CHAPTER IV

Underground Government of Mizoram

The administration of the underground government of Mizoram was not successful owing to the pressure of the Indian Army and bad communications. They ruled the whole district for a few days except Aizawl town and a few other places as stated earlier. But before they could set up administrative system they had to go underground. For a certain period of time they ran effective administration in the interior places beyond the reach of the Indian Army. Even then the administration could not be centralized since the communications were interrupted by the Indian Army and as a result the underground government of Mizoram was broken into fragments. They could not have common rules and common system of administration to follow since they had to modify them every now and then in accordance with the local situation or new development. As the local situations were not the same throughout Mizoram the administration or rules and orders were different from place to place.

When the major operation was launched the Mizo Government had to be on the run and as such, no administration could be run. Right from the beginning of the insurgency there could not be any systematic administration. Though there were Chief Commissioners in every area or Bung, no laws or rules
could be framed for the whole district, or even if they existed they could not be followed owing to the military operation. The Government of India also faced problems in running civil administration because the commanding officers of both the armies were the sole administrative authorities wherever they went. They imposed curfews without considering public convenience or administrator's opinions. There were no Human Rights, no justice, no court of law but only the rule of gun.

In those days the underground Government of Mizoram was in deep forests holding conferences and assemblies as far as practicable. They had many internal problems to solve in spite of external dangers. But ever since the major operation was launched by the Indian Army no conferences or assemblies could be organised within Mizoram any more.

Sialsir Conference: Sialsir is a remote, out-of-the-way village about 160kms to the south east of Aizawl, not connected with any other villages except by footpaths. It was selected for the venue of the MNF conference held in December 1966, owing to its difficult accessibility for the Indian Army. There was a tug of war in this conference, between the President and the Vice President (Lalnunmawia), regarding the type of government. The Vice President and a majority of the Cabinet Ministers were in favour of switching the existing Presidential type over to the Parliamentary type of government because they did not like
to serve under the dictatorial power of President Laldenga.\(^1\) However, Sainghaka, the ex-Home Minister of MNF, said that the parliamentary debate in Sialsir Conference was not on the subject of switching the type of government, but it was a matter of changing the designation of Secretaries into Ministers.\(^2\)

Most of the Cabinet Ministers considered the Presidential type of government impracticable and inconvenient for underground freedom fighters. They said that if the President, the final authority and the supreme power of the government should stay in Dhaka which is a long way off from Mizoram, and the Vice President and the Ministers were to stay in different places of Mizoram, running before the Indian Army, being unable to meet one another, Presidential type of government would not be practicable. Moreover, the President would not be able to run administration of Mizoram from Dhaka. Therefore, the Vice President and his supporters thought it necessary to give full power to the Ministers in their respective Ministries so as to enable them to run effective administration in Mizoram during the absence of the President.

The President and his supporters were afraid, on the other hand, that the Ministers would become so powerful that they would dictate, outvote, replace or even dethrone the

1. Pasalthate Rammutna - Vanhela pp 2 & 3.
2. An interview with Sainghaka.
President some day. There was an endless debate in the conference for quite sometime until the President won over some of the members to his side. During the lunch break of the session some of his supporters told the President that it would be better and safer for him to drop or replace some of his Ministers with new ones. But the President did not follow their advice for he knew that some of his Ministers were more popular than anyone of his supporters. Fortunately, they could arrive at a consensus point at last.

Before arriving at the consensus point the conference came to a deadlock when the Vice President requested the President to remain in Mizoram to supervise the internal administration and command the underground force personally. At last, they all agreed that the President should be in charge of Foreign Affairs and the Vice President was to be in charge of the internal administration with full power. Laldenga, therefore, devolved the Presidential power to Vice President Lalnunmawia. Automatically, they had full authority in their respective portfolios until the whole underground government migrated to East Pakistan (now, Bangladesh).

Before the conference could come to a close the Indian Army approached the venue of the conference from all directions. Therefore, the meeting was shifted to the jungle outside the encirclement of their enemies. Thus the conference ended smoothly. The internal administration was also reorganised
in this conference. This was the first conference of the underground MNF after their insurrection. Though it was called a conference, it was, in reality, a combined meeting of the two Houses of the Parliament.

Lungpho Conference: By the end of September 1967, about one year after Sialsir Conference a joint session of the two Houses of the Parliament was held at Rullam village. As Rullam village was attacked by the Security Force the meeting was shifted to the building of Primary School at Lungpho village, about 4 miles away from the former venue. Here the meeting was held for more than 20 days without being disturbed by the Army. The Vice President Lalnunmawia and the General Secretary S. Lianzual attended the session from their camp in the forest everyday.

The Vice President submitted two bills to the meeting for consideration. Bill No.1 was, "One person should not hold the office of the President of the government and that of the party at the same time". Bill No.2 was, "The Vice President should be accepted by both the Houses of the Parliament in their joint session as the President on the basis of the MNF constitution which stated, "In the case of President's inability to hold his office for a period of six months for any reason whatever the Vice President should occupy the office of the President automatically and this should be approved by the joint
session of the two Houses of the Parliament or by the two Houses of the parliament sitting separately, and a new Vice President should be elected to occupy the position vacated by the new President."

The bills were kept secret by the Speaker for sometime keeping it from the knowledge of even the two Secretaries of the Parliament, namely, Zahmuaka and Chawnghnuna, for he was reluctant to lay it before Parliament for consideration since it was, according to his opinion, the first open attempt to dethrone Laldenga from the Presidency of the MNF government. After all, he laid it open before the Parliament at noon of the second day. The Vice President attached to his bill the paper of devolution of power to the Vice President duly signed by President Laldenga himself.

Vice President Lalnunmawia stated in support of his bills that he wished the joint meeting of the two Houses of the Parliament should consider him to be proclaimed President in the place of Laldenga, for it was quite impossible for a man to shoulder full responsibility of war and civil administration without full power; and also, his being proclaimed President would be in accordance with the MNF constitution. The motion was moved and championed by three Senators, namely, Thangmawia, Vanmawia and Bualhranga with the consent of Malsawma Colney, the Pro Tempore Chairman of the Senate.

The motion was not opposed for sometime only because
the movers were highly educated Senators while other members of the House of Representatives were mostly without good educational qualification. At last Speaker Vanhela proposed that the combined session of the two Houses be adjourned and convert it into the Whole House Committee so that free discussion could be held under the Chairmanship of the Pro Tempore Chairman.

In the discussion, Vanhela, the then Speaker of Parliament, started to oppose the motion saying that the President, though being absent from Mizoram, had been doing his official work in Dhaka as the President. He might have been dealing with foreign countries as he was in charge of Foreign Affairs. He stated further that Lalnunmawia, the Vice President had full power to exercise in internal administration and in commanding the force since the Presidential power was fully devolved upon him with the exception of Foreign Affairs. He concluded his speech saying that the two bills of the Vice President could not be accepted. Thereupon, he was supported by the majority of the members of Parliament including Malsawma Colney, the pro tempore Chairman of the Senate.

Lalnunmawia maintained his stand saying that President Laldenga be doing his official work in Dhaka dealing with the representatives of foreign countries but not in the capacity of the President since he had handed over to the Vice President his Presidential power and office. That means Laldenga's Presidency had ended ever since he devolved Presidential power
on the Vice President which had been more than six months then. All the same the discussion ended in the defeat of the motion.

Later, Vanhela the ex-Speaker of Parliament said that if it had not been for his support and defence Laldenga would have been dethroned from his Presidency either in Sialsir Conference or in Lungpho Parliament session. However, Sainghaka, the ex-Home Minister of the MNF said that there was no proposal whatsoever for the replacement of President Laldenga in Sialsir Conference. He added that the main topic of the conference was re-designation of Secretaries which did not have any connection with replacement of President Laldenga.

MNF Party Executive Meeting at Khuangthing Village: Vice President Lalnunmawia and S.Lianzuala, the General Secretary of the MNF party called the party Executive Committee near Khuangthing village. According to the version of Vanhela, the then Speaker of Parliament, the committee was started before the due date owing to the fear of the Indian Army. He said that when he arrived at the venue of the meeting the committee had already been over. The resolutions passed in the committee, according to him, were: 1. Vanhela himself was to be replaced by Lalhmingthanga Ralte the Foreign Minister, 2. "Anhela was to hold the post of Financial Secretary of the party. 3. Vice

President Lalnunmawia was to become the Army Chief-cum-President of the party and 4. the Ministers should be the heads of the four areas, each Minister for one area. But before these resolutions were implemented the whole underground government had to leave Mizoram for East Pakistan owing to the major operation launched by the Indian Army. The names of the areas (provinces) were Lurh Bung (Eastern Area), Dampa Bung (Western Area), Phawngpui Bung (Southern Area) and Run Bung (Northern Area). According to the decision of this committee every Minister should be the administrative head of each area.

Chin Hills Operation: The underground government of Mizoram declared Chin Hills in 1967, a part and parcel of Mizoram. Therefore, in October, 1967, Vice President Lalnunmawia called the meeting of the High Power Committee which was constituted in Sialsir Conference, consisting of two MP's, two Senators, two party representatives and two service representatives. The Speaker of the House of Representatives chaired the meeting. In the meeting the Vice President put forward a proposal for Chin Hills operation. In support of his proposal he said that the work of liberation should be started in all Mizo occupied areas so as to liberate all Mizos in the same period of time leaving none of them behind to be liberated later on, since

they were all Mizos in the same degree being equal in value. Secondly, since journalists could not come to Mizoram from any country, the expansion of the area of operation would publicise the cause of Mizos to the world.

After all, the meeting of the High Power Committee refused to pass the resolution in favour of the motion on the basis of the experienced gained in Manipur operation which resulted in the enmity between Mizos and Manipuris, and also in the loss of supporters and friends in Manipur area. However, the Vice President persisted in his proposal saying, "No Mizo is so superior to others as to be liberated first and no Mizo is so inferior as to be liberated later." All the same the motion fell flat.

However, the Vice President sent Brig. Sapzova to Dhaka as a special messenger to take the President's consent for Chin Hills operation. The President refused to give his consent. After all, the Vice President decided to launch the expedition to be led by himself. Maj. Gen. C. Thangkima, the Military Secretary to the President was appointed to command the operation. But since there were many Civil authorities in the expedition who could give directions to the commander the real commander was Lalnunmawia, the Vice President of the Mizo government. Most high ranking Army officers were in the expedition force, that is, nearly the whole Mizo National Army went on the expedition, with a view to liberating Chin Hills
and occupying the area so as to enable them to establish a military base there with the help of the People's Republic of China. They planned to send a large contingent of Army into China from Chin Hills for military training and to bring weapons.

According to the plan, Brig. Sangkawia was to command the contingent with Col. Sapbawia as the Second-in-Command and Lt. Col. Kapthuama, the commanding officer of 'L' Battalion as the Adjutant. Malsawma Colney, the pro-tempore Chairman of the Senate, Senator Bualhranga, et al. were also in the operating multitude with a view to running civil administration in Chin Hills.

Well ahead of the appointed day they sent information to various Mizo posts to meet together at the Tiau river which flows on the borderline between Mizoram and Burma, on 25th May, 1968. Accordingly they moved to the rendezvous and encamped on the bank of the river. During their stay there some Burma Rifles personnel came to the camps garbed in poor clothes as humble hawkers, selling odd pieces and knic-knacks from camp to camp. In addition to this, Corpl. Sangliana, Pvt. Roenga and another private soldier who were stationed at the upstream outpost as sentries went to a nearby small hamlet to drink and happened to encounter with some Burma Rifles. For these reasons, the Burma Rifles became on guard and sent for reinforcements. Every outpost on their way were heavily garrisoned with special forces armed with sophisticated weapons.
The monsoon began to set in and events of bad omens happened one after another which caused uneasy feeling and fear in the minds of the Mizo Army, such as, cry of gibbon apes at midnight, bad dreams which were traditionally interpreted as signs of evil fortune, etc. However, they encouraged themselves by half-truth propagandas.

The plan of action was as follows:

1. **Rih bungalow and Rikhawdar village**: These two small outposts were to be attacked by 'L' Battalion under the command of Lt.Col.Kapthuama. After capturing them they should proceed to China to undergo military training.

2. **Tiddim post**: This should be taken by 'S' Battalion under the command of Lt.Col.Joseph Kapkima.

3. **Tuibual post**: This post should be attacked by 'T' Battalion commanded by Lt.Col.Zachula.

4. **Haka post**: This was a big town and the post was strongly fortified. It should be attacked and taken by 'K' Battalion commanded by Lt.Col.Chuaudinga.

5. **Falam Headquarters**: This was the biggest town and the Capital Headquarters of Chin Hills. The task of capturing this Capital was entrusted to Lt.Col.Lianhnuna, the commander of 'CH' Battalion. After capturing this town Mizo National flag should be unfurled and the civil administration should be run over the whole Chin Hills with its town as the
administrative Headquarters.\textsuperscript{5}

Actual Operation:

1. Rih lake Bungalow and Rihkhawdar operation ended in failure with heavy casualty on Mizo Army.

2. Tiddim post Operation was successful but at the cost of one private soldier of MNA.

3. Tuibual post was taken by surprise without any casualty on MNA.

4. Lunglerh Operation: This post was attacked by 'K' Battalion. They were assigned to attack Haka, but as their strength was too small for Haka they attacked Lunglerh and captured without any bloodshed.

