Early Demands

By 1946, Manipur, like the rest of India, had reached the final stage of the nationalist struggle. Anticipating the withdrawal of the British from India, the Manipuri leaders came out with their own projections of the future political set up in Manipur. The Congress Party campaigned for the immediate establishment of the responsible government with an elected assembly to replace the monarchy; but the constitutional movement had only taken roots by the late 1930s when the Women's Bazar Agitation led by Hijam Irabot Singh was launched for the ban on rice export and the establishment of the responsible government.

After the death of Sir Chura Chand Singh, his eldest son Bodha Chandra Singh took over the charge of the administration; for a pretty long year, the hereditary ruler supposed that he would be able to reign peacefully unhindered by any political trouble; but unfortunately he was seriously disturbed with the outbreak of the World War II. Manipur became in 1942
a target of the Japanese air raids and a battle front. During the war the capital seemed to be completely deserted; the administration remained at a standstill for sometime then was taken over by the military.¹ With the end of the war in 1945 the Japanese retreated from Manipur. After the war the British Government had declared their intention to quit India for ever. This news reached Manipur by passing through many tall mountains and valleys. This caused much political excitement and the demand for the responsible government was intensified.

A resolution passed by the All-Manipur Mahasabha Council's Working Committee on August 2, 1948, asked the Maharaja of Manipur to proclaim the establishment of the responsible government in the State within a year. It further requested him immediately to set up a constitution-making machinery composed of the leaders of public opinion.²

The Nikhil Manipuri Mahasabha was the first political organisation which took up the political

¹ Home Department Political File No. 183, 1943, NAI, New Delhi.
² The Hindustan Standard (Calcutta), September 2, 1946, p. 3.
issues of Manipur. Since then the party had been active in the State politics. It took the leading part in the compounders' strike and in the primary school teachers' demand for pay-hike. It also demanded the curtailment of the big salaries of the Durbar members and an increase in the pay of the low-paid public employees.

In one case it was decided in the Fifth Annual Session of the Manipur Students' Federation which was held at the Manipur Dramatic Union Hall under the Presidency of Dwijamani Dev Sharma, a leading political figure, that an immediate installation of a responsible government should be effected. The resolution also demanded the easily introduction of the local self-government in the State.3

As the British Government made known its intention to transfer power to the Indian hands, a

3. Ibid, June 21, 1946, p. 2. It also demanded the Calcutta University and the Manipur State Durbar for the recognition of the Manipuri vernacular in the Bachelor of Arts examination. It further emphasised the necessity of the establishment of a full-fledged college of Science and Arts, and a free and a compulsory primary education.
meeting of the Organising Committee of the Socialist Party of Manipur was held at Imphal under the Presidentship of Bijoy Chandra Singh. It adopted a resolution for the early introduction of the popular government.⁴

Being apprehended the imminent political developments, the Maharaja instituted a constitution-making body for the future administration of the Manipur State. This was announced on December 12, 1946. The Manipur State Durbar after having a discourse with the Agent to the Governor-General, had accepted to form an Interim Government, with some State officials of the present regime, for the time being, before the making of a new constitution.⁵ The Interim Council was inaugurated by the Maharaja on August 14, 1947. The Maharaj Kumar Priyabarta Singh, the younger brother of Maharaj Bodha Chandra Singh, became the first Chief Minister of the Manipur State. Four ministers from the plains and two from the hills were appointed.

⁵ Ibid.
The Era of Political Factionalism

With the creation of an Interim Council as the political executive, started the era of the factionalism in the Manipuri politics and the State Congress Party split into two groups. The selection of the members of the Interim Council was left to the Maharaja's discretion. Those Congress leaders who had not been considered at all became angry with the Maharaja. They developed an inferiority complex. This dissatisfaction among a section of the Congressmen was responsible for the growth of the factionalism in the Party. As the chances of the compromise narrowed down a Congress group led by late Elangbam Tompok Singh separated from the united Congress Party. The remaining Congress group was headed by Tomal Singh. And both of them became the Presidents of their respective wings. It was a matter of question whether whose party would be the real and the genuine Congress. It was very difficult to answer because both of the Congresses claimed right. Both of the sections started condemning each other.

