgency



Edited by Malsawmkima

**SOCIO -ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL
IMPACT
OF INSURGENCY IN MIZORAM**



**PUBLISHED BY
GOVERNMENT AIZAWL NORTH COLLEGE**

SOCIO -ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL IMPACT OF INSURGENCY IN
MIZORAM

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EDITOR: Malsawmkima
Associate Professor,
Government Aizawl North College

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INTRODUCTION

In the old days, Mizos were peaceful by nature; unfortunately due to some misunderstandings inter village wars and skirmishes often occurred. Village life itself was mostly peaceful within the closely knit community. Mizos live by a code of self sacrifice, of honour and chivalry, putting oneself at the forefront in times of danger while remaining at the backseat in times of peace. Rebellion or insurgency have never been a part of Mizo culture. It was a term which had been introduced after the 1966 emergency. So deep is the colonial legacy of the Indian government that the whole movement is still termed as Insurgency even by those who fought the war. Since the 1966 emergency, a new generation has emerged, inheriting a trauma of unconscious experiences, unsure and unwilling to adapt themselves to the new era of nationalism.

When the British left the Indian shores decades ago, their presence was still felt in the Indian mindset. The 1897 uprising was labelled The Sepoy Mutiny for scores of years. Only in recent times does the incident being renamed as a War of Independence. Likewise, it may take time to rewrite our own history from our own point of view, with our own terms.

As a Mizo, only when we free ourselves from being a race of insurgents, we shall be free from the self imposed marginalised tribe. Henceforth, we shall accept ourselves as Indians, think like an Indian. As long as we feel marginalised, alienated, so shall we be. As long as we call our war of independence as an insurgency, we shall never gain independence of the mind. We shall ever be dependent on the Centre, not on the sweat and toil of our hands. We want Big Brother to hear and recognise our existence, but we only whine. When we free ourselves from the shackles of insurgency terminology, so shall we be free. Whining may cause a ripple, never a wave.

Coming to the academic perspective, Dr. Lalzarmawii provides us, in her paper, *A Study of Political condition on the eve of insurgency with special reference to the formation of The District Council in Mizo Hill* a brief but comprehensive view of the political party formation in Mizoram. *From Hill state to Independence (Political background of Mizo Independence Movement)* a paper by Dr. Malsawmliana rendered a closer examination of Mizo mindset in respect to independence, keeping in mind the political scenerio along with some racial issues.

Through the Oral history of the North East, Pankaj Roy traces the spirit of nationality of the northeast from the Mizoram context in *Insurgency in North East India – Nationality Question in the context of Mizoram through Oral History*. In his paper- *Formation of Underground Government : MNF Government* Prof. K. Zohra examines the underground movement from the ideological point of view. The historiography of the freedom movement undoubtedly enriches the study of the movement itself. In *Mizo Nationality Question-Impact of Political Movements in Mizoram on Mizo Nation* Dr. Paul B. Chonzik's deeper investigation of the "Zo' identity has become more relevant today, with talks of unifying the whole area occupied by the 'Zo's". Benjamin Lalduhawma traces how widespread the movement was in his *Brief account of the MNF Movement in Tripura*. Pulak Chandra Devnath offers very brief but thought provoking observation in his paper-*Insurgency and drug abuse in North East region with special reference to Mizoram*. On going through this paper, one is reminded of the Opium War and the Vietnam War. In his '*Economic Problems Caused by Insurgency in Mizoram-A study*', Dr. O.Rosanga dwelled deep into the crux of the situation. The whole movement, when closely examined, comes down to the

basic necessity of man- Economy. The famine *Mautam* was the catalyst that shook the whole of Lushai Hills and beyond. Dr.Harendra Sinha offers a comprehensive view of the Rural Development in post insurgency period in *Insurgency and its impact on Rural development in Mizoram*. Dr.T.Lalsangliana traces the formation of the MNF movement for the cause of freedom in- *Political Leadership and action taken to gain the so called Independence*.

Dr. C.Lalhmanmawia's *Role of Political Parties, Churches and Human Rights Organization in Restoration of Normalcy in Mizoram During Insurgency Period (1966-1986)* makes an important observation, rightly applauding the role of the church, the political parties and the human rights elements of the period. Dr. H. Vanlalhruaia, examines the literary work of C.Zama, *Reading Insurgency from MNF Army Perspective: The Works of C.Zama* who chronicled the movement from his own experience is a very enlightening piece. One is hopeful that this paper may serve as an wake up call to write more about the whole movement.

Acknowledgement

This book, or the Seminar itself would not see the light of day were it not for the sponsorship of the UGC-NER. The College is deeply grateful to the sponsoring agency, to all the paper presenters, participants, the organising team and volunteers. Mention must be made to our Librarian Dr. Zomuana Joute for his initiative in the project and for procuring the ISBN status for this book.

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to Dr.T.Lalsangliana, Coordinator of the *Socio Economic Impact of the Mizoram Insurgency Seminar*. Before the seminar papers were finalized into a book, he met his untimely death on the morning of 24th April,2012(10:40 a.m). On this fateful morning, Dr.T.Lalsangliana felt slightly weak but was determined to deliver his classroom lectures as usual. While in the Professor's Common Room, he suddenly collapsed due to high blood pressure. He was immediately rushed to the nearby hospital but all efforts to revive him was in vain.

The void he left shall never be filled but the memory of his friendship and professional dedication shall remain forever.

Contributors

Dr. Lalzarmawii is an Associate Professor and Hed of Department in Education, Government Aizawl North College

Dr. Malsawmliana, Associate Professor, Department of History. Government T. Romana College

Mr. Pankaj Roy, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Kamalanagar College

Prof. K. Zohra, Professor, Department of Education, Government Saiha College, Saiha, Mizoram.

Dr. Paul C. Chonzik, Associate Professor, Department of History, Diphu University

Mr. Benjamin Ralte, Associate Professor, Department of History, Government Aizawl North College.

Dr. Pulak Chandra Devnath, Asst. Professor in Education, Kamalanagar College, Chawngte, Lawngtlai

Dr. O. Rosanga, Head of Department, Mizoram University

Dr. Harendra Sinha, Associate Professor, Government JB College, Lunglei.

Dr. T. Lalsangliana, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science. Government Aizawl North College

Dr. C. Lalhmanmawia, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Government Aizawl North College.

Dr. H. Vanlalhruaia, Assistant Professor, Department of History at Govt. Aizawl North College.

**A STUDY OF POLITICAL CONDITION ON THE EVE
OF INSURGENCY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
THE FORMATION OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL IN
MIZO HILLS**

Dr. Lalzarmawii

No organized political movement had existed in Mizoram till 1946. The traditional political institution centred round the chieftainship to which all the legal authority was attached. The chief was the traditional village head in all spheres except religions. He had the authority to enact and execute laws in his discretion. The chief confined in himself all the three modern administrative functions – legislative, executive and judiciary. However, the chief was not wholly free from constraint. He was guided by the traditional normative rules which were conventionalized through the customary uses. He also had to respect the wishes of the village youths who were the backbone of his power and glory. Moreover, the people could at any time shift their allegiance to some other chiefs by migrating.

The pattern of residential settlement presupposed the status of the clans. The chief's house was in the middle surrounded by the Lusei clan members or wealthier and prestigious families.

The only purely indigenous local government institution of the autocratic chiefs was contaminated with certain elements of representative government which were carried on by the political institutions that had taken concrete shape on the eve of independence of India.

The Lushai Hills along with the other hill districts of Assam became Excluded Area under the Government of India Act, 1935.

The Governor of Assam was the sole administrative and legislative authority for the Excluded Areas. This kept these hills out of jurisdiction of the elected Ministry. The Governor was authorized to make regulations for peace and good government of such an area. This had two effects – first, the Mizos were kept out of the mainstream of the national life. The political process which was developing in the rest of the country did not touch the excluded areas. Secondly, the funding for such areas being from the provincial budget there were very limited resources available for these areas. Hence economic activities were almost absent in the excluded areas. In 1924 a group of Mizos led by one Telela of Kulikawn, Aizawl demanded that representation of the Lushai Hills to the Assam Legislature should be allowed. After this, Telela, with his political reform enthusiast friend, Chawngbawia met Rev. J.J.M. Nichols Roy in Shillong and discussed political and administrative reforms in the Lushai Hills. On their return to Aizawl they were arrested under orders of the Superintendent. Thus ended the first attempt of the Mizos to cause a ripple in political set up of the area.

Prior to 1946, no political activity was permitted in the Lushai Hills. When the independence of India was on the horizon, A.R.H. Macdonald, Superintendent of Lushai Hills, convened a district conference of chiefs and commoners on 14th January 1946 to advise him on administration and future political set up of the hills. A plan was formulated involving adoption of a constitution for the Lushai Hills with legislature, ministry, judiciary and other usual organs of a full fledged government. The constitution drafted in this regard was popularly known as McDonald's Rorel Khawl.

Mizo Union

The first political party in the Lushai Hills came into existence when the political future of the country was being decided. It was widely felt by the common people that the British administration was trying to adopt a policy of isolated independence for the Lushai Hills working through the chiefs. An anti-chief movement was building up. The people resented and demanded that in the district

conference the commoners should get more seats than the chiefs. The political party that was born on 9th April 1946 with these demands was named the Mizo Common People's Union. In order to win wider membership, the MCPU leaders enlisted the support of the elite and the chiefs, and subsequently changed the name of the party to Mizo Union. However, this remained a party of the common people. The party elected Pachhunga as the President and R. Vanlawma as the General Secretary.

In their first general Assembly held in Aizawl on September 1946 the Mizo Union demanded that a chief should rule the village not through the *upas* (village elders) appointed at his discretion, but elected by the people. The Superintendent was requested to have two-thirds of the District Conference representatives elected by the common people and the rest by the chiefs, instead of the existing arrangements of equal representation of the people and the chiefs. The party deliberated on the future set up of the Lushai Hills and declared that in the event of India attaining a complete and unqualified independence the Mizos are also to be included in it, within the province of Assam. The Mizos are opposed to the retention of their district as a political area under Independent India, but wish to be included in the Provincial Legislature. Except on the concurrent subjects, no legislation of the Provincial Legislature should apply directly to the hills and they reserve all rights and privileges of their internal administration with a Local Legislative and Executive Body.¹

It was suggested that the district should be enlarged by bringing under it all the neighbouring Mizo inhabited areas of Manipur, Tripura and Chittagong Hill Tracts and the surrounding plains.

Bordoloi Sub-committee

The Constituent Assembly of India constituted an Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights, Minorities, and Tribal Areas on 25th January 1947 under the chairmanship of Sardar Vallabhai Patel. The Committee appointed a Sub-Committee, for the north-

eastern tribal areas and the Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas, with Gopinath Bordoloi as its Chairman. The Sub-Committee met representatives of different political parties and other organizations on 18th and 19th April 1947 at Aizawl.

In the memoranda submitted by the representatives of the different sections of the people of the Lushai Hills, to the Bordoloi Sub-committee, the following points are prominent:-

- A maximum possible autonomy for Mizoram in internal matters;
- Sole propriety right over land to be in the hands of the Mizos;
- Preservation of Mizo culture, custom and tribal way of life;
- Protection from exploitation by the plains people;
- Financial provision in the Central budget for Mizoram;
- Unification of all territories inhabited by the Mizos in order to bring all the Mizos together under one administration;
- The review of the political set up at the end of ten years after which the Mizos should have the right to opt out of India.

None of the Mizos who appeared before the Bordoloi Sub-committee talked about immediate or direct independence from India. However, the general idea seemed to have been that for lack of financial resources the Mizos considered it was impossible for them to run an independent government, though there was a feeling in their minds that in future they might wish to be independent. Accordingly, they made a clause in their draft constitution for opting out of India after ten years. Had this clause been approved by the Constituent Assembly and incorporated in the Constitution, majority of the common people might have, after ten years' time decided to make an independent Mizoram. It can be assumed that the Constitution makers, fully aware of the Mizo mentality, ignored

this clause for fear of national disintegration. In spite of its rejection by the Constituent Assembly, this clause for opting out of India by the Mizos after ten years of Independence of India became the base for the Mizo freedom fighters.

United Mizo Freedom Organisation (UMFO)

As Indian independence was drawing near, there were sharp differences of popular opinion regarding the future of the Lushai Hills. The Mizo Union was avowedly in favour of staying within India, but a secessionist group came up in the party favouring the Lushai Hills joining Burma. Ultimately on 5th July 1947, the group, supported by the chiefs, formed a new party called the United Mizo Freedom Organisation (UMFO).

District Advisory Committee

The Constituent Assembly accepted the recommendations of the Advisory Sub-Committee (Bordoloi Sub-Committee) with certain modifications. Though the Constitution came into force after the British had left, the immediate constitution of the District Councils in the hill districts was not possible. As the government desired the association of the tribal people with the administration of their areas, it was decided to constitute the Tribal Advisory Council in all the Hill Districts.

Owing to the disagreement between the chiefs and the commoners ever since the District Conference was formed, the constitution of the Tribal Advisory Council in the Lushai Hills posed a new problem. Therefore, negotiations were carried out in the presence of the Governor of Assam, Chief Minister and J.M.Nichols Roy, Minister of Assam in a meeting held in Shillong on the 9th and 10th November 1947, which was attended by three representatives of the Mizo Chiefs, four Mizo Union leaders, three UMFO leaders, one Mizo Ex-servicemen Association member, Mr. L.L.Peters, Superintendent of the Lushai Hills, and G.E.D. Walker, Adviser to the Governor for Tribal and Excluded Areas.

After prolonged discussions, an unanimous agreement was reached between the parties, and the composition of the Council was fixed as follows:-

There should be a total of 37 seats, of which 10 seats should be reserved for the chiefs. There should be 20 general seats for the rural areas corresponding to the number of administrative circles in the district, 3 seats for Aizawl town and 2 seats for women, 1 for Aizawl and 1 for Lunglei. The chiefs were allowed, if they wished, to contest the 20 general seats and the other seven 7 seats from Aizawl and Lunglei.

The election of the Advisory Council was held on the 15th and 16th April 1948. The District Advisory Council, a large body of 37 members, with representatives from remote areas, however could not meet very often and arrived at quick decisions. There was the need for having a smaller body to carry out the normal functions of the Advisory Council. So a nominated committee known as District Advisory Committee was constituted on an ad-hoc basis. The Advisory Committee was inaugurated on 24th July 1950.

Six autonomous districts with District Councils came up in Assam – the Lushai Hills being one such district. A Regional Council was set up in the Pawi-Lakher Region in the Lushai Hills. Thus the Advisory Committee in the district was dissolved on November, 1951 and consequently the District Council was inaugurated in Aizawl on 26th April 1952.

Abolition of Chieftainship

The Assam Government passed the Lushai Hills (Acquisition of Chief's Rights) Act in 1954 through the sustained pressure of the Mizo Union. On 16th August 1954, rights and interests of 259

chiefs in the District Council area were taken over by the District Council and those of 50 chiefs in the P-L Region were assumed by the Regional Council on 15 April 1956.² Village Councils were constituted to perform broadly the functions earlier discharged by the chiefs and *upas*. The Mizo Union won the election to the Village Councils which was held in July 1954, thus vindicating their stand for abolition of chieftainship.

Formation of the Village Council

After the District Council was formed the whole administrative set up of the Lushai Hills was changed and the people were enabled to participate in the formation of the Government through adult franchise. With the abolition of the Chieftainship, in order to substitute the hereditary chiefs, who were empowered with all the administrative powers and responsibility to manage the affairs of the villages in the Mizo traditional society, the Village Council elected through franchise was to be formed. The proposed new system of forming the Village Council was discussed in the District Council's sessions.

The first was the enactment of the Lushai Hills District (Village Council) Act, 1953. The Governor of Assam gave his assent to the Act on November 29th, 1953 and the same was published in the Assam Gazette, dated 9th December, 1953.³ The Act empowered the District Council to form a Village Council in every village within the jurisdiction of the Lushai Hills District Council. Thus, all necessary steps for the formation of the Village Council were taken by the District Council. It provided that the number of the Village Councils would vary from village to village according to the number of houses. In accordance with the Constituency of the District Council, the Village Councils were divided into various groups. The first election to the Village Council was held from April 23rd to July 7th, 1954⁴ in which the Mizo Union captured most of the interior villages while the United Mizo Freedom Organisation (UMFO), another political party largely supported by the chiefs and their followers won only

few seats in the interior villages. After completing all formalities the village level administration which so long rest with the chiefs began to be performed by the Village Councils in Lushai Hills from 1954.

Eastern India Tribal Union (EITU)

The tribal leaders met at Aizawl in 1955 and demanded the formation of a hill state comprising the hill districts of Assam. With this objective a new political party, Eastern India Tribal Union (EITU) was formed. On 2nd October 1957 the UMFO and the right wing followers of the Mizo Union joined the EITU.

All Party Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC)

The leaders of all the political organizations in the Hills Districts of Assam met in Shillong on 6th and 7th July 1960 under the Chairmanship of J. Hagir, Congress MP from the North Cachar Hills. As an outcome of this meeting a new political party came up. It was called All Party Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC). All the political parties in Assam hills converged into the APHLC.

Indian National Congress (INC)

The first all India political party to have its affiliate in the Mizo Hills was a branch of the Indian National Congress set up by Pu A. Thanglura, who came out of the Mizo Union, at Aizawl on 11th April 1961. This party could not make much progress as there were many who were averse to the policies and programmes of the Congress. Being a party of the 'Vais', the Mizos naturally preferred to join a regional political party. The Mizo Union and Mizo National Front (MNF) were hostile to the Congress on the ground that it was not a party of the Mizos and for the Mizos. Thus the regional tendencies of the people made them more inclined to reject the Congress Party rather than accepting it.⁵

Mizo National Front (MNF)

The Mautam brought forth in the relief front a number of voluntary social welfare organizations. One such organization which came up in 1960 was the Mizo National Famine Front. Young volunteers of the Front collected relief contribution from door to door and came forward to help the distressed in all the villages including the remotest ones and thus the Front gained popularity in the district. On 22nd October 1961, the Front gave up the word famine from its name and became a political party with the name of Mizo National Front (MNF). The MNF, under the charismatic leadership of Laldenga, an ex-serviceman and an ex-clerk of the District Council, declared achievement of an independent sovereign Mizoram as its goal. The MNF gradually strengthened its fold, apart from the zealous young men, some members of the EITU and the UMFO who were asking for a hill state. Quite a few ex-chiefs who were disgruntled against the Mizo Union and a number of ex-servicemen, particularly from the 2nd Assam Regiment, which had been disbanded for misconduct also joined the Mizo National Front (MNF)

On 24 October 1962 the APHLC observed Demand Day. All the APHLC MLAs were asked to resign from the Assam Legislature. The two Mizo Union MLAs resigned but the EITU MLA did not. In 1963, in the bye-elections held to fill up the two vacancies, the MNF candidates, John F. Manliana and Lalmawia won the two seats of Aizawl West and Lunglei.

The polarity between the Mizo Union and the Mizo National Front (MNF) was getting wider. Although the MNF had two out of three legislative seats, in the village council election held in 1963, the Mizo Union gained primacy, winning 220 village councils against the MNF's 145. The Congress got 16, the EITU 12, and the independents 10. In the bye-election held in 1964 for the seat vacated by EITU leader R. Thanhkira, who was appointed a

member in the Assam Public Service Commission, Ch. Chhunga, the President of the Mizo Union won by defeating the MNF candidate.

On 5 October 1963 Prime Minister Nehru came out with a formula called the Scottish Pattern, for solution of the political problems in Assam. The plan envisaged that a Committee of the MLAs from the hill areas would be formed. The ministers for the hill areas in the Assam Cabinet would be appointed on recommendation of this Committee, which also would advise on legislations and administration of the hill areas. The APHLC accepted this formula. For working out the details of the plan, on 16th March 1965 the central government appointed a commission with H.V. Pataskar as chairman. The Mizo Union boycotted the Commission as they wanted a separate state for the Mizos, consisting of the Mizo Hills and the neighbouring Mizo populated areas. The report of the Pataskar Commission was rejected by the APHLC as it fell short of their expectation of autonomy.

Insurgency

In the Mizo Hills large scale disturbances started on 28th February 1966. Armed MNF force simultaneously attacked different Government installations at Aizawl, Lunglei, Vairengte, Chawngte, Chhimluang and other places. The first attack was on the sub-treasury at Lunglei. About 1,000 armed MNF insurgents attacked the Assam Rifles posts at Lunglei. At midnight between 28th February and 1st March 1966, the government treasury in Aizawl was attacked and cash, rifles and ammunitions were confiscated. The road to Aizawl was cut off at Vairengte, the first village in the Mizo Hills on the Assam side. Culverts were blown up and huge trees were placed on the road. On 1st March 1966, the MNF declared independence for Mizoram. The declaration was signed by Laldenga and sixty others. The MNF appealed to all independent countries to recognize independent Mizoram. Many

interior centres fell to the rebels, but in Aizawl the 1st Assam Rifles headquarters held out despite repeated attacks from the rebels.

On 2nd March, the government of Assam declared the district as a disturbed area. Army was deployed to deal with the situation. A column of the 61 Mountain Brigade left Silchar on 2nd March 1966 for Aizawl. From the morning of 3rd March 1966 troops started landing by helicopters at Aizawl. Most of the inhabitants started deserting Aizawl from the morning of 4th March 1966. The town was under the MNF excepting the Assam Rifles headquarters. On 5th March 1966 a number of IAF Jet Aircrafts strafed the MNF positions in the town and bombs were dropped. Air raids continued on 6th March 1966 and most of the shops in the Aizawl main market, Bara Bazar were burnt. Large scale disturbances continued throughout the district in the days that followed.

The District Council

The Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India provided for the establishment of district councils and regional councils within the autonomous Hill Districts in Assam. The election to the first District Council of the Lushai Hills was held in April 4th, 1952 along with General Election to the Assam State Assembly.⁶ There were eighteen elected seats and six nominated seats. Of these six nominated seats two were reserved for the Mizo chiefs, the remaining four were divided among government officials, women association, and minority and backward communities. It appears that the Mizo leaders were not consulted in the distribution or fixation of the elected as well as the nominated seats in the first District Council.

Of the eighteen elected seats, only one seat was lost by the Mizo Union to the opposing party, the UMFO in the town/constituency. Two of the elected members were from the Pawi-Lakher Region. The Mizo chiefs were given two nominated seats,

one from Aizawl sub-division and one from Lunglei sub-division. One nominated seat went to government officials, one to Mizo women association to represent the fair sex, and one to Chakma community to represent the backward and minority groups. The remaining nominated seat was given to Dr. Rosiama, a retired officer in the Indian Army Medical Corps. He was elected to be the first Chairman of the Lushai Hills District Council.

The Mizo Union's remarkable victory in the election was the result of careful strategy the party took to win the election, reaching the common people while the UMFO party's debacle was due to lack of collective leadership in the party, its unpopular policy of joining Burma, its association with the chiefs, and the absence of mutual contact with the electorate. Thus developed a two-party system in Mizoram.

The District Council was inaugurated by Bishnuram Medhi, the then Chief Minister of Assam in Aizawl on 26th April 1952 with Dr. Rosiama as its first Chairman and Tuikhurliana as Deputy Chairman.⁷ The first Chief Executive Member was Lalsawia and the Executive Members were Hrangaia and Sangkunga. The Lushai Hills District came to be known as Mizo District as per the Lushai Hills District Act, 1954 (Act XVIII of 1954) of the Indian Parliament. Consequently, the Lushai Hills District Council also came to be known as Mizo District Council since 1954.

Under the Constitution, the District Council has law making powers with respect to the following:

(a) allotment, occupation or use of land, other than reserved forest, for agriculture, grazing, residential or other non-agriculture purpose or for any other purpose likely to promote the interest of the inhabitants of any village or town;

(b) management of forests not being reserved forest;

- (c) use of any canal or water course for the purpose of agriculture;
- (d) regulation of the practice of jhum;
- (e) establishment of village or town committee;
- (f) any other matter relating to village or town administration, including village or town policy, public health and sanitation.
- (g) appointment or succession of chiefs or headmen;
- (h) inheritance of property;
- (i) marriage and divorce;
- (j) social customs.

The District Council has the power of constitution of village councils and courts at different levels, appointment of officers and prescribing procedures.

The Regional Council exercises all these functions within its area. There are certain exclusive jurisdictions of the District Council which covers primary schools and the medium of instruction in the primary level, dispensaries, markets, cattle pounds, ferries, fisheries, roads and waterways. The District Council/Regional Council has financial powers for assessment and collection of land revenue and tolls on buildings and persons. The District Council can levy taxes on profession, trades and employment; taxes on animals, vehicles and boats; taxes on entry of goods, tolls on passengers and goods carried in ferries, and taxes for maintenance of schools, dispensaries and roads.

The District Council has also the powers to control money lending or trading by non-tribals. It can regulate rate of interest and issue of licence to non-tribals for wholesale or retail business.

To tide over initial financial difficulties, a financial grant was announced by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru when he visited Mizo Hills on October 1952. The first budget of the Council in 1952-53 was only for Rs.17, 175/- which was mostly for establishment. The Council always suffered from chronic financial inadequacy.

The first District Council completed its five year term and the election of the second District Council was held in 1957. Four parties contested in the second District Council viz., Mizo Union, UMFO, Tribal Union of the Pawi-Lakher (P-L) Region and Congress party of Chakma area. The Mizo Union won eleven seats, two by Tribal Union, one by Congress and eight by the UMFO. Of the twenty two elected members eight were elected for the second time and one of the nominated member was renominated. Medhi Chakma, a nominated member in the first District Council was elected on Congress ticket in 1957. The fair sex was represented by Hmingliani who was nominated in place of Lalziki. There were two bye-elections and the elected were new to the Council.

Three changes could be prominently noticed in the second District Council -

- 1) The number of nominated seats was reduced from six to two.

- 2) The Mizo chiefs had no representation in the second District Council because the chieftainship was abolished in 1954 and Village Councils were constituted in its place. Similarly, no special representation was given to the Government officials. The two nominated seats were given to Dr.Rosiana and Women Association.

3) The strength of the Mizo Union went down to such a low ebb that it lost 8 out of 15 seats in Aizawl sub-division to the UMFO party. However, the Mizo Union won all the four elected seats in the Lunglei sub-division. Thus there was a much stronger opposition party in the second District Council.

The two-party system had gone up almost to the highest degree in the second elections. The Mizo Union Right Wing, an offspring of the split of the Mizo Union in 1956, contested but lost altogether. Thus the UMFO gained from the split of the Mizo Union because many votes lost by the Mizo Union went to the UMFO party and not to the Mizo Union Right Wing, which was a factional party.

Looking at the events that happened during the second District Council, it can be concluded that taken as a whole, the second District Council was a sad record in Mizo history. The following are the main events that occurred during this period:-

1) The UMFO members being encouraged by their sizable number attempted two unsuccessful no-confidence motions against the shaky Mizo Union Executive Committee, one in 1957 and the other in 1958.

2) The UMFO also lost one District Council seat and one Assembly seat on account of the death of its sitting members.

3) The Mizoram Forest Reserve was handed over back to the Deputy Commissioner in 1958.

4) The Mizo District Council's Phaisen Development Plan was thwarted by the Cachar Forests authorities in 1958, and the Mizoram - Cachar Border-line was shifted far into Mizoram.

5) Bamboos flowered in 1959 which indirectly caused a large-scale famine in Mizoram.

6) The District Council took over the management of Primary Schools in Mizoram from the State Government in 1961.

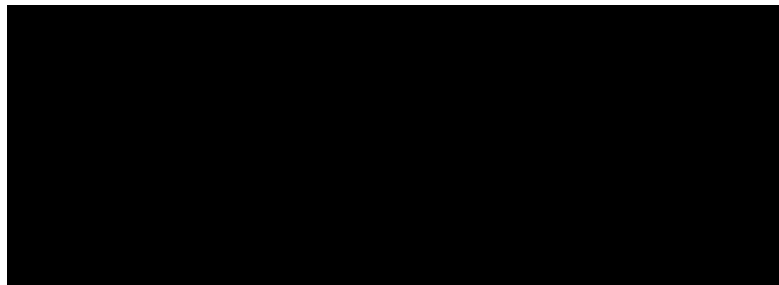
The third elections to the District Council and the Assembly were held simultaneously in February 1962. These elections were remarkable in the history of the development of party system in Mizoram. Four political parties, namely- the Mizo Union, the EITU (UMFO and Mizo Union Right Wing merged into EITU), the Indian National Congress (INC) and the Mizo National Front (MNF) contested the elections. With the Indian National Congress on the scene, national party began to penetrate into the hitherto purely regional party system in Mizoram. The Mizo Union and the Eastern India Tribal Union (EITU) contested the District Council election separately and the Assembly election jointly under the banner of the All Party Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC). The MNF contested four District Council seats. An independent candidate was elected to the District Council in a very strong-spirit- permeated Mizoram.

