Chapter - III

RADICAL YOUTH MOVEMENT
IN INDIA

Universities are giving irrelevant, unrealistic wrong and defective education, if you read more, you become more foolish.

Charu Mazumdar,
Naxalite Leader
Youth Movement in India has a chequered history. Its first radical elements appeared on the eve of the Partition of Bengal. The first organized radical youth movement can be traced back to the Naxalbari uprising.¹

In 1969, under the leadership of Late Hare Krishna Konar, the legendary Land reforms Minister in Ajoy Mukherjee's United Front Government Naxalism sprang into action.² The geo-strategic location of the site was a cause of immediate concern to the Indian Government. Ideological guidelines were readily flowing from China with Chairman Mao's active support to the 'Guerrilla warfare line'.³

Presidency College of Calcutta became the breeding ground for the Naxalites with large number of students being attracted by the fashionable concept. They began joining the ranks of the naxalites.

The situation was fully capitalized by K. Sanyal who used the opportunity to indoctrinate the young and spirited community in to the ideological fold of the Movement. Of course the discontent was already simmering in due to the failure of


³Ibid., pp.46-54.
the Marxists to bring out land reforms, the trade union movement provided further input for the movement.

The Marxists, who held the land and land revenue portfolio made plans to emulate the Kerala pattern in the rural areas. The Land Revenue Minister announced in 1967 that the police of the State Government would recover land held illegally in violation of ceiling laws, and the police in rural areas would not suppress the "democratic and legitimate struggle of the people" to identify and transfer such lands.⁴

The fact was that objective conditions were emerging -- extending to areas outside the regional strongholds of the Communist parties -- that favoured extra-parliamentary tactics of peasant mobilization. In one year, 1967-68, reported cases of agrarian conflict were more than doubled.⁵ The overwhelming majority of the agitations, over 80 per cent were led by the landless against landowners over demands for increased agricultural wages, security of tenure, larger crop shares, and most important redistribution of land.

⁴The Statesman (New Delhi), 7 March 1967.

In West Bengal, law and order situation began to erode after 1969 and inter-party rivalries began to erupt in resulting murder and physical injury. While the political parties indulged in violence, murder and physical assault on a large scale were, more or less, confined to the Naxalites and the Marxists. In 1969-70, the dominant Naxalite group in West Bengal adopted what in practical reality amounted to urban guerrilla terrorism.

The involvement of West Bengal students in the Naxalite Movement could be evidently linked with a short trip of their representatives to Nepal in 1965. The Naxalite Movement did not start in that year nor was it a fact that it was the result of a sudden upsurge. Some students of Calcutta crossed the border under the leadership of Saibal Mitra and visited Nepal to meet the Chinese Ambassador. What issue was under discussion is difficult to visualize. However, it must have been something to do with the Chinese assistance for carrying out their mission in India. The Maoist philosophy impressed them immensely and they were evidently inspired by its revolutionary fervour. They brought back some slogans, “Negotiate a

---


5”Against Anti Party Tendencies”, People’s Democracy, 3 July 1967, 10 August 1967.

6Jawaid, n., p.6.
boundary settlement with China", "Mao Tse-tung Zindabad" (Long live Mao Tse-tung). Until 1966, the rigorous attitude of the students and the manner in which they tried to direct the attention of the authorities towards the problem remained within the limits of demonstrations, sending deputation to the University administration as well as to the Government. The situation took a serious turn when in 1966, several students of the Presidency College, Calcutta, were suspended or expelled for taking part in the protest strike. These students, so punished, joined the Leftist group with the CPI(M).

These revolutionary students of Calcutta directed their attention to Debra district. In that area the movement began in the form of economic struggle as early as 1967 under the CPI(M) against black-marketeers and hoarders. On the question of wages, the agricultural labourers joined the movement. In 1968, the leadership of Debra district switched its allegiance over to the CPI (ML), but it was not until Mazumdar propagated his policy of annihilation that the CPI (ML) could register a significant progress.

Meanwhile, Mazumdar, who seemed to be well-wisher of the students, declared that "they should not take part in the students' union elections and

\[\text{Gupta, B.D., } \text{The Naxalite Movement} \text{ (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1974), pp.76-77.}\]

\[\text{Ibid., pp.89-90.}\]
concentrate on revolutionary work". As a large number of students shifted their activities to the villages and instigated the villages so as to bring them into the fold of Maoism.