The Organising Committee of the Socialist Party of Manipur rejected the plea of the selection of the members of the Interim Council. It advocated only a
popular Interim Government will be able to properly charge the responsibilities at the present juncture. The Committee was of the opinion that a constituent assembly elected on the adult franchise should immediately be established and recommended that the formation of an interim government should be left to the people and their organisations. The Committee did not favour the interference of the Maharaja with the affairs of the people. Fairly speaking, the Maharaja should have approached in a democratic way, so that the people might have been satisfied. He could have arranged an election for the purpose. That would have credited more to him.

Laishram Achau Singh, one of the members of the Congress Working Committee, issued a statement: 'There seems to be some confusions in the minds of the public about the reported move of the state congress to come to some half-hearted arrangements with the State Authorities on the question of the

7. Ibid.
Interim Ministry of Manipur State. Late Doctor (Physician) Leiren Singh, one of the supporters of the Congress led by Tompok, criticised the high-handedness from which it led to the splitting of the Congress. This was reported to the President of the All India States People's Conference. The Congress led by Tompok charged against the Congress led by Tomal for violating the Congress discipline, as they joined the Interim Council.

The Congress problem started just after the so-called night 'secret negotiation', on the question of forming an interim government, between Pearson, Durbar President, and some Congress leaders namely, R.K. Bhubon Singh, the Congress President, Oujamani Dev Sharma, Jogeshwar Singh and Khoimachandra Singh, the Secretary of the Congress, on the other side. The content of the negotiation was unknown thoroughly. Naturally, this created more suspicions in the minds of the other Congress members. Immediately after the incident took place a meeting of the Working Committee of the Congress was called.

9. Telegram from Doctor Leiren Singh to President of the All India States Peoples' Conference, Manipur State Congress File No. 5, 1947-48 (Date is not mentioned).
in the night of July 16, 1947. But those suspected persons who took part in the secret negotiation did not turn up. The other members present in the meeting declined to disclose anything about the agreement. Achau Singh tried in vain to let out something on the secret negotiation, and went on saying that if they could make a demand on the introduction of the interim government. But the matter was dropped for the following day the 17th instant at 9 a.m. This time the Working Committee discussed on the content of the letter given by Bhubon on the night of the 14th July. As Bhubon could not attend the meeting due to illness, Gouramani Sharma was appointed temporary President. In the meeting a charge-sheet was brought against Bhubon, Khoimacha Singh, Jogeshwar Singh that they were the gentlemen who recommended the names of two of them – Dwijamani Dev and Krishnamohan Singh – and two other State officials one of them a cousin of Bhubon for the ministership of the Council. The President in his letter specially mentioned the fact that the names of those two State officials could not be given out to the Committee even on that day. However, the discussion went on for about three
hours. It was revealed in the meeting, that they went against the policy of the committee itself as set down in its resolutions, viz., the formation of an popular interim government in complete accord with the All India States Peoples' Conference resolutions, policies and decisions and also that they were, in so doing, acting against the discipline of the Congress organisation. 10

It was really a sinister game played by the unprincipled Congressmen to their colleagues. It was an act of crime to cheat the public by political manoeuvring with the help of Major Pearson. It was also a matter of shame on their part not to take the Working Committee into their confidence. It was not at all befitting on their part to finally submit the personnel of the ministry without prior consultation of the Committee. So the natural conclusion was that they had acted against the policy and discipline of the Manipur State

10. General Secretary of the Manipur State Congress, to General Secretary of the All India States Peoples' Conference, 17 September 1947, Private Office Records, 1947 (File No. is not mentioned).
Congress. The Committee, therefore, passed a censure motion on Bhubon and his associates by strong disapproving of their actions by nine votes to five.\(^\text{11}\) The Committee further authorized Krishnamohan to call an urgent meeting of the Committee to take the requisite steps. The dissentients claimed that they should give minutes of dissent, quite contrary to the constitutional principles of any political organisation. However, their motion was put down by a majority vote though the President of the day was a partisan on the side of the dissentients.\(^\text{12}\)

