CHAPTER VI

Conclusion

The Impact of MNF Movement on Christianity in Mizoram: There were many political parties in Mizoram before the birth of Mizo National Front (MNF), namely, Mizo Union, United Mizo Freedom Organization (UMFO), Indian National Congress, Praja Socialist Party (PSP), Chiefs' Council, Mizo Union Right Wing and Mizo National Union (MNU). None of these parties had mingled religion with politics. The MNF was the first and the only political party in Mizoram to claim God as its driving force or the leader of the party. Pastor Chhawna, who claimed to be a prophet, prophesied great future for Mizoram. He claimed that he was used by the Spirit of God through visions and dreams in relation with political affairs of Mizoram. He said that some of his political prophecies would come to pass shortly while some of them were to be fulfilled in a little distant future. His prophecies were expressed in prophetic terms and symbols which were ambiguous and liable to different interpretations.
Being Christians quite a large number of Mizos generally believe in prophecies and dreams as the means of God's communication with them. Many interpreted Pastor Chhawna's prophecies and dreams in favour of the MNF party with wishful thinking. Not a few Mizo Christians believed that since Israelites rejected their Lord (Jesus Christ) and refused to obey his commands, the Mizo people, a Christian nation, have been chosen as a favoured nation of God in place of Israelites. They wishfully thought that God would liberate the Mizos from the "domination of India" and would let them preach the gospel of salvation all over the world. They said that God wrought many miracles to save Mizo volunteers from the hand of Security Forces during the insurgency and that was a sign for being God's chosen people.

The top leaders, Laldenga and the members of his cabinet did not believe that the Mizos were God's chosen above all other nations of the world, but they preached that God was the guiding force of the movement. Many of their followers simply believed that God would liberate the Mizo people from India in a miraculous way. There were, therefore, various locally or regionally originated churches in Mizoram in support of the MNF, but Laldenga and his colleagues had never joined those churches. These churches prophesied in the name of God, the success of the MNF and propagated the policy and doctrine of the party or dreamed in favour of it. The Government of
India did not take any action against them because it thought that they were propagating their faith.

Since these new churches freely preached the MNF ideology many members of the long established churches also believed in the charismatic movement of the MNF. For all this reason those who were killed in the fighting with Indian Security Forces were regarded as religious martyrs as well as political. Even some of the church leaders were reported to be glad when many members of the Security Forces were killed in the encounters with the MNF while they were said to be sad when soldiers of MNA were killed.

Manaseh church and the Church of Ephraim were organised before the MNF party was founded. They claimed to be the descendants of Manaseh and Ephraim respectively. Being Zionists they advocated once, migration to Palestine. Since they could not migrate to Canaan nearly all of them diverted their interest in Zionism to MNF politics. Other Churches, such as Maicham Kohhran (the Alter Church), Ramthuthlung church and Mizo also spread the same propaganda and faith. In fact, it was these churches who mixed religion with politics. There were many among the members of the House of Representatives, senators, party leaders and military officers who believed in this faith and earnestly preached it wherever they went.

It was this faith that gave fortitude, tenacity and chauvinism to the 'freedom fighters'. They had a strong
conviction that their cause was right and worthy to die for. There were in these churches fanatics, orthodox, zealots, etc., who claimed to be prophets, sons of God, seers and even Jesus Christs, etc., who prophesied in favour of the underground government of Mizoram. Some of them tried to give advice to the MNF President and members of his cabinet. Sometimes these people even went underground trying to become the spiritual guides for the underground force. It is strange that some of the educated Mizos who were government servants, including some senior officers were convinced of this faith of locally founded churches.

Therefore, the MNF movement could be called a charismatic movement right from the beginning. Several of Presbyterian and Baptist church leaders believed that there was a supernatural driving force in the movement though they did not accept it to be the Holy Spirit of God. This charisma was also present in Laldenga.

Role of the Churches in Peace Efforts: At the beginning of insurgency in Mizoram, when many Assam Rifles' posts fell to the Mizo volunteers the Indian Jet fighters attacked the Aizawl town and shelled civilian populace indiscriminately resulting in the burning of the town. The lives and property were lost. Thereupon, the churches stepped forward to make peace between the Indian government and the MNF so as to prevent further
sufferings of the people in Mizoram. The different churches of Mizoram, therefore, submitted a joint petition to the Government of India with a view to establishing good relations between the government and the church leaders even if they could not bring the two warring parties to the negotiation table. However, to the contrary of their expectation, the Government of India ordered grouping of villages, in the month of January, 1967 without even consulting the District Council of Mizoram.

Thus the first effort of the churches to bring back normalcy and peace to Mizoram ended in failure because the Government took a sterner action against the populace of the villages by bringing them to the group centres. The leaders of churches, therefore, felt that while they asked their (Government) for fish, they were given serpent instead. Since then the churches had given up, in disappointment, their endeavour to make peace between the Government and the MNF.

Since there was no power or organization which dared to speak for the people any longer, military atrocity was let loose in Mizoram. Security Forces disrupted and sometimes even dispersed church meetings in villages. They defiled sacred places by destroying and robbing the churches of their property, encamping themselves therein and drinking, smoking in the pulpits. They cut to pieces, tore or burnt copies of the Holy Bible, hymn books, Bible Commentaries and any other books of scripture found in the churches. They dug trenches in the
church yards. Wherever they went the Security Forces imposed curfew and forbade church meetings but occasionally church services in the day time were allowed. Some commanders, sometimes, challenged Jesus the God of the MNF and the Mizos.

In this way the churches were so much suppressed for a certain period of time that none of the church leaders dared to speak for the liberty of conscience and religion. However, the Presbyterian church, which was the biggest church in Mizoram, felt it its normal duty to take the initiative in restoring peace and normalcy in Mizoram by bringing about good-will and mutual understanding between the Government and the MNF. If at all not possible to make peace between the two warring parties they would try to establish better and friendly relations between the Security Forces and the public as well as between the public and the MNF, so as to lessen the sufferings of the innocent citizens at least. They felt it quite necessary for the churches to bring the MNF and the Government to the negotiation table to make peace between them. It was necessary for the churches to establish better relationship between the MNF and the public because the MNF also resorted to kidnapping, sniping, assassinating and threatening the people who refused to follow their orders or support them. It was for the purpose of stopping all the unlawful activities on the part of the MNF and to restore law and order in Mizoram that the Government called out Secretary Forces. On the contrary, the soldiers punished the
public indiscriminately instead of protecting them from the unlawful and lawless activities of the MNF.\(^1\)

To start with, the Presbyterian church distributed pamphlets boldly condemning the violent activities in Mizoram which was against the teaching of the gospel as well as the laws of Human Rights.\(^2\)

When the so-called government of Mizoram (MNF) received a copy of the pamphlet, its contents cut them to the quick and the Home Ministry (MNF) forbade any more circulation. The MNF government, therefore, warned the church leaders that should they dare to disobey the warnings and instruction from the government of Mizoram the law of the country would determine their fate.\(^3\)

Baptist Assembly of Serkawn followed the step taken by the synod of Aizawl. In the first pamphlet they openly charged the MNF of being responsible for the sufferings of the innocent public in Mizoram. At the same time they requested the MNF to stop violence.\(^4\)

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2. Church pamphlet on the issue of trouble in Mizoram dt. 12.3.66
3. Home Ministry (MNF); Letters to Synod leaders, dt. 16.3.1966.
4. An Appeal to the MNF volunteers by Zoram Baptist Church dated 30.5. '66.
In their joint Special Commitment on 8.9.1966, the Presbyterian and the Baptist churches issued a message to their respective members pointing out that the true spirit and teaching of Jesus Christ in the Bible cannot approve the use of violence to safeguard the religious rights. They added that the church could not approve any violent movement in the name of the kingdom of God.

Lalnunmawia, the Vice President of the MNF issued a circular to contradict the joint communiqué of the two churches prohibiting the Mizo people as a whole from participating as candidates or voters in any election under the Government of India. Secondly, no Mizo should enroll his or her name in any census conducted by India. Thirdly, no Mizo should render any service, paid or unpaid, to the Security Forces, but restrain themselves from giving any help to them either in cash or in kind. The Security Forces on the other hand, requisitioned forced labour, demanded firewood, water, chickens, etc., wherever they went. Lalnunmawia further prohibited the use of India postal services so as to disrupt it.

He said, moreover, that if anybody dared disobey any instruction issued by the government of Mizoram (MNF) he or she should be treated as enemy of the government of Mizoram and the severest punishment should be inflicted on him or her.

The MNF also prohibited the Mizo people from entering the group centres ("concentration camps" to borrow their own term.)

Those impracticable orders and instructions deteriorated the relations between the MNF and the churches. At the same time, the Security Forces persecuted and suppressed the innocent public. The people in such dilemma coined a new phrase of their situation as to be "in between the hammer and the anvil." The Security Forces hammered the public on or against the MNF (anvil) and the party that suffered most was the one between the hammer and the anvil, i.e. the public. They were really at a loss to whom they should obey and whom they should defy. To disobey either of the governments would mean death. Thus things went from bad to worse in Mizoram.

