INDIA ATTAINS FREEDOM - 'INDEPENDENT TRAVANCORE' - AND FORMATION OF POPULAR MINISTRIES

India was on the threshold of independence by 1947. The attitude of the princely States underwent some changes by this time. When the British Government formally decided to transfer power to Indian leaders, the princely States were free to decide their future. They could join the Indian union or stand independent, or join Pakistan. It was the second choice that was exercised by the Diwan in Travancore.

The political conditions in Travancore remained in turmoil when the Maharaja and the Diwan decided to declare themselves independent of the Indian Union against public will. The action by the Ruler and Diwan was a clear indication of denial of justice to their people who were so far agitating for the establishment of Responsible Government in the State, and therefore failed and indicated to feel the pulse of the people of the State. National leaders including Gandhiji vehemently opposed this policy of Travancore and the State Congress which was agitating for this cause reacting against this move and launched an agitation in June 1947.
Princely States and the Cripps Proposals

Indian States were not mentioned in the short term offer of Cripps because they were already co-operating with the British Government. In the long range plan, however, the Draft Declaration announced that provision would be made for the participation of Indian States in the constitution making body. It further declared that "whether or not an Indian State elects to adhere to the constitution, it will be necessary to negotiate a revision of its Treaty arrangements, so far it may be required in the new situation."

Thus the Ruler, though not affected by the Cripp's proposals, was very much concerned with its long term proposition and, therefore, sought clarification regarding their position in the long-term plan. For this purpose, a Princes' delegation met Sir Stafford Cripps on April 2nd 1942, in the course of which the Chancellor, the Jam Sahib of Nawanagar, argued that, although the States would like to co-operate and

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1. Under the short-term offer, it was maintained that, until the new Constitution was prepared, all political parties must give their active and effective co-operation in the Councils of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations for the defence of India and the prosecution of the World War effort as a whole.


2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. This delegation consisted of the Chancellor (the Jam Sahib of Nawanagar), the Pro-Chancellor (the Maharaja of Bikaner) and the Maharaja of Patiala. The Maharaja of Chhattar represented the Nizam. See No. 192, FPD, Political Secret, 1942, 20.
participate in a United States of India, provision was necessary for “non-adhering States or groups of States” to “have the right to form and negotiate for a union of their own with full sovereign status in accordance with a suitable and agreed procedure specially devised for the purpose.” Sir Stafford Cripps promised the Chancellor that he would urge it on behalf of the Princes before His Majesty’s Government.

Sir Stafford Cripps, in this context dealt with the question of paramountcy and said that while, in the case of States adhering to the Union Paramountcy would be “automatically dissolved” with regard to non adhering States, the Crown would retain the means to implement its obligation and there would be no change on the question of paramountcy and other related matters except with their consent.

Reference has been made regarding the issue of paramountcy in the earlier chapter. But a discussion on various issues relating to it is to be made for a proper understanding of the situation, and the circumstances leading to the declaration of Independence of Travancore by C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid. It is to be noted that in consultation with the Reforms Commissioner H.V. Hodson, and later V.P. Menon, the Viceroy wrote in a letter to the Secretary of State that a Union of States was not within the range of practical politics “and that it was not worth wasting time considering it.” He was “emphatic that it would be disingenuous to encourage the States to go on thinking along these lines.” For details see V.P. Menon, *Story of Integration of Indian States*, (Calcutta, 1956), p.46.

7. No.192, FPD, Political Secret, 1942.

8. Ibid.
Issue of Paramountcy and the Cabinet Mission Plan

On February 19, 1946, the Labour Government announced the appointment of a Cabinet Mission comprising of Sir Stafford Cripps, Lord Pethick Lawrence and A.V. Alexander to negotiate with the Indian leaders on the issue of granting Responsible Government to India. Announcing the Mission, Prime Minister Atlee referred to the Indian States and expressed the hope that Princely India and British India would cooperate with each other.

On his arrival in India Sir Stafford Cripps explained the procedure which the Mission would adopt in its negotiations. He made it clear that in its negotiations the Mission would adhere to the earlier procedure and would consult only the Rulers. This disappointed the All India States Peoples Conference which had all along demanded that the State people’s opinion should also be taken into account. Authorised by the standing Committee of the AISPC, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru wrote to the Mission insisting that it should meet the representative of the AISPC. In the

10. In Rajasthan, the Marwar State’s People’s Conference met under the Presidentship of Jai Narain Vyas on February 28, 1946. The president said that the State’s people could not be ignored in the future policy of India. “Rulers of the States do not represent the people and if the Cabinet Mission does not consult them (the people) it is bound to fail.” See for details National Herald, Lucknow, 3rd March, 1946. K.C. Reddy, representative of the AISPC in London who, in the course of a press interview, while expressing satisfaction at the decision of the British Government to send the Cabinet Mission, “Could not help pointing out that Atlee’s speech left much to be desired in relation to the people of Indian States.” Reddy believed that, unless the Paramount Power relinquished its treaties with the Princes, the latter could not fit in the picture which independent India envisaged.
letter Nehru emphasised that “independence conferred upon India would not be complete unless it applied to State’s subjects too.”

On behalf of Travancore and some other princely States Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer met the Mission. In the course of his talks with the Mission he suggested two points in relation to States:

1) the States were opposed to the creation of Pakistan and were in favour of a United India with a strong Central Government; and

2) after the transfer of power to India the British Crown should not exercise powers of paramountcy over the States and they should be allowed to enter into treaties and engagements with the new Government of India.

The Diwan, no doubt, stood for a united independent India and a strong Central Government but clearly expressed his unwillingness to join the Indian Union after the lapse of Paramountcy.

The Cabinet Mission ultimately announced its proposals on the 16th May 1946 in which it was agreed to set up immediately an interim Government ‘to formulate ways and means for the early transfer of power to the Indian hands.’


clearly in detail about the much disputed and discussed issue of paramountcy and Stated that:

.... with the attainment of independence by British India, whether inside or outside the British Commonwealth, the relationship which had hitherto existed between the rulers of the States and the British Crown will no longer be possible. Paramountcy can neither be retained by the British Crown nor transferred to the new Government .... 14

Again in a press conference in Delhi on the same day Sir Stafford Cripps announced that “Paramountcy cannot be handed over to a third party without the consent of the States. They will, therefore, become independent.....” 15

The reaction to this Statement from different quarters was a mixed one. While some native rulers and their Diwans welcomed it some others vehemently opposed it. In Travancore the Diwan, Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer expressed the view that the Princely States should regulate their relations with the new Government of India only in accordance with the new agreements and treaties. Further he made a Statement in the Sri Chithra State Council that Travancore was prepared to work in the closest alliance with the Indian National Congress and to make a common cause with them for


the purpose of attaining freedom, if the present position of the dynasty and ruler of Travancore is preserved in tact. This would suggest that instead of integration with the Indian Union the Diwan had in mind an independent Travancore State leading to a policy of keeping the State away from the national mainstream.

The main political organisations in India expressed a different stand and were opposed to the proposals of the Cripps Mission. Both the All India Congress Committee and the All India States’ Peoples’ Conference expressed their strong resentment and opposition to the proposals and passed resolutions in which they expressed their anguish and concern regarding the uncertainty created by the Cabinet Mission proposals. The unquestionable leader of the congress, Gandhiji expressed the view that the Mission has left the question of paramountcy “very much in the air” and he demanded for transference of paramountcy to the new Indian Government. The strongly worded resolution on the future of Indian Constitution moved by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on 13th December 1946 in the Constituent Assembly of India reads thus:

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18. File No.206/C.S./1946/Political, Cellar Records, KGS, TVM.
20. In July 1946 elections were held to the Central Legislative Assembly and the Constituent Assembly of India met for the first time on 9th December, 1946.
No State can have an administration which goes against the fundamental principles or gives less freedom than obtaining in other parts of India....whether the present Rajas or Nawabs will continue or not, concern the people of the States ..... The decision will rest on them. Our Republic shall include the whole of India ... If the people of a particular State desire to have a certain form of administration, even though it might be monarchical, it is open to have it ..... If monarchical figure heads are approved by the people of the State, whether I like it or not, I certainly will not like to interfere. Nobody challenges them in India, and anybody ought to challenge them and anybody does challenge, well we accept the challenge and we hold our position.....21

This Statement of Nehru was a clear indication that if the people of a particular State preferred monarchical rule to democracy by free will the Indian Government will not stand in the way or use force to merge into the Indian Union, while it had an indirect message that if the ruler was against integration and the people for integration the Government of India would interfere, thereby giving the freedom to the people of the respective States. Nehru was aware that not the people of a single State in India would adopt to remain independent of the Indian Union except the rulers for their own ends. Hence by this declaration Nehru was fully convinced that the people in Princely

States will not opt for princely rule against a democratic administration in the Indian Union.