In a special meeting of the Working Committee which was held on July 21, 1947, at Bhagyabati press, the main topic of the discussion centred round the plan of the interim government. When the sitting commenced, a point of order was raised by one member

\(^\text{12}\) It should be noted in their connection the fact that there was no higher authority of the Manipur State Congress other than the Working Committee. All the members of the Working Committee were accepted after the election of the President by a general meeting of the Congressmen. No representatives of the council of Congressmen existed on that day as of higher authority above the Working Committee.
stating that the appointment of the three additional Working Committee members was unconstitutional and arbitrary. But that was ruled out by the President. At that very moment, the same member demanded the resignation of the President as illogical conclusion of the censure motion passed on July 17, 1947. The President, however, refused to do so and urged the house to hear them again. 13

The General Secretary began to move a counter resolution recommending the adoption of the secret plan to the Working Committee. Achau raised a point of order on account of the fact that the plan was already considered and was disapproved and a censure motion passed on July 7, 1947. The dissentients confidently claimed that the matter should be reconsidered though they were in the minority. It was against the constitutional principle and the democratic practice of all political organisations in the world to maneuver in this way so as to be able to impose their decision upon the Working Committee by a minority of official

clique. The President showed his high-handedness and obstinacy by pressing the motion. The speaker once again demanded the resignation of the President. A point of information was also raised if the names of those two State officials who had been recommended to the Council could be divulged at that time. The President replied in the negative. It was a wonder that such a matter of public importance could not be given out in the Working Committee which was assumed to be the representative of the people. In spite of repeated demands of the resignation of the President and his bloc in the Working Committee, the President and his bloc in the Working Committee violated vagrantly the principle and the policy of the Congress and acted contrary to proper procedure. It was therefore vividly proved that they were the seceders who were somehow trying their utmost to maintain their position by political manoeuvring and have refused to hand over office. They had set up an unconstitutional body and were creating an intricate sensation in the minds of the people. 14

Soon after the incident, an emergency meeting of the Working Committee was held on the night of July 21, 1947, and Tompok was recommended as the President of the new Cabinet and Chandrakas Singh was authorised as the General Secretary to take up requisite steps for carrying on the activity of the Congress.

Tompok was duly elected as the President in the general meeting of the Congressmen convened for the purpose on July 24, 1947, and a new Cabinet was formed and ratified by the meeting. 15

When the matter came to a climax, the Chief Minister manouvered to pacify the rebellious Congress section by offering the post of Education Minister in the State Council to be formed, to their unquestioned leader Tompok, eventhough he did not recognise the new Cabinet. Tompok could not accept the position as the plan was quite defective and was not at all up to the expectations and in aspirations of the people. Because

Krishnamohan and Tompok were only the peoples' representatives in the State Council of seven members. The Working Committee in the meantime rejected the proposal and demanded a truly popular interim government.

In the meanwhile, the Bhuban clique set up their own committee sponsored by the State Government and the Maharaja and they accepted the office in the name of the State Congress against the wishes of the vast majority of the public. Bhubon, himself belonged to the ruling family and Krishnamohan being brother-in-law of the Maharaja had allied themselves with the Maharaja to keep up the ruler in power. 16

Finally, the members of the Working Committee unitedly resolved to enquire into the matter and take proper steps to save from an impossible situation and to prevent from the imminent public disorder on sequent upon the secret alliance and the strengthening of the Maharaja's hands in taking repressive measures to put down the popular and the legitimate demand for a responsible form of government. It would be

illogical to form an interim government without prior consultation with the State Congress. The Working Committee highly condemned the action of Major Pearson, the Chief Minister of the State Council, who in complete disregard of the people's wishes and demands entered into a secret negotiation with some politically self-motivated members of the Working Committee on the issue of the Interim ministry. 17