At this critical juncture Rev. Zairema, a highly educated and an outstanding leader of the Presbyterian church came forward shouldering the great responsibility of making peace between India and the MNF. Taking this responsibility he risked his life because he could be suspected by either of the parties. He, first of all, wrote a letter to Laldenga stating that the difficult situation in Mizoram was understood by all and in spite of that the Government of India had no

6. Home Ministry (MNF) order No.3 G.M.(H) - con/67/91 of 3.1.67.
7. In recognition of his service to the people of Mizoram the North Eastern Hill University conferred a Ph.D Degree.
intention to withdraw from the district. He told him further
that the frequent clashes between the MNF volunteers and the
Indian Army resulted in the suffering of innocent men, women
and children which was bound to increase tremendously if things
went on as they were.®

Rev.Zairema informed Laldenga that the Presbyterian
church and Baptist church were very much concerned about the
critical state of Mizoram affairs. He added that the churches
believed that there must be a way of restoring peace and security
in Mizoram, and therefore, had appointed representatives to
deal with the matter. He went on stating that the churches
were of the opinion that they should have a talk over the matter
with the MNF President first before approaching the Government
of India. He said also that the churches were as anxious as
the underground people were to restore peace in Mizoram and
for that reason he hoped that he (Laldenga) would welcome the
representatives of the churches at his convenience and cooperate
with them in exploring ways and means for speedy restoration
of normalcy. He stated that he would greatly appreciate if
the underground government of Mizoram would accept the proposed
meeting.

Rev.Zairema requested Laldenga to chalk out the
programme of meeting at his convenience but the venue should

not be farther than a day's journey from a motorable road if the latter accepted the proposal. In another letter Pastor Zairema informed Laldenga the names of three delegates selected by the Christian Peace Committee, namely, Rev. Zairema (Presbyterian), Pastor Lalngurauva (Presbyterian) and Pastor H.S. Luaia (Baptist Church).

The Meeting Between Church Representatives and Laldenga: Laldenga accepted the proposal. The first meeting between Laldenga and the Churches leaders was held and the following points were specifically discussed:

1. **Violent uprising:** The Churches representatives expressed their disapproval of violence that had disrupted as it was contrary to the teaching of Christ. The President of the MNF replied that their party was also against any form of violence and they had tried any peaceful means to realise their political ideals. But they finally resorted to violence merely as a form of self-defence to safeguard their liberties. He stated also that they had submitted their memorandum to the Prime Minister of India and also the President and the Vice President signed pledge of loyalty to the Government of Assam never to resort to violence but to adopt only constitutional and peaceful means. He accused B.P. Chaliha of making a secret preparation to stab them in the back but facing with them with a smiling face. He said that on learning the evil intention of Chaliha they
made a preparation to defend themselves. Their intelligence reports disclosed that the government of Assam planned to ban the MNF party and arrest their leaders, he added.

President Laldenga went on saying that in order to prevent violent opposition on the part of the MNF, to such mass arrest, the 18th Battalion of Assam Rifles and a Jat Regiment were to be moved in to Mizo District. President Laldenga affirmed that he had sent a telegram to the Chief Minister of Assam when 18th Assam Rifles were being moved in, protesting military deployment into Mizoram. When there was no reply to the telegraph message, he said he made a direct phone call to the Chief Minister who said that the troops were being moved in to control lawless elements in the district. Laldenga stated further that Chaliha himself expressed in the Assembly that crime rate in Mizo district had greatly decreased, and therefore, there was no reason why troops should be sent into Mizo district except to suppress the MNF.

Laldenga went on saying that he requested the Chief Minister to withdraw the troop to avoid trouble but his petition was flatly refused. According to him in spite of all his efforts to prevent the deployment of military in Mizoram the troops were sent in purposefully to suppress their freedom. To preserve their very existence, he said that they had to declare independence, organise themselves into government and use force to prevent the Indian Government from having any further control
over them. He maintained that their actions were purely the case of self-defence.

2. Church Matters: The Church delegation protested against the action of the MNF. They said that the church as such, had the right to speak what they believed and tell the teachings of Jesus Christ. In reply to this, the President said that he admitted their right to speak boldly about the spiritual matters, but he reminded them that the MNF personnel were also members of Presbyterian, Baptist and other churches. The church should therefore, confine itself to spiritual matters and in so doing it should be careful not to hurt the political feelings of any section of its members. He expressed his appreciation of the church leaders' condemnation of violence and wanton destruction of human lives and property.

President Laldenga conceded the possibility that some lawless elements among his party might have committed certain unpardonable crimes against humanity just as the Indian troops had done. He invited the church leaders to keep him informed of such facts. He, however, said that in condemning violence and certain actions of the MNF volunteers, the church should also condemn the Indian Government for indiscriminate air attack of the civilian population of Aizawl town and other villages, raping women, the use of incendiary bombs, burning villages, looting, forcing villagers to supply labour without payment, forcible restriction of the people and curtailment of their
human rights.

He also complained about desecration of church buildings for shelter, urinating and passing stool inside, spreading fowl entrails on the pulpit, drinking liquor and leaving the empty bottles therein. He also mentioned of troops entering church buildings with arms while public worship was going on and burning alive one woman wounded on the leg, at Serzawl village. These things he said, should be openly condemned by the church.

3. The church delegation then produced a copy of the letter which was signed by some church leaders under duress. The letter stated, "We reject the Government of India who are idol worshippers and we accept the Mizo government which is a Christian government as our government." The President, on seeing a copy of this letter, expressed his shame at the action, if true, and condemned the miscreant outright. His promised to stop it immediately and requested the church representatives to help him find out the villain. He requested the church delegation to maintain strict neutrality in the political upheaval and to concentrate on spiritual matters. The delegation handed to the President a list of persons arrested by the MNF but whose whereabouts were unknown. The President promised that he would investigate the matter.

The President stated further that when the uprising started they had no time to deal with all problems. The officers
appointed to deal with prisoners could not join their posts for sometime, and as a result, the prisoners were passed from hand to hand and some of them were shot dead while trying to escape and till then they were unable to straighten out many things. Those who had been guilty of definite crime had been given appropriate punishment and the authority of the underground government was determined to see that no innocent people suffered. The President went on saying that since the underground government had been well-organised no innocent person would suffer under their hands any longer.

He told the delegation also that they would institute investigations about those men particularly mentioned, and assured them that justice would be meted out. Further he informed them that the MNF government was making indemnity of those who suffered accidentally or through unavoidable circumstances in their hand. To their amazement the President asserted that they were prepared to cooperate the Government of India to stamp out any crime and they would hand over any criminals taking shelter among them to the Indian Police if their case histories were reported to them. He emphatically said that they did not want to harbour criminals and he hoped to create some sort of Inter-pol some day.

4. The church delegation raised the question of threats particularly against the leaders of Mizo Union and the heads of the District Council. The President regretted that such
policy of intimidation had been adopted by certain groups of his people without his approval. He expressed his disapproval of the "13 Black List." He stressed also that it was not the intention of the party to stamp out ideological differences by violence. They had no hope of realising their political aims by means of violence and they realised that armed conflict with India would not solve their political differences. If, however, India should continue the use of force, they too would resort to the use of arms till they were completely annihilated.

It was their desire to settle their political differences with India and also with the Mizo Union by non-violence means. Much blood had already been shed and they had no wish to shed more blood of their fellow Mizos and it was their avowed policy not to commit any political assassination on account of ideological differences. The church delegation urged the President to issue a letter to this effect. But he thought it unnecessary.

5. The President told the delegates that as many of the problem boys of normal day joined the underground MNF there were some problems among them still. Since they had started their own Police organisation he hoped that threatening, unnecessary killing would be altogether stopped.

6. The church delegates pointed out the cases of fund raising by masked-men at gun point. The President told then that he had not yet ordered any collection of taxes in Aizawl town and
that he would take immediate action to stop such unauthorised activities. He said also that if Indian Government was unable to deal with liquor and gambling effectively his government would step in soon.

7. Regarding schools, road buildings, medical works, general development programmes for the country and such international problems - malaria eradication programme in Mizo district, the President said that any activities of Indian Government in Mizoram were illegal and therefore, they could not allow or agree to such activities even if they could not prevent them. He added that they would prevent the coming general election to take place in Mizoram. As to the cease-fire, President Laldenga maintained that they would not agree to such proposal as this would give the Indian troops an opportunity to consolidate their positions in strategic places. If, however, the Indian Government agreed to work out the principle of having a peaceful solution to the problem and gave up the idea of using force against them, the underground government would agree to cease-fire under certain terms.

8. Political Stand: In view of the impossibility of successful resistance against Indian Army and in case of failure to get full independence, the delegates asked the President whether the MNF would reconsider their position to accept a high degree of autonomy within the framework of the Indian Constitution. The President's reply may be summarised as follows:
Their party's demand was self-determination for the Mizo people, but that did not necessarily mean secession from the Indian Union and they had attempted to achieve that goal by constitutional and peaceful means. They were compelled to declare independence from India only because of the evil intention of the Government of Assam to restrict by force their freedom and birthright. But since they had started a movement for independence, their decision became irrevocable. There was hardly any possibility of changing their decision so as to associate themselves with India.

They did not, however, want to create the impression that they were all out for violence. They wanted peace and they were prepared to have peace talks with India as between governments. The Mizo Union and other political parties had agreed with them in the ultimate ideal of politically independent sovereign state for Mizoram but those parties were not ready to pay the price of struggle and some of them felt that Mizoram was not yet ready both in man-power and economic resources. They would soon see things in a different light and ultimately come round to the MNF way of thinking. He also said that the old political leaders of Mizoram would lead them in the new era.