Out of the 22 elected seats in the District Council, the Mizo Union captured 16; the EITU 1 seat; the Tribal Union of Pawi-Lakher Region 3; the pro - Congress Chakma 1 seat; and an independent candidate 1 seat. Almost all the Indian National Congress and MNF candidates lost their security deposits.

The results show that the Mizo Union which was dominant in 1952 considerably fell down in 1957 and again occupied the dominant position in 1962 though its 1962 position was not as stable as its 1952 position. The Mizo Union could maintain its solidarity while the hitherto supporters of the second party were divided. The Mizo Union secured votes more than the total votes secured by all the other party and independent candidates. This shows that there was a tendency to go back to the one dominant regional party system.

The term of the third District Council was extended till the next election held in April 1970. The election of the fourth District Council was to be held in February 1967. But it could not be held due the MNF insurgency. The election of 1970 was the first election in which the people participated as usual after the outbreak of a political violence in 1966. Out of the 22 seats the Mizo Union got only 9 seats and the Indian national Congress secured 10 seats. The remaining three seats of the Pawi-Lakher area were won by independent candidates. These three independent members became the deciding factor in the formation of Government. All three of them joined the Congress legislature party to enable it to form a Congress Government in the District Council. Thus, a non-Mizo Union Government was formed for the first time in the Mizo District. Before the completion of the term of the fourth District Council Mizoram became a Union Territory from 1972.

The Mizo District Council was abolished by the North Eastern area (Re-organisation) Act, 1971 and was replaced by the Mizoram Legislative Assembly on the 29th April, 1972.⁸ However, the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was upgraded to the status of a



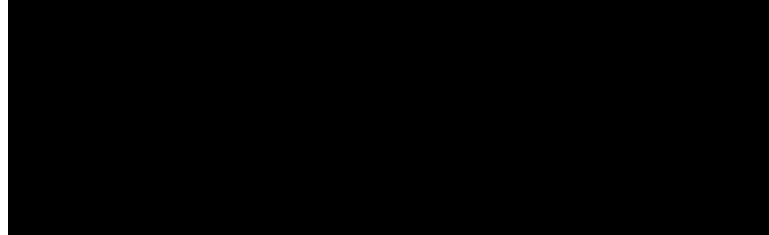
District Council and made into three District Councils namely- Pawi District Council, Lakher District Council and Chakma District Council.

The following table shows the position of Political Parties in different District Council elections.⁹

The Mizo District Council during its first three terms made the following ten Rules:-¹⁰

- The Constitution of District Council Rules
- Administration of Justice Rules
- Court Manual of the Mizo District Council
- Mizo Hnam Dan (Mizo Customary Law)
- Election of Village Council Rules
- The Lushai Hills District (Trading by non-tribals) Rules
- The Mizo District (Market) Rules
- The Mizo District Agricultural Land Rules
- The Lushai Hills District Fund Rules, and
- The Mizo District Council Service Rules.

From 1952 to 1970 there were only three CEMs, one of them held office for ten years, the second for six years and the third for two years. But from 1970 to 1972 there were four CEMs. There was, therefore, political instability for about two years. While there was no frequent change in the Chairmanship of the Mizo District Council, there were frequent changes in the CEMs.¹¹



The Sixth Schedule was found unsatisfactory. The tribal people of Assam felt that the autonomy in the Sixth Schedule was a misnomer, that the powers of the District Councils were curtailed, that the tribal's were dominated, and that the independence of India brought them nothing but a change of rulers only. Their dreams of powers, functions and status of the autonomous District Council became daydreams. In order to remove the fear, complex, distrust and suspicions from their mind, and to restore their confidence in the Constitution of India, R. Thanhlira, MP (Rajya Sabha), in his letter dated the 3rd December 1957, suggested to the Home Minister of India the conversion of the autonomous District Council into District Government with the Deputy Commissioner as a Constitutional head and agent of the Assam Government.

The formation of the District Council was an important landmark in the history of political development in Mizo Hills. This however failed to satisfy all aspirations of the Mizos. A section of the people continued to demand independence. The Mizo insurgency in the subsequent years resulted from this feeling. The Government of India also realized that the District council was not a sufficiently effective instrument to take care of the Mizo political interest. As a result the Union Territory of Mizoram came into existence in 1972.

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THE DEMAND OF THE MIZO: FROM HILL STATE TO INDEPENDENCE (POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF MIZO INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT)

Dr. Malsawmliana

During the colonial period, the British administrators acquired many of the Mizo chief's rights and privileges reducing the position of the Mizo chiefs. Therefore, the Mizo chiefs acts as an agency of the British in their own village and all the powers were vested in the hands of the British. Meanwhile, the Govt. of India Act, 1935 has excluded the Lushai Hills from Indian Union which alienated the Mizo people from the mainstream of India. Thus many of the Mizo began to feel that 'we are not Indian'. Mizo has different distinct cultures, traditions etc. which was far different from Indian culture. So there was a need to formulate the future of the Mizo hills in respect of administration.

Thus, there was political consciousness among the Mizo which resulted the formation of political parties in Mizoram.

Political Background: Demand of Greater Autonomy

On the eve of the independence of India from Britain, there rose a question over the future administration of the country and particularly the excluded areas, which were declared by the Government of India Act, 1935, in north east India. The Act excluded such areas in all legislations and executions meaning which

such excluded areas should have no representatives in all Federal and Provincial Legislative Assemblies of the British India.

Being located in the remotest area of Assam province, the Mizo district was economically and politically backward when compared with other districts of Assam. Politically, many of the educated Mizo began to take an interest in politics and initiate for the formation of political party in 1946. Thus, the leaders and prominent citizens of the Mizo felt the need to formulate for future administration of the Mizo district and provided concrete ideas to the authority for this purpose. To them, the prevailing District Conference is not enough for their future administration.

In view of the disadvantages of the District Conference, the Mizo leaders felt the need of greater autonomy for the district. Accordingly, a number of petitions on this regard were submitted to the authorities. For instance, when the Bordoloi Committee visited Aizawl during April 17-18, 1947, the demand of greater autonomy was submitted by the Mizo Union leaders. To them, it was an autonomy in which the rights, customs, and traditions of the Mizo should be protected and granting of protection against exploitation from outsiders. They also demanded that the Mizo in living in Lushai Hills, Manipur, Cachar and Chittagong districts should be put under one administration i.e. under Assam.

Apart from the Mizo Union party, the demand of political autonomy was also made by some individuals before the Bordoloi Committee. For instance, Rev Zairema advocated the local autonomy with full self-determination within the Assam province and he was the first person to use the term 'autonomy' in the case of Mizoram while R. Thanhkira demanded much autonomy as possible for the Lushai hills. The autonomy of the hills as advocated by Rev Zairema would have National Council with supreme power to make laws and executive authority for enforcement of the laws. He suggests that the Mizo should be given full self-determination within the province of Assam; and there should division of powers

and functions between the province of Assam and Mizoram. He also suggests that the form of government shall be the purest form of democracy. Meanwhile, HK Bawihchhuaka also advocated that the Lushai Hills should be given a widest possible self-determination and his proposal includes the amalgamation of the Mizo territories (all areas inhabited by the Mizo) into one administrative unit under Assam province. He also said that there should be a clear division of powers and functions between the Government of Assam and the Mizo National Council.

Thus, in view of the demand of the Mizo people and the political situation of the Mizo hills, the Bordoloi Committee (Committee of North East Frontier Tribal Areas and Assam Excluded and partially Excluded Areas, a Sub-Committee of the Advisory Committee of the Constituent Assembly, finally recommended the formation of autonomous district council in Mizoram. Accordingly, the Mizo District Council was inaugurated on April 25, 1952 by Bishnu Ram Medhi, then Chief Minister of Assam.

Hill state to Mizo State:

Soon after, while working of the District Council was in progress, there arose discontentment among the hill leaders on the powers granted to them by the government as it was not consistent with provisions of the Sixth Schedule. Meanwhile the demand for separate hill state from Assam was underway; some of the Mizo political leaders began to take keen interest in the movement. But some, particularly the leaders of Mizo Union party were divided on these issues. Later, the Mizo Union decided to support the Eastern India Tribal Union (EITU) for separate hill state without liquidating the party or merge with other party. In this connection, T. Raatan highlights the situation of how the Mizo leaders turned their attention towards hill state,

“...but when they felt that the Assam Government, whom they had been looking to for their own sustenance, became unappreciative of the workings of the Mizo District Council, which they were running, the emergent elites then came up and joined the Hill State Movement in the early fifties. Again, the hill state movement also did not very well suit their attempt to hold power because such movement was highly broad based and their power equations with the other hill leaders were poor.”

The Mizo leaders then actively involved in the movement and joined All Party Hill Leader Conference (APHLC), which was formed in 1960 following the introduction of official language bill in the Assam Legislative Assembly on June 22, 1960. Meanwhile, a contrasting view on the hill state movement among the Mizo Union leaders was witnessed in one of the secret meetings of the party councillor in which the party policy on whether to choose separate hill state or separate Mizo state was to finalise. It is said that Ch.Saprawnga was in favour of a separate hill state while Ch.Chhunga spoke in favour of Mizo state. Likewise, R. Thanhkira, Chairman of the APHLC Council of Action expressed in favour of forming separate Administrative Region with Mizo District, North Cachar District, Manipur and Tripura states. However after a long deliberation, they could not arrive at any concrete decision on this regards.

However, a procession was held at Aizawl observing ‘Protest Day’ against the passing of the official Language Bill of the Assam Legislative Assembly on October 14, 1960 where the Mizo Union party and EITU also participated in which they express their unwillingness to accept Assamese as official language and demanded a separate hill state. Meanwhile, the Mizo Union proposed a Federal Hill state in which there should be equal numbers of MLA from each hill district but rejected by the APHLC in its third meeting at Haflong. Furthermore, officially the Mizo Union resolved to support the Hill state movement in its Special Assembly during

November 2-3, 1960. At the same time the EITU Unit of Mizo District gave its all efforts for separate hill state and fully cooperates with the APHLC as it was formed for this purpose only. They also approached the leaders of the PL Regional Council to get support of the people to their demand for a separate state.

Although the Mizo Union party was seen actively participated in the hill state movement, it was only in name in the true sense. This was indication that some of the leaders of the Union were not interested in the hill state but the Mizo state. At last, the Special Assembly of the Mizo Union held on June 10, 1963 discussed about the hill state movement which was attended by some of the APHLC leaders to negotiate with the Union leaders for their continuing support of the movement. In this assembly, particularly Ch.Saprawnga, then Chief Executive Member(CEM) of Mizo District Council and HK Bawihchhuaka, then President of Mizo Union and Chairman of MDC, stood in favour of a hill state by proposing the following points –

- a) Reservation of post in police service in the Hill state for the Mizos as other hill peoples were not interested in the service
- b) It may be easy to have hill state than a Mizo state

But the pro-state movement could easily tackle the above points in the assembly. Finally, the Assembly resolved to adopt the Mizo state as a new policy of the Union which automatically closed the chapter of the hill state movement and cut its connection with the AHPLC by passing the resolution as below:

“Indian Government had not conceded to our demand for a separate Hill State, though we had been fighting so long. Therefore, this Special Assembly of Mizo Union, after a prolong deliberations on the issue of the party policy, unanimously resolved to adopt ‘MIZORAM STATE’ as party policy. Party

Headquarters will please find out ways and means to materialize it.”

Accordingly, the Mizo Union has submitted a petition to the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru regarding the formation of Mizo state. In view of the adoption of the policy of Mizo state by the Mizo Union, Ch. Saprawnga stated thus, ‘we (pro-hill state) were much beaten by the supporters of the ‘Mizo state’ in the assembly, so it was difficult to estimate that the Mizo state was surely attained. The situation was quite hopeless’

Thus the Mizo Union leaders decided that ‘Direct Action may be launched unless Mizo State is given by the Government of Assam before the end of 1964’. But the issues of Direct Action create disunity among them which later resulted in the resignation of Ch. Saprawnga from Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the Mizo District Council. Thus, the Mizo Union could freely launch the movement for ‘Mizo state’ and is interesting to note that a song has been composed for this occasion.

Mizo Independence movement:

As cited earlier, there arose divergent views among the Mizo political leaders on the future of Mizo hills. Some preferred to join Burma instead of India while others prefer to remain as a part of India Union. Meanwhile, some sections of the Mizo advocated self-determination rather than remaining a part of Indian union. For instance, when a public meeting was held at Aizawl (at Bengali Theatre Hall) on February 21, 1947, the motion for independent of the Mizo hills was passed, as follows:

‘mi tam fe in ngaihdan hrang hrang an sawi hnuin leh hriatthiam loh zawng in zawhna leh in hrilhfhahna te a awm hnu in ban phara Vote lakna a awm a, he ti ang hian thu a tlu a ni. “Keini Mizote chu mahni a ro in relin mahni ke ngei in

kan ding tur a ni” tih a ni. (Chu chu Independent tihna a ni).”(After long deliberations, the meeting unanimously resolved that ‘we, the Mizo should stand on our own feet and we should have self-determination i.e. independently).

The meeting was attended by about 200 peoples from various walks of life including church workers, teachers, prominent citizens, etc. The meeting was chaired by Pu Sainghinga, Assistant Superintendent and convened by Pu Pachhunga, Pu PS Dahrawka and Pu Hmartawnphunga. It discussed about the future of the Mizo hills after the withdrawal of the British and indicated that the meeting desires for self-government i.e. independence which would be the only safeguard from assimilation by the larger communities, instead of putting the Mizo hills under Indian Union.

‘ tin, a reng reng thu an keini Mizote chu Kumpinu Sorkar hnuaiah chauh lo chuan tu Sorkar hnuaiah mah kan la awm ngai si lova, eng vangin nge Kumpinu Sorkar a kal avanga India Sorkar lo ding thar tur hnuaiah chuan kan kuna kan luh mai ang ? Keini Chu Vai nen chuan hnam hrang daih, in an Na nei hlek lo, hnam hlawmkhat fel hlak, tawngkhat hman thei ngat leh pian chhuahna lam pawh thuhmun vek Kan ni si a, eng vang mahin Vai Sorkar hnuaiah kan in barh mai tur a ni lo. Mahni ngeiin kan inti hrangin kan in bawh hrang tur a ni. Kan hnam zalenna leh thawvenna te kan Mizo nihna te hi chelh tlata humhalh kan duh phawt chuan tu bawih ah mah kan in tulut tur a ni lo.” (the Mizo never submit themselves except only the British, what reasons shall the Mizo submit into the Indian government after the British regime ends. The Mizo are quite different from Indian peoples in respect of culture, habits, customs, language etc. They should be given independence and separate from the administration of India Union.)

Meanwhile, the United Mizo Freedom Organization (UMFO) party which was founded on July 5, 1947, have objectives of joining Burma instead of Indian Union. To them, the Mizo would have

better and bright future if they opt out of India and join Burma. C. Lalthlengliana makes a few highlights the reasons which later steered the party to opt for Burma as follows -

'it was chiefly because this small Lushai hills was not the only Mizo settlement, but also in Burma, whose kinship and appearance of these people were more similar to the Mizo besides the other Mizo settlements of Manipur, Tripura and East Bengal of India. They also once again hoped the old same policy to unify the whole Mizo settlements under one administration. The party therefore evidently aimed to join Burma, which they believed to be the nearest solutions'.

Therefore, the UMFO party prefers Burma to India as they were convinced that they should be comfortable more in Burma than India due to their (Mizo) closer affinity with the Burmese people.

In case of Mizo Union party, when Assam Congress leaders such as Gopinath Bordoloi, Sir BN Rao and JJM Nichols Roy arrived in Aizawl on the eve of India Independence in 1946, to discuss the future of Lushai Hills. They consulted political leaders of Mizoram and persuaded them to join India which later convinced the Mizo Union leaders to join India and then the party decided to have 'full self-determination within the province of Assam' instead of independence or joining Burma. Though the political leaders of Assam advised the Mizo leaders to join India, they also gave alternatives other than joining India. For instance, Sir BN Rao when addressing the public at Kulikawn (Aizawl) said that 'the Mizo people would also choose independence if they wish'.

In case of the questions on independence, though the Mizo Union was against independence, but there were differences of opinion among the leaders on this regard. For instance, R. Vanlawma, the founder of Mizo Union party, favours Independence

by saying that ‘we must govern ourselves. We have enough supplies; we also have the ability to be self sufficient. Now is the time to fight for independence.’ On the other hand, Vanthuama, who was against independence, said as follows-

‘It is impossible to fight for independence now. If we look around us we see the ‘Darwin Theory’, the more powerful swallowing up the less powerful. If and when we are more powerful, we will swallow the Indians, and if they are more powerful than us they will swallow us. Besides, if we are independence, where will we get salt and iron ore to make our farming equipment, and how are we going to make money?’

Since there was indications that the leaders of Mizo Union were divided on the subject of independence, in which majority of them are in favour of joining India while others favoured independence. Interestingly, C. Pahlira, former leader of the party also revealed his opinion that ‘God will give us independence at the right time; we cannot have it by means of violence.’ Likewise, many of them believed that ‘after a numbers of years, we may have a chance to attain independence from Indian Union’. So they decided to join India first for the betterment of Mizoram.

Formation of MNF and Declaration of Independence:

The Mizo National Front (MNF) having ‘For God and our Country’ as its preamble, was formed on October 22, 1961 with Laldenga as Chairman and R. Vanlawma as Secretary General. The party chooses ‘self-determination’ as its aim. Soon after, the MNF party gained immense popularity within a short span of time and were confident enough to contest the elections of District council and Assam Legislative Assembly. In short, the MNF Party has submitted memorandum to the Prime Minister on October 30, 1965 demanding ‘self –determination of the Mizo’.

Finally, the Mizo National Front then declared independence for Mizoram against Indian Union on March 1, 1966 appealing to all independent states to recognize independent Mizoram. As a result, the Government of Assam declared the Mizo district a disturbed area under the Assam Disturbed Area Act, 1955 and counter-insurgency measure were soon taken.

Factors for the declaration of independence:

a) As cited earlier, some Mizos felt awkward being an Indian and could not accept the idea of being a part of the Indian for the rest of their lives. The MNF believed that ‘the Mizo people had not been able to feel at home with Indians or in neither 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.’

b) Different political ideology – Hill state, Mizo state, Independence - Transition period. The idea of attaining independence from India was advocated by many of the political leaders of the Mizo hills instead of joining India or Burma,

c) Poor developmental works of the government failed to satisfy the people which led maximum support of MNF’s independence policy.

d) Nationalism and patriotism inspired by the political consciousness led the cry for political self-determination among some section of the Mizo

Thus, there is indication that the ideas of independence or political self- determination or separation from Indian Union was possessed by most of the political leaders of the Mizo hills, but the way they wish to achieve vary from party to party. It was also evident that there was a ‘desire for more political autonomy or self-govern/rule’ among the political leaders of the Mizo hills. For

instance, they demand greater autonomy from District Conference, District council from Hill state, then separate Mizo state to independence/self-determination.

In view of the political situation of the Mizo hills, the period when MNF declare/fought independence may be appropriate as there was a thirst for more political autonomy among the Mizo leaders during those days.

End notes and References :

1. The excluded areas declared by the Government of India Act, 1935 are - The North East Frontier (Sadya, Balipara and Lakhimpur) Tracts, The Naga Hills District, The Lushai Hills District, The North Cachar Hills Sub-Division of the Cachar District. Partially Excluded areas are – Khasi Hills, Garo Hills, Mikir Hills.
2. With the initiation of R.Vanlawma, the first political party in Mizoram i.e. Mizo Commoners Union' Party was established on April 9, 1946 at Aizawl. It was later renamed as Mizo Union party.
3. The Block Officers Conference of the Mizo Union held at Sialsuk during April 4-5, 1947 resolved that 'Mizoram may have District Autonomy and attached to Assam Province' along with

other resolutions. See P.Lalnithanga, *Political Developments in Mizoram*, Aizawl, 2006, p.23.

4. HC Thanhranga, *District Councils in the Mizo Hills*, p.36. Also, see the resolutions passed by the Lakhipur Conference of the Mizo Union during November 21-22, 1946 at Lakhipur, Cachar District, Assam.

HC Thanhranga, *op.cit*, pp.76-77.

5. V.Venkata Rao, “*Autonomy Movements in Mizoram*’ in RN Prasad (ed) *Autonomy Movements in Mizoram*, New Delhi, 1994, p.6.

6. *ibid*, p.79.

7. *ibid*.

8. Chaltuakhuma, *Political History of Mizoram*, Aizawl, 2001, p.203.

9. T.Raatan, *Encyclopaedia of North East India : Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Delhi*, 2004, p.242.

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11. *Ibid.*, p.66.

12. Ch.Saprawnga, *Ka Zin Kawng*, Aizawl, 2007., pp.135-136.

13. *ibid*, p.68.

14. KL Chhuanvawra, *Mizo Union kha*, Aizawl, 2008, p.80.
15. Ch.Saprawnga, op.cit, p.136.
16. Chaltuahkhuma, op.cit., p.219.
17. C. Lalthlengliana, '*United Mizo Freedom Organisation(UMFO)*' Sangkima (eds) Historical Journal Mizo, Vol-V. No.1, Aizawl, 2004, p.8.
18. The Mizo Union party demanded full self-determination with the province of Assam, see Memorandum submitted to His Majesty Government, Government of India and its Constituent Assembly through the Advisory Sub-Committee by the Mizo Union party in 1947.
19. '*Mizo ram din dan tur ngaihtuah hona Vantlang Inkhawm*' Resolution, February 21, 1947 at Bengali Theatre Hall, Aijal.
ibid.
20. ibid.
21. Lalmawia, '*Reminiscence of Gopinath Bordoloi*' in Lily Mazinder Baruah, Lokopriya Gopinath Bordoloi, New Delhi, 1992, p.195.
22. C. Lalthlengliana, op.cit., p.8.
23. Keihawla Sailo, Golden History of Lushai Hills, Aizawl, 2010, p.246. Also see, Lalmawia, '*Reminiscence of Gopinath Bordoloi*' in Lily Mazinder Baruah, Lokopriya Gopinath Bordoloi, New Delhi, 1992, p.195.
24. Lalmawia, op.cit.

25. Memorandum submitted to His Majesty's Government of India and its Constituent Assembly through the Advisory Committee by the Mizo Union Party in 1947.
26. Biakchhunga, Hnam Kalsiam, Aizawl, 1996, p.61.
28. Vumson, Zo History, p.254.
29. Ibid, p.254
30. 'C. Pahlira thuhnuhnung', Zozam Weekly, Vol-VII, No.35, August 4-10, 2011, Aizawl, p.12
31. *Constitution of MNF Party*, Published by MNF General Headquarters, Aizawl, 2004p.6.
32. The other members of Office Bearers were – A. Rohnuna(Joint Secretary), Vanlalliana(Treasurer), Kailianchhunga(Executive members),H.Zirliana(Executive Members), C.Hermana(Executive members) and Lairokunga (Executive members). See R. Zamawia, Zofate Zinkawngah,Aizawl, 2007,pp.169-170.
33. Ibid, p.169.
34. JV Hluna, 'The Role of Mizo National Front in Mizoram politics upto 1986' Sangkima(ed) Historical Journal Mizoram, Vol-V, No.1, Aizawl, 2004, p.78.
35. Memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister of India by Mizo National Front on October 30, 1965.

INSURGENCY IN NORTH EAST INDIA - NATIONALITY
QUESTION IN THE CONTEXT OF MIZORAM
THROUGH ORAL HISTORY

Pankaj Roy

History, as a whole, depends ultimately upon its social purpose and that's exactly why in the past, it has been handed down by oral tradition and later through written chronicles. Sometimes the social purpose of history is obscured: by those academics who pursue fact finding research on remote or general problems without attempting to relate their discoveries to more general interpretations, insisting on the technical virtue of scholarship and the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. At the other extreme, the social purpose of history can also be made blunt by politicized and narrow interpretation of it. The challenge

to oral history lies partly in relation to this essential purpose of history: that is to explain the complex nature and continuity of evolution of society.

As many as five of the North Eastern states of India, shares a long international boundary on their east as well as southern sides. As much as 100+ groups from various states of North-East India are listed as terrorist, insurgent and extremist outfits. Why such a big number of the citizens of the area are disgruntled? Or do they feel differently so far as the Indian political definition of nationality and citizenship is concerned! As this region is a habitat of multi-ethnic groups, mostly of mongoloid race, with each tribe and group having a different lifestyle, culture, habit and social fabric, yet the common feature they share or have shared together may be said to be the problem of insurgency. B.C. Bhuyan in his analysis about the North-East India states that 'The problem of insurgency is the greatest of the problems being experienced by the people of this region since independence.' But the focal points of this continuing unrest are rarely gauged!

If we trace back some sort of beginning of unrest in the erstwhile undivided Assam during British India and after, we find Nagaland leading the list. It is important to understand the Naga problem as it paves the way for understanding the other revolts of the area, as the Mizo and Meitei insurgency. It was during 1940s that Nagas revolted for they felt their right to self-government is being compromised. Angami Zapu Phizo, a veteran of pro-Japanese Indian National Army, accepted the plan of Sir Reginald Coupland for Naga-inhabited contiguous areas both in India and Burma to come under a single administrative area, but opposed its administration as 'Crown Colony' system. Thus, what the Nagas thought was on ethnic line was to become the yardstick for all the tribal in northeast India. Later on, when the Naga disturbance was culminating to a

climax of the first phase, Rev. Zairema wrote to Phizo: “We admire your conviction. However, we would like to remind you that India herself has never been one nation. The Telegus are as different from the Punjabis as the Bengalis from the Mizos. Yet, we are together, determined to build one mighty nation. In this process each of us has a right as well as responsibility...” but Phizos budding ethnic philosophy was terse, and harsh to Indian ears, “Nagas are not Indians, just as Indians are not Nagas...” By the twist of fate, the Mizos were to be the next to rise into revolt owing the same ethnic line but on different context and situation.

The genesis of the MNF insurgency can be traced back to 1940s itself with the infamous ‘Coulpland Plan’ – as the imperialists divided the Naga population of undivided India and Burma, so did they with the Mizos. Earlier, the mongoloid Mizos used to be free on the vast uncharted area between Burma and India or in the British ‘Excluded Zone’ but the partition of Burma from the Indian subcontinent sprayed the Mizos on both side of the border and unluckily they never had a Phizo amongst them. The moderate Mizos wanted autonomy and favourable financial aid to develop their economy from the state which the Government of Assam neglected. This negligence was compounded by the state government’s decision to make Assamese the official state language, which raised significant concerns about the future of Mizo culture and identity in India.

The straw that broke the camel’s back came in 1960 when the Lushai Hills was hit by a most severe famine from Bamboo Flowering or Mautam. It is commonly believed that the Government of Assam was neither able to assess the intensity of impending famine nor could it rise to the occasion in dealing with it. There was animated discussion in the Mizo Hills District Council at the slow moving process of the Government of Assam

while rats were causing havoc with food grains. The famine, remarks N.C. Asthana and Anjali Nirmal, “sowed the seeds of resentment which came to be directed against the Government of India.” First, the Mizo National Famine Front (MNFF) was formed. By the time the famine was over, it was overwhelmed by ethnicity and political consideration in the light of Naga revolt, converted itself into Mizo National Front (MNF). Apart from the effect of the famine, there was a deep discontent among the Mizos due to the separation of their kins in the Burmese side; they found themselves distributed within three provinces of the newly born state. The bed of the Kolodyne River would divide them further from their kinsmen in the Chin Hills. Secondly, the Mizos being in the state of extreme hardship due to lack of infrastructure and basic needs, accused the Government of Assam for their plight and joined the unrest.

Now the question is what it is being a tribal? What is their origin and lifestyle? What is their thought on citizenship and government? What about nationality? What does a federal government owe to the distinct ethnic group of Mongoloid origin within its territory? Will it be right to impose an artificial identity on ethnic groups like Nagas, Mizos, Ahoms etc? Why insurgency has taken place in the North East in general and in Mizoram in particular? What are the different factors, agencies and events that created a condition for the insurgent movement in Mizoram? If one has to address these objectives and examine the consequences of MNF insurgency in the past along with the question of nationality, then we have to do a bit of time travel.