From the early 1970, the teenagers joined the students. They launched a series of attacks on the memorials of national leaders, smashed Gandhi centre in Jadavpur University and killed the Vice-Chancellor. They even destroyed the laboratories and openly went about shouting that Chairman Mao says that "If you read more you become more foolish". The Naxalites distributed handbills criticising the prevalent system of education and disturbed the peaceful atmosphere of the educational institutions and repeatedly called the youth to go on strike. Most of the Naxalite students abstained from appearing in the examinations, and believed in Mazumdar's direction and shouted the slogan, 'Boycott the examinations".

---


12Charu Mazumdar Party’s Call to the Youth and Student Liberation, September 1969.


14Ibid.
professional criminals, who lived along the railway lines chose this opportunity for their nefarious activities. When they broke open railway wagons and committed dacoities, they shouted the slogan, "Mao Tse-tung Zindabad" (Long Live Mao Tse-tung).  

Some areas came under the control of the Naxalites, and they started to function as their strongholds. They did not permit the police or other government officials to enter these strongholds. They had their own armed squads, which controlled the administration, school and other public activities in these localities, and People's Courts were administrating justice. In these strongholds, it was the normal practice that Naxalites visited the houses of their class enemies and took them to secluded open fields. Here the Naxalites assembled as a People's Court, brought chargers against the kidnapped persons and when these so-called crimes were "proved", these "enemies" were slaughtered in full public view. The next day, the head of the slaughtered person was hung at a market or other crowded place as a warning to other members of the class enemy. These methods of taking decisions, and these ruthless practices became the main cause of their unpopularity and led to the ultimate failure of the movement, in addition to their effective strategy.

Link, 30 August 1970.

Charu Mazumdar, who had assumed the role of Indian Mao Tse-tung in the eyes of the Naxalites formulated strategy of the armed uprising in an issue of Liberation.17

However, the Naxalite fervour has not totally gone. It has assumed new forms with several factions, the leading faction being the Peoples War Group headed by Kondapalli Seetaramaiah. The Group had been able to draw a substantial number of young tribals in to its fold who took up the fight against money lenders and influential landlords and who had been exploiting the tribals. The police were also not spared for siding with the powerful. Of late they have devised kidnapping and hostage as a means to release their members who were in judicial custody.18

With the atrocities and torture looming large in rural areas of Andhra Pradesh and Bihar, the Naxalites have still been firm in their ground.

In the sixties, the colleges and universities were the scene of youth agitations. It was estimated that in 1966. There were 2,206 student demonstrations of which 480 were violent.19 The prominent student agitations till 1968 had been recorded by

17Liberation (Calcutta), February 1970.
Viswa Yuvak Kendra. An overview of these agitations bore testimony to the fact that how these movements obstructed the normal functioning of academic institutions during 1968.\textsuperscript{20}

A close examination of the series of student strikes in Karnataka, Benaras, Calcutta and elsewhere in the 1960s and in Delhi during the early 1970s highlighted that in the sixties the student agitations started gradually regaining an organized form.\textsuperscript{21} Student unions came to be increasingly influenced by political parties though devoid of ideological fervour. But it was only in 1974 that the student agitations started manifesting characteristics of an articulated movement. It originated in Gujarat, spread to Bihar and was later transformed into a country wide movement.

Navnirman Samiti of Gujarat started a violent movement against spiralling prices and growing scarcity which caused untold hardship to the people.\textsuperscript{22} Situations in Ahmedabad Engineering College assumed very violent proportion when police resorted to the ruthless handling of the situation.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{20}Documents of Viswa Yuvak Kendra, 1968.
\textsuperscript{21}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{22}Race Today, August 1975, p.181.
\textsuperscript{23}Ibid., p.183.
The Chhatra Sangharsha Samiti of Bihar under the magic spell of Late Jaya Prakash Narain came to the streets with a defying mood. The call to run parallel School, colleges, universities and administration sent panic wave to the Government.  

The Students Federation of India, the students wing of Communist Party of India Marxist, at Jawaharlal Nehru University and Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad at Delhi University were also at the fore front of agitational politics in early 70s.

Contrary to expectations, the end of the Emergency did not bring peace and tranquillity to the campus. According to an official estimate, there were 7,520 incidents of student unrest in 1977, of which 1,146 were violent. The corresponding figures for 1978 till August stood at 8,838 and 1,050 respectively. State-wise, student unrest was more pronounced in Uttar Pradesh (22%), Maharashtra (21%) and Bihar (13%). Moreover, the percentage of violent incidents was only 15 for the whole of 1977 whereas the corresponding percentage for the first eight months of 1978 was 18.