The church delegates suggested that the MNF should have a talk with the Mizo Union leaders. President Laldenga related his previous talks with them and his failure to convince
them. He said that he had little hope of resolving their ideological differences in such a meeting at the then stage, but he hoped that many points of misunderstanding and unnecessary apprehensions among them might be removed.⁹

The Christian Peace Committee then also met several other MNF leaders, such as Lalnunmawia the Vice President, Sainghaka Home Minister, Lahlmimgthanga Foreign Minister, Ngurkunga Information and Publicity Minister, et al. At the same time they also met the representatives of India, like the Deputy Commissioner of Aizawl, B.C.Carriapa Commissioner of Cachar and Mizo districts, B.P.Chaliha Chief Minister of Assam, Home Minister of India Mr.Banerjee, et al., on several occasions. They exchanged the opinions of the warring parties and tried to bring them to a common table for negotiation.

Feeling the pulse of the Government and realising the limitations of the underground Mizos, the Christian Peace Committee tried to bring the political settlement of Mizoram within the framework of the Indian Constitution. They urged the MNF leadership to make their final political demand in this line. The MNF leadership also came closer.

It was very unfortunate, however, that most of the MNF leaders including Sainghaka Home Minister and Vanlalng&a

⁹. John Vanlal Hluna : Church & Political Upheaval in Mizoram, pp 111 - 121.
Director of Intelligence Service, who met the member of the church leaders were arrested soon after their meeting was over and some others were killed by the Indian Security Forces. Therefore, some of the MNF boys alleged that the church leaders betrayed those ill-fated MNF leaders. The MNF top leadership had also been convinced by this opinion in due course and had gradually lost confidence in them. There was a general feeling among the Indian leaders, representatives and officers that those church leaders were the MNF agents. Their mission ultimately became stale to eyes of both the MNF and the Government of India and it was no longer effective as it ought to be. Thus the Christian Peace committee failed in their mission in the first attempt. However, the Church Leaders Committee was reformed and reorganised on 15 June 1983 consisting of nine Christian denominations in Mizoram. The new Church Leaders Committee demanded that the Government of India and the MNF leadership should resume their talk which ended on January 21 1982.10

The Impact of the MNF Movement on the Moral Principles of the Mizos: There are different opinions in this subject. Some people think that the Mizo people have become less humane than

10. John Vanlal Hluna: Political & Church Upheaval in Mizoram pp 122 & 123.
they had been before the insurgency in Mizoram. In those days one murder case shocked the whole of Mizoram and become the common talk of the district and it also occurred few and far between. Murder cases are to be seen very frequently in the newspapers nowadays and have become common place. The murderers also have less guilty conscience now than they had been prior to the insurgency. By that time most of the murderers were convicted but nowadays most of the murder cases have ended in the acquittal of murderers.

However, it is not at all the whole truth to say that the MNF movement was the main reason for the increase in the number of crimes and murder cases in Mizoram, for it has been increasing everywhere else. Our Televisions, Cinemas, Videos, etc., have contributed a great deal as well. We can also say that the increase in the number of murder cases in Mizoram is the fulfillment of the Bible prophecy as signs of the last days or the historical outcome. Nevertheless, the MNF movement is undeniably one of the causes, because the MNF volunteers killed Security Forces, the Chakmas, other non-Mizos and the Mizos whom they thought to be Indian Agents or informers.

During the turmoil in Mizoram many youngmen were killed or arrested by the Indian soldiers and a number of them were killed by the MNF volunteers. As a results, the male population, particularly, that of youngmen decreased. For this reason the mortality of Mizo women greatly declined. Even some married
women have become less faithful to their husbands than before. But it is natural that in any country which is occupied by military force or where a rule of guns is imposed women's life of immorality is rampant. As such, in this dark period of Mizoram a large number of women were raped by the Indian soldiers since there was no law and justice for them to redress their grievances.

As a result of turmoil in Mizoram during which women were freely raped and molested the chastity of women in Mizoram has declined to a considerable degree. The number of rape cases, the cases of adultery and the number of illicit love affairs had now increased. All these social evils and immorality are undeniably the outcome of the insurgency though they are also historical outcome and the result of social change.

Moreover, the people were reduced to absolute poverty and dire necessity during the dark period of military operation in Mizoram. Taking the advantage of the people's poverty, the Security forces tried to buy the honour and chastity of women for a morsel of food if they happened to find them dying of hunger. Many women were brought under indefensible situations and raped at gun point. For the aforesaid reasons quite a number of Mizo women lost their honour and chastity and as a result this social evil (sexual immorality) has its hangover even after normalcy has been brought back to the land.

As a result of the disturbance the quality of Mizo
people has been deteriorated in respect of truthfulness and reliability. But the deterioration of Mizo quality in this respect started from Mautam famine in 1959 when people demanded free supply of food from the Central Government. But Ch. Saprawnga, the then Chief Executive Member (C.E.M.) of the Mizoram District Council strongly opposed the free supply of food for he feared that the morality of the Mizo people would be lowered by the free gift making them desire to rely on others at the cost of their moral quality. Charity corrupts both the giver and the receiver. During that famine, the Government introduced a scheme for the construction of village roads and for the development of villages, so that the villagers might be able to earn enough money for the purchase of government supplied rice at a subsidised rate.

New schemes, such as Gratuitous Relief Scheme, Test Relief and EGS were introduced. Through these schemes the people contributed a great deal for the development of their own villages while they were paid liberally in return for their labour. As the schemes were gratuitous relief the labour of the people did not deserve the amount they received. These schemes and liberal wages actually spoiled the people to some extent. They expected much in return for little labour.

To make the matter worse, the Security Forces reduced the Mizo people to extreme poverty, to be unable to think of justice and fairness but to think of their survival only. Most
of the villagers were undernourished and disease-ridden, unable to work hard to produce enough food for the family. Stealing also became very tempting under such circumstances.

In course of time, the U.T. government was established in Mizoram and as a matter of course the Central Government accorded sanctions for the development of Mizoram which were to be implemented on the basis of contract system. The number of government contractors suddenly increased and many poor people became rich within a short period of time. But there were many people whose neighbours had become upstarts who had been their fellow poverty stricken people a few days earlier. Thus they wanted to follow suits, but there was no chance for everyone to become parvenu. When they compared their jhum work with the contract work, the jhum work became disappointingly unprofitable and as a result the dignity of labour suddenly declined. So, they looked down upon manual labour.

Under this circumstances the Mizo people had to strive for survival or better financial position by hook or by crook. Therefore, in the government contract or in other dealings many of them lost much of their truthfulness and trustworthiness so as to gain the highest profit. This deterioration of Mizo characteristics is another result of the disturbance in Mizoram. Selfishness has also increased affecting in some respects the Mizo chivalry which is the pride of the people inherited from their forefathers. In the market where women are dominating,
selfishness is shamelessly exposed to gain financial benefit. This is a new-fangled behaviour severely criticised and condemned from the pulpits by the preachers.

So much for the bad results of the insurgency in Mizoram and now for its good results. The underground people, having come out of all difficulties and dangers become more sturdy and have had a strong determination and untiring tenacity in whatever they do. Their tried and firm personality gave them fortitude which stood them in good stead in all eventualities. They feel themselves equal to any task confronting them. The difficulties and hardships they faced in the jungle have made them tough more than ever before. Also, the war-torn overground people of Mizoram had to work hard for their survival for quite a long period of time. This has given them patience and strong determination.

The Impact of the MNF Movement of the Economy of Mizoram: Much has already been said about the poverty and the distress of the people in Mizoram as the result of the MNF rebellion and that it became very difficult for them to stand again on their feet. Before the insurrection of the Mizo people were self-supporting in food. They had no need of buying food from outside Mizoram except in times of Mautam famine which occurred at the interval of 50 years. What they had to import from outside Mizo district were: salt, kerosine oil, clothing, iron ware,
etc., for, their standard of living being low, they could not purchase luxurious materials. But now, Mizoram is far from self-supporting in food.

Before the MNF movement there were only a few jeepable roads in the whole district which were, moreover, fair-weather roads only, and most of them were constructed by the local people voluntarily without any remuneration for their labour. Such being the condition of the district, the people were backward and their standard of living was also low. Neither the Government of British nor India brought about any development of the district and that was one of the causes of the MNF movement for independence according to many politicians and writers. The Mizo people in those days were not, however, primitive though they were economically backward. They had been displeased with the Central Government for being neglected.

When reduced to absolute poverty the Mizo people had no means to regain their former position because their economy was completely undetermined. When the Government of India accorded sanctions for the development of Mizoram, the sum of money could not be evenly distributed to the poverty-stricken people of the land. Some of them made headway in their economy with the help of the meager sanction from the Central Government. All the progress so far made are achieved by means of Government sanctioned money only, and the people themselves had not yet produced out of the district at their own initiative. The desire
and need of the people have greatly increased as the civilization of the people is progressing. Therefore, one can say that the Mizo people, after the insurgency, are much less self-supporting than before, though the majority of them have become materially better off.

Even today, the people of Mizoram have not yet been able to begin economic development effectively by their own initiative without the help of the Central Government. As a result of government contract, inequality of opportunity of wealth and education has greatly increased. But the use of wealth as a criterion for the determination of social status is not commonly practised. So, there are many poor people who are elected leaders at different levels, such as, village level, block level and even at state level, though wealth is considered as an important factor for determination of social status to some extent on some occasions. This does not necessarily mean that there is no social gap in between the rich and the poor in Mizoram. But the gap is not so wide here as it is elsewhere. Before the MNF movement there were no rich nor poor in Mizoram and as a result there was no gap in the Mizo society. The present gap may be the result of economic growth. Anyway, it is true to say, to some extent, that the disturbances in Mizoram made the poor poorer and the privileged make headway, resulting in a gap between them.