The Committee after analysing the prevailing political situation considered the formation of an interim government highly essential, otherwise, the progress towards the responsible government might be hindered and arrested, and the disturbances and the troubles might break out in the State. The local authorities should in the case bear the responsibility. Besides, they outrightly rejected the rules of the administration for the Manipur State, 1947, as introduced by the Maharaja could not be the basis of the interim government. 18

18. Ibid.
To quote the words of Bipin Pal Dass, a Socialist leader of Assam, who happened to visit Manipur, addressing a public meeting held at the Manipur Dramatic Union Hall, that 'The Manipur State Rules for Administration, 1947 was a direct challenge to the people of Manipur and the State Congress. It was high time to reject the draft constitution of the constitution-making body which embodied provisions falling far short of full responsible government.' Further, encouraging the people he drew the attention to Nehru's statement that the people's power would be supreme in all the Indian states. Sovereignty should go to the people and an intensified struggle for a responsible government should be advocated. Once again, Dass in a meeting of the Socialist workers held at Imphal, reminded, or rather excited the people that they should not stop their struggle for a responsible government, and be ready to face any source of trouble. Lastly, he further urged the people to endeavour to end the defective system of passport which prohibited free entry of the out-

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siders into Manipur without prior permission from the State Government. Really, many of the political leaders were dis-appointed as they were not allowed to enter Manipur. Dass ironically commented that it was a great insult to the Manipuris.20

Coming back to the main theme of the problem of the formation of the State Council, the hill people and the Muslims protested on their exclusion in this respect. They alleged that the nomination of the present minister was illegal. In a meeting held on August 24, 1947, the attitude of the Maharaja was also condemned by the student's Congress wing, Krishak Sabha, etc. But the Maharaja seemed to be unheeded to such political development.21

20. The system of the 'inner line' permit had been adopted since the advent of the British rule in the State because the strategic considerations required it. Free entry might threaten the peace and tranquility of the border territory. Being conscious of this fact the British Government enforced the 'inner line' permit system. Even after the withdrawal of the British Government from India the same old system has been continued. Keeping in view of the advantage of the 'inner line' system the Maharaja and his Government intentionally did not abolish it. This would help to check the entry of the political mongers in Manipur. The Maharaja was really afraid of the outsiders who could instigate the people to revolt against his rule.

If the Maharaja could have judged the political situation, he would have surely saved the Congress from the impending crisis. Neither his Government nor he himself took the least interest in the welfare of the people and the State. He appointed in the constitutional making body only those persons who were his patrons. He appointed his younger brother as the first Chief Minister of Manipur; on the other hand, this would never serve the purpose of the proposal of compromise between the two Congress groups. The Maharaja should not have supported the Congress led by Tomal.

**Negotiations for the Congress Unity**

After the splitting of the Manipur State Congress into two rival groups, the efforts were continuously made for the reconciliation and the unity between the two while both continued to claim to be the genuine Congress Party. In Manipur, the united Congress Party was the only largest political organisation before the split-up. Even before the satyagraha the matter was discussed to bring a compromise between the two
groups; when the satyagraha was ended, the issue of the negotiation was a matter of daily question.

The only difference lied on the point: Tompok's Congress wanted the other Congress section headed by Tomal should follow them in spirit; only then they would be able to achieve their first and foremost goal, i.e., the establishment of the full responsible government. If the Congress led by Tomal regretted the consequences of the split, and did not accept the constitution drafted by the constitution-making body, and demanded immediately the full responsible government, then there would be a definite chance of the normalisation, as before, of the strained relationship between the two contending Congresses. But, unfortunately this condition was not entertained by the Congress led by Tomal. In a meeting held on September 20, 1947, at Atom Babu Sharma's residence, the Tompok Congress came out with the following four points:

1. there should be re-election;
2. the President of the Congress should be elected by the primary members;

3. there should be a selection of fifteen members by the Working Committee according to the old constitution;

