A PROFILE OF MIZORAM

Mizoram is situated in the easternmost corner of India flanked by Bangladesh and Tripura in the west and by Burma in the east. In the North it has a boundary with Manipur and Cachar District of Assam. It lies between 92 degree and 95 degree of longitude and between 18 degree and 26 degree of latitude. The imaginary line of Tropic of Cancer cuts across the land in the middle and the climate of Mizoram is more or less equable all the year round. The range of hills in this state mostly run from North to South forming deep gorges and valleys along with them throughout the length of the country which are enshrouded by snow-white mists in the bright winter mornings. The hill tops have good views of the vast areas of the land towards the east and the west.

The highest peak called the Blue Mountain has an altitude of 2,168 metre and the average height of the hills is about 900 metres and the hills on the eastern part tend to be higher. The higher level of the slopes of the hills have a cool and temperate climate but the foot of the hill and low lying areas have a warm sub-tropical climate. For this reason a large variety of crops can be grown in Mizoram. The average rainfall in this state is 303 cm annually. Since the Tropic of Cancer runs through the heart of Mizoram, the entire land is under the influence of the south west monsoon from the Bay
of Bengal in summer. The whole area of the state is covered with forests and the jungle which are evergreen and rich in fauna and flora. The slopes of the hills and even the hilltops are suitable for jhum cultivation which is the main occupation of the inhabitants. As the result of the jhumming cultivation which is shifted every year to a new site by cutting down the forests and burning them for the cultivation of crops, a large area of forests is destroyed every year.

Since there are not enough low-lying areas in the state for wet cultivation, the primitive way of cultivation (i.e. jhumming) cannot be abandoned so far, but the Government of Mizoram is trying its best to reclaim more and more wasteland and to find out other methods of cultivation.

'Mizoram' is a new name to non-mizos for it was known as 'Lushai Hills' during the British period. But its present name is not new to its native inhabitants since it had been known to them as such from time immemorial. 'Mizoram' means 'the land of the Mizos' or 'Mizoland'. Between the ranges of the hills are meandering streams flowing either from north to south or from south to north. These streams cannot be utilised for irrigation because their waters are too little in the dry seasons but overflowed their banks in the rainy seasons. The waters are too rapid and uncontrollable when the rivers are in spate. Most of the low-lying areas along the river banks are not plain enough to be ploughed. The length
of Mizoram state from north to south is 200 miles while its average breadth from east to west is 100 miles. Since it is surrounded by the foreign countries except in the north it is good for military strategy. Being a hilly country Mizoram has many precipices specially on the western sides of the mountains and hills.

The Mizo people enjoy one of the pleasantest climates in the world which is mild and congenial throughout the year and is suitable for cultivation of immense variety of crops. The climate of low-lying areas is suitable for cultivation of tropical crops while that of the slopes of mountains and hills for warm temperate crops. As stated earlier the average annual rainfall in Mizoram is 303 cm which is fairly heavy and not at all evenly distributed over the whole year. The rainy season is extremely wet and the dry season is distressfully dry. Thus the river banks are full to the brim and even overflowed occasionally in the rainy season, but the small body of water, snakes its way through the broad dry riverbeds in the dry season. So, nearly all the rivers and streams in Mizoram are naturally useless for irrigation, communication and transportation.

No minerals of economic values have been discovered in the state so far, but oil deposits are found in different places of the state and the tapping of some deposits has been undertaken by an oil company.
Mizoram is a poor and under-developed state. One of the reasons is the lack of good communication. It has no communication with the rest of India except the only one road that runs from Aizawl to Silchar. There is air service from Calcutta to Aizawl and from Silchar to Aizawl for the smallest type of aircraft. The service is undertaken by Vayudoot which is most unreliable and irregular. A railway link with Cachar District has been constructed recently. For reason of bad communication and other reasons there is no industry worth mentioning.

THE PEOPLE :

Mizoram has a population of 6,86,217 according to the 1991 census. The rate of population growth during the last decade 38.98%. It is estimated that almost half of the population is within the age group of 0-15 years. This leads us to the conclusion that Mizoram population is an infant one. As such, dependency ratio is found to be very high. Rapid urbanisation is also a notable feature of the population. The percentage of urban population to the total population was 21.17 in 1981 as against 11.36 in 1971. The percentage of urban population in 1991 has not yet been calculated. The male population is 3,56,672 while that of the female is 3,29,545 only.