To assuage the suffering of the Mizo people the
Government of India introduced a new scheme called, "Employment Generation Scheme" (EGS) under which the intervillage roads were constructed by the villagers to earn money for the purchase of the government's subsidised rice. Their wages were paid rather too liberally. This scheme is detrimental to the spirit of self-reliance which was once evidenced among the Mizo people. It encourages, to some extent, dependency on the government. As such, jhuming cultivation becomes less and less popular, but without any proper substitute for it. Before the insurgency the main occupation of the Mizo people was jhuming cultivation on which were depended more than 85 p.c. of the population, but now, they mostly depend on the government's subsidised rice.

The 1981 census indicated that about 25 p.c of the Mizoram population were monthly salaried, being government servants, church employees, teachers, etc., and a large number of people were dependent on them. The rest of the population were merchants, shopkeepers, hawkers, pedlars, brokers, carpenters, artists, etc., and quite a large number of people were dependent on them. It is now, therefore, difficult to say that jhuming is the main occupation of the Mizo people. That is to say that there is a change in the economy of the Mizo people. It is, however, hard to say that this change of economy is due to growth of economy. Owing to the aforesaid reasons it is true, to some extent, that the MNF movement contributed a great deal to the change of economy in Mizoram.
The system of grouping villages as described earlier, seemed to be extremely cruel and inhuman. But it was a blessing in disguise, for it was much easier for the government to develop grouping centres than to develop scattered small villages. Also, there was economic competition among the people when they were put together. The economic condition of the people in the grouping centres are generally better off than those of the people living in scattered small villages. The grouping centres are provided with better facilities in various respects.

There are some people who go out of grouping centres and make temporary settlement in their old villages to make jhum there. After the harvest these people come back to the grouping centres or they settle in the old villages for a longer period, say, for three years or so, then come back to the grouping centres to make better homes and living. During their stay in their old villages they enjoyed facilities provided for the grouping centres by the government as far as possible, because they are still members of the grouping centres. In this way many people can improve their economic condition to a considerable extent.

The Impact of the MNF Movement on the Mizo Society: A drastic change has been brought about in the social life of the Mizo people after the insurgency in Mizoram. Social evils have been increased and some social norms have disappeared. As already
said earlier, immorality of sex, murder cases, cases of robbery and theft have increased while the fear of God has decreased to a great extent. Superstition has disappeared. These can be attributed to the insurgency of Mizoram. But it may not be the whole truth to say that all these are the outcome of the MNF movement. They may partly be concomitants of social change or historical outcome. Whatever the cause may be, the MNF movement can be regarded as the main cause or factor.

Since the fighting between the MNF and Security Forces was regarded and fought as a war of a nation against another nation, the Mizo people were integrated as a nation against the common foe - India. At the beginning the Mizo Union party was ready to help the Indian Army and organised a volunteer force armed with shotguns, to fight side by side with the Indian Army against the MNF Force. Not a few people supported the Mizo Union against the MNF. But the Security Forces did not discriminate the members and volunteers of the Mizo Union from the MNF volunteers. They did not show mercy to the women and children of the Mizo Union either. The indiscriminate persecution of the Mizo people by the Security Forces integrated the Mizos irrespective of their ideological differences.

Such social evils as sexual immorality, violence, irreligious life might be cause by television, videos, sexy literature and obscene picture which are much more common nowadays than before. The MNF movement was one of the factors...
of the above mentioned social evils. Some of the social norms, such as respect for elders is decreasing or begins to disappear. Respect for the rich has a tendency to increase.

The hatred for the Security Forces and other plain's people still has its hangover from the military atrocity let loose during the insurgency. But this is slowly dying down as a result of mixing with more and more non-Mizos. More and more non-Mizos have come in to Mizoram for various purposes while more and more Mizos go out of the state to different places of India for different purposes. Immigration and emigration resulted in a wider outlook, a feeling of oneness and fraternity. Before the insurgency the Mizos, being a few people, were narrow-minded. Now, as a result of living together in grouping centres and mixing with non-Mizos they now have developed a broad outlook. They used to look upon non-Mizos especially the plain's peoples as aliens before, now they can look upon them as their fellow citizens. Having broader outlook now, they have given up prejudice they used to have even against their neighbouring villages. The term 'Vai' is dying out. It might also be noted that communication between Mizoram and the outside world has become frequent. Development of communication resulted not only in the free flow of merchandise but also ideas. Ideas are more important than merchandise.
policy of independence contributed a great deal to the creation of the national spirit of the Mizo people. In fact, the Mizo people did not consider themselves Indians before the insurgency. As stated earlier, the Mizo people were neglected by the Government of British as well as by the Government of India in respect of their welfare and development. Even on the threshold of Indian independence the mass of the Mizo people did not know which country they would like to join, India or Burma, while some people wanted to set up a sovereign state or to remain as a part of Assam. Even during the British period the Mizo people considered themselves as independent of India, being outside the purview of the Indian Constitution. They did not know that they had any connection with the rest of India. After independence they began to consider themselves to be Indians through the teachings of their political leaders, especially, of the Mizo Union.

The MNF demand for independence revived the old popular idea that the Mizo people are different from Indians in respect of race, tradition, culture, language, family, religion, mentality, etc. Then Mizo nationalism burst out. The mass of the people considered themselves as non-Indians and the Indians also treated them as such. Most of the Mizos had prejudice against Indians, particularly the plain's people whom they nicknamed "Vai" or "Vai chhia" which was originally contemptible. This feeling against Indians was accelerated
by the teachings of the MNF party.

The MNF ideology fomented the Mizo idea of their being superior to the plain's people as a nation or as an individual person. Every individual feels himself match for two 'Vais' of his own size.

This idea or mentality gave the MNF volunteers an impetus to rise in revolt against India. Since the MNF movement and its ideology aroused the people's nationalism any political party which supported the MNF came to power, and any party that went against the MNF was defeated in the election during the insurgency. That was also because of the military atrocity and cruelty. The People's Conference Party came to power because they supported the MNF movement. It gained MNF support when the party was in power. But when they lost support from the underground government they automatically lost public support. But this does not necessarily mean Laldenga individually as a party leader, because the P.C. party won the election even when Laldenga was bitterly against it. That means, the MNF government, without Laldenga, gave support to the P.C. party.

The Mistakes of the Government of India: The Government of India made a serious mistake in neglecting Mizoram. They did not like to give importance to its strategic position and its vulnerability to foreign invasion. The Indian leaders did not understand the psychology of the people nor did they give
attention to their grievances. Even when the public discontent spread through the length and breadth of the district the Government of India turned a deaf ear to it. When the MNF prepared for a war of independence it did not take any step to stop it. The MNF party submitted its memorandum stating that independence from India was their birth-right. Moreover, there was an Intelligence report that the MNF leaders came in contact with some foreign embassies or consulates. Even then the Government of India did not take any effective step to nip the undesirable element in the bud. At last Laldenga and Lalnunmawia were arrested for crossing the border and entering Pakistan territory to meet the representatives of Pakistan. But after a few days they were released on personal bond.

B.P. Chaliha, the Chief Minister of Assam, was not on good terms with the Mizo Union leaders who had long been in power in the Mizo district ever since the inception of the Mizo District Council. Therefore, Chaliha wanted to remove the Mizo Union from power by strengthening the hand of Laldenga to defeat them in the next election. At that time MNF was gaining ground in Mizoram politics as well as in the state level politics.

Taking advantage of deteriorating or unfriendly relation between the Chief Minister of Assam and the leaders of the Mizo Union, Laldenga wanted to set up a parallel District Council in Mizoram in which he would be the Chief executive.
member with the help of Chaliha, the Chief Minister. Or he
and his party would contest the election to the District Council
by capturing a majority of the seats in the District Council
and thereby come to power.\textsuperscript{11}

Laldenga established friendly relations with the Chief
Minister of Assam. He assured him that he would adopt
constitutional and non-violent methods for the achievement of
his ends. Chaliha reposed full confidence in Laldenga. But
the latter played a double game. All the while he was preparing
for a total rebellion. Chaliha found out that he had been
deceived. A number of volunteers were given armed training
by Pakistan Government within East Pakistan territory and arms
and ammunition were transported to Mizoram and some delegates
had been sent to East Pakistan to meet the representatives of
Pakistan to discuss how to start the movement for independence.

There were other mistakes made by the Government of
India. One of them was that they could have divided the Mizo
people to isolate the MNF from the rest of the people. They
could have set one group of the Mizo people against the other
group. That means about one half of the people were ready
to fight along side the Security Forces against the MNF force.
The indiscriminate punishment of the Mizo populace by the Indian
Security Forces integrated the Mizo people against India.

\textsuperscript{11} An interview with Sainghaka, Ex-Defence Minister of MNF.
It must also be said that Laldenga, while demanding independence was always ready to accept statehood. In other words, though Laldenga propagated independence with highly ornamented oratory all his speeches were wish-washy, without conviction or sincerity. Right from the outbreak of armed revolution he expressed his doubt in achieving independence laying the blame on his colleagues for starting the rebellion. He said that his colleagues were to be held responsible for all the bloodshed and suffering in Mizoram. Such being the case, he was desirous of returning to India a few months after the movement was started, if he were to be accorded with a warm welcome or honourable reception.