4. there should be a cancellation of three members from the category of the voter-candidate of the Congress, because they—Krishnamohan, Dwijamani Dev and Bhubon—illegally and secretly took part in the negotiation in connection with the formation of an interim government without prior consultation with the Congress Working Committee.²³

With exception to the last point, Tomal's Congress accepted the remaining three conditions on the term of the compromise. It showed that the chance of the negotiation was broken down. Seeing the less chance of agreement between the two factions of the Congress, Sarangadhar, General Secretary of the All India States Peoples' Conference, left Imphal on September 21, 1947, who came to solve the Manipur State Congress crisis.

23. Manipur State Congress, Private Office Records, 1947 (File No. is not mentioned).
On the eve of the satyagraha a Negotiating Committee was formed. On October 28, 1947, in a meeting, it was resolved that the two rival Congresses should unite together once again as before. Gourahari, the President of the Committee requested Tompok not to start any sort of agitation unless the two Congresses united. The Committee asked the Congresses to send their suggestions on the term of compromise. Further the Committee informed them on November 2, that it might be handicapped in narrowing down the differences if there were no quick and definite replies from the Congresses. Despite, the Committee would be compelled to regret if any sort of agitation took place in the meanwhile. But all the attempts and the exertions of the Committee were in vain, as the satyagraha movement had started already.

When the satyagraha was called off, the student Congress wing had taken the matter of the negotiation, and appealed to the leaders of both Congresses to work unitedly for the development and bring a socio-economic revolution in the State. Though the student wing referred to the successful

24. President of Negotiating Committee, to President of Manipur State Congress, 31 October 1947, Ibid.
satyagraha, they regretted the disunity among the Congressmen. 25

Debeswar Sarma, the Indian Dominion Agent in Manipur, seemed to be interested in the Congress crisis of Manipur, as he invited four members from each Congress to the informal conference with a view to bring out a solution on the issue of replacing the present Council for a popular interim council and a constituent assembly in order to frame a constitution for the responsible government. But he failed consecutively to bring a common term of agreement. 26 On the first day of the meeting, the Congress led by Tompok raised certain points that the ministry should be distributed between the two Congresses in a proportionate ratio and an immediate dissolution of the present ministry. However, the other Congress led by Tomal accepted the dismissal of the present ministry and the substitution of the four Congress nominees if the dissentients were once again allowed


to join the old Congress. But such a condition was not acceptable to the Congress led by Tompok. As decided by the Working Committee (Resolution 1, 26.2.48), a sitting of the Manipur State Congress Parishad was arranged in Imphal at Manipur Dramatic Union Hall in connection with the settlement of the problem created by the split of the Congress. But the hope of bringing the two Congresses into one was never fulfilled.

Satyagraha against the Maharaja

As the Interim Council and the new rules for the administration of Manipur, 1947 did not meet the demand of the Tompok group, it eventually led to the launching of the first political satyagraha in Manipur. A dissident faction of the Tompok Congress

27. On the other hand, the Congress led by Tomal blamed the Congress group of Tompok that '... the seeder party went back upon their words and demanded immediate unconditional dissolution of the present Ministry leaving the whole thing in chaos and thus giving them greater opportunity to aggravate the present disorder. They further wanted their party to continue as a separate congress. The motive of the seeder party was evidently to leave every thing in melting pot for political adventurism.' Ibid.
did not think that a responsible government was going to be established very soon; so they decided to launch a satyagraha to press the demand for a responsible government in Manipur. It was a massive satyagraha which spread to the far-flung villages of the capital. The satyagrahis' main aim was to bring an end of the autocratic rule, as 'For centuries together the Manipuris have been groaning under the yoke of the Rajas. Now with the course of events in the world at large and India in particular, the freedom-loving people of Manipur can no longer bear this medieval system in Manipur with the Raja as the sole dictator in the State.'