The people in Mizoram were formerly known by the foreigners as 'Lushais' which was a term corrupted from 'Lusei'.
the name given to the predominant group of Mizo clans. The term Lusei was assumed to be originated from 'Seipui' the supposed original home of the Mizos. However, the foreign or corrupted term 'Lushai' had been officially changed into 'Mizo' and 'Lushai Hills District' into 'Mizo District'. Eventually when the Mizo District was elevated to the status of Union Territory on 21st January 1972 its name was again changed into Mizoram. However, some people think that the term 'Lushai' was originated from the people ruled by Lua Kings somewhere in Burma in days gone by. Those people were believed to be styled 'Luahai' meaning 'Lua people' which was again corrupted to 'Lushais'. C.A.Soppitt said, "This derivation, if true one, is most important, and enables us to trace back the people for many ages".

Technically, the term 'Lushai' (Lusei) comprises only about ten clans while the term 'Mizo' comprises about forty clans including Chins and Paihtes in Burma, that means all the tribes in Upper Burma. It includes also Hmars, Thado, Gangte and all other tribals in Manipur state, Tlanglaus, Bawms and Pangs in Bangladesh. Therefore, the term 'Mizo' is much more comprehensive than the term 'Lusei' or 'Lushai'. Since there

is no record of the early Mizos or Luseis, nor has the anthropological and ethnographical research on the Mizos ever been attempted so far, their origin cannot be claimed authoritatively. Nevertheless, the Mizos appeared to have had a common origin with many other clans of the Tibeto-Burman group. In view of the tremendous enthusiasm which the Mizos later evinced for the religion of their choice it remains a matter of considerable curiosity that they never fell to the teaching of Buddha, Confucius or other great preceptors with whose disciples they must have been in intermittent contacts all through the ages.  

A certain amount of linguistic similarities and similarity in physical appearance as well as general stature are the main obvious reasons why the Mizos are believed to have had a common origin with other clans of Tibeto-Burman group. The ancestral home of the Mizos would appear to have been somewhere in the neighbourhood of South-east Tibet and Western China whence, by slow degrees through the centuries, they pressed southwest and westward to their present habitat which is divided and added to three neighbouring countries such as Burma, to form Upper Burma, India forming a portion of Northeast India.

3. Lushai Chrysalis; Major A.G. McCall, 1949 pp 34,35.
4. Dictionary of Lushai Language by James Herbert Lorain 1940 preface p V
and Bangladesh along the borderline of Northeast India.

The Mizo Clans are as follows:

Sailo, Zadeng, Thangluah, Rivung, Rokhum, Pachuau, Chuaungo, Chuaughang, Chhakchhuak, Chhangte, Chawngthu, Hauhnar, Renthlei, etc. who are collectively known as Luseis; Ralte, Fanai, Hmar, Khawlhring, Ngente, Hrahsel, etc. All these clans live in the present Mizoram proper and in the neighbourhood. Others are Hualngo (originally who belonged to the group of Lusei clans, but separated from them because they refused to move westward into Mizoram along with their brothers and chose to remain in Upper Burma), Paihte, Zahau, Thlantlang, Khuafoh, etc. in Upper Burma; Kawm, Anan, Vaiphei, Thado, Hmar, Gangte (Rangte), Darlawng etc., in Manipur area, Bawm, Tlangau, Pang, etc., in Bangladesh; Chawrai, Biate, Hrangkhawl, Sakechep, Muaithuam, Langrawng, Sukte, etc., in Tripura and Assam.

The Lushais were the predominant group of the clans and that is why all the people in Mizoram were once known as Lushais and their land Lushai Hills.

THEIR LANGUAGE:

All the Mizo clans mentioned above still speak one and the same language with different local dialects which are more or less intelligible to each other but with some difficulty. The speech of the Mizo belongs to Assam-Burma branch of the Tibeto-Burmese family of languages. In his "Languages and Literatures of modern India" Suniti Kumar Chatterji classifies
Indian languages into five main groups one of them being Mongoloid which is spoken in Northeast India. He further states that the language of Mongoloids which were brought into India fall into several groups which again belong to one or the other of the two main branches of the Sino-Tibetan speech, namely, Tibeto-Burman and Siamese Chinese.

