

# Interning Insurgent Populations: The Buried Histories of Indian Democracy

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Based on the memories of elderly Naga and Mizo villagers in north-east India who underwent grouping in the 1950s and 1960s, this article shows how the concept of “success” and “failure” used by studies of grouping is flawed, betraying a bureaucratic calculus. Whatever the overt reasons given for grouping, what underlies it is the assumption that all people in a given area, whether civilian or combatant, are potentially hostile. Grouping is thus an act of war rather than effective counter-insurgency. This article describes the process of grouping, forced labour, surveillance and starvation in the camps. While descriptions of the process of grouping are consistent, people’s opinions vary on its implications for their own lives, depending on their past and current location.

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Darzo (Mizoram) was one of the richest villages I have ever seen in this part of the world. ...My orders were to get the villagers to collect whatever moveable property they could, and to set their own village on fire at seven in the evening. I also had orders to burn all the paddy and other grain that could not be carried away by the villagers to the new centre so as to keep food out of reach of the insurgents...

Night fell, and I had to persuade the villagers to come out and set fire to their homes. Nobody came out. Then I had to order my soldiers to enter every house and force the people out. Every man, woman and child who could walk came out with as much of his or her belongings and food as they could. But they wouldn’t set fire to their homes. Ultimately, I lit a torch myself and set fire to one of the houses. I knew I was carrying out orders, and would hate to do such a thing if I had my way. My soldiers also started torching other buildings, and the whole place was soon ablaze. There was absolute confusion everywhere. Women were wailing and shouting and cursing. Children were frightened and cried. Young boys and girls held hands and looked at their burning village with a stupefied expression on their faces. But the grown men were silent; not a whimper or a whisper from them...

When it was time for the world to sleep, we marched out of Darzo – soldiers in front, with the Mizos following, and the rear brought up by more soldiers...We walked fifteen miles through the night along the jungle and the morning saw us in Hnahthial. I tell you, I hated myself that night. I had done the job of an executioner. The night when I saw children as young as three years carrying huge loads on their heads for fifteen miles with very few stops for rest, their noses running, their little feet faltering, for the first time in my life as a soldier I did not feel the burden of the fifty pound haversack on my own back.

But there was something more to be carried out. I called the Darzo Village Council President and his village elders and ordered them to sign a document saying that they had voluntarily asked to be resettled in Hnahthial PPV (Protected and Progressive Village) under the protection of the Security Forces as they were being harassed by the insurgents, and because their own village did not have communications, educational, medical and other facilities. Another document stated that they had burnt down their own village, and that no force or coercion was used by the Security Forces. They refused to sign. So I sent them out and after an hour called them in again, this time one man at a time. On my table was a loaded revolver, and in the corner stood two NCOs with loaded sten-guns. This frightened them, and one by one they signed both the documents.

– An army officer’s reminiscences reproduced in Jaffa (2001: 240-43).

## The ‘Age of Camps’

How will our century go down in history? Will it be under the name of the ‘Age of the Camps’, of flesh turning cancerous?

– Bauman (1995: 192).

For a counterinsurgency strategy which has affected the lives of millions in the 20th century, and which continues to be popular,<sup>1</sup> grouping, regrouping, villagisation, strategic hamletting, or forced population removal, as it is variously known, is a surprisingly understudied topic. Usually an aside in a

larger narrative, the account is couched in terms of the outcome for the incumbent state. For instance, we are invariably told that the Malayan regrouping “succeeded” while the Vietnam strategic hamlets “failed”.<sup>2</sup> In India, grouping is said to have “succeeded” in Mizoram where a peace accord was signed between the Mizo National Front (MNF), which had been seeking independence and the Indian government in 1986, but “failed” in Nagaland, where the movement for self-determination continues.<sup>3</sup>

While it is true in Malaysia that regrouping and the associated starvation helped to militarily defeat the Malay communists, as Malayan Communist Party (MCP) leader, Chin Peng acknowledged in his memoirs (Peng 2003: 395), counter-insurgency never stoops to question its ends – that success in the Malay counter-insurgency, for example, was about maintaining empire and harnessing the revenues of Malaya for the reconstruction of post-war Britain. Nor does it look at “success” from the point of view of those uprooted and imprisoned.

Not surprisingly, all the victims of internment have been either colonised populations, inhabitants of the internal colonies of democratic countries like the Philippines or India, or “enemy races” as in the US (Murray 2008; Mindanao Documentation Committee for Refugees 1982). The Naga and Mizo struggles for self-determination rested on the assertion that their demands were part of the unfinished decolonisation of the Indian subcontinent, a claim that was only buttressed by the grouping strategies of the Indian government.<sup>4</sup>

In grouping, the exceptional legal space of the camp becomes normalised as a way of dealing with citizens or subject people, even outside the camp. In the camp, writes Agamben, “a state of emergency linked to a colonial war is extended to an entire civil population”. The juridical basis for the Nazi camp was the principle of protective custody, “a preventative police measure insofar as it allowed individuals to be “taken into custody” independently of any criminal behaviour, solely to avoid danger to the security of the state” (Agamben 1998: 166-67). In other words, whatever the overt reasons given for grouping such as ensuring civilian safety and support, what underlies it is the assumption that all people in a given area, whether civilian or combatant, are potentially hostile. Internment thus negates the distinction between civilians and combatants that the Geneva conventions have sought to institutionalise and reverts to an earlier conception of war where the entire population was fair game (Tooley 2007). Based on the dehumanising concept of “collateral damage” at one end to a genocidal mentality at the other, with a whole range of punitive and retributive rationales in between, forced relocation as part of counter-insurgency is an example of a profoundly anti-civilian ideology, a war by other means (Slim 2008: 71-119). Yet the ease with which much of the literature deals with it, as an incidental byproduct of counter-insurgency, a mere means, displays what Bauman describes as the lack of a “moral calculus” emblematic of a bureaucratized modernity (Bauman 1989: 29). As insurgents get dehumanised as “vermin”, “terrorists”, “bandits” or “hostiles”, the people associated with them get reduced to statistics and populations, enabling internment to be seen as merely an administrative, indeed even benign act, rather than as part of a war waged on

real people. People’s citizenship rights are in abeyance till the emergency ends; their deaths or suffering justified as both bureaucratic and military necessity in the higher interests of state sovereignty and continuity.