On August 15, 1947, a group of Congress led by Tompok using the Indian Congress caps and hoisting the National flag tried to enter the palace with a view to worshipping the image of Govindji as a mark of the Independence Day celebration. They were not allowed to enter the palace by an order of the Maharaja because they came with the Indian National flag and the

Congress caps.\textsuperscript{29} The Maharaja suspected the move was politically-motivated; whatever the case might be, the Maharaja did commit a mistake in tackling the situation. In fact, he was deadly opposed to the Congress led by Tompok for their anti-feudal and anti-monarchical attitudes. Moreover, he should not have disrespected the national flag. This irrational on his part had complicated the issue. This did not cause violence. However, many of them were arrested on the spot for breaking the laws of the State.\textsuperscript{30} Subsequently, the arrest had incited the public sentiment from which it was likely to spread in the form of a large-scale agitation.

The General Secretary of the Manipur Socialist Party issued a press note declaring that 'They (Socialists) are now rising to end this feudalism once and for all and establish full responsible Government. They can no longer remain silent when the Tri-colour flag, symbol of India's

\textsuperscript{29} Manipur State Congress, Publicity Department File No. 2, 1948, Congress Office, Imphal.

\textsuperscript{30} The Hindustan Standard (Calcutta), September 24, 1947, p. 7.
freedom, has been dishonoured by the Raja. The General Secretary further requested the people of Assam to help the Manipuris in their struggle for the achievement of the political and civil liberties. This was responded by the Socialist Party of Assam. So far the Assam Socialist Party members and the workers were greatly excited by the satyagraha movement in Manipur and some of them came to Manipur to take part in the agitation. A few of them were arrested by the State police for not having obtained prior permission from the Government. Later, they were released at Mao, the border station in the north of Manipur.

Sarangadhar, the General Secretary of the All India State Peoples' Conference and one of the members of the Constituent Assembly, issued a

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31. Ibid, September 30, 1947, p. 5. A resolution was also passed in a public meeting held on August 24, 1947 that 'This meeting of the people of Manipur of all shades of opinion places on record its deep sense of grief at the dishonouring of the Indian Union Flag and the Gandhi cap and resolving that a Satyagraha movement will be launched to vindicate the honour of the flag and the cap.' Ibid, September 13, 1947, p. 8.

32. Ibid.

statement condemning the rude attitude of the local
authorities of Manipur in holding up the members of
the delegation of the Assam Socialist Party, namely,
Hareswar Goswami, Principal Hem Barua, etc. He
expressed with deep shock that 'We are free and the
whole country is ours. You can go anywhere in your
peaceful pursuits and no power on earth can stop
you. Manipur claims to be independent but carries
on this British system of permits imposed on non-
Manipuris. This is absolutely no ground for it.
There is no emergency nor any other condition. But
feudalism still clutches at the British apron. I
invite fighter all over to smash this citadel of
old fashioned reaction'.

When Dass was in Manipur, it was understood
that he had conversation with Captain Priyabarta,

34. Ibid. Like Dass, Hareswar Goswami, one of
the members of the National Executive of the
Socialist Party of India, held the same views. He
did not justify the arrest of the Socialist
delegates on the ground of being they were
foreigners. He added that 'Nowhere in India this
system (inner line permit) is in vogue. In Manipur
too there can be no reason for its continuance after
the withdrawal of the British from India. This only
betrays a desire to remain independent and free from
the Indian Union. Otherwise, how and why does
Manipur restrict the freedom of movement of the
people by such an abnoxious and medieval system, and

(Footnote continued)
Chief Minister of Manipur, regarding the 'pass system'. But his argument of hoisting up the national flag in front of the Govindji temple was unreasonable as it was not the general practice in all over India. It seemed to be politically motivated only to create a problem and tease the Maharaja. Anyway he admitted that the immediate cause of the satyagraha was the hoisting up of the national flag in front of the temple and entering in the palace with the Gandhi caps. He also talked to the Political Agent and Debeswar Sarma. He indicated that Manipur's case would be reviewed like the other states of India in the next session of the All India States Peoples' Conference.