---

\(^{9}\)Pandit, 1977, p.147.

\(^{29}\)Documents of Viswa Yuvak Kendra.
Marathwada Riots

An exceptional feature of Marathwada University in Maharashtra was the polarization of students along caste and community lines. On one side was the Nagasena Vana campus encompassing four colleges and hostels run by the People’s Education Society started by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, champion of the untouchables. Adjacent to it is the university campus proper. Over ninety per cent of the students on the Nagasena Vana campus were Harijans. While the government colleges reserved thirty-four per cent of the seats for students belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, their number in private colleges was negligible according to the Annual Report of the University for 1977-78.

In July 1978, the newly formed Janata and Rebel Congress coalition ministry in Maharashtra decided to rename the Marathwada University after Ambedkar. Whatever might be the motive behind this political decision, there followed riots which originated on the campus in Aurangabad and spread like wildfire throughout the State.

On the Campus, the renaming issue originated through a combination of the need to mark the fiftieth anniversary of Ambedkar’s Mahad Satyagraha with a fitting memorial and certain personal manoeuvres. The campaign had lasted for over 18 months and was almost incident free. But the aggressiveness of Dalit Panther (a
Harijan group) incited Vidhyarthi Kruthi Samiti. The issue of protective discrimination enlarged the renaming of the university into a symbolic act and it became a focus of a confrontation between the Harijans and the caste Hindus.

A ten-day-old state-wide strike which had resulted in loss of life and property was finally called off on August 6, 1978 -- even as violent incidents were reported for the first time from Bombay, Poona, Nanded, and Nagpur -- on the assurance of the chief minister that no decision would be taken unless and until an amicable settlement acceptable to all concerned was found. There now prevailed an uneasy calm in Marathwada University.26

Pantnagar Incident

The Pantnagar Agricultural University was the only campus in Uttar Pradesh which the police had never entered to tackle law and order problems. But in April 1978, it saw a protracted and violent strike accompanied by an equally brutal and persistent police action. The incident originated as a farm workers' agitation and developed into a campus versus police affair.

26Ibid.
The Pantnagar Karamachari Sangathan, which had been set up in October 1977 to represent the interests of nearly 8,000 migrant farm workers, submitted a memorandum to the Vice-Chancellor threatening to go on strike if their demands were not met. After two unsuccessful agreements, and the suspension of ninety workers, the Uttar Pradesh government declared any strike in the University illegal. The workers' retaliation resulted in the arrest of 100 workers and the posting of Provincial Armed Constabulary on the campus.

In March 1978, a procession of 6,000 demonstrators demanded among other things the repeal of the government decree declaring the strike illegal, the withdrawal of the constabulary from the Campus, and the dismissal of the Vice-Chancellor. When the demands were not met, the strike was resumed and later turned violent. The constabulary opened fire on the strikers resulting in the death of fifty-one persons and injury to many more. The university was closed on the same day. In view of the prevailing tension, the University which was reopened on April 19, was closed again on May 5.

It appears that the rich farmers of the area were interested in scuttling the strike, as they apprehended that any hike in the wages of the university farm workers, would have repercussions on their own workers whom they had been exploiting with strong-arm tactics. This was effectively countered by the parties of
the left, and some left-wing student leaders paid regular visits to Pantnagar to confer with the leaders of the strike.

With 1,100 head of cattle and 19,000 fowl uncared for, and cane and wheat crops likely to be ruined, the indefinite closure of the university by striking farm workers posed a threat of great physical and monetary loss to the university. However, the situation eased with the resignation of the Vice-Chancellor in June 1978.

The Pantnagar incident is unique in several respects. The Action Committee of the university did not allow the strike to be politicized, and in fact, it explicitly requested the politicians to keep away from it. Moreover, the post-strike behaviour of Pantnagar students was exemplary. After the strike, but for the fullest cooperation extended by the students, hundreds head of cattle would have perished, milk supply ceased, and sanitary arrangements on the campus collapsed. Most important, the strike was initiated by the workers of the university and the students joined it, with the teachers following suit. Perhaps this is the first instance in which the intelligentsia came out of its closed circle to join the workers’ struggle, thus heralding a new trend in campus activism in the country.
An Account of Student Unrest in some Other Parts of India

College students in Bangalore went on strike demanding among other things the institution of a judicial inquiry into the university affairs, removal of the Vice-Chancellor and removal of the police station from the university campus. In October the Harijan boarders of the university's Jnanabharati Men's Hostel demonstrated protesting against the "harassment and discrimination" of hostel inmates by the chief warden. Students of a Christian women's college went on strike -- for the first time in the history of the college -- demanding democratic election to the students' union of the college.