Based on interviews with civilians who endured grouping in the Indian states of Nagaland and Mizoram in the 1950s and 1960s, this article shows how for them, there was no “success”, only hardship. What they remember is not the agricultural extension agents, the pharmacists or the administrative officers who ostensibly manned the grouping centres as part of a supposed “hearts and mind approach”,<sup>5</sup> but the army search operations, the starvation, the regime of curfews and the reduction of identity to a roll call and a piece of paper. Separation from their fields, their homes, and their forests filled them with a yearning which no amount of “improved poultry and piggery” could compensate for. Villagers described themselves as objects: In Mizoram, the grouping was called *Khokhom*, which literally means driving villagers here and there; a term that sums up a world of terror, like the Palestinian *Nakbah* or catastrophe to refer to the forcible evacuations of 1948. People in Nagaland also mark time with reference to grouping and the extended sojourns in the forest which preceded it: “the year we came back from the jungles”. While some acknowledge that their lives are better off than they might have been had they not been grouped, this is not the only way they could have been drawn into “modernity”; and certainly that was not the government’s benevolent intention.

Although Naga and Mizo histories of insurgency are now beginning to be locally published (Iralu 2003; Atsongchanger 1994; Zamawaia 2007) and there is a range of literature on the Naga movement and to a much lesser extent the Mizo struggle (see for example, Nibedon 1978, 1980; Verghese 1996; Nunthara 1996; Baruah 2007), there is practically no independent or scholarly analysis of the way grouping worked as a counter-insurgency tactic.<sup>6</sup> This article looks both at how the process played out, and the way in which it is recalled by different actors. While people’s differing experiences and position in relation to both the insurgents and the state influence their memories of the period, what is clear is that no one’s hearts or minds were converted by what happened.

### Grouping: Understanding the Links between Civilians and Insurgents

The central logic behind grouping is to isolate insurgents from the general population from which they derive their support, cutting off their food and other supplies (Shafer 1988: 62-63; Kalyvas 2006: 122-23; Jaffa 2001: 238-39). In the counter-insurgency literature, for example, in the writing of Robert Thompson, the British counter-insurgency expert on Malaya who also advised the American government in Vietnam, this is euphemistically described as “protecting” the population from the insurgents, who are portrayed as lacking legitimacy and preying on the people. By concentrating populations under government control, it is also possible to organise them into supporting the government (Elkins 2005: 241; Kalyvas 2006: 128; Stubbs 2004: 162-63). In its ostensibly more benign form, the “winning hearts and minds (WHAM or sometimes simply HAM) approach” pioneered by

general Richard Templer in Malaya as an advance over the Briggs Plan, grouping must involve improving the economic and living conditions of villagers, so that they have a reason to support the government rather than the insurgents (see Thompson 1966: 14-125; Short 1975 for these views). Grouping is thus portrayed as something that is positively good for people. Cast in these terms, population relocation for counter-insurgency is continuous with “voluntary” relocation, Soviet “amalgamation” or collectivisation, as well as “involuntary resettlement” for large hydel or industrial projects.<sup>7</sup> Small, scattered hamlets are seen as breeding not just insurgency, but also social and economic “backwardness”. Some relocations are justified by war, and others by “development”.

In the more honest, if less palatable for public consumption, “cost-benefit approach”, counter-insurgency must focus on making the costs, including starvation, torture and other brutal forms of pacification, far higher than any benefit the public gains from supporting the guerrillas. At best, as Shafer points out, this coercive approach rests on a morality of consequences, the notion that the order imposed by pacification is better for people in the long run (Shafer 1988: 73). It also ignores the possibility that the same outcome might have been achieved through alternative means. In practice, there is often little difference between the two approaches, and while governments may claim to be focused on rehabilitation, the process is overwhelmingly coercive.<sup>8</sup> In the Malayan case, despite the stated adoption of a “more humane” approach, which was what ostensibly accounted for its “success”, this was accompanied by the collective punishment of villages through curfew, stringent policies of food denial and identification parades where people disappeared.<sup>9</sup> Wherever practised, grouping has led to major civilian mortality, decline in food production, and severe dislocation of the social fabric (Elkins 2005; Shafer 1988; Greenhill 2004; Branch 2010).

Both these approaches assume the fundamental illegitimacy of the insurgent goal, and thereby the illegitimacy of civilian support for that goal, which in turn justifies punitively subjecting civilians to severe hardship. At best, when governments or analysts want to make a distinction between people and insurgents, they portray people as uncommitted; and likely to support whichever side has more power.<sup>10</sup> People may often describe themselves as pawns caught in the conflict between two more powerful forces, but this is often mere playing to the gaze of a “human interest story” driven media or the depoliticised practices of humanitarian intervention. What both of these do is deny people their rights as citizens or political beings (the right to support any ideology they choose), and reduces them, as Agamben notes for the refugee, to “bare life” signalling thus a complicity or “secret solidarity” between humanitarian organisations and “the very powers they ought to fight” (Agamben 1998: 133; also Diken 2004: 89). Bare life, for Agamben, is opposed to political life in the Aristotelian sense, “that whose exclusion founds the city of men” (Agamben 1998: 7, 177). The default ideology, as far as most writers on counterinsurgency are concerned, is support for the status quo, even when this includes colonialism or imperialist invasion; and even where grievances are recognised, they become a threat only when they are exploited by “conspirators”, or “communists” (Ahmad 2006: 57).

This view, however, simply does not get at the core of civilian support for insurgents in most cases. This is not to say that everyone is equally committed to the guerrilla cause, that there is no variation in support over time, that guerrillas are honest about the cause, or that negotiation is always possible; but simply that without attending to the political reasons behind the insurgency in the first place, pacification is often merely the imposition of state terror. The same disdain for certain populations that makes it possible for governments to regroup them, makes it unlikely that the government will make the internment pleasant for them.

While the Indian state, like every other proponent of grouping, thought it could commandeer political affiliations, it only buried them underground. Both in Nagaland and Mizoram, everybody I spoke to agreed that grouping hugely increased the support for the insurgents, not necessarily ideologically, but as a matter of justice. In Nagaland, the entire population became “UG” (underground) or as they preferred to call themselves, “national workers”, fighting for the Naga nation.

### A Brief Background

While the Naga movement traces political consciousness back to the formation of the Naga Labour Corps in the first world war, concrete political organisation began with the Naga National Council (NNC) in 1946. The political implications of a 1947 agreement between the NNC and the governor of Assam, Akbar Hydari, which stated that the issue of Naga integration into India would be considered after 10 years, came into dispute. A Naga boycott of the first general election in India (1952) soon extended to a boycott of government schools and officials, to which the Indian government responded with army search operations, killings and the first of the Emergency regulations. In 1956, the Federal Government of Nagaland was announced along with its standing army, the Naga Home Guards, which began to attack police posts. The Indian government further militarised the area – in 1956 nearly two divisions of the army and 34 battalions of the paramilitary Assam Rifles and armed police were operating in the Naga hills.