5. Falam, the Headquarters of Burmese Government in Chin Hills was captured and the Mizo National flag was hoisted with a ceremony while the flag of the Union of Burma was lowered and furled. A great deal of money was taken from the bank but nearly the whole lot was recaptured by the Burma Army.

The 10th MNF General Assembly at Chhippui: By the beginning of March 1969 the whole population of Mizo underground crossed

\textsuperscript{5} Treasure of New Generation - Lalpanliana pp 91-93 (unpublished).
the border of East Pakistan and encamped in and near Mahmuaam village and Chippui village which were two of the Mizo villages on the Sazek range of East Pakistan along the Indian border. On August 14-15, 1969 the 10th Assembly of MNF party was called by the President. The reason why the Assembly was held, according to Vanhela, was the Vice President did not cooperate with the President and did not like to attend the Cabinet meetings even, but stayput at Rangamati town. In order to call him to the Headquarters the party General Assembly was called. 6

The agenda of the meeting was:

1. A joint session of Parliament be called at Mahmuaam,
2. The review of the "Chin Hills Operation".
3. Devolution of Presidential power to the Vice President.
4. Review of Financial position and discussion of account and
5. Party election.

Vice President Lalnummawia, aspired to become the President of the party, came to attend the Assembly. As it was the first time he came to the Headquarters ever since the whole MNF government migrated to East Pakistan, a cabinet meeting was also called just before the Assembly took place, taking the advantage of his presence in the Headquarters. Parliament Session at Mahmuaam: Soon after the MNF party General

Assembly at Chhippui the joint session of the two Houses of the Parliament was held at Mahmuam village. The agendum of the meeting was "How to address the person who presides over the joint session of the two Houses of the Parliament." Other items of the agenda were not worth-mentioning. Previously, Vice President Lalnummawia objected to address the person who presided over the joint session of the two Houses of the Parliament as Speaker and that was why this joint session discussed the subject. They resolved that "the person who, in future, would preside over the joint session of the two Houses of Parliament should, henceforward, be called Speaker and addressed as such."

Factions in MNF: Even before the upsurge of insurgency there had been a rift in the MNF organisation, especially among the leadership owing to the lack of faith and integrity. The top leader was almost always doubtful of his colleagues' loyalty to him personally and as a result he took the Defence portfolio from the hand of Sainghaka and gave it to R.Zamawia his trusted follower; and Sainghaka was put in charge of Home Ministry so as to make his leadership more secure.\(^7\) Rochhinga, the MNF unit leader of Sialsir village was instigated by Laldenga to move, in the General Conference of the MNF party, a motion for

\(^7\) An interview with Sainghaka.
the removal of Lalnunmawia from his position as the Vice President.8

In the Assembly the first item of the agenda, "A joint session of the two Houses of the Parliament" was unanimously passed to be held at Mahmuam village soon after the Assembly. The second item of the agenda was "Review of Chin Hills operation". The Assembly condemned the operation on the ground that it was launched against the decision of the High Power Committee as well as the President's written refusal which stated that the last party assembly decided that Chin Hills should remain untouched as an unredeemed part of our country called 'Irredenta'. The third item, "Devolution of the Presidential power upon the Vice President" was considered no longer in force since the President and the Vice President had then been together in East Pakistan. As to the fourth item, "Government Account" the assembly deemed it necessary to set up a Public Account Committee to control the management of the government money.

The last business of the assembly was the election of the party office bearers. According to the pre-plan, L.H. Lalmawia, who had not come down to East Pakistan was elected President of the party, Tlangchhuaka Vice President, Lalnunmawia General Secretary and Kawlchhawna Assistant Secretary. But Lalnunmawia did not accept his position. Since he refused to

8. An interview with Rochhinga.
join his new post Kawlchhawna was elected General Secretary in his place. President Laldenga proposed that Lalnunmawia should hold the post of party President. But considering his attempt to overthrow the government in the party meeting held at Khuangthing village the President's proposal was not accepted. But the motion was not carried in the conference.

The rift, not only remained unremedied among the leadership of the MNF but grew from bad to worse until it broke out into an open conflict in 1971. At this stage the Ministers considered it necessary to put the broken vessel together again to stand stronger against their enemy. They thought that internal misunderstanding could be done away with in the spirit of patriotism in the face of danger of being annihilated by Indian Army. They, therefore, put a pressure on the President to organise a public meeting where every disputed point and misunderstanding could be amicably settled. Accordingly, a public meeting was organised at Chhantlang the Headquarters of the MNF.

In his public address Laldenga stated that he did not have any ray of hop for independence of Mizoram, neither could he see a glimmer of light from any quarter of the globe. He stated further that he was at a loss to where and how he would lead his people. After all, he said, however, he was

good leader to lead the people out of India but a no-good leader
to lead them back to India, or anyone or any group intending
to lead the people back to India should be classified as an
enemy or enemies of the nation. "In case the time comes when
I would like to lead the people back to India, mark my word,
you soldiers of freedom, you must dare to shoot me right at
my forehead, otherwise, you would not be worthy of being Mizo
youngmen." The opposition group took him for instigating the
armed force to kill them, because he accused them of intending
to lead the people back to India through negotiation.

When asked as to what to do since he himself had no
hope of getting independence in the near future Laldenga said
that he would adopt a long-term policy, say, for thirty years
or fifty during which the underground people would grow teak
or ginger in order to earn their livelihood and in so doing
the Indian Army might wear out and independence of Mizoram might
be granted by the Government of India at last. He said that
he had no choice or alternative other than long-term policy.
"If anyone knows where else to go and what else to do, let him
lead, then I will follow him" said he, challenging others to
compete for the leadership in this critical period of time.
Really, no one dared to compete for the leadership as Laldenga
was all-powerful being the supreme commander of armed forces
and the head of civil authority. In fact, his leadership
remained uncontested all through, even before and after the
insurgency though he felt it otherwise, until he entered India from Geneva.

Many of the underground people became disappointed on hearing the disappointing speech of their President. They heard him say that the freedom of Mizoram was not within sight, no wind blew in their favour from any quarter on earth and that he would adopt a long-term plan to wear out Indian armed forces. They were not at all convinced with the speech, but they simply grumbled in their respective quarters saying that the President lived with his family in safety enjoying all facilities and amenities with the best quality of education for his children at the expense of the Government of Pakistan. They added that he gave 75 p.c. of his thought for the welfare of his family and only 25 p.c. for his people and the country. They also said that anyone of them would be able to wait any length of time provided his wife and children were with him enjoying all facilities and amenities like Laldenga's family. Since some of the MNF soldiers were as young as Laldenga's eldest son they felt that he too should join the Mizo Army.

These people left hearth and home in the hope of getting independence within a year or two. On the contrary, their leader suggested a long-term plan of thirty to fifty years even after five years of underground during which many of them lost their homes (being burnt to ashes by the Indian Security Forces), some of their nearest and dearest passed away, some
of them in prison and the whereabouts of some others were unknown and untraceable. Moreover, these people lived a very hard life because their supplies were very irregular. Of and on, they had to go without food even for five days or more, without having proper clothes to wear. To the people in such condition the idea of long-term plan could not be appreciable nor acceptable.

Since there had been two factions in the MNF, bitterly opposing each other, the faction in power labelled the other faction 'Blue' or 'Blue faction' in derision. The main body of the intellectual persons being in the so-called Blue faction there were only a very few educated persons in Laldenga's faction. It was said by his opponents that Laldenga kept the educated and men of ability out of his clique so as to preserve the throne of the MNF exclusively for himself and to enable him to exercise absolute power unhindered.

The term 'Blue' originated from the prophecy of the late Pastor Chhawna to indicate the stage of Mizoram's freedom movement when the darkest period (stage) for the people was over but before the achievement of the freedom. He stated that during that period many of the underground people would like to lay down their arms for peaceful negotiation, or give up their struggle for full independence and accept any status lower than full independence. This prophecy was retold by Buka in the presence of Laldenga and interpreted it in his own way. Thereupon, Laldenga and cliques applied the interpretation to
the other faction, and labelled 'Blue faction'.

This labelling became a useful and effective political weapon for Laldenga in that he could make his faction believe in the prophecy and this belief, in turn, made them wait patiently for independence. By means of this prophecy he could make the blue faction hateful ever so bitterly to his faction.

This prophecy and Laldenga's interpretation made the mass arrest of the blue faction easy, for it was twisted in favour of Laldenga accusing the blue faction to have recommended and promoted among the underground people a status less than full independence. This, he harangued, was a crime to the freedom fighters for, he tiraded, it was sheer betrayal of their comrades in arms. However, whether the blue faction really recommended and promoted a status less than independence was beyond proof. Since the blue faction was not an organised body, some people somewhere might advocated anything, but it would be wrong to say that the blue faction accepted or advocated anything short of independence. Though Laldenga had no proof of the fact, yet, he had to make it a pretext for arresting them (the blue).

Sinhlutlang Scandal: As the Indian Army openly intruded upon East Pakistan territory, they approached Maikhawr, the new temporary Capital of the MNF. The MNF leaders, therefore, decided to move to Arrakan, where they said that there was a
no-man's land to occupy beyond the reach of the Indian Army and from where they could have a sea access to China to smuggle arms. They had already made an arrangement and agreement with China, for smuggling arms of different calibres through the sea route.

On their way to Arrakan from Maikhawr they had to pass through a small village called Sinhlutlang. The 'Z' Battalion, under the command of Lt.Col.Haleluia was detailed to guard the civilians on their way to Arrakan. But before they reached the village Haleluia refused to go through that route, because, he said that the leaders of the Blue made a plan that the Indian Army should be stationed in that village to ambush the MNF so that all the underground people might be captured and forced to surrender. This propaganda was spread among the soldiers and Laldeng's faction. Speaker Vanhela, the staunch supporter of Laldenga, said, however, that the propaganda was incredible and beyond proof. Since 'Z' Battalion refused to go along with the civilians, the whole exodus had to turn their route to the interior of East Pakistan. If the leaders of the exodus really desired to surrender to the Indian Security Force, and if the Security Force were really stationed at Sinhlutlang as propagated by Lt.Col.Haleluia, they should have kept on going to Sinhlutlang without 'Z' Battalion, to surrender there. But since they turned their way to the other

10. Pasalthate Rammunna - Vanhela. pp 25, 26
direction it seemed that they did not plan to surrender or Haleluia's propaganda was false.

Since the 'Z' Battalion rebelled against the civil authority the whole civil population dared not take such a long journey without military guard and had to stay at Mainimukh and Lungkudu for sometime. It was here that the leaders of the so-called Blue Faction, including their so-called supporters were arrested on 13th May, 1971. On their way to Mainimukh, i.e. just before the mass arrest, they had the second term election in the forest of East Pakistan. This election was the continuation of the election held at Maikhawr Capital which was not completed before evacuation. Vanhela was re-elected Speaker and the old Deputy Speaker Chhunzawna was replaced by a new Deputy Speaker C.Lalthangkima B.Com.

While in Mainimukh and Lungkudu the high ranking officers of MNA, MNV officers, including all Ministers except one (Ngurkunga, Minister of Publicity), all educated and intellectual persons numbering 77 in all, in the first instance, were arrested by surprise by Laldenga's faction. The Ministers arrested were:

1. S.lianzuala Vice President
2. Lalhmingthanga Foreign Minister,
3. Lalkhawliana Finance Minister
4. Thangkima Supply Minister and
5. R.Zamawia Defence Minister. Sainghaka Home Minister was
already captured and arrested by the Indian Army before mass arrest.

The high ranking officers of MNA and MNV arrested by Laldenga were:
1. Brig. Sangkawia Commander of Dagger Brigade,
2. Brig. Muankima, Commander of Lion Brigade.
3. Brig. Lalngura
4. Col. Sapbawia
5. Col. Demkhawsia,
7. Maj. Thangzuala Sailo,

The civil high officials arrested along with the Ministers and military officers were:
1. Lalhmuaka Chief Justice, National Refinery Court, 2. Vanmawia, Chief Secretary.
3. Thangphunga M.P.
4. Rolala M.P.
5. Robula M.P.
6. Lalthangliana Roving Ambassador and
7. Lalnunmawia ex-Vice President of the Mizo underground government.

Earlier, Vice President Lalnunmawia was reprimanded by the Parliament at the instigation of Laldenga, for misbehaviour and fornication. Consequent upon the reprimand he had been deposed about a year prior to the mass arrest. Nearly all the Deputy Commissioners were also arrested. Among them Lalhrima Sailo was arrested only because he had a dream unfavourable to Laldenga. Strangely, quite a large number of them did not know that they were classified as members of the Blue faction because the list of the Blue members was prepared
without their knowledge by the ruling clique.

After a few weeks all the civilians moved to Rangamati, the Headquarters of Chittagong Tracts of East Pakistan, from Mainimukh and Lungkudu. When East Pakistan was about to fall, the Mizo underground government occupied and ruled Chittagong Hill Tracts, for the civil government of East Pakistan was dislocated and Pakistan Army was in operation to suppress the Bangladesh insurgency. So, Laldenga made use of the East Pakistan jails for keeping the blue faction in confinement.