Thus the position of Princely States after the lapse of paramountcy became a matter of serious concern to both Princely States and British Indian leaders. The constitutional developments in British India had its impact on the Princely States as well. The speeches of and resolution moved by Jawaharlal Nehru virtually shook the very foundation upon which the rulers had based their policies to be adopted towards the future Government of India. The gravity of the situation forced several princes to participate in the constituent assembly. However, some States convened a meeting at Bombay on 29th January 1947 and adopted the following fundamental propositions as conditions to their States’ acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plans namely:

a) The State should enter into the Union on the basis of negotiation and the final decision should rest with each State;

b) The State should retain all subjects and powers other than those ceded by them to the Union;

c) At the close of the interim period paramountcy should terminate and it should not be transferred to the new Government of India; and

d) The union should not interfere with the constitution of the State, its territorial integrity and the succession of its reigning dynasty.22

22. Ibid., pp. 387-388.
These decisions taken at the meeting were only a reassertion of their earlier stand.

On 20th February 1947 Clement Atlee announced in the House of Commons the decision of the British Government to transfer power to Indian hands not later than June 1948.23 He also reiterated the Cabinet Mission proposals regarding the Princely States and stated that the British Government in India will not hand over their powers and obligations under paramountcy to any Government in British India.24 It was left for the native States to decide their future relations with independent British Indian Government. It was on the basis of these Statements that the Government of Travancore formulated its future course of action.

Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer and the Declaration of Independent Travancore

The demand for and final declaration of Independent Travancore by Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer was only a logical culmination of the stand Travancore had taken in the Memorandum to the Butler committee of 1928 and in its talks with the British Government on the question of its entry into Indian Federation envisaged in the Government of India Act of 1935. The stand taken by Travancore in its relation with the centre at different occasions clearly indicated this culmination of events. An

examination of the background for this is necessary to understand how this position was arrived at.

The Butler committee, which was set up by the British Government to examine in detail the relations between the Paramount Power and the Native States with reference to the rights and obligations arising from treaties, engagements and usage and also economic and financial relations between the two, was presented by the Diwan of Travancore M.E. Watts in April 1928 with a Memorandum. It pointed out that subject to the comprehensive power of intervention exercised by the Paramount Power in respect of negotiations, control of legislation, administration of justice, official appointment and cases of complaints the State could be regarded as autonomous in the exercise of its internal sovereignty.25 The Memorandum also referred to the rank enjoyed by the Ruler of Travancore. He was next in rank to the Rulers of Hyderabad, Baroda and Mysore and demanded "a higher rank than they have now come to occupy."26 It also referred to the usage of some words like ‘Durbar' by which the British Government referred to an Indian Princely State and requested to substitute the word by ‘Government'.27

27. Ibid.
The Butler Committee made two important observations in its report submitted in 1929 regarding the exercise of Paramountcy. 1) that "if any Government in the nature of Dominion Government could be constituted in British India, such a Government should clearly be a new and written constitution. The relations of the States to such a Government would raise questions of law and policy which we cannot now and here foreshadow in detail. 2) That in view of the historical nature of the relationship between the Paramount Power and the Princes, the latter should not be transferred without their agreement to a relationship with a new Government in British India responsible to an Indian Legislature"28 Again the Simon Commission in 1930 also recognised the force of this contention.

"Two important issues which caused concern to the Indian States related to their representation in a Federal Legislature and the scope and extent of the powers to be exercised by a Federal Government in relation to the States. Firstly, were the States to be represented by members nominated by the Ruler or by democratically elected representatives of the people? The answer to this itself hinged around the answer to the allied question whether sovereignty was vested in the Ruler or in the people. Secondly, was the Federal Government to be vested with the powers of the States or vice-versa? These were contentious issues that had to be settled amicably by discussion among the parties concerned."29


29. Ibid.
The intentions of Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer to retain Travancore as an independent political power was again reflected in the Memorandum submitted to the Loathian Committee which visited Thiruvananthapuram in November 1936. The Memorandum claimed for Travancore the right to retain authority even in subjects which, it might cede to a federal authority. It also demanded for Travancore special treatment in respect of its rights concerning salt and customs. The question of discontinuance of payment of annual tribute was also raised since in a federal set up the components are not subordinate to the centre. It also requested for the recognition of the Travancore High Court as a High Court under Section 217 of the Government of India Act of 1935. The real intention of the Diwan was to plead for an independent status to the State in all possible ways. Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer presented before the Loathian Committee thus:

It is abundantly clear that the British Government are going back not only on their intentions as expressed in the Round Table Conference and Joint Parliamentary Committee, but are resiling from the position they were compelled to assume when they amended the Government of India Act after the well known Bombay meeting of March 1935. To give an instance, Section 6(2) of the Government of India Act was enacted in order to make it clear that it is the Ruler who has to determine the extent of the Legislative and Executive authority of the Federal Organisation and it is the Ruler who has to empower the Federal
authorities to exercise their functions. The proposed Draft Treaty of Accession was, in fact, drafted on this footing. But at present the contention is that Section 6(2) is not to be applied but Section 125 under which the Federation is to get all powers and the Federation is to empower the Ruler to exercise powers delegated by the Federation to the Ruler. In other words, instead of the Federation being the agent to the Ruler in certain matters of all India importance as was at one time contemplated, it is the Ruler who has to be the agent of the Federation, when at their discretion, he is vested with certain jurisdiction.

This is an intolerably humiliating position from the point of view of the dignity of the Ruler, but apart from sentimental considerations, the legal difficulties consequent upon such a position are such that I cannot honestly recommend the adhesion to a Federation on such terms.

This is one of the numerous instances of deliberate breaking by the British Government of their word. One more instance may suffice to prove this beyond doubt. In certain matters of all India importance, the power of legislation may have to be uniform but the power of actual executive administration would naturally have to be vested in the Ruler. With reference to every simple item this has been resisted by the Committee who have suggested at every turn that the executive administration must
also be in the Federation. Furthermore, in the case of certain subjects, it was taken for granted throughout the Round Table Conference and the deliberations of the Joint Parliamentary Committee that the Ruler’s consent was necessary before federal authorities were enabled to function within the State. The committee wants now to remove the necessity of the Ruler’s consent in most of these cases and to substitute therefore, the discretion of the federal authority. In fact, therefore, this imposes in addition to the vague and indefinite jurisdiction of the Paramount Power statutory jurisdiction of the Federal Executive and the Federal Legislature over and above the Ruler of a State who, according to my considered opinion (if the Loathian Committee’s ideas to be carried out), will be reduced to the position of a Zamindar in a British Indian Province.

I consider that in the circumstances, that steps should be taken quite confidentially to let certain number of people know the exact state of things so that when the time arrives, public opinion in the State may be co-ordinated and made to express itself in unmistakable terms with regard to the inexpediency and danger of joining the federation on the present terms. I may add that I have made clear that the raising of the salute and the
revision of the Inter Portal convention are conditions precedent to Travancore joining the Federation.\textsuperscript{30}

In August 1937, the Government of Travancore made it clear that it will not co-operate with the Government of India in implementing the Federal Scheme at least in one respect. In a confidential letter to the Diwan, the Resident suggested that Travancore State might accede to the Federation with respect to item No.53 of the schedule to the Government of India Act of 1935, in result that the Travancore High Court and Subordinate Courts will be dependent on the Federal Court.\textsuperscript{31} The Diwan outrightly rejected this proposal and recommended to the Maharaja of Travancore to this effect. He suggested that it should be rejected on the ground that "This is a contingency which even if we join the Federation we must avoid."\textsuperscript{32} This suggestion or recommendation of the Diwan was approved by the Maharaja on August 14\textsuperscript{th} 1937.\textsuperscript{33} With regard to the discussion with the Resident of Travancore Col. G.P. Murphy, the Diwan informed the Maharaja on 1\textsuperscript{st} August 1939 that he was not satisfied in the nature of his discussions with the Resident, Col. G.P. Murphy on such substantive issues like salute, customs, excise etc and informed the Maharaja that "In

\textsuperscript{30} Letter dated 30\textsuperscript{th} November 1936 from C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer to the Maharaja. See File No.35/1936/C.S/Political, Cellar Records, KGS, TVM. Also see A. Sreedhara Menon, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 227-228.

\textsuperscript{31} See for details File No. 144/C.S/1937/Political Cellar Records, KGS, TVM.

\textsuperscript{32} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Ibid.}
the net result my deliberate view is that Travancore has nothing to gain but something to lose from the economic point of view and a great deal to lose from the political point of view if we join the federation."

Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer’s idea of an Independent Travancore found expression again in his Memorandum submitted to the Resident on October 11, 1939 commenting on the Wardha Resolution of the All India Congress Committee. The Memorandum reads:

It must be collected that the arrangements that now govern the relations of the British Government with the Indian States and which are included in the comprehensive term ‘Paramountcy’ involve certain inescapable assumptions. It has not been found possible to furnish an accurate definition for the term ‘Paramountcy’ but it depends upon certain rights and obligations arising by virtue of specific treaties and usage. Such relation is not transferable to third parties and certainly not unilaterally. The Congress claim that India be declared an independent nation necessarily involves the immediate independence of the various units of India including, of course, Indian States like Travancore which, unlike British Provinces, have not been conquered and which have entered into relations with Great Britain under negotiated treaties of allegiance and alliance. The

34. File No. 35/C.S/1936/C.S./Political, Cellar Records, KGS, TVM.
relations between States placed in that position and the future ‘Independent India’ can be only determined by new treaties to be entered into in the future and it is possible that some Indian States may decide not to enter into legal and political union with an independent India.  