He started, therefore, searching for possibility of returning to India with some sorts of settlement. He sent a letter to Baveja, the Director of All India Radio, Shillong Station who could convey his idea to the Chief Minister. Baveja, conveyed the contents of the letter to Chaliha, the Chief Minister, but the latter turned a deaf ear to the plea of Laldenga because he could not trust him any more. But this was the time when Laldenga was to be trusted. In other words, Chaliha made a mistake in trusting Laldenga before the insurgency and has now made another mistake in distrusting him. But one cannot blame the Chief Minister in this matter.

Not only the state government of Assam made mistake but also the Central Government. Many a time Laldenga
sent letters to the Government of India but those letters were not taken into consideration because they did not trust him. Even during the peace talks they distrusted him because they considered him to be a slippery customer in his dealing with them. But Indian representatives should know that Laldenga simply tried to make the most of the peace talk without any definite demand. They should make him understand that he was bound to make a settlement within the existing constitution of India and that the constitution of India could not be modified in his favour. India should understand that they could make peace without Laldenga after Calcutta convention.

Laldenga also made many mistakes during the peace talks. He should understand that no bargain could be made after submitting himself under the mercy of the Indian Government. He should have bargained before he came to India, that is, before he accepted a settlement within the framework of Indian Constitution. He should understand earlier that the Government of India was too wise for him to deceive. When he came to India it was altogether too late for him to make any bargain.

Laldenga as a Charismatic Leader: Laldenga excelled other politicians in Mizoram in cultivating personality cult. He was worshipped by many people not only as a hero or a leader but also as a supernatural being, or as an instrument of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit. But he was denounced and repudiated
by those who did not worship him. So, he was most hated and most loved. Unfortunately for him, he used to alienate his supporters one after another and that was his weakness or his inexorable mistake. It was astonishing that he could rally the mass of the people around him but kept on alienating them one after another or one group after another. What is more, he estranged normally his colleagues by adopting the "divide and rule" policy setting one group against the other. When his estranged colleagues dropped out, he selected new colleagues to replace them.

When he most needed a strong man to save him from being deposed he always had a suitable person to help him. Strangely, those who had rendered valuable services or help when he needed them most were the first persons to be alienated. Let us take some concrete examples: Sainghaka, his Defence Minister was his right-hand man and best helper among his educated colleagues. But when Sainghaka became popular he alienated him and selected R.Zamawia to replace him. Believing that the Vice President Lalnunmawia had a subversive tendency he estranged him.

When R.Zamawia became disaffected Biakchhunga loyally defended President Laldenga against possible military coup. In course of time, Biakchhunga also became disaffected and Laldenga was actually deposed for the time being and Biakchhunga became the President of the MNF. But Tlangchhuaka, supported
by Lt.Col.Kawlvela dethroned Biakhungla. When Tlangchhuaku became disaffected he was deposed and arrested. At last, Laldenga was enthroned again.

Also, when all other cabinet members left Laldenga, Ngurkunga rendered a valuable service to save him from being dethroned by his opponents in the party, as well as from being arrested by the Bangladeshi force. But Laldenga made this man his bitterest personal enemy after sometime.

In this way, all the supporters of Laldenga became his personal enemies in course of time. But Laldenga was always surrounded by devoted persons, group after group. This was how Laldenga won the love of the people. One group of people loved him and come close to him rendering the most valuable service they could to him, venerating and praising him for a certain period of time. But the time came for them to hate him or for him to hate them, and they left him antagonising. Another group came loving him, loyally serving him and at last left him resentfully. Then came another group and left, then another and another. It was charisma with which he attracted the people and won their love and it was the same power that upheld him in his shaky position for quite a long time. Even when nearly all educated underground people including all his cabinet members, except one, opposed him he could not be removed from the power because he was miraculously protected seemingly by a supernatural power or charisma.
It is surprising that even when the top ranking civil officers with all high ranking officers of the Army, except only one tried to overthrow Laldenga they could not be successful except for a few years. The reason was his enigmatic personality which he had cultivated among the rank and file of the Army in particular. Another reason was that his colleagues wanted his removal from power only because they doubted his sincerity in the struggle for independence. If they could achieve independence under his leadership they would accept him as their leader and the father of the nation. Also, if he could accept the advice of his colleagues they were always willing to cooperate with him. In the cabinet meetings it seemed that everything went off smoothly.

The cabinet members expected that they would be able to correct him though they were disappointed sometimes. His opponents used to say that they did not hate President Laldenga personally but what they hated most was his insincerity in the struggle for independence. Foreign Minister Lalhmingthanga said that they overestimated Laldenga's moral character in that they were arrested when they did not think that he would be able to contemplate such heinous action against his colleagues.

His course of action can be justified on the ground that military coup de tat was contemplated. But R.Zamawia, the Defence Minister, denied that and said that if he had
attempted the coup he had many chances to do so, and it would not be a failure. But he confirmed that there were some people who wanted to overthrow the ruling power with the help of the military. But he said that he told those people not to weaken the cause of independence by overthrowing the ruling power. He explained to them that what was extremely hateful was not Laldenga himself personally but his insincerity and half-heartedness in the cause of Mizoram independence.\footnote{12. An interview with R. Zamawia.}

Regarding the personality cult, the rank and file of the Army could not be persuaded to desert him. That was why they used to say, "Those who speak ill of or say anything against President Laldenga should be killed". No volunteers of other political parties said that any person speaking ill of their leader should be killed. Here it is evident there was a strange power working in the MNF party, in favour of President Laldenga in particular.

When Laldenga visited the National Army camps in the jungle, he used to sermonise to the ill-fed and ill-clad soldiers how his own children in Dhaka were well-cared for by the Government of Pakistan. His right-hand man of that time Lalthangliana suggested that it might be better not to relate the welfare of his children to the poor soldiers who lived on bamboo shoots and wild roots without proper clothing, for they
might be jealous of his children and might demand them to join the underground force. Fortunately for him, the majority of the soldiers were happy that their leader was respected by a big country like Pakistan in taking good care of his children though many of them were jealous of those children. Anyway, many blunders he made which were likely to work to his ruin did not lead to his downfall, rather, some of his mistakes turned into his advantage.

Laldenga and the MNF movement: As stated earlier, Laldenga eloquently and vehemently preached the gospel of Mizoram independence throughout Mizoram convincing the mass of the people. But he himself did not have conviction that full independence was possible. Many a time he expressed his disapproval of the insurgency the blame of which he laid on his colleagues. He was thinking of setting up a parallel District Council of Mizo District which was unconstitutional and also unacceptable for the members of his party.

Ever since the Government of Pakistan gave him residence in Dhaka where he could enjoy a bed of roses with his family he had not given much attention to Mizoram affairs. However, he had always kept with him some assistants who were sincerely desirous of getting independence with strong conviction. These people made arrangements for his meetings with Pakistan representatives whenever it was necessary for the underground government to make demands from the Government
of Pakistan for the supply of arms and ammunition as well as for food and equipment. They sometimes made arrangements for his meeting with C.I.A. and for some foreign embassies. In order to make those meetings his assistants made many contacts with those peoples. Whenever his assistants arranged necessary meetings with foreign dignitaries he had no objection to meet them.

During the period of 1966 to 67, the Government of Pakistan earnestly requested Laldenga to leave Pakistan soil so that they might be able to help him more effectively and look after his family in a better way. They told him that if India knew that the Mizo leader was in Pakistan it could do more harm to Pakistan than Pakistan could do to it. They told Laldenga further that they would send his children to the best school in Dhaka at the expense of Pakistan Government. But he said, "If I myself go to Mizoram, India will deploy all its forces to hunt for me. Then they will corner me and arrest me to be hanged."

The Pakistani representatives persuaded him more earnestly saying, "You said that your leadership is shakky. If so, you might be ousted by your Vice President if you remain here." But Laldenga said, "If you give me more arms then the people will trust me and my leadership will automatically be strengthened." They told him that it would be difficult for them to give him more arms, for his presence in their soil bound
their hand, and also, that all the freedom fighters fought in their own countries. But Laldenga said that A.Z. Phizo was also fighting independence from London. They told him that they did not mind if his family, ambassador or representatives lived in Dhaka. But they could not let him go. Even when the whole population of MNF encamped in East Pakistan the representative of Pakistan Government requested him to leave Dhaka to live with his men without his family. Even then he strongly protested.

President Laldenga set out from Dhaka with David Laldanmawia his son and Lalthangliana his ambassador. He stayed in the Capital Headquarters for only one day and had a cabinet meeting. But the Parliament wanted to meet him also, and requested him to stay only one more day. He refused their request on the ground that his son's school admission should not be late. The member of Parliament suggested that his son should go home with Lalthangliana. But he said, "It is not reasonable nor appropriate for a man to stay away from home on the day of his son's admission into the school." The people in the camps said that all of them stayed away from home on the days of their sons' admission into schools. Moreover, the houses of many of them had been burnt down by the Indian Army and they did not know the whereabouts of their families not to speak of being present on the day of admission of their sons into schools. They grumbled saying that their President
gave 75.p.c of himself to his own family welfare and only 25.p.c. to the cause of the country.