Laldenga's prisoners were to look after themselves under armed guards. They had to cook for themselves, collect firewood from the jungles, carry water from the nearby springs or streams and collect rice and vegetables from the markets at their own expense, under strict guard. Fortunately for the prisoners of Khagrasuri jail, a pole of young tree was cut from the jungle for firewood which was long enough to reach the top of the prison wall from the ground. The pole was made into an improvised ladder by tying pieces of wood to it to serve as rungs, with ropes made from pieces of gunny bags used for carrying rice into the prison. The ladder was for climbing over the prison wall for a planned escape. But it was hid among the grass within the prison wall until the right time came for them to escape. There were many jails in Chittagong Hill Tracts and all these jails were used for keeping the 'Blue' prisoners. The Ministers and the high ranking military officers and high
officials of the Civil Service were kept together in Khagrasuri jail while others were kept in different jails at different places.

The inmates of the Khagrasuri jail earnestly prayed God that they might be given a good chance to escape from the prison. They wished that the chance should come on a Thursday night because the radio programme of Aizawl station on Thursday night was 'Choice of the people' in which all the Mizo young people were interested. The escape was tentatively planned for about 14 members of the inmates in such a way that some other members who did not intend to escape would set a transistor radio near the prison door and invite the guards to listen to it. In the meantime they would escape from behind the prison house. They prayed also that 'the would be night of escape' be rainy but not too much, so that no escapee might leave any traceable foot marks from the prison. They prayed further that the night might be so dark that they might escape under cover of darkness without being noticed by the guards and any other people outside the prison.

Miraculously enough, the prayers of the prisoners was answered exactly as they wished for on 18th September, 1971. It was dark drizzly Thursday night and the 'Choice of the people' programme started at about 8 p.m. Then 14 members of the inmates, having got their rucksacks already packed, stealthily climbed the ladder behind the prison one after another in
darkness, while the guards were listening to the radio at the door of the prison. When one climbed to the top of the wall, one swung oneself down from the top of the wall to the ground on a rope tied at the top end of the pole.

The party made good their escape. Those that escaped were:

1. Lahlmingthanga Foreign Minister,
2. Lalkhawliana Finance Minister,
3. Thangkima Supply Minister, 4. Thangphunga M.P.
5. Rolala M.P. 6. Lalthangliana Ambassador
9. Col. Sapbawia 10. V. Laichhinga,
11. Lalhrima Sailo Deputy Commissioner, 12. Lahlmachhuana,
13. Hrangzuala Deputy Commissioner and
14. Lalsanga Director of Supply.

Their escape was reported to the underground government by the remaining prisoners at 9 a.m. on the following day. Thereupon, Laldenga detailed his men to run after the escapees, but it was too late for the pursuing party to overtake them. After two days of journey through the thick forest the escapees crossed the border and reported themselves to Capt. Sarma, commander of the Indian Army camp at Phuldungsei, the nearest camp from the border. However, only seven members of the escapees reported to the camp, because another group consisting of seven members went the other way to report themselves to
the Indian authority through the good office of Rev. Zairema, who was expected to do something good for the Mizo underground as a whole. That means, since the underground government of Mizoram had nothing to expect, it would be good for both the parties to make an honourable end of the hostility. In those days the Government of India showed a fatherly attitude to the rebels by allowing them to return home under general amnesty. Therefore, Rev. Zairema was expected to be able to do something towards settlement.

The escapees thought it necessary for some leaders to plead with India for mercy for the remaining underground people who might have been within the encirclement of Indian Army; or to prepare a way for honourable settlement with India. Those who escaped felt that they had a better idea than the idea of the ruling faction, but they were not in a position to put their idea into practice. They felt also that they were more interested in the welfare of the underground people and in the fate of Mizoram than President Laldenga was. They desired to ventilate their idea to the Mizo leaders and that was why they made their escape.

It was said, before the 14 members escaped, that Laldenga told the guards of Khagrasuri jail, where the 14 members were kept, that in the event of the Bangladeshi force or Indian force attack them they should kill all the prisoners first before shooting the enemies. It was said that this order was already
issued by Laldenga before the inmates escaped. The escapees also thought that if the prisoners whom Laldenga hated most could escape, the political atmosphere among the underground people might calm down. Accordingly, since the leaders whom he thought to be most dangerous came out of his control he dared not execute his scheme against the prisoners. As a result, he set all the remaining prisoners free. That was one of the direct results of the escape.

After throwing his opponents into prison Laldenga prepared a White Paper against his prisoners to create public opinion against them, or to bring public condemnation upon them. Many believed that he intended to purge the MNF party of whom he called the Blue faction, after obtaining public condemnation. A new atmosphere was created among the underground people by the escape of the so-called ring leaders from the prison. Realising that he could not execute his evil scheme against them, Laldenga released all the remaining prisoners and apologised to them saying that it was a sheer mistake that he took his brothers prisoners, and from that time on they should live a happy and peaceful life together, forgetting as an unpleasant dream all the past mistakes and misunderstanding between them. He was compelled, moreover, by the downfall of East Pakistan, to release the prisoners because he knew that he could not afford to keep prisoners in the critical situation.

In course of time, the Indian Army was advancing from
all directions and Dhaka was about to fall. President Laldenga and his family were also within the encirclement of the Indian Army. When their way-out seemed quite impossible Ngurkunga, a cabinet Minister and Lt. Lalhleia rescued them by sheer luck.

MNF Special Assembly: A special Assembly of the MNF was called at Rangamati on June 2nd and 3rd, 1971 soon after the rescue of Laldenga and family. The first item of the agenda was the type of government which was discussed for some minutes. Since all the leaders of disaffected group had been arrested and not yet released by that time, the discussion was directed only in favour of Laldenga. They, therefore, passed a resolution that they were satisfied with the Presidential type government, and only one House of Parliament be instituted. Another resolution stated that the Parliament should constitute a judicial body as it deemed convenient. This was planned for the condemnation of the prisoners. It was planned that the Parliament should constitute the judicial body consisting of Laldenga's staunch supporters who would try the cases of prisoners in accordance with Laldenga's instructions.

However, the resolutions were not implemented owing to the disagreement among themselves complicated by the fall of Dhaka. The whole underground government had been located at Rangamati while the Mizo National Army were stationed in different places around the town and elsewhere. The Indian
Army was advancing towards Dhaka and Bangladesh liberation was imminent. But Laldenga forecasted that Big Powers of the world would not like to see the fall of Dhaka. America and other Big Power would come in aid of Pakistan, and India would also call upon Russia to come to her rescue. As a result a large scale of war would break out. Then, an escalation of war and international political turmoil would break out with Dhaka as its centre. Taking that political turmoil for granted he believed that he would be able to take advantage of the settlement of the international political turbulence to achieve independence for Mizoram. He stated further that a baby would be born out of Dhaka. By the new born baby he meant independence of Mizoram as a by-product of the political settlement of Bangladesh.

Believing that Big Powers would interfere in the war of Bangladesh liberation, Laldenga could not anticipate the fall of Dhaka. Even when Chittagong was already captured by the Indian Army, he was still illogically credulous that Dhaka was invincible, depending on the United States and other powers. However, his colleagues, Army commanders, members of the two Houses of Parliament and civil officers could no longer share his view. As a result, he was compelled to organise a meeting of all politicians, including Senators, MP's party leaders, high ranking military officers and civil officers to discuss the feasibility otherwise of escaping from the Indian Army.
encirclement.

On December 14, 1971, Gen. Niazi commander of the Pakistan Army in East Pakistan against the Indian Forces in the war of Bangladesh liberation announced on Radio Pakistan that his Army should observe cease-fire with immediate effect and all the fighters who were on the front lines should also withdraw forthwith. Nearly all Mizo underground people took the announcement for the declaration of surrender. But Laldenga was still sceptical and optimistic about it. Two days earlier the air attack of Chittagong city was heard for it was only 45 kms by road from Rangamati. But since 14th December the bombardment of Chittagong city had not been heard seemingly it had been taken by enemies. It was a wild surmise on the part of Laldenga to maintain the ideas of invincibility of Dhaka in spite of all the aforesaid adversities.

On the pressure of his colleagues, etc. mentioned above, Laldenga organised a meeting on December 15, 1971. In the meeting Laldenga did not like to give in to the demand of his people for taking to flight from the Indian Army immediately, but suggested to wait one more night to listen to the Radio Pakistan once again. On the following night Radio Pakistan did not clearly announce the fall of Dhaka. Moreover, many reports came to the President's office that the Indian paratroopers dropped at 20 kms away from Rangamati, and even at 12 kms away only. The Mizo Army fought commendably well
on all sides and their gallantry excelled that of the Indian Army and Pakistan Army. That was why they could stop the advance of the combined forces of Bhutan Army and Indian Army who sustained a terrible loss of lives at Borkol on the bank of the Karnafuli. Since all Pakistan Army withdrew the Mizo Army had to withdraw as well.

Another meeting was organised by President Laidenga on 16th December 1971. The meeting was attended by the same members of the meeting held on the previous day. Even by this time the prisoners had not been released and the meeting was held without them. Moreover, on 15th December the Indian Air Force dropped quite a large number of pamphlets in and around Rangamati, requesting the Mizo underground people to surrender. This indicated that India knew for certain that the Mizo underground were in and around Rangamati.

The agenda of the meeting was whether to attempt to escape or to surrender to the Indian Army hoisting a white flag for a sign of surrender. It should be remembered that Rangamati town is surrounded by water and the only land route open was the road to Chittagong which was already occupied by the Indian Army according to the reliable information. As such, their escape seemed impossible. Therefore, the Mizo underground had nothing to hope for. Now, the new baby expected by Laidenga to be born out of political settlement of Dhaka became abortive owing to the non-intervention of Big Powers. At this critical
point Laldenga was at his wit's end and decided, at one moment, to hoist a white flag for a sign of surrender which was, however, strongly objected by his military high ranking officers.

At another moment, he refused to believe or accept as truth that East Pakistan had already fallen, and declined to consider how to escape or surrender. While the meeting was in progress a Pakistani messenger barged into the meeting hall and delivered to him a letter from the commander of Pakistan Army detachment of Rangamati informing him that they would like to hand him over arms and ammunition with a sum of Rs.25,000/- in cash. The letter added that he (the commander) and his men were leaving for Chittagong immediately.

According to Vanhela, Laldenga was not aware of the critical situation even then. Still, he was presiding over the meeting and did not like to put forward for discussion the question of how to escape or surrender. He said, "Pakistan has not fallen; even if West Pakistan might have fallen, East Pakistan is still holding on." He was persistent even when all the members of the meeting opposed him until his brother-in-law disapproved his stand.

Only after that could they consider how to escape or how to surrender. How to escape was the first question. If escape was not possible how to surrender would be the next question. The Chairman of the meeting Laldenga was so reluctant to surrender to the Indian Army that he suggested to go down
to Chittagong where he expected the 7th Fleet of the United States to have come to the rescue of East Pakistan, so that they might survive under the protection of the fleet. But knowing that Chittagong had already been occupied by the Indian Army none of the members of the meeting could accept his suggestion. They told him that to go to Chittagong would mean to surrender to the Indian Army. The President suggested again, "Let all those who can, swim across the lake over to the other bank." It should be noted that the other bank of the lake was hardly within the offing. But Speaker Vanhela opposed him saying, "In this critical situation we must not leave behind those who cannot swim, the sick, women and children. No, that would be too cruel for us leaders to do." By this time there were some people in the civil hospital while some others whom they jailed, in prisons.

At this point Laldenga became panic stricken. He wanted to take his family apart from the mass of the people in search of safety for him and his family alone. He said to the audience, "My family and I would not be safe in the hand of India, I would, therefore, request our leaders to allow my family and me to go in search of our own security." On hearing this a great commotion suddenly broke out in protest and out of surprise. Vanhela said that the people had had a high hope

in him and he was the only leader they had to rely upon, for nearly all of the ministers and intellectual persons were in prison. If Laldenga took himself and his family away from the mass of the people, and if the other leaders and the intellectual circle were not with them, they thought that only the uneducated people would not be able to face the critical situation and their fate would be unthinkable. At the same time they realised that their enemies were approaching nearer and nearer. They were, therefore, harassed and panic stricken.

Now that their enemies were approaching closely they felt that they were not in a position to split into two factions to arrest the leaders and intellectuals, their President released all the prisoners. The whole underground population were on the horns of dilemma- whether to surrender or to attempt escape through the extensive surrounding lake by boats under cover of darkness.

In order to get out of Rangamati they had to get an adequate number of launches. But the problem was the adequate number of them might not be available. Even if they were to surrender they had to get out of Rangamati by boats and launches because they dared not wait for the arrival of the Indian Army. If they tarried at Rangamati waiting for their arrival they feared that all the children and women would be sexually molested and persecuted while the menfolk would bound hand and foot to be tortured till death or even if they survive perchance,
they would be sentenced to death or life imprisonment. Also, they knew for sure that even the whole MNF force would not match for the Indian Army.

At last, the President rose from his seat and proposed once again that a white flag be hoisted and the mass of the people should go to the Indian Army outpost at Lungkudu. The whole congregation agreed upon the proposal. Thus mass surrender was decided. Before they started for Lungkudu another proposal arose. Some of the members said that since Lungkudu was rather too far from Mizoram the Indian Army might persecute them on the way, suffering too much and some of them might even be killed before they could reach Mizoram. They suggested therefore, going to Tuipuibari following the Maini river, and taking along with them the Dagger Brigade who were stationed on the upper course of the Maini, following the river up to Tuipuibari. That suggestion was also unanimously agreed upon. But how to collect boats and launches was the deadlock.  