(Footnote continued from previous page)

that too, of an Indian. It does against the fundamental rights of an Indian as enunciated by the Constituent Assembly. Every lover of freedom must fight this system. When too it is added the insult hurried by the Maharaja to the Union flag on August 15, the whole game becomes very clear. Manipur cannot at one and the same time join the Indian Union and disrespect its flag.' *Ibid.*


In September 1947, the Tompok Congress submitted an ultimatum to the State authorities in the following terms:

1. The interim government, which was recently introduced, should be reconstituted according to the popular demand, that is, all the members of the Government should be elected by the people and that no members should be nominated by the Maharaja as had been done.

2. A constituent assembly elected on the basis of the universal franchise should immediately be set up to draw up a constitution.

3. The 'pass system' whereby an outsider was to take a pass from the State authorities for the entry into Manipur should immediately be suspended.

4. The Indian Union flag and the wearing of the Gandhi cap should be allowed in the temple of the palace, which had been disallowed even after the Manipur State had joined the Indian Union.
5. The land revenue, which was very high and the incidents of which were very high on the peasants, should be revised and redressed so as to give relief to the people.\textsuperscript{37}

On November 6, 1947, a general strike was observed in the State. And all the Government offices like police Station, Revenue Department, Registration Office, Chief Court, Palace, Chief Minister's residence, etc., were picketed.\textsuperscript{38} But the Education Office was excluded as it was related to the sheet of learning. Subsequently, several public meetings were conducted, and long processions were taken out in Imphal. In defiance of the order of the Maharaja, the agitators started cutting bamboos and firewoods from the reserved forest of the Maharaja.\textsuperscript{39} The satyagrahis' slogans like 'Bande Mataram' had thundered the air of Manipur. The reports of the

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{38} The \textit{Daily Praja} (Imphal), November 12, 1947, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{39} Manipur State Congress, Publicity Department File No. 2, 1948, Congress Office, Imphal.
clashes between the State police and the satyagrahis were coming in. In one of the happenings, on November 7th, the State police fired more than sixty rounds of blanks upon a large crowd of the satyagrahis gathering at police ground only to disperse them. About twenty persons were reported injured and no death reported. Some of the policemen were captured and detained by the satyagrahis but they were released stripped off their police uniforms.

On the tenth day of the non-cooperation movement in Manipur, an 'anti-repression day' was observed on November 14, under the leadership of Tompok, the Dictator of the Satyagraha Council of Action. The picketing was still continued. The majority of offices cooled deserted. The State police


41. Later with the start of the satyagraha, i.e. between November 6 and November 19, about seventy people were reported injured. Manipur State Congress File No. 5, 1947-48, Congress Office, Imphal.
was condemned for their rude and cruel handling of
the satyagrahis. The satyagrahis vehemently
denounced the police firing, the lathi-charge and
the employment of the Assam Rifles to crush the
demonstrators; they also decried the State's
'repressive policy'. 42 As a protest against the
blatant use of the Assam Rifles in suppressing the
peaceful satyagraha movement, the Manipur
Satyagraha Aid Committee of the Assam Socialist
Party sent telegrams to Sardar Patel, Jawaharlal
Nehru and Sheikh Abdullah, the then President of
the All India States Peoples' Conference. 43

The satyagraha movement seemed to be not
subsided before long. As the movement spread
throughout Manipur, it also affected the student
community. Now the State authorities instructed
the school authorities to find those students who
took part in one incident of hartal. In a letter
addressed to the President of the Manipur State

42. The Hindustan Standard (Calcutta),
November 14, 1947, p. 2.

43. Telegram from Elangbam Tompok to V.O.
Patel, 8 November, 1947, Manipur State Congress,1947
(File No. is not mentioned).
Congress (the Tompok group), the students’ General Secretary, on behalf of the Students’ Strike Committee, expressed that the action of the Government was nothing except victimization of the girl and the boy students. The Committee further threatened that if the Government did not exempt the fine, it would turn into a serious consequence. 44