However, it is false to say that Laldenga did not want independence of Mizoram. He did want it. So did all Mizos. But many people did not believe in the possibility of independence of Mizoram. Likewise, Laldenga did not believe in it and that is why he was satisfied with a status of statehood. Sainghaka said that Laldenga was satisfied with a status of District Council if he would be the Chief Executive Member (C.E.M.). LALhmingthanga, the ex-Foreign Minister of MNF said that it was not the choice of Laldenga that he left the District Council service and entered upon the politics. He stated further that it was only because of misunderstanding between him and Ch. Saprawnga the then Chief Executive Member of the District Council that Laldenga left his service in the council. His main objective was to overthrow the Mizo Union and capture the power of the District Council of Mizo District.13

But to overthrow the Mizo Union party and to make his party the largest one in Mizoram he wanted to use any weapon, propaganda or policy. The aspiration for independence was undercurrent in Mizoram in those days. Laldenga took the advantage of this and adopted the policy of independence to

13. An interview with LALhmingthanga, Ex-Foreign Minister of MNF, interviews with H.K. Bawihchhuaka (Late) and (Late) Hrangaia.
attract the people. He was in league with B.P. Chaliha, the Chief Minister of Assam to topple down the Mizo Union. It was certain that Laldenga was in a position to become the C.E.M. of the Mizo District Council in early nineteen sixties, and he was bent upon taking the power of the District Council. But since he had already roused the aspiration of the Mizo people for independence he could not stop a strong pressure from his colleagues and his party.

Therefore, it was alleged that Laldenga was not sincere to the cause of independence and it was for the same reason that he was very sincere in peace making with India. He was tight cornered by his own politics and policy. But he was fortunate that his political career did not suffer much from his insincerity and mistakes. He told the people that if he should lead them back to India they should shoot him down. But he did lead them back to India safely, without being killed by his soldiers. This was a miracle that proved his charismatic leadership.

For quite sometime, all the soldiers of Mizo Army accepted Laldenga as their only leader because of his schematic personality cult. However, owing to the teachings of the intellectuals or the so-called Blue Faction many underground personnel were convinced of the new ideology. Even the leaders and commanders were once captivated by the charisma of President Laldenga, but later many of them became rebellious against him.
Examples of charismatic leadership are as follows: When Tlangchhuaka was loyal to his master Laldenga he received a letter from Rochhunga Pudaite who is still now in USA, offering his good office to mediate between India and MNF. But Tlangchhuaka told that it was not at all reasonable to offer mediation for a settlement within Indian Constitution while the MNF were fighting only for full independence. After two or three days Vice President Tlangchhuaka received a letter from Laldenga advocating a settlement within the Indian Constitution which he readily accepted. To him the same suggestion was quite unreasonable when it was originated from others but highly appreciable when it came from Laldenga.

Another example was: The so-called Blue faction were arrested because they were alleged to have accepted a status lower than independence but better than ordinary statehood. But when Laldenga suggested only the statehood which was lower than the one allegedly accepted by the blue faction, it was accepted without any complaint. For this reason Ngurkunga, the ex-Minister of the MNF said that the MNF politics was nothing but Laldenga himself.\textsuperscript{14}

Ngurkunga stated further that Laldenga refused to pursue the possibility of unconditional talk found out by Lalnghenga and Vaninmawia, and also another way of negotiation

\textsuperscript{14. An interview with Ngurkunga (Late)}
explored by Sailianpuia and Laizova soon after the fall of East Pakistan only because they were not initiated by him. But after a long period of suffering and loss of great wealth and many lives Laldenga accepted much cheaper and more humiliating talks with India. Then the ruling faction (his faction) accepted and welcomed whatever Laldenga achieved by it howsoever humble. The mass of the Mizo people must welcome peace for the sake of peace even if it were without any achievement because they had long been groaning under the iron heels of Security Force. They were tired of the rule of guns where they had no right of any kind. It was strange that even the MNF soldiers welcomed the ordinary statehood while a better one could be expected. This also was the proof of his charismatic leadership. Another proof of his charismatic power was that when the Blue faction proposed to go to Arrakan Laldenga's faction bitterly hated the proposal, but when Laldenga proposed the same thing they willingly accepted it.

Why Laldenga gave up the struggle for independence: A large number of people said that Laldenga would have been keeping on struggling for independence had he not been entreated by the people of Mizoram to abandon violence and come home. But the people of Mizoram had been making earnest appeals to Laldenga continually throughout the period of disturbance, to stop violence and meet the Indian leadership at the negotiation table.
The Government of India also repeatedly announced that they were ready to meet the underground MNF on condition that they first lay down their arms. If he was to respond the public cry for his return home he would have come home soon after the disturbance. Vanlalngaia said that it was unbelievable that Laldenga received any public appeal for giving up violence while he was in Islamabad where he was kept out of postal communication. He gave up the movement of MNF for independence because he had no foreign support any longer. China and Pakistan had abandoned him. Circumstances compelled him, therefore, to surrender to the Government of India unconditionally, or to kiss the dust. Another reason for giving up violence was that he could achieve what he called an "honourable" settlement where he could become the head of the state. In order to shift responsibility for a cheap achievement he spread a propaganda in Mizoram that he had abandoned violence only because of public appeal. 15 He said to the people sometime, that they returned home to fight for independence without violence.

Laldenga as a politician: Undoubtedly, Laldenga was a rare political orator and schemer. He was also a good debater, quick at detecting the weak points of his opponents' arguments and knew how to patch up the flows in his own arguments. It was

15. An interview with Vanlalngaia.
difficult to defeat him even when he was on the wrong side. Right or wrong, his arguments were always forceful and logically expressed. Therefore, the political platform was his choicest battlefield where he, nearly always, got the better of his opponents, at least in the opinion of the unintellectuals, who, most often, formed the majority of the audience. Since the Mizos are generally emotional to a great extent, Laldenga's exiting and impetus oration swept over the mass of the people even when they do not see the value of the points

His oratory, in a sense, was that he mostly used symbolic expression without making his points clear, but making his audience to believe in something cherishing and favourable which would not hold water, or could be twisted in the other way round. For concrete examples, he said once, to the people of Pukpui village (his birthplace) that he would contribute one or two bundles of bamboos for the rebuilding of the village which was burnt down for two times by Indian forces. As he made that statement during his Chief Ministership the Pukpui villagers expected a large sum of money, say, a million or two at least, or a crore or two at most, to be sanctioned by the Government of Mizoram. But he said, in fact, that he would contribute one or two bundles of bamboos for the rebuilding of the village.

At another time, before the insurgency, answering the question of whether or not he had enough guns to start the
armed revolution he said, "I do not say we have guns, but we do have iron pipes". Also, by way of saying the importance of Mizoram and its valuable resources he said, "Oh, that Tawi mountain!". The Tawi mountain is some sixty five miles east of Aizawl. He did not add anything about the mountain, but his hearers simply believed that the mountain was rich in mineral wealth. But he might not mean that. Therefore, the interpretations of his political speeches were always different particularly the important points. Besides using symbolic and figurative expressions, he most often chose ambiguous words particularly for the expression of sensitive points, so that he might be able to twist the expressions later in accordance with the situation.

His skill in this type of oration was a valuable asset to him, for it helped him to the fullest extent in his political campaign in Mizoram. But this tactic was not applicable to the intellectual circle and international politics. For this reason he did not occupy a high position in the estimation of Pakistan, China and India as well as intellectual circles in Mizoram. But since he did occupy a very high position in the mind of the mass of the people who accepted him as their leader above all other Mizo politicians he could not be belittled by the Government of India.

As a shrewd political schemer Laldenga did not tolerate any sign of opposition and nipped them in the bud. He knew how to take advantage of any untoward incidents for his benefit.
He did not like to lose any chance to topple down his opponents, and manipulated others' weaknesses and blunders for the upliftment of his cause. In order to cultivate his personality cult among his followers he always denounced any achievements made by others and tried to show himself as more praiseworthy. He was capable of making members of his party pin their faith on him only and not in others. He enjoyed a high position in the minds of the unintellectual mass of the people until the open rebellion broke out against him.

Like some of the great leaders of other countries of the world he was not highly educated academically but he had a command of English and Hindi besides his mother tongue, Mizo, and this mastery of languages stood him in good stead. Like other great leaders of the world who did not have high academic qualifications Laldenga had a dictatorial tendency in the latter part of his leadership and this led him to his downfall once. He was keen to the political situation of Mizoram and manipulated any political change therein. He was a strong politician but a weak administrator especially in critical period. That is, he used to be indecisive in a critical situation.