The Indian army estimated the “Naga hostiles” as between 1,500 and 2,000, but with the support of a much larger number of villagers. An extract from a “Top Secret Document April 23, 1959” gives orders for villagers to be “isolated, searched and all inhabitants gathered at central places in the village for identification/apprehension of hostiles”.<sup>11</sup> It was also during this period, 1956-59, under Nehru’s orders, that villages were burnt and their inhabitants grouped into camps which were guarded by the army. The subsequent history of statehood (1963), the breakdown of the 1975 Shillong peace accord, the 1997 ceasefire and the current long drawn talks between the NSCN (IM) and the Indian government require no elaboration here.

Unlike Nagaland, the Mizo Union which won the 1952 District Council elections actually desired merger with India, as a way of abolishing unpopular chiefships. In 1958, the cyclical 50-year flowering of the bamboo, accompanied by an explosion of crop-destroying rats, led to widespread famine, a phenomenon known locally as the *Mao Tam* (Nag 2008). Neglect by the Assam government, and the lack of infrastructure to transport rice, led to starvation deaths in the interior (Nibedon 1980: 39; Rangasamy 1978).

The Mizo National Famine Front (MNFF) was formed and in 1962, fuelled by a growing alienation, renamed the Mizo National Front with an eye to independence.

On 28 February 1966, the MNF launched Operation Jericho, in which they simultaneously attacked army posts in the major towns, Lungleh, Champhai, and Aizawl, and took over communications. On 2 March, the Indian government responded to the MNF's declaration of independence by declaring the entire Mizo hills a "disturbed area" under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), 1958. Troops were moved in to retake all the army posts and on 5 and 6 March, Aizawl was aerially strafed and its biggest market burnt down. The Chief Minister of Assam, B P Chaliha, and the Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, both initially denied that bombing had been carried out, saying that the air force had been used to drop men and supplies (Hluna 2006: 8, 21). At least 13 people died in this attack, apart from animals (Interview with Rev Lalsawma, Aizawl, August 2008).

Laldenga's several feelers to the Indian government from the early 1970s onwards seeking an honourable position for himself in any future set-up, finally resulted in an accord signed in 1986 between Laldenga, the Mizoram Government, and the Government of India. The MNF became part of the government in Mizoram, and Laldenga became chief minister. Mizoram was given union territory status in 1972 and statehood in 1986.

But the most lasting impact of the war was "Operation Security" or as the Army called it, "Operation Accomplishment",<sup>12</sup> launched by the Indian government in 1967, which involved forcibly grouping villages into smaller concentrations. The inspiration, as elsewhere, was British counterinsurgency writing, showing that "imperial networking provided a kind of doctrinal continuity" (Townshend 2008: 36; Elkins 2005: 101, 105; Branch 2010; Jaffa 2001: 214), which flowed over into the post-colonies, despite their own recent histories of freedom struggles. The national media cooperated in the idea of grouping, even while expressing caveats. An *Indian Express* editorial, 7 January 1967 writes:

Evacuation of the entire village population over 4,000 sq miles is a spectacular operation which implies either that the situation is more serious than the authorities want the country to believe or that a newer determined effort is about to be made to wipe out the last vestiges of rebellion. The evacuation will help in isolating and mopping up the rebel bands but resettlement of 60,000 people far away from their houses will present serious difficulties. Operation Security will involve a measure of force (cited in Nibedon 1980: 106-07).

Nor was there much protection against grouping or emergency laws from the formal institutions of democracy, like the Assam Legislative Assembly, where protest by some members was overruled in the name of the security imperatives of the state (Hluna 2006).

### Law and Location in the Cartography of (Counter) Insurgency

In both Nagaland and Mizoram, location at the borders of the Indian state played a major role in defining the nature both of the insurgency and the counter-insurgency. What was sought was not just independence from India, but "recognition" of the unity of ethnic and cultural communities which had been divided by

the nation state boundaries of India, Burma and Bangladesh, a demand for the undoing of a partition which has never been given its due place in the history of India (see also Van Schendel 2005: 363-64). The movements here have been less about alternative politics to those practised by the Indian government, as against alternative cartographies, since the federal government of Nagaland and the Mizo National Front both set up parallel governments and armies with similar command structures. In both cases, involvement in the theatre of the second world war and the presence of ex-Indian army personnel among the Nagas and Mizos played a significant role.

In both states, the boundaries are also drawn in religious terms, as a defence of Christianity versus the imposition of Hinduism by the Indian state.<sup>13</sup> Yet far from the Church being a purveyor of secessionist sentiments, the natural conservatism of the Church meant it often sided with the authorities, also putting it at odds with the insurgents whom it condemned.<sup>14</sup> In both states, given its centrality in the lives of the people, church elders have played a significant mediatory role.

Being located on the boundaries of the nation influenced the ease with which guerrillas could get arms and sanctuary from neighboring states like China, former East Pakistan, or Burma, and the ease with which they interacted, the Naga movement providing the original inspiration and practical help to many of the others. However, while external aid was critical, it did not explain the rise of the movements or their local support. On the other hand, it enabled the Indian state to attribute resistance to outside conspiracy, and strengthened its determination to prevent secession, which would further render the nation's boundaries vulnerable (see also Schendel 2005: 270; Mullik 1971: 620).

If insurgency challenges existing maps of Indian citizenship, the Indian government has used "law" in a similar fashion, by demarcating "insurgent spaces" as spaces of non-citizenship. The Defence of India Rules under which the population was first grouped in Mizoram was introduced by the British during second world war to deal with enemy aliens, and also used extensively against communists in 1962. The Assam Maintenance of Public Order (AMPO) (Autonomous Districts) Act 1953, the Assam Disturbed Areas Act 1955, the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) 1958, and the Nagaland Security Regulation 1962, provided the legal sanction for army operations, and the cover of impunity for acts of rape, killings, and arson.

But simultaneously, the Indian government has faithfully followed Templer's Malayan injunction to keep civilian government going at all costs (Stubbs 2004; Short 1975). Emergency law has been accompanied by the formal trappings of democracy – elections, political parties, promises of statehood – with the centre attempting to rule through a mixture of co-optation and repression. However, the palliative role played by elected governments like the Mizo People's Conference headed by Brigadier Sailo should not be underestimated.

### 'Houses Die When Their Inhabitants Are Gone'<sup>25</sup>

In Mizoram, the grouping was both more extensive and lasted longer than in Nagaland, almost 15 years compared to Nagland's two-three years. After grouping ended, almost everyone in

Nagaland went back to their original villages, but in Mizoram, many stayed on in the grouping centres or moved to Aizawl, making Mizoram the most urbanised state in India.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, the conflict in Nagaland continues, so when people talk about grouping, it forms part of an ongoing continuum of perceived oppression. For instance, in 1973, helicopter gunships were used for aerial bombing in Longjang (Luithui and Haksar 1984; IWGA 1986). In both cases, the grouping was preceded by burning, so that villagers could not return home, and the insurgents could find no food or shelter; and was almost always accompanied by search operations.