According to S.K Chatterji the Tibeto-Burman speeches fall into four classification, one of them being the Assam-Burmese speeches. The Assam-Burmese speeches are again divided into different branches or groups. One of the groups is the 'Kuki-Chin group' of which Mizo language is a member. It is noteworthy that Mizo language is the best known and most widely spoken among the Kuki-Chin group of languages.

The Kuki-Chin languages, however, can be treated as one and the same language spoken differently by different clans of Mizo in different places. In spite of diversity and so-called Kuki-Chin languages can rightly be called Mizo language to a certain extent and the people who speak them as one people with a common name for all of them- Mizo.

Mode of Living:

No permanent settlement existed in the life of the Mizos in the past because their nomadic instinct militated against any idea of permanent or lasting settlement. Villages would move more or less regularly to new places in search of better and more fertile land, perhaps every fourth year or so,
but within a limited area, the jurisdiction of the village chief. However, the Mizos were very particular about their dwelling places and considerable thought was spent on the subject of village site. The highest hilltop started as favourite if a good supply of water was available because hilltops were considered to be healthy and strongholds.\textsuperscript{5}

Every Mizo village, as a rule, was an independent principality under an autocratic monarch who exact a certain amount of jhum produce from every house as a tribute or tax. Villages would move to new places not only in search of better and more fertile land, but also in search of safety from inter-village wars which broke out more often than not, and from epidemic diseases which also occurred once in a blue moon. The good chiefs always had bigger villages than the bad ones. As many as one thousand houses might be collected under one chief. Some villages of two or three thousand houses of the days gone by were mentioned in the history of Mizo people.

All able-bodied persons of the village, including women were engaged in jhum cultivation which was the main occupation of the people. There was a distinct division of labour as between man and his womenfolk, any work which calls for labourious efforts and great energy being left to men and

\textsuperscript{5} Lushai Chrysalis - Maj.A.G.McCall, 1949, p 165.
less strenuous works to his womenfolk. So, jungle clearance for jhum cultivation was exclusively left to man, but in sowing seeds, weeding and reaping women took active parts along with their menfolk. Every woman was capable of making garments for the family and herself.

When they worked on jhum young men and women worked together in small groups in the log-rolling system practised in America in the past. That means they worked together on one member's jhum in one day and on the following day on another member's jhum, and so on in rotation. They enjoyed the jhum work in that way. Their staple food being rice their main crop was paddy. Following the patriarchal system man enjoyed a better position than woman.

ADMINISTRATION:

The administration of a village chief was autocratic but not necessarily tyrannical because he was assisted by a group of village elders who were rather powerful especially where the chiefs were benevolent. Since there was a keen competition among the chiefs in having more subjects it was necessary for them to show themselves as good chiefs. Hence the increase of the elders' power.

Though the Mizo chiefs did not have written laws they had conventions and customary laws which had been in practice since the time of their forefathers. Every chief had at least one legal remembrancer who could reproduce off-hand decisions
of similar cases and trials in the past for reference. The customary laws might vary from village to village, especially in minor cases. Though the Mizo chiefs had supreme power in their respective villages they never made arbitrary decision in matters of public concern or judicial proceedings. That means the Mizo chiefs were not despots generally.

As there was no capital punishment among the Mizo formerly, the gravest penalty inflicted upon an offender was expulsion from the village. The people paid tribute to the king in kind out of their jhum produce. The members of the village court or chief's council had to pay more tribute to the chief than the commoners had to pay, in return for the privilege of choosing jhum sites every year before the land was thrown open to the commoners for cultivation. Since there was no paramount power who could bring other chiefs under control; every chief was an Austinian sovereign. There was no unity whatsoever, among the Mizo chiefs unless they had a common foe. Sometimes some chiefs formed an alliance against a powerful chief or against another group of chiefs. A combination of some chiefs sometimes raided the neighbouring tribes in the plains of Assam and tea gardens there. For this reason, the Lushai Expeditions were launched by the British government in India, to stop the repeated raids by the Mizos (Lushais) and to punish them.
LUSHAI EXPEDITION:

In the late 19th century the Lushais (now Mizos) became a source of trouble to the neighbouring tribes of Assam which had been annexed to the British territory. The Government of British India was then forced to take steps for their protection against the repeated raids by the predatory Mizo tribe. However, the policy of the Government towards the offenders had generally been one of conciliation rather than retaliation. Therefore, the British government granted annual payment to the well-disposed Mizo chiefs so that they might influence the unfriendly chiefs not to infringe the treaty or agreement they made with the government.