This Statement was a clear indication of the Diwan’s idea to remain as an independent entity as and when occasion became favourable. By repeating this desire off and on at every possible platform he was trying to get the support from the British administration thereby, he thought, that the Indian National Congress leaders could be persuaded by the British, to accept his demand. On October 19, 1939 the Resident of Travancore, Murphy, informed the Diwan that “he should take into consideration the likelihood of intensified attacks against the State from certain quarters in that event” and the Diwan replied that “They (the Political Department) may be informed that if and when the department thinks that the publication of the Memorandum would be helpful I shall do so. I am not much worried about the possible intensification of the attacks because they cannot be more intense than they are at present.” This evidently brings to light the determination of the Diwan to suppress all possible political agitations against his actions in this direction. He was also consistently adamant in his stand on Independent Travancore.

35. File No.38/C.S./1939/Political, Cellar Records, KGS, TVM.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.
Right from 1904 Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer entertained the idea of two political States in India even after independence. He Stated:

The truth was right through during negotiations with Parliament and Ministers from 1919 to 1932, in which along with personages like Dr. Beasant, I took part, I was in favour of a residual authority being alone vested in the Centre which should in my opinion be in charge of Defence and Foreign Relations and certain essential public works of inter-State and continental significance, other powers and jurisdictions to vest in the States (Provinces as they were then called). What used to be called Provincial Autonomy and what Gandhi was always emphasising was an article of faith in the early years of the Congress and from the time I joined the Congress in 1904, I was an advocate of Provincial Autonomy in the above sense with ultimate authority in certain inevitable matters in the Centre.38

By the year 1944 the idea of Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer regarding Princely State’s Autonomy in all internal matters had been crystallised in his mind. He Stated that

The States, should, in my view, come into a scheme whereby the various administrative and political units in India, while exercising a full measure of autonomy in local matters would co-operate with other units in the composition and working of the central legislative and executive organisations. Such organisations will function effectively within and without the limits of India and national and co-ordinating as well as representative bodies. Within the limits of India the relationship between the units will be one of equality and there will be no question of Paramountcy as such inter se, though the rights residual and otherwise of the Centre will have to be firmly established and implemented ..... My point is this, namely that treaty rights or no treaty rights, no Indian State has a right to exist which does not come into any scheme by which there is created a central direction or central control of matters that appertain to the Indian States and British India alike, or which does not loyally conform to all political arrangements that may be arrived at for the governance of India and all ideologies that may be evolved as a result of few and equal discussion and resultant compromises.39

39. Address delivered on October 6, 1944 by Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer before the Bombay branch of Indian Council of World Affairs. File No. 176/1944/C.S./Political, Cellar Records, KGS, TVM.
His indication was of course to reconcile the requirements of State Autonomy in internal matters with those of central direction and control over matters of common concern.

The well-calculated plan of action for an Independent Travancore was voiced confidentially by the Diwan again in 1946 when the question of participation in Constituent Assembly arose. He expressed thus:

I am strongly of the opinion that the Indian States as a whole or at least Travancore in particular, should now take a line without implementing which the dynastic and historical traditions of the State cannot be ensured. There is no doubt that, by taking a definite line based on the so called treaties and by declining to join the Indian Federation, it is possible to be disassociated from Indian constitutional developments and to see that the present posture of affairs is temporarily continued; but to succeed in this attempt the support of the British and their army would be essential because both the Muslim League and the Indian National Congress will stir up trouble and revolt in the Indian States and in most cases such forces will not be sufficient to put down widespread trouble which I anticipate in the course of the next 12 months. To rely upon the British Government in such contingencies is to rely upon a broken reed. English character in
general and Englishmen in particular will always swim with the tide. To rely upon British help and assistance would be unwise.40

The Diwan was wise enough to envisage such an eventuality and to be realistic about the political outcome in the near future.

In February, 1946 Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer clarified his stand and asserted that Travancore would remain out of the Union of India after the lapse of Paramountcy. He said that:

I made it clear that this does not mean that Travancore will submit to the exercise of Paramountcy by the British Crown after it has made itself ineffectual as a factor in British Indian politics. In other words, I emphasised that Travancore will and must be relegated to the position before the treaty with the East India Company in 1795, namely as a perfectly independent unit.

I was asked if Travancore will stand by itself against the pressure of British Indian political parties and my reply was that our position could not be worse than it was during the Mysore war, when England was unable to help either Hyderabad or Travancore and Hyderabad, Travancore, and the English East India Company had to enter into a treaty for mutual protection.

40. File No. 455/1937/C.S./Political Cellar Records, KGS, TVM. Also see A. Sreedhara Menon, op. cit., p.233.
Travancore would rely upon its geographical isolation, the protection afforded by its sea board and if necessary, try to defend itself politically and economically against any attempt at subjugation. I added that the time had come when the pious formulae have to be given up and one has to face facts. If there is going to be a civil war in India as the result of Jinnah’s attitude, the Travancore Government would stand out of the struggle and should not be expected to help either party to the fight as all the resources would be needed to help ourselves. In other words, if India is going to be independent, important States like Hyderabad, Mysore and Travancore should also be treated as independent, subject of course to their conferring with each other and with the Governments of the future as to the treaty relations which will guide their mutual obligations and rights.  

These observations of the Diwan forwarded to the Maharaja and approved by him was a clear indication of the future course of action on the part of the Government and the Royal Family. The attitude of non help and non intervention by Travancore to the Indian side in the event of the Civil War was indicative of an Independent Travancore Declaration.

41. File No.134/C.S/1946/Political, Cellar Records, KGS, TVM. Also see A. Sreedhara Menon, op. cit., p.234.
The Independent Travancore Move was further voiced with much more strong determination in his Memorandum submitted to the Cabinet Mission. Sir C.P.Ramaswami Aiyer emphasised the following points in his meeting with the Cabinet Mission on April 9, 1946, which was sent for perusal to the Maharaja on April 12, 1946.

a) Travancore would be willing to negotiate new treaties or agreements with an independent India provided it was one independent India with a central organisation.

b) The moment India was declared independent the treaties which were justified only on the basis of allegiance offered by one side to the other for defence and protection against external and internal enemies would cease to operate.

c) Paramountcy would inevitably fall to the ground and will be eliminated as soon as and if the independence of India were declared. Both from historical and legal points of view the statements by Gandhiji and Jawaharlal Nehru that the successor Government would automatically succeed to paramountcy is unacceptable.

d) With more than 500 princely States no effective organisational framework is possible. Only those States, which can stand on their own legs, should be regarded as separate and individual units. Others should be grouped so as to enable the several States to act through accredited agencies charged with representing their joint interests. There should not be more than 15 or 20 units of Indian States for
this purpose. The minimum financial resources and population for each unit should be decided after further negotiation and discussion.

e) A united India is of paramount importance. There should be an effective Central Government operating in regard to British India and Indian States dealing with common matters concerning the country as a whole. These should include defence, external affairs, management of armament factories, the regulation of the production of steel, chemicals and explosives, magazines, mica, thorium, uranium, aluminium, iron, etc which are fundamental to welfare, agriculture production, etc.

f) Travancore would send 50% of its representatives to the Constituent Assembly of the future from the Legislature of the State. But the State would never join a Constituent Assembly that was not meant for the whole of India.42

Though Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyyer strongly defended and stood for a United India with a strong central administration, from his arguments, what he envisaged was central administration with independent princely States with sovereign right for internal administration excepting a few subjects listed above. He also hinted indirectly that Travancore will not even join a Federation of this kind, if India is divided, and preferred the existence of Travancore as an independent sovereign State in India. This was a clever step taken by the Diwan towards the fulfilment of his aim in future as the political overturns proved that partition was inevitable. After meeting the Cabinet

42. For details File No.828/1946/C.S./Political, Cellar Records, KGS, TVM.
Mission the Diwan wrote to the Maharaja that he had won in his efforts. He wrote that "when the permanent Government is set up and the British authority disappears, Paramountcy will not only disappear but all the rights hitherto exercised by the British Government will revert in the States which will be restored to the position occupied before these treaties were concluded with the East India Company. This is most important concession that I fought for and succeeded in getting." The Diwan was confident that he had succeeded in getting the British Government's approval for his suggestions and believed that on the strength of the Statements of the Cripps Mission in this regard, he could declare Travancore independent with the consent of the British.