The 1967 order on grouping in Mizoram, under the Defence of India Rules, makes this scorched earth policy explicit. It specifies a date, time and route by which villagers were to leave their own areas and move into the grouping centre. "All buildings", the order says, "except places of worship and all moveable and immovable properties situated or left behind in those areas shall... be destroyed or rendered useless before 11.1.1967".<sup>17</sup>

There were four phases to the Mizoram grouping – the first involved the grouping of 106 villages with a population of 52,210 into 18 grouping centres called Protected and Progressive Villages (PPV), and was completed in 10 weeks.<sup>18</sup> The second, third and fourth phases involved shifting villagers into what were called New Grouping Centres, Voluntary Grouping Centres and Extended Loop Areas, and although the official orders for this were passed in 1969 and 1970, the process had started earlier.<sup>19</sup> Ostensibly run by the regular civilian administration, these grouping centres were, in fact, attached to a military unit. In all, by 1972, over 2,00,000 people or 82% of the total population of Mizoram was shifted, and the total number of villages came down from 764 villages to 248 villages (including grouping centres and 138 ungrouped villages). Aizawl district was particularly affected, with 95% of the population being moved (Nunthara 1989: 5-6, 48-49).

Figures are unavailable for Nagaland, but the process was similar. In Mokokchung district, almost every village was burnt, not just once but several times, as a prelude to grouping. Army trucks would come and inform the *Gaonbura* (village headman) that the village would be burnt. Mongjen village was burnt seven times and Mametong 19 times, before the villagers could be forced to leave. Sometimes the grouping took place much after the village had been burnt. For instance, Lungdai (Mizoram) was burnt in 1967 but constituted as a grouping centre only a year later.

Villagers spent the intervening time in the forests or in the fields around their homes. Sometimes, the whole village would flee, while at other times, the men joined the underground and the women and children stayed on in the village. Pi Zamani, originally from Chungtlang (Mizoram), who now runs a grocery store in Reiek where her village was grouped, described the terrible and constant fear, as a neighbouring village, Rulpui, an MNF stronghold was bombed from afar:

Whenever we heard the army come, I would cradle my baby, collect my belongings and run into the forest. We could hear shooting all the time... Once while we were hiding inside a cave, the Indian army fired mortars and it exploded right next to us. Thank God we are still alive. The hardest part was getting the babies not to cry.

Grouping centres in both Nagaland and Mizoram were chosen on the basis of size, proximity to the main road, and suitability for an army camp. Smaller villages – within a radius of 10 to 15 miles – would be brought there. Sometimes the residents of the original village were made to work as unpaid porters to help transport the belongings of the refugees. They also provided shelter in their own houses. In other cases, the refugees were initially moved into the church or primary school building, when not occupied by the army, or into makeshift bamboo shelters in the open, before their own houses were built. If they were lucky, the army would allow them to dismantle their houses and take some of the material to the grouping centre. The new houses they were given were 10 feet long tin sheds.

The move had to be completed within a week. Occasionally, a village could negotiate the timing. For instance, in Lungpher (Mizoram), which was given marching orders in December, the villagers offered to burn their own houses in exchange for being allowed to spend Christmas in the village. Eventually they moved to Phullen grouping centre in January 1969.

Earlier, land was communally owned, and could be sold only by the community. In every cycle, the village council president (*vc̄p̄*) would allocate land to households for *jhum* or swidden cultivation. After grouping, this practice was simply extended to include the new households, putting tremendous pressure on the land. In some cases, if their original village was not too far, relocated villagers would be allowed to return for cultivation. But combined with curfew, roll calls and the distance to be travelled, this was, of necessity, tenuous. The grouping process also put a strain on the forests, which not only now had to provide timber for so many houses to be rebuilt, but also fuelwood to a much larger population. Rangasami found, from conversations with villagers in 1978, that the grouping centres had no land for fruit trees, or places to rear pigs (Rangasami 1978: 656). Domestic animals had either to be consumed or sold at throwaway prices to businessmen from Aizawl, Kohima or Mokokchung.

While many original Mizo villages disappeared, the grouping centres became semi-urban. For instance, in Thingsultia which had 150 houses before grouping, the number went up to 700-800 houses after nine other villages were brought in. In 1986, after people had returned to their original villages or left for Aizawl, 600 houses were left. Many stayed on because of employment or business, and sometimes people retained fields in both places. The grouping and urbanisation eventually destroyed the old land allocation system in these centers, with the *vc̄p̄* selling land titles to rich people from Aizawl. In Nagaland, even though villages survived, the pattern of settlement was permanently altered, from scattered homes spread across the hills, to homes strung along the main road in straight lines.

The underground armies were unable to prevent grouping, though they did tell people not to go to the grouping centres (Jaffa 2001: 233; Nunthara 1989: 3-4). General Maken of the Naga army said that all they could do was provide some protection to villagers in the jungles:

We never tried to liberate camps (grouping centres) or attack the army in camps because we knew it would have serious consequences for the

public. Our main duty was to protect the villagers who had fled to the jungles, so that the army could not enter the jungle. The army would occupy the villages and the main routes, and we controlled the jungle. This is how we protected the villagers. Sometimes a camp would last for two-three years before it was moved. Sometimes the public would have their own camp, and sometimes they would be attached to a Naga army camp.

Villagers were often caught in the midst of conflicting orders between the army and the underground, trying to take their own counsel. Pu Lungmuana of Kelzam in Mizoram, recounted:

We were forty households in our village. We were forced out of our village on 13 February 1968. I was 19 then so I recall most of what happened. We were supposed to be grouped in east Phaileng village. The Indian army came and ordered us to leave the village the same day. We thought they would escort us there but they didn't. They just gave the orders and left. But we were scared so we did exactly as ordered. We carried what we could and followed the road to east Phaileng. En-route we met MNF underground patrolling the area who told us to go back to our village and that they would protect us. So we marched back to our village under MNF escort. The next morning, the MNF got a message and had to leave. We pleaded with them to stay but they said they couldn't. The whole village was scared. That evening all the villagers met. The elders thought it wouldn't be safe to stay on, since both the army and the MNF were coming in and out, and we could be caught in the firing. After much discussion, all the villagers agreed to leave the village and head for Aizawl. We marched through rough roads and forest and were constantly aware of the MNF and the Indian army. We spent many nights in the forest.

In Aizawl, Kelzam was allotted a specific area, and the villagers given some immediate rations and tin roofs for house construction. Eventually in 1972 they were given land passes or ownership papers for their new settlement. The old village no longer exists.