A Hindustan Standard correspondent reported that the Maharaja’s men were trying to sabotage the agitation by inciting people to violence. 45 The General Secretary of the Congress led by Tompok commented that the Maharaja and the Durbar could not fairly run the Government. Theirs became an administration of the police and the bullies. In a statement issued from the office of the Manipur Socialist Party, the people were warned to be vigilant against the activities of the anti-satyagraha movement, as they were trying to suppress the national movement by hook or by crook. 46

44. Secretary of Students’ Strike Committee, to President of Manipur State Congress, 11 October 1947, Ibid.

45. The Hindustan Standard (Calcutta), November 8, 1947, p. 5.

By a resolution a conference of the Manipuris of the newly constituted district of Cachar held on October 28, 1947, at Nasughat, Silchar, congratulated the people of Manipur for their struggle for the full responsible government.\textsuperscript{47} The late Socialist leader Jaya Prakash Narayan sympathized with the cause. Wishing them all success in their struggle he said: '... I hope you too will soon be reaching your goal and that your progress would be rapid and sure ...'.\textsuperscript{48}

The End of Satyagraha

After a long struggle between the State forces and the people's pressure, at last, the later had to win the ground. The Maharaja and his Government could not overlook all the time the rightful demand of the majority. The Government

\textsuperscript{47}. Proceedings of the Surma Valley Manipur Association, 28 October 1947, Manipur State Congress, 1947 (File No. is not mentioned).

has been a machinery to look after the well-beings of the people; an autocratic ruler would never last long; it is only a question of time and tide; a change ought to take place sooner or later in due course. And, now people have been more and more politically conscious.

At the eleventh hour, the Maharaja's declaration came out that the draft constitution drawn up and submitted in the last July by the constitution-making committee consisting of elected representatives from the plains and the hills would be introduced soon. But the Chief Minister opined that 'There appears to be no reason why this constitution which, I am advised, ensures full responsible government, should not be given a trial. I am, however, prepared to invite and consider the opinion and advice of the Constitutional Advisor of the Constituent Assembly of the Indian Dominion on the draft constitution, as to whether any clause in its conflicts against the concept of responsible

49. The Hindustan Standard (Calcutta), November 26, 1947, p. 3.
government. He further appealed to the people to work out the constitution. He also expressed his strong opinion to crush the anti-social elements for maintaining a strict law and order in the State.

The Dominion Agent in Manipur, speaking at a mammoth public meeting held at Imphal on April 23, assured the people that 'As the agent of the Dominion of India in Manipur, I have to say two things here. There are (1) Responsible Government is going to be introduced in Manipur State by April 1948. And (2) the Dominion of India cannot look upon chaos and disorder in this frontier State with equanimity. There should be peace, progress and rule of law here. The Dominion Government is interested in attainment of both objectives. I seek the whole-hearted cooperation of all peoples of Manipur State for this end.'

The announcement of the Chief Minister affirmed the promise of the Maharaja for the estab-

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50. Manipur State Congress, Private Office Records, 1947 (File No. is not mentioned).

lishment of the responsible government by April 1, 1948. This brought a change in the future political development in Manipur. Soon, the declaration of the Maharaja calmed down the satyagrahis. As a result of the recent change in the policy of the local government, the Manipur State Congress led by Tompok decided to call off the satyagraha on November 26, 1947.\textsuperscript{52} The Dominion Agent said that it was a wise decision. On the other hand, the State Government accepted to fulfil their four demands, viz., the dissolution of the State Council, the introduction of the full responsible government, the institution of the constituent assembly and the grant of the people's civil liberties.\textsuperscript{53}

As a celebration of the successful satyagraha movement, the Manipur State Congress led by Tompok made a programme for calling out a long procession on November 28, 1947; and in this way, the satyagraha in Manipur came to an end.

\textsuperscript{52} Elangbam Tompok to Dominion Agent in Manipur, 26 November 1947, \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{53} The \textit{Hindustan Standard} (Calcutta), November 28, 1947, p. 1.