Undoubtedly, Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer in his capacity as Diwan of Travancore and the spokesman of the Princely States of India in general and that of Travancore in particular played a very important and dominant role in extracting from the British Government an assurance that with the withdrawal of British power and consequent lapse of paramountcy, the Princely States of about 600 in number would become independent, as the treaties between them and the British become inoperative or defunct. It was also left to the respective Rulers of the Princely States to decide whether to join the Union of India or Pakistan or declare independence. A general impression was created among the people that C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer was personally responsible for advising the Maharaja of Travancore in this direction and that the Ruler was not keen in this regard. This is contrary to facts as is evidenced from the

43. Ibid.
various letters and intimations sent by him to the Maharaja. The Maharaja never opposed this scheme nor made any comments against it nor disapproved his suggestions but gave his consent to proceed at every point. When the Diwan appraised the Maharaja of the disastrous implications and consequences involved in such a move the Ruler directed the Diwan that he (the Ruler) 'wanted to fight it out', whatever might have been the odds.44

It is reasonable to believe that the Diwan had anticipated the course of events to come and, therefore, resigned his position as Diwan of Travancore and left Travancore on 7th December, 1946. But the Maharaja’s personal appeal through a messenger, at his residence in Madras, forced him to rejoin as Diwan on 20th December 1946.45 His resignation was obviously due to the following reasons: 1) His concern about the possible and ominous consequences in the pursuit of his idea of Independent Travancore, 2) He had realized that only if he relinquished the official position he could convince the people that he was not interested in self-aggrandisement, and this would enable him to influence the discussions in Delhi about the future of the Princely States. He might have also thought that he would get enough time and freedom to speak and write about the concerns of the Travancore Royal Family and the State. His interest in literary activity for which he had been collecting materials for the last forty

44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
years also forced him to leave the job.\textsuperscript{46} In his request to the Maharaja to permit him to relinquish the office of the Diwan this point was very much made clear. His resignation was subsequently accepted and a press communiqué was released.\textsuperscript{47}

**Declaration of Independence for Travancore**

In British India lord Mountbatten replaced Lord Wavell as Viceroy and he assumed office on 24\textsuperscript{th} March, 1947. He was sent to India by the British Government with definite and clear instructions to make all possible and necessary arrangements for the transfer of power "in a manner that will best ensure the future happiness and prosperity of India."\textsuperscript{48} On his arrival he held deliberations with leaders of both the Indian National Congress and the Muslim league. These discussions finally led him to the conclusion that the Cabinet Mission Plan as such was not workable and in the given political situations as the Indian National Congress vehemently stood for a united or unpartitioned India and the Muslim League for creation of an independent Pakistan or a Divided India. He, however, succeeded in settling the issue with them and after final discussion with the Home Government, published certain definite proposals on 2\textsuperscript{nd} June, 1947. Named as the "Mountbatten Plan", it proposed the

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{47} The letter reads: "For partly sentimental and partly religious reasons, I am asking Your Highness' permission to relinquish my office on 14th January instead of January 1st (the beginning of Utharayana). As I am proposing to devote myself to literary and philosophic work for the rest of my life, the dates may be symbolic." \textit{Ibid.}

division of India into two independent dominions, India and Pakistan and the official transfer of power to take place on August 15, 1947, instead of June 1948, as declared by Clement Atlee earlier. People with some exceptions, throughout India welcomed the declaration, though with reservations and disappointment about partition. Thanks to the efforts already undertaken by Sardar Vallabhai Patel and V.P. Menon, majority of the Princely States had already agreed to join the Indian Union without much threat or compulsion. In the changed political situations larger States like Travancore and Hyderabad decided to declare independence, and talked of entering into treaty relations with other States.

Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer, who all along tried all his efforts for an Independent Travancore and waiting for an opportune moment to declare it open, found this as the most favourable time and declared the independence of Travancore. On the 11th June 1947 the Diwan announced in a press conference at Bhakti Vilas, Trivandrum, the official residence of the Diwan that, “Travancore would assume and maintain an independent status after the transfer of power by the British Government and the lapse of paramountcy.” A second press conference was also held at the V.J.T. Hall, Trivandrum on 25th June, 1947 in which the Diwan refuted the suggestion that

49. R.C. Majumdar, op.cit., pp. 805-806.
50. V.P. Menon, Towards the Integration of Indian States, (New Delhi, 1969), p.76.
Travancore being a small State has no right to claim independence. He compared its population and revenue with those of other princely States of comparable size and British Indian Provinces and also with some Dominions of the British Commonwealth and strongly argued that Travancore with a population of seven million and a total revenue of 9¼ to 9½ crores of rupees at that time had every right to claim an independent and sovereign status. He also declared that Travancore would have joined a United India, but now that the country was going to be divided the State would not join the Constituent Assembly of a Divided India. He stressed at the press conference that the decision on Independent Travancore was taken by none other than the Maharaja himself and strongly repudiated the suggestions and arguments of it being the decision by someone else and described such talk as 'Calumnious and defamatory'.

In order to establish commercial transactions he decided to enter into treaty relations with Pakistan. He also expressed his Government's readiness to co-operate

52. This was not the stand taken by Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer during the period immediately prior to the withdrawal of resignation, and re-assumption of duties of Diwan at the Maharaja's request on December 20, 1946. In a letter addressed to the Maharaja on December 18, 1946 he said "If Mr. Jinnah stands out of the Constituent Assembly and continues to stand out until and unless Pakistan is created, that is no ground in my opinion for the non-co-operation of the States with the Constituent Assembly." Evidently he had changed his stand after having taken up the active advocacy of the course of Independent Travancore in the interests of the Royal Family after his return to the State. File No. Ibid.

53. Ibid.
with the Government functioning in India to evolve co-ordinated and harmonious policies as to matters of common concern. In support of this announcement he cited the proposed partition of India and the constitution of two dominions under the aegis of the British crown. On 18\textsuperscript{th} July 1947 the Maharaja issued a Royal Proclamation creating an Independent Travancore which reads: “All the elements necessary for a happy and national existence was present and I feel confident that with the blessings of ‘Providence’ and the co-operation of my people, Travancore will realize its destiny as a Sovereign State working in close collaboration with the rest of India in all matters of common concern.”\textsuperscript{54}

The Diwan gave undue importance and publicity to this Proclamation, though he was aware that the people were not with him and strongly stood for integration with the Indian Union. Yet he took it as a challenge and left no stone unturned to win the game. In support of his move and to win the co-operation the people he embarked on an active propaganda campaign. He called upon the people to rally round the Maharaja of Travancore\textsuperscript{55} and set in motion the propaganda machinery of the State administration. Strict instructions were issued to public servants to take full part in what he termed as ‘a matter of life and death to the State’,\textsuperscript{56} and employed the police.

\textsuperscript{54} File No.196/C.S./1947/Political, Cellar Records, KGS, TVM. Also see R. Ramakrishnan Nair, \textit{Constitutional Experiments in Kerala}, (Trivandrum, 1964), pp.22-23.

\textsuperscript{55} T.I.L., Vol. VII, No.11, July 1947, p. 44.

\textsuperscript{56} \textit{The Hindu}, 13th June, 1947, p.6.
revenue and excise officers to canvas support.\textsuperscript{57} He made an appeal to the people to forget about individual and communal differences and to stand together with the Maharaja in this time of ‘crisis’.\textsuperscript{58} He held a number of press conferences subsequently in which he exhorted the people to raise slogans such as ‘Independence or Perish’, ‘Sacrifice for Independence’, ‘Oppose Violence and Revolution’, ‘Die for Independence of King and People’, etc.\textsuperscript{59} The Diwan was very well aware that the Travancore State Congress and majority of the people of the State were against his move but wanted to create an impression that his move had the approval of the people at large and that the Ruler and his people stood united in their endeavour to be masters in their own houses.\textsuperscript{60} He concluded his announcement by saying: “At this juncture the path of prudence, the path of safety, the path of glory, the path of achievement, the path of realisation, is the path of independence of Travancore.”\textsuperscript{61}

In pursuance of his policy Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer held a discussion with Mohammed Ali Jinnah, who agreed to receive a trade agent of Travancore in Pakistan on its establishment as an independent dominion.\textsuperscript{62} The Government of Travancore

\textsuperscript{57} Pouraprabha, 24th June 1947, p.3

\textsuperscript{58} T.I.L., \textit{op.cit.}

\textsuperscript{59} C. Narayana Pillai, \textit{Thiruvithamcore Swathantra Samara Charithram} (Mal), (Trivandrum, 1972), p.1159. Also see File No. 196/1947/C.S./Political Cellar Records, KGS, TVM. This file contains very detailed recommendations and instructions for making the Independent Travancore a success.

\textsuperscript{60} \textit{The Hindu}, 17th June 1947, p.6.

\textsuperscript{61} T.I.L. \textit{op.cit.}, pp.17-18.

\textsuperscript{62} \textit{Ibid.}
nominated G.S.A. Karim Saheb, a retired Inspector-General of Police, as the representative in Pakistan and directed him to take charge of the new assignment after the laps of Paramountcy.\footnote{The Hindu, 22nd June, 1947, p.7.} Besides, for negotiating arrangements with India, he nominated G. Paramaswaran Pillai, a retired Chief Secretary to the Government, as the representative at Delhi.\footnote{Ibid, 28th June 1947, p. 5} He sent trade agents to the Muslim States of Bhopal and Hyderabad.\footnote{File No.368/C.S./1947/Political, Cellar Records, KGS, TVM} He also made an announcement on 12\textsuperscript{th} June 1947 on behalf of the Nizam of Hyderabad that Hyderabad would set itself as an independent State.\footnote{File No.370/C.S./1947/Political, Cellar Records, KGS, TVM} When Travancore was invited by the Government of India to join the Constituent Assembly convened early in June 1947,\footnote{H.V.R. Iyengar was the Secretary of the Constituent Assembly of India, New Delhi. He wrote a letter to the Diwan of Travancore in the Constituent Assembly. File No..238/1947/C.S., Cellar Records, KGS, TVM} the Diwan conveyed the decision of the State of Travancore not to join the Constituent Assembly and participate in its proceedings.\footnote{Letter dated 13th June 1947 from Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer, Trivandrum to the Secretary, Constituent Assembly of India, New Delhi. See for details File No.238/1947/C.S., Cellar Records, KGS, TVM}

**Independent Travancore Move Opposed**

The declaration of Independent Travancore and the advocacy of the cause by the Diwan Sri C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer naturally had strong reactions not only in

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64. *Ibid*, 28th June 1947, p. 5

65. File No.368/C.S./1947/Political, Cellar Records, KGS, TVM

66. File No.370/C.S./1947/Political, Cellar Records, KGS, TVM.

67. H.V.R. Iyengar was the Secretary of the Constituent Assembly of India, New Delhi. He wrote a letter to the Diwan of Travancore in the Constituent Assembly. File No..238/1947/C.S., Cellar Records, KGS, TVM

68. Letter dated 13th June 1947 from Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer, Trivandrum to the Secretary, Constituent Assembly of India, New Delhi. See for details File No.238/1947/C.S., Cellar Records, KGS, TVM
Travancore but also throughout the whole of India. The Diwan claimed that the move had full support from all sections of the people of Travancore and, therefore, it should be taken as a move towards the fulfilment of the aspirations of the public at large. At the same time he was aware that he stood for an unpopular cause as is evidenced from his own Statements communicated to Sardar Vallabhai Patel in a letter a couple of years later.69 No doubt he succeeded in obtaining support from leaders like R. Sankar, Barrister A.K. Pillai, Thangal Kunju Musaliyar, A.A. Rahman etc., who so far stood with the State Congress and the reason for their shift remains a mystery.