Ironically, by 1971, when people began to return to their original villages in Mizoram, the government called these *thlawbawks*, the term for temporary huts on swidden fields. In order to stay near their fields, people had to get permits renewed every month (Nibedon 1980: 158; Nunthara 1989: 29). The grouping centres were now seen as the permanent villages, while the *thlawbawks* were not recognised, and therefore it did not matter if they had no schools or health services. Going back itself was dangerous because the army would come and find them.

### Surveillance: Seals on the Arm

In all life under heaven, the grouping of villages was the sorriest thing.

– Popular Mizo song

The grouping centres were surrounded by high bamboo fences, sometimes as high as 24 feet, which ran the entire length of the villages. In many cases they had a second layer of spikes, sometimes 60 feet or more. There was just one gate. While the army justified this as “protection” from the insurgents, for the villagers it was building their own prisons. The fencing took months to complete, with all the village men being conscripted, unpaid, to perform the job.

Army camps were usually located at the top of the village from where the army could look down and be looked up to. The issue was not just making the population legible to the state – which is what grouping shares with other high modernist projects – but equally, making the state visible to the people. As Bauman writes, the panopticon was a “model of mutual involvement and confrontation” (Bauman, cited in Diken 2004: 86). The families of

men in the underground were singled out for special surveillance, often kept in smaller more closely guarded camps.

Entry and exit into the camps, even for everyday purposes like going to fetch water or firewood, was strictly regulated through the use of ID cards, as well as the branding of individuals. Those not covered in the camp census were assumed to be with the guerrillas. Each camp had “women searchers”. L Ao described the procedure in Warumong camp in Nagaland:

Every individual who left was given a number. The army would call out names and then brand their forearms. After working in the fields all day, the sweat would often wipe out the seal, or it would get scratched out by the paddy stalks. People were terrified because if they went back to camp without the stamp, they would be taken for the underground and beaten, unless the *gaonbura* intervened. Later the seal was put on the forehead, and sometimes, with women, it was put on their chest.

The roll call in the morning took two hours; which reduced the time for cultivation. Men and women would be separated. The villagers would laugh at the pronunciation of their names in the roll call, at which the soldiers would get incensed and beat them, and then the villagers would laugh some more.

People were always tense about informers, whether in their homes or even in their fields, where they worried about Indian army soldiers hiding in the bushes and spying on them. Personal animosities, including conflicts over women, were often an occasion for informers to accuse someone. “We were not afraid of the Indians”, said Lanungsang Ao in Mokokchung, “we were afraid of our own people. We were more afraid of the informers than of wild animals.” Spies were given army uniforms and had their faces covered. If they were discovered, the villagers would themselves kill them without waiting for the Naga army. But Reverend Lalsawma in Mizoram recalled that even if the “pointers” were killed, there was never any retaliation against their families.

Equally, any hobnobbing with the army could put one at risk from the insurgents. Kapkungi of village Bualpui (Mizoram) recalled that her father was a retired *sepoy*, so army men would come to their house on a regular basis to chat. One day, an MNF soldier, unaware of the army presence inside, asked for food through the window of their house. The army men rushed out to inform the others at their base camp, and within minutes their house was surrounded. The soldiers patrolled there all night. Kapkungi's family was scared that the MNF would think they had deliberately called the army.

### Search Operations:

#### ‘Perhaps They Beat Me Because I Had Long Hair’

A feature that everyone consistently and vividly recalled was the constant search operations, or “Operation Blanket” (Jaffa 2001: 234). Being summoned from their homes to be herded in the open fields or in the church or school, were common features. Young men were particularly vulnerable, since any of them could be suspected as an underground worker, and sometimes people would get killed in crossfire, when working in their fields. There was little point in complaining. When the villagers of Maite protested to army head quarters regarding the random death of one Malsawma, the local officers gathered all the youth and whipped them (Interview with Pu Tochunga, village Maite, Mizoram, by H Lalthuamlana).

Humour was often the only way that people could resist, even under conditions of severe torture. L Ao in Mokokchung describes an incident after the villagers had returned home from the grouping centre in 1959:

The army came looking for my brother-in-law, Temchen, whose presence had been betrayed by an informer, and rounded up the entire village by torchlight. "Get up get up" they said, and herded everyone into the church. Temchen was hiding in the rafters of the church. He told us later how he was desperate to pee, and had to piss into his cloth to prevent it falling on the people assembled below. Not having found Temchen, the army started beating the men. They put them into jute sacks and rolled them down the hill, beating them with rifle butts. After that, they tied them upside down to posts, so that their loin cloths fell off. One man called out to the others, "this year we have to clear both the old and the new swiddens. In this position, how will we work in either, leave alone both?" At that, all hundred men started laughing, and the army was so angry at this, that they beat them some more.

One of the old men who had suffered this indignity, and who till then had been just an ordinary farmer, now became a committed messenger for the Naga army, escaping suspicion because of his age.

### Starvation: 'We Were Always Out of Food'

Hunger ruled in the camps. This was not an accidental byproduct of the dislocation, but an intrinsic part of what grouping involved.<sup>20</sup> Ao recalled returning with his uncle from the forest where they had fled, to the traumatic sight and smell of a smoldering granary, the fire consuming grain they had spent all year to produce:

We rushed. My uncle got two bamboos to separate the half-burnt grain from the rest. He gave me the smaller bamboo to control the fire. I couldn't. He tried and tried to save the paddy, collapsed and tried again after half an hour. Because of him, we managed to get 50 tins of paddy, and lived on this for a month.

People hid their grain in makeshift bamboo containers in the forest if they had advance notice from the army. Sometimes when they went to retrieve it, they found themselves competing with birds and wild animals.

Starvation deaths were common in the camps in both Nagaland and Mizoram. A casual survey by Rangasamy (1978: 656-57) among a group of 10-12 men in Vanhne (Mizoram) in 1978 revealed that everyone had lost someone. The army provided little or no rations. Hrangtinzula Jahau remembered of the Ruantlang grouping centre: "Even if the army provided us with rations, it was the worst kind. It just wasn't fit to be eaten. Diseases started spreading in the village and many died. I helped to dig a number of graves at that time". Jahau's brother was on the MNF hit list for being the treasurer of the Mizo Union, showing the grouping and the starvation that accompanied it was a blanket punishment, regardless of political affiliation.

Many described the humiliation of having to go begging for food to other villages which might be slightly better off, because they were working their own jhum fields or had managed to save enough of the harvest. This practice was called *Pur Phur*.

We were always out of food since we were not given any lands for jhum. Since we had ID cards, we would go around neighbouring villages and beg for food. Sometimes we would gather whatever we could from the forest and take it back home. We were poor beyond

words. Its hard even to talk about it (Interview with Khianzika, age 71, village Chhawrhi, by H Lalthuamlana).