In the plains of Assam bordering Lushai Hills, there were small isolated tea gardens without any protection against raids by the tribals. As these gardens offered temptations to the raiders, the Lushais repeatedly plundered them and the nearby defenceless villages. The first attack on the gardens was made about the year 1840. The next one was made simultaneously in Sylhet, Tipperah and Cachar. To punish these outrages an expedition was organised by Col. Lister, political agent in Khasi Hills and Commandant of Sylhet Light Infantry. The expedition started from Cachar on 4th January 1850. After releasing four hundred captives from their bondage in Lushai Hills, Col. Lister, deeming his force too small for any further operation, returned to Cachar on 23rd of the same month, with
great difficulty. He recommended to the Government the construction of a road through the country to ensure effective control of the tribe, and form a Kuki Levy which should act as scouts to collect information concerning Lushais. Accordingly Kuki Levy was raised in 1850 but was abolished in 1860.

After Lister's expedition no raids occurred in British territory till 1862. But in 1862 a Mizo chief, Ngursailova plundered and burnt the neighbourhood of Adampur. In this raid Suakpuilala, a friend of the Government was also involved. At this Capt. Steward, the Deputy Commissioner was desired to open negotiations with Suakpuilala to induce him to give up the captives in his possessions so as to avoid expedition. But the negotiations ended in failure.

A large expedition was set on foot in February 1869 consisting of Police and Military forces which also ended in failure. On his return from the expedition Mr. Baker, Deputy Inspector-General and Commander of Deleswari column of the expedition suggested a large and well-equipped expedition to be launched again. In the meantime the Lushais, under the command of Lalburha raided a tea garden at Moniarkhala and in south Hailakandi. At Alexandrapur the Mizo raiders killed Mr. Winchester and some coolies and took little Mary Winchester.

and several prisoners with them. Then another Lushai expedition was set on foot with Gen. Brownlow commanding the right column, who succeeded eventually in obtaining the release of Mary Winchester. The campaign under the command of Gen. Brownlow commenced on 8th October 1871. This expedition was successful in subjugating the Mizo Chiefs. As a result, Mizoram was brought under the British rule.

MIZORAM UNDER THE BRITISH RULE:

When Lushai Hills was subjugated by the British, the whole area was divided into (a) North Lushai Hills which fell under the jurisdiction of Assam Government and (b) South Lushai Hills under Bengal Government. However, on April 1, 1898 the two divisions were amalgamated into the Lushai Hills District under the provision of the Assam Frontier Tract Regulations of 1880 and subsequently declared to be an excluded area under the Government of India Act by order 348Fr. dated April 15th, 1936.

On the formation of the District, notifications were issued to remove from operation in Lushai Hills all Government of India enactments and provincial enactments applicable elsewhere within British India, except certain Acts which were specifically introduced.

8. The Lushai Hills District Cover by Maj.A.G.McCall J.B.E.
Fortunately for the Mizo chiefs, the Government desired to run a successful administration in Mizoram through the instrumentality of the Mizo chiefs. For this purpose the Government felt it necessary to maintain the power of the chiefs, not to be weakened without a very good cause. It follows that the Government desired no changes to be made without full ventilation of the necessity. It was not anticipated however, that no changes should be made under any circumstances whatever, even for better Government and control of the district that might be necessary from time to time, but such changes when under consideration, should be in pursuance of the principle contained in these rules and standing orders, unless there was strong reason for departure.

The civil officers charged with the administration of the district had it, as their responsibility, the duty of ensuring as far as possible, the maintenance of indigenous custom.