Even though this was the case there were strong protests from all quarters to the stand taken by the Travancore administration. Mention may be made about the N.S.S. leader Mannath Padmanabhan, who had stood all along with Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer for the Independent Travancore cause. He isolated the Diwan and joined with the State Congress and made a fighting speech at Muthukulam on 25th May 1947. He was subsequently arrested on June 14, 1947, tried and sentenced to two years simple imprisonment and a fine of Rs.1000/.70

This move of the Diwan also drew the attention of leaders of the Indian National Congress. They considered the attempt of the Diwan as ‘unpatriotic’ and expressed deep concern that ‘India would be split into fragments.’71

70. V.P. Menon, *op. cit.*, p. 87.
State People’s Conference which met at New Delhi on 11th and 12th June 1947 passed a resolution protesting against the action of the Travancore administration, and condemned it as ‘being undemocratic and reactionary’ and demanded the Government to revoke the ‘disastrous step’.

The All India Congress Committee passed a unanimous resolution on 15th June 1947 that “The Congress cannot admit the right of any State in India to declare its independence and to live in isolation from the rest of India. That would be denial of the course of Indian history, and of the objectives of the Indian people today.”

The resolution marked a remarkable change in the policy of the Indian National Congress towards princely States. So far it followed a policy of non-intervention in the Political affairs of the latter while the Diwan’s action forced them to adopt a policy of active intervention. Moreover, it also exhorted the people of Travancore to intensify their political agitation against the Diwan and his actions. This was the first time the Indian National Congress gave such a call to the people of Travancore.

National leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru also condemned the stand of Travancore as unpatriotic and anti-national. Nehru declared the States which refused to join the Indian Union as ‘hostile’ and also warned them that strong and stringent action would be taken against those States which had declared


74. Ibid.
independence. He categorically stated that "We will not recognise any independence for any State in India. Further any recognition of such independence by any foreign power, which ever it may be and wherever it may be, will be considered as unfriendly act."\textsuperscript{75} Gandhiji also asserted that such a declaration was ‘tantamount to a declaration of war against the free millions of India.’ In a post-prayer meeting on 13\textsuperscript{th} June 1947 Gandhiji appealed to all the princes in India to join the Constituent Assembly without delay and warned them that “Times have changed, and if the princes do not take time by the fore-lock they would cease to be”\textsuperscript{76} Pattabhi Sitaramayya issued a Statement on 9\textsuperscript{th} June 1947 and “posed the question as to what constituted Travancore independence beyond an ‘autonomous status’ for the State.” He also said that “the only difference is one of phraseology and approach and I ardently hope that Travancore will clear the position, remove the misunderstanding and strengthen itself with the support of its people, throwing open the portals of self-Government through agreed gateways.”\textsuperscript{77} N. Gopalaswami Iyyangar and Jayaprakash Narayan also severely criticised the Diwan’s action. Ambedkar Stated that “The only way by which the Indian States can free themselves from Paramountcy is by bringing about a merger of sovereignty and suzerainty; this can happen only when the Indian States join the Indian Union as constituent units.”\textsuperscript{78} The Government of India even contemplated upon serious steps

\textsuperscript{75} The Hindu., op. cit.

\textsuperscript{76} A.S. Sreedhara Menon, op. cit.

\textsuperscript{77} The Times of India, 18th June, 1947.

\textsuperscript{78} The Hindu, 24th June 1947.
in the form of economic boycott\textsuperscript{79} and issued orders for taking a census of all Travancore subjects who were employed by it either as officers or subordinates in their departments with a view to deciding what policy they should adopt towards Travancore subjects.\textsuperscript{80} The Associated Press of India reported on June 22\textsuperscript{nd} 1947 that the Central Government were also examining certain steps to be taken against Travancore which are of a serious nature and may lead to a crisis in the relations between the Travancore State and the Indian Dominion.\textsuperscript{81} Various religious and social organisations in the State also came out with strong protest. The council of the Marthoma Church, the All Kerala Catholic Congress, The Nair Service Society etc adopted resolutions condemning the decision of the administration.\textsuperscript{82}

Though strong protests came in from various quarters C.P. Ramaswami Aiyyer obtained support from the All India Muslim League and the All India Hindu Mahasabha. Muhammad Ali Jinnah welcomed the decision of Travancore to send its representatives to Pakistan. He hoped this would improve the trade and commercial relations between these two independent and sovereign States. In a telegram dated June 20, 1947 he informed the Diwan that “Pakistan will be glad to have your representative and will be ready to establish relationship with Travancore which

\textsuperscript{79}Ibid. Also see A. Sreedhara Menon, \textit{op. cit}

\textsuperscript{80}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{81}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{82}File No. 26/1947/C.S./Political, Cellar Records, KGS, TVM.
will be mutual advantage. Travancore has my best wishes for its prosperity and welfare."83

V.D. Savarkar, President of All India Hindu Mahasabha also extended his support to Travancore in a telegram on June 20th 1947. He stated that “In the very interest of Akhand Hindusthan itself, I strongly support the Maharaja and the far-sighted and courageous determination to declare the independence of our Hindu State of Travancore. The Nizam has already proclaimed his independence and other Muslim States are likely to do so. Hindu States bold enough to do so have the same rights.”84

The Diwan found another excuse for his Independent Travancore when a movement was started for the unification of Kerala State. In 1946, the demand for the formation of a linguistic State of Kerala for the Malayalam speaking people by merging Cochin, Travancore and British Malabar, became a strong political issue. The Diwan found in this movement a serious threat to his policy but the political developments in Cochin and the formation of the Tamilnadu Congress relieved him of his concern. The Maharaja of Cochin announced in the Cochin Assembly on 29th July 1946 his intention “to work towards merging Cochin in a United Kerala Province.”85

This statement had mixed response as the State Congress, Communists and other

83. Ibid.
84. Ibid.
political parties supported it while the Tamilnadu Congress vehemently opposed it.\textsuperscript{86} It was argued that Tamilians constituted 1/3rd of the total population of Travancore and any attempt to integrate Travancore with Kerala will be detrimental to their interests. M.N. Janardhanan Pillai and V.S. Krishna Pillai moved an adjournment motion in the Sri Mulam Assembly and argued that the Maharaja's statement had created serious anxiety and alarm among the Tamil citizens of Tovala, Agastheeswaram, Kalkulam, Vilvancode, Shenkottah, and Devikulam taluks of Travancore.\textsuperscript{87} Linguistic affinity of the people, constituting 1/3rd of the population, to the Madras Province was cited as the main hindrance for the formation of United Kerala. The Diwan stated in the Assembly that “one of the main grounds . . . which are militating against the entertainment of the idea of a Kerala province comprising Travancore is this very matter. Obviously in Travancore one third of the population speaks Tamil and equally obviously those people are more akin linguistically to Tamilnadu than to Kerala. Therefore, from Trivandrum to Cape Comerin the people of Travancore will, if the underlying idea of the Cochin scheme is adopted, become part of the Tamilnadu province and obey the orders of the Governor of the Province of Tamilnadu. Then there is the area from Trivandrum to Parur and that portion will come under the Kerala province envisaged in Cochin . . . The Kerala province idea is therefore, unthinkable and would involve a partition of Travancore. Hence this

\textsuperscript{86} File No.84/1946/C.S. Cellar Records, KGS, TVM.