Eventually, when people were allowed to work in the fields – either their own, or the new swidden fields allotted to them at the grouping centre, there were severe restrictions on what they could carry with them. Hunting was prohibited, because of restrictions on guns. Nobody was allowed to wear khaki pants or carry matchboxes; and people were checked to see that they were not carrying out food. They also had to make sure that all the harvest was transported back to the village – and sometimes this was done under armed escort, to avoid any leakages to the MNF. But women still managed to smuggle out some food for their husbands and others in bamboo sticks.

The underground also tried to use food as a weapon. Mal-sawmi Ralte who was grouped with her family from Selig to Tingsulktia remembers that Saitwal was an MNF stronghold, and was not grouped. The MNF there would tell them: "If you want food, come to our side. Over there you are mixing with the Indian army."<sup>21</sup> But even in these ungrouped villages, cultivation was difficult because people were scared of getting caught in crossfire or being subject to army raids.

Food was not the only item in short supply. Khianzika of village Chhawrhi (Mizoram), now aged 71, described the abruptness of the move:

The army wouldn't allow us to take anything except what we were wearing. Almost half the village went with only their farming clothes on. At the grouping centre, each family was given a rice sack as a blanket. This too, we were not allowed to cut. A single rice sack for a family of 2, 3 or maybe 10. Just think of it.

### Forced Labour

Everyone also recalled the grouping as a time of forced labour, when men, in particular, suffered. Like food denial, this was not an accidental byproduct of grouping, but one of the active reasons the army used to justify grouping, albeit under the euphemism of "gainful employment" (Jaffa 2001: 231). In the camps, men did odd jobs for the army like constructing their barracks, digging bunkers and trenches, and fetching water. They were also made to build roads, both within Mizoram, and further afield in Kashmir, their absence reducing the numbers available to work on the fields and further aggravating an already bad food situation in the camps (Rangasamy 1978: 655).

The army often conscripted men as porters, who ended up in the process as human shields. Pi Zamawii, who was 12 when the army came to her village, Kelkang, in 1966, gave a vivid account of the multiple complications as well as the helplessness of civilians:

When the Indian army arrived, they called us out and said they would not burn our village, but asked for a number of coolies. They already had around 10 coolies from Buang village. I think 12 coolies were picked from our village. My father was about to be picked but he knew beforehand that the MNF were going to ambush the patrolling army from our neighbour who had a high rank in the MNF. My father started making excuses and luckily he was left out.

I recall that there were also MNF undergrounds captured. I could see them as they led them with their hands tied. I've never supported the MNF, but seeing them with their hands tied and being beaten, as a Mizo that was hard for me to see. I felt sorry for them, you know. Then the army left our village in the morning for Champhai with the

coolies and captured MNFs. The story goes that when they reached the outskirts of Champhai, there was a single gunshot heard. This was fired by the MNF waiting for the ambush. The shot was to distract the Indian army so that the MNF prisoners could escape. But none of this happened. The gunshot angered Major Nathan so much that he gave the order to execute all the prisoners and coolies there and then. I don't know how many escaped but most of the prisoners died. Six coolies died from our village and one escaped and all the coolies from Buang village died.<sup>22</sup> (Interview with Pi Zamawii by H Lalthuamlia).

Not everyone saw this period as one of economic desperation or gloom. Reverend Zairema said that because people were forced to labour, rather than work on their jhum fields, they had more money in their hands. They also became more religious. Church collections for North Mizoram went up from Rs 40,000 in 1968 to Rs 10 lakh after three years of grouping.

### Sexual Violence:

#### 'We Could Hear the Wailing of Women All Night Long'

Although sexual predation was comparatively low compared to other conflict theatres, and non-existent on the part of the Naga and Mizo armies, it forms an indelible part of the narratives. Pi Zamani recalled the stratagems women used to escape the harassment during search operations, when men and women would be separated:

The prettier you were, the higher the risk of being raped. So we messed our hair and rubbed charcoal dust on our face and tried to look as shabby as possible. They would come into the house and ask us where the men were. Even if they were hiding, we would say they were in the fields.... The MNF never harassed women, but the *vai* (outsider) army did. It is as if they were hungry for women.

Grouping reduced the rapes that search operations made possible, but allowed other kinds of exploitation. In the Warumong grouping centre (Nagaland) Lanungsang Ao recollected, the army would call young women to the army camp on the pretext of teaching them the national anthem. The army's instructions were that the *gaonbura* had to accompany the girls, but he would be sent back within the day, while the girls were kept on much longer. The *gaonburas*, he remarked sardonically, never learnt the national anthem.

Pregnancy and child-rearing under these conditions was traumatic, and particularly so, when an outcome of rape. Inevitably, some "relationships" also developed between the army and local women, "which is why", said Malsawmi Ralte, "the army thought all Mizo women were available". Such women were looked upon with suspicion by other villagers.<sup>23</sup> In some cases, the women left the village to marry their soldier lovers.

While there were no women then in the Naga or Mizo armies, women helped out in multiple ways. Medemakla (now 109 years old), served as a government nurse in Mokokchung, administering to many in the regrouped villages. She declined a government pension, but recalls with pride the honour of 20 tins of rice bestowed on her by her village for services rendered.

### The Disruption of Schooling

Teaching or studying in government schools was seen as a sign of collaboration. In 1953, the NNC beheaded three teachers. Lanushasi Longkumer, now teaching geography in Mokokchung

university, said he would purposely fail in Hindi or else his seniors would scold him.

Normal studying was impossible in the grouping centres, putting the lie to any claim that grouping was for the people's own benefit and development. Children faced blackouts and curfew, and those who had to travel distances from their school to home were often caught up in the violence. But children were not passive victims either – many of them served as lookouts for the underground army. Laltanpuia, a third standard student during grouping, described his youthful admiration, at the same time as he sought to distance his older self from it:

My friends and I would pretend to be MNF volunteers, making wooden guns and pretending to ambush the army. We were lucky that the army didn't see us or else they would have beaten us. But maybe that was our way of supporting the MNF. But now, as a father, I don't support them.

### Relations with the Underground Army

The basic premise that grouping would serve to separate the general population from the insurgents was sociologically mindless, if nothing else. The "national workers" or underground army were the husbands, brothers, and sons of those in camp – how *could* they not have helped them? (see also Kalyvas 2006: 126). An old couple, Pamayongba and Imsengkala of Aliba village (Nagaland) recounted how they had just got married and as newlyweds, were about to carve out their own swiddens. Instead, they found themselves running to the forest with their new pots and pans. Pamayongba later joined the underground and Imsengkala went with the other villagers of Aliba to the grouping site at Chungtia. But they still managed to meet occasionally, looking forward to assignments in the paddy fields or in the forest.

Even T Sailo, later chief minister of Mizoram, had a son in the underground, a particularly piquant situation for a brigadier of the Indian army. Mrs Sailo told me:

He didn't tell us when he left. We searched all over Shillong for him. Then we learn that a batch of young people had joined the MNF...He would send occasional letters through somebody, which we would receive after some months. I tried to send him letters but he did not get them. I would write in my diary the letters I wanted to send him.