In Hyderabad, students went on strike in September 1978 demanding the resignation of a woman Minister for Women's Welfare, who had "degraded Indian women publicly". The Vice-Chancellor of Osmania University announced the closure of all the forty-five colleges in Hyderabad and Secunderabad for several weeks in view of the disturbed conditions on the Campus resulting from clashes between two groups of students belonging to the Progressive Democratic Students' Union and the Vidyarthi Parishad.

In 1979, students throughout Tamil Nadu went on strike in sympathy with striking teachers. In Pondicherry, about 4,000 students organized a procession to
protest against the proposal to merge Pondicherry with the neighbouring State of Tamil Nadu.

In Bombay, the students of St. Xavier’s College went on strike in 1977, against the continued attempts of the principal and the management to stifle free expression and democratic rights in the college. In August 1978, a strike against increased tuition charges culminated in the seizure of Bombay University by the students, whereby the university officials, including the Vice-Chancellor, were locked out of their offices.

In Patna, the vice-chancellor’s security guard opened fire when the law examinees started hurling chairs at him on September 12, 1978. The incident was sparked off when the squad detected the use of unfair means by the examinees, who later walked out of the examination hall with their question papers and answer books. In Bihar and Uttar Pradesh students agitating against the policy of protective discrimination in favour of the “Backward Classes” almost paralysed academic life for over six months.

There had been a sharp rise in student unrest in India since the end of the Emergency. In 1977, agitators in several universities demanded action against the “Emergency excesses”. The reasons for a large number of recent agitations were non-academic. Besides politically motivated agitations, issues like restoration of
democratic rights, protective discrimination, renaming of universities, alteration of state boundaries, police excesses, and purely local issues, such as bus fare increases, had disrupted the normal functioning of educational institutions.

The repeated occurrence of student unrest posed a major headache to the government and educational authorities. Intrusions by the police into a university campus has become a frequent occurrence and was no longer a news. The two-day Conference of State Governors held in March 1979 has expressed grave concern at the growth of student indiscipline in the country and had called for firm steps to curb it.

RADICALISM IN NORTH EAST

North Eastern states of India which once presented a picturesque serene environment of peace and tranquillity have been in the midst of a turmoil today. Insurgent activities reinforced by militants have held the entire region under the size of army or Border Security Forces.27

Unemployment, poverty, hunger and destitution have alienated the youth from the national mainstream. The Movements of All Assam Students Union, and United Liberation Front of Assam in Assam, National Socialist Council in Nagaland,

27Sunday, 15 April 1993.
Mizo National Front in Mizoram, Tripura National volunteer in Tripura have radicalism still in their agenda.

**AASU**

The Assam movement spearheaded by All Assam Students Union (AASU) is an unique Indian experience. It is perhaps first time in world, students after successfully mobilising mass support could capture the state power through democratically elected election shifting their area of operation from university campuses to the state's secretariat. The History of India never witnessed an upsurge of such magnitude that for the preservation of cultural and socio economic identity of the Assamese people. According to AASU “The simmering discontent has today erupted in a form of mass movement. It is no longer a movement today it is a mass- upsurge. Indeed a mass upheaval”.28

The steam that the movement generated engulfed the entire population of the State. “Assam is burning” and it was true.29 The movement was launched by the AASU with the motive of throwing out foreigners from Assam”. The All Assam Students Union and its office bearers have long been in the forefront of many a

---


29 All Assam Minorities Co-ordination Committee, “Assam Movement Anatomized”. 
struggle in Assam. There have been successful agitation to establish a university at Guwahati, the setting up of a refinery at Noormate and also 1969, 1972 agitations to set Assamese accepted as the medium of language through which education was to be imparted after the manner of other states of the Union, where the local language was thus used.\textsuperscript{9} The detection and deportation of aliens was one of the 21 demands submitted by the AASU to the Government in 1974.\textsuperscript{10} In April 1979, the election commissioner began the business of updating the Mangaldor Parliamentary constituency with the view of conducting a poll. Within a short span of time some 70,000 complaints were registered against the foreigners. After a close scrutiny of the objections Election Commission ruled that they were valid in more than 45,000 cases. They meant that 64.28 per cent of charges were upheld. "The question began agitating the minds of responsible Assamese and the first organization to take a lead in the situation was the All Assam Students Union (AASU) followed closely by a number of regional parties like Jatiyabadi Dal, Purbachaliya Lok Parishad and also by the literary organization, the Assam Sahitya Sabha.\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{9}Ibid., p.8.