The thought pattern and definition of being ‘tribal’ in this area is, can be summarised in the words of Theyieu Sakhrie, a close aide to Phizo who stated in a letter dated 16th of July 1947 to the Indian Government, which reads –“Truly, we are a peculiar people...we are all equals – men and women, have equal social status. We have no caste distinctions: no high and low...we

believe in that form of government which permits the rule, not of the majority, but of the people as a whole. We govern ourselves by a government which doesn't govern at all... every family is proud of its own...possessing its own house, built on its own land, no family ever pays any tax. Forests and woodland, rivers belong to the people. We cultivate as much land as we need or desire and there is no one to question our rights...we have no beggars...and wonder of wonders, we have no jail...our civil authority is God in the matter of life and death, and murder is very rare...we fear nobody...what peace we have, no police and no CID! We use no lock. Our granaries are kept outside the village and no guard ever needed, for there is no one to steal...wherever we go it is our home...we talk freely, live freely and often fight freely too. We have no inhibitions of any kind. Wild! Yes. But free!...there is order in chaos, law in this freedom..." If we read further into the histories of the period and the reactions of the Naga leaders, we find that strong nativistic feelings run high on almost all the tribal population of the northeast and they are to become the victims of the schemes and conspiracies of the outgoing colonists.

On studying the contents of the letter by Theyieu Sakhrie, we find that the tribal way of life and thought was quite different from the plains people: it also reflects how the tribal democracy and classless society has outlived Plato's philosophical republic. The mental and psychological difference of the mongoloid tribal and the Aryan-Dravidian plainsmen became so deep that the hill people started to hate them and branded them in different names in different areas – this trend can be traced back to undivided India when they were heavily recruited by the British in Burma, Malay-Provinces and Thailand: the Indian workers were called 'Kalla' by the Burmese, 'Kling' by the Malays, 'Khek' by the Thais, all meaning 'outsiders' or 'exploiters'. But due to the difference, an average mainland clerk or worker was regarded as an 'outsider' even in the North-eastern area of India. The Nagas called them 'Tephriemia', Mizos 'Vais', Meitei-Manipuri

'Mayangs', Khasis 'Dkhars', Arunachalis 'Nyipak' – behind all these usages, cutting across the boundaries of many states and people, could be espied the deep ethnic divide of the mongoloid segment. Now, the question is why such a deep estrangement? How these sentiments grew? And did all these issues along with geo-political aspirations ultimately paved the way for disturbances and insurgency?

The whole Burma-Northeast India-CHT came under the British sway in 1826 when the Whites pushed back the Yellows. Thus began large scale experimentation thereby upsetting the demography of the region. The British send swarms of indentured labourers instead of statesman, researchers and scholars; Thus a large number of Indians filled this area and amassed vast fortunes which was at the cost of the tribal. Then came tea plantations and same fate befell the indigenous tribal who could only be a distant spectator of the whole drama.

Concentrating on the Mizo situation, all hell broke loose on 28th February 1966 – Operation Jericho was launched. Almost all the subdivision towns were captured by the MNF rebels except Aizawl. Interestingly, the immediate effect was that the track from Silchar to Aizawl was upgraded and ultimately paved the way for road building project being launched on May 1967 in the state of Mizoram. In this connection, it is worthy to mention the words of Jadu Kakoty, an eminent journalist and writer of Assam and Assamese Mind, "It may sound paradoxical, but Assam has reasons to be thankful to the Chinese that they had come up to the Assam border at least and had threatened to run over the Assam Plains. Otherwise, the bridge over Brahmaputra would have not come, nor the railway line extended up to Murkongchelek along the northern bank, nor a network of surface communications established in this region". Such was the degree of neglect for the North-east region by the New Delhi based Central government.

If one speaks of the ethnicity of the Mizos, it is aptly reflected by the word ‘Tlawmngaihna’ – a word whose meaning is so implicitly juxtaposed and embedded in Mizo lores and legends that it is hard to transliterate let alone translate even by the ablest of the Mizo scholars. It is next to impossible for a non-Mizo like me to unearth the exact meaning of it but what comes close to mind when one talks about ‘Tlawmngaihna’ is some sort of emulation of the life of legends like Vanapa, through practice and preservation of codes and ethics of the tribal life. It can also mean some sort of ideal manhood to be practised in life; this may include chivalry, patriotism, bravery, sacrifice and above all Honour. To understand the concept more explicitly, a lad explained why the 13 volunteers had to be killed on 4 March 1966 in a dare devil mission in Aizawl – “It was a matter of Tlawmngaihna”. When such a concept of life is amalgamated with animistic lore of the legends, the immediate contrast is with the selfish, exploiting and conspiring characters of the plainsman who were brought by the British Colonists in the name of business and development in the Hills. So, it is natural that the Mizos would call these plainsmen ‘Vai’ or ‘outsiders’ in comparison to their own lifestyle and ethics; they would, by instinct and reason, repel such people and refuse to cohabit with them or become a part of such lifestyle. When one despises such philosophy of life, then there can be no question of becoming a part of that country. Further, the concept of ‘citizenship’ was very much confusing to the tribal mind – if we remind ourselves of the letter of Theyieuh Sakhrie, we can immediately recall that tribesmen always felt that nature was their ‘country’ and its bounties are their ‘claims’.

So far as next generation Mizos are concerned, that is after 1960s, the stringent operations of the Military alienated them from the mainstream and intensified their animus towards all things Indian. Neutral commentators later assured that like the

Nagas, the Mizos also has been denied an independent national existence by the shape of the imperial history of the sub-continent. 'They are the victims – as others have been beneficiaries – of the integrating thrust of the British impact in South-East Asia.' If the experience of the Colonialists here been like that of Africa and divided by imperial competitions, there can be little doubt that Nagaland or Mizoram by itself or linked with other areas would have emerged sovereign.

Since 1987, Mizo separatists have opted for peace and development of the region within the ambit of the Constitution of India and have proved to be efficient enough to achieve considerable success. The prime example being, ex-Chief Minister Pu Zoramthanga's initiative to mediate between Naga rebels and the Government of India. But by achieving a positive literacy rate of 88+%, the second highest in the country after Kerala, Mizos have not only strived forward in the new millennia but also has exemplified their capacity and emboldened their claim to be the citizens of India.

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FORMATION OF UNDERGROUND GOVERNMENT :
MNF GOVERNMENT

Prof. K. Zohra

The formation of the underground government *Mizoram Sawrkar* was not accomplished by a single event, but had passed through many critical stages of the socio-political development or transformations in the Mizo politics after Indian Independence in 1947. In 1958, the Mizo Cultural Society (MCS) was founded by three eminent persons, R. B. Chawnga as its President, R. Zuala as its Secretary and Laldenga as its Assistant Secretary.¹ The main objective of the MCS was to safeguard Mizo culture and traditions.² The whole of Mizoram came under the grip of a severe famine in 1959, and in the same year, the MCS was automatically transformed into the Mizo National Famine Front with the objective to carry out relief operation for the people of Mizoram under the leadership of R. Dengthuama as its President and Laldenga as its Secretary.³ The regional parties like Mizo Union founded on 9th April, 1946 and the United Mizo Freedom Organisation founded on 5th July 1947 brought about new political movements in Mizoram.

When the famine was over in 1961, the leaders of the MNFF felt that it was a right time to form a political party with the objective of propagating separatist tendency or separatism. Therefore, on 28th October 1961, by deleting the word famine, the MNFF was transformed into a political party known as Mizo National Front under the leadership of Laldenga and his colleagues.⁴ There are some significant factors leading to the formation of the underground government, *Mizoram Sawrkar*.

Mizo Nationalism:

History and culture played very important roles in the formation of ethnic nationalism among the Mizos, who by political consciousness recalled their indigenous tribal survival, ethnic identity, separation of homeland, ethno-historical memories, history and cultural difference, etc. The MNF considered the indigenous Mizo chieftainship as one of the primary factors of the separate identity formation, and they compared the administration of the Mizo chiefs with 'Greek City State'.⁵ They hold a separate nation concept, and therefore they believed that the Mizos are a distinct nation; created, moulded and nurtured by God and nature.

Regarding the basic objective of nationalism, Rabindranath Tagore and Manabendra Nath Roy rightly say: "Political freedom is the concrete object of nationalism, although the nature and scope of that freedom are not clearly defined, 'Complete independence' is generally accepted as a slogan".⁶ Chawngsailova clearly explained that the MNF deeply utilized Mizo nationalism as the strategic base of their movement, and survival instinct was the most important force in the development of nationalism. He brings out the ideology of the Mizo nationalism.⁷

"All men are created and enclosed with in alienable human right by God and blessed with the spirit of nationalism. The more the nation is small and weak, the more they are concerned about their survival against domination and oppression of the bigger nation. Mizo nationalism also emerged out of this survival instinct against the fear of oppression and assimilation".

Nationalism and patriotism inspired by the political consciousness among the members of the MNF gradually led to the formation of the underground government, 'Mizoram Sawrkar' which became the main pillar of the political movement

in Mizoram. On November 9, 1966, the Deputy Minister for Home Affairs stated in the Lok Sabha: “A Provisional Government by the Mizo National Front is operating from East Pakistan and directing subversive activities in Mizo and Cachar Districts”.⁸

Mizo Re-unification:

The term ‘Mizo Reunification’ covers the movement relating to the reconstruction of geo-political boundaries and integration of the hill tribes who lived in the erstwhile Lushai Hills and its neighboring hill areas. The British annexation of the Lushai Hills in 1890⁹ brought about many changes, and the status of Mizoram was geographically and politically reduced due to problem of boundary settlement for past many years (1890-1933). The geo-political boundary of Mizoram had touched different bordering areas such as: Manipur-Lushai Hills boundary (1900); Chin-Lushai boundary (1901); Tripura-Lushai Hill boundary (1933); South Lushai Hills-Chin Hills boundary including the North Arakan Hill Tracts, (1924).¹⁰ The demarcation of boundary lines made by the British was, however, ill-defined, and thus brought about new geographical map of Mizoram, socio-cultural division of the people with different settlements, etc. The above inter-district boundaries later became an international boundary by Indian Independence, 1947.

The Mizos had always dreamt of reunification with their ethnic families or tribal groups living across the international boundaries especially in the Indo-Myanmar and Indo-Bangladesh bordering areas. The problem of the socio-cultural and geo-political separation among the Mizos became an important objective of the MNF who adopted the slogans such as ‘Self-determination’, ‘complete Independence’ and ‘Greater Mizoram’.¹¹ Based on the definition of the linguistic survey by G

A. Grierson, Laldenga, leader of the MNF claimed all the areas occupied by the Mizos covering an area of about 25000 to 30,000 square miles between 92° and 95° Longitude, and between 18° and 26° Latitude.¹² The idea of incorporating all the Mizos who lived in the Indo-Myanmar and Indo-Bangladesh bordering areas, thus paved the way for the introduction of the political ideology ‘Mizo reunification’, which had very much attracted the Mizos.¹³ The fulfillment of the Mizo reunification was very difficult task for the MNF party, and therefore, the leaders felt to have better and efficient organized body to achieve their goal. Such unavoidable situation led to the formation of the underground government which later became an important tool for the administration and movement of the MNF.

Secessionism:

Historically, the Mizos claimed that they had been enjoyed an independent status with a definite territory under the sovereignty of their own chiefs since the time immemorial. In fact, the Mizo chiefs were naturally the real owner of the soil or land (Mizoram) on which the tribal political institution, chieftainship was founded on a secure footing. After the annexation of the Lushai Hills, the Mizo chiefs were allowed to retain the chieftainship through which the British carried out the administration,¹⁴ and when the political administration of the Lushai Hills was resettled in 1907, the Superintendent issued boundary paper ‘Ramri Lehkha’ to every chief.¹⁵ The administration of the Lushai Hills was now entrusted to the chiefs and their mentors, the British officials. Thus, the district executive administration was vested in the Superintendent, his assistants, Circle Interpreters and village chiefs.¹⁶ Thus, the Mizo chiefs became an important administrative machineries under the British, and they were intermediaries between the British and the people.

The British authorities had introduced various administrative reforms and measures such as- the chiefs' council (it was known as chiefs' conference in 1939) and the chiefs' Durbar (1941).¹⁷ The British were concerned with the future political status and position of the Mizos and their chiefs, and on eve of the India Independence, 14 August 1947, a meeting of the Mizo leaders attended by 50 persons was held under the chairmanship of L. L. Peters, the last British District Officer of the Lushai Hills. The participants of the meeting are as follows: Mizo Union representatives-12; United Mizo Freedom Organisation representatives-13; Mizo Hmeichhia Tangrual-3; Church representatives-5; Local elders or eminent persons-5; Chief representatives-5; Ex-servicemen-3; Government servants-2.¹⁸ One of the main demands resolved in the meeting was that the Lushais (Mizos) will be allowed to opt out of India Union when they wish to do so, subject to a minimum period of ten years.¹⁹

The British occupation of the Lushai Hills (Mizoram) was gradually followed by some administrative arrangements and reforms. The status of the territory of the Lushai Hills remained undefined till 1920, and based on Section 52-A of the government of India Act of 1919, the Lushai Hills District was classified as 'backward tract', and later it was known as 'Excluded Areas'.²⁰ This classification was done based on the recommendation of N. E. Parry before Simon Commission. N. E. Parry, the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills strongly advocated the exclusion of the Lushai Hills from the general constitutional arrangements on the ground that in origin and ethnic affinity, the Lushais belonged to the Mongoloid and closely allied to the Kuki and Chin tribes, were different from the Bengalis and Assamese and entirely untouched by Islam and Hinduism.²¹ Thus, from April 1, 1937-1947, the political administration of the Lushai Hills and other excluded areas was carried out by the Governor of Assam who was acting independently of the Government of Assam with a separate

Secretariat and also assisted by a Secretary designated as Secretary to the Governor.²²

The Grown Colonial Scheme:

When Burma was separated from the province of India in 1937 by implementing the Burma Act of 1935, Sir Robert Reid, Governor of Assam, strongly protested against the problem of the administrative boundaries of the homelands of Chin, Kachin and Naga. Thus, he wrote to the British Government in London that... “the separation of Burma from India on lines of the present frontiers will permanently divorce portions of tribes (Chin, Kachin and Naga), which naturally should comprise a single unit”.²³

From the very beginning, Sir Robert Reid was in favour of forming ‘Province of Commonwealth’ for those peoples, and therefore, he rejected the idea of dividing those tribes into three administrative units. He also updated the provision of the ‘Inner Line Regulation of 1873’ in order to protect the Chin, Kachin, Naga and other ethnic groups of the Northeast India from the exploitation of the outsiders. The Inner line Regulation was not only empowered to prohibit permanent residence for the outsiders but also designed as recognition of the pre-colonial independent status of the Chin, Kachin, Naga and other peoples in this region.²⁴

In 1941, Sir Robert Reid declared that “... they (Chin, Kachin and Naga) are not Indian in any sense of the word, rather in origin nor in outlook, and it is a historical accident that they have been taken into an Indian province”.²⁵ He thus proposed to form ‘Chin-Lushai Province’ for the peoples and region covered by the Chin Hills Regulation, which would have its own governorship, and the same political and administrative status as the governments of Assam, Bengal and Burma. His

proposal was provisionally accepted by the Conservative party led by Sir Winston Churchill. Unfortunately, the outbreak of the World War II had prevented the implementation of Robert Reid's proposal of the Crown Colonial Scheme. The 'Crown Colonial Scheme' was, however, updated in accordance with changing political situation during the war, which favoured the formation of a separate colonial country called, 'Province of the Commonwealth' between India and Myanmar. While Robert Reid's original 'Crown Colonial Scheme' was aimed at the creation of Chin-Lushai Country, the updated proposal 'Province of Commonwealth' was more extensive covering many other hill areas of the Northeast India and Chin Hills.²⁶

Thus, in 1945, Mr. R. Coupland, a Professor in the History Department at Oxford University and an expert on constitutional law was sent to study the possible implementation of the resolution relating to the formation of a separate country. He gave his affirmative report to the British government under the 'Crown Colonial Scheme'. However, Clement Attlee rejected the Conservative Party's proposal, 'Crown Colonial Scheme' when he (Labour Party) came into power in 1945.²⁷

From the above discussion, it is clear that the British had planted the seed of 'self-determination'²⁸, which appears in another forms 'independence', 'separation', 'difference', etc. The 'Crown Colonial Scheme' created separatist movement among the Mizo political leaders. Such secessionist tendency paved the way for the formation of the underground government, Mizoram Sawrkar, which became the main functional unit of the MNF organization and its movement

MNF Leadership:

The MNF leadership was socialable, democratic and typical in its organization, and was mostly dominated by personal quality, character and calibre of Laldenga, the founder president

of the MNF and active cooperation of his colleagues or co-workers. Isaac Zoliana, in his account Laldenga mentions some peculiar traits or characteristics of Laldenga who rightly displayed the objectives of the MNF among the people. First of all, Laldenga was good orator having excellent eloquence, and he was capable of influencing others. Secondly, he was good thinker, and was very interest in philosophy. He was considered as philosopher among the Mizos during his time. Thirdly, Laldenga was very simple and socialable in his conduct, and always maintained good principle in his personality and behaviour. Fourthly, he was a courageous person, having firm determination and clear objectivities. His attitude of fearlessness and decisiveness prompted him to face any problem or critical issue. Finally, Laldenga was very patient, and had mental health and maturity in his conduct, behaviour and action, which made him superior citizen among the people. His maturity was mostly found in his mentality, decision-making and leadership.²⁹

The MNF leadership was elevated and sharpened by various personalities and political ideologies of the leaders who were associated with the objectives of the MNF party. After the formation of the MNF party (28th October 1967),³⁰ there was aggressive platform competition among the political parties in Mizoram. The Mizo Union Party (9th April, 1946)³¹ tried to fulfill certain objectives such as- to unite all people in the Lushai Hills and its adjoining areas; to abolish the chieftainship; and to join the India mainstream.³² The United Mizo Freedom Organisation (5th July 1947) also tried to fulfill the objectives such as- to merge Mizoram with Burma; to retain chieftainship; and to resist the growth the M.U. in the Mizo politics.³³ The MNF party also adopted the objectives such as- to serve the highest sovereignty and to unite all the Mizos to live under one political boundary; to uplift the Mizo position and develop it to the highest extent; and to preserve and safeguard Christianity.³⁴

The political movement in Mizoram under various regional political parties coupled with the development of the national political parties had strengthened the MNF leadership. Thus, the MNF leadership led to the formation of the underground government Mizoram Sawrkar, which became the main infrastructure of the MNF movement.

Political Revolution:

The growth of the Church, Christianity and spread of education in the Mizo society after 1894 gradually brought about a lot of political awareness in Mizoram. The organization and movement of the MNF party had passed through various stages of the political development in Mizoram. The MNF believed in revolutionism, which was an expression of regional ideology or regionalism influenced by history, culture, ethnicity, literature, etc. which became the main driving factors of the movement. R. Vanlawma also observed.³⁵

“From time immemorial, the Mizos stood as a separate nation. Even before the British occupation, our forefathers stood separately under the traditional administration of our chiefs. Due to our distinct ethnicity, our culture and custom are completely different from the plain people. Therefore, a national feeling was stirred up to safeguard our culture and custom as well as for our self-determination.”

The MNF leadership firmly held the view that the Mizos were created and moulded by God as a separate nation, and their land had never been subjugated by any Indian ruler or Maharaja.³⁶ Thus, the MNF issued pamphlets, booklet, leaflets, etc, which had popularised the objectives of the party such as, independence, self-determination, separation, self-government, sovereignty, etc. These terms or slogans became very significant symbols of the Mizo national entity or regional identity among the Mizos. The MNF leadership believed in the philosophy of the

political revolution, without which the Mizos and Mizoram could not be free from India. Thus, they adopted the slogan 'For God and Our Country' (Pathian Leh Kan Ram Tan), which became the motto or theme of the Mizoram Sawrkar.³⁷ The functional organisation of the MNF party was revolutionary in its nature and movement, and thus, the underground government was formed as a self-governing body for the MNF as they did not accept any form of the existing civil administration in Mizoram.³⁸ The underground government 'Mizoram Sawrkar' became very important infra-structural factor for the growth and development of the MNF party in its organisation and revolutionary movement.³⁹ The MNF party had practically functioned under systematic administration and organization of the Mizoram Sawrkar since 1965.⁴⁰

Constitution of the Mizoram Sawrkar

As decided in the MNF General Assembly meeting held in May, 1964, the Executive Committee of the MNF Meeting in July 1965, it was finally decided to have the Presidential type of Government. The underground government Mizoram Sawrkar was unanimously formed by the MNF party.⁴¹ The Constitution of Mizoram Sawrkar was framed based on the American Constitution, Presidential form of Government. The Constitution came into force on 1 January, 1967. The Constitution of Mizoram Sawrkar was known as 'The Constitution of Mizoram'. The Constitution opens with the sentences which run as follows: The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of Mizoram and the Holy Bible is the foundation of her administration. The Constitution has a preamble, introducing with the key words: "We the people of Mizoram..."⁴²

The Constitution is very rigid in its nature, and has seven Articles, Article-I has section six, which deal with legislature, the power and function of parliament (Lower House), the power

and function of house representatives; power of the senate (Upper House). Article-II contains section two, which deal with the citizenship and duties of citizens; Article-III deals with election system under Mizoram Sawrkar; Article-IV deals with impeachment connected with the leaders under Mizoram Sawrkar; Article-V deals with executive functionaries of Mizoram Sawrkar, power and function of the president and the vice-president; Article-VI deals with judiciary and administration of justice, and power of National Retirement Court. Article-VII also deals with Amendment of the Constitution. The Constitution can be amended by either:

- i) Two-third votes of the Parliament Members;
- ii) Three-fifth votes of a special Electoral College convened for the purpose;
- iii) Majority votes in a Nation-wide Referendum.⁴³

Structural Organs of the Mizoram Sawrkar

The Mizoram Sawrkar had National Legislature consisting two houses such as the Senate (Upper Chamber) and the House of Representatives (Lower Chamber). No members to these Houses were elected by franchise. They were selected by the leaders through convention. All members of the two Houses were selected by the Executive Committee of the MNF party on the recommendations of the president and his secretaries, and those selected members were generally the Block Members, and also popular local leaders or members of the party.⁴⁴ Senators were mostly members who had educational background and good experience. The House Representatives were mostly the President of MNF Block, and they known as Member of Parliament (MP).⁴⁵ The main functional organs of the Mizoram Sawrkar are Executive, Legislature and Judiciary.

EXECUTIVE:

The President was the executive head of MNF government Mizoram Sawrkar with full powers like the President of USA for tenure of five years. The Vice-President was one of the cabinet ministers of government next to the President and he should act as the President in the absence of the President. The President was assisted by eight secretaries or cabinet ministers such as- i) Finance Secretary, ii) Foreign Secretary, iii) Foreign Secretary, iv) Defence Secretary, v) Home Secretary, vi) Supply & Transport Secretary, vii) Information Secretary and viii) Welfare Secretary. There was a Commander-in-chief, who was the head of military administration and administered the whole organization and functions of the Mizo National Army (MNA), the Mizo National Volunteer (MNV). There was also a Chief Justice who was entrusted to look after administration of justice. He was the head of judicial administration in the Mizo District.⁴⁶

LEGISLATIVE:

Mizoram Sawrkar has a bicameral legislature and the followings are the functionaries of the legislature.⁴⁷

1. Senate President: Vice President of Mizoram Sawrkar was elected as Senate President.

2. Pro-Tempore President: Rev. Sakhawliana was elected as Pro-Tempore President.

Senators (Upper Chamber):

1. Malsawma Colney
2. Bualhranga
3. R.Thangmawia
4. Lalhmuaka
5. Lalchhawna
6. Ngunhulha
7. Lallianzuala Sailo

8. Dr. Saikunga
9. Tlangchhuaka
10. Lalkhawlung
11. Vanmawia
12. Col. Ralliantawna
13. K. Rochhinga

**House of Representative/Member of Parliament
(Lower Chamber)**

Speaker : Chuailokunga
Deputy Speaker : V.L. Nghaka

Members:

1. James Dokhuma
2. S.M.Vanhnuaitanga
3. Zoramthanga
4. Thangbuaia
5. Hnuna
6. Thangkhuma
7. Vala
8. Hlunsanga
9. Thangluta
10. Thangzika
11. Rosanga.
12. Vanhela
13. Brig.Gen.H.Dangliana.
14. Lalnuntluanga
15. Khawlremthanga
16. Chhonzawma
17. Lamputa
18. Lalchunga
19. Thanghuaia
20. Vansiama
21. Thatthiauva
22. Lalchhawna
23. Lalluta

- 24. K.Thangphunga
- 25. Rothuama
- 26. Rolala
- 27. Thangkolet Kipgon

JUDICIARY:

Judiciary was another organ of the Mizoram Sawrkar. Chief Justice was appointed to look after administration of justice under the Mizoram Sawrkar. National Refinement Court was established to look after the administration of court proceedings, jails and judiciaries. Mizoram Sawrkar also set up a Jail Department and issued 'Jail Manual 1966'.⁴⁸ John F. Manliana was appointed as Chief Justice. He was succeeded by senator Lalhmuaka. Chief justice was also helped by two justices S. M. Vahnuaithanga and Major General J. Sawmvela. Ngurliana Sailo was also appointed as Judicial Secretary to assist the Chief Justice and other officers.⁴⁹

The Political and Civil administration of Mizoram Sawrkar was completely placed under the Home Secretary who was also designated as Home Minister; he was one of the executive functionaries of the Mizoram Sawrkar. Under the Home Minister, the whole area of Mizoram was divided into four Division or Area (Bung) to facilitate the direction of Civil Administration. Each Divisional area Bung was looked after by many subordinate officials who were directly responsible to Home Secretary.⁵⁰

Divisional Area (Bung)	Chief Commissioner
1. Eastern Area (Khawchhak)	Ngurchhina
2. Southern Area (Chhim)	K.Hrangchhinga
3. Northern Area (Hmar)	Senator Tlangchhuaka
4. Western Area (Khawthlang)	V. L. Zaithanmawia

Mizoram Sawrkar established a military wing, Mizo National Army (MNA) known as Hnam Sipai. For better and smooth functioning of the MNA, the whole are of Mizoram was divided

into 3 commanding areas, each of them was placed under a commander such as Eastern Command, Western Command and Southern Command. All commanders of the Command Area were placed under Chief of Army Staff.⁵¹

Foreign Ministry looked after the foreign policies of Mizoram Sawrkar, and appointed ambassadors and representatives. Lalthangliana Phillip and J.H. Rothuama were appointed as ambassadors of Mizoram Sawrkar to Pakistan and China; Dr.Saikunga and other officials were also appointed as ambassadors of Mizoram Sawrkar to Burma (Myanmar) and other nations.⁵² The leaders of the MNF knew that they would not be able to achieve Mizo independence without bloodshed and foreign assistance. They, therefore, sent representatives to the countries like Pakistan, USA, China, etc for assistance.⁵³

Appointments and promotions under the Mizoram Sawrkar, and the MNF workers were usually approved in the Senate Meeting. Various Acts like the Defence Act, The Trade Act, The Forest Act, etc were also passed. Defence of Mizoram Rules 1966, Mizo Army Rules (Act) 1966, and MNA Decorations and Medals were also produced and issued to the towns and villages in the Mizo District by MNF government Mizoram Sawrkar.⁵⁴ The Mizoram Sawrkar used to summon the Parliament Session to discuss the important business of MNF party. The first Parliament Session was held at Sialsir, December 1966 and the more important subjects such as- Rules and Regulations of Mizoram Government Employees, 1966 and Mizoram Constitution were passed after a long deliberation. The more remarkable Sessions were the Lungpho Parliament Session, September, 1967; Ruallung HPC meeting 1967; Khuangthing HPC meeting 1968, etc.⁵⁵

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MIZO NATIONALITY QUESTION
Impact of Political Movements in Mizoram on Mizo
Nation

Dr. Paul B. Chonzik

Broadly speaking there are two conceptions in which the term 'Mizo' has been widely used. The first is the narrow conception, according to which the term 'Mizo' is conceived as including only the various tribes living within the confines of the state of Mizoram or at best those who speak Mizo/Duhlian (Lusei/Lushai) dialect as their first language, which is the most common language spoken in Mizoram, including those living outside Mizoram. The second is the broad conception which included in the term 'Mizo' all cognate tribes whom the British colonial writers had variously identified as 'Chin', 'Kuki' and 'Lushai' and all the tribes and sub-tribes under them. These tribes and sub-tribes are scattered over a more or less compact geographical area but politically and administratively divided over the states of Mizoram, Manipur, Assam, Tripura, trans-border Myanmar (earlier called Burma)* and Bangladesh. For the purpose of the present study, the term 'Mizo' is used in its broad conception, i.e. the various tribes belonging to the Chin-Kuki-Mizo groups such as Mizo, Kuki, Chin, Paite, Gangte,

Vaiphei, Jou (Zou), Thadou, Hmar, Pawi (Lai), Lakher (Mara), Ralte, Bawm, Ranglong, Sakechep, Molsom, Kom, Anal, Chothe, Monsang, Darlong, Hrangkhoh, Hallam, etc.