Given the divided loyalties in almost every family, there is little doubt that a war on the "hostiles" was in effect a war against the whole population. And in many ways, the entire population *was* at war. Support took many forms, apart from providing the money for arms, and manpower for the underground army. During the second world war, Mizo villagers had become proficient in the Morse code, and signalling with battery torches thus became a regular mechanism for communication across the hills. A person could work their way up from passive support to more active engagement, and back again, like Pu Lalamlova who began as a messenger for the MNF in 1967, and then in 1968 was involved in an aborted march lasting five months with 300 other volunteers to China. They had to turn back on reaching the Chindwin river because there were no boats to take them across. On coming back, Lalamlova surrendered to the army. Like him, many people wanted independence, but also recognised that the path was too hard, and reconciled themselves to something less.

Wholehearted support for the national army seems to have been greater in Nagaland than in Mizoram. In part this may be due to the fact that the Naga struggle is ongoing and criticism would be politically incorrect, but it also does reflect a genuine diversity of views with respect to the MNF. Support was divided between the Mizo Union, the Congress and the MNF.<sup>24</sup> Poorer people and people in interior villages, especially those who had suffered from the famine, were more likely to support the MNF as standing up for their rights. Other accounts, like Pi Zamani's were ambivalent, displaying both support and fear:

While we were in the jungle, we would send up some volunteers to spy if the army had gone and only then go up. We would see a lot of MNF volunteers in the forest, and tell them when the army had gone. Sometimes we called them into the village and fed them and sometimes fed them in the forest. (Later she said: We fed them – MNF – because we were scared of them. I hated them because they took all our good food.)

People may have been scared of both the MNF and the army, but as reverend Lalsawma said, there was a crucial difference: Even if people were opposed to the MNF, "since our children, our blood, had taken up arms, we could not criticise them". The most equivocal were those who had been Congress or Mizo Union supporters. Pu Thangliana, from Lungdai, a Congress supporter, said sarcastically, "There was no tension between the MNF and Congress supporters...Even if you were a Congress supporter you had to act like an MNF supporter". Mizo Union members often fled to Aizawl, like Pu Lalhluna, out of fear of the MNF:

It was tense. They would hunt us down as they did to the Indian army, traitors and others. They thought that the MU was in support of the central government...The MU at that time even thought of fighting back against the MNF. There were recruits from the MU, who were ready to arm themselves, but not in alliance with the Indian army. But our president C H Chhunga didn't want that to happen and the pressure went down and it cooled off.

Former MNF guerrillas, by contrast, painted a more rosy picture of the support they enjoyed, describing themselves, somewhat jokingly, as local heroes who could have had any girl they wanted. As far as they were concerned, they got 100% support from the villagers.

### Relations with the Indian Army

It is harder to get at the texture of villagers' everyday relations with the army than with the underground, in part because of the greater distance between the two, both socially and politically. Apart from a few ex-army men who served as translators because they had learnt Hindi while in the army, Village Council Presidents (VCPs) and other elders, few ordinary villagers had any sustained interaction with the army. Being an ex-army person, moreover, was no help when it came to grouping, just as it was no help to be against the MNF. Germanthanga, for example, who I met with his wife in their large well built stone house in Thingsultia, had served both the British Indian army and the Indian army from the second world war onwards, fighting the Japanese on the banks of the Irawaddy river. In 1966, he came back from Shillong to find his own village burnt, and his wife hiding in her brother's fields, with their seven children.

People's memories of the army are mostly negative, with some naming the army officers they hated the most. But people also remembered the good army officers, with several expressing an individuated view of human character:

In the Indian army, there were good and bad guys, and also in the MNF. We hated the bad guys on both sides. ...When grouping started, I had two or three friends in the Punjab regiment. When we moved our house, they cried (Interview with Challiankhuma, Thingsultia village).

Even those who had suffered terribly under grouping were grateful for the good acts done by the army, like Tochhunga whose baby got sick enroute to Aizawl: "When we finally reached Aizawl, we went straight to the army camp and asked them for help. They were kind and gave us some medicines and luckily our baby survived."

The army was also seen as better than the Mizo Armed Police which consisted of ex-MNF and local Mizos who had been especially chosen to identify MNF soldiers and supporters (Nibedon 1980: 220), or the Naga Village Guards set up in 1957, with "300 loyal Nagas", who were also armed to help the government against the rebels.<sup>25</sup>

### Remembering

*You can kill people, but you can not kill history. You can bury people but not bury history* (Interview with Mr Sebi, age 82, Khonoma village, Nagaland, 23 May 2008).

The most traumatic experiences can either serve for cathartic telling or be the most silencing, rendering silence as revealing as speech (Passerini 1998; Portelli 1991: 2). In this case I have relied on the wonderfully detailed accounts of the old, even though, as one said: "You just can't imagine how horrible life was. I can't even put it in words. You have to be there to know it all."

Memories are inevitably subject to the political pressures of not just the past but the present (Murray 2008; Olick and Robbins 1998). They may be individual and autobiographical but also simultaneously filtered through the lens of institutionalised or recorded ways of remembering, especially when those memories concern national or collective events (Kenny 1999: 422-26; Stanley and Dampier 2005). Here people's individual memories add up to and draw from a collective memory in which certain experiences were important (e.g., the surveillance, the starvation, the beatings), but are simultaneously different from each other, inflected by the particular location of the actor. Thus while people's memories are consistent with respect to each other and to earlier accounts of the *process* of grouping (see Nunthara (1989) based on fieldwork in 1979-80 and Rangasamy (1978), showing that time had not dulled or transformed their memories of the pain, they vary with respect to *opinions* on its *meaning* for their lives.

In Mizoram, both those who saw grouping as an overwhelmingly negative experience and those who saw positive, if unintended spin-offs for themselves, described grouping as the most significant experience of their lives. Some blamed the MNF for their suffering, but a much larger number blamed the Indian army. Some people recognised that were it not for grouping they would still be poor farmers, rather than urban residents, but whether that

excused the horror is debated. Upa Thangthiawa, an old man of 93 from Kelzam said:

There is the good and the bad side. The bad side is that we are still nostalgic about our own village. We were forced to move out, we were tortured physically and mentally. But on the bright side, we came to Aizawl and here we are: we are in the modern world.

Vanlalpari, now an old woman, originally from an MNF stronghold village, argued:

We didn't get independence, but looking back on the pre-insurgency days, we are better off than before. So the insurgency was justified. The insurgency brought both suffering and development.

