

PEOPLE'S MANDATE IS SUPREME

By
BRIG. T. SAILO AVSM (RETD), CHIEF MINISTER, MIZORAM

In the last couple of weeks certain developments had taken place in the People's Conference Party and amongst various MLAs of different parties, which have caused concern among people particularly those who voted for this party. I had deliberately chosen to maintain silence about these developments, because I felt that these matters should be thrashed out and resolved within the party forums. I am today, feeling compelled to make a public statement because I find that certain friends in the party have gone to the press and had made statements which are unfounded and misleading. Perhaps, the time has come when the common people who voted this party into power need to be taken into confidence.

2. By way of background, I may mention that I came to Mizoram after my retirement from the Indian Army in the year 1974. I had neither any background nor interest in politics, but, on seeing the condition of the people in Mizoram, I felt impelled to intervene and take certain steps for ameliorating their difficulties. The greatest problem faced by the people at that time was the excesses committed by the Security Force during their operations. I had set up a Human Right Committee all over Mizoram to enable the people to resist such excesses and to bring these to the notice of higher authorities in Government of India. We succeeded to a very large extent in controlling these excesses. At that time, the common people expressed a desire that a political party should be formed to carry on the task which was started by the Human Right Committee and to voice and achieve the aspirations of Mizos. In consequence of this desire, the People's Conference party came into existence in April, 1975. How this party, within a short span of time achieved tremendous popularity, how the leaders of this party suffered hardships including detention under MISA, how inspite of these hardships and handicaps, the party won the Parliamentary Election in March 1977 and finally how the party secured an overwhelming victory in the Assembly Election in May 1978 are facts of history which are known to all people in Mizoram and need not be repeated. The results of the election are :-

(a) People's Conference	- 23
(b) Congress (I)	- 4
(c) M.J.P. (Self-styled Janata)	- 1
(d) Independent	- 2

On 30th May 1978, all the 23 P.C. MLAs sat together to elect the leader of the house. When I was elected leader of the house on that day, I offered two alternatives for consideration :-

- (a) That I should be left out of the Ministry so that I could work exclusively for the peace making efforts.

or

- (b) I could accept the position of leader of the house. The P.C. MLAs decided that I should lead the house and I accepted it

3. I have stated this background so as to put in the correct perspective the present controversy raised by some of the MLAs who got elected on the P.C. Party mandate. The eight dissident MLAs and the Speaker have expressed different reasons in pressing their demand for me to quit the Ministry. I have always welcomed constructive criticism and democratic working. These friends had an opportunity of voicing their criticism during the General Assembly of P.C. Party which was held on 10th - 11th October, 1978. They had also an opportunity of being elected to party posts. The fact that the rank and file of P.C. Party members did not repose confidence in them should have made them realise that they are going against the interest of the Party as well as the common people of Mizoram. Instead of realising this, out of anger and emotions for being defeated in the Party election, they took a decision, on the very night of the Party General Assembly Election, to withdraw support from Chief Minister and submitted the matter direct to the Lt. Governor of Mizoram. They have perhaps, in frustration, gone to the extent of hobnobbing with a motley group of MLAs belonging to Congress (I), Mizoram Janata Party and Independents. In this manner, they are betraying the very party which was responsible for getting them elected to the Legislative Assembly. Such betrayal of the Party and of the trust reposed by the common people in the MLAs elected on P.C. Party mandate cannot be tolerated. I believe in democratic working and I am quite willing to let this issue rest with the P.C. Legislative party who can either affirm confidence in my leadership or elect a new leader. There can, however, be no question of a few dissident MLAs of P.C. party joining hands with diverse groups of other MLAs merely for the object of toppling the Government which received an overwhelming mandate from the people only a few months ago. These toppling games are a total negation of the principles of democracy enshrined in our Constitution. I have no intention of succumbing to these tactics. I shall, gladly step aside and quit office under any one of the following circumstances :-

- (a) The P.C. Legislature Party sit together, do deliberations and elect a new leader.
- (b) The Central Executive Council (CEC) or Special General Assembly of the party meet and decide that I should step aside.

4. Four of the dissident MLAs have already received a clear direction from the people of their constituencies that they must resign as MLA as the voters have disapproved of their action. It is expected that voters of other constituencies will soon demand the resignation of the remaining dissident MLAs. It is abundantly clear that the actions of these dissident MLAs have been totally disapproved by their respective constituency.

Some P.C. MLAs joining hands with Congress (I) MLAs to topple the P.C. Ministry is something which cannot be expressed in words. It is against all ethics and morality;

5. An attempt has been made to twist certain facts in relation to the peace talks with MNF. It is a well-known fact that I have been most concerned about achievement of lasting peace in Mizoram. To this end, I have contributed my efforts at different times. It is unfortunate that certain internal differences have developed within the MNF. These are, however, the internal matters of the MNF. We are only interested in lasting peace being achieved through a settlement to be worked out between the Government of India and the MNF. Our full weight will be behind such efforts.

6. Against the above background, I would earnestly appeal to my friends who are today known as dissident MLAs to do some heart-searching and think of the consequences of what they are doing. Will it serve the interest of Mizo people if there is instability in Mizoram? Does it not amount to betraying the confidence reposed by the people in P.C. Party if efforts are made to topple the present Government with the help of Congress (I) opposition and Independent MLAs? Is President's Rule better than a popular elected Government because these disruptive activities may well result ultimately in imposition of President's Rule. Is it not better to resolve any differences, real or imaginary through discussions within the party forums? If honest answers are given to these questions after sincere heart-searching I have no doubt that these friends will come to the right path and together we shall be able to serve the people of Mizoram with greater sincerity and success.

Sd/-

BRIG. T. SAILO AVSM (RETD)
Chief Minister, Mizoram.

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