In recent years the term 'Mizo' has gained wide acceptance as a common nomenclature among the various cognate tribes although many of them chose to call themselves 'Chin' and 'Kuki' and others 'Zo' or 'Zomi'. And the present study accepts this group of people called 'Mizo' as a nation or nationality. Mizo nation, as such, had undergone processes of ethnic division and integration at different points of time in history. And it is still undergoing changes or transformation. In this paper, it is argued that political movements play a big role in shaping the Mizo nation.

MIZO AS A NATION

It is imperative to try to justify Mizo as a nation. Anthony D. Smith discussed two models of nation – namely the western model or civic model of nation and the eastern or ethnic model of nation. According to western model or civic model a nation is equated with a political entity or a political-territorial unit like India, Pakistan, France, Brazil, United States of America, etc. On the other hand, according to the eastern model or ethnic model, the term nation is used to refer to a specific type of human collectivity, not necessarily living within a specified territory of a state. Western or civic conception of nation began from the formation of territorial nation-states in the course of history over the 17th to the 19th centuries. This kind of conception has exerted a powerful influence on the conception of 'nation' so that even after the non-western communities diverged from their norms, they kept thinking of 'nation' in the western model.

The eastern or ethnic conception of nation follows the etymological origin of the word nation, according to which the term nation comes from the Latin past participle of the verb *nasci*, meaning to be born, and hence the Latin noun, *nationem*, connoting breed or race or ethnic origin. In this conception, the members of nation boasts of pedigrees and genealogies to back up their claims often tracked down by native intellectuals. In this way the nation can trace its roots to a common ancestry and that therefore its members are brothers and sisters, or at least cousins differentiated by family ties from outsiders. Thus, a state could be a multi-nation state having in its membership people of different 'nations', or as Barry Buzan points out, a nation may spread over more than one state and a state may include several nations. Nation as generally perceived in North East India follows the ethnic model of nation.

Anthony D. Smith has given six main attributes of ethnic community or *ethnie* (French) which may be ascribed as 'nation' in the ethnic model. He said, "the more a given population possesses or shares these attributes (and the more of these attributes that it possesses or shares), the more closely does it approximates the ideal type of an ethnic community or *ethnie*. These attributes are as follows:

1. a collective proper name
2. a myth of common ancestry
3. a shared historical memories
4. one or more differentiating elements of common culture
5. and association with a specific 'homeland'

6. a sense of solidarity for significant sectors of the population.

Among the Mizo people differences are there in the collective proper names they have chosen to identify, all because of the ethnogenic divergence they had gone through, whereby some chose the name given by others (exoethnonym), such as Chin, Kuki while some chose to use the name they gave to themselves (endoethnonym), Mizo or Zomi. Except for this, the different tribes forming Mizo nation shares the other 5 attributes of nation although slight differences have crept in. For instance, different terms were used to refer to their original homeland such as 'Chhinlung', 'Sinlung', 'Khul', 'Khur', 'Khurpui', and so on.

On closer investigation, these different names for their homeland, from their descriptions, are the same (see Paul B. Chonzik, Nationality Question in North East India with Special Reference to Mizo, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Manipur University, 2007, pp. 33-34). Also names of ancestry and terms used in traditional practices differ slightly because slight differences in dialect have developed over the years, while ancestry referred to and traditional practices of the tribes are practically the same. Except for these they shared such historical memories such as their migration from Sinlung to Shan and on to Chin Hills, Lushai Hills. All these tribes have a story of Sura who got married to a Mishmi girl from Mishmiland (now in Aurnachal Pradesh). The Lusei speaking people call this famous character Chhura, while some called him Benglam or Penglam. The legendary stories associated with this famous character are all the same even though different names are all the same even though different names have been given. The various Mizo tribes also shared many common cultural practices. In short, Mizo, in the broad sense, qualifies as a nation or a nationality.

To clarify our stand further, views of few scholars on nation are briefly discussed as under:

To Ernest Renan, a nation is a soul, a spiritual principle, and said that, 'to have common glories in the past, a common will in the present; to have accomplished great things together, to wish to do so again, that is the essential condition of being a nation'. To him, therefore, 'the existence of a nation is an everyday plebiscite'. Thus, the choice or rather feeling of belongingness of the individuals or the corporate body (of individuals) made on the basis of rational thinking, the conviction developing from experiences, is central to being a nation. R. S. Peters also observed that national entity exist 'mainly in the minds of these who believe that they belong to it'. Here the conviction of every individual member is important to make up a nation. If one feels he belong to a particular nation, he belongs to it. On the other hand, Max Weber examined nation as a 'prestige community', endowed with a sense of cultural mission. Thus, he concluded that, 'a nation is a community of sentiment which would adequately manifest itself in a state of its own; hence, a nation is a community which normally tends to produce a state of its own'. In this criterion, an ethnic group with a political mission, to demand and fight for a state of its own, etc. would qualify to be a nation. This view is similar with a view expressed by some later scholars that a nation may be seen as 'an ethnic community politicized'.

From an anthropological perspective, Clifford Geertz stresses the desire to be recognized and strive for power for the group is essential for becoming a nation. Another interesting definition comes from Walker Connor, who defines nation as 'a self-aware ethnic group'. He clearly distinguishes an ethnic group from nation and says, "an ethnic group may be readily discerned by an anthropologist or other outside observer, but until the members are themselves aware of the group's uniqueness, it is

merely an ethnic group and not a nation". He further says that, "While an ethnic group may, therefore, be other-defined, the nation must be self-defined". According to him, the essence of nation is a 'psychological bond that joins a people and differentiates it, in the subconscious conviction of its members, from all other people in a most vital way'. Paul R. Brass, from his study of nationality formations in South Asia observed that ethnic groups first transformed into specific communities and then into nations under certain circumstances. Such circumstances may come under elite competition. It may also come under a critical relationship between the elites and the state. He is aware of the presence and importance of cultural differences, but argued that cultural forms, values, and practices of ethnic groups become political resources for elites in competition for political power and economic advantage. According to him, 'ethnic identity formation is a process created in the dynamics of elite competition within the boundaries determined by political and economic realities'.

The underlying current of all these views is that, first, 'nation' as conceived in ethnic model is different from nation-state and is rather human collectivity bounded together by certain cultural, linguistic and kinship bonds, often than not, having common economic and political interest. To be a successful nation, member of such human collectivity may be closely bound together by deeper understanding of this affinity; conviction from rational thinking that he/she belongs to that group. Thus the individual members' conviction, and sometimes, choice, is very decisive. This may explain why some members of Mizo nation chose to re-align their nationality and identified themselves as 'Naga' or 'Tripuri' or 'Manipuri', etc. while culturally closer to Mizo nation. There must have been some 'pull' factor from these 'other' nations or alternatively there must have been 'push' factor from 'Mizo' nation.

ETHNIC PROCESSES MIZO NATION HAD UNDERGONE

Mizo nation had undergone several processes of formation and transformation before they reach the present stage. And it is still undergoing changes. Some of those processes it had undergone may be discussed as follows:

Ethnogenic Divergence:

This is a process of ethnic division in which a community or communities detach themselves from a former single ethnic community to form a separate ethnic community. The former single ethnic community may be divided into two or more parts, each of them becoming separate ethnic groups. The Mizo people had been and are still undergoing the process of ethnic division or ethnogenic divergence which may for the sake of convenience be divided into three phases.

Ethnogenic Divergence during Pre-Colonial Phase:

The first phase saw the dispersion within the tribe without external forces. And this phase covered a period roughly between 1200 A.D. and 1826 A.D. By 1200 A.D. the Mizo people are believed to have moved out of Kabaw valley and began to disperse. Although one cannot be certain about the date 1200 A.D. as the date the Mizo people started moving out of Kabaw valley, they did move out from there and with significant historical impacts. Eventually they began to settle in different geographical pockets, each settlement comprising mainly of people of the same clan. Then, as time passed, clans developed into tribes while still maintaining family ties, and also preserving the predominant ethnic properties or attributes of the parent ethnic group though in a modified form. During this phase, forces such as clan-wise settlement & lack of communication,

the practice of chieftainship among the different clans, whereby the clan gave more allegiance towards their chief of the chieftaindom than to the wider Mizo nationality, inter-village and inter-clan feuds contributed to their ethnogenic divergence.

ETHNOGENIC INTRA-ETHNIC CONSOLIDATION DURING PRE-COLONIAL PHASE:

Intra-ethnic consolidation refers to the internal consolidation of large ethnic groups through the 'smoothing over' of local internal differences that exists between member-units which have lost their self-awareness but endowed with individual specific culture components and the 'evening out' of dialect differences and cultural everyday life distinctions as the general ethnic self-awareness is strengthened. Intra-ethnic consolidation may operate either consciously or unconsciously of the members concerned. Consciously when participating member-units chose to forget or discard their individual ethnic attributes in favor of the general enlarged ethnic group to which they have now been integrated because they gain than lose in doing so. It more often operate unconsciously because the participating member-units have lost their distinct ethnic self-awareness.

Within the Mizo nation Intra-ethnic consolidation occurred during pre-colonial period under the stronger chiefs such as Sailo chiefs as the stronger chiefs became bigger and were able to put under their sway many villages and clans. In such conditions dialect differences and slight cultural differences was effected and the Sailo chiefs were able to produce a more uniform language, religious tenets, and customary laws for a large section of the Mizo people. A case in point could be the Sailo chiefs who, in a bid to strengthen their force against the Pawi (Lai) menace, combined to form a village of 7000 households. They were largely responsible for promoting the Lusei dialect as the most popular of all the Mizo dialects. And this was to have a long term impact in the history of Mizo nationalism. One can also

speaking about the process of assimilation the Mizo nation had undergone during this period in which the smaller clans were absorbed into the realms of Mizo nationality.

Ethnogenic Divergence – British Phase (1826 – 1947):

Fragmentation of Mizo nation happened under British administration acting as an external force. This may be considered as an impact of the ‘divide and rule’ policy of the colonial rulers. When Mizo inhabited areas came under British rule one after another, they were very much conscious that their administrative divisions cut across the Mizo inhabited areas but they did little to integrate the areas. For example, regarding the transfer of Kabaw valley from Manipur to Burma per the 1834 treaty between the king of Burma and British representative Capt. Pamberton, Alexander Mackenzie, the chief commissioner of Burma commented as follows:

“..according to the boundary laid down by Captain Pemberton, contained in the Treaty of 1834, part of the Sootie tribes at present live in Manipur and part in Burmese or independent territory”

Carey and Tuck also observed:

“By the delimitation of the Manipur boundary How Chin Khup lost several villages which his forefathers had conquered and which up to that time had paid him a nominal tribute..., The border line between the Chin Hills and Manipur has carved the Thado tribe (Zomi tribe) into two...”

However, with the partition of administration of Burma from India in 1937, the line became the India-Burma boundary and remained so when India became independent in 1947. It can be said that the fragmentation of Mizo inhabited areas under several political and administrative units were largely effected during the colonial period. The reason can be both the British policy of ‘divide and rule’ and the fact that there was no attempt on the part of the Mizo people to unite and fight for integration as

common nationality at that point of time. This requires further investigation.

The Mizo people were fragmented also when India was partitioned and granted independence in 1947. Part of Mizo inhabited areas fell under East Pakistan which became Bangladesh in 1972, where Mizo inhabited areas of Chittagong Hill Tracts was included. As a result of all these, the Mizo people were found living in several administrative units – majority of them in the various North East Indian states and big numbers in Burma and a good number of them in Bangladesh. Writing about the consequences of partition S. K. Chaube observed,

“The loss of the Chittagong Hill Tract created for India a number of problems. The Kuki-Chin solidarity over the southern part of Hill Tipperah, the Chittagong Hill Tract and the Lushai hills was broken, and intensified the kind of ‘irredentist’ feeling that had been growing among the people since the separation of India and Burma in 1937. In the absence of a natural boundary between the Lushai and the Chittagong hills, the area developed into a paradise for smugglers and outlaws.”

In short, the region Mizo people inhabited had been fragmented into several political and administrative units divided by both state and international boundaries such as Mizoram, Manipur, Tripura and Assam, Bangladesh and Burma.

Effects of being under separate administrative units:

Effects of fragmentation of Mizo inhabited areas under different political and administrative units are many and some are very fundamental and adverse for the Mizo nation. First, center of attention and also loyalty shifted from the more dominant Mizo chiefs, who were likely to integrate the Mizo people under

them, to the ruling power in each administrative or political unit such as the Ministers and big officers of the states of Mizoram, Manipur, Tripura, Assam and of the sovereign nations like Pakistan, Burma, India, which were centers of power. Since political and administrative powers and influences of economic powers are in the hands of the men in authority in these units, it is only natural that attention and loyalty is drawn into these new centers of authority and no more to the chiefs and in that matter to the Mizo nationality. This shift of attention became stronger after the tribes became more politically conscious of their rights under the new administrative set up. In the process the gap between them widened further.

Secondly, linguistic differences developed further as languages of the state or nation influenced the languages or dialects of Mizo tribes living in them. For instance, the Mizo tribes in Bangladesh, Tripura and Cachar have more Bengali words incorporated into their dialects. The Mizo tribes in Manipur incorporated substantial Meitei words in their dialects. In the same way, the dialects of Mizo people living in Burma incorporated words from Burmese. This further strengthened the linguistic diversity of the Mizo tribes living in the different administrative and political and geographical units thereby enhancing linguistic cleavages among the various Mizo tribes.

Thirdly, international boundaries and, to a lesser extent, inter-state boundaries, in the long run became a dividing line separating Mizo tribes. Although political and administrative boundaries do not always divide the bond of ethnic or tribal communities, yet it tends to separate them, at least in the long run, as center of attention shift to the ruling authorities of each political and administrative unit. This could be the root cause of the birth of much criticized appellation 'Mizo – II' given to the Mizo people living outside the state of Mizoram, especially Mizo people from Manipur.

Thus, the British administrative division undermining the cultural or ethnic boundary of the Mizo people had serious and far reaching effects on Mizo nationality. The more serious impact of this political and administrative division of their country for the Mizo people was that the prospect of their re-unification was made more distant, especially after they were put under different state authorities and sovereign nations.

Ethnogenic Divergence under Independent India:

From the eve of Indian independence political awakening occurred among the Mizo people. The political awakening could be seen directed in two diverging ways. One directed towards ethnogenic interethnic consolidation and the other towards ethnogenic divergence. Ethnogenic interethnic consolidation is a process by which several linguistically and culturally kindred groups merge to form a new, enlarged ethnic nation with its own ethnic self-awareness. There were political organizations which strived for re-unification and integration of the Mizo tribes who were already dispersed in the different states of North East India and the sovereign countries of Burma and Bangladesh.

In the meantime, there were political organizations of individual tribes who asserted their distinct identity and demanded for self determination on narrow ethnic lines. Some of such political organizations may be listed: 1) Those with integration of Mizo tribes as their objectives included Mizo Union (MU), which was formed in April 6, 1946, United Mizo Freedom Organization (UMFO), formed in 1947 after breaking away from Mizo Union and they were in favour of joining Burma than India, Kuki National Assembly (KNA), formed in Oct. 24, 1946 demanding separate Kuki state; the term 'Kuki' in their conception included all cognate tribes otherwise included in Mizo, Khulmi National Union (KNU), formed in 1947 after breaking away from Kuki National Assembly with the same objectives as the former, Chin National Union (CNU), formed in

1965 with the objective of integrating Chin people from India and Burma under one administrative unit, 'Chin' being used as generic term inclusive of all ethnic tribes otherwise included in 'Mizo' or 'Kuki', Zomi National Congress (ZNC), formed in Jan. 21, 1974 propagating 'Zo' as the generic term inclusive of all tribes otherwise referred to as Mizo cognate tribes, and seeking integration of 'Zo' people; 2) Those formed on narrow ethnic lines included Pawi-Lakher Tribal Union (1948), Paite National Council (1949), Hmar National Congress (1954), Jou National Council (1954), Vaiphei People's Council (1958). The list is not exhaustive, but surely suggests that political consciousness among Mizo tribes were directed in two divergent directions and that no common ethnonym or common proper name for Mizo nation acceptable to all has been devised yet. This divergence on the question of common ethnonym may be regarded as one big hurdle to Mizo integration. (The point may be debatable!)

POLITICAL MOVEMENTS AFFECTING MIZO NATION

Impact of political movements for a Mizo nation started under the banner of Mizo Union and Mizo National Front. It is argued that Mizo tribes from inside and outside Lushai Hills were greatly unified by these movements, and Mizo nationalism in its proper sense appears to have been ignited during the early period of these two parties. Therefore, the two movements may be considered as national revivals after the processes of division they had gone through. The final outcome however was division again as discussed below.

Mizo Union

On April 9, 1946 the first political organization of Lushai Hills (now Mizoram) called Mizo Common People Union was formed in Aizawl, Mizoram which later on was rechristened as Mizo Union. The first conference of the Mizo Union was held

at Aizawl during April 25–26, 1946. The draft constitution of the new party was approved with a thumping majority. The conference, while agreeing on points which were to reduce the privileges of the chiefs and other privileged classes in the existing administration of Lushai Hills, also resolved that the party should demand for creation of separate District which should be enlarged by bringing under it all the contiguous areas of Manipur, Tripura, Chittagong Hill Tracts and the surrounding plains inhabited by the Mizo tribes. After this the party had a conference at Lakhipur (Hmarkhawlien), a big Hmar village in south Cachar, during November 21-23, 1946.

The Lakhipur conference reaffirmed the points agreed upon at the Aizawl conference on issues such as demanding for separate administrative unit for the contiguous areas in Lushai Hills, Cachar (including North Cachar Hills), Manipur, and Chittagong Hills Tracts. Accordingly, a memorandum was submitted to the Sub-Committee on the Tribal and Excluded Areas of North-East India (Assam) popularly known as Bordoloi Sub-Committee in 1947, in demand for the enlarged Mizo District, in which they also demanded the substitution of 'Mizo' for 'Lushai' for the name of the proposed district. Mizoram was then known as Lushai Hills, and the Mizo Union leaders were aware that 'Lushai' (or Lusei) was just one of the Mizo tribes. 'Mizo' then became the more popular term to refer to all the cognate tribes. Hence they wanted the proposed District to be called Mizo Hills District instead of Lushai Hills District. And the party's constitution, adopted on 15th October, 1947 spelt out as one of its objectives - to integrate all 'Mizo' tribes from within and outside Lushai Hills District, and to strive for a system of governance best suited for them. The Mizo Union soon set up branches in Manipur and Cachar, Assam.

Such integration propaganda of Mizo Union ignited the budding nationalist sentiment of not only people living in the then

Lushai Hills but also the adjoining areas. At that point of time many ethnic tribes of Mizo nation did not seem to think in terms of separate ethnic politics. Even other political organizations started separately by other cognate tribes such as Kuki National Assembly were drawn towards Mizo nationalism, especially during the ensuing years (as shall be seen). The Hmars in Manipur were particularly enthusiastic in the movement. They even launched a movement in Manipur under the banner of Mizo Union popularly known as “Hmar People’s Boycott Movement”, boycotting the first general election of Manipur after the state joined Indian Union. So many patriotic songs in praise of Mizo Union were composed. The Hmars in Manipur had joined the Mizo Union with the sole objective of merging the Hmar inhabited areas of south-west Manipur with the contiguous hill areas of Assam together with Lushai Hills to form Mizo Hills District.

Meanwhile, Premiere of the then shaky Manipur state, Priyo Brata Singh paid a visit to Hmar inhabited areas of Tipaimukh in early part of 1949. In his address to the public at Parbung, the premier mentioned that, while the Hmars had all his sympathy, he was not prepared to take up any measure that was likely to affect the territorial integrity of Manipur. In the best possible way he suggested the formation of Hmar Regional Council within the state of Manipur. True to their commitment for merger of their areas with Lushai Hills, the Hmars in Manipur rejected the premier’s offer of Hmar Regional Council in Manipur. Many Hmar leaders now considered that rejection as a political blunder. Lal Dena observed: “It can be said with the advantage of hindsight that the leadership of the movement really lacked political far-sightedness and in rejecting the offer, the Hmars paid too heavy a price and the movement ultimately ended achieving almost nothing”.

The above sentiment can be appreciated only when one examines how the political aspirations of the Mizo ethnic tribes from outside Lushai Hills were shattered when Mizo Union leaders accepted the creation of Lushai Hills District without incorporating in it the areas inhabited by Mizo tribes outside Lushai Hills. This was considered as 'betrayal' by the cognate Mizo tribes from outside Lushai Hills. Thus the Hmars and other Mizo tribes outside Lushai Hills who rallied behind MU began to assert themselves as distinct ethnic groups. The Lushai Hills District came into being in 1952. This was soon followed by the forming of several political organizations by Mizo ethnic tribes. The Hmar National Congress was formed (1954), Jou National Council (1954), Vaiphei People's Council (1958) were some of them. The Hmars began to demand separate Hmar Hills District. It coincided with the prospect of States reorganization and the new organization soon submitted a memorandum to the States Reorganization Commission in 1956 in which while claiming Hmar to be distinct ethnic group they demanded creation of autonomous 'Hmar Hills District' by cutting out and integrating Hmar inhabited areas of Manipur, Assam, Lushai Hills. It can therefore be said that, while Mizo Union movement ignited Mizo nationalism, the fact that it failed to achieve its political goal of integration of areas inhabited by Mizo cognate tribes resulted in cementing the ethnogenic divergence of the nation it had gone through over the years.

Mizo National Front (MNF)

Like the Mizo Union, the Mizo National Front (MNF), with its expressed objective of creation of an independent sovereign Mizo nation which will be a 'Greater Mizoram', a union of all Mizo people in Burma, India and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) re-kindled the nationalist sentiment not only from within Mizoram, but also from outside Mizoram. R. Vanlawma, the founding Secretary of the party considered 'Greater Mizoram' to be the 'real' Mizoram since, if the British had not

divided the areas inhabited 'Mizo' tribes, the land Mizo people inhabited would have been a compact political unit; but divided as it was, it became only proper to talk of 'Greater Mizoram'. The movement saw another revival for Mizo nationalism. After the wave of Mizo nationalism under Mizo Union, between 1954 and 1961, Mizo nationalism was at its ebb; Mizo youths had been under the influence of other cultures and began to lose their pride and respect for Mizo culture. In other words Mizo nationalism was down sliding. The MNF movement rekindled Mizo nationalism.

At the time when MNF wave was building up strength in the then Lushai Hills District (now Mizoram), Mizo nationalism was also building up its strength from other quarters which complemented the MNF movement. One such was the formation of Manipur Mizo Integration Council (MMIC). In 1964, the Kuki National Assembly (KNA) and Manipur Mizo Integration Council (MMIC) passed a resolution to achieve a single administrative unit for the ethnic Mizo tribes. The resolution was signed by Holkhmang Haokip, General Secretary of KNA and Ex-MP and K.T. Lala (Hmar), Chairman of MMIC. Then on January 15 – 18, 1965, MMIC called a wide-based convention at Kawnpui, Churachandpur, Manipur. The following organizations were represented in the meeting: Paite National Council (PTC), Vaiphei National Organization (VNO), Simte National Organization (SNO), Zoumi National Organization (ZNO), Mizo Union (MU), Mizo National Front (MNF), Chin National Union (CNU), Mizo National Union (MNU), Hmar National Union (HNU), Kuki National Assembly (KNA), Gangte Tribal Union (GTU), Kom National Union (KNU) and Biete Convention Council (BCC). After three-day long deliberation, the meeting adopted a plan for direct action with the aim of securing a Mizoram State, comprising all the areas inhabited by members of the Mizo nation. Whether this state would be totally independent of India and neighbouring

countries was not spelt out. It was decided that a convention for this purpose would meet in April. In the words of Vumson, creation of a single administrative unit for the Kuki-Mizo people called 'Mizoram State' was the underpinning objective of the convention.

In such a condition when Mizo nationalism, inclusive of practically all cognate Mizo tribes, may be considered at its highest peak, the MNF propaganda of independent 'Greater Mizoram' was launched. As would be expected, it did captivate the minds of many youths from all Mizo inhabited areas. Many of them joined the rank of file of MNF volunteers.

The Memorandum MNF submitted to the Prime Minister of India on October 30, 1965, also was in tune with this nationalism. A demand was made for creation of a sovereign Mizo nation for all Mizo people from in and outside Mizoram. This kind of nationalist sentiment it provoked was clearly spelt out in the memorandum the party submitted which declared *inter alia*:

"The Mizos, from time immemorial lived in complete independence without foreign interference.... 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 it Lushai Hills (now Mizo District) and the rest of their land was parceled out of their lands to the adjoining people for the purpose of administrative convenience without obtaining their will or consent. Scattered as they were 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 distinct nation, created, moulded and nurtured by God and Nature.”

This demand included areas outside the then Lushai Hills to be incorporated in the sovereign independent nation to be called Mizoram. Then in 1986, those who were in control of the MNF party accepted statehood and accordingly an accord was signed to this effect. To the cognate Mizo tribes from outside Mizoram who also contributed and suffered severely from the MNF movement, the acceptance of statehood for the then existing Union territory of Mizoram instead of sovereign Greater Mizoram was a betrayal. Donn Morgan Kipgen considered it as ‘downright betrayal’. The Kukis who now became one of the groups seriously involved in nationalist movement for ‘Kuki’ people were most unhappy about it. (‘Kuki’ as discussed above is being conceived in its broad conception including all cognate tribes otherwise included in ‘Mizo’). Seikholen Thomsong wrote: “To the Kukis, the only explanation and conclusion was that the clever Mizos befriended them when they needed taxes, food, shelter, sanctuary and recruits but quickly forgot the bonds of friendship as soon as the fruits were ripe and well within their grasp”. He again in his “Betrayed or Fooled” (in an internet portal <http://Kukiforum.com>) reiterated,

“Talking about the promise of Greater Mizoram made by Laldenga and other Mizo leaders, we can only say we were betrayed if indeed it was true that the MNF had intentions of a greater Mizoram where the Kukis etc. were to be considered as equal citizens.... So it is doubtful that the MNF in fact had honest intentions of sharing all the goodies with the Kukis. Had their intentions been honest the HPC would not have been born. The Hmars who are closer to Mizos than us would not have cause/reason to fight for space in Mizoram. So this writer would argue that the Mizos never intended to include us in whatever was to be reaped

from the struggle. The concept of a greater Mizoram was indeed a very smart and cunning political move which was necessary if the Mizos (Lushais) at least had to have a state within the union of India. It was a tool in the hands of the wily Laldenga to use as a bargaining chip in the negotiations with the Govt. of India....”

One may argue that such expression of personal views of few Kuki intellectuals do not represent the sentiment of the whole Kuki people. This may be true to a great extent, but if such propaganda freely expressed in widely read Kuki internet forum will surely provoke the same sentiment not only among other Kuki people, but among other cognate Mizo ethnic tribes. The bottom line therefore is that while MNF movement had raised the Mizo nationalism to great height, its failure to achieve the expressed goal of integrating Mizo people and areas inhabited by them only contributed towards furthering the process of ethnogenic divergence in the Mizo nation.

It may therefore be said that while Mizo Union movement and Mizo National Front movement represents national revival, their failure to achieve their goals in uniting the Mizo inhabited areas under one administrative unit resulted in concretizing Mizo Ethnogenic Divergence. They in turn resulted in the ‘revival’ of ‘Hmar nation’, ‘Kuki nation’, and so on. In other words the feeling of belongingness of some cognate Mizo tribes to Mizo nation was shaken if not altogether lost. It remains a big question what Mizo nation would be like if Mizo Union or Mizo National Front movements had been able to integrate the Mizo inhabited areas under one administrative unit. Like Paul R. Brass said, elites in competition may still form smaller nationalities within Mizo nation using slight dialect and cultural differences as political tool. This is a question one can only imagine.

Post Script: Mizo nation is still transforming. Strong unification or re-unification movement is underway. The Zo Re-Unification Organization (ZORO) movement, the steps taken by Mizo Zirlai Pawl in affiliating students' organization of member-ethnic tribes and the effects nationalist writings of Mizo politicians and scholars and the mesmerizing songs with Mizo national integration theme are slowly taking roots in the minds of younger generation. And what Mizo nation will be like is yet to be seen! Only time will tell.