\textsuperscript{87} Proceedings of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly, Vol. XXVIII, No. 9, August 1, 1946, p.824.
Government made up their minds not to be a party to any Kerala province. Clearly Travancore cannot join the Kerala without also joining the Tamil province. Unless there is a partition of Travancore for the purpose of putting one-half or one third into Tamilnadu and the rest in the Kerala province, the scheme cannot be got through. That is why we emphatically negatived the proposition.88

The remarks of the Diwan was intended not against a partition of Travancore but a united Independent Travancore which he had entertained in his mind for long, though he had not expressed it in public till its declaration on 11th June 1947.89

Even though the Diwan severely opposed integration, the Malayalees who formed the majority in Travancore supported the Cochin scheme of merger. All political parties – The Travancore State Congress, The Cochin State Praja Mandal, and the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee offered their unstinted support for the realisation of this aim.90 Large scale propaganda meetings were held in different parts of the States of Travancore and Cochin and British Malabar and on 26th and 27th April a meeting was also convened by the United Kerala Convention at Trichur with K.Kelappan in the Chair, who was then the President of the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee. About 300 delegates participated in the meeting and T.M. Varghese

88. Ibid., No.7, July 30, 1946, p.825.

89. Press Note by the Government of Travancore, 11th June, 19747, for details see File No.D.Dis. 268/1947/C.S./Political, Cellar Records, KGS, TVM.

90. See for details File No.16/1946/C.S./Political, Cellar Record, KGS, TVM.
moved a resolution that “This convention of the peoples’ representatives of Kerala proclaim that Indian States such as Travancore and Cochin and the British Indian areas including Mahe should be considered as integral parts of Kerala on geographical, cultural, linguistic and economic basis and should form a separate self governing unit under the Indian Union. The administrative power in this unit should be vested in the hands of the people.”\textsuperscript{91} A Working Committee was also constituted consisting of fifteen members for propaganda work and to organise the people for the formation of a United Kerala. The Maharaja of Cochin in whose territory the convention was held, agreed to act as the patron of the United Kerala Movement.\textsuperscript{92} The express willingness of the Maharaja of Cochin to act as the patron of the United Kerala Movement shows the ‘Great mind of a Great Man’ He was aware that he was going to lose power of administration in this effort and is going to be an ordinary citizen in his State after independence, but supported people’s cause and always stood with them throughout, unlike Travancore. This also suggests that the Maharaja of Cochin was not power crazy unlike the Maharaja of Travancore, who could not tolerate any loss of position or power and desired to retain it at any cost. The Cochin Raja respected popular sentiments while his counterpart in Travancore refused. However, this aspect of the nature of these rulers has not been analysed and the Ruler of Cochin given his credit so far by historians.

\textsuperscript{91} See File No.D.Dis/490/1947/C.S./Political, Cellar Records, KGS, TVM.

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid.
The Tamil Population in Travancore had been very much alarmed and concerned about the developments in Travancore. They felt a sense of isolation in Travancore and for the redressal of their grievances an All Travancore Tamilian Congress was formed as early as December 1945 by some educated Tamilians of South Travancore which was subsequently renamed as the Travancore Tamilnad Congress. S. Natheniel an advocate of Nagarcoil, was its first president. Its aim and objective were to organise the Tamil population of the State to protect their political interests. Since its formation the Party had been involved in organising meetings, taking out demonstrations and holding conferences throughout the State explaining their case and cause and tried hard to obtain popular sympathy and support of the people at large. When the Maharaja announced his stand the President of the Travancore Tamilnad Congress stated that “The Maharaja of Cochin has, by his Statement, unconsciously thrown out a challenge to the inhabitants of Tamilnad in Travancore and in British India and generally to the linguistic minorities in the State. If the Maharaja of Cochin is anxious to preserve his culture and language, the

94. It may be noted that the Tamilnad Congress characterised the Travancore State Congress as a party of the Malayalees and demanded the creation of a Tamil district in Travancore with the attainment of Responsible Government. Bitter rivalry and difference of opinion existed between the State Congress and the Tamilnad Congress especially in Tamil dominant areas in Travancore. Moreover in 1948 and 1954 the Tamilnad Congress organised popular agitations to attain their aims, as against the aims and programmes of the Travancore State Congress.
Tamilians of Travancore are equally anxious to preserve their culture and language. This statement marked a beginning of a separatist tendency among the Tamil speaking population in the State and a warning to the promoters and supporters of a United Kerala. It also gave clear indication that the Tamilians of Travancore will not join in any move or agitation in this regard and stand only for union with Tamilnad. However, these developments gave Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyer a safe position to take a firm stand on Independent Travancore, as his move will not affect, in no way, the rights and status of the Tamil speaking community in the State. The efforts and agitations of the Travancore Tamilnadu Congress lost its significance when the Diwan of Travancore announced the ‘Independence of Travancore’, and they felt considerably relieved of their anxiety. They also lost a strong ground for their demands and agitations.

Though the main ground was lost, the Travancore Tamilnadu Congress did not remain idle. They decided to press their demand for a separate district in Travancore,

95. In a sense Tamil separatism had its roots in the activities of the Tamil Nadu Congress. It began perhaps with the demand for a separate district in Travancore and manifested itself in it statement that they were equally anxious to preserve their culture and language (as that of Cochin). The Raja of Cochin agreed for a United Kerala not because of any intention ‘to retain and culture of the Malayalees’ but the Tamil speaking population of Travancore who were more orthodox, interpreted it for their own ends.

and adopted an independent course of action, to show that they were not working as a part of the State Congress and will not co-operate with the State Congress in their activities. The Working Committee of the Tamil Nadu Congress met at Nagarcoil on 18th July 1947 and resolved to start direct action against the Diwan’s declaration of independent Travancore. An Action Committee of six members was also constituted.

Leaders travelled throughout the State and outside and explained their cause. On 31st August 1947 the President of the Tamilnadu Congress Stated that “unless the Travancore State Congress made an unequivocal declaration conceding the right of self determination to the Tamilians of Travancore, it could not win their confidence. The Travancore State Congress did not represent the Tamil speaking population of the State and if it were to reflect the will of the State’s people as a whole, it should be reorganised so as to consist of two autonomous units – one representing the Tamils and the other representing the Malayalam speaking population.”

He also made it clear that his organisation while fighting for self determination, will not stand in the way of agitation for Responsible Government in Travancore by the State Congress. However the Tamilnadu Congress failed to get enough support to launch agitations and, therefore, could not implement its programmes.

97. P.S. Moni, Thiru Thanizhar Iyakkam (Tamil), (Nagarcoil, 1956), p.31. Also see File No. 268/1947/C.S./Political, Cellar Records, KGS, TVM.

98. The Hindu, August 3, 1947. Also see File No. Ibid.

99. Ibid.
The proposed agitations of the Tamilnadu Congress, though weak, divided the Travancore polity into two separate groups working in opposite directions and, therefore, at least for a short period, weakened the State Congress. It also deepened the political crisis of the State at a time when a strong and united action, was required for the people against the Diwan’s declaration of Independence. People realized the seriousness of the situation and showed “more enthusiasm in political matters than before.”

The Communist Party which kept itself away from political agitations after the Punnapra Vayalar incidents also promised to help the State Congress. The Congress also obtained support from the Nair Service Society. Thus the political situation of the State turned favourable to the State Congress for a renewed agitation. With support from all sections of people it carried out intensive propaganda campaign. Pattom A. Thanu Pillai exhorted the people to hold meetings and pass resolutions and observe ‘Constituent Assembly Day’ on 13th June 1947. He also requested the people to react against Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer’s negative stand with regard to the participation in the Constituent Assembly, and urged the Government to elect representatives to the Constituent Assembly.

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100. File No.226/1947/C.S. Cellar Records, KGS, TVM.
102. Ibid., 11th June 1947, File No.268/1947/C.S. Cellar Records, KGS, TVM.
103. Ibid.
Thus when the Travancore State Congress stiffened its stand against the Government and was determined to intensify its agitations and called for a referendum to settle the issue of Travancore joining the Constituent Assembly and the Indian Union, the State of Travancore was again in the throes of a political crisis. State Congress leaders like Pattom A. Thanu Pillai shifted to Ernakulam in Cochin State and even thought of setting up of a parallel Government to agitate against Independent Travancore and ensure the accession of Travancore to the Constituent Assembly and the Indian Union.

These political developments again forced the Government to take suppressive measures and put down the agitation in all ways possible. The police was instructed to concentrate their attention on important places and to break up meetings and to arrest the leaders and to proceed against them. Accordingly, the district magistrates banned meetings and processions for a period of fifteen days from 12th June 1947.\textsuperscript{104} Government also invoked provisions of the Emergency Powers Act 1946 by which no public procession could be held for a period of six months with effect from 29th June, 1947 without written permission of the concerned district magistrates.\textsuperscript{105}

The ban orders of the Government forced the State Congress leadership to shift their centre of activity to Ernakulam in Cochin State and a State Congress camp started

\textsuperscript{104} File No.268/1947/C.S. Political, Cellar Records KGS, TVM.

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid. Also see The Hindu, 20th June, 1947.
functioning there in June 1947. Propaganda materials were printed by the Communists at Trichur and Ernakulam and these were taken to Travancore by couriers appointed for this purpose.\textsuperscript{106} Excise and Labour Commissioners were given strict instruction to take necessary action in this regard and seize all such literature at centres.\textsuperscript{107}

By this things moved to a situation that a rapprochement between State Congress was inevitable. State Congress now advocated direct action and called upon the people to launch Civil Disobedience and exhorted them to be prepared for a 'mighty conflict'.\textsuperscript{108} They chalked out an seven point programme and placed it before the people. The course of action included:

a) To disobey all prohibitory orders;
b) To organise meetings and processions on all days;
c) To face lathi-charge and shooting through non-violence;
d) To defy all possible civil laws;
e) To deny cooperation to all the programmes of the Government;
f) Not to attend educational institutions by students and courts by advocates;
g) To act in each stage according to the programmes, directions and instructions given by the leadership from outside.