The number of boats and launches was very limited and in the meantime, the Indian Army were approaching closer and closer. They were, therefore, greatly puzzled. Some of them proposed a mass prayer which they did with all sincerity. Some of them bowed their heads in prayer, some knelt down and some prostrated. It was during this prayer that a low pitch

deep sound of a speed boat was heard approaching them from the
Arrakan side where they believed that a detachment of Indian
Army was stationed. They all wondered which side the speed
boat might belong to. Their prayer was much disturbed.

Very soon, a major of Pakistan Army with his orderly,
came to the meeting room and bade farewell to the Chairman
Laldenga telling him that all the soldiers of Pakistan Army
in Chittagong Hill Tracts should meet together at Chittagong.
This indicated that they were defeated. The name of the major
was Dixit. Then the members of the meeting bombarded him with
many questions, such as, where he came from and how, whether
the way to Arrakan was safe or not, what his opinion for them
to get out of Rangamati was.

He told them that he came from Arrakan side following
the Tatkawng river. He suggested that they should also follow
the same route but with utmost caution because there was a camp
on the way where the combined forces of Indian soldiers and
Bangladesh volunteers numbering 120 were stationed. Thereupon,
the members of the meeting heaved a sigh of relief.

From the light of Maj. Dixit's report the third possible
way had been opened to them. To go to Tuipuibari following
Maini river - one, to go to Lungkudu - two, and the third choice
was to escape from the encirclement of the Indian Army, by
following the Tatkawng river. The first two choices were to
surrender and the third was to escape and proceed to Arrakan.
President Laldenga, the Chairman of the meeting asked the members whether they would take the risk of sailing to Arrakan by country boats and launches rather than surrender to the Indian Army. None of them dared to give definite answer because of the risk, though they were all bent upon taking the risk of escape to go to Arrakan. Even if they chose that route there was possibility of being encountered by their enemies which they should avoid as far as possible because of women and children who would go along with them. To make the matter worse adequate number of boats and launches was not available.

At last the Vice Army Chief Biakchhunga stood up and said that the Arrakan route would be the best and safest for them to follow. He stated further that the security of women and children was in the hand of the Army, not the responsibility of the leaders and civil officers. If the choice should be made by the Army there was no alternative, he was confident that the whole population would be able to go to Arrakan safely. The people were still indecisive, for they were in doubt about the safety of the Arrakan route while they were also uncertain about the clemency of the Indian Army if they surrendered to them. However, the Chairman supported the suggestion of the Vice Army Chief. Lallawta the Quarter Master General also supported the suggestion of the Vice Army Chief saying that the security and safety of the government should be in the hand of the Army. Then they all agreed to go to Arrakan.
It must be borne in mind that the so-called Blue Faction were condemned and thrown into prisons partly because they advocated to go to Arrakan to establish a Headquarters there. President Laldenga was displeased even at the mention of 'Arrakan' in those days. But now, he has strongly advocated the occupation of Arrakan. His political forecast in the case of Dhaka and East Pakistan as a whole was totally a failure; so was the Arrakan issue. It was stated earlier in this thesis that President Laldenga said, in the beginning of the insurgency, that his colleagues had not as good political foresight as his, but now, it has been proved that he had no better foresight. Before he arrested the Blue faction he said that the idea of moving to Arrakan was non-sense. He confidently expressed that the world would not allow Dhaka to fall, and independence of Bangladesh would never be created against the will of Pakistan. But the Ministers and educated persons whom they called 'Intellectuals' firmly believed in the fall of Dhaka and the creation of Bangladesh.

The Intellectuals maintained their stand saying that since the Mizos, just a handful in comparison with Bangladeshis, were anticipating independence from a teeming millions of Indians it was certain that the larger section of the population demanding independence from the smaller portion of it would achieve their demand which was, moreover, supported and sponsored by a mighty government like India. This difference of opinion
was the only apparent immediate cause of mass arrest of the Blue faction or Intellectuals. Therefore, the Intellectuals did not understand why they were classified as the opposite faction and labelled 'Blue' while they had the same ideology with theirs and the only differences between them were about the fall of Dhaka and East Pakistan, and evacuation of Chittagong Hill Tracts which, according to them, were trivial matters. They felt they did not have any difference in ideology from the mass of the underground MNF. They called him, therefore, 'The Great Divider.'

Since the President was adamant to their proposal for evacuation of East Pakistan to go on exodus to Arakan, Lalhmingthanga, the Foreign Minister said in disappointment that Laldenga would never entertain any idea or opinion originated from anyone, other than himself, because he was afraid of being outwitted. He stated further that Laldenga wanted to show himself off as if he was the ablest man with unchallengeable wisdom.

Before this, Lalhmingthanga accompanied Laldenga to China and personally met Chinese leaders making with them an agreement to make Arakan as an elbow room for the underground Mizo Government, for this place was convenient for them to smuggle arms from China and other countries because of its sea access. The Chinese leaders agreed to supply the MNF underground with all sorts of military hardware including heavy weapons,
such as anti-aircraft guns if they could make an occupied area or an elbow room with a sea access. That agreement was also nullified by the President, only because, according to Lalhmingthanga, the idea originated from others and not of the President himself.

Compelled by circumstances Laldenga and his government had to leave, by all means, East Pakistan for Arrakan even the name of which had been so repugnant to him once, that to mention it openly had to be in danger of arrest. The meeting lasted the whole day and ended at 1 a.m. of the following night. They could leave Rangamati at 3 a.m. on 17th December 1971 by launches because the Mizo soldiers could collect the adequate number of them at last. Before they left Rangamati the MNA officers and civil officers threw their important documents into the water so that the Indian Army might not get any information about the MNF and their secrets. However, President Laldenga left all the important documents in his residence without destroying them. There were many secret documents which were beyond the knowledge of Cabinet Ministers and military high ranking officers. Some people believed that he left them purposely for Indians.

Fortunately for the MNF, the night was very dark and it was drizzling and foggy. There were 8 launches and speed boats. They followed down the Karnafuli river as far as the mouth of the Tatkawng river near Kaptai dam. They
followed the river from the mouth towards the upper course. The convoy of the launches was escorted by 'T' Battalion under the command of Lt.Col.Lunghnema (late). Some of the launches began to sink because of overloading. They, therefore, had to throw out many rifles and ammunition into the water to make their launches lighter. It was at dawn on the morning of 18th December that they started to follow the Tatkawng river from the mouth towards the upper course.

According to Tlangchhuaka, it was just before they left Rangamati that the Intellectuals were released from the jail without having any chance to meet the President. These newly released prisoners were also given arms and ammunition. Since they had been armed President Laldenga was afraid of them. So, he selected the choicest soldiers, good in fighting, to go along with him in one launch and in another launch to guard him. These two launches went well ahead of his launch keeping good distance between them.13

At about 10 a.m. on 17th December 1971 they reached a certain small deserted village on the bank of the Tatkawng river where they had breakfast. While they were taking breakfast an Indian helicopter was hovering over them. They thought that they were pursued by the Indian Army. But the helicopter flew back doing nothing.

13. An interview with Tlangchhuaka.
After the breakfast they proceeded upward and at about 1 p.m. the advanced party saw the Indian Army camp at Pharaoh as Maj. Dixit told them. They were fortunate that they saw enemies first. So, they immediately ran ashore, landed and took battle position. The second launch on which the President was on board followed them. They signalled it to run ashore. All the launches following them were also signalled to follow suit. The Mizo Army took them by surprise, killing many of them and captured 70 of them alive with their rifles. After throwing the captured rifles and ammunition into the water, they set the Indian soldiers free. In this battle only two soldiers of the MNA were wounded and none of them was killed. However, one of the Mizo soldiers was drowned.

The next morning they proceeded upwards a little further up to a deserted hamlet consisting of 7 houses only. Here, President Laldenga hit upon a new idea and told it to Speaker Vanhela. So, they landed here to have a public meeting. The President delivered a speech to the people, "This is the place nearest to the Indian Army post. We have been encountered a little while ago, and an Indian helicopter flew over us yesterday. It is sure that the Indian Army have located our whereabouts as well as our destination, Helicopters or fighters might pursue us very soon. Also, the Indian Army might intercept us and surround us somewhere in the deep jungle. Then we would not be able to save ourselves. If so, it would
be too humiliating and shameful for us in the sight of the world. Therefore, the best way, and safest measure, in my opinion, is to reduce our number by sending home women and children, those who are sick, weak and those who got tired of underground life. In that way we would be able to fight more effectively. "Speaker Vanhela supported the President's proposal and added that it was the proposal for evacuation of East Pakistan, and exodus to Arrakan why the blue faction were arrested.

Consequent upon the President's speech they organised a committee to be attended by the ranks of captains and upwards from the Army, Deputy Commissioners and upwards from the civil officers, all MPs all Senators, party office bearers, and Cabinet members. First of all President Laldenga apologised for having arrested his comrades in arms, his colleagues or brothers in the service of Mizoram. He said that it was a sheer mistake that he had arrested his fellow servants of the country. Then he announced women and children, the sick and the weak, and those who got tired of the jungle life were allowed to go home because the way to Arrakan would be long and arduous which might not be safe from air attack or Indian Army interception. Those who were fit for fighting but willing to go home should also be allowed to go home. He requested the newly released prisoners to forgive and forget his mistake as an unpleasant dream. He said also that the people who would go home would need leaders to help them on the way and to deal
with the Indian Army for them. He proposed the ex-Vice President Lalnunmawia and ex-Defence Minister R.Zamawia to be the leaders, for, according to him, they would be the most trustworthy and dependable for the same. His proposal was accepted by the committee which appointed the two persons to lead the people home and to meet Indian leaders on behalf of the MNF underground. According to Tlangchhuaka's information, Laldenqa proposed those two persons, who had been newly released from the prison, because he was afraid of them since they were the only remaining leaders of the so-called Blue Faction as other leaders escaped from Laldeng's jail. R.Zamawia said that if they were like Laldenqa they could do him harm. In this connection, he said further that on the night of the battle at Faruah Camp, some of the soldiers secretly came to him and said, "Sir, is not this the right time to kill Laldenqa? Amidst the rain of bullets no one would be able to tell whose bullet hit him, the enemies' or ours". But he did not allow them to shoot him dead, because, he said, that life is from God and it belongs to him; nobody has right to take it away. Thus he saved the life of Laldenqa. R.Zamawia said further that no prisoner of Laldenqa had a mind to take revenge on him though they held him guilty of arresting them.


15. An interview with R.Zamawia, Ex-Defence Minister of MNF.
R. Zamawia said also that President Laldenga wanted them to meet the Indian leadership of behalf of the MNF underground as a whole because their safety was not sure at all and needed to plead with India for mercy to spare their lives at least. But if they could escape safely and reach a place beyond the reach of the Indian Army, then their dealing with the Indian leadership should be treated as null and void. But Laldenga told the two leaders to plead with Indian leaders for anything possible, great or small, but at their own responsibility. He said this because he did not like to bear any responsibility for any mistake or failure.  

In his farewell speech Laldenga said that he did not know where to lead the people, it would be, therefore, necessary for women and children, the sick and the weak to go home under the leadership of Lalnunmawia and R. Zamawia for the safety of their lives under the general amnesty of the Indian Government. "To go home is for the good of the country, while to go to Arakan is also for the good of the country" said he, "and there is no reason why we should hate each other because we are all working for our country. Some of us will go home and work for our country from Mizoram while some others will go to Arakan to work for our country from there. Lalnunmawia and R. Zamawia would also negotiate with India for peace talk in any possible

16. An interview with Tlangchhuaka.
way. As you are all aware, none of us wish to surrender to India, but we all understand that it is not at all effective to fight the enemy much too mightier than we are, with the sick, aged, women and children among us. It is, therefore, good for us all that you go home. We appreciate your patriotism, your fortitude and your service for the people and the country. But please note that arms is not the only weapon to fight for freedom. You can do quite a lot from home for our cause. I appeal to you to hold fast the spirit of the MNF party and its policy. Wherever you go, whatever you do, I want you to be faithful to our country and nation" he added.

Before this public meeting, Speaker Vanhela had a private talk with President Laldenga who told him that China had not interfered in the Mizoram's struggle for independence as they expected and there was no more hope from China or any other country whatever. Such being the case, he asked the President if it would be better for all of them including the President himself, to surrender to India to contest, under his leadership, the Indian general elections for MPs and MLAs from Mizoram constituency. Since the victory for their party was certain they would be able to form a government and then it would be much easier for them to fight for independence again. But Laldenga had already said in the public meeting at Chhantiang that he could lead them out of India, but he would not be a good leader to lead them back to India and he challenged the
Mizo Army to shoot him down should he step towards India.

President Laldenga requested R.Zamawia to plead with Indian authority for the safety of his own life in particular. Then the home-going group started for Mizoram and surrendered at Damdiai camp of the Indian Army. Those who surrendered were 350. From there, Lalnunmawia and R.Zamawia were taken by helicopter to Aizawl and to Delhi while others went on foot from Damdiai camp to Lunglei where they dispersed everyone to his home.