\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., p.16.
On August 27, 1979, the All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad was formed, consisting of AASU, the Assam Sahitya Sabha and the Jatiyawadi Dal. The Purbanchaliya Lok Parishad, Jatiyawadi Yuva Chhatra Parishad, Assam Yuva Samaj and the Young Lawyers forum were among those who also joined the AAGP leaders. The AASU movement gave birth to different trends in Assam, many people were influenced by the movement’s activities or were inspired by the aspirations of the Students Union. The main demand of the AASU and AGP were the detection of Foreign Nationals on the basis of the 1951 National Register of Citizens (NRC) their deportation and disfranchisement by striking their names off the electoral rolls. They also demanded identity cards for the voters bearing photographs of individual voter. The organization’s version was ‘without the revision of voters list no elections could be held in Assam’.

The AASU leaders were given a Press Note (No.88) on 18 September, 1979 which read: The Election Commission has instructed that no person whose name was included in the electoral roll shall be eliminated on the ground of citizenship as the process of establishing citizenship is time consuming. Against this circular a largescale mass movement spearheaded by the AASU, was launched. In 1980

---

\(^{9}\)Ibid., p.22.

\(^{10}\)Ibid.

\(^{11}\)Ibid., p.23.
AASU threatened the Central Government with an oil blockade. There were various rounds of talk with the Government. The main demands of AASU were seven:

1. All foreign nationals must be detected and deported from our country;

2. (a) Names of foreign Nationals must be removed from the concerned electoral rolls before holding any election in Assam.

   (b) Inclusion of foreign nationals in the electoral rolls in future must be made impossible with the help of an adequate and strong machinery.

3. The border of India with the neighbouring countries must be sealed to check infiltration.

4. Necessary constitutional safeguards should be provided to the people of North Eastern region for the next 15-20 years by making necessary constitutional provisions for the Protection of the identity of the indigenous people of this region.

5. Government of Assam should be free to reject any certificate issued by the District authorities of West Bengal and Tripura.

6. We demand that the authority to grant citizenship certificates delegated to the State Government should be withdrawn by the Central Government, so that those foreigners who are detected and deported from Assam do not come back armed with citizenship certificates issued by other states.

7. Fresh nominations must be invited when election for Karbi Analog and North Cachar is announced after detection of foreigners and their deportation.*

---

*Ibid., pp.33-34.
However, inspite of the signing of the Assam accord, peace is still elusive with United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) continuing its militant tactic.

UNITED LIBERATION FRONT OF ASSAM (ULFA)

In April 1992, around 3100 ULFA militants laid down arms following Assam Government and a Section of militant outfit. Chief Minister Hiteshwar Saikia promptly announced an aid package ambitiously called the 100 per cent Special Margin Money Scheme (SMMS) to rehabilitate those who came over ground. The SMMS which promised a sum of Rupees Two lakh to each ULFA member who gave up his gun came into force from June 1st, 1992. A Committee chaired by a senior Assam bureaucrat, N.N. Basu, Director of Industries was also set up to implement the SMMS.

The Scheme as envisaged by Barua had three distinct phases.

1. The first step consisted of educating the ex-ULFA cadres about the project. It is made clear that they would not get aid in the form of cash. Instead banks would help them to set up small scale industries, grocery shop or a poultry farm depending upon their aptitude and training. Those covered by the Scheme are expected to repay the loan in instalments.

2. The first step completed the loans applicant would be put through a training course. Several technical institutions of the state have been roped in to provide specialized training, which would extend to 15 days at the most. The trainees would be given certificates.
3. A Project Profile is prepared by the District Industrial Centre. This is then scrutinised by a district level committee and if everything is in order the file is sent to the banks for loan. Many youth Congress leaders do not share this view. "It is more a question of attitude than to give these financial aids" retorted a Youth Congress activist while being interviewed by the Researcher.  