His colleagues said that he wanted to avoid all blames but claimed all credits. For example, he put the blames for all sufferings, bloodshed and distress in Mizoram on his colleagues, his decision to give up independence movement, to
the people of Mizoram, any mistakes he made or difficulty he created in the peace talks, to Brig.T.Sailo and for the cheap achievement the blame was shifted to Rajive Gandhi or Congress (I) party. When he wanted to condemn some of his colleagues whom he believed to have subversive tendency or whom he was afraid to become more popular than he was, he incited someone under his thumb to take initiative in alleging them of treason, etc., but keeping himself aloof of the trouble. When this was officially brought to his notice he feigned to be surprised and disbelieved. He then pretended to defend them.16

Thus he tried to make himself free from any blame when he wanted to purge his party of undesirable elements, to consolidate his power and position. This indicates that he was not a bold administrator. Further, when he wanted to replace Sainghaka, the Defence Secretary (Minister) it was initiated by Rochhinga. Lalnunmawia, the Vice President was reprimanded and removed from his position through the instrumentality of Speaker Vanhela and the mass arrest of the intellectuals was also executed in his absence seemingly without his knowledge. Those are the examples of his schemes to do away with his disfavoured persons or how he tried to avoid blames.17

16. An interview with Lalhmingthanga, ex-Foreign Minister of MNF.
17. An interview with Lalhmingthanga.
As a dictator he made laws and enforced them forthwith. For example, in Calcutta convention he proposed that the convention should be vested with the power of National Emergency Committee (NEC). Since none of the members dared to oppose it the proposal was passed and enforced at once. Whenever he found any provision of the constitution or law to bar him to execute his scheme, he got them amended or deleted right away and revived them if and when needed. As a despot he appointed all the key persons of the government and the party to strengthen his position as a President. In that way, he closed the doors of opposition and rivalry. This was practiced by all other rulers and leaders wherever and whenever possible. Therefore, Laldenga was not to blame for safeguarding his power in every way possible.

Unlike Laldenga Biakchhunga and Malsawma Colney tolerated oppositions and tried to win over the people to them by love and justice, and as a result, they were overthrown within a short period of time. They did not like to nip the opposition in the bud for they did not foresee the possible danger of the consequence of their toleration. As revolutionary leaders they should be strong and unscrupulous to some extent. But Laldenga knew how to be a revolutionary leader and what he had to do as such.

18. An interview with Tlangchhuaka.
As he did not allow any opposition so he did not allow himself to be outwitted or outdone in any respect, so that he might occupy the highest position in the estimation and mind of the unintellectual mass of the people who were his main support and strength. In fact, being less educated he could not excel his colleagues in every respect except in scheming.

Laldenga's mottos were, "The end justifies the means" and "Power grows out of a barrel of the gun". Therefore, he did not hesitate to use any means even guns, in order to achieve his goals. He often said, "If my house is on fire I must use any water available, dirty or clean, in order to put it out. By this he meant to say that he would never care to use any means, good or bad, whichever was likely to help him to achieve his goal. Biakchhunga, on the other hand tried to use love and justice to achieve the same goal. He was successful in getting full support from all battalions except Lt.Col.Kawlvela's battalion. Unlike Laldenga he allowed open opposition which led to hunger strike and ultimately to his resignation.

Tlangchhuaka became the President of MNF once. He wanted to start a new Church and tried to become a spiritual leader. He was surrounded by a host of prophets who gave him advice in accordance with their faith, and prophesied in his favour. On the other hand, Laldenga did not believe in prophesies and dreams even when they were in his favour which
were used for his political tools though. Tlanchhuaka gave more importance to spiritual welfare than to politics and administrative affairs. As he was not given support by the Army Tlangchhuaka’s administration was a failure.

Malsawma Colney, a man of strong and integrated personality, was not fit for a revolutionary leader as he himself said to Lt.Col.Lalluauva. He said that he hated violence inside the MNF organization and was afraid of bloodshed even if it were for his own benefit. He said also that he would rather lose the throne than to shed the blood of his comrades in arms. According to him that was the reason why a handful of armed men led by Zoramthanga and Tawnluia recaptured the underground government of Mizoram for Laldenga. He said further that the then Chief of the Army Staff sent messengers to take him back to become the President of the MNF once again. But he refused to go back because he was afraid that there would be bloodshed among themselves. The then Army Chief Lalluauva confirmed that statement and added that Malsawma Colney refused the offer not because of kindness and goodness but because of cowardice. Malsawma Colney frankly said to Lalluauva that he was not fit for a revolutionary leader but only a leader for peace time when there was no conflict among them.19

19. An interview with Malsawma Colney and Lalluauva, ex-Army Chief.
It is true, beyond a shadow of doubt, that the three Presidents of MNF mentioned above, who ousted Laldenga, were rather too religious to be leaders of armed revolution which called for at least some amount of cruelty, unscrupulousness and violence if not to the fullest extent. They were rather too soft and mild and therefore, Laldenga was more fit for a revolutionary leader in all senses of the term, good or bad, than any one of the three.

Laldenga's Mistakes in dealing with foreign countries: When he made a demand for more arms and ammunition Laldenga emphatically said that he needed them to strengthen his position as the President which he said was shaky because, according to his version, there was a subversive element among his colleagues. For this reason the representatives of Pakistan had a bad impression of him which they expressed to Lalthangliana who was with Laldenga then.

When Laldenga flatly refused their strong pressure to go to Mizoram to take the command of the MNF force, Pakistani representatives said to Lalthangliana that Laldenga was not at all sincere in the cause of independence of Mizoram. They said that his excuses were trivial matters and he was too much for his family. R. Zamawia said that Pakistan knew that they could please Laldenga without giving him much and effective assistance so long as they took good care of his family.
While in China Laldenga failed to give good impression of him to Chinese leadership and as a result they gave him much advice on how to be a good and successful leader of a revolution. Lalhmingthanga, ex-Foreign Minister of the MNF, who went with him to Peking (Beijing) said that Laldenga talked too much about his family in the presence of Chinese representatives who considered him, therefore, to give too much importance to his family.20

When he arrived at Islamabad from Burma Laldenga was accorded with a warm reception and provided him with all facilities and amenities as if he were a V.V.I.P. But he made a mistake in saying to the Government of Pakistan that he wanted a house of his own, a car of his own, etc., for he had no intention to go back to India. Since then he was shifted to a poor cottage in the outskirt of the city.

Laldenga's mistakes during Peace Talks: We cannot blame Laldenga for accepting a settlement of Mizoram problem within the Indian Constitution since he had already closed all possibilities of better achievements. He had cut off his connection with China, CIA and Pakistan. He had also turned a deaf ear to better status offered by the Government of India.

20. An interview with Lalhmingthanga, ex-Foreign Minister of the MNF.
through Intelligence Department. Now the only way open for
him was to make peace with India under any condition. The
Government of India knew that they could force Laldenga to accept
any status and any condition because he could not do anything
else nor could he go anywhere else. But they had to consider
the underground force behind him. Only because of them Laldenga
still had political importance.

In spite of all his failures and difficulties he had
passed through, he was not absolutely a failure because a door
for his headship of Mizoram was still opened ajar. Although
he could not avoid accepting Indian Constitution and its
citizenship he could make the best of the bad job by holding
peace talks outside India so that the progress of the talk might
have been covered by the newspapers of the world. Even if that
was not possible, his entry into India should have been covered
by some internationally popular papers.

Had the Government of India not been so merciful
Laldenga could be kept a prisoner or they would not have any
talk with him. But since they discovered his weak points and
shortcomings the Indian representatives wanted to make him a
tool for Mizoram politics. He could have his weak points
undiscovered so as to make better achievements. But after
exposing all his weaknesses or his ins and outs, he foolishly
tried to bluff the Indian politicians who were cleverer and
wiser than he was. In this way he invited unnecessary troubles
in which he entangled himself off and on. For fear of being unable to convince the underground MNF he often made propaganda in contradiction to what he had done with India for Mizoram. In that way he put himself in a dangerous position sometimes.

Regarding peace camps he made promises to the Indian Government which he would not at all be able to do. He promised to lay down arms within a very short period of time which he was quite unable to execute. Also, after accepting a settlement of Mizoram problem within the framework of Indian Constitution he tried to interpret the clause of the agreement in such a way that a separate constitution should be framed for Mizoram and that should be a part of the Indian Constitution like Sixth Schedule, etc. While the Government of India meant the existing constitution. Again, after making an agreement to set up peace camp for laying down arms so that peace talks might ensue, he tried to hold peace talks which should be followed by laying down of arms. Thus he made mistakes by trying to bluff the Indian leaders or by playing fast and loose with them.

Accusation and Counter-accusation: Laldenga accused Brig.T.Sailo of making an alliance with India against the MNF and of sabotaging peace talks. He sent a letter to the Vice President of People's Conference party, Sakhawliana, informing him that India was trying to support one of the political parties in Mizoram to form a government of Mizoram U.T. and to sabotage
the peace talks. He said that Indian Intelligence Department had bought Brig.T.Sailo and Biakchhunga Chief of the Army Staff to be used as weapons against the MNF and therefore, the Government of India did not like to make an honourable settlement. He stated that what India wanted to make was a settlement that would bring dishonour to the MNF. He said further that Brig.T.Sailo interfered in their talk with the Prime Minister as well as in the one with the Home Minister, on the invitation of the Government of India, as their instrument or agent. He informed Sakhawliana that Brig.T.Sailo was always hid on the other side of the wall of the meeting hall and was called into the hall after some minutes of discussions. He said that Brig.T.Sailo contributed his idea against MNF in favour of India.