Lalnunmawia and R.Zamawia pursued their mission meeting the Indian leadership who promised them any status short of independence. But in the meantime they received a letter from the MNF Headquarters telling them to discontinue their mission because they had opened another channel of communication with India. So, they discontinued their mission at once. However, Lalnunmawia was assassinated. In this connection, R.Zamawia did not do anything wrong and there was no reason why he should be killed. Answering the question who might be the assassins in his opinion R.Zamawia said that they could be no other persons than MNF men on Aizawl town duty by that time. He was asked further whether killing of such prominent persons could take place without proper order from competent authority. He emphatically answered, "Not at all." He added that such kind

17. An interview with R.Zamawia.
of killing could take place only at the beginning of uprising before the organisation of the MNF was set in proper order. Ever since military and civil administration had been reorganised or properly set up, no warrant of death could be issued by any authority except the President.

Answering the question why the warrant of death was not issued against him while it was issued against his fellow emissary, R. Zamawia said that Lalnunmawia went to Nagaland to trade soon after receiving an order from the MNF Headquarters for discontinuing their mission. It is probable that they mistook him for continuing their mission. He added that that was very doubtful, for they should not issue a death warrant without making proper investigation.

So much for those who returned from underground and now for those who proceeded to Arrakan. Following up the river Tatkawng from the place where they parted with the home-going group, they reached a deserted Chakma hamlet which consisted of a very few houses on 24th December. There they had a meeting and constituted an administrative body which they named 'National Emergency Committee' the function of which it was to look after the underground Mizo government during the absence of the President. Since the President was determined to go to West Pakistan the need had arisen for constituting this body. Vice President S. Lianzuala was elected chairman of the National Emergency Committee (N.E.C). The resolutions passed in the
meeting were:

1. The President and family should be sent to Rangoon to be in search of possibility to go to West Pakistan so as to deal with other countries to establish friendly relations. During his absence the whole affairs of the MNF underground should be in the hand of the National Emergency Committee (N.E.C) and the President should be in charge of Foreign Affairs only.

2. The N.E.C. should have supreme power regarding military operations, administration, etc. So, it was on 24th December 1971 that the NEC was constituted. This body consisted of the Vice President as its Chairman, Cabinet Ministers, Office bearers of the MNF party, Army Chief, all MP's, Senators and some high ranking government officials.

After giving detailed verbal instruction as to the civil and military administration Laldenga and his family, with four attendants left the mass of the underground people in the jungle. He took with him Rs 350,000/- (Rupees thirty five hundred thousand only) for ten persons of his group and left Rs 70,000/- (Rupees seventy thousand only) for about two thousand underground. This financial settlement between a few persons of President's group and the mass of the people to the tune of two thousand created a very bad atmosphere among the underground. Many of them lost faith in the leadership of Laldenga. Had it not been for the earnest appeal of N.E.C. to the people the whole organisation should have been broken
How Laldenqa went to Pakistan from Burma: Laldenqa sent Vanhlira who had a good command of Burmese language, to establish friendly relations with Burma Communist Party (BCP), who welcomed them with the hope of getting much assistance from the MNF whom they believed to be stronger than they themselves were. Laldenqa made an agreement with the BCP according to which the whole population of the MNF underground were to be accommodated by the BCP and in return the MNF should fight the enemies of the BCP alongside with them. Laldenqa took two thousand kyats from the BCP as the price of the agreement with them or as a reward for the service of the MNF force to be rendered in aid of the BCP.

Laldenqa sent Lalsanqliana Sailo ahead of them to prepare the way for them to Karachi. Lalsanqliana Sailo was taken by the BCP to Akyab as a Bawm refugee from Bangladesh. The Burmese Intelligence suspected him and interrogated him for four hours. The same questions were asked again after an hour in order to see whether his statements were true or not. Since he could give the same answer he was released and allowed to proceed to Rangoon. In his statement he mentioned Laldenqa and party who were following him soon, as his family and as a Bawm family. He gave all of them assumed names. Therefore,

18. Why was MNF Split up? - Biakchhunqa p 2.
he had to give information to Laldenqa and party to tell them their assumed names and how they should answer the interrogation. He sent information through a lady hawker, the agent of BCP. Therefore, when Laldenqa and party came they did not have much difficulty, for Lalsanqliana Sailo had got many things done for them.

While Laldenqa's group including Lalsanqliana had been waiting at Akyab for their flight to Rangoon a Pakistani consul came over to Akyab from Rangoon. Laldenqa met him and disclosed his identity to him. At this, the Pakistani consul told him that they had long been expecting him. So, they were taken to Rangoon very soon and they processed their departure for Karachi by the ensuing flight in April 1972. When they arrived at Karachi they expected that the Inter Service Intelligence (ISI) men would meet them in the airport. But since they were not met, and there was no arrangement for them whatsoever, they went straight to Zaitei, sister of Briq.T.Sailo, who married a Pakistani military officer. They stayed there for a night. Unfortunately, the 359,000/- Pakistani currency that Laldenqa took from the treasury of the MNF government was declared invalid.

The next morning they were in search of ISI office. When they found it they gave a report of Laldenqa's arrival. So, the Government of Pakistan accorded him a VIP reception. In the month of May 1972 they were shifted to Islamabad where
Laldenga was given a fashionable, spacious quarters which was wall to wall carpeted with luxurious furniture. He told the ISI men that he wanted to meet Z.A. Bhutto and the Chinese ambassador. He was provided with a car and was treated as a VVIP. In Chinese Embassy he told the Chinese ambassador that he needed a large sum of money to continue their struggle for independence from India. The Chinese Government decided to give him two hundred thousand dollars, and they asked him to appoint someone to receive the money in Chinese Embassy or Pakistan's Embassy in Rangoon. But Laldenga demanded that the money should be directly handed over to him since he was the President of the MNF. But the Chinese Embassy refused to give it to him directly. So, the money was withheld.

One day, Gen. Gilani the head of Inter Service Intelligence (ISI) met Laldenga in connection with the future programme of the MNF. Instead of telling the future programme of the MNF, Laldenga told Gen. Gilani that he wanted a large sum of money for the maintenance of his family. Gen. Gilani was much surprised and asked him why he needed such a large sum of money. Laldenga told him that he wanted to purchase a car of his own. Gen. Gilani said that the Government of Pakistan had provided him with a good car, which was at his disposal. Laldenga said that he wanted to buy a house for his own. Gen. Gilani told him that the Government of Pakistan had set aside a fashionable quarters for him and his family.
Then Laldenga told him that they came to Islamabad never to go back but to spent the rest of their lives there. He told him also that he wanted to get his money (350,000/- tekkas) exchanged. But the Pakistani General told him that all of them were only waste paper, and if they needed money his government would see to it. Lalsangliana said that Gen. Gilani was very much disappointed.\footnote{An interview with Lalsangliana Sailo.}

Since then they were shifted to the outskirt of Islamabad where they allotted Laldenga an isolated small quarters, and their monthly gratuitous grant was also cut down to tekkas 1200/- or sometimes 1400/- only which was rather too meagre for the maintenance of a family of ten members. At the beginning of every month they were visited by an ISI officer only to give money. Laldenga told the ISI officer that he wanted to meet Bhutto, the President of Pakistan. But they did not respond it. Then he told them that he wanted to meet the Chinese Ambassador. For this, they made an arrangement when he met the Ambassador Laldenga asked whether the Embassy had received any information about the arrival of the MNF contingent at the training camp somewhere in China to undergo arms training. He asked this question because he got information from the MNF Headquarters that Col. Biakvela led an MNF contingent to undergo military training in China and they had already
arrived there. He hoped that he would be able to repair his broken relationship with the Embassy. But the Ambassador tersely replied in the negative.

Since his meeting with Gen. Gilani, Laldenga had no longer been paid any attention or importance. That might be because he was seeking for asylum in Pakistan, and as such the ISI might have thought that he had no political importance for Pakistan any more. Regarding his relationship with China, Demkhawsiak, the leader of the first Mizo contingent that went to China for training, said that the Chinese leadership did not admire Laldenga, for he kept away from his people in perilous time and cosily nestled in the capital East Pakistan leaving his people without leader and shelter to face the tantrum of their enemies. He said further that the Chinese leaders told him that their leader Mao Tse Tung was always with the freedom fighters through thick and thin, even leading the famous Long March when Laldenga never went underground with his people. That might be the reason why they did not like to hand him over the handsome amount of money they wanted to give to the Mizo underground people.

So much for how Laldenga sneaked into Pakistan and now for the rest of the underground people. The second N.E.C. meeting was held on 27th December 1971 at the abandoned humb shed of Sunsong village. The committee resolved that all the MNF underground should be divided into four groups namely, A, B, C,
and D, for easy management of food. It was resolved also that some of them should be sent to Mizoram to work and to operate. Accordingly, they were sent on 4.1.1972.

The third meeting of N.E.C. was held on 24th January 1972 at Chaikhiaing village. The following resolutions were passed:

1. The people around them be educated and convinced in the cause of Mizo independence;

2. Though the people around them belong to Mizo community the administration of the Mizo underground government should not be extended to them, but steps should be taken to teach them to help the underground people in any way they could.

3. Since some members of the N.E.C. have gone home their membership should be terminated;

4. A base area be made in a suitable place;

5. No judgement should be made yet regarding the mission of R.Zamawia and Lalnunmawia as to whether it should be outside Indian Constitution or inside it. However, it was unanimously passed that a peace camp be set up.

6. Since India imposed the status of Union Territory on the Mizo people the policy of less bloodshed be adopted and the leaders of Mizoram U.T. be approached by the N.E.C. representative.

On the next day, i.e. 15th January 1972, another N.E.C. meeting was held at Mim Camp. They passed a resolution that
whereas it was reported that there were enemy agents around them a tribunal be set to try the cases of suspects and to pass an appropriate judgement on them. This was the fifth meeting of the N.E.C.

The sixth N.E.C. meeting was held on 7th February 1972 at Zotlang, near Rimaipho village. The resolutions passed in this meeting were:

1. The then ensuing Mizoram U.T. election scheduled to be held in April 1972 should be sabotaged or stopped;

2. It was unanimously resolved that land routes be opened to Pakistan and China to communicate with them so as to enable the MNF government to continue their struggle for independence, even if Laldenga's effort to establish relations with other foreign countries might end in failure.

The 7th NEC meeting was held at Laisaw camp on 15th February 1972. The meeting decided that the Army Headquarters and Capital Headquarters be shifted to Arrakan proper in compliance with the President's order. It was also resolved that the sick and the weak be allowed to go home, for they would be a burden for the whole government. Moreover, the Government of India was still opening general amnesty.

The 8th NEC meeting was held in the forest of Moduk on 25th February 1972. The meeting decided that Mizoram political leaders should be requested to refuse the status of Union Territory which was, according to them, being imposed
by the Government of India. The second resolution was that the mass of the underground be given instruction on how to live with the communists party of Burma (CPB).

The 9th meeting of NEC was held at Tongchhonqji, Arrakan on March, 1972. Before the business of the meeting was started a talk was held with Gyi Tin Monq, the leader of the representatives of the CPB, who suggested that all Mizo Army called to come into the Arrakan territory to make a base area there. He said that he would be able to give room in Arrakan. Also, he thought it necessary for the MNF to meet Chaw Mya, the Secretary and Head of the CPB in Arrakan Province. He stated further that his party allowed the MNF to visit their Headquarters at any time.

After this, the business of the meeting was started. The first item of the agenda was how to send for the Mizo Army to come over to Arrakan. It was decided that they should be ordered to come one battalion after another, otherwise, food supply and accommodation might be problems. The second item was the length of the interval between the first batch or battalion and the second one and so on. It was decided that it should be one week.

The 10th meeting of NEC was held on 10.3.1972 at the same place (Tongchhonqji). The meeting resolved that until the arrival of the first batch of the Mizo Army no operation should be launched yet. Since President Laldenga and family
had not yet found out the possibility of going to West Pakistan, they said that it would be dangerous for them if they started an operation there, and the CPB be appraised of that problem as their pretext for not launching any operation for them so far. The third item of the agenda was 'Holding of weekly meetings for the whole of the MNF underground with a view to giving instruction to their men on Mizo moral code of honour so as to win the love and support of the people around them.

However, the CPB urged the MNF to start military operation immediately, because President Laldenqa took from them ten thousand kyats for the purchase of air tickets with a promise of giving them in return the service of the Mizo Army to help them in their operations. In addition to that amount he took two thousand kyats as mentioned earlier. The CPB or BCP wanted to utilize the service of the Mizo Army for the instrument of suppressing other underground revolutionary parties around them, to lord it over them so as to enable the CPB/BCP to set up a base area in Arrakan. They wanted the MNF force also to collect taxes for them in the areas where they themselves could not or dared not collect.

The 11th meeting was held on 23rd March 1972 at Tongchhonqji. The resolutions of the meeting were:

1. According to their convenience the operation be launched in the name of the Communist Party of Burma (CPB) or Burma Communist Party (BCP). When the Mizo Army got ready they
were to give an o.k. signal to the CPB/BCP.