Due to the extensive area of the district and bad communications between the villages of the chiefs and Headquarters it was necessary for the Government to form a system of intelligent link between them. This was the circle system. Each circle had one circle Interpreter and one Chaprasi. Each circle covered 15 to 25 chiefs. The circle Interpreter had no executive power in relation to the manner in which the chief ruled their villages. They simply carried out the directions
given to them by the Superintendent, the Sub-Divisional officer or the Assistant to the Superintendent acting on his behalf. The administration of the villages was carried on by the chiefs in accordance with the directions of the superintendent.

The circle Officer reported to the Superintendent the administration of the villages by the chiefs. Further, directions to the chief should, therefore, as far as possible, be framed to enhance the position of the chiefs.

Political Parties in Mizoram before the MNF Movement:

During the British Period the Mizos had no political awareness until the eve of Indian Independence. Just before independence some educated Mizos took interest in national, as well as regional politics. R.Vanlawma took initiative in organising the first Political party in Mizoram which was founded on 9th April, 1946 and was known as the Mizo Union Party.

R.Vanlawma pleaded for liberalisation of the rule by superintendent who ruled over the district autocratically without any interference by the provincial or central authorities. The powerful village chiefs also exercised their power without outside interference in minor matters, because they were not given detailed instruction by the Superintendent as to the internal administration of the village. As a result the commoners suffered and resented the autocratic rule of the chiefs. Therefore, the gospel of 'freedom from the oppression of the chiefs, equality of all men' was welcomed and highly
appreciated by the commoners.

The first conference of the Mizo Union party was convened on 25th May 1946 and the following office-bearers were elected:-

President : Pachhunga
Vice-President : Lalhema
General Secretary : R.Vanlawma
Assistant Secretary : Lalbuaia
Treasurer : Thanga.

In September 1946, the General Assembly of the Mizo Union Party was held. The Assembly passed a memorandum which was subsequently supported by the Mizo conference at Lakhouri (Cachar District) in November 1946. A memorandum was submitted to the Government of India and the constituent Assembly through the Advisory sub-committee for Assam partially excluded areas and excluded areas. It stated that since Mizo Union had 20,000 full members and 80,000 associate members, it alone represented the entire Mizo People.

The memorandum demanded the right of territorial unity and solidarity and self-determination within the province of Assam, and this demand was supported by Mizos outside Lushai Hills, such as those who were living in Manipur state, Cachar District, Tripura and Chittagong Hill Tracts. They stated, 'The memorandum seeks to represent the case of Mizo people for territorial unity and integrity of the whole population and
full self-determination within the province of Assam...’ See Appendix II 'The Mizo Union Memorandum'. In the same paragraph, the memorandum stated that financial provision specially for Mizoram was solicited to be sanctioned from year to year directly from the Central Government for a period of ten years or until such time as the Mizos should assert that they could maintain their self-determination without that financial provision. The leaders of the Mizo Union did not realize that it was absurd to demand territorial unity and solidarity with full self-determination within the province of Assam.

Describing the people of the country they stated that the Mizos were a numerous family of tribes, closely knitted together by common tradition, customs, culture, language, etc., but living in different places inside and outside Mizoram even beyond the international boundaries of Burma and Bangladesh because, they said, their land was sliced out into pieces and added to Burma, Bangladesh, Manipur, Assam and Tripura by the British Government so as to disintegrate the people. Scattered though they were they still clung together to the same tradition, custom, language, culture, etc. having nothing with the rest of India. They claimed to be a distinct block being distinct from Indians nearly in every respect and wherever they were they identified themselves as Mizos. In the memorandum the Mizo Union Party emphatically expressed its dislike of being known as 'Kuki' which, according to them, is a term of derision.
given them by the neighbouring foreigners.

They expressed also their dislike to be called 'Luseis' or 'Lushais' on the ground that this term is applicable to only one sub-tribe of the Mizo race. The term 'Mizo' is more comprehensive than the term 'Lusei' or 'Lushai'. But during the British period the term 'Lushai' was used to mean Mizo. So the Mizo Union leaders felt it necessary to change Lushai into Mizo for better integration and unity. They also felt that the Mizo tribes formed a distinct ethnic unit traditionally, culturally and physically.

The memorandum stated further that traditionally Micos claimed descent from Sinlung, a mythical rock in east of Shan state but their original home was traced to be somewhere in the neighbourhood of the present Falam Sub-Division. They estimated the total Mizo population to be 328,400 approximately including the Mizos living outside Lushai Hills in areas contiguous to it, on the basis of 1941 census.