Thus he shifted responsibility to Brig.T.Sailo and Chief of the Army Staff Biakchhunega for making unsatisfactory achievement out of the peace talks. Biakchhunega said that Laldenga was already bought with money since the time when he came in contact with the Indian Embassy in Kabul from where he got money for the maintenance of his family in Islamabad. He was taken out from Islamabad by the Indian Intelligence Department who took him with his family on a European tour and thus made him their political tool to serve India against the Mizo people. Even during the peace talks in India he was provided with fashionable quarters where he enjoyed all sorts
of facilities and amenities at the expense of the Government of India. His children were given the best education available in New Delhi without his expense. Laldenga sold the Mizo people for his personal benefit.\textsuperscript{21}

Biakchhunga further stated that after swallowing the baits on the political hook of India Laldenga tried to undo the commitments he had already made with India and his attempt to do so was fatal to his political career. He was thrown into prison one time and expelled from the Indian soil in another time. After all these he was brought to his knees once again. Therefore, he could not do anything for the good of Mizoram except in accordance with the instruction of the Indian Government. What he ate, what he put on and where he lived in were provided by the Government of India and no other Mizo could be or had ever been bought by the Government of India like Laldenga. Thus Biakchhunga accused him of being bought by and making an alliance with India to stop MNF movement without honourable settlement.\textsuperscript{22} It must be understood that Laldenga was compelled by circumstances to follow the only possible course against his will. Since it was not his choice to make such a humiliating agreement with India he tried to make better achievement by playing fast and loose with the Indian

\textsuperscript{21} An interview with Biakchhunga.

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
leadership but with no success. He was successful in Calcutta
collection, to achieve the goal set for him by the Government
of India.

Machiavellian Politician: Laldenga was a true machiavellian
politician in that his mottos were "The end justifies the means"
and "Power grows out of the barrel of guns". He said also that
if his house were on fire he would not care to use any water
to put out the fire. This means that he would use any means
to achieve his goal. Accordingly, he played fast and loose
with the Indian leaders, nor did he hesitate to violate the
rules he made by himself if and when it was good for his end.
He did not hesitate to break his promises if he thought it good
for his cause and for the cause of the country. For example,
he signed pledge of allegiance to the Government of India.
But a few weeks after signing the pledge he started armed
revolution. That was what he tried to practice during the peace
talks with India. He was faithful and sincere to his commitments
if or so long as it was good for him or for the country. He
did not care to break pledges and promises for the good of
Mizoram and for his own good. He wanted to get maximum from
others but was willing to give minimum to them. This policy
gave him problems in his dealing with foreign countries,
sometimes.
Mizo mentality and the MNF movement: The Mizo people, in general, are interested in politics. But the mass of the people, like other peoples in other parts of India, are not aware of political affairs. They are often swept over by the political oration of self seeking politicians. The mass of the people though literate, cannot discern good politics from the bad one. Therefore, many people thought that Laldenga had achieve independence or a status as good as independence. That was the reason why the MNF party captured the absolute majority of seats in the state Legislative Assembly of Mizoram in the first election of full-fledged state of Mizoram. Moreover, the MNF party called Laldenga the "Father of the Nation" in spite of his failure to achieve his main goal. Quite a large number of Mizo people based their political reasoning on religion and that is why they cannot exercise clear judgement in politics.

Before the insurgency the MNF party based their propaganda on Christianity saying that the Mizo people were God's elect in the place of Israelites who rejected and crucified Christ. At the end of every official and private letters or documents they wrote, "For God and our Country". They preached that God would liberate the Mizo people from the domination of the heathen government - India, the worshippers of idols. The blessed Mizo, favoured of God, would be liberated to preach the gospel of Christ through out the world. That was why the MNF party swept the whole district of Mizoram within
a short period of time. In fact, the top leaders of the party did not believe it heart and soul, but to win the people's hearts they vehemently preached the doctrine.

In Mizoram, nowadays, every political party has realised that Christianity is the best political instrument to win the people to their side. In its Saturday issue of September 23, 1989, the Indian Express published an article with a caption "The Christian Government Takes a Turn". The article was on the election petition filed against the ruling Congress (I) Chief Minister of Mizoram, Lalthanhawla by a leader of MNF. Lianhmingthanga, stated in his revision petition that the Congress (I) had blatantly sought votes in the name of Christianity during the Mizoram Assembly elections, and had campaigned to seek support for a Christian Government.

The MNF movement for independence was concluded with a final agreement signed in New Delhi on 30th June, 1986 between the two warring parties. The signatories of the accord were R.D. Pradhan, Home Secretary of India and Lalkhama, the Chief Secretary, Government of Mizoram on behalf of the Government of India, and Laldenga on behalf of the MNF. Some of the important points of the accord are:

The underground personnel should lay down their arms and give up their policy of secession. On the other hand, the Central Government would take steps for the rehabilitation of the underground personnel. India would grant a status of
statehood. In respect of religion, social practices, Mizo customery law, etc. no Acts of Parliament should apply to the state of Mizoram.

The Central Government would transfer resources to the new Government to cover the revenue gap for the year Border trade in locally produced or grown as agricultural commodities could be allowed under scheme to be formulated by the Central Government, subject to international agreement with the neighbouring countries. The Innerline Regulation should not be amended nor disrespected without consulting the state Government. The rights of minorities in Mizoram should be preserved. Regarding the question of unification of Mizo inhabited areas of other states to form one administrative unit the Central Government could not make any commitment.

The state would be allowed to establish its own university in the state in accordance with the prescribed procedures. Mizoram would also be entitled to have a High Court of its own. Ex-gratia amount was to be paid to the heir/decendants of persons killed during the disturbance of Mizoram. Compensation should be paid to the damage of crops, building, etc. done by the Security Force.

Leadership among the Mizos: Ch. Saprawnga was one of the founders of the Mizo Union party and an undisputed leader in the organization. Under his leadership the Mizo Union had been
was his weakness that went against him to some extent. Ch.Saprawnga's programmes for Mizoram were confined within the district of Mizoram at the level of the District Council, though full autonomy of Mizo District and integration of Mizo occupied areas were stipulated in the Mizo Union memorandum, submitted to the Government of India, to be implemented. Being the steersman of the Mizo Union party from its early stage Saprawnga was proposed by his colleagues for the first Chief Minister of Mizoram when Mizo district was upgraded to the status of a Union Territory. But he declined the proposal on the ground that Mizo state was beyond the horizon of his politics, rather, it was Ch.Chhunga who strove for the achievement of Mizo state. It is evident, therefore, that his politics did not go beyond the level of District Council and Hill State. His refusal to become the first Chief Minister of Mizoram speaks well for his selfless service for the people and the country as well. Had he been a self-seeking politician he would have readily accepted the proposal.

Ch.Saprawnga was serving as a Minister under the Chief Ministership of Ch.Chhunga for one term. When the Mizo Union merged with congress (I) Ch.Saprawnga became a king maker controlling the government and the party from behind the screen.

23. An interview with Vaivenga, first Education Minister of Mizoram.
so to say. By then he was not in the ministry nor was he among the office-bearers, but only a member of Executive Committee or High Command of Congress (I). One of his personal qualities which strengthened his position as a leader was that he put all the blames on himself for all mistakes of the leadership even if they were done by his colleagues, and he always abode by the decisions of committees and conferences of his party or government.

Brig.T.Sailo: He retired from the military service at the time when the people of Mizoram needed him most. In those days Mizoram was under the rule of guns and the people were groaning under the iron heels of the Army. There was no justice nor a court of law for redressing public or individual grievances against the Army in particular. They cried for a protector. Even Ch.Saprawnga the then political leader (MLA) was manhandled by the Indian Army in a busy street in a broad daylight but there was no rescuer or where to redress his grievance.

When Brig.T.Sailo retired from military, he immediately started a Human Rights Committee to strengthen his hand. Using this committee as a weapon and exercising his personal influence he did a great deal to assuage the suffering of the Mizo people. Thus he became popular throughout Mizoram as the defender of the people from their dreaded military atrocity. When the Committee on Human Rights was converted into a political party
it was named the "People's Conference". As he was the Chairman of the Committee Brig.T.Sailo was unanimously elected President of the "People's Conference" (P.C.) party.

As a military man Brig.T.Sailo was well-disciplined. His military life manifested in his political career in many respects in a good way as well as in an unfavourable way. Even his opponents expressed that he is an outstanding leader among the Mizos. They said also that his programme for the development of Mizoram cannot be surpassed or outdone and no leader can implement them except himself. He was such a strong leader that no one could challenge his leadership within his party.

However, Brig.T.Sailo lacks oratory, a very important qualification for political leadership. Military leadership, his way of life, is not practicable in political field some time. He is rather too truthful and honest to be a political leader in a community which is not fully civilised and where lip service is more effective than sincerity. He is rather too firm in his decision and policy to come to terms with oppositions. He seems to be willing to sacrifice his position and privilege in order to uphold truth and justice. He is quite opposite to machiavellianism. In spite of his sincerity and capability Brig.T.Sailo was defeated in 1987 election.

Laldenga : His leadership was charisma. The MNF party was founded in October 1961 but it captured two MLA seats in 1983
bye-election which were vacated by Ch.Saprawnga and Ch.Chhunga who resigned in October 1962 to strengthen their demand for Hill state. The people of Mizoram accepted Laldenga as a Messiah to liberate the Mizos from the "Indian domination". Unlike Brig.T.Sailo he was a political orator. His unmatchable oratory carried away the mass of the people of Mizoram. Unlike Ch.Saprawnga he harangued, tiraded, appealing to the sentiment of the people. In contradiction with the style of Ch.Saprawnga Laldenga put all the blames for anything wrong on his colleagues even if they were his own faults. Being machiavellian he lacked sincerity unlike Brig.T.Sailo. The areas of these two leaders' politics is more extensive than that of Ch.Saprawnga. Their political dreams were not confined within Mizoram state only.

These three leaders were prominent Mizo politicians.