2. The second item of the agenda was the Chakma problem. It was reported that the new government of Bangladesh persecuted the Chakmas and about 500 Chakma youths were on the way to MNF camp in Arrakan to seek for their assistance. So, the meeting resolved that a mission be appointed to meet the Chakma youths and deal with them.

3. The Mokhs also had a problem with the new government of Bangladesh and wanted to meet the MNF. The meeting resolved also that if and when the delegation of the Mokhs came due attention be given to them as well.

4. It was also resolved that some members of the House of Representatives who had been sent to Bawm area be recalled

5. Resolved that three battalions of the Mizo Army be stationed in Arrakan, two battalions in the Capital Headquarters and another in the Bawm area and in the area between the Capital Headquarters and Mizoram.

   It was also reported that Moduk, Tausi Bazar and Ruma Bazar were frequently spied by the Indian Army helicopters. For this reason the resolutions of the last meeting could not be executed. The protecting force was considered necessary to be reinforced and a line of communication with Mizoram be opened.

   The 12th NEC meeting was held at Leiphah camp on 4th November 1972. The first resolution of the meeting was
least two delegates be deputed to Mizoram to meet the leaders of the Union Territory (U.T) and leaders of different political parties and churches. It was decided that the delegates should be appointed from the members of the NEC. The second resolution was, the operational area be divided in accordance with the old administrative areas. It was also stated that the number of persons who should be sent to Mizoram should be specified, the motto and propaganda they should spread in Mizoram should be drafted and how they should collect taxes should be drawn up and the programme of moral reconstruction should also be chalked out.

The 13th meeting of NEC was held at Leiphah camp on 9th November 1972. The meeting decided that S.Lianzuala and Chawngzuala be deputed to Mizoram to meet the leaders specified in the previous meeting. The second item of the agenda was to draft what they should say to the leaders in Mizoram. It was drafted as follows:

1. Before the achievement of U.T. status the political leaders of Mizoram taught the people that they could not take a step to bring about peace in Mizoram because they could not get in direct touch with the Central Government without going through the state government of Assam. Now that Mizoram became a U.T. they could have a direct contact with New Delhi, they should ask what kinds of steps they were going to take to bring about peace in Mizoram as early as
possible.

2. The underground government of Mizoram wanted to make the U.T. government of Mizoram understand that they would keep on fighting for independence. Since the U.T. government of Mizoram has stood in the place of the Central Government of India to fight against us, i.e. the underground government of Mizoram, it would be necessary for both of us to consider how to shed as little blood of Mizo people as possible and how to achieve peace or freedom at an early date.

3. The U.T. government of Mizoram should be not indifferent of the cause of independence which was the cause of the whole population of Mizoram. The leaders of Mizoram should be made to understand that it was for the freedom of their country that the underground people left their hearth and home, suffering every hardship and were willing to lay down their lives.

4. The Mizoram political leaders should be reminded of what they had said before the commencement of MNF movement, which were: "If and when armed revolution were started in Mizoram, the non-MNF members in Mizoram would not keep themselves aloof from the trouble but take part in the revolution". Besides they promised not to stand on the way of the MNF.

5. The leaders of Mizoram should be requested to pursue, as far as possible, the policy of Mizo integration.
6. They should be told about the South East Asia politics, Indian Sub-continent politics and Global politics. They should be told to take advantage of those politics wisely and take necessary steps accordingly.

7. They should be requested to give every possible assistance to the people who were seeking for peace and for the possibility of negotiation.

8. If the leaders of the U.T. government of Mizoram were too conceited or arrogant to demand conditions for talk, or unwilling to receive the delegates and did not like to entertain their suggestions, they should be told that the underground government would support any political party to topple down the U.T. government and the Mizo Union party. Then negotiation should be made through any party they should support.

9. It was decided also that the party to whom the MNF government would give support should be told to take offensive steps and to adopt an offensive policy.

10. If it were not possible for the underground delegates to approach the leaders of U.T. government as the head of the government of Mizoram then they should be approached as the leaders of the Mizo people.

The 14th NEC meeting was held at Leiphah camp on 10th and 11th of November 1972. The committee decided that the government machinery be established in accordance with the
decision of the MNF General Assembly. It was resolved also that a bye-law be made that should be suitable to the local situation and practicable for the situation they were in, or for different circumstances. It was resolved further that since the terms of many elected members expired a Presidential decree be issued to extend the term of the elected persons concerned unless and until the election could be held by the government.

The 15th meeting of NEC was held at Leiphah camp on 12th November 1972. The meeting decided that a tactical Headquarters be set up in Bawm area to link Arrakan and Mizoram. It was also decided that a Capital Sub-Headquarters be set up in upper Chindwin so as to develop political consciousness among the people of Chin Hills and to establish friendly relations with Kachins and Naqas so as to open a land route to China.

Leiphah camp was shifted to Lahpenkreh on 4th December 1972. On the same day, the daqqer Brigade consisting of four battalions was sent to Mizoram.

Ch.Chhunqa, the first Chief Minister of Mizoram U.T. and Lalthanhawla sent a letter to the MNF Headquarters telling them that they were desirous of meeting them. On the receipt of this letter the NEC meeting was called on January 25th and 26th 1974. In this meeting they chalked out some points to be raised in the meeting with Ch.Chhunqa, Lalthanhawla and other leaders of Mizoram U.T. The points were:

1. Whether or not possible for the Mizoram leaders to initiate
negotiation between India and MNF.

2. Whether the leaders of Mizoram would be able to persuade the Government of India to suspend the Indian military operations and to curtail their movement in Mizoram with immediate effect so as to create a favourable atmosphere for negotiation.

3. To propose a common effort to bring about peace and tranquility in Mizoram in any possible way.

4. To let the Mizoram leaders know that they failed to keep their promises to do whatever they could for the freedom of Mizoram.

5. In case the Mizoram leaders would not accept the demand of the underground government they should be told to tender their resignation from their respective posts. Malsawma Colney and Chawngzuala were deputed to meet the leaders of Mizoram U.T.

After the delegates returned from Mizoram the NEC meeting was called on 19th March 1974 to hear the report of the delegates. The report they brought was, "The leaders of Mizoram said that they would try their level best to meet the demand of the underground government of Mizoram." Therefore, the meeting resolved that the MNF government would wait and see what the U.T. government of Mizoram could do for them, regarding their demand.  

20. An Interview with Tlangchhuaka.
Tlangchhuaka said that the Mizo freedom fighters were full of spirit even though they were ill-fed and ill-clad in the face of danger of being attacked by different groups of Burmese underground as well as by the Indian Army, when they were in Leipah camp in Arrakan. The relationship between the Communist Party of Burma and the MNF deteriorated because the CPB could not use the Mizo Army to fight for them as much as they expected. Meanwhile President Laldenga's long letter from Islamabad written on 18.9.1973 was received in the Capital. This letter was read out before the full sitting of NEC, all the members of which were very much surprised to hear the content of the letter. In his letter Laldenga expressed his disappointment in his search for assistance and support from other countries. The meeting was presided over by Maisawma Colney who had replaced S.Lianzuala as the Chairman of the NEC.

The important points of the letter were:

1. No power, even small ones, not to speak of the Super Powers was willing to help them.

2. Even in this sub-continent, no power was willing to give them assistance (apparently he included Pakistan).

3. It was, therefore, necessary for them to make a settlement with India, but not necessarily within Indian Constitution.

4. In order to have meaningful talks with India the following conditions should be laid down: -

(a) Cease-fire
(b) India should allow the MNF to set up peace camps,
(c) all prisoners should be released and
(d) The status of Bhutan or Sikkim should be studied and examined.

Many of the members said that their President was disappointed and dispirited. Some of them even said that since Laldenqa had deviated from the MNF policy he should be expelled from the MNF party and the freedom movement should be carried on without him. Considering the people's high expectation from Laldenqa as he had been in Islamabad where he could meet representatives and ambassadors of many countries, what he had done so far was absolutely nothing. Before he left his people he informed them that he would be of a great help to them and to the Nation (Mizo), for, in Islamabad he would be in continual touch with other countries. Their eager expectation gave the freedom fighters endurance and fortitude in their bloody struggles in which many of them lost their lives. They also endured thirst, hunger, nakedness and all sorts of difficulties in the high hope of getting independence of Mizoram in the near future.

In spite of this disappointing letter the underground force were warming up themselves to do more works. The Mizo Army organised intensive training to step up activities. Quite a large number of Mizo Army disliked the Sikkim status or that of Bhutan to substitute the policy of full independence for
which they had fought many battles at the cost of many lives of their comrades in arms. But some soldiers worshipped Laidengna and were ready to follow him through thick and thin no matter what the goal or achievement might be.

Many members of the NEC interpreted the contents of the President's letter as an abandonment of the MNF policy which deserved a stern action against him. Malsawma Colney, the Chairman of the NEC suggested that the copies of the letter be distributed to all members for closer examination to discover the deeper meaning. The opinion of the underground people about the content of the letter was divided.

Before this meeting, i.e. on January 3, Nqurkunga, Minister of Health and Publicity submitted to the NEC meeting a proposal for settlement with India. His points were:

1. The Mizo Army be withdrawn from Mizoram and
2. any kind of settlement with India be accepted in order to launch a stronger and more effective movement after sometime.

But his speech fell flat and convinced no member.

In spite of Nqurkunga's proposal it was decided to despatch the Mizo Army to Mizoram to propagate among the Mizo people the principles and teachings of the MNF as under, that

1. They were working for God and their country:
2. They were determined to fight for the freedom of their country to the end.
3. They were determined to convince the people of Mizoram by
good deeds, good behaviour and good moral character:

4. The Mizo people as a whole were freedom fighters and that should be understood by all:

5. They strongly determined to safeguard the integrity of the Mizo people;

6. They would defend the Mizo people from anything that hindered them from rendering their valuable service to their country;

7. (a) they determined to support themselves with the quits of the people, but they were strongly determined not to take anything from the people without their permission, and

'b) they were determined to support themselves also by taking as many things as possible by hook or by crook from their enemies.

Tlangchhuaka said that after making their men to learn all these points by heart they sent them off to Mizoram with words of prayer. He stated further that they decided to dissolve the National Emergency Committee so as to restore the old system of government. In this connection they consulted President Laldenga by a letter. In his letter dated 18.5.1974 Laldenga stated that as it was difficult for him to make a nomination from a far of place like Islamabad he entrusted the party President, Tlangchhuaka to nominate suitable persons on his behalf. He stated further that the office of the Vice President
was indispensable for which the party President should nominate the most suitable person.

Since the President could not name his running mate which they could not do without, it became necessary for them to hold an election. Accordingly the election was held on 7th September 1974 and as a result Tlangchhuaka the existing party President was elected Vice President of the underground government of Mizoram. Since the old form of the government had been restored as the NEC was no longer required it was dissolved on 17th September 1974. Thus the NEC ceased to exist.

On 29th September 1974, Capt.Chalrikhumu brought a report to the Capital Headquarters that Lt.Col.Demkhawsiak was intending to collect 300 young men from Manipur area and lead them to China for military training without taking prior permission from, or without the knowledge of the Headquarters. The newly formed cabinet seriously considered the matter on November 30, 1974. But it was decided that 300 soldiers of Mizo Army be collected from various battalions and send under the command of Lt.Col.Biakvela to join the contingent collected by Lt.Col.Demkhawsiak, to go to China. The decision of the cabinet meeting was immediately executed.

In the meantime before the NEC was dissolved it was reported to the NEC that the secret talks between Indian Intelligence and the State Security Agency (SSA) the MNF Intelligence, for unconditional talk between India and MNF,
had arrived at the consensus point. The NEC, therefore, immediately pursued the matter for it was unconditional talk with India that the MNF had been demanding from the former since the beginning of the insurgency. The Government of India did not like to yield to the demand of the MNF till then. Now that the Government of India has reportedly condescended to accept the demand for unconditional talk with the MNF, the NEC enthusiastically searched for possible means for talks. While the preparation for talk was actively afoot another letter was received by the MNF Headquarters from Laldenga saying that what had been so far done in the Headquarters for talks with India should be put to a stop with immediate effect, for a communication with Mrs. Indira Gandhi had been newly opened from Islamabad. But Laldenga did not clarify his points in the letter as to the conditional or unconditional talks. It was discovered a year later, when it was too late already, that Laldenga's discovery of communication with the Prime Minister was no other than conditional talk which was offered by the Government of India right from the beginning of the insurgency.

As stated earlier Laldenga had been neglected by his former friendly countries-China and Pakistan and that seemed to be the reason why he wrote a lengthy disappointing letter from Islamabad to the MNF Headquarters. He then wanted to come in contact with the Indian Embassy in connection with peaceful negotiation. But he had no more money for moving about.
In search of Indian Embassy.

In the month of October 1973 Laldenga borrowed money from a Mizo lady Zaitei, sister of Brig.T.Sailo. With this money Laldenga sent Lalsangliana Sailo and Tawnluia to Kabul to get in touch with the Indian Embassy there. They met the military attache and told him that they wanted to negotiate with the Government of India for unconditional talks. The military attache told them that he would apprise his superiors of the matter and the result would be sent to them by letter. But no information was received for a long time. Therefore, in November 1974 Laldenga sent Zoramthanga and Lalsangliana to Kabul again, with a softer suggestion, to meet Indian representatives there. The Embassy told them that the "Quit Mizoram" order should be withdrawn first. The two Presidential envoys promised to withdraw the order with immediate effect. Since then some sorts of relations were established and the R.A.W. sanctioned a certain amount of money for the expenditure of Laldenga and his family including his attendants since then they had been living on Indian support.