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A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE MNF MOVEMENTS IN TRIPURA

Benjamin Ralte

The formation of Mizo National Front in October 1961 was not limited to the hilly state of Mizoram alone. Within a few years of its inception, its activities were felt even in the neighbouring state of Tripura, the erstwhile Hill Tipperah. Thus soon after the MNF declared independence simultaneously the Indian Army made their appearance in the Mizo inhabited area of Jampui Hill in North Tripura. Although in the initial years there were hardly any volunteers from the area. However, the Indian Army assumed that the Jampui Mizos might have a close connection with the MNF of Mizoram and leaders of several villages were interrogated and questioned. The Army further imposed Coolies on the villagers and many youth were engaged as porters in the operations. As the coolies sometimes had to work on Sunday some villages sheltered five to ten Bru household in their village who would provide coolies on their behalves. Some of these families still continue to stay in Mizo villages even today.

In the meantime, the MNF volunteers who regarded the hills as their area of operation began to make a forced donation to the extent of one percent of salary from government employees. Those who lived on jhum and orange cultivation are in no way exempted from paying this donation. The villagers on their part unwillingly contributed the donation out of fear. Besides the volunteers collected from the shopkeepers in the form of cigarettes, biscuits, and whatever they find suitable.

Towards the close of 1967, leaders of the MNF volunteers and Member of Parliament summoned a conference of leaders of several villages of Jampui Hill at Mr Lalduha's House at Vangmun and strongly urged the villagers to join their party and form units in their respective villages. The Jampui Mizos however did not comply to their demands since they believe that the MNF demand was not appropriate for their hill area. Moreover, they were of the conviction that the MNF would never set up a consistent government to rely on.

Surprisingly, the Government of India seeing little activities and resistance from the MNF in the hill areas began to be more lenient towards the hill people and withdrew troops. Only a few men from Provincial Army Constabulary (PAC) and about ten policemen were stationed at the northern edge of Vangmun village. At the same time, the only Government office includes educational institution, forest office – beat officer office and range office – PWD Inspection Bungalow. The total strength of PAC includes seven men with one wireless operator.

It was under such condition that on 17 November 1967 the MNF volunteer from Mizoram crossed Langkaih (Longai) river from Lungthirek and carried out a surprise attack on the PAC station at the northern edge of the village. Two local youth Zathangkima and his brother Vanlalmalsawma enroute to the

village were caught in the encounter. It was only after they reveal their identity saying 'we are Mizo' that they were directed to flee towards the jungle alongwith the wireless operator. The matter soon reached the Government of India and as much has been anticipated they lost no time in sending armies to flush out the MNF operatives in the hills. The army came through the paddy field of Vanghmun, routing everything that stand in their way. The army presumed that the local people must have a close connection with the volunteers. They therefore decided to burn down the whole village. They arrested Mr Zawngtea, Pradhan of Vanghmun, Panchayat member Mr Rosanga, Mr Hnehliana and a few men from Lungthirek and were sent to district jail at Dharmanagar. The army also captured some volunteers from the hills who had recently joined the MNF and were sent to quarter guard at Agartala.

In the meantime, the Government of India was made to believe that the local people has no hand in the late attack since two local youth were also caught in the encounter and that the wireless operator was spared because of them. After a careful analysis of the situation the Government decided to cancel the earlier proposal of burning village. However their attitudes towards the hill people began to change and the whole of Jampui Hill which was earlier declared as Disturbed Area was confirmed. It was also decided that the villages should be grouped as had been carried out in Mizoram. This was however not carried out.

In December 1967, U N Sharma, the then Chief Commissioner, came to Jampui to look into the matter. This visit resulted in the release of the village leaders and volunteers who were jailed in Dharmanagar and Agartala respectively before the ensuing Christmas. Unfortunately two of the volunteers Thanchhuma of Bangla Zion and Sawithanga of Tlangsang died at Kanchanpur hospital, 30 kilometers from Jampui. The death of these two volunteers was attributed to malnutrition while at Agartala. The visit of the Chief Commissioner was in a way

beneficial for the hill people and may be regarded as compensation of the atrocities inflicted by the army upon the local people. The construction of roads which was earlier kept in the hands of Public Works Department was given to the local contractors through negotiation. More than thirty kilometers of jeepable roads were given to Mizo contractors under this agreement.

The frequent visit of Jampui hills by MNF volunteers from Mizoram made the Government of India more suspicious about the state of affairs. The Government, thereupon, made a more stringent security measures. The original site of security post was inadequate from strategic point of view. Accordingly it was shifted to a hillock south of the village of Vanghmun and continues to serve as permanent station till date. The number of security personnel was raised and it was placed under the command of Brigadier who was in charge of the entire operational area. At Sabual about 15 kilometers from Vanghmun and a few kilometers from Mizoram border another post was set up. It was reported that security personnel of this station were not on good terms with the local people. They even raped a lady inside a church building. In spite of the new security arrangements the MNF volunteers continued collection of donations from the local people. ~~Some of them were fortunate enough in getting away unmarked while others were not.~~ At Behliangchhip and Tlangsang some MNF volunteers were killed while collecting donation.

Meanwhile, in Mizoram several political developments was taking place. When Meghalaya was granted the status of 'autonomous state' within Assam, in 1970 the Mizos renewed their demands for separate state. Ultimately united efforts, continuous struggles and great sacrifices rendered by the Mizos, the Government of India in 1971 agreed for political settlement and came out with a proposal to constitute Mizo Hills District

into Union Territory. The Government of India enacted North Eastern (Areas) Reorganisation Act 1971 by amending the Indian Constitution (Twenty Seven Amendment) under which Mizoram was formed into the Union Territory with thirty three Assembly seats (thirty elected and three nominated). The Union Territory was formally inaugurated by Prime Minister of India, Mrs Indira Gandhi on 21st January 1972 and ceased to be part of Assam. Mizoram was given two seats in Parliament –one to be elected in the Lok Sabha and the other to be nominated in the Rajya Sabha. The High Court of Assam was further redesignated as Gauhati High Court with Jurisdiction over all the five states and two Union Territories in north eastern region. S.J. Das was appointed Chief Commissioner. As desired by the people of Mizoram S.P.Mukherjee was appointed as the first Lieutenant Governor of Mizoram who assumed charge on 29th April 1972.

The first election to the Mizoram Legislative Assembly took place in April 1972 and the Assembly was constituted on 29th April 1972. Of the 27 elected MLAs, 21 belonged to the Mizo Union, 6 from Congress and three were independents. The first sitting of the Legislature was held on 10th May 1972. Soon following the installation of the UT Government hostilities began to spurt in and around the towns, particularly Aizawl and Lunglei by the MNF outfits. On 28th February 1973, the MNF activist blew up a part of Aizawl power station. There were killings and widespread looting of cash from Government treasuries and rice from government godowns. Such disturbances compelled the authorities to reimposed night curfews and on March 1973 Mizoram was declared a disturbed area. Meanwhile, both the Mizo Union and the Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) under the leadership of Lalthanhawla felt that there would be advantage in merger of the two parties. Accordingly, on 24th January 1974 the Mizo Union merged with the Congress as approved by Prime Minister and Central Congress leadership and Ch. Chhunga continued as Chief Minister. The

MPCC was dissolved and an ad hoc Congress Committee was appointed with Lalthanhawla as the President.

There were two brigades of the MNF operating – Lion and Dagger, the former commanded by Col. Zamana and the latter by Col. Vanthanga. From time to time, the MNF was issuing quit notices to non-Mizos residing in Mizoram. The situation in Mizoram was very unstable and life was becoming insecure not only for the non-Mizos but also a large number of loyal Mizos. The most sensational incident occurred on 13 January 1975 when G.S. Arya, Inspector General of Police; L.B. Sewa Deputy Inspector General of Police, and K Panchapakshan, Superintendent of Police were killed while in a conference in IGs office. Immediately curfew was imposed in Aizawl. The Union Home Minister Brahmananda Reddy at once rushed to Aizawl. Further violence continued. On 6th August 1975, the MNF and its allied organisations were again declared illegal, the previous notifications having been expired. By the close of 1975 many rebels were arrested, a few of them surrendered while some were killed in encounter and a large number of arms and ammunitions were seized.

A peace advisory body was formed with Rev. Zairema as Chairman and Lalthanhawla as Secretary. Members were drawn from various denominations of the church, students and political parties. It started a non official dialogue with the MNF. The Problem, however, continued, not as in breach of law and order but more in a bulk of people continuing to stay away from the mainstream of national life. On 29th August 1975 Laldenga wrote to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi expressing his desire to come to a settlement with the Government of India, which would ensure religious and cultural safeguards for the Mizos. In February 1976, Laldenga signed an agreement by which he agreed to – i) abjure violence, ii) accepted Mizoram as an integral part of India, iii) Seek a solution to the Mizoram

problem within the constitution of India, and iv) hand over all MNF arms to the Central Government, after collection in a camp within a month. The MNF leaders who were in Arakan Hills were brought to Calcutta to ratify this agreement. The MNF activists were somewhat confused and they did not come up to hand over their arms. Hence there was no progress in implementation of the agreement.

In January 1977, general elections were announced in the country. The Janata Party came to power and the new Prime Minister Morarji Desai wanted Laldenga to honour his commitment of 1976 for surrender of the MNF with their arms. Since Laldenga could not implement his promise, the Home Ministry felt that he should hand over authority to the MNF National Council who would then deal directly with the Government of India. Accordingly, on May 1977, Laldenga handed over his authority to the MNF National Council.

The breakdown of talks with Laldenga was followed by a persistent demand for elections to be held in Mizoram. Ch. Chhunga resigned in May 1977 and Presidents rule followed in the territory. On 17th May 1978 second elections to Mizoram Assembly took place and People's Conference (PC) secured comfortable majority. On 2nd June 1978 Brig. Thenphunga Sailo was sworn in as Chief Minister ending President's Rule in the territory. Soon after swearing in, he addressed a public meeting that return of popular government signalled in a new era of peace which his ministry would wholeheartedly try to resolve. However, due to the development of anti-MNF attitude within the party resulting in the division and dissension within the party caused Brig Sailos' government to collapse. Mizoram was again brought under President's Rule on 11th November 1978. Fresh elections were held in April 1979 in which Brig Sailo's People's Conference again emerged as the ruling party by winning 18 out of 30 seats. It was then that the MNF underground served

notice on all non-Mizos to 'quit Mizoram' by July 1st, 1979. The early parts of July saw several fresh incidents in the hills and ultimately on 8 July 1979 MNF was again declared an outlaw organization. The Centre, however, resumed peace talks soon after Mrs Indira Gandhi returned to power in 1980. Zail Singh, the Home Minister, announced another accord on July 30 1980 following which ceasefire was announced. Nonetheless, Brig T Sailo's People's Conference hostile relations with the MNF resulted in deadlock, and the talks soon broke down again in 1982.

In 1984 Election to the fourth Mizoram Assembly was held. The People's Conference lost its popularity and the Congress led by Lalthanhawla emerged as the ruling party. On 5th May 1985 a four member Mizoram Congress (I) Ministry with Lalthanhawla as Chief Minister was sworn in. This being the first time Congress (I) came to power in Mizoram. The Congress was able to gain majority due to the better advantage it had in bringing about or the promise of bringing about peaceful settlement over all the other political parties. Steps were taken for resumption of talks and on October 2nd, 1984 Laldenga was again summoned to resume talks. He was scheduled to meet the Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi on 31st October, 1984 but her assassination on the fateful day prevented the meeting. Talks were resumed only after five months.

The assumption of power by Rajiv Gandhi following his mother's death signalled the beginning of a new era in Indian politics. Laldenga met the Prime Minister on 15th February 1985. Some contentious issues, which could not be resolved, during previous talks referred to him for his advice. All trends indicated that neither the Centre nor the MNF would pass up the opportunity that has now presented itself to have a full, lenient and flexible state. New Delhi felt that Mizo problem had been dragging on for the long a time, while the MNF was convinced

that bidding farewell to arms to live as respectable Indian Citizens was the only ways of achieving peace and development.

Statehood was a prerequisite to the implementing of the accord signed between the MNF and the Union Government on 30th June 1986. The document was signed by Laldenga, on the behalf of MNF, and the Union Home Secretary RD Pradhan on behalf of the Central Government, Lalkhama Chief Secretary of Mizoram, on behalf of Mizoram Government.

The MNF volunteers came out of their hiding and surrendered arms to makeshift bamboo huts up for the purpose at Parva and Marpara. A total of 614 activists gave themselves up in less than two weeks in July. Large quantities of firearms including LMGs and rifles were received from them. While the MNF kept its part of the bargain, the Centre initiated efforts to raise the status of Mizoram to a full fledged State. A Constitution Amendment Bill and another to confer statehood on Mizoram were passed in the Lok Sabha on 5th August 1986.

The formalization of Mizoram State took place on 20th February, 1987. Chief Secretary Lalkhama read out the proclamation of statehood at a public meeting organised at Aizawl's Parade Ground. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi flew to Aizawl to inaugurate the new state. He said in Aizawl 'Verdict of the people must be respected. Poll in Mizoram was the most friendly and most gentlemanly contest perhaps anywhere in the country.' Laldenga was sworn in as the Chief Minister. Hiteshwar Saikia was appointed as Governor of Mizoram. With the assumption of power in Mizoram the MNF movements in Mizoram and Tripura also came to an end

Appended
Mizoram Accord, 1986

Memorandum of Settlement

Preamble

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

Toward 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) of the two conditions, namely, cessation of violence by MNF and to hold talks within the framework of the Constitution. A series of discussions were held with Shri Laldenga. Settlement on various issues reached during the course of talks is incorporated in the following paragraphs.

Restoration of Normalcy

1. With a view to restoring peace and normalcy in Mizoram, the MNF Party, in their part undertake within the agreed time-frame, to bring out all underground personnel of the MNF with their arms, ammunitions, and equipments, 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, ammunitions and equipments will be as worked out. The implementation of the foregoing will be under the supervision of the Central Government.

2. The MNF party will take immediate steps to amend its articles of Association so as to make them conform to the provision of Law.

3. The Central Government will take steps for the settlement and rehabilitation of underground after considering the scheme proposed in this regard by the Government of Mizoram.

4. The MNF will not undertake to extend any support to the Tripura National Volunteer (TNV), Peoples' Liberation Army of Manipur (PLA) and any other such group by way of training, supply of arms or providing protection or in any other matters.

Legal Administrative and Other Steps

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 stipulation contained in this Memorandum of Settlement.

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.

3. The amendment aforesaid shall provide, among other things, for the following:

1. The territory of Mizoram shall consist of the territory specified in Section 6 of the North Eastern Areas (Reorganization) Act, 1971.

2. Notwithstanding anything contained in the Constitution, no act of Parliament in respect of (a) Religion 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.

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

\ 1. Soon after the Bill of Conferment of Statehood becomes law, and when the President is satisfied that normalcy has returned and that conditions are conducive to the holding of free and fair elections, elections to the Legislative Assembly will be initiated.

2. (a) The centre will transfer resource to the new Government keeping in view the change in Status from a Union Territory to a State and 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 State.

3. Border trade in local produced or grown agriculture commodities could be allowed under a scheme to be formulated by the Central Government, subject to international arrangement with neighbouring Countries.

4. The Innerline Regulation, as now in force in Mizoram, will not be amended or repealed without consulting the State Government.

Other Matters

5. 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.

6. Steps will be taken by the Government of Mizoram at the earliest to review and codify the existing customs, practices, law or other usages relating to the matters specified in Clauses (a) to (b) 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.

7. The question of Unification of Mizo inhabited areas of other States to form one administrative unit was raised by the MNF delegation. It was pointed out to them, on behalf of the Government of India, that Article 3 of the Constitution of India



describes the procedure in this regard but that the Government cannot make any commitment in this respect.

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

1. The Provisions of Part XVII of the Provision of the Constitution will apply and the State will be liberty to adopt any one or more language to be used for all or any of the official purposes of the State.

2. It is open to the State to move the establishment of the separate University in the State in accordance with the prescribed procedure.

3. In the light of the Prime Minister's Statement at the Joint Conference of the Chief Justices, Chief Minister 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.

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

1. It was noted that consequence on verification done by a joint team of officers, the Government of India had already made arrangement for payment of compensation in respect of damage to crop: building destroyed/damaged during the action in Mizoram, and rented charges of building and land occupied by security force. There may, however, be some claim which were referred and verified by the above team but is not yet settled expeditiously. Arrangement will also be made for payment of pending claim of rented charges or land/building occupied by the security forces.

Sd/-
LALDENGA
On behalf of
Mizo National Front

Sd/-

Sd/-

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INSURGENCY AND DRUG ABUSE IN NORTH EAST REGION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MIZORAM

Pulak Chandra Devnath

The North-eastern region of India comprises of eight states including Sikkim. The Northeast India, which is a home to diverse ethnic groups, has seen much violence and bloodshed over the past few decades. These include insurgencies in Assam, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura and Mizoram

and growth of militant groups in Meghalaya. In addition, there are conflicts and confrontations over land use and control as well as issues of language, identity formation, demographic change and minority and majority relations. In Mizoram, the Mizo National Front (MNF) led insurgency movement and it came to an end in 1986. The MNF transformed itself into a regional political party subsequent to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of India on June 30, 1986. It also formed the government, winning in the State Legislative Assembly elections, following the formal declaration of Mizoram as a State in 1987.

Since then, no militant outfit has disrupted the overall peaceful environment prevailing in the State. But in this peaceful state drug abuse is increasing day by day although it is officially ban. So, question is that where from Drugs come to Mizoram or North-east state? Who supply the Drugs to North East Region? Is it the activity of surrounding/neighbour country's insurgent group? Official figure say that there may be more than 200,000 injecting drug users in the NE region and this drug abuse leads not only to deaths but also in numerous health complications and delinquents young. The main concern of this paper is to study the availability of drugs in NE region and its impacts on Mizo society.

The total number of villages in Northeast region is 39,865 according to 2001 census and 71.23 percentages of villages have not reported any crime in the last 2 years/3 years. That is, out of 39,865 villages in Northeast, 28396 villages are crime-free. The findings are based on secondary data provided by police departments of the States. Generally, normal IPC crimes in Northeast are minimal, since the original inhabitants are mostly peace loving. Majority of the crimes in Northeast region are insurgency related. The total number of insurgents in the Northeast is less than 18,000 and weapon holding cadres, less

than 8,500. So, if greater political will and commitment are shown, the problem of insurgency in the NE can perhaps be resolved. Recognition of the insurgency problem as a political one in majority of the States is imperative to restore peace in the region. In this immensely diverse and complicated ethnicities, discord relating to local resources, land, forest etc. have been present for quite some time.

Inter-tribal flare-ups have been quite common- clashes between Kukis and Nagas, Maities and Pangans, Kukis and Zomis, Khasis and Garos, Bodos and Santhals etc., apart from these inter and intra-tribal conflicts, the Nagas launched a movement for self-determination which led insurgency spearheaded by two main formations – NSCN (I/M) and the NSCN (K). Largely owing to the Naga separatist movement, today, there are a plethora of ethnic insurgent formations demanding self-determination and autonomy. The NSCN (I/N) and the NSCN (K) apart, other major insurgent groups are: Peoples' Liberation Army (PLA), United National Liberation Front (UNLF), Peoples' Revolutionary Party Kangleipak (PREPAK), Kanglei Yaol Kanba Lup (KYKL) –All Meitis; Kuki National Army (KNA) Thadou Kuki; United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) – Assamese; National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) – Bodos; National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT); All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF) – Tripurri; Hmar Peoples' Conventions (HPC) – HMAR; Achik National Volunteers' Council (ANVC) – Garos etc. The turmoil in the Northeast is substantially linked to ethnic political aspirations, fierce pride in distinct cultural heritage and the vehemence to protect ethnic identities, territories and resources. This psychology is exacerbated by the geography of the region and the demographic currents: a tenuous land link with the rest of the country, international borders, illegal immigration, narcotic traffic, smuggling of weapons etc. A significant percentage of the

population is not with the insurgents, but in the face of organized violence the voice of these saner elements is weak.

The Mizo National Front (MNF) was the insurgency group in Mizoram which transformed itself into a regional political party in 1986. Since then, no militant outfit has disrupted the overall peaceful environment prevailing in the State. However, insurgency related incidents have continued to take place in Mizoram. For most of the incidents, some zealous organizations with bases on the peripheries of the State have been blamed. Out of 807 villages in Mizoram, 146 villages did not report any crime during last five years. The State has a homogeneous tribal population. Here drug abuse and unemployment are major problems. The Mizo Youth Association (MYA) is the real hope for solving problems of Drug Abuse. The State reported the highest conviction rate for IPC crimes: 96.6% (2030 out of 2101) as compared to National level rate 40%. Before the Mizos came into contact with western civilizations there was a regime regulated by long established culture and custom. The barter economy of the most primitive form left no scope for accumulating wealth. Agricultural products could not be preserved for a long time. The possession of great flock of herds was a mark of a person's worth.

The existence of the drug producing area of the Golden Triangle (Thailand, Laos and Myanmar) has contributed to the considerable increase in the consumption of opiates among South-East Asian populations and furthers a field, along all Asian drug trafficking routes. The inflow of various varieties of drugs has increased in the past two decades from the porous borders of Myanmar into the Northeast States, which share a 1,463 km long porous border with its eastern neighbour. The international border with Myanmar consists largely of hilly and often inaccessible terrain. From poppy fields in Northeast Myanmar, opium, as well as heroin, is transported by road through Bhamo,

Lashio and Mandalay to the Northeast region. The main drug trafficking routes lead from west Myanmar to the States of Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram. Thereafter, the drugs reach Dispur, enroute to Kolkata and the rest of the country. The region is said to be the shortest route from drugs from South-East Asia to the metros of the Asian sub-continent.

Poverty often forces young persons to carry the contraband across the borders. Interestingly, the Chinese version of Viagra has been found in many eastern villages of Mizoram. The region has also turned out as a springboard for smuggling 'non-conventional' psychotropic substances to countries like Bangladesh, Myanmar and even Thailand. Addicts are also resorting to cheap alternatives cough syrup and pain killer tablets to get a high. For example, in Mizoram the powder of Spasmo Proxyvon painkiller capsule is diluted in water and injected intravenously by the youth. Often thighs and underarms are used to points to inject the drug to avoid easy detection. Doctors are often forced to amputee the limbs of addicts who get septic by blatant use of unhygienic syringes and contaminated water. In the Northeast, trading in drugs is helping the militants to procure arms for their secessionist campaigns.

The earlier militants in the region used Chinese weapons. In the 1970s, China made a foreign policy decision to stop supporting revolutionary groups around the world, including the Northeast. Since then, insurgent groups in the region turned to similar groups in Myanmar. With the drug problem assumed alarming proportions. Rebels of that country obtain cover and protection for their drug production and trafficking activities in exchange for training insurgent groups from the Northeast region Manipur had three insurgent groups till the 1980s. This has now risen to 27. Manipur has the highest incidence of HIV AIDS in India because of the large number of intravenous drugs used. Drug trafficking and increased violence are inextricably linked.

The most significant recent shift in drug use pattern in the region is the move from smoking to injection. Transmission of HIV from injecting drug users to their spouses has been established and a study found that 45% of the wives of such users were also HIV positive. Official figures say that there may be more than 200,000 injecting drug users in the Northeast region. It is estimated that there could be up to 75,000 drug users in Manipur out of a total population of 2.39 million. A WHO report says that at least 50% of the injecting drug users in the State were infected with HIV. Only Mizoram and Nagaland, here have officially imposed prohibition. In Manipur, an insurgent group – United National Liberation Front (UNLF) has imposed the dry law. One view is that prohibition is leading to consumption of spurious liquor.

According to Mizoram Excise Department, since 1997, at least 40 persons (including 6 women) have died due to consumption of spurious liquor. It is estimated that at least 100 youth died every year in Mizoram due to drug abuse. The abuse has lead not only to deaths but also in numerous health complications, which prevented the victims from becoming good and useful citizens again. An alarming fact, which has emerged is that, Mizoram takes first place in tobacco consumption in the country. According to the report of National Family Health Survey, 60.7% of Mizo women and 60% of the men indulge in chewing tobacco and 59.4 smoke. This is against the national average of 28.3 and 29.4% respectively. It has also been reported that among the male cancer patients in the districts in India, Aizawl district is at the top, followed by Serchhip, Lunglei and Kolasib districts. These are closely followed by North Goa, Champhai and Mamit Districts. Among females too, Aizawl district has the highest incidence of cancer patients in the country, followed by Serchhip, Chandigarh and Kolasib districts.

The most unfortunate part of Northeast is that it has porous boundaries (98% international) and falls in the major international drug traffic route i.e. from Golden Triangle (Myanmar) to the Northeast, from there to rest of the country and the world. It is a well-known fact that drug cartel/mafia can go to any extent to keep the Northeast turbulent and volatile since a peaceful region would not serve their purpose. They are influencing some of the politicians, bureaucrats, and opinion makers like religious institutions to achieve their nefarious designs. Their influence on imposition and continuance of dry policies (prohibition) cannot be ruled out. It is proven fact that nowhere in the world has prohibition been successful.

Entertainment starved youth in Northeast, who cannot afford black-market liquor, are taking recourse to cheap drugs. Yet, for reasons unknown, prohibition is still enforced. The solution to the problem of illegal liquor trade/spurious liquor, cheap drugs (Proxyvon, etc.) lies in lifting prohibition immediately by taking the church into confidence. A State wide action plan for drug prevention and rehabilitation must be accorded high priority. A nodal office for drug abuse prevention needs to be set up. This office could coordinate the various policies on the subject of the Centre, State, international bodies and other key players in the field. There is a requirement of a special programme for adolescent drug abusers. At least one chapter should be included in the curriculum of secondary level to higher level about the effect of drug abuse. Colour poster, banner, seminar, workshop, tele film in local languages etc. and awareness programme should be organized in every village and town.

The NGOs like YMA, VDP, JAC etc. should take an important role and at the same time the Police force should also project a more public-friendly image to create a healthy and harmonious atmosphere for effective community policing.

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**ECONOMIC PROBLEMS CAUSED BY INSURGENCY
IN MIZORAM - A STUDY.**

Dr. Orestes Rosanga

The main focus of this paper is on the economic dislocation caused by the insurgency which broke out from 1966. Emphasis will be given on two major issues- first to highlight the economic depression caused during the revolutionary period; second, to reflect on some of the effects of grouping of villages by the Government ; third to focus on the resultant economic hardships experienced by the civilians. I have my own reservations on the limited developmental works of the government during the said period as well as the disruption of peace by the *insurgents*.

The Mizo independence movement started from 1966 till 1986 by die-hard revolutionaries who expressed their aspirations through armed struggles against the procrastinated doctrinaire politics and ideology of economic policy- deprivation caused by the government due to the severe famine which occurred during the *Mautam* or Bamboo flowering in the hills (1959-1960). This was the first major signal of an organized resistance against the administration and the government of India. After 1970, there were talks and delegations on both sides - the MNF and the Indian Government which lasted till 1986. From

the beginning, one of the factors leading to the MNF movement was the economic issues faced by the people of Mizoram. The economic plight of the people grew worse during the first decade of the *insurgency* period.

The Mizo National Front Party was established on 22 October 1961.* By 1965, in Aizawl Town hall (now called Vana Pa Hall), a General Assembly election was held where all the executive members (elected) were of the educated elites. By this time, the Mizo intelligentsia were convinced that self-determination was the only future in asserting economic grievances and Mizo nationalism. They therefore appealed for universal sentiments geared towards nationalism. Gradually, under the guiding force of the MNF, volunteers were recruited from different parts of Mizoram and outside the hills.

The changing trend of Mizo politics soon came to the notice of B.P. Chaliha, the then Chief Minister of Assam and the Central Government of India. Although initiatives were undertaken, the Government was a little late in solving the problems of the embroiled Mizo educated -youths. On March 1, 1966 the MNF declared the Mizo independence and this was followed by incessant battles and firing with the Government armed forces that were posted in the hills. The situation was likened to a 'blackboard jungle.'

During the first week of the armed revolution, the hills administration almost lay dormant due to the pressure of the MNF activities and the army operations. As a result of incessant operations undertaken by the Indian armies and due to the incapacity of the administration to tackle the problem of the revolution, Mizoram faced not only political crisis but severe economic dislocation which continued unabated. The economic backwardness of the hills continued till the 1980s.