\textsuperscript{106} File No.425/1947C.S. Cellar Records, KGS, TVM.
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{108} File No.278/C.S/1947/Political, Cellar Records, KGS, TVM.
State wide publicity and propaganda were given to the Seven Point Programme of the State Congress by secretly distributing undated pamphlets, under the caption ‘Samaram Enkil Samaram’. It of course had its results. People enthusiastically responded to the call of the State Congress and innumerable meetings were held in different parts of the State defying prohibitory orders. Very often the supporters of the Diwan though few in number, tried to disrupt the meeting. They raised slogans supporting ‘Independent Travancore’ and the meetings organised at Thodupuzha on 9th and Pala on 13th July 1947 were disrupted. The planned policy of suppression of Government went to the extent that at Thodupuzha, anti-Congressmen of about 500 hired by the Government, went through the streets cheering the Maharaja and the Royal Family and raising slogans in support of ‘Independent Travancore.’ They passed resolutions criticising and condemning the actions and policies of the State Congress. The involvement of the Government was very clear from the opinion of the District Magistrate Kottayam. It became almost clear that the involvement of Government will lead to bloodshed.

109. Ibid.
110. Ibid.
111. File No.508/1947C.S. Cellar Records, KGS, TVM.
112. Ibid., B. Paramu, District Magistrate, Kottayam in his letter dated 16th July 1947, addressed to the A.S. to the Diwan opined that the meetings were “very successful ones.” This is a clear indication of the involvement of the administration in this case and that these programmes were planned and directed by the administration.
The advocates of ‘Independent Travancore’ convened a meeting on 11th July 1947 at V.J.T. Hall, Trivandrum and pandemonium broke out when speakers supported Independent Travancore and State Congressites opposed it. At Alleppey the students joining hands with the State Congress workers took out a procession defying ban orders and consequently the police resorted to lathi charge and disbursed the crowd. Against this action of the police a complete strike was organised on July 15th 1947 by the students of University College, Law College and Ayurveda college, Trivandrum and several high schools in Trivandrum. On 13th July the State Congress held a meeting at Petta in Trivandrum city. When opponents of the Travancore State Congress, in their bid to disrupt the meeting, attempted to raise certain questions to the speakers and the State Congressites opposed it, there followed, shouting, of slogans supporting ‘Independent Travancore’ and the ‘State Congress’. Police resorted to lathi charge and firing in which three persons including a student of 13 years by name Rajendran were killed.

In spite of the troubled and tense political situation in the State the Government issued a press note on 15th July 1947 stating that “There is no longer any reason for further discussion or controversy regarding what is now an accomplished fact, viz. the

113. File No.268/1947C.S/Political, Cellar Records, KGS, TVM.
114. File No.508/1947C.S. Cellar Records, KGS, TVM.
115. Ibid.
independence of Travancore.” The administration by this press note intended to reassert its earlier stand of declaration of independence to Travancore. Adding fuel to the fire the Maharaja Sri Chithra Tirunal in an address broadcast over the Thiruvananthapuram Radio on July 18, 1947, the date on which the Indian Independence Act was passed by the British Parliament, declared that with effect from August 15, 1947, "Travancore will resume its independence and sovereignty in full measure."  

The declaration of 'independence for Travancore' under the guidance of Sir C.P. Rameswami Aiyer and the subsequent political events in the State represented a turning point in the history of the State. It gave an opportunity to the State Congress to strengthen their hold among the masses. The Diwan’s idea to exploit the terms of the Cabinet Mission Plan went wrong in Travancore and he failed to get popular support in the State. He became unpopular and had to face a strong and united agitation on the issue. The Congress left no stone unturned to champion the cause and finally succeeded in its endeavour.

The Interim Government and Indian States

The 'Independent Travancore' move of the Travancore administration and the subsequent developments in and outside the State synchronised with some important


developments at New Delhi. The Indian National Congress was trying its best to preserve the integrity of India. The actions of some Native States like Travancore and Hyderabad caused much concern to the leaders of the Congress and Government in Delhi. The plan of some States to enter into treaties with Pakistan and of a few others to assert their independence forced these leaders to think in terms of creating ‘an organised bond between the Government of India and the States’\textsuperscript{118} For this purpose, they decided to gain popular support throughout India in favour of considering the States which are geographically contiguous to India as legally and morally part of it. They were also anxious to complete this accession of Indian States to the Indian Union, if possible, before August 15, 1947.

To deal with the issues arising between the Government of India and the Indian States, it was decided by the Interim Government to create a new States Department by the middle of June 1947. Communicating this decision to Sir C.P.Ramaswami Aiyer, the Resident of Travancore Edwards, informed him that the following arrangements have been suggested by the Government of India.

1) That the States should agree to the location by the successor Governments of their own Agents in State Territory and/or;

\textsuperscript{118} V.P. Menon, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 92.
2) That each State or group of States appoint a fully authorised representative or representatives to be located at the head-quarters of the appropriate Government to provide information, to elicit replies and to secure co-operation.119

The Travancore Government rejected the first proposal and wrote to Col. Edwards that "The Travancore Government do not agree to the location by successor Governments of India of their own agents in Travancore territory until and unless negotiations for the purpose are initiated and carried out by mutual consent between this Government and the Domain Governments after they came into being."120 The second proposal was accepted and G. Parameswaran Pillai was nominated as the Representative of Travancore in Delhi.121

In July 1947 Government of India initiated crucial discussions with the Government of Travancore with a view to softening its rigid stand on independence. The States Department was placed under the charge of Sardar Vallabhai Patel with V.P. Menon, the Constitutional Advisor to the Viceroy, as Secretary. Sardar Vallabhai Patel appealed to the princes to join the Constituent Assembly and accede to the Union on three subjects of Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications. On 12th July 1947 the Resident informed the Diwan of Travancore that a meeting with the representatives of the States and the States Department would be held in Delhi on 25th July 1947 under

120. Ibid., p.241.
121. Ibid.
the presidency of the Viceroy. In an earnest attempt to render the negotiations with the States meaningful, V.P. Menon met some of the Rulers and their advisors and discussed the issues with them at his residence on 10th July 1947. V.P. Menon also informed the Diwan that

when on the 15th of August the States get back their sovereignty, the 500 and odd States will be literally released from the centre and will have no contact either with the centre or among themselves. This is too dangerous a position and if the transitional period is not safeguarded the result may be complete chaos. Transitions are always risky and in India especially at present great danger of unsocial elements rearing their heads; unless they are checked at once, it may soon be too late to do so.123

He also assured that “What we ask for is only executive and legislative authority in these matters. In other respects, the sovereignty of the States (which past conditions did not allow them to exercise in full) is completely preserved. Further your course of action as regards adhesion to future constitution is in no way prejudiced by the present accession.”124 Again on July 20, 1947 V.P. Menon wrote to the Diwan enclosing a

122. V.P. Menon, op. cit., pp.102-103.
123. File No.121/1947/C.S./Political, Cellar Records, KGS, TVM.
124. Ibid.
copy of the Draft Instrument of Accession and informed his readiness to come to Trivandrum at any time for discussions. But before the receipt of the letter Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer left Trivandrum to Delhi on the request of the Viceroy Lord Mountbatten for talks with him. Copies of V.P. Menon’s letters were made available to the Diwan at the Travancore House, Delhi.\textsuperscript{125} The Diwan replied on 20\textsuperscript{th} July 1947 which reads:

\begin{quote}
Coming from a sincere well wisher of the States and of myself in particular like yourself, your comments will have my closest attention. I may add, however, that the time at my disposal for studying the matter and for giving the close and detached consideration to it, which it needs, for consulting my advisors and for discussing the subject with His Highness has been very short. Indeed as I have seen the Draft Accession Treaty today (less than 24 hours before my meeting with His Excellency) and as His Highness has not seen it, you will readily concede that I cannot give you an answer straightaway. Let me conclude again, as I began, by assuring you of the most earnest and meticulous attention to every sentence of your letter and to the terms of the Draft Treaty of Accession.\textsuperscript{126}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{125} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{126} Ibid.
In the talks with Lord Mountbatten in Delhi on 21st and 22nd July 1947 the Diwan mainly raised issues contained in V.P. Menon’s letter of July 14, 1947. He asserted that all treaties and agreements entered into by Travancore with the British would come to an end on 15th August 1947 and that Travancore had already denounced the Inter Portal Convention and the Cochin Harbour Agreement. Regarding the Periyar Lease of 1886 the Diwan “indicated that was the way in which Paramountcy was working in the past and pointed out that the kind of Paramountcy under any disguise cannot further be agreed to.”127 More interesting was his comment on the accession of Travancore to the Union. He reasserted his stand that under no circumstances Travancore would send its representatives to the Legislature or Executive of Dominion and insisted that the references by him and others to a strong Centre and India remaining a Dominion were on behalf of a United India.128 However, with regard to Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications the Diwan agreed that certain loose relationship would have to be established with the successor Governments, particularly with India for geographical reasons.129

It was at this crucial stage that V.P. Menon intervened. It was left to him to devise a formula that would satisfy the requirements of both the Centre and the States. The viceroy, though agreed to most of the contentions of the Diwan, stated that his

127. Ibid., p.248.
128. Ibid.
129. Ibid.
difficulties to face other Princely States at the Conference on 25th July, 1947 and that they would not agree to have a different status to the State of Travancore. It suggested that the Viceroy was making it clear that Travancore cannot expect to claim a special treatment in its treaty obligations with the British. During the talks the Diwan was convinced that the idea of independent State of Travancore entering into treaty relations with the new Government of India on a footing of equality was not within the range of practical politics and therefore, he finally agreed to the accession of Travancore to the Union subject to the final approval by the Maharaja. On his request the Viceroy gave him a formal letter on 22nd July 1947 addressed to the Maharaja explaining the whole position. The letter was handed over to the Maharaja on the same day and the Diwan advised the Maharaja to accede to the Indian union without delay.