In June 1975 Laldenga sent his men to Bangkok to meet Indian representatives there. In August 1975 Laldenga, his family and Zoramthanga left Islamabad to go on a European tour at the expense of the Government of India to meet a certain person by the assumed name of Singal (his real name was found to be Hassan Wali) who told them that he was an Indian.
representative, Additional Secretary of R.A.W. Before he left Islamabad Laldenga told his attendants that the Government of India told him that they would be able to bear the tour expense of his family including Zoramthanga only and not his attendants for it would be too expensive. He instructed them, therefore, to go to New Delhi to wait for him there. But as a matter of fact, it was technically impossible for his attendants to enter India unless they surrendered, or without some sorts of agreement or understanding between India and the MNF. But the R.A.W. told Laldenga's attendants that they had no problem in sanctioning money for them. So the R.A.W. sent them to Rome to meet their President there, instead of sending them to New Delhi.

When they reached Rome Laldenga was indignant at the news of his attendants' arrival and sent Zoramthanga to tell them that they should be courtmartialled and sent home because they came to Rome, according to him, at the expense of the enemies (India) which was tantamount to surrender or becoming the enemies' agents. But Lalsangliana told Zoramthanga that he himself and the President also went on the European tour at the expense of the enemies; all that they ate, bought and wore were paid by the enemies. All the same, he sent them to India where they were kept under house arrest.

Their absence from Islamabad was not noticed by the Government of Pakistan because they paid their monthly grants
only at the beginning of every month and did not visit them in between. Therefore, Laldenga and family went back to Islamabad at the end of their European tour. It was during his European tour that Laldenga wrote a letter to Mrs. Indira Gandhi from Geneva which became later, the apple of discord among the MNF underground.

His letter stated that since November 1973 his officials had been meeting the Indian representatives to discuss the question of restoration of peace and normalcy in Mizoram for an ultimate settlement of political problems. He stated further that in pursuance of those meetings and discussions he had already sent her a letter expressing his willingness to discuss the solution of the Mizoram problem within the Constitution of India. He stated also that because the Indian officers wanted to meet him personally he came out of Islamabad taking a great risk. He made a mention of his meeting with Singal, Additional Secretary of R.A.W. at Geneva. He emphatically assured the Prime Minister that he would readily accept a settlement within the Constitution of India. He however, added that Mizo social life, culture, religion and custom would necessitate some special safeguard and for this purpose some minor administrative adjustment would have to be found during the political talks.

He requested the Prime Minister to allow him to enter India so that he might inject into his underground colleagues
his belief and conviction to make them come round to his line of thinking. He made a request also that a safe conduct be granted to him during his stay in India, and facilities be extended to him in such a way that he could meet his underground colleagues wherever the Government of India deemed it suitable. He mentioned the names of persons whom he wanted to meet for the first time. He again assured the Prime Minister that he would be able to bring those people over to his line of thinking for the settlement of the problem.

Laldenga stated further that he could not, for obvious reason, tell his colleagues and people straight away that he had agreed to discuss the solution of the problem within the Constitution of India. He said also that for the same reason he had to explain everything to give them some hope. In this connection he said that he was unilaterally issuing instructions to his colleagues to refrain from operation so that the conducive atmosphere as desired by the Indian representative would be created before and during the talks. He said that he attached therewith a copy of his instruction to his colleagues. He added that the Indian armed forces would also refrain from operation. If so, he would then assure his colleagues that he had requested the Government of India for cessation of hostilities.

In the concluding paragraph Laldenga requested the Prime Minister of India to treat his letter as most secret.
In this connection he stated further that Mr. Singal promised that the letter and his intention should be guarded with utmost secrecy as he desired. He emphasized that only if strict secrecy be maintained about his correspondence with her then he would be able to convince his colleagues without feeling that he was working under any duress.

Biakchhunga, the Chief of Mizo Army Staff critically studied Laldenga's letter to the Prime Minister of India, and passed the judgement of his as follows:

There are four significant points in his letter:

1. From the first paragraph of his letter it is clear beyond the shadow of doubt that right from the beginning of his dealing with the Indian representatives Laldenga had not brought forward the question of independence of Mizoram for discussion but what he did on the other hand was seeking political solution of Mizoram problem within the framework of Indian Constitution. This might imply that he had never dreamed of or struggled for full independence of Mizoram. By the time he wrote the letter to the Prime Minister his people in the Headquarters and in Mizoram had been struggling for full independence and nothing else whatever at the cost of many lives. Moreover, the members of NEC were about to discover, through the service of State Security Agencies (SSA), the possible means for unconditional talks with India. But Laldenga stopped all their work just before it was successful.
Biakchhunga stated further that stealing a march on members of the NEC, SSA personnel and others in the Headquarters Laldenga dropped the MNF policy of independence without their consent, and accepted a conditional talk with India for a status within the framework of Indian Constitution. He is, therefore, the only revolutionary leader in the world who has ever betrayed his people in this way.

2. Laldenga, who had once declared the independence of Mizoram has now demanded in his letter to the Prime Minister only some minor administrative adjustments and safeguard of Mizo social life, culture, religion and custom within the constitution of India. Biakchhunga said, therefore, that such trifle demands were too cheap for a revolutionary leader to achieve for the price of untold suffering of the people and the blood of patriots.

3. That Laldenga sought for permission for entering India to meet his colleagues with a view to injecting into them his belief and conviction so as to let them come round to his line of thinking was abandonment of MNF policy. It is strange that he tried to lead his people back to India after saying publicly that he should be shot at his forehead provided he should lead his people back to India.

4. Biakchhunga went on saying that Laldenga stated that for obvious reasons he could not tell his colleagues straight away that he had agreed to discuss the solution of the problem of
Mizoram within the Constitution of India. Thus he dishonourably betrayed his people and the cause of the MNF for his own benefit. Thus he proved himself to be the most unreliable leader of freedom fighters in the history of the world.21

After staying in Arrakan for three years the whole government of the MNF left the place for Bawm area on March 3, 1975. On 18th March 1975 a letter of Rochunga Pudaite was received in the Capital Headquarters. He stated that he wanted to meet the MNF representatives at Pharhva in connection with the possibility of negotiation with the Indian leadership. Ngurkunga, the Minister of Health and Publicity was deputed to meet him. After waiting for more than one week Ngurkunga left Pharhva without meeting Rochhunga Pudaite who did not turn up.

Meanwhile, the Indian Intelligence Department of the MNF (SSA) and Subramanian from the Indian Intelligence Department had opened a link between them concerning peace talk. The history of relations between Indian Intelligence and the MNF Intelligence started early in the month of December 1968 when Zahmingthanga the Director of the MNF Intelligence Department told Rev.Biakvela, who pastored Kanghmun Presbyterian Church, that the MNF government was desirous of meeting the Indian representatives to initiate peace talk. Rev.Biakvela told the

matter at once to Rev.Zairema the then head of the Presbyterian Church in Mizoram, who took up the case without delay. So, on behalf of the Presbyterian Church Rev.Zairema and Rev.Lalngurauva immediately approached M.V.Thomas, the Central Joint Director of S.B.I. who was posted in Mizoram to be in charge of Mizoram affairs on behalf of S.I.B. Accordingly M.V.Thomas immediately informed the Central Government about the matter.

At the instruction of the Central Government M.V.Thomas made an arrangement, through the instrumentality of Rev.Zairema and Rev.Lalngurauva the Church representatives, for his meeting with the MNF government. They instructed Rev.Biakvela of Kanghmun village to tell Zahmingthanga that the MNF representatives should wait in a certain house of South Hlimen village on 20th December 1968. Accordingly, Zahmingthanga the Director of the MNF Intelligence, Liantluanga the Deputy Commissioner of Aizawl and Kamlova the Assistant Deputy Commissioner came to the appointed place at the appointed time to represent the MNF Government. Before they came to South Hlimen village the military operation of that area was suspended and the Army was withdrawn by the Government of India for their safety.

At 2:30 p.m. on 20th December 1968 (Sunday) Zahmingthanga and party were picked up by an official vehicle from their waiting place and a dinner was given in their honour
at the residence of Rev. Zairema. When the dinner was over they shifted to the office cum-residence of M.V. Thomas at Chandmari, Aizawl. In the presence of the MNF delegation M.V. Thomas gave information to Shillong and New Delhi by telephone. At the instruction of the Central Government of India he told the MNF delegation that India was always ready to have a talk with the MNF government on any status for Mizoram except independence. He told them frankly that secession from India was quite impossible and that was dead sure, but his government was willing to give them any status even Protectorate State or anything less than independence.

Zahmingthanga submitted the report of the meeting to the then Home Minister S. Lianzuala, who, in his turn, submitted it to the Vice President. And the Vice President forwarded the report to the President along with a letter, requesting him to come over to Mizoram to pursue the matter before it was too late. In this connection he stated further that the Government of India was preparing a major operation to be launched in Mizoram in the near future. He added that for this reason, it would be the right time for him to come over to Mizoram to pursue the matter without delay, otherwise, the Mizo people would be suppressed under the rule of guns then it would no longer be possible for them to choose any status. The Vice President sent a special messenger to bring the letter to the President across the Pakistani border. However, the
President turned a deaf year to the Vice President's request.

Zahmingthanga said that President Laldenga never liked to pursue anything initiated by others no matter how wise and how good it might be. He said further that he knew Laldenga's ins and outs, for he had been very close to him ever since Laldenga had a mind to enter upon politics. He added that Laldenga's shortcoming was that he never entertained any ideas first conceived or originated by others. So, Zahmingthanga said also that though he would always be in support of Laldenga, and he was, moreover, every inch an MNF even after the demise of his beloved leader, yet, he would always be sorry that his initiation for a protectorate state or anything like that had not been pursued only because it was not initiated by Laldenga himself.22

Zahmingthanga said that his discovery of the possibility of negotiation with India through the Indian Intelligence was the beginning of open split among the MNF into what Laldenga called Blue and the other faction led by him. He went on saying that Laldenga accused some of the MNF leaders of being willing to have negotiation with India for a status lower than full independence which he said was strongly against the MNF policy. But he has made a much cheaper end. However, according to Zahmingthanga's opinion Laldenga would have made

an achievement had he accepted the Indian offer at the right time. He said that it was deplorable that the MNF movement ended in failure, without any achievement, which was only because Laldenga's refusal to take up or entertain other's initiation.

According to Zahmingthanga's version Laldenga thought it necessary to make his position secure in that way. So, he propagated to the underground people that some of the MNF leaders (meaning his colleagues or Blue) and their followers were in favour of making peace with India. These people, he said, were the enemies of the nation and the cause of the MNF. That is why he arrested intellectual persons. In fact he himself started communicating with India sending messengers, namely, Thanthuama, Lalsangliana, Lalhleia and Lalngenga to Shillong to meet the Indian Intelligence called Research Analysis Wing (R.A.W.). He contacted through correspondence also with J.D.Baveta the Programme Executive of All India Radio, Shillong station requesting him to do everything possible for his return to India without being humiliated.

Laldenga's messengers met the R.A.W. officers for four times who welcomed them and received them well, in Shillong. The messengers were in the service of military, all of them being Lieutenants in rank. These messengers did not like to disclose their identities, not did the other party. That is, they did not know who's who of each of the parties RAW & MNF. At the beginning of every talk, both the parties took out their
guns and laid them down on the table during the talk. The RAW officers told Laldenga's messengers that India was ready for talk with the MNF on condition that independence should not be demanded. Though the messengers suggested unconditional talk they, however, told the RAW officers that they had no power or authority to change the message they brought, and their counterparts also told them that they were in the same position. Both the parties were to report the results of their talks to their respective competent authorities. The RAW officers treated Laldenga's messengers with hospitality providing them with food and protection while they stayed in Shillong. Though they did not like to disclose their identities one of the RAW officers was known to be a Mizo by the name of Zuala.

In the talks only Thanthuama and Lalnghenga were present from the MNF side because Lalhleia was always detailed to go to Aizawl to sense the political atmosphere there, while Lalsangliana was entrusted with some other missions in Shillong. Whenever they went to Shillong these messengers divided the work among themselves in the same way. However, all of them were hosted by the RAW. After every meeting the RAW officers always requested Laldenga's messengers not to discontinue the talks but to make sure to come again for further talks.

Whenever the messengers went back to East Pakistan the RAW officers always took them to the border of East Pakistan by their official vehicles pretending to go for a picnic with
their families. Before the talk could make a meaningful achievement the war of Bangladesh liberation broke out and the talks could not be continued. Had it not been for this war, a talk between Laldenga and the RAW officers would have taken place. However, after he was arrested by the Security Force at Aizawl, Thanthuama was sent to Kathmandu to meet Laldenga in the year 1974, and also, Laldenga sent letter to the Prime Minister of India for a talk. It appears that this was the letter mentioned by Laldenga in his letter to the Prime Minister which he wrote from Geneva saying, "I have already written a letter to you mentioning therein about my willingness to discuss the solution of the problem within the Constitution of India."