It may be noted that there was a tripartite form of government in the hills. The administration of the hills which more or less became dormant at the start of the gunfire had somehow resumed functioning after a month. On the one hand, the MNF with an underground element enforced administration which controlled the civilians. On the other hand was the army who did not listen to or took heed of the then administration and who sometimes deliberately ignored the latter. In fact, either the army or the MNF has to be listened to or obeyed by the civilians or they had to face the consequences. Although, the then administration also tried its best to bring law and order at bay the MNF policy was to disrupt the functioning of the administration and also to paralyze the army operations. But the armies exerted pressure on the civilians with aggressive policies to deprive the MNF volunteers from their active movements. In the event of the affairs, the government and the armies started to take drastic actions against the pressure of the revolutionaries. Under such circumstances, the plight of the innocent civilians may have been very great and torturous too as it was then out of the question to lead a normal life. Empirical evidence shows that the reaction of the Indian government was very severe. It has been stated that 'It was no different with the World War II.'¹

The heinous crimes committed by both the armies and the MNF (from the official point of view) were talks of the contemporary age. Mizo writers have often made references about the MNF movement from experiences - by reflecting and emphasizing on the crimes committed and trauma experienced during the *insurgency* period. However, there are few writers who have mentioned the economic depression as a consequence of the MNF movement. Lalsawia an Ex CEM and Ex MP of Mizoram lamented that 'When we narrates such atrocious actions/activities (committed by the army) to the plains people (people of India who are living in the plain areas) they never believe us ; they think that we exaggerate our stories.'²

When the MNF movement started in 1966, within a span of time the Aizawl-Silchar road (the only connecting road for heavy vehicles then in existence) was packed with the Indian army wherein their armoured cars and other vehicles blocked supply vehicles intended for the civilians on several occasions. In this way the much awaited food supplies could not reach its destination on time. In fact, the first motor vehicle to enter Mizoram was on 10th September, 1942 only.³ By the time the food convoy reached its destination, the situation was such that starvation and deprivation became the day to day problems experienced in many places and villages of the hills. Lalsawia stated: 'The army changed the schedule of running motor vehicles from Silchar to Aizawl. They introduced a *Convoy System* where the civilian vehicles were made to run in between the army armoured car (for their safety perhaps). The army vehicles would stop whenever they like, even for long hours. As such it sometimes took more than two nights to travel between Silchar and Aizawl. Since this was the case there was always a problem of food supplies.'⁴ Ch. Saprawnga also wrote: 'They usually spent two weeks to one month on the road. To repair the bad condition of the roads was never taken into account by the army. Hence there was acute shortage of food supplies, and the civilians faced scarcity of food as a result of which famine was prone during those days.'⁵ If such was the condition of Aizawl, the condition of the villages may have been much worse or in other words, 'horrible.' It may thus be presumed that scarcity and not poverty was the major problem then, dreaded and feared by the Mizos.

The army was strict on the supply vehicles plying between Silchar and Aizawl because of the MNF who were trying to extract large quantities of food grains or taxes from the same. It was asserted that "The MNF stopped vehicles plying on the main highway and demanded at gun-point Rs. 500/- from

a Mizo driver, and Rs 1000/- from a non-Mizo. If the driver refuses to pay the amount so demanded, the MNF would either confiscate the vehicle driver's documents, log books and so on. This sort of harassment took place regularly on the main highway between Silchar, Aizawl, Lunglei and Lawngtlai.”⁶ Since this was the day today happenings, most of the drivers especially the non Mizos, were reluctant to travel to the hills. This therefore brought about scarcity of food crops that were supposed to reach the hills.

To add to the burden of the civilians, “The MNF would roam about in Government offices demanding from each government servant a certain percentage of their salary. Many of the government servants had to pay out of fear.”⁷ It was also alleged that the MNF leadership encouraged the Mizo Zirlai Pawl to indulge in the current politics, and follow the path of the MNF movement.⁸ Because of this influence many Mizo young men have neglected their studies which had in turn greatly affected the future economy of the household members. The hope of the parents to relieve themselves from their economic distresses or burdens were now in vain. Generally, most parents expect that their children would one day be working in the government offices and which would free them from economic bondage. But such expectation could not materialize due to the reasons cited. In fact, the *insurgency* indirectly effected on the households of the hills.

During the first decade of the *insurgency* period there were no proper roads with the exception of the said highway. The only available roads in the villages were palpable footpaths not even fit for plying small vehicles or light vehicles. Under such circumstances, it was easy and possible for the MNF to collect information about the movements of the security forces or the army. Taking advantage of this condition, the MNF often demanded from the households of the village volunteers, supply

of free labour and accommodation under pain of cruel reprisals.
⁹⁹ Suhas Chatterjee, *The Making of Mizoram, Role of Laldenga*, Vol. 2,

It was also alleged by the Mizoram Finance Minister that ‘The MNF were extorting money from businessmen and government employees as liberation fund even while Mr.Laldenga was negotiating the ceasefire in new Delhi.’¹⁰

The years 1966 and 1967 was the worse period in Mizoram history. Every day, the mortality rate rose due to scarcity, malnutrition and lack of health care facilities. It may be mentioned that access to hospitals and dispensaries was very difficult due to curfews enforced almost every day from dawn to dusk. No doctors could make their tours to visit the sick patients too. Added to this were the activities of the Army such as burning of villages who were suspected of harbouring the MNF volunteers. H.K. Bawihchhuaka, Chief Executive Member (CEM Mizo Hills District) in the District Council Assembly in December, 1967 stated that ‘Eighty five villages were burnt down’.¹¹ After this, many other villages were burnt by the army; this implies that about 120 villages were burnt to ashes by the army.¹² It is a fact that during those days, the army considered and treated all the Mizos as aliens. Lalsawia lamented, “Our houses and stores of grains were burnt down such severe annihilations have not been experienced anywhere else in the world.”¹³ It may be noted that a large number of households were homeless for many months without food and shelter.

It is stated that after every ambush of the army patrol by the MNF, the army in retaliation and in anger had the habit of burning of villages.¹⁴ Just for the sake of displaying their prowess, many villages were burnt to ashes while at the same time threatening and harassing the innocent- civilians This obviously brought about economic disparities and destitutions to many households of the villages. Since it would take many

months or years to rebuild their villages, the only recourse was to move to different directions.

Ch.Saprawnga, stated that the Government's (Indian Government) action was based on three objectives-to annihilate the Mizos or civilians; to bring about poverty in the hills or make the Mizos famine stricken people; and grouping of villages.¹⁵ In fact, to deprive the MNF from food supplies, the army devised all possible means to make the hills poor. This could be one of the reasons that had made the supply motor vehicles to move up the hills as slowly as possible.

The effect caused by the *insurgency* was more severe in the villages. Most of the dispensaries were closed down due to insufficient medical aids. As the households of the villages were unable to access or receive immediate medical treatment, they no doubt experienced many difficulties while attending to their *tlang lo* or *lo* or agricultural land. Hence one may suggest that the villagers suffered serious economic depressions and problems due to ill health. Dr. Lallawma stated that in Lunglei (the second capital town of Mizoram, in the south hills) the Christian Hospital in Serkawn became 'dilapidated and roughshod', during the insurgency. The hospital was reconstructed on 23rd march 1972 by Mr.M.K.Bezbaruah (IAS) the Sub-Divisional Officer,Lunglei.¹⁶ He further cited, 'Mizoram passed through troubled waters due to insurgency till the peace accord was signed in 1986.'¹⁷ In retaliation against the MNF *insurgents*, the government and the army, would paralyse the normal functioning of the villages, sometimes for days or months. 'The situation jeopardized medical work to a great extent financially, supply of medicines and movement of the workers.'¹⁸ Dr. Lallawma truly believed that, 'This was probably the darkest moment in the history of the Hospital as Mizoram itself passed through unsettled political life.'¹⁹ However, not all the army personnel were aggressive nor treated all Mizos as aliens. Dr.

Lalthanliana stated that 'Army doctors on the other hand were quite helpful.'²⁰

Labuaia who was then member of Rajya Sabha (the first Mizo Member of Parliament and a Mizo Union member) under the Union Territory of Mizoram from 1972-1978 wrote : 'Both the MNF and the Indian security forces had endangered the life of the people. Both regularly declared curfews on the civilians rendering the administration defunct in its normal routine. As the Central government saw the difficulties of running the administration of the hills, it decided to group villages.'²¹

The need for grouping of villages at certain point was thus strongly felt by the government. The Government of Mizoram remarked, 'The armed insurrections of the MNF hostiles brought to the sharp relief the sites to which the people of small number of houses constructed over the hill top, were spread over a very difficult terrain. From the mountain fastness the marauding hostiles could sneak into these villages and extort food supplies, money, free labour and accommodation. Under the oppression of the hostiles, the villagers were getting greatly confused and feeling difficult and helpless. It was very essential to build up their protection and security in chosen/selected places where deployment of a small force could ensure security of a large number of people.'²²

Further it was stated, 'Under the oppression of the hostiles, the villagers were getting confused and feeling difficult and helpless... the paramount need of accelerating the pace of economic development also called for constitution of large villages.'²³ Hence in consultation with the central government, a new scheme was worked out to solve the so called '*need of the people*' and to safeguard the '*interest of the public*'. The entire operation was completed within a period of nearly three years in the early part of 1970.²⁴ Approximately 68 percent of the total

population of the hills were shifted from their original villages and were settled in 105 Group Centers.²⁵

There were four types of Grouping Centers-

(i) Protected and Progressive villages -the total original population before shifting to grouping centers was 16,534, and after shifting the population increased to 30,241.

(ii) New Group Centers- the original population was 34,450 and after shifting to new grouping centers it was 54,465

(iii) Group Centers of the Extended Loop Area- the original population was 15,919 and after shifting it was 18,276

(iv) Voluntary Group Centers- the original population was 23,721 and after shifting to the then grouping centers it was 23,435.²⁶

The population of Mizoram in 1961 was 266,063 only- Male-132,465; Female-133,598. By 1971, the population of the hills was 332,390; Male-170,824; Female-161,599. ²⁷ The *insurgency* did not seem to bring about a decline to the male population of Mizoram. This however needs further investigation.

It may be argued that the process of grouping of villages to a particular center for *development* was not the real motive. On the other hand, it was the economic issue – for easy access of supplies to the hills during the disturbed hours or days. It was also a combination of the emergent needs of the administration and the army - to eliminate the revolutionary elements from the people and to prevent food supplies to reach the revolutionaries. Under the so called *grouping* Lalsawia stated, ‘we could not take (all)our food crops nor our clothes as there was restriction’ for taking our belongings.²⁸

It is to be noted that from the grouping centers, no households or persons were allowed to go out without the permission of the security forces as they were under constant surveillance. Food as promised by the government was not regularly supplied. Many children and women went without food for many days. The only economic resource that they could maintain were based on the cultivation of their *tlang lo* which too was restricted by the security guards. Even if they were permitted to go to their agricultural lands they were not even allowed to take their lunch packs. The army alleged that these packed lunches usually landed in the hands of the revolutionaries clandestinely. Apart from this, there was hardly sufficient time to cultivate their lands as they had to fulfill certain formalities – such as going through the check gate and showing their identity cards. R. Zamawia cited that grouping of villages was called by the freedom fighters as ‘Concentration camps.’²⁹ The elders and the children suffered most and many died too in the ‘concentration camp’. Rev.Chhangte Lal Hminga wrote: ‘Grouping was a humiliating and demoralizing experience. The death toll of the old people during the grouping years was high.’

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J.Sawilaia stated that in his village ,i.e Serchhhip one of the grouping centers,(now a District headquarter of Serchhip District in the heart of Mizoram) ‘the people lived by the ration of the government, and the quality of rice supplied was of the worse type, smelling and of a very poor quality, not even fit for pigs or chickens.’³¹ He further related , ‘ People were even deprived of going to their *tlang lo* for cultivation by the security forces. To go to the agricultural land, it is a custom till today to carry packed lunch, usually cooked rice. If the security forces saw anyone carrying such a pack it was assumed that they were for the MNF revolutionaries. Some security guards even ate up those lunch packs carried by the household members of the

grouping center.’³² He lamented that , ‘As the men were the main suspects, the female folks were the only ones left to cultivate the land. The young girls and the women were allowed to move freely in and outside the grouping centre. But certain incidents occurred wherein the young girls would be molested and teased by the security guards. On the other hand, as the household members could not cultivate their land regularly, the living condition of the Mizos were beset with poverty, therefore most females were forced to earn their living immorally.’³³

Since the men were the prime suspects of providing food to the insurgents there was strict vigilance on their movement. This had resulted most of the men to spent their time leisurely. They simply loitered in the villages doing simple household chores. In this way many Mizo young men were depressed and morally down and they became lazy. Their energy lay dormant such that they could no longer contribute or share work in the society. They had nothing to do except to bear the pressure of the security guards and to be forced to work for them or spent the day leisurely.

Although the administration clearly mentioned that emphasis would be given on agriculture and other development activities, it was not fully enforced nor materialized. At the initial stage , attempts were made by the administrative officers, however, due to interference from the Security Forces, the scheme of grouping failed. This was a significant departure from the initial scheme that was suggested by the administration.

The effects of Grouping brought about untold depressions and miseries to the people. The tribal ways of agriculture could no longer be pursued as the villagers were all the time under surveillance by the security forces and their movements restricted. There was serious social imbalance and changes since many Mizos felt that they were looked upon and treated as foreigners or an alien race different from the rest of the Indian people.

Moreover, at the initial stages there were problems in the task of shifting of the villages to grouping centers. There were scarcity of materials for the construction of many houses, added by shortage of food stuffs and water. Apart from this, the rugged hills and the small size of the steep hills could not hold a large village. Hence the traditional system of cultivation soon faced problems as to its continuity with the villagers now permanently settled in the grouping centers. The regular cultivation of the land in one place without shifting soon lost its fertility.

Grouping of villages had never been experienced by the Mizos. Even the then ruling party of the Mizo hills could not find any solution nor could it enforce proper laws and order. Perhaps, the administration of the hills was either directed or dictated by the army or the central government. There were serious sufferings especially amongst those who were not even involved in the armed struggles. Everywhere there were pressures both from the army and the MNF and there was no freedom of movement beyond those villages that were grouped or outside of it. Even the ungrouped villages also faced similar fates. Wherever they went or any movements made were carefully watched upon by the army with suspicion. The most hated element during those days was the army and their treatment of Mizos as 'foreigner' or 'alien' different from the rest of India.

Grouping of villages also had its effect and impact in the hills. It was more or less to urbanize the fissiparous villages scattered in the hills in the near future. This was because during the *insurgency*, the households of the grouping centers found themselves to be much safer than living in the remote villages. As long as they were in the grouped villages they could at least sustain their daily economy with the meager rations received from the government.

Although the people of Mizoram had suffered severely during the insurgency period, however, there were certain developmental works in the hills. Lalsawia eulogized that, 'Had there been no such movement we would not have Tuirial Airstrip/field.'³⁴ (now no longer in use) Helipads were also made in many places of the hills.³⁵ Transport developed for motor vehicles.³⁶ However, one may argue that these developments were purely based on necessity of the army not necessarily for the people of Mizoram as a whole.

Till today the main economic access has been the Cachar plains of Assam, India. This was the only source of commercial goods and food supplies since colonial times. Before the 1980s, the road condition was therefore beyond imagination. It was due to the MNF movement that some development was undertaken to construct and renovate the existing roads for transportation. This was also due to the assertion made in the Times of India, 1980 which stated that, 'The Mizos by and large ,suffer from an acute sense of isolation in their mountain fastness and there is no reason why more funds cannot be earmarked to develop communications within Mizoram as also between it and the rest of the country.'³⁷

It is also to be noted that before the emergence of the MNF movement, there were hardly any good buildings or houses in the hills even in Aizawl city. Almost all houses of the villages were constructed with thatched roof with bamboos and woods. There were hardly any concrete or cemented buildings even in the two towns - Lunglei and Aizawl. This could have been one of the reasons that when the Aizawl town was bombarded with incendiary fire by Jet Fighters, with the exception of few cemented buildings, almost all houses were gutted to ashes. Such experience was enough to change their style of architecture especially material used in constructing

houses. This had a further effect on the urbanization of Aizawl city especially in the construction of houses. The people now started to opt for concrete or cemented buildings than tin or thatched roof. It may be noted that since colonial times Aizawl has been the source of economic access for the villagers. Due to difficulties of food supplies most villagers now prefer to settle in the Aizawl town. Hence, Aizawl town has become gradually urbanized and a commercial center for the whole hills.

Apart from the economic effects, one may not ignore the negative aspects of the revolutionary period. Contemporary Mizos believed that all the disasters- miseries, hardships, poverties and scarcity of food crops, inhuman treatments, rapes & molestations, murder, burning of villages, diseases, tortures, deprivation from medical facilities during the *insurgency* period -were the faults of both the MNF and the army and the Government. But the extent to which these individual groups were responsible to such sufferings may no doubt be questioned and require further investigation for historical awareness.

Notes and references

* The MNF leader Mr. Laldenga first joined the Mizo Cultural Society formed in 1958 and after leaving his clerical job, he became the Secretary of the Society. When in 1959, there was a severe famine commonly known as the *Mautam Tam* or Bamboo Famine, the Society was converted into the Mizo National Famine Front. Consequently the Famine Front became popular and in 1961, it was converted into a political party under the name Mizo National Front.

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3 C.Rochhinga, *Aizawl A Motor Lut Hmasa Ber*, n.p., 1995, p. 7.

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9 Suhas Chatterjee, *The Making of Mizoram, Role of Laldenga*, Vol. 2, M.D. Publications, New Delhi, 1994, p. 216.

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12 Ibid.

13 Lalsawia, op.cit., p. 150.

14 Vanlalfima, *Ka Hmangaih Zoram Tan*, n.p. & n.d, p. 4

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24 Ibid. p. 167.

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26 Ibid. pp. 167-168.

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31 Interview, J.Sawilaia, Aged 73, ITI , Aizawl, dated 24th July, 2011.

\32 Ibid.

\33 Ibid.

34 Lalsawia,op.cit., p.153.

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36 Ibid.

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INSURGENCY AND ITS IMPACT ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN MIZORAM

Dr. Harendra Sinha

Mizoram(earlier known as Lushai Hills/Mizo Hills District) is situated on the North East of India located between 22.19'N Latitude 92.16' and 93.26' East Longitude covering a geographical area of 21,087 sq.km. It is covered by international borders on three sides, Myanmar in the East and South (404), and Bangladesh in the West (306). Mizoram is highly mountainous and has rugged topography with the high ranges trending north south direction. Barring few patches of flat land along the valleys and the area bordering the plains of Cachar and Bangladesh, the topography of Mizoram is composed of steep hills and deep gorges (Singh 1995:4-5). Rural development¹ in the State is not straightforward as it is in other plain states of India. Moreover, two decades of insurgency² severely affected the village economy and development of Mizoram as a whole. The most peaceful State in the North East India now,

Mizoram was harshly affected in its development due to eruption of underground Mizo National Front(MNF) in midnight of 28th February 1966 which lasted for two decades (Singh 1994:204). It has disrupted not only the normal administration but also the development efforts as a whole. The grouping of villages as counter insurgency measures further aggravated the socio-economic scenario of Mizoram.

Rural Development before Independence in Mizoram.

Before Independence, in Lushai Hills, the means of livelihood was largely through agriculture. Rural development was primarily meant for development of agriculture. Jhum cultivation (shifting cultivation) was the main occupation of the people due to absence of flat land, rugged mountainous terrains. No systemic effort was made for the development of agriculture although a focus on agricultural development was started when the British missionaries encouraged agricultural experiments in different kind of cash crops and cereals, potato, cultivation, rubber cultivation and terraced cultivation was experimented (Das 2004:35). The British administration felt that until the Lushai abandon their migratory habits little improvement could be hoped for. The Administrative Report of 1895-96 recounts: owing to the improvidence of the Lushai as a result of their migratory habits, and the impossibility of carrying about with them large stock of grain there is never a surplus share of rice in any village, and the failure of annual harvest breaks up the inhabitants, dispersing them to the villages where some village chiefs³ are fortunately situated (Ray 1982:189).

Some suitable areas were found where long stretches of flat land were available and a lot of interest was generated in agricultural experiments, reclamation of valley lands were taken up. Experimental cultivation of many new crops was being undertaken. Potatoes were doing well. Small quantities of wheat

were also successfully raised. Experiment in rubber cultivation was started. Terraced cultivation was introduced, as this was the only scientific way of agriculture in the steep hills. As terracing was a good success in the Naga Hills, a party of Lushai Chiefs was taken by the Superintendent to the Naga Hills to show them the benefits of terracing. The British Administration further felt that as the people migrated in search of jhum lands, new crops which would serve as staple crops of permanent, to dig and plough, to sow and plant and harvest, to feed and milk the cow and to rear all kinds of domestic stock, but will also open the way for various related industries that are dependent on agriculture (Ibid: 190-91). In 1940's, A.G. Mc Call, Superintendent of Lushai Hills introduced certain economic and welfare measures. To raise the economic status, he drew up a plan of all round economic development in which the lead was to be provided by the administration. Mc Call suggested the adoption of cottage industries and he took steps to start the first cottage industries in the area (Mc Call 1949: 283-85). The British administration was thus, alive to the problems in agriculture and general conditions in the Lushai Hills, but there was no concerted effort and wide based move from the government to tackle the problems (Ray 1982:191). The efforts were not successful due to lack of financial support, administrative coordination and technical guidance. As a result, jhum cultivation was continued as a dominant feature of Mizo rural economy and rural activities remain confined to basket weaving, animal rearing and collecting things from the jungle (Das 2004:35). The 1962 Census reveals the poor and primitive agriculture in the overall backward economy of Mizoram where there were no agro-based industries and other manufacturing agencies and 90% of the people depended on primitive method of agriculture. While it was one of the Districts of Assam, it contributed only 1.5% of the states income, being the lowest among all the districts of Assam (GOM 1989:208-9).

After independence the most significant measure for rural development was initiated by the government of India in the form of Community Development Programme (CDP) in 1952. Just over a decade period of the launching and implementation of the CDP throughout the country, insurgency broke out in Mizoram in 1966, lasted for two long decades, which severely affected the process of rural development. The grouping of villages as strategy for counter insurgency by the government of India had its harsh impact on the village economy.

Village Grouping and its Impact on Rural Development:

Occurrences of insurgency was the most significant factor which determined the course of political development in Mizoram. It has disrupted the normal administrative system and counter-insurgency measures have again affected the system in the feedback process (Ray 1982:152). Insurgency in Mizoram began in 1966 due to various factors, out of which economic backwardness and development disparity, alarming unemployment, apathy of the Assam Government, the then State Government, to solve the problem of the series of famines and crop failures, etc. led to the outbreak of insurgency. The extraordinary situation of sudden rebellion throughout the whole district resulted in the imposition of Assam Disturbed Areas Act, 1955 to enable the government to make adequate provision for the suppression of the disturbances. The Act under Section 4 empowered magistrates, officers of the Assam Rifles of the rank of Havildar and upwards and police officers of the rank of sub-inspectors and above to fire upon or otherwise use force even to the causing of death, against any person who is acting in contravention of any law or in the disturbed area (Ibid:164-65). As was expected, the security forces carried out large scale offensive operations against the MNF. The situation aggravated further then the MNF declared the 'independence' of

Mizoram from India in the early hours of March 1st, 1966 followed by counter –insurgency measures when the army was asked by the Central Government to deal with the situation. As a counter insurgency strategy, regrouping of villages was made, which saw the entire rural population of Mizoram (roughly 80% of the total population) uprooted from their homes to be relocated miles away. The Indian Army argued that the segregation and control of the population by this method was necessary for a successful counterinsurgency campaign. General Manekshaw, the Army Chief had suggested the government to hand over the district administration to the army for effective control over MNF and also suggested from military point of view that regrouping of villages should be given priority in order to control the rebels effectively(Jafa: <http://www.satp.org>). There were four categories of grouping of villages in Mizoram (Singh 1994:221-23).

1. Progressive and Protected Villages (PPV): The first stage of grouping started on 14th January 1967 under the order of Central Government liaison Officer for Mizo Hills District. Accordingly, 50,000 people from 106 villages were re-settled in 19 centres, along Silchar-Aizawl-Lunglei road which started from Vairengte village covering a distance of 400 km. Further 63 villagers with a population of 40,000 were re-organised into 17 PPV along the sensitive borders with Burma and Manipur. Each PPV unit was placed under the charge of Civil Officer called Administrative Officer (AO), to represent the Deputy Commissioner to the people of the PPV from junior Assam Civil Services and a small office was provided consisting of a few clerks and porters.

2. New Group Centre: (NGC): The second category of grouping as NGC was done immediately after completion of PPV in 1969. 182 villages into 40 group centres affecting 55,000 populations were brought under re-grouping. The 40 centres were divided into 6 sectors on the three borders of the district. I) Tripura border, ii) East Pakistan(now Bangladesh) border, ii) Lunglei -

Demagiri Road, iv) Lunglei - Lawngtlai Road, v) Seling - Champhai Road, and vi) Darlawn - Khawbung, North Vanlaiphai - Serchhip Road.

3. Voluntary Group Centre (VGC): The third category of grouping the VGC started in 1970 and 110 villages were grouped into 26 centres voluntarily, under the supervision of the security forces with all facilities extended to them as in case of other two.

4. Extended Loop Area (ELA): Under this category, 63 villages were grouped in 17 grouped centres covering of total population of 40,000 along the border of Manipur in the north and Burma in the east, which was completed by the end of 1969 and the army authority handed over the area to the civil authority by the middle of 1970.

There were some positive impacts of village grouping. Although public opinion in general was against grouping and all political parties wanted that the villages should be re-established in the old sites, the grouped villages continue as such even after a popular government came in power after the election in Mizoram in 1972. There were obvious advantages of populous villages situated on the lines of communication. Administration has, therefore, preferred the people to continue to remain in the group centre, rather than moving back to scattered hamlets away from the main currents of developmental and administrative activities (Ray 1982:177-78). This was which Tarlok Singh⁴ suggested before insurgency broke out, who observed that the economic benefits could not reach the innumerable interior villages having small villages should be reconstituted into large units with road communication which would bring the people easy reach of technical know-how of developmental and financial and other assistance from the government (Ibid :169). However, the grouping of villages had its adverse impinge on the socio-economic life of the people. The general humiliation, loss of freedom and of property, and very often,

injury and death involved in this process of so-called 'grouping of villages' were incidental to the military operations in Mizoram, as perhaps they are to internal wars anywhere.

It appeared to many then, as it would appear to many more acutely now, that the policy of 'grouping' was tantamount to annihilation of reason and sensibility and certainly not the best policy to follow against our own ethnic minorities (Jafa:<http://www.satp.org>). Although regrouping of villages done with the basic object of eliminating the underground elements as interior villages were under their control, yet it failed to effect physical elimination of the underground movement. It naturally disturbed the traditional village harmony based homogeneity and attachment to village land and the masses of the village system of jhum cultivation became poorer (Nunthara 1996:115). From morning to evening people had to endure the pangs of regimented life. Their "Thlawhbawk" huts, near the sites, where jhumias used to stay at night, were dismantled. They had to compromise with their freedom. The man-land affinity was burnt which disturbed the geopolitical order of the area (Singh 1994:223-25). Once self sufficient village economy mainly through jhum, had to depend on relief and temporary employment, as little activity could be carried out under strict supervision and watchful security forces. It has its permanent repercussion even in post-insurgency Mizoram, where almost all villages and the State is not self sufficient in food production.

Rural Development Initiatives during Insurgency in Mizoram:

There is a question often raised in various mediums-whether there could be development without peace. Preferably, peace and developments of together and without peace, there cannot be an appropriate development. However, planning process and government cannot cut short development initiatives and wait for peace; otherwise there will be more poverty, unemployment, economic backwardness leading to more frustration of the people. Therefore, there were number of development programmes initiated

stressing importance on agriculture development through successively planning in Mizoram during insurgency period (Sinha 2006:57-67).

Rural development measures took a fresh start with the inauguration of Community Development Project (CDP) in Mizoram on the first April 1953. The first CDP was opened at Aizawl and later more CD blocks were opened at Lunglei in 1956, Kolasib in 1958 and Mamit in 1959 (GOM 1989 :228). Before 1972, there were nine CD blocks with the inauguration of Hnahthial, Lawngtlai, Saitual and Champhai in the Aizawl Sub-Division and Lunglei, Lawngtlai and Hnahthial were in Lunglei Sub Division (Ray 1982:324). Each blocks were headed by a project Executive Officer.

During the early period of the introduction of the CDP, it was the largest scheme in Mizoram which undertaken various developmental works through various groups under it (Fambawl 1998 :27-29). There were agriculture group, medical group, education groups, rural communication and building groups.

The agriculture group includes developmental works of animal husbandry and veterinary, fisheries development, and soil and water conservation. This group has undertaken 75% of the developmental works for rural development. During the two Five Year Plans (1951-61) attention was mostly concentrated on the development of the agriculture in Mizoram with special emphasis on irrigation, soil conservation, wet paddy cultivation, land reclamation, fisheries and community projects. Land reclamation work was executed by the agricultural Department where as other development work was taken up through the CD blocks in the district (Lianzela 1994:113). The medical group was involved in health care. Various health centres, medical sub centres were initiated with health workers posted under this group. The education group was involved in the social education programmes like health

awareness for women and children, sports and cultural development, etc. Social Education Organizers both male and female were appointed for the same. The rural communication and building group undertaken the communication developmental works. It undertakes construction of roads and bridges, construction of halls, office buildings for which number of Civil Engineers and Overseers were appointed for the same. In each CD block, ten Gram Sevak and two Gram Sevak's were appointed for the multipurpose rural developmental works, as per the guidelines of community development scheme.