MIZO NATIONAL FRONT (MNF)

From Facade of Non-Violent Movement en route Violent Armed Upsurge to Conciliatory Solution

It is a sense of alienation that the Mizos do not constitute as a component of Indian mainstream gave rise to the formation of Mizo National Front. Two incidents that triggered the fire were the famine of 1959 which brought over the surface the hunger, penury and squalor of Mizo people to whom the Central help did not reach and the armed insurgency which manifested the anguish and frustration of the people. MNF was formed on 22 October 1961 with the objectives of attaining independence and sovereignty for greater Mizoram. Lal Denga and R. Vanlawma, the founder secretary of the Mizo Union, were first elected as President and General Secretary respectively. The Head Quarter of the MNF was located in Aizawl, the capital town of Mizoram Hill District. There were two divisional Head Quarters at

*Ibid.

**Interview with General Secretary of Assam Youth Congress on 14 April 1993.
Lunglei and Lawngtlai headed by Divisional Presidents. Divisional Head Quarters were divided into many blocks.

Each village under the block had party organization. Regarding the organization of the Party, in the initial phase it was divided into two groups, the political branch and the general branch. The political branch consisted of political leaders who decided the course of action to be taken to fulfill the Party's aims and objectives. They also formulated policies and framework on which the Party was to function. The General branch was constituted by the cadres of the organization.

Since 1961, the MNF started propagating for complete independence for Mizoram from the Union of India and the adjoining areas inhabited by the chins, kukis and other tribes akin to Mizos. The MNF declared to liberate Mizoram from India, to safeguard and promote Christianity. It drew a long term strategy to prepare itself for violent movements. It decided to achieve its aim by acquiring dependable support from some foreign countries.³⁹

Laldenga, an enthused propagandist himself published a daily news paper ‘Mizo Aw’ meaning Mizo Voice which voiced anti-India propaganda. Laldenga

suggested that "the Mizos should fight for their freedom from the bondage of Indian domination".\footnote{Ibid., p.3.}

The Mizo National Front based their propaganda on the following lines:

1. There is no kinship between the Indians and the Mizos. The British had also kept the Mizo Hills District separate from the General Administration of India.

2. Their country would develop rapidly and the natural resources like timber and minerals would be exploited for the benefit of the people.

3. They would get more foreign aid for economic development than that India could assign and independence could bring more prosperity to Mizos and Kukis.


5. Chakmas from East Pakistan [Bangladesh] are being settled to disrupt unity of the Mizos.

6. Christian religion is being suppressed. No major developmental project had been allotted to Mizoram in the five year plans. No technical and educational facilities are provided to the youth.\footnote{Lal Ming thanga, Exodus Politics.}

Laldenga sent out batches of volunteers to Pakistan for getting trained in Arms, guerrilla war activities, and commando tactics. By 1965 MNF started
dumping arms and ammunition in the territory. In 1966 MNF high command convened a meeting and set up its Shadow Government, styled as Government of Mizoram with its Legislature, Executive and Judiciary. The Government was based on American institution of President, and Vice-President and the Congress. The Constitution was purely on selection basis.

On 30th October 1965, MNF submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister of India. "...During this fifteen years of close contact and association with India, the Mizo people have not been able to feel at home with India, for their joys and sorrows have really ever been shared by India. They do not therefore feel India. Therefore the MNF demanded the creation of Mizoram, a free and sovereign state to govern itself, to work for her own destiny and to formulate her own foreign policy. If independence was not granted, the MNF would fight for it not by violent means but by non-violent means. The Memorandum said "Though known as head hunters and martial race, the Mizos commit themselves to a policy of non-violence and their struggle have no intention of employing any other means to achieve their political demand."

---


4Ibid., p.171.

"See Memorandum of Mizo National Front, General Head Quarters, Aizawl, Mizoram, submitted to the Prime Minister of India on 30 October 1965."
But in reality Mizo National Army, the military wing of MNF raised many battalions of the armed volunteers and trained them in Guerrilla warfare activities to fight for secession from the Indian Union.45

On 1st March 1966, MNF declared independence. In contents and tune the draft resolution echoed to the American declaration of independence. The declaration read, “In the course of human history, it becomes invariably necessary for mankind to assume their social, economic and political status to which the laws of nature’s god entitles them. We hold this truth to be self-evident that all man are created equal and that they are endowed with inalienable fundamental human rights and dignity of human rights and dignity of human persons, and to secure their rights, Governments are instituted among men deriving their just powers from the consent of this. It is the right of the people to alter, change, modify and abolish it, and institute a new government laying its foundation on the same principle and organise its powers in such forms as to them, shall seem most likely to effect their rights and dignity. The Mizos created and moulded in to nation and as such by nature’s god,

45Source from the records maintained by the Deputy Commissioner, Aizawl, December 1965.
have been intolerably dominated by the People of India in contravention to the laws of nature."