A meeting with Indian Intelligence: In the month of March, 1969 Vanlalngaia the Director of Military Intelligence of MNF went to Dhaka to meet President Laldenga. Laldenga took him to Hotel International for a dinner. There and then Laldenga asked Vanlalngaia to seek for the possibility of making an honourable settlement with India particularly for him (Laldenga). Vanlalngaia asked the President what he meant by an honourable settlement. Then Laldenga mentioned Sheik Abdullah of Kashmir for example. Vanlalngaia told him in reply that while the whole MNF force had been struggling for independence it would be

it would be dangerous for him to go in search of the possibility of talks with India for a status of statehood wherein the WNP President should become the Chief Minister as in the case of Sheik Abdullah of Kashmir. So, he suggested that the President should take the approval of his cabinet. Vanlalngaia said that he realized from this that President Laldenga gave more importance to his Chief Ministership than to the welfare of the people and the freedom of Mizoram.

After getting the cabinet's approval Vanlalngaia was about to set out for his mission. But Laldenga detained him for he wanted Vanlalngaia to help him established his leadership which he felt to be shaky, before he went on his mission. They, therefore, met a Pakistani representative who was known by the name of Alam, a major of Inter Service Intelligence (ISI). Laldenga said to him, "If you do not give me arms and ammunition my leadership will go dry and wither." According to Vanlalngaia's information, Maj.Alam said in his presence in a humorous way, "Arms and ammunition are needed for the establishment of Laldenga's leadership but not for the cause of the Mizoram people."24

When he felt secure Laldenga sent off Vanlalngaia on the mission of his (Laldenga's) Chief Ministership. Vanlalngaia said that the struggle for independence of Mizoram ended there.

and then for it had been converted since then, into the movement for Laldenga's Chief Ministership. "All the bloodshed and suffering thereafter became Laldenga's personal interest only" he added.

So, Vanlal ngaia sent a message to Rev. Zairema who did everything needful for his meeting with Indian Intelligence. In accordance with Pastor Zairema's pre-arrangement Vanlal ngaia met M.V. Thomas the Central Joint Director of S.I.B. at Dholai Inspection Bungalow in Cachar District on 1st July 1969. Rev. Zairema and Rev. Lalsawma were also present in the talk. M.V. Thomas told Vanlal ngaia that the Government of India was ready for talk with MNF for any status short of independence. Vanlal ngaia said that he had no shadow of doubt in the sincerity of Indian Government, for, he said, India had already planned Bangladesh liberation programme in which they wanted the MNF to fight alongside with Indian Army against Pakistan. He said further that had the MNF fought alongside Indian Army against Pakistan India would like to cede the whole of Chittagong Hill Tracts to Mizoram in return, in addition to a good status less than independence.

After the meeting, Vanlal ngaia proceeded to East Pakistan. But on his way back to Pakistan he was arrested by the Assam Police at Karimganj while crossing a river on 5th July 1969. The Central Government interfered in favour of Vanlal ngaia to secure his release. But the Assam government,
remembering that Chief Minister Chaliha was dishonestly deceived by Laldenga just before the insurgency, flatly refused to yield on the ground that the Central Government could not interfere in the state's affairs of law and order. M.V. Thomas also tried his level best for the release of Vanlalngaia informing the State authority of Assam that Vanlalngaia was playing a very important role for India as well as for the MNF government. But the Government of Assam remained adamant.

According to Vanlalngaia's opinion, the Central Government could not put a strong pressure on the Government of Assam due to the unpopularity of Congress (I) in those days throughout the country except in Assam. Such being the case, the arrest of Vanlalngaia the emissary of the MNF President to search for an honourable settlement with India like that of Kashmir was published in the newspapers of India on the following day. That was a hard hit on Laldenga, for his disappointment in his struggle for independence was publicised; and also this was tantamount to betrayal of Pakistan which was his refuge and rice bowl.

In order to make the best of the bad job Laldenga had to denounce Vanlalngaia's mission denying that he sent him on the mission. "In his attempt to regain Pakistan's confidence Laldenga condemned all the activities he had so far performed for the achievement of peace talks or honourable settlement denying that he himself manipulated all these..."
activities. He condemned some of the people he had already convinced of the need for making peace with India, labelling them 'Blue Faction' and that was how Blue Faction came into existence" said Vanlalngaia.\(^{25}\)

There were five reasons why Laldenga did not like to pursue the achievement of Zahmingthanga in spite of Vice President Lalnunmawia's earnest and urgent request to pursue the matter: First, he took Lalnunmawia for his rival for the top leadership of the MNF. So, he was afraid that Lalnunmawia would be crowned with the credit. Secondly, he doubted the sincerity of the Government of India. Thirdly, he himself had been searching for the possibility of honourable settlement or peace talks which he hoped to be crowned with success. Fourthly, he would rather fail to achieve anything, however great it might be, than to achieve it through the initiation or efforts of others, particularly his colleagues. Fifthly, he believed that the Government of India would inform him of their willingness to come to the negotiation table, through his own messengers.\(^{26}\)

Foreign Relations: Before the insurgency in Mizoram, Laldenga, President of the MNF met Pakistan Ambassador in India. Making

\(^{25}\) An interview with Vanlalngaia on 7th October 1990.

\(^{26}\) Ibid.
an arrangement with the Ambassador for their meeting with the Government of Pakistan, President Laldenga and the Vice President Lalnunmawia went to Dhaka across the Sazek range of East Pakistan. In their meeting with Pakistan Intelligence Department they discussed the feasibility of armed training for MNF volunteers and supply of arms for starting armed struggle for independence from India. In accordance with their agreement 21 MNF volunteers were given armed training on guerrilla tactics. These volunteers returned to Mizoram with arms and ammunition. Soon after this Lalthangliana and J.H.Rothuama were sent to Dhaka to request Pakistan to grant passage for the transportation of foreign aids and supplies to Mizoram through their territory. This was verbally granted.

When the armed revolution was started a large number of MNF volunteers went to East Pakistan. Though could not supply them with arms at the beginning the MNF volunteers were given financial assistance with which they managed to pull through. After sometime the Government of Pakistan supplied them with arms and ammunition but in a small quantity, only two hundred rifles in the first instalment.

Though the Mizo underground were housed by Pakistan taking Laldenga and family under their special care, they did not make any written commitment nor did they give them any political support. They did not even disclose to the MNF their real names and identities for fear of further involvement or
to ensure a limited commitment. The relations between Pakistan and the MNF was a clandestine one taken up at the level of Intelligence Department. Laldenga and family including a small team of his assistants were provided with fashionable quarters in Dhaka. But they were frequently shifted to different places of the city for the sake of security. They were strictly instructed to avoid friends and not to talk to any person in Dhaka, alien or native, so as not to make acquaintance with anybody. In case of being asked what nationality they belonged to, they were instructed to call themselves Chakmas or Azad Kashmiris. They were also provided with a caretaker (chokidar) whose duty it was to do marketing, to look after their welfare and to spy their movements as well. He was to report every movement of Laldenga every now and then.

For reasons mentioned above the MNF leaders realised that Pakistan would not support them to the extent of getting independence but only to pinprick India. Their armed assistance was also far from adequate for struggling against such a big country as India. Disappointed with Pakistan's attitude towards their struggle for independence Lalthangliana the Roving Ambassador of MNF tried to locate the Chinese Embassy in Dhaka. After meeting with the Chinese Consul for about ten times he made an arrangement for Laldenga's meeting with consul. In

27. An interview with Sainghaka and Lahnningthanga.
this meeting clandestine relations were established between the underground government of Mizoram and People's Republic of China. That was in 1968.

Soon after this meeting the Government of Pakistan came to know the matter somehow. The Pakistan's Intelligence officers came to Laldenga's quarters to inquire into the matter. When it was confirmed the Intelligence officers told Laldenga and his assistants that they could continue the relations and they (Pakistan) were ready to help them promote and improve it if the MNF thought it necessary. There and then they made a plan for Laldenga's visit to China to meet the Chinese leadership. Accordingly, the Government of Pakistan met the Chinese Consul at Dhaka in behalf of Laldenga and prepared travel documents and did everything needful. The Chinese Government issued him a visa sending also information to Peking (Beijing) about his visit to the country and the date and time of his arrival. During his stay in China in the month of June 1968 Laldenga met some of the Chinese leaders but not top leaders. He was promised financial, medical, equipment and armed assistance to be supplied through Pakistan. But political assistance was not promised.28

When Laldenga came back to Dhaka Lalthangliana was sent to Beijing to stay there as an ambassador or a

28. An interview Lalhmingthanga Foreign Minister.
representative of the underground government of Mizoram. At Peking Airport Lalthangliana was received by the Director of Southeast Asian Relations and his colleagues. He was treated as a V.I.P. and was given an office in the Reception Hotel. During his stay in Beijing dinners were given in his honour by different high ranking officers and politicians. Facilities of armed training were offered by Chinese Government for Mizo National Army. But Laldenga and Lalthangliana were reluctant to accept the offer for fear of brainwashing and indoctrination while they gladly accepted arms, ammunition, military equipment and financial assistance. However, after Lalthangliana left Beijing Mizo Army personnel were sent to China batch after batch to undergo military training and came back fully equipped militarily.

During his stay in Beijing Lalthangliana met the underground leaders of the Nagas with whom he had political talks. He proposed international conference of freedom fighters to be held in Beijing under the sponsorship of the Government of China. The Naga leaders discussed their common problems and expressed that being small nations was a misfortune for them creating problems in foreign dealings because the Big Powers were not interested in the cause of small nations. In order to form a larger unit and thus make their causes stronger or more interesting to the strong powers Lalthangliana proposed a loose confederation of Northeast Indian states consisting
of Mizoram, Nagaland, Manipur, Assam, Meghalaya and NEFA having a common Parliament with separate parliament and government for each state. That proposal was also welcomed by the Nagas. But since Laldenga was not interested in the above proposals neither of them was implemented.

When he returned to Dhaka from Beijing Lalthangliana met a C.I.A. agent who could make a great deal of contribution to the establishment of relations between the U.S. and the MNF. Through the good office of this person it was arranged the meeting of Laldenga with the U.S. Consul in Dhaka. But no relations could be made so far.

However, after sometime, the CIA agent asked Lalthangliana to meet him at a rendezvous which was at a certain house in Dhanmandi area. The CIA agent told Lalthangliana that the Mizoram problem was 101st in the White House list of Foreign problems and a certain U.S. representative asked Mrs. Indira Gandhi the Prime Minister of India on the occasion of tea-party given by her, how she would deal with the problems of the Mizo and the Nagas. He stated further that the lady told him in a rage that that was none of his business which he should not repeat.

The CIA agent suggested that some of the MNF personnel should go to USA to approach some influential persons to help them organise the "Friendship Society of the Mizos" to create public opinion there. He stated also that it would not be
possible for them to meet the top leader at once. But if public opinion could be created at all, the Mizo cause would be trumpeted by newspapers and other mass media, then it would be taken up at the National level. He suggested that they should be equipped with a clandestine radio to publicise their cause to the world and the equipment might be supplied by well-wishers or financial assistance could be collected for the purpose through the instrumentality of influential persons. The Government of U.S. would not supply arms and ammunition in the first instance but they could be purchased from the market.

The CIA agent suggested that the MNF leaders should communicate with Mr. Fullbright the then Chairman of the Foreign Policy Making Committee of USA who would be able to make a great contribution to the cause of the Mizos. He promised that he would put a pressure of Mr. Fullbright personally, for he was his former professor. A letter was sent accordingly. But President Laldenga was not willing to send representatives to any country which he himself had not visited. He said to Lalthangliana that nobody should go to a country which had not been visited by the President and the Ambassador (meaning Lalthangliana), otherwise, those who travelled more widely would become more popular some day than the President and the Ambassador and would outdo them in the politics in future.

When Lalthangliana returned from China, President Laldenga, Lalhmingthanga the Foreign Minister and Zoramthanga,
Secretary to the President, went to Peking. This time they met Premier Chou Enlai. They reaffirmed the relations between the underground government of Mizoram and the Government of People's Republic of China. They discussed the possibility of opening land route as well as sea route for the transportation of military equipment and supplies. The Chinese leader advised Laldenga to rely on the intellectual people who might serve as his brain if he could deal with them wisely, and to win the support of the people for whom they fought independence and that would be the main strength of the fighting force while arms and ammunition would play the secondary role only.

The Foreign Minister of the MNF suggested that heavy arms, such as, ground to air missiles or guided missiles should be supplied to the Mizo freedom fighters so as to enable them to fight more effectively. He said further that there was a no man's land or unadministered area with a sea access in Akyab which could be used by the MNF as an elbow room, to be fortified with heavy weapons, which should be imported by sea. This proposal was accepted by the Chinese Government in principle, but its implementation was largely dependent on the readiness of the MNF. The Chinese Government accepted the proposal for opening the land route as well. This was implemented and utilised by the MNF for going to China through Burma with the help of Kachin rebels. But the sea route was not implemented because Laldenga was not interested in the scheme and was also
reluctant to leave Dhaka which he could not believe to fall. The MNF Headquarters sent the Mizo Army contingent batch after batch through the land route to undergo military training.

While India openly waged the war of Bangladesh liberation no country was willing to give open support to Mizoram. Since Laldenga chose to integrate Mizoram with India, CIA discontinued their connection with MNF. Pakistan and China likewise.29