During the third Five Year Plan, 1961-66, emphasis was mainly on the development of means of communication, agriculture development and marketing of agricultural products. A three years special development plan for the development of the district was undertaken in 1963-64 with the following provisions (GOM 1989: 224-25):

1) District Development Board	:	Rs. 1.50 lakhs
2) Major roads	:	Rs. 34.00 lakhs
3) Rural Roads	:	Rs. 30.00 lakhs
4) Education	:	Rs. 20.00 lakhs
5) Medical	:	Rs. 20.87 lakhs
6) Air trip	:	Rs. 12.00 lakhs
7) Rural Water Supply	:	Rs. 6.90 lakhs
8) Soil Conservation	:	Rs. 8.58 lakhs
9) Agriculture & Marketing	:	Rs. 5.18 lakhs
10) Power & Electricity	:	Rs. 6.10 lakhs
11) Inland Water Transport	:	Rs. 3.88 lakhs
12) Publicity	:	Rs. 0.15 lakhs
Total	:	Rs. 150 lakhs.

For implementation of the plan a District Development Board was established at Aizawl with Deputy Commissioner as Chairman.

The Fourth Five Year Plan 1969-74 also laid emphasis on agriculture and allied activities including cooperation and community development to make the hill areas self sufficient in food production. Emphasis has also been made to create a base for industrial development and social service sector including education, water supply etc. However, the Fourth Five Year Plan has suffered serious setback in Mizoram due to large scale disturbances. Many block officials were also attached to Administrative Officers' Office. The regrouped villagers had to depend on supplies of food grains from outside Mizoram (Ibid:226).

When Mizo Hills District was upgraded to the Union Territory status in 1972, for smooth functioning of developmental operations, the entire structure of the community development blocks were re-organised into twenty blocks in 1973. They are: (1) Tlangnuam, (2) Thingdawl, (3) Thingsulthliah, (4) Reiek, (5) Aibawk, (6) Phaileng'W', (7) Lunglei, (8) Serchhip, (9) Khawzawl, (10) Darlawn, (11) Ngopa, (12) Lungdar'E' (13) Lunglei, (14) Lungsen, (15) Bunghmun, (16) Sangau, (17) Hnahthial, (18) Lawngtlai, (19) Tuipang, (20) Chawngte. Many development departments were also started functioning such as Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, Forest and Soil conservation, Public Works Department, etc.

However, the community development project staff was not involved in such sectors as agriculture and animal husbandry, soil conservation, medical, etc. which were taken up by development departments. As a result, the activities of the CDP staff was reduced to nothing, with an office only under Deputy Commissioner with a Mizoram Civil Service Officer as its head till 1974. But in 1974, a significant development separating from the Deputy Commissioners control and in 1983-84 the nomenclature of community Development was changed to Rural Development. The Directorate is headed by a Director, Assistant Director, Finance and Accounts Officer and a Special Officer, Nutrition. At the district

level the Deputy Commissioners were the controlling Officers of the CD blocks and the block development officers(BDO) within their respective blocks. The Directorate of Rural Development started functioning with special focus on alleviation of rural poverty. The blocks functions with special emphasis to uplift the day to day living standard of the backward communities in the rural areas, to popularize improved breeds of livestock and poultry at a domestic level by selling better breeds to villagers at subsidized rate, taking up social education, health and rural sanitation, communication and housing. The objective of social education was to give effective moral and physical education at the village levels by providing them with play grounds, community halls, village wells, water points, urinal sheds and prizes for cleanliness/ The programmes under communication includes construction of jeep roads, inter village paths, suspension bridges, masonry steps and culverts and housing programmes includes construction of office buildings and quarters for BDO were proposed.

The Fifth Five Year Plan 1974-79 laid emphasis on agriculture and community development. Under agriculture sector, it proposes to bring 20,000 hectares of land under permanent cultivation of paddy and seasonal crops and 10,000 hectares of land under plantation. The objective was largely to minimize shifting cultivation and to preserve natural forest wealth by restoring to permanent cultivation to step up food production for self sufficiency. Emphasis was also laid on the improvement of rural health services by bringing up more new primary health centres and sub centres, up gradation of primary health centres to rural hospitals. For this purpose, the Government of India evolved several new programmes as centrally sponsored schemes. Three of the important programmes are: (1) Multipurpose Workers Scheme (2) Community Health Workers Scheme and (3) Indigeneous Dhai Training Schemes which were launched and implemented with substantial success. The Sixth Five Year Plan 1980-85 laid top priority on the achievement of economic and technological self

reliance, reduction in the incidence of poverty and unemployment, a speedy development of the indigenous sources of energy, promoting the involvement of all sections of people in the process of development. The rural development blocks were also entrusted to implement the integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP). Besides IRDP, Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Scheme (RLEGP) were launched in 1981 and 1983-83 as centrally sponsored schemes. The District Rural Development Agency, an autonomous body created under the Societies of Registration Act, 1860 was inaugurated in the year 1980, to administer centrally sponsored schemes. In Mizoram, the District Rural Development Agency was inaugurated in 1982 at Aizawl, Lunglei and Saiha. The Seventh Five Year Plan 1985-90 lay down 'Food, Work and Productivity as the basic objectives. It emphasizes on accelerating food production, increase in employment opportunities and raise productivity (Lianzela 1995:6).

Till 1972, Mizoram as one of the autonomous districts of Assam. Since Assam had four other autonomous districts, the share of Mizo district was but meager. The planning process, in true sense, in Mizoram started only with effect from the Seventh Five Year Plan, when the State launched her development programmes for the first time under conditions of peace. The developmental plans and strategies in true sense in Mizoram started following the Peace Accord signed on 30th June, 1986 and when Mizoram was conferred statehood on February, 1987.

Thus, development strategies of the government have been mainly towards attaining economic self sufficiency through agricultural development and many other segments which have potentials for local propagation and production and to protect the land from degradation, to protect burning of forests for jhuming, encouraging permanent cultivation in achieving sustainable development in eco friendly manner vis-a-vis to find out alternative way of livelihood for the jhumia families. However, the planned

development strategies of the development of the rural people and the state as a whole, had very modest impact. In spite of the huge developmental expenditure incurred with reorganization of administration, the state is still backward with inadequate transport facilities, scarcity of drinking water, very expensive price of essential commodities, lack of marketing facilities, etc. Still today about 3 lakhs work force in Mizoram are engaged in low productivity jhum practice and it is estimated that an average area of 2.00 lakhs acres of forest cover are annually destroyed by slashing and burning of trees for Jhum land in Mizoram, (<http://Mizoram.gov.in>), yet failed to produce sufficient food crops. The following section portrays the present economic scenario of rural Mizoram.

Present Economic Scenario of Rural Mizoram:

The geographical location, poor condition of road networks, remoteness of the market, poor infrastructural facilities, no broad gauge rail road and waterways to transport goods to outside world, slow growth of alternative employment avenues, lack of industries, deficiency in natural resource management, inappropriate programmes and policies initiated and poor implementation of development programmes are some of the evils towards development in Mizoram. Despite its abundant natural forest resources, favourable climate and fertile land, the state remains backward. It has been stated that, “during the sixty years of planned development, India have made impressive progress in developing agriculture and industry, science and technology, health and education and the infrastructure for a wide range of services”. But it is sad to note that this statement has no relevance so far as Mizoram is concerned. Mizoram is still virtually where it was at the time of attainment of Union Territory. No doubt, the rest of the country has made impressive progress, but Mizoram is still far behind even in building up the requisite infrastructure (Hluna 2010:33). The land is fertile and favoured by monsoon. Its forests are abundant green (Das 2004:33). But in spite of its natural

resources, Mizoram remained socio-economically backward. The region is at an infantile stage in the field of industry. Whatever industry, it may be called; at present is only small scale industry, fed by indigenous agricultural produce covering only a small market zones (Pachua 1994:73). The situation in respect of allied sector is in no way better. The potential in animal husbandry, a common subsidiary activity, is grossly under utilized and meat, egg, fish come from outside the state (Ibid :34). Agriculture still remains under developed and the primitive method of jhum predominates, while only 5% of the total area is under cultivation. Paddy continues to remain the chief food crop and the staple food of the area under food grains. In spite of the fact that the rice being the most important crop occupying the largest share in area and production, is still not self sufficient in rice production where about 75%⁵ of rice alone comes from outside the state.

The share of agriculture alone in the net domestic product (NSDP) is merely 30% at current price during 1998-99. As per the agriculture Census (1995-96), there were 65,919 operational holdings with a total operated area of 85,000 hectares. Out of the total number of holdings 42.04% is marginal 39.0% small, 17.83% semi medium 1.11% medium and 0.01% large holdings. Mizoram an agrarian economy still imports a large quantity of food stuff, fruits, vegetables, fish and livestock like pig, cattle, goat, poultry essentially required for over all food supply of the people. Large quantities of such items imported from other states particularly neighbouring states of Assam, Tripura and Manipur. Some quantity is also imported through informal border trade from Myanmar. As per the Trade and Commerce Department, Mizoram, the value of Import of Agriculture, Horticulture and Livestock's items, etc. during 2008-2009 was Rs.4,04,91,1730.00 i.e. Rs. 40.50 crores ([http:// :Mizoram.gov.in](http://Mizoram.gov.in)).

According to the 1990 Survey reports of the Rural Development Department, 52 per cent of people today in the state were living below poverty line. It is a paradoxical situation that,

more than ever the threats of poverty loom large in the hearts of the working class despite the fast growth in developmental expenditures since 1972 (Thangchungnunga 2003:143). With the existing structure of Mizoram economy, precarious state of agriculture slow growth of alternative employment avenues in rural areas, lack of industries, poor communication facilities, there is low possibility of absorbing the fast expanding labour force. The cultivable land and other traditional rural enterprises have limited scope for supporting the fast emerging population. This has forced more people to seek their fortunes in the urban areas, which have its own repercussions on the economy (Thansanga 2003:215-16).

Table : 1 shows the total area of land utilization in Mizoram 2006-2007

Source: Directorate of Agriculture and Minor Irrigation, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl. The total geographical area of the state is 21,08,700 hectare in which 9.84 percent is under fallow land and only 4.46 percent is under net shown area.

Although the administration was geographically closer to the rural people due to grouping of villages, it failed to create sustained impact on the lives of rural people. This can be easily blamed for insurgency, but the rural bureaucracy is hitherto entrenched to the rural people. The following table: II shows the responses on whether block level bureaucrats are visiting the villages regularly. 75 percent of the respondents say 'no', 4.17 percent responded 'yes' and 20.83 percent falls in the category 'do not know' (Sinha 2006:230).⁶

TABLE :II

Showing Responses on Whether the Block Level bureaucrats visits the Village People regularly

Number of respondents – 240

Source: Questionnaire and Interview Schedule

The message from the above table replicates the non-availability of the rural bureaucracy in the villages. Many remote villages were not visited by these functionaries although it was found that the villagers heard about these functionaries. There is lack of motivation and belongingness of all rural bureaucrats at the state and block level. This is because almost all bureaucrats are on deputation from development departments who likes to go back to their parent departments.⁷

The post insurgency major rural development programmes of both Central and State Sponsored Scheme initiated such as Integrated Rural Development Programme, Swarnjayanti Gram Sworojar Yojana Praject,etc. failed to produce substantial outcomes and the state is far away from attaining economic self sufficiency. Inequality in economic status in Mizo society had been very much evident. While launching New Land Use Policy by dissolving the Mizoram Intodelhna Project, the Chief minister of Mizoram Lal Thanhawla sounded a warning that if the present trend of widening gap between the rich and poor is not reversed, there may be discontent amongst the poorer sections leading to social tensions, disharmony and violence to the extent of causing bloodshed in Mizoram.⁸

Lack of good communication facility is the major problem faced by the rural population of the State. Lack of road transport facilities, the farmers of the remote villages cannot market their products even to the block headquarters. Regulated markets and cold storage facilities in the State are inadequate. Although the agro climatic condition of the region is conducive, dairy, poultry, fishery etc. has not been developed as s means of livelihood. Veterinary services in the rural areas are inadequate. The efforts of the government in developing small-scale industries are not quite satisfactory and also this sector has a direct link with road transport, power, etc. Middleman's share has been one of the main reasons behind increasing food prices at the retail level. How to eliminate the middleman and thus cut costs and to reach the actual profit to

the rural development beneficiaries were generally not taken into consideration while implementing rural development schemes.

Therefore effective implementation of development initiatives is vital. Designing and implementing people-centric schemes by harnessing the available natural resources of the State through participatory development strategy and grassroots planning is desirable. More infrastructure development ensuring better link roads, market connectivity, cold storage facilities, irrigation are required. Initiatives for more farmers' cooperative societies should be encouraged which will help in eliminating the middleman. Making jhum cultivation scientific, understanding of the technical factors involved while implementing development programmes, timely supply of appropriate inputs, flow of assistance, marketing of output, strict and continuous monitoring are essential. Bureaucracy needs to be very active and work on the field in reaching the remote villages and see that they do not look at the problems from the office. Demonstrations at regular intervals to impart technical know how and skill to the farmers through training, tours, audio-visuals, seminars to aware and in involving the farmer to join actively in the programme is needed for which trained, skilled, specialised, efficient, impartial and more importantly motivated bureaucracy is required.

Providing gainful and productive employment opportunities is essential for which capacity building focusing on development of skills and training is extremely important. Local means and production suited to the genius of the people needs to be identified and explored. Industrial development programmes announced by the government from time to time lack efficiency in management and there is lack of proper coordination among small scale industries based on local resources like agricultural products, bamboo and other forest products needs to be identified with special packages of incentive for educated youth to take those enterprises. Involvement of Non-Government Organisations (NGO) in

providing loans in such sectors as floriculture, small scale industries like development of weaving and knitting, horticulture, etc. and helps in marketing of those products, will ensure employment to a sizeable number of poor people.

Development initiatives for the rural people and autonomy should go together. The local self-government institutions-the village Councils are not as viable as Pachayati Raj Institutions (PRI) due to lack of financial autonomy. Therefore, empowering the rural people by strengthening of local self government through PRIs as per the Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act at the Village and District level with certain modifications in ensuring the existing traditional values will guarantee financial autonomy, reservation of women and the decision making power (Sinha 2010:47).

The massive development initiatives undertaken by both the Central Government and the State Government, so far benefited only a small elite section of the society in the State and the Rural marginal section of the society is largely deprived. Most of the rural development plans and strategies were not made in accordance with the needs of the newly uprooted groups of villages. The strategies of rural development by the Central Government such as IRDP, DWRCA, NREP, RLEGP were made for the whole of the nation and there was no systemic and sustained development initiatives were made especially for the displaced people and for their newly settled villages in the State. The result is that almost all villages and the State was not self sufficient just after the grouping and the trend continues till today. Insurgency being a deviation of the past, the State has great future to look ahead for which a corruption free responsive administration is necessary. The development projects and schemes should be prepared to fit in a methodical and inclusive plan which promises to benefit the poor people. At the same time people's participation for successful implementation of schemes and their hard work without waiting for help from the government every time, is also essential towards achieving economic self sufficiency.

Notes and references:

1. Rural Development Sector policy Paper, World Bank, Washington DC, 1975, defines rural development as “the strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of the specific group of people—the rural poor. It involves extending the benefits of development to the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in rural areas—the group includes small scale farmers, tenants and landless.
2. Online Encyclopedia Wikipedia defined insurgency as the state or condition of being in revolt or insurrection; an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through use of subversion and armed conflict.
3. Before independence, each Mizo village was ruled by a ‘Chief’ called ‘Lal’.
4. Tarlok Singh, a Member of the Planning Commission, led a Study Team to the Mizo Hills in January 1966
5. In reply to the Assembly House Members, Agriculture Minister of Mizoram, H.Liansailova said that the production of rice could substantiate only about 25% of the State requirements (huge decrease in production due to famine (mautam) during 2007-2008 (Virthli : March 2010:1).
6. Total of 120 beneficiaries + 120 non-beneficiaries of rural development, covering all the four blocks of Lunglei District of Mizoram through questionnaire and interview schedule was made during 2003-05.

7. Author's personal interview with Dr.R.Lalmalsawmi (DD,Vety) Directorate of Rural Development,Aizawl on 23.10.2005.

8. Speech of Mizoram Chief Minister Lal Thanhawla at the meeting on Matter of Dissolution of MHIP and Launching of NLUP in Mizoram (GOM 2010:2).

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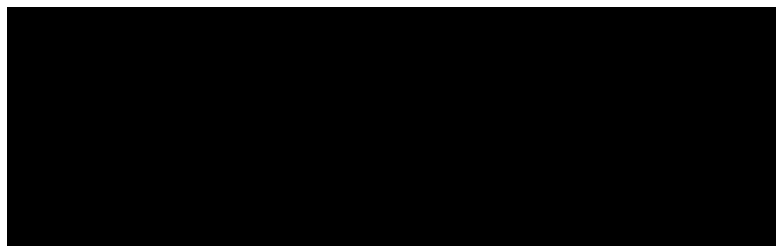
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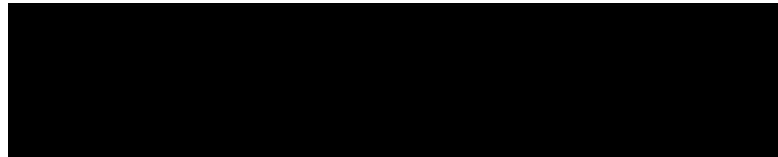


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**POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND ACTION TAKEN TO
GAIN THE SO CALLED INDEPENDENCE**

Dr. T. Lalsangliana

I

The term insurgency is often used interchangeably with the terms like terrorism, extremism, guerrilla warfare, armed revolt, uprising etc. It includes actions against an established government not by conventional warfare. Insurgency is often restricted to rebellious activities in order to achieve a public purpose which requires activities beyond pacific means. It is different from revolution, resistance war or national liberation. It usually refers to movement smaller in size and purpose oriented, conducted methodically, step by step, in order to attain specific intermediate objectives leading finally to overthrow of existing orders. In modern times the use of violent activities for the achievement of political and social ends is common to state and non-state groups. It involves heinous crimes, kidnapping and killing of innocents by a private group in such a way to create a media spectacle.

The major wave of Mizo insurgency broke out in 1966 with the MNF declaration of independence for Mizoram signed by Mr. Laldenga and sixty others. However, the root of insurgency for Mizoram signed by Mr. Laldenga can be traced in the 1940's. By that time rumours and talks of India's Independence had affected the Mizo people. Most of the Mizo ethnic communities had the inspiration of having autonomy and a separate regional council with a feeling quite clear, that they are conscious of protection and safeguard of their identity and culture or otherwise they may be assimilated. The fact is that the British policy of alienation and isolation not to join the people of mainstream India further movement encouraged the Mizo people to conceive the idea of independence. On 2nd March 1966, the Assam Government declared Mizoram as a disturbed area and the Indian army was deployed to deal with the situation. They carried out counter operation vigorously. The Armed Forces Special Power Act, 1958 was extended to Mizoram with determination to put down the disturbances and to restore peace and tranquillity.

II

The integration of the Mizos had already been advocated and preached by the Mizo Union party, the first political party in Mizoram, even before it was adopted as their policy by the MNF. In a memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister of India in 1947 they sought a right to secede from the union within ten years or so. This was nothing but an idea of independence of self-determination as visualized for the future status. The District Conference under the chairmanship of Mc Donald proposed British Crown Colony for the Mizos while a faction of Mizo Union wanted independence when the British left Mizoram. Meanwhile, Lalmawia with the support of the Mizo chiefs and blessing of the Superintendent formed a new party known as UMFO in July 5, 1947 to counter the activities of the Mizo union party. The dissidents of the Mizo Union joined the new party. They wanted to join Burma rather than remaining in India while the Mizo Union leaders preferred to

be part of India. After few years, UMFO had merged with the East India Tribal Union (EITU) under the chairmanship of Capt. Williamson Sangma.

III.

Growing Emotion & Formation of political Party

The rise of political consciousness among the Mizos in the 1950s and 1960s contributed for independence movement. The Mizo union stimulated the old sentiments of Mizo that they are under no control of other rulers. The growing emotion was caught by the newly formed MNF party and took advantage of it to declare independence. Till the early sixties, EITU (1954) and the Mizo Union were the only two active political parties in Mizo Hills District. As a result of the outbreak of Mautam famine in Mizo Hills District during 1959, a relief organisation called the Mizo National Famine Front was formed in 1960. The MNFF volunteers under the leadership of Laldenga, Lalnunmawia, Sainghaka and Vanlalhrauaia got the praise and all the credits for the supply of food stuffs to the remote villages. When the famine was over in 1961, Laldenga found it as opportune moment to drop the word 'famine' from its appellation and transformed Mizo National Famine Front itself into a new political party called the 'Mizo National Front'. In the wake of growing political consciousness in the early seventies, Mizo Labour party was formed on December 13, 1971. HK Bawichhuaka was the President. In the meantime, a new party called the Socialist Party was also formed where Thangridema was elected President. In the same year, the MNF Returnees established Mizo Insuihkhawm Pawl (MIP). In the 1975 the People's Conference Party was formed by Brig. T. Sailo so also the Mizo Democratic Front in the same year. The Janata Party was formed in 1977 with J.Thanghuama as the President. Thus there was a mushroom growth of political parties during the years.

Policy Formation:

The next agenda for the MNF leadership was as regard to the policy of the party. Thangliana Sailo suggested statehood for Mizoram while others put forward a policy of independence. However, the party later on could accept independence for its policy. Besides independence, the policies of integration of all the areas inhabited by the Mizos- a 'Greater Mizoram' movement, economic development and safeguard of Christianity were adopted. Since then the MNF party launched an all-out campaign and sent out volunteers to all directions throughout Mizoram and Mizo occupied areas of Manipur and Burma to preach their doctrine (Greater Mizoram). The MNF became so popular among the young people and common men and their policies arouse the feelings of younger generations. The party policies and programmes augmented with the outstanding oratory of Laldenga attracted the mass of the people. The Mizo union demanded statehood for Mizoram while the MNF demanded full independence for Mizoram. Under the Union Territory Areas Reorganization Act 1971 the Mizo District was elevated to the status of Union Territory on January 21, 1972 to fulfil the aspiration of the major political party in Mizoram. In protest to acceptance of UT status by the Mizo Union, HK Bawichhuaka faction with many youth leaders left the party.

Declaration of Independence and open Armed Revolt

To realise the rightful and legitimate demand for self determination and calling the Govt. Of India unworthy and unfit to rule over Mizoram, the charismatic leader, Mr. Laldenga and sixty others of MNF leadership made vehement appeal to the Govt of India for independence; thus finally declared independence on 1.3.1966. A memorandum was submitted to the Prime Minister on 30.10.1965 stating that the Mizos sought for territorial integrity and solidarity. On February 28th, 1966 the MNF started an open armed revolt against the Indian government troops moved into the

district as counter insurgency measures and the MNF volunteers with their leaders went underground. The MNF insurgents launched raids simultaneously on security check posts all over the Mizo hills district. Subsequently the MNF was banned under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act of 1967. As part of counter insurgency measure, Protected and Progressive Villages (PPV) were constituted in Mizo District in 1966. It involved grouping of smaller villages into a bigger ones called Grouping Centre so that the hostiles (volunteers) would be denied food supply, shelter, money and other facilities extorted by them from the interior villages. Moreover it would provide security to the people from hostile acts of the MNF. Curfew was imposed repeatedly in the district normally between 6pm to 4am every night. No person should remain out of doors or loitering around during these hours. Sometimes it was relaxed for some particular reasons. The security forces were positioned in various places and constantly patrolled in the streets throughout the villages. It is true that on account of insurrection in Mizoram several Mizos and non-Mizos alike suffered and got killed.

Strengthening of the party:

Another important task of Political Leadership before hand was to strengthen the hold of their party by recruiting volunteers and workers. The MNF elders understood that without bloodshed and suffering they would not achieve independence. In response to a call given by Laldenga 1965, many Mizos resigned from their jobs as school teachers or government servants by the end of 1965 and joined the MNF. Some of them who played key role in the party were Lalkhawliana, Lalhmingthanga, Ex-sub Thangzuala, Ex-sub Maj. Sawmvela, Hav. Biakchhunga, Bualhranga, Vanlalngaia, Ngurchhina, Sainghaka, S.Lianzuala, R.Zamawia, Lunghnema and others. Most of the followers of the MNF ideologies were anti-Mizo Union. Being glued up into nationalism by the Party's doctrine and sermon of its President, the Mizo people enrolled themselves in thousands as MNF volunteers.

Resource Mobilisation & Rapport Building:

The MNF leaders were busy with rapport building. Laldenga, Lalnunmawia and Sainghaka went to East Pakistan in 1963 where they were received by top military functionaries of Pakistan. They promised to them supply of military hardware and training to the MNF volunteers. The MNF leaders understood that without bloodshed and suffering they would not achieve independence. They also understood that Pakistan's assistance would be limited and not dependable in the long run. Hence they need more assistance from foreign countries. They agreed to send Mizo emissaries to various countries including USA, UK, China, France, Burma, Nepal, Japan and Indonesia. They were met by these respective emissaries several times at Dacca in East Pakistan. The Pakistani government promised that they would allow free passage for foreign assistance if they could get any. For about a decade the MNF took shelter in the neighbouring Pakistan and Burma, building clandestine relations with foreign countries from where they entered Mizoram from time to time for operation.

Peace settlement and conflict resolution:

After 20 long years of the movement for independence, they realized that the path of progress lay not in violence but in finding out peaceful solution of political problem. Large number of MNF volunteers wanted to return to their villages as events did not turn out as promised by Laldenga and other leaders. Pakistan had stopped further supply of aid and ammunitions on account with the Tashkent Agreement. The MNF leaders were willing to have peace negotiations with the Govt of India. Laldenga asked Rev.Zairema and other church leaders during October 1966 to start some peace talks.

Laldenga knew that third party neutrality and involvement brightened the prospect of its resolution by bringing the conflicting parties to the negotiation tables. Warring groups adopt intransigent postures, thereby taking their enmity up to the new height, the mediators act like a bridge in order to contain, reduce, soften, cool down and finally resolve the conflict. A 'peace mission' was formed by the Presbyterian and Baptist Church committees to persuade MNF leaders to give up violence and to persuade the Government of India to accommodate important demands within the framework of the constitution. And hence, after prolonged political negotiation the Government of India and MNF could sign a memorandum of agreement on June 30, 1986 in New Delhi which subsequently led to the creation of the state of Mizoram within the Indian Union.

The most difficult part for Laldenga was how to convince his volunteers who undauntedly fought for independence. Thus the chapter of MNF movement for sovereign independent state of Mizoram was closed. Although MNF movement could not realize its goal of forming a sovereign state for the Mizos, it succeeded in strengthening ethnic solidarity and propagating the idea of distinct nationhood among the Mizos.

Split in the Party & Crisis management

Factionalism is a common feature of every political party. The inner circle of the MNF was divided into two groups of different ideologies – one group wanted to continue their fight for independence while the other group consisting of the younger and educated lot wanted to have peace negotiations with the Govt of India and accepted statehood within the Indian Union. Vice President Lalnunmawia, Lalkhawliana, Lalhmingthanga, Thangkima and Zamawia belonged to one group who were called Blue Party; and the other group was led by President Laldenga. This split was visible during Sialsir meeting from 11-15 Dec 1966 where Laldenga was criticized for not being able to obtain foreign support aid. There

was even sharp division of opinion among the leaders as to whether Mizoram should have Presidential or Parliamentary type of Government. Sainghaka and few others wanted the power to be shared and expressed their view that Parliamentary type was suited than the Presidential form. Laldenga planned a strong Presidential form from where powers emanated. Moreover, it seemed he was not prepared to share powers with anyone else. Laldenga was not very happy with decision of Sialsir meeting which approved the draft constitution of Mizoram Sawrkar. This had weakened the MNF movement for the time being. The intellectual group blamed Laldenga for his partiality, selfishness and dictatorial way of dealing with other leaders. It resulted to party reorganisation. Lalnunmawia was removed and S.Lianzuala was installed in his place as Vice President; Army Chief Sawmvela was replaced by R.Zamawia and so on.