It further accused the Government of India for violating the Charters of the United Nations and its universal declaration of Human Rights. Sensing the Secessionist trend of the movement the Government of India declared the MNF as an unlawful organization and also banned it vide notification on 6 March 1966 which was published in an Extraordinary Gazette of India, (Part-II, Section 3, Sub-Section 1 of 6 March 1966). In later part of 1966 the MNF Chief, Laldenga, with his family and some other volunteers escaped to East Pakistan. However with the patronage of Pakistan Government he managed to live in Dacca. Since 22nd March the MNF's organized resistance had more or less ceased, the rebels took to Guerrilla warfare against the Security forces. The army operation began from March 1966. It was clearly ordered to take effective action against the small minority who had organized a campaign of violence against their own people and against the Government because they are the enemies of Society and freedom. On 30 March 1966, the Sikh column which was returning from Tulipuibari was ambushed on

*Refer to notes on Mizo on Mizo District (Unpublished), prepared by B. Pounte, District Research Officer, Cachar, Mizo District, Aizawl.


*Researchers interview with underground top leader Thangakima, 16 October 1990.
Aizawl-Sairang road by the hostiles. On 18th April 1966, the rebels kidnapped a Deputy Superintendent of Police (BM). After a few days they caught hold of a vehicle carrying Jawans of the Bihar Military Police near Kolasib and burnt every one of them alive.

On 16th May, there was an encounter between the Army and the underground rebels at village Bungmur. The encounter continued for two hours. After the encounter, the army tortured Laizama and Chhimukhuma to death. Some of the Jawans also raped a woman, she died later. Casualties on the armed forces were not known.

But in spite of brutal army operations, the MNF volunteers continued their attacks and violent acts. The indiscriminate harassment by the Security forces strengthened the identity consciousness of the Mizos. The insurgents were highly politically motivated. Their legitimate objective was to promote disorder as well as to undermine the strength and the authority of the counter insurgency forces. With worst facilities the MNF Guerrillas continued their struggle unabated. Laldenga the MNF Chief was living in Dacca, there was hardly any ordination between the leader and the insurgents, but as per an understanding between the MNF chief and Pakistani officials, the MNF armed volunteers had the supply of arms, ammunition and financial help from the country. They had also regular training in firming,
handling explosives for sabotage and jungle warfare imparted by the Pakistani army personnel.*

The Security forces had meanwhile intensified combing operations inside the territory and also patrolling along the routes to east Pakistan which resulted in shattering the Guerrillas. Even the hard core were now willing to lead a civilized peaceful life. Government of Assam in its circular vide Memo No.PLB 444/66 of 24 August 1968 offered to pardon the Militants who offers to surrender. The certain financial benefit to the volunteers who were willing to lay down their arms. Mizos who wanted peace and progress appreciated this gesture of the Government – The Government offered the third Amnesty in February 1969 which continued up to 30 April 1969. Under this provision announcement was made to release and pardon the misguided volunteers detained for offences committed against the State. This paved the way for many hardcores surrendering along with their arms and ammunition.*

The moderate intellectuals within the MNF was wanting a peaceful solution of the Mizo problem within the framework of the Indian constitution. Rift within the ranks of MNF volunteers started simmering since 1968 resulting in a serious rift among the leaders in several camps in 1970. The MNF encouraged a trend towards

*Interview by the Researcher with top MNF militants now surrendered.

*Collected from the Reports and Documents from Deputy Commissioner’s Office, Aizawl.
personality cult, helped in furthering centralization of power structure and prevented the Practice of intra-Party democracy of the Organization at all levels. There were two elements -- the system of intra-party communication and the instrument of indoctrination which ran vertically from top to the bottom of the Party. As a consequence leadership always remained with the extremists keeping away the moderate intellectuals who joined the movement much later. MNF in its basic structure was ultra conservative whereas the leadership elite was modern in outlook, realistic in its beliefs and meticulous. But Laldenga had not skilfully bridged the gap between these antagonistic currently within the MNF. Or the other hand he simply kept together the different wings, groups and factions by his unchallenged authority.

Emerging out of the debacle in March 1970, Laldenga removed Lalmunmawia from the post of Vice-President and appointed Iianzuala in his place. Similarly the chief of Mizo National Army, major General Sawmvele was are placed by the Defence Secretary Zamweia. Sawinvela was made chief Justice of MNF's refinement court.