They stated also that it was a great injustice that the Mizos having one and the same culture, speaking one and the same language, professing one and the same religion, and knit together by common customs, culture and traditions should have been called and known by different names, and thrown among different peoples with their homeland sliced out and given to others. They stated therefore, that it was imperative that His Majesty's Government, the Government of India and
Constituent Assembly should grant them their just demand for territorial unity and solidarity.

They went on stating that the Mizo people had always been independent and their country never been subjugated by any Maharaja of the neighbouring countries although there had been frontier clashes between them. They said also that the British came to the scene in 1871 and annexed Lushai Hills (now Mizoram) to the British territory in 1889, when a little more than half of the country was carved out for the Mizo people and named Lushai Hills while the rest had been parcelled out to the adjoining districts.

Regarding the relations between the Mizos and the British they said that the Mizos remained loyal and friendly to the British Government at all time, and whenever the British needed help as in the World War I and II the willing services of the Mizo people were always readily available. They pointed out also that the Mizos had an efficient system of administration and discipline retaining to a considerable degree, their ancient and traditional laws, and customs and organisations. The memorandum stated further that the Mizo people had been excluded from the Government of India's Act and the area inhabited by them was kept as the special responsibility of the Governor of the province in his capacity as the Crown Representative, and the legislature had no influence whatsoever.

The memorandum further contended that the Mizos had
never been under the Indian Government and never had any connection with the policies and politics of the various groups of Indian opinion. They, therefore, jumped into the conclusion that since the British were quitting the Mizos who had never been under the Indian Government should not be thrown on a common platform with the rest of India, rather, it was important to the highest degree that the Mizos be given self-determination in its fullest form. Here it appears that they were demanding independence but within the province of Assam, a contradictory claim.

The memorandum demanded thus territorial unity and retention of the sole proprietary right over the land, full self-determination within the province of Assam:— (a) with the national having the supreme legislative authority and executive body and judiciary within the district the composition and function of which will be prescribed by rules; (b) any concurrent subject in which the district may be connected with the autonomous province of Assam or India as a whole shall be by negotiation with the national councils which will set up according to the wishes of general public, any legislation may be applied to the district only with the sanction of the national council with any modification; (c) Special financial provision to be sanctioned by the Central Government from year to year until the district became self-supporting.

They concluded their memorandum with the following
provision: 'ALL THE ABOVE ITEMS SHALL BE SUBJECT TO REVISION ACCORDING TO THE FUTURE TRENDS OF EVENTS EVEN TO THE EXTENT OF SECEDING AFTER TEN YEARS'.

Vanthuama, the then General Secretary of Mizo Union explained their idea about self-determination within the province of Assam saying that they wanted full autonomy something like independence. He said further that by the time they drafted the memorandum India had not yet achieved independence nor was Mizoram brought under the Government of India yet, and the British Government was still in power. Since Mizoram remained excluded area from the provincial legislature and administration as well as from the Government of India Act, 1935, and again from the Independence Act Of India, they expected the possibility of achieving independence for Mizoram. At the same time they felt that they had not been in a position to get independence yet in view of their economic condition and political immaturity. Therefore, they demanded a status of full self-determination within the province of Assam, meaning India, for Assam was a province of India. Though they wanted independence, yet, they thought it too early to get it. That is why they concluded the memorandum with a plea for permission to opt out of India after ten years.

Vanthuama added that though they dreamed independence of India as their ultimate aim in their politics they admitted that Mizoram had been a part and parcel of British India. He said also that Mizoram, Nagaland, etc. were created excluded areas only because they were too backward to be under the administration of the mainstream of Indians who were civilised and to be administered as such. The civil laws of the civilised people could not be applicable nor suitable for the primitive peoples of Mizoram, Nagaland, etc. The British Government, in its kindness wanted to preserve the identities of these primitive peoples and for that purpose separate administrations were set up in accordance with their customary laws.