In conclusion, since the dawn of India's independence, the political elites in Mizoram were apprehensive of the political future of Mizoram. They felt the need to unify themselves as a group to increase their bargaining power to integrate the Mizo ethnic communities and protect their distinct identity. It should be noted that the idea of re-unification of the areas inhabited by the Mizos was not a new one. The integration of the Mizos had already been advocated and preached by the Mizo Union party even before it was adopted as their policy by the MNF. Also the party leaders already conceived the idea of independence before the formation of MNF. In a memorandum submitted to the Prime minister of India in 1947 and later by the MNF, they sought a right to secede from the Union within ten years or so. This was nothing but an idea of independence or self determination as visualized for the future status. This had awakened the educated middle class. Our contention is that there had been political turmoil and factional politics within most of all political parties. There was a leadership competition and the crisis management was found to be difficult. It was the headache of political leadership till today. It is crystal clear

that political independence and the politics of Greater Mizoram had always been mobilising tools for political parties. But the price to be paid was too much and too long that almost every political party did not receive wider supports. People inclined more towards immediate solutions of political problems and wanted to settle peacefully.

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**Role of Political parties, Churches and Human Rights
Organization in restoration of normalcy in Mizoram during
insurgency period (1966-1986)**

Dr C.Lalhmanmawia

Mizo Union (MU)

The Mizo Union, formed on April 9, 1946 was the first political party in Mizoram. Originally, it was named Mizo Common Peoples Union and later on named Mizo Commoners Union and finally to Mizo Union.¹ The Mizo Union (MU) completely dominated the electoral scene of Mizoram for almost 20 years since 1948 up to 1974. The party lasted for 20 years and ended when merged with the Congress Party on January 23, 1974.

The Mizo Union (MU), right from its inception had been insisting for the abolition of the traditional Mizo Chiefs who imposed construction of Chief's house by free labour, payment of paddy tax, bringing of disputes to the Chiefs for trial. An aged old institution of traditional Chieftainship, which was said to have been started from the period between 1450 to 1700, ² became a burden for most of the Mizo commoners. Under the institution, the chief was so powerful that the subjects were at the mercy of the chief as he had the power over the life and death of his subjects and in fact, all administrative and judicial powers were in his hands. Due to their vast powers, some of them had become despots and acted in a very cruel manner towards the common masses which were unbearable and moreover abolition of this autocratic institution was fully justified in keeping in mind with the fulfillment of the democratic aspirations of the commoners.³ The Mizo Union successfully moved

for the abolition of the institution that finally led to the abolition of the institution on August 16, 1954.

Mizo Union again had a great contribution for popularization and use of the term Mizo. Credit goes to Mizo Union for its remarkable effort for the protection of Mizo language against introduction of Assamese as Official Language of the then Assam state in 1960. Leaders of the party took collective initiative for the protection of the lingua franca of the Mizo. They successfully popularized a more accommodative term Mizo in place of an exclusivist term Lushai. It also managed to change the name of the District from Lushai Hills to Mizo Hills on and from September 1, 1954; and again Mizo Hills was changed, through the party's effort, to Mizoram from April 29th, 1972. In fact, the existence of the present Mizoram state since 1986 formerly on the status of Lushai Hill District Council within the state of Assam is the outcome of efforts made by MU.

More importantly, the party made an all out effort to bring about peace and tranquility in the area especially due to MNF Insurgency. Quite remarkably, unlike the Mizo National Front (the then underground party), MU stood for democratic order, constitutional means and peaceful transformation of the Mizo society opposing vehemently the cult of violence. It always advocated peaceful settlement of the prevailing Mizo problems and also developed a common consciousness of a common end.⁴ Due to its entire constitutional means and its total negation of any violent methods, MU received confidence of the Mizo people and hence ruled the territory for a long period. Its final merger with the Congress Party in 1974 was also believed to be for the cause of restoring peace and normalcy in the area.

Congress Party

The Congress Party, officially the Mizo District Congress Committee (MDCC) that later became Mizoram Pradesh Congress

Committee (MPCC) was formed at Aizawl on August 10, 1961. Mizo District Congress Committee was under the charge and jurisdiction of Assam Pradesh Congress Committee from its inception till the attainment of Union Territory by the District in 1972. MDCC became a full-fledged territorial unit of Indian National Congress from 1972, since then MDCC became Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC). By this time, MPCC was no longer under Assam Pradesh Congress Committee, but was directly under Congress Headquarters in Delhi, the All India Congress Committee (AICC). The Congress party got rapid enlargement when the ruling Mizo Union merged with it on 12th January 1974.

The Congress party was in power in Mizoram for almost 20 years. Of all the existing political parties in the state, the Congress ruled Mizoram for the longest period of time. Among other things, role of the party for the restoration of peace and normalcy in the state deserves a credit. From being a disturbed area since 1966, Mizoram today has been claimed to be the most peaceful state in India. By virtue of its strong commitment to peace, the party won the confidence of the people that they had been given opportunities to rule Mizoram for such a long period. It may be cited here that some of the hardcore MNF leaders were released from jail as a result of effort made by the Congress party leaders. It was Lal Thanhawla and Sainghaka who bailed Laldenga and his son Danmawia out of Tihar Jail in Delhi on 29th October 1979. The party also did remarkable effort for preventing the Indian army from forcible grouping of village like Biate village. An attempt to group villages along the Sialsuk ridge in 1968 was also prevented when the move was successfully challenged in the Gauhati High Court. There are several other instances of Congress leaders coming to the aid of people who were denied of their rights by both the Indian security forces and MNF insurgents.

The party was backed by the underground MNF for its advocacy of restoration of peace and tranquility in the state. The party's initiative for peace negotiation took a concrete form when the Peace Accord, officially called Memorandum of Settlement was concluded between the MNF and the Government of India at 7:00 pm (IST) on 30th June 1986. As per an agreement made earlier between the MNF and Indian National Congress for peacemaking, Lal Thanhawla, the then Chief Minister, stepped down himself from the Chief Ministership and vacated the post for Laldenga, President of MNF. This development finally wined up two decades of long turmoil in the territory.

Another remarkable achievement of the Congress Ministry was the conclusion of Peace Accord with Hmar People Convention (HPC). HPC formed on 18th December 1986, demanded Autonomous District Council for the Hmar people living in the north eastern parts of Mizoram under the 6th Schedule to the Constitution. This armed rebellion against the state government toll lives on both sides, seriously affecting law and order situation in the north-eastern parts of the state. To bring an end to this, the Congress government signed an accord with the HPC called Memorandum of Settlement between the Government of Mizoram and the Hmar People's Convention on 27th July 1994 at Aizawl. Keeping in mind all the above contributions of the Congress party, it may be safe to remark here that Congress party in Mizoram achieved a lot for liberating people from the clutches of oppressions and suppression from both insurgents and state forces arising out of disturbances and war-like conditions that brought untold sufferings to the people of Mizoram.

Human Rights Committee in Mizoram.

As the situation became deteriorating in the early seventies, Brig. Thenphunga Sailo, an army retired of high ranking, who had enormous experiences of army discipline and well versed with what

the army ought to do came forward to rescue his own people from various atrocities committed both by the Army and the MNF underground. After assessing the situation thoroughly, he came to the conclusion of making of an institution to which victims of the human rights violation may seek redress. It was in the month of June 1974 that he organized a small meeting in which persons like Lalsawia, Thangliana, Zairemthanga, J.Kapthianga, Vanlalhruaia and few others were present. The meeting decided to form the Human Rights Committee. Thus, Human Rights Committee (HRC) was established on the same day.⁵ The organizational structure of the Committee was a simple one consisting of the Chairman, the Secretary, the Joint Secretary and Treasurer. Brig. Thenphunga Sailo was the chairman, Zairemthanga and H.Lallungmuana Secretary and Joint Secretary respectively. The Committee established its office at Dawrpui, Aizawl, Mizoram.

The HRC was formed to realize following aims and objective;

“This Committee will endeavor to uphold the human rights of the Mizo people as guaranteed under the constitution of India”.

The Committee’s immediate objectives are two fold namely:

Firstly, it will seek judicial intervention in the matter of forcible evacuation of villagers from their villages to other places.

Secondly, it will endeavor to restore goodwill, mutual understanding and cooperation between the Security Forces and the Mizo people, thereby removing the feeling of insecurity in the minds of the Mizo people against the Security Forces,

which has been still prevailing in Mizoram. As thus it will ensure the safeguarding of individual human rights.

The Committee is non-political body. All citizens, Mizos or non-Mizos, regardless of their occupation, their religious beliefs, their political party affiliations, whether in business or Government Service who have the sufferings of the affected Mizo people genuinely at heart, are requested to lend support, either through a moral force or through prayers.

Lastly, the Committee will focus the attention of the powers that be in India on the silent sufferings of the affected Mizo people as a direct result of a para 2 (a) & (b) above, hitherto unknown to the rest of India”⁶

Briefly, the main purpose of the formation of Human Rights Committee was to oppose various atrocities committed by Indian Force operating in Mizoram to counter MNF insurgency. In an effort to realize its objectives, members of the Committee toured different parts of the state and launched campaign against rampant human rights violations in the state. They launched awareness campaign about rights of the citizens and remarkable results were seen in this regard. The public were enlightened about their rights and showed great appreciation to the venture of the Committee and at the same time the Indian Army also showed some sign of positive response. The Committee collected as many as thirty-six cases of army atrocities ranging from rape and torture to collective execution listing the names and ranks of the army officers involved.⁷ In an effort to pursue the matter, the HRC submitted memorandum to the then Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, urging her to form impartial team to investigate the allegations of human rights violations. The letter contained collection of alleged 36 cases of human rights violations as ‘only a fraction of several hundred cases which had happened since 1966’. The Committee’s report created a furor in

the Indian Parliament. It was this memorandum that made aware the Government of India about gross violations of human rights arising out of insurgency measures adopted by the Army operating in Mizoram.

The Chairman of HRC, Brig. Thenphunga Sailo by dint of his military experiences over more than thirty years exerted enormous influence upon the higher authority in the army which in one way or the other produced some positive results that put significant limit on the Army excesses. This in a remarkable way improved situation in Mizoram which eventually decreased violation of human rights to a significant extent.

The Committee again did remarkable achievement for the restoration of the rights of Thlawhbawk (temporary dwelling place for the villagers who were returned back to their original villages) dwellers. The Committee strongly condemned the Village Grouping carried out by the Indian Force and the implementation of the Assam Maintenance of Public Order 1968. The problems of 'Thlawhbawk' dwellers was to some extent solved when the government granted voting rights to people who returned to their original villages from the Grouping Centres. As a result of this development, quite a numbers of people forcefully grouped to Grouping Centres were returned to their respective villages and regained freedom that had been denied. Looking at all these events, the Human Rights Committee achieved great successes in its pursuit and the public were made aware about their basic freedom and fundamental rights under the Constitution. The Committee restored rule of law in the state. The Committee, in fact had made terminology of Human Rights well known to the people and people began to realize the importance of the term for practical purposes. People were encouraged to fight for their inalienable rights even against military might. Though very successful in its elementary endeavours, the HRC was very short lived. By 1975, the Chairman of the HRC

along with some of his friends formed a new political party called, Peoples Conference. This led to the decline of HRC and since then the HRC became almost defunct.

The contribution of HRC was quite remarkable but not without some shortcomings. The Committee was not up to the expectation as it was featured by organizational structure defect. It was nurtured and manned mainly by the Chairman, Brig. Thenphunga Sailo. Everything depends on the Chairman and the success and failure of the committee depend entirely on one person. Truly, it was a one-man team spearheaded by the Chairman himself. Some other personalities like Zairemthanga, H.Lallungmuana holding posts like Secretary and Joint Secretary respectively did not play important role nor were important responsibilities bestowed upon them. In this sense, it can be said that the Committee lack proper organizational framework that in some ways responsible for its weaknesses.

The Committee may be criticized again on the ground that Brig. Thenphunga Sailo, the chairman of the Committee set up the Committee just as a stepping-stone for the formation of a new political party. It is widely believed that Brig. Thenphunga Sailo, a man of ambition prepared a firm ground for his political carrier by establishing Human Rights Committee exploiting the prevailing situation where promotion and protection of human rights was badly needed. This approach had been proved true by the fact that within a very short period of the formation of the Committee that a new political party was formally formed out of Human Rights Committee. Though the party in its Constitution, still included promotion and protection of human rights of Mizo as one of its objectives; “The Party will uphold the aims and objectives of Human Rights Committee, Mizoram”.⁸ Yet when the Party won the election in 1978, it however did not give priority to the promotion and protection of human rights.

People's Conference Party (PC) and Human Rights.

When a new political party, the People's Conference Party was formed by Brig. Thenphunga Sailo on the 17th April 1975, people of Mizoram looked at it with great enthusiasm as the party president was believed to have been much concerned about protection of human rights of the Mizo people.⁹ In fact, the party included Human rights as one of its aims and objectives thus, "The Party will uphold the aims and objectives of the Human Rights Committee, Mizoram".¹⁰ The party having this objective as one of its main slogan, attracted great sentiment of the population as a result of which the party strength increased by leaps and bounds. In 1978 UT election, the party won the election by landslide victory and formed the first PC Ministry.

The social background at that time was so dark that there were rampant violations of human rights. People were denied their rights but there was no specific institution for the victims of human rights violation to seek redress. Restoration of normalcy in the state was the most urgent need. In this regard the party submitted series of memorandum to the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi urging her to resume peace dialogue between Government of India and the representatives of the Mizo National Front. Though, efforts of the PC Ministry could not yield tangible result for restoration of peace and normalcy in the region due to lack of consensus between the party and the underground leaders, the party deserves credit at least for its efforts.

Another remarkable effort of the Peoples' Conference Party with regard to promotion and protection of the rights of the Mizos was step taken by it for the resettlement of Thlawhbawk (temporary dwelling place) dwellers and to regain their fundamental and democratic rights which had been denied by the Government since operation of Village grouping. As mentioned earlier, following

the outbreak of armed rebellion in Mizoram in 1966, the authorities resorted to forceful grouping of villages as one of the means of fighting insurgency that caused unprecedented suffering of the villagers affecting around 80% population of Mizoram.¹¹ More sadly people who returned to their old villages were denied democratic rights that they were not allowed to have Village Council. It was in this context, the Peoples' Conference Ministry successfully pressed the Union Government to restore the institution of Village Council to several villages. The Government of India had given the recognition for the de-grouped villages and thus finally removed the wrongs that had been done to them for long. The successful effort of the PC Ministry in this regard may be cited as significant contribution for democratic rights guaranteed under the Constitution were ensured to many people settled in Thlawhbawk villages.

Again PC Ministry did some achievement for the preservation of Mizo ethnic, culture and social identity. Peoples' Conference party when came to the power in 1979 gave due emphasis on the protection of the ethnic identity of Mizo people. The Ministry adopted preventive measure to check influx of foreigners especially of the tribal like Chakmas from Bangladesh. The Central Government accordingly directed the Army Units deployed in Mizoram for insurgency duty to detect and pushing back Chakma infiltrators. One Border Security Force battalion was deployed along the western border of Mizoram and a fairly substantial number of Chakmas were pushed back.¹² Thus, the Ministry by taking concrete step for checking of infiltrators from bordering states, Mizo culture and ethnic identity has been still intact till today and in this regard the PC party deserves a remark.

The PC Ministry laid the foundation for infrastructure development in the state. During the five and half years of the PC Ministry, there were significant developments in the field of electricity, road communication, economic self-sufficiency. At the

outset of the PC Ministry, Brig. Thenphunga Sailo, the Chief Minister evolved the strategic aims of development that he used to refer to as SIX BASIC NEEDS, aiming at provision of basic essential need to the people like -Food, water supply, power, communication, transport system and rural development. Developments in these areas are in fact essential parameters of improvement of the condition of the general population. The Ministry very often pleaded the Central Government at different forums to give adequate compensation to victims of army excesses and for destruction of any properties during the anti-insurgency operations from 1966 onwards. In this regard, some success had been achieved.

However, PC party putting firmly human rights issue in the backburner, it is indeed ironic, but true, that the very P.C. Government was accused of committing serious human rights violation after it launched a bitter and bloody anti-MNF operation using the state's police force- 'Special Force'. Several MNF personnel and people sympathetic to the MNF were killed; and in the process many innocents lost their lives. It was in such critical situation that enmity aroused between the Ministry and the combined effort of Lal Thanhawla, leader of Congress party and Laldenga that resulted to the death of many innocent politicians. Killing of politicians like R.Zadinga MLA on 15th June 1982, Lalthawmvunga MLA candidate of PC party on 11.4.1984, Z.A. Kapmawia on 15th June 1982, Lalsanga Sailo on 10th May 1990, Thantluanga VCP of Sateek village on 22nd April 1983 and Roenga 10th May 1990, were no doubt the result of enmity between the underground MNF and the ruling PC Ministry.

It was in such a dark situation that the PC ministry failed to restore normalcy in the state that terror reigned supreme. Angered by extreme behaviour of Mizoram State Police, the MNF underground continued their brutal behaviour that resulted to the death of many innocent people. In the mean time the so-called

Special Force (state police equipped with almost unlimited powers designed to counter MNF underground formed by former Chief Minister, Ch.Chhunga) was blamed to have committed various violence resulted to rampant violation of human rights. Truly, in such a situation even right to live was at stake.

It may be now safe to conclude that the Peoples' Conference party which started as Human Rights Committee when came to power totally ignored its ground foundation. No concrete arrangement had been made to continue the works of Human Rights Committee and the human rights issue never occupies a due place in the PC Ministry during its five years of ruling in the state. Therefore, the very foundation of peace, promotion and protection of human rights was neglected.

Churches' Involvements for Restoration of Normalcy

The MNF declaration of Mizoram Independence in the year 1966, was followed by strong counter insurgency measures. The Indian Government called MNF independent movement as Armed Rebellion and countered it with iron fists which caused serious suffering of the innocent people. Assessing situation, the Church (Presbyterian Church) felt the need of appropriate involvement for the safety of the general masses which took a concrete form when the then Synod Standing Committee presently Synod Executive Committee held an emergent meeting at Synod Office on 13 March 1966 at 10:00AM. The Meeting formed Aizawl Citizen's Committee consisting of 18 numbers from various denominations and eminent citizens. Rev. Lalnurauva Ralte and Paul Zakhuma Hauhmar were appointed the Chairman and the Secretary respectively. The meeting also formed two Sub-Committees; Relief Committee entrusted to provide people with essential commodities and dresses, and Complaint Cell meant for reporting various grievances out of military and Police excesses.¹³ This effort significantly improved the conditions and the Government authorities also paid a positive heed to various endeavors of the

Committee. The Committee members paid a visit to different prisoners' cells where many arrested people were confined on the ground of suspicion. Due to all these efforts the masses were relieved to a significant extent. On July 14, 1966, an emergent Synod Standing Committee held at Aizawl decided to form Christian Peace Committee. The Committee entrusted following Church leaders like Rev.H.S.Luaia of Baptist Church, Rev.Zairema and Lalngurauva Ralte both Presbyterian Church as peace delegate to find out ways and means for peace dialogue between Laldenga of MNF and Indian Government. Accordingly, the Committee met Laldenga on November 3, 1966 and Indira Gandhi Prime Minister of India, Home Minister and other Officials in Delhi in the month of May. However, all these efforts did not produce a desired result and the situation rather deteriorated.

The churches' involvement for the restoration of normalcy in the state took a new turn when MNF moved Non-Mizo Quit Mizoram Order, on 10 June 1982. Lieutenant Governor of Mizoram S.N. Kohli called on different church leaders and made vehement request to them to take effort for revocation of the Order. The church however denied the request on the ground that it was not appropriate for them to involve in non-religious matter yet expressed the need of calling for meeting of all representatives of churches under the auspices of the Presbyterian Synod to improve the situation. This finally led to the formation of Zoram Kohhran Hruaitute Committee (ZKHC) or Mizoram Churches Leader's Committee on 13 August 1982. The Committee entrusted three leaders like Rev.Lalsawma, Rev.Dr.PL Lianzuala and Pastor VL Rawna as peace delegates to find solutions for peace in the state.

These leaders had series of meetings with MNF President and the Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi at different places and times. The Committee convened meeting of all political party leaders in which three representatives of party like Mizo Union,

Peoples Conference, Mizo Convention and Mizoram Congress attended in which they reached at a remarkable agreement that they will warmly welcome any kind of agreement reaching between the Government of India and MNF. Thus, the final conclusion of Peace Agreement on June 30, 1986 was to some extent result of the peace initiative of the ZKHC. It is an undeniable fact that the ZKHC's role in the whole process of peace dialogue was a great one. More importantly, the voice of churches during the whole period of insurgency produced a significant result in minimizing sufferings of the innocent people and put significant limits on the brutal behavior of both the MNF underground and Indian forces.

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Reading Insurgency from MNF Army Perspective: The Works of C.Zama

Dr. H. Vanlalhrauaia

There is a mix reaction among scholars, politicians, ethnic members and their leaders on their re-collection of MNF movement in Mizoram. Official records are often fragment which are neither exhaustive not inclusive. With the ongoing reconstruction of the state of Mizoram in post-insurgency period, literatures on insurgency have been produced in academic institutions across India. Unfortunately, such literatures rarely touch how an ethnic individual re-reads the history of insurgency. There was a time when conflict, battle and war constituted an important theme in Mizo oral tradition that Mizo heroes were the protagonists, their antagonists were either other ethnic groups, the British colonial power or even the postcolonial state. Such narratives formed an important theme in

the local construction of their past. Similarly, MNF movement is a subject where many ex-MNF activists have re-imagined themselves, and their participation in the MNF movement provide a canvas on which to express their memories. C.Zama has played an important role in the recollection of insurgency in Mizoram.

C.Zama was born in the village of Samlukhai in 1949. To pursue his education, he moved to Aizawl in 1952 and completed his primary and middle education. This period witnessed a critical condition in the Mizo hills. Uncertainty of the future usually begets identity and political crisis. On 29 October 1958, the Mizo District Council passed a resolution cautioning the government (Assam) to sanction relief funds for the approaching famine. However, the Assam government rejected the request on the grounds that such prediction of famine was only “tribal superstition”. True to the Mizo scientific observation, standing crops were devastated by millions of rats. Majority of the people who were fully dependent on jhum agriculture for their subsistence were subjected to starvation.¹ It was nearly too late when the government admitted her mistake. The famine brought havoc in almost every part of Mizo Hills. The Mizo National Famine Front offering social service to the people in time of famine was ultimately transformed into a new political party called “Mizo National Front” (MNF). On 22nd October 1961 with the aim of contesting their marginality against the government, declared-

“During the fifteen years of close contact and association with India, Mizo people have not been able to feel at home with India or in India, nor have they been able to feel that their joys and

sorrow have really ever been shared by India. They do not, therefore feel Indian”²

In February, 1966, Mizo National Front (MNF) overran many parts of Mizoram in a series of simultaneous and surprise attacks. The Indian army quickly responded with brutality which was in fact seldom seen in the subcontinent and little report to the outside world. It was under this critical situation that C.Zama attended his second year in the Government High School at Aizawl. Strongly inspired by the idea of ethnic-nationalism he joined the insurgency group (Mizo National Front) in 1966.

His experience in the insurgency war (the central theme of his various works) was a mixture of ‘ethnic heroism’ and ‘hardship’. Many times, he had been arrested by Indian army and managed to escape several times as well.

“Ka rammut lai hian India sipai nena inkahnaah vawi engemawzat ka tel a. Mihring ngaiha thihna ngei ngei turah tum 4 Pathianin min chhanchhuak a ni.” - “During the course of insurgency, I experienced many encounters with the Indian army. I was supposed to die many times, but GOD helped me escape those deaths”.³

In June 1975 he was arrested by Indian security force. Luckily, he was bailed out of jail the next year. During this period, constant talk between India and Mizo National Front took place. When the chapter of insurgency was about to close, C.Zama

continued his studies he graduated from Pachhunga University College in 1982.

When peace was restored in 1986, he dedicated his time for the recollection of ethnic memory on insurgency. His first book “*Mizo pasalthate Part-I*” (Mizo Warriors-I) was published in 1989. Based on his experience in the war between the ethnic region and larger nation state, he focused on recollection of ethnic army life in the course of war in Mizoram. Their hardships as well as their aspiration for the future Mizo society is highlighted. His second book “*Mizo pasalthate Part II*”-(Mizo Warriors-II) was published in 1990. The book is mostly based on his personal reminiscence and oral interviews of the ex-Mizo National Army. He successfully uncovered the many lost voices of the people who were actively participated in the insurgency war. Another book “*Chhim keite a fam ta, Thangrehlova chanchin*” (The death of southern Leopard: A Biography of *Thangrehlova*) was released in the same year of 1990. In the following year, another autobiographical work, “*Mi huaisen Capt. Lalhleia chanchin*” (Ethnic Warrior: A Biography of Capt. *Lalhleia*) was released in 1991. Both biographies traced two men and their self-dedication in the arm struggle in MNF movement. In the post insurgency period, both *Thangrehlova and Capt. Lalhleia* were highly esteemed among the Mizos. Their ethnic patriotic actions in guerrilla warfare have been repeatedly narrated by local people. In 2002 “*Escape*” (*titled in English*) which was more or less the same narratives (in both subject and context wise) with his previous books was released.

Prior to Insurgency movement in Mizoram, songs have served as a rich source of inspiration for communities in Mizoram. Most of these songs portray ethnic identity, nationalism, patriotism and impact of insurgency on local and individual lives. Such songs were scattered in books, news papers, magazines and personal diaries. Many songs were in oral forms which were sung occasionally by community and individual. C.Zama soon realized the need to preserve these songs for future generation. Hence, a collection of ethnic songs composed between 1961-1986 “*Mizo Hnam Hla*” (Mizo National songs) came out in 2005. In the succeeding year, three more books “Zinkawng thui” (Long Journey), “Zoram hmangaih vangin maw” (For the love of Mizoram) and “Chhanchhuahna mak leh ropui” (The Great Escape) were released.

More extensively, the author rigorously explores insurgency in the larger context by realizing the nature of many government records which are often filled with bias and ordinary people’s narratives are excluded in insurgency texts generated in India and abroad. In the author words “Many events, ethnic memories, hardship and community feeling in times of war, ordinary people’s lives are not found in standard literature. If we don’t preserve it, it will be lost forever.”

Three more books “Chengrang a au e” (The Bullet Cries), Hmarchhak Mi Ropui Pahnih (Two Great People of The North East India) and *Zoram a tap* (Mizoram Weeps) were published in 2008. ‘Two great people of the North East’ is a narrative and comparison of two individual and the most charismatic figure of insurgency politics in the North east India. During the course of ethnic identity reconstruction, the call for ‘ethno-hero’ from the past went hand in hand with the revival of ethnic consciousness.

⁴Both emerged in the same critical situation and share the same burden in the construction of ethnic nationalism in Mizoram and Nagaland respectively. Laldenga led insurgency in Mizoram whereas Nagaland insurgency was shaped under the leadership of A.Z Phizo. Though brought up in different regions, Laldenga and A.Z Phizo were good friends, motivated and inspired each others. The book enriched our understanding on the role of ethnic leaders in shaping the politic and identity of the North East India.

Zoram a tap (Mizoram Weeps) has earned a big name in Mizo literary circle and was selected by Mizo Academy of Letters as top-3 books of Mizoram in 2009. The book is empirically rich and highly original in its interpretations. Unlike many books written on insurgency in Mizoram (generally authored by male writers), the role of women in MNF movement had been incorporated in many of C.Zama works. However, it is obvious that C.Zama concern was not to reveal gender complexities in the MNF movement. Rather his interest was to document the lives of many people including men and women who join MNF movement in a narrative mode.

Besides his dedication to insurgency literatures, C.Zama has made a number of documentaries depicting people's lives during the insurgency period. The theme touch upon in these documentations includes the brutality of Indian army on Mizo women, the struggle and contribution of MNF Army. He has four credited documentaries *Zoram, ka hmangaih che*, (Mizoram, I love you), *An nun an hlan ta ram daiah* (They died for you in a lonely place), 'V' Battalion, *Thian chhan thih ngam* (Willingness to Die for friend).

We can see that C.Zama works are mostly in the form of autobiographical notes where the main subjects in most of his books are people who took part in the MNF movement. His narrative style is unique in which reader can easily travel back to the MNF movement even if we were not there at that time. No doubt the richest academic literature on North East India is on insurgency and ethnic conflict because it is very much relevant in the conflict prone situation like the North East India. However, C.Zama works are confined to Mizo readers and remains inaccessible to any other languages of India. If these texts could be made available to wider readers, perhaps it will change, the way we see, the way we perceive and the way we discuss the various complexities of North East India. It also reminds us how MNF Army narratives can be a new form of literary genre on the one hand, the critical interaction between memory and history on the other hand.

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