---

Researcher’s interview with MNF high ranking officials now surrendered.

Researcher’s interview with MNF high ranking officials now surrendered.
In March 1970, Laldenga visited China to seek their help. Although there was no ideological analogy from both the sides, it was a marriage of convenience. But Mizo people did not approve this idea to seek help from a Communist country. Because most underground activists were Christian and often vowed in the name of the Cross as their symbol of commitment.

The emergence of Bangladesh also contributed in crippling the hostile activities and compelled the rebels in East Pakistan now Bangladesh to bid farewell to arms and return home. The main cause of this surrender is because of personal reasons, and problems like family, instinct of peace, quest for bread, unable to undergo the rigorous jungle life because of ill-health, hardships and prevailing other unsettled conditions. Many of them began to realise the futility of an agonizing and lingering guerrilla combat. The economic conditions of the villagers became so pitiable and miserable due to the grouping system that they could not feed the MNF volunteers indefinitely. So the bulk of the volunteers began to surrender due to the extreme difficulty of getting food for a long time.

Since the split between the moderate intellectual groups and extremists groups remained unreconciled, the moderate leaders sneaked in to Mizoram after the fall of Dacca and surrendered themselves to the Government, availing of the liberalized

terms of amnesty. Thus the Government's policy of appeasement did help the extremists to look for the reason and surrender. It definitely entailed growing loss of strength of the hard core MNF hostiles.34

After the liberation of Bangladesh, the MNF chief along with the remaining MNF volunteers escaped to Arkan Hills of Burma to set up Guerrilla camps in collaboration with Communist Party of Burma. In 1972 the MNF chief trekked to Pakistani territory where he enjoyed hospitality. before his departure, he promoted Biakchhunga to the rank of Brigadier General and appointed him as the Chief of Mizo National Army. To guide the movement in his absence, a National Emergency Council (NEC), Consisting of senior leaders of the Party was formed.35

The attitude of popular support of local population to the MNF volunteers and their movement gradually declined. The local people suffered too much from the economic hardship, miseries and were also fed up with the forceful and constant collection of money, intimidation, harsh treatment, agonizing and lingering guerrilla combat by the volunteers. The rebels objective was now narrowed down and demand for statehood to Mizoram became pressing.36

34Prasad, R.N., pp.200-03.

35Researchers interview with Top ranking ex-militants of MNF.

36Researchers discussion with Mizo Scholars.
The Mizo Hills District was elevated to the status of Union Territory (Mizoram) on 21 January 1972 and the Government was formed. The Government took many steps to rehabilitate the surrendering MNF volunteers. Some were given assignments for construction work, liberal packages were granted for poultry, piggery, land development etc. Youth were also recruited in the Border Security Force (VBSF) and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) thus bringing them back to the mainstream of national life.7

Smt Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India addressed "A new door of opportunity in opening for the people of Mizoram. This big change will also make a closer link between the Mizo People and the Union Government which will certainly open a new chapter of Progress, prosperity and good will...welfare does not lie in violence of disturbance but in having peaceful conditions in which development can take place. In this auspicious day I appeal the misled young Mizos to abjure violence, turn their energies to constructive purposes, and help their people in a meaningful and creative manner".8

Since 21st January 1972 the administration of Mizoram Union Territory began to function. The Chief Commissioner was appointed by the President to carry

7Ibid.

8"The Union Territory of Mizoram" designed and issued by the Directorate of Informations and Public Relations, Mizoram, pp.1-3.
or the territory administration till the constitution of the territory legislature and subsequent formation of the Government. The Chief Commissioner was assisted by a set of officers such as Chief Secretary, Development Commissioner and others.

After the elections the first popular Government in the State was instituted under the leadership of Chhunga of the Mizo Union (Party). The Party positions were like this, Mizo Union-21, Congress-6.

A significant trend in Mizo politics emerged when Chhungga, the Chief Minister of ruling Mizo Union and Lalthanwala, President of the Mizoram Congress Committee decided to merge unconditionally. The merger approved by the Congress high command took place on 24th January 1974. Since all the Members of the legislative Party now became Congress, there was no opposition left in the Mizo Assembly. This Chhunga Government continued till 1978.

However the major breakthrough in combating Mizo Militancy came after signing of Mizo accord by the then Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and underground Mizo militant leader Laldenga. Although at times there is strife in Mizoram today, the situation is very much under control.

*Election Commissioner's Office, Aizawl.

*Refer to All India congress Committee declaration, 24 January 1974.