Vanthuama went on saying that the then superintendent of excluded areas were vested with legislative power in their respective jurisdictions. However, the Superintendents were the employees of the Government of British India. Such being the case, excluded areas were parts of British India. In spite of all these, independence of Mizoram was expectable at the outset of the Indian independence. Burma, for example, was a part and parcel of India till 1935, and Pakistan till 1947, but they got independence from British India. But as for the Mizos, they had no economic viability nor political maturity
to enable them to achieve independence. That was why they wanted to wait for about ten years.

In course of time, there was a rift in the Mizo Union party resulting in the breaking up of the party into two factions—the radicals and the moderates. The radicals, under the leadership of Ch. Saprawnga and Khawtinkhuma drew up a radical programme which included among other things, abolition of chieftainship, representation of Lushai Hills in the Assam Legislative Assembly, improvement of economic and social condition of the people, etc., as envisaged in the memorandum. However, Ch. Saprawnga, the leader of the radicals denied in the Assembly of the party at Pukpui village that the abolition of chieftainship was included in the programme. Though he did not explain this point he was taken for hinting that the chiefs would be abolished automatically without compensation and hence no point in demanding abolition of chieftainship.

The united Mizo Freedom Organisation (UMFO)

According to verbal information received from Laimavna, who had been the helms-man of the United Mizo Freedom Organisation (UMFO) party since a few months after its foundation the party was organised on 5th July, 1947 with Lalbiakthanga

as its President, Lianhnuna (one of the first two Mizo graduates) as the Vice President, Chhawnzinga as a Secretary (who, being a government servant, resigned a few weeks after the party election and was replaced by L.H.Liana) and Hningiiana (Salvation Army) as the Treasurer.

By the time the Party was organised some of the office-bearers had not yet resigned from the Mizo Union Party. But in a few days when they found themselves unwelcomed by the Mizo Union radicals because of their connection with UMFO party and their untoward activities, and when their speeches in the Mizo Union Assembly were mocked at with hulabaloo by the audience, they resigned from the Mizo Union Party.

In the month of October, 1947 the UMFO party was reorganised with Lalbiakthanga as its President, Lalmawia as the Vice-President, L.H. Liana as the Secretary and Pachhunga as the Treasurer. Since the UMFO party became the rival and opponent of the Mizo Union Party, most of the chiefs, with their followers and the Mizo Union Right Wingers joined instantly. After a few months from the inception Lalbiakthanga left the UMFO party to join the government service, giving room to Lalmawia for the leadership of the Party.

The policy of the party was to join Burma Union. Lalmawia said that it would be better for the Mizo people to join Burma union than to join India Union for it would more beneficial for them to become a part of a small country where
they could form a significant component of the whole country than to become an insignificant component of a big country like India. Counteracting the Mizo Union's propaganda against the possibility of joining Burma Union Lalmawia said that Sylhet was a part of Assam but they chose to join Pakistan by plebiscite and came off India (Assam) to become a part of Pakistan. The same thing was possible with Mizoram. He stated further that there were similar cases in Burma. The rulers of Upper Burma were given option to join Burma Union or to consider otherwise. Accordingly after some years, some of the rulers chose to remain under the British rule. But he and some high officials persuaded them to join Burma Union.11

Anyway, UMFO was less attractive to the mass of the people than the Mizo Union because nearly all the chiefs who had been repugnant to the commoners, joined it. Even if it were possible for the Mizo people to join Burma Union the Mizo commoners chose to join India Union because their leaders convinced them of the blessings of joining India. However, the Mizo people, being different from the rest of Indians in race, tradition, culture, etc. could hardly feel themselves one with Indians while Burmese are similar to the Mizos in race, tradition, culture, etc.

11. An interview with Lalmawia the leader of UMFO on March 11, '91
The UMFO party contested the election to the District Advisory Council in 1948 and won only one seat out of 23. It contested again the election to the Lushai Hills District Council in 1952 and won only one seat out 24; and in the election to the Assam Legislative Assembly held in the same year and lost all seats to Mizo Union. The positions of Mizo Union and UMFO parties in the elections before 1963 were as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of M.U elected</th>
<th>UMFO seats</th>
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<td>District Advisory Council</td>
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<td>23 22 1</td>
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<td>Mizo District Council or</td>
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<td>Lushai Hills District Council</td>
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<td>M.L.A Election (Assam)</td>
<td>1952</td>
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<td>District Council Election</td>
<td>1957</td>
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<td>M.L.A Election (Assam)</td>
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**Eastern Indian Tribal Union (EITU)**