Inevitably, the memories of vcp's who had regular dealings with the administration or Mizo Union Supporters are likely to be different from those of ordinary villagers, deprived of their swidden fields; and those of children who found new friends in the regrouped centres are likely to be different from those of a newly married couple separated by war. Memories of former guerrillas – both Nagas and MNF returnees – are very different from that of civilians.<sup>26</sup> In contrast to the villagers who see their present as a huge improvement over the period of grouping, the guerrillas are nostalgic about the past, which for them, was a time of youth and heroism. They cannot, of necessity, express happiness with the

peace accord for that would be to betray the cause they had spent their lives for, but portrayed themselves as doing it because they cared about the public. Had the MNF won, perhaps the civilians too would have seen their experience in different terms, as part of their own heroic sacrifices for freedom.

Between 2005 and 2007, the Indian government sent two battalions of Naga and Mizo paramilitaries to Chhattisgarh to counter the Naxalites. Together with the local police and Salwa Judum leaders, they burnt villages, killed people, and forced the population into camps. Surely it was not just a coincidence that the Indian government should have chosen to send troops from precisely these two communities. If historical memories travel, through what genealogies, and with what effect? While the Naga Hoho apologised to the people of Chhattisgarh for the actions of the Naga paramilitary, for the young men themselves, facing unemployment at home, the link between their people's past and their own present was more fractured. In 2008, I interviewed young Naga reservists who had come back from a posting in Chhattisgarh. How is support for the Naxalites different from Naga support for Phizo and the Naga National Council, I asked. Phizo's was a freedom struggle, they replied, with evident pride. "But", they said, "We are *Hindustan ka phauj* now".

## NOTES

- 1 The term "concentration camp" comes from the second Boer War (1899-1902), when more Boer women, children and blacks died in British camps than male Boer combatants (Stanley and Dampier 2005); in Malaysia 5,70,000 Chinese were resettled in New Villages between 1948 and 1960 (Stubbs 2004); in Vietnam, over 8.5 million people had been settled in 7,205 strategic hamlets by 1963 (Osborne 1965); in Algeria between 1954 and 1961, between 1.9 and 2.3 million civilians were grouped by the French (Porch 2008); and in Kenya over a million people were resettled in 854 villages to crush the Mau Mau revolt (Elkins 2005). In 2009-10, thousands of Sri Lankan Tamils were interned in camps; two million Pakistani civilians were displaced during the army "actions" in Swat and South Waziristan; and between 2005 and 2007, some 50,000 civilians in Chhattisgarh were forcibly moved to camps as part of anti-Maoist counterinsurgency.
- 2 See Marston and Malkasian (2008: 16-17), Greenhill (2004: 2), Busch (2002), Osborne (1965) on the comparison between Malaya and Vietnam; Sim (1979), Hack (1999), Stubbs (2004), Short (1975) on Malayan "success".
- 3 See Chadha (2005: 288-89) on Nagaland and (2005: 324) on Mizoram for the standard security view. But even here it is unclear what role grouping played in the eventual resolution of the Mizo conflict – since the grouping increased support for the MNF, and the conflict lasted for 20 years.
- 4 However, internment has also been used against communist struggles in the heartland (e.g. Telangana, Srikakulam, Chhattisgarh). See Sundarayya (1985), Sundar (2007).
- 5 See District Gazetteer of Mizoram, reproduced in Nunthara (1989: 63).
- 6 For two exceptions, see Nunthara (1989) and Rangasamy (1978). Nibedon (1978, 1980) provides some details, but grouping is not his primary focus. An August 2010 workshop on grouping in Aizawl, however, attended by scholars, as well as former insurgents and retired civil servants, suggested this situation may soon change.
- 7 See Scott (1998), Cernea (1999). Even prior to grouping, a 1966 Planning Commission Study Team headed by Tarlok Singh had advocated merging smaller hamlets into larger units for developmental purposes. See Nunthara (1989: 62); also Jaffa (2001: 48, fn 41).
- 8 Elkins (2005) points to the systematic destruction of British records on the Mau Mau repression, retaining only those records which emphasised rehabilitation.

- 9 See Stubbs (2004: 169-72); Loh (1988: 161). Peng (2003: 278) reports soaring donations for the Communists after the Korean war boom.
- 10 See Stubbs (2008: 116); Short (1975: 236-39). This is central to Kalyvas's (2006) argument that it is control that breeds collaboration.
- 11 Copy No 2908/AC signed by one Cap Offg Adjt Kanwal Singh, reproduced in IWGA (1986: 141).
- 12 Nibedon (1980) refers to it as Operation Security, while Jaffa (2001: 232) calls it Operation Accomplishment.
- 13 Tours by government officials on Sundays were cited as an example of official discrimination against Christians. This perceived anti-Christian bias was reinforced by the Indian army's occupation and burning of churches. Hluna (1985: 91, 101).
- 14 In March 1966, the MNF tried to block pamphlets issued by the Presbyterian and Baptist Churches condemning violence as un-Christian and against human rights (Hluna 1985: 107-08).
- 15 Darwish (2006).
- 16 The urban population increased from 5.36% in 1962 to 46.09% in 1991. See Verghese (1996: 160).
- 17 Order Co CLD 1/1-67/1 dated Silchar, 2.1.67, signed by B C Cariapa, liason officer of the central government for the Mizo District, Silchar, reproduced in Zamawaia (2007: 988-89).
- 18 Nunthara (1989: 5); Jaffa (2001: 232, 236-37), gives slightly different figures.
- 19 For the three later phases, the Assam Maintenance of Public Order (Amendment) Act, 1968 was invoked rather than the Defence of India rules, which had been challenged as a basis for grouping in the Assam High Court (*Chhuanvawra versus The State of Assam and others*).
- 20 The 1940s Minnesota experiment showed that starving healthy men had long-lasting effects on their confidence and ability to resist (Greenhill 2004).
- 21 The MNF issued rules to counter the grouping, telling Mizos not to go to the grouping centre, or run away if they could; not help the security forces in any way; refuse to be enumerated in the census or participate in elections. Photographers who helped make ID cards were threatened (Hluna 1985: 109).
- 22 Interview with Pi Zamawii, by H Lalthuamlia. The MNF gave the families of the dead Rs 100 each as compensation.
- 23 Fictionalised accounts of such relationships include Ao (2006), Bhattacharya (2005).
- 24 In the elections to the Village Council held in 1963, the Mizo Union got 228 seats compared to

the MNF's 145 (Hluna 1985: 89).

25 Manual for VG (Village Guards) Organisation, [http://nlsic.gov.in/chapter/commissioner/VG\\_chap1.pdf](http://nlsic.gov.in/chapter/commissioner/VG_chap1.pdf), accessed 27 March 2009.

26 Based on Interviews with ex-guerrillas from Peace Accord MNF Returnees Association (PAMRA), Aizawl.

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