In November 1954, the UMFO party decided to support the Eastern Indian Tribal Union (EITU), and thereupon a branch of EITU was established in Mizoram with Lalmawia as its President. On 2nd October, 1957 UMFO and the Mizo Union Right Wing dissolved their parties and amalgamated into EITU with

12. My Country and I—R.Vanlawma p 183
Lalmawia as its President, Lalhuliana as the General Secretary, C. Chhunbura as the Assistant Secretary, Lalrinliana as the Treasurer and Vankeuva as the Financial Secretary. In 1958 EITU cooperated with the Indian National Congress and supported the Chaliha's government of Assam. In return for their cooperation with the ruling party Lalmawia was appointed Parliamentary Secretary.

**The Indian National Congress**

Though the Mizo Union leaders were greatly influenced by the Indian National Congress leaders of Assam as well as of the Central Government, they never contemplated joining the Indian National Congress party. However, A. Thanglura started to establish the party in Mizoram. He was elected to the Assam Legislative Assembly on the Mizo Union ticket previously. He was also the Chairman of All Party Hill Leaders Conference. When EITU joined the Chaliha's government on the advice of Prime Minister Nehru, A. Thanglura was appointed Chief Parliamentary Secretary, for the Mizo Union party resolved in their General Assembly that their MLA's should decide for themselves whether or not they should join the Congress Parliamentary party.

Therefore, the Mizo Union MLA's, including A. Thanglura joined the Congress Parliamentary Party and got his appointment as a Parliamentary Secretary and subsequently, when Lalmawia also became the Parliamentary Secretary he was promoted to the Chief Parliamentary Secretary. But when the Chaliha's government
declared Assamese the state language of Assam EITU protested and at last resigned from the Chaliha's government. Since A.Thanglura would not resign but left All Party Hill Leader Conference (ALPHLC) he was labelled renegade which harmed his future political career.

On 10th March, 1959 when A.Thanglura was still the Chairman of the APHLC a Mizo Union General Assembly was called at Town Hall, Aizawl in which A.Thanglura, Kajee, the Chief Executive Member of the Khasi District Council and George Hamilton, one of the APHLC leaders participated to promote the cause of Hill State which was demanded by APHLC. After a long discussion the General Assembly voted for Mizo State to be demanded rather than the Hill State. Thereupon, A.Thanglura declared that he, as the chairman of the APHLC could not support the demand for Mizo State, and soon after that he left the Mizo Union party and started the Mizoram Congress Committee in Mizoram on 10th August 1961\(^{13}\) with himself as the President, Lalsawia the first Chief Executive Member of Lushai Hills District Council and subsequently the leader of the Mizo Union Right Wing, as the Vice President, Lalthankima as the General Secretary and Hrangchhuana as the Treasurer. In 1962 a Conference of the party workers was held in Aizawl in which A.Thanglura was elected President, Thangliana Sailo Vice President, Zalawma General

\(^{13}\) Mizoram Political Lumlet Dan 1982 - A.Thanglura p 161.
General Secretary and Hrangchhuana Treasurer.

Some of the leaders of the Mizo District Congress Committee, namely, A.Thanglura and Lalsawia being defectors from Mizo Union, the party was not popular until the merger of the Mizo Union with the Mizo District Congress Committee on 12th January 1974. The Mizo District Congress Committee contested the General Election to the Assam Legislative Assembly in 1962 and the bye-elections in 1963 and 1964 but lost all seats so far.

A.Thanglura had been acting as a Chairman of APHLC for sometime demanding the Hill State for all Hill Districts in Assam, that is all hilly areas in Northeast India. But ever since he organised the Mizo District Congress Committee he abandoned the idea of Hill State and even Mizo state as he rejected it in his capacity as the Chairman of APHLC in the General Assembly of Mizo Union on 10th March, 1959. That was why his party could not be popular for quite sometime in Mizoram. Nagaland did not join the proposed Hill State for they were struggling for a separate identity, and Mizos resigned from APHLC because they demanded Mizo State. As a result only Garo Hills and Khasi Hills were left to demand a Hill State. Thus the combination of KHasi Hills and Garo Hills has formed a State called Meghalaya.