On 23rd July 1947 the Government of Travancore informed the public about the deliberations of the Diwan with the Viceroy at Delhi through a press note and Stated that “The final results of these discussions which are still in the confidential stage will be published as soon as possible.”\(^{130}\) The Maharaja did not give his consent immediately as he wanted more time to take a final decision.

In the meantime a special meeting was held at Delhi on 25th July 1947 which was attended by Rulers, Diwans and other representatives of States. The Viceroy endorsed the views of Sardar Vallabhai Patel regarding accession of Princely States to the Indian Union and called upon the Princes to solve the problem relating to States on

\(^{130}\) Travancore Information and Listener, September, 1947.
a friendly and co-operative basis. He Stated: “Now the Indian Independence Act releases the States from all their obligations to the Crown. The States have complete freedom – technically and logically they are independent . . . . and are theoretically free to link their future with whichever dominion they may care. But . . . there are certain geographical compulsions which cannot be avoided. Out of something like 565 States, the majority are irretrievably linked geographically with the Dominion of India. The problem therefore, is of far greater magnitude with the Dominion of India than is with Pakistan.”

The sincere and earnest efforts of Sardar Vallabhai Patel, V.P. Menon, the Viceroy and other leaders of the Indian National Congress and the pressure from the people compelled most of the Native States to accede to the Indian Union before August 15, 1947.

The decision of the Diwan and Maharaja to proclaim an Independent Travancore had already alienated them from the people of the State. The Travancore State Congress Committee with support of all India leadership, met at Alleppey on 22nd July 1947 and reviewed the political condition in India in general and Travancore in particular and decided to intensify agitations to achieve integration. Exhorting all sections of the people to participate in it the committee placed before the Government the following demands: That,


“1) Full Responsible Government be introduced immediately;

2) The Diwan be forthwith relieved of his office’

3) The State of Travancore to join the Constituent Assembly and the Indian Union;

4) An interim Government composed of popular representatives be immediately established with the duty of taking steps to convene a Constituent Assembly based on adult franchise to frame a constitution for Travancore.”

It was also decided to start direct action from August 1, 1947, and Pattom A.Thanu Pillai was chosen as ‘dictator’ to take necessary steps in this regard.

Meanwhile an attempt was made on the life of the Diwan, Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer on 25th July 1947, while attending the Swathi Thirunal Centenary Celebrations at the Swahi Tirunal Music Academy, Trivandrum. The Press note issued by the Government described the event thus: “...... The Diwan was leaving the Pandal after the music performance and when he neared the entrance where his car was waiting for him, one man rushed at him with a sword stick and hit him on the neck and the fingers of the hand, which was raised to ward off the blows causing some injuries. Fortunately, his life is safe ...... The assailant has escaped. Investigation is proceeding.”

The Diwan described the event thus:


134. *Ibid*.

On the 25th July fell the Centenary celebrations of the great music composer, Swathi Thirunal, a former Ruler of Travancore and it is now clear that carefully designed and correlated steps had been taken to kill me on that day. At the conclusion of the function as I was proceeding to get into my car, some persons engaged themselves in heated talk with the Inspector-General of Police who, thus did not follow me. Lights were put off all over the pandal just as I was about to enter the car. A man clad in military shorts jumped up and brandished a curved knife. Instinctively I warded the stroke with my left hand, fingers sustaining bruises. Four successive strokes followed, one grazing the ear, one hitting the back of the skull, one cutting the left cheek (the flesh hanging loose) and one cutting the lower palate. The jugular vein was not severed because of the cloth (Angavasthram) round my neck. It was miraculous and providential that no artery, bone or cartilage was severed and only flesh wounds were sustained. I was unconscious for a while but my breath control served me in good stead and holding the half severed portion of the cheek with my hand, I drove to the hospital where a most capable surgeon dressed and sewed up the wounds which included a minor injury to the lips. In three weeks the wounds were healed completely and the sutures were removed. My residence was turned into a hospital but there was
no danger to life unless sepsis set in. My regular habits evidently helped me and I practically recovered and resumed normal diet etc. by the 10\textsuperscript{th} August. By the 15\textsuperscript{th} August the accession of Travancore to the Dominion was notified and I tendered my formal resignation on the 19\textsuperscript{th}. The assailant had a car with the engine running just outside the pantal and has not yet been apprehended.”\textsuperscript{136}

The incident demonstrated two things: a) several people, presumably adherents of the State Congress and the communists must have planned ahead and also secured help from the police and employees of the electrical department. The lights were switched on immediately after the escape of the assailant. b) that his continuance as Diwan was purposeless and futile in view of the personal bitterness created by propaganda.\textsuperscript{137}

The District superintendent of Police, and the Inspector of Police, Trivandrum were punished with compulsory retirement from service for their failure to take precautionary measures. The Government announced a reward of Rs.10,000 for those who identified the culprit.\textsuperscript{138} No body came forward with any information. The

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{137} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{138} N. Srikantan Nair, \textit{Thiruvathamcore Inidan Unionalil} (Mal. article), \textit{Kerala Kaumudi Weekly}, June 13, 1976, Book I, Vol.44. It may be noted that C.Narayana Pillai had recorded it as Rs.20,000/- in his book. C. Narayana Pillai, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 1194.
Government made it clear that “such dastardly act of terrorism will not deter them in the discharge of the heavy responsibilities at this juncture and that all such activities will be firmly met.” A number of leaders of the Travancore State Congress including Pattom A. Thanu Pillai, T.M. Varghese, A.J. John, C.Kesavan, Kumbalathu Sanku Pillai, P.S. Nataraja Pillai, K.P. Neelakanta Pillai and Communist leaders were arrested on 27.7.1947. The State Congress nor the Communist party had any role in the plan of assassination of the Diwan. The arrested were later released.

It was later established that N.Srikantan Nair, an activist of the Kerala Socialist Party was the brain behind this plan, and it was well executed by his close associate K.C. Subramonia Aiyer popularly known as K.C.S.Money. K.C.S. Money was later arrested and acquitted as C.P.Ramaswami Aiyer and other witnesses did not appear before the trial court during the course of trial. However, the “attempt on Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer’s life came as a dramatic climax to the political agitation that had been going on Travancore for over a decade for the achievement of Responsible Government.”

140. N.Srikantan Nair, _op.cit._, p. 53.
141. _Ibid._ Also see Vol.45 and A.Sreedhara Menon, _op.cit._, p. 251.
142. N.Srikantan Nair, _op.cit._, p.53.
The Travancore administration was convinced that it could not postpone anymore its decision to join the Constituent Assembly and the Indian Union. It also realized the possibility of losing the services of the eminent Diwan who stood with the Royal Family all the time. The State Congress expressed shock and sympathy and hoped that their demand of Responsible Government would be granted immediately. The Government of Travancore realized its helplessness to combat the emerging political situation and on the advise of ailing Diwan, the Maharaja informed the Central Government of his decision to accept the Instrument of Accession and Standstill Agreement. But the Diwan from his sick bed guiding the negotiations in Delhi required certain clarifications on such issues as the control of State forces, currency and coinage, customs, export and import control, railway, police, irrigation and electric power etc. The letter of the Diwan addressed to V.P. Menon Stated that "The State will of course be prepared to come to special agreement so as to come into line with all India policies and to prevent unfair practices or smuggling but the States inherent rights to fiscal autonomy and to levy and to retain export and import duties must be guaranteed as conditions precedent to accession as already agreed during discussions." 

G. Parameswaran Pillai, the representative of Travancore at Delhi, held discussions with States Department officials in Delhi, C.C. Desai, Additional Secretary

of the Department in his letter dated 10th August 1947 gave the following assurances to the Diwan to clear doubts of the Travancore Government. The letter Stated that:

a) Both the Instrument of Accession and Standstill Agreement do not invest the Dominion Government with any jurisdiction or power to interfere in the sovereignty or internal jurisdiction of the State except to the extent permitted by terms of the Instrument itself.

b) Accession on Defence does not extend or relate to the Travancore State Forces, but when they are attached or to operate with Dominion Forces, they will come under the jurisdiction of the Dominion.

c) Accession in respect of neutralisation will not affect any State law on the subject promulgated with respect to Travancore subjects.

d) Accession in regard to maritime shipping and navigation, admiralty and carriage of passengers and goods by sea or by air will not affect any of the existing rights of the State which are saved under the Standstill Agreement.

e) Accession on External Affairs will not debarr the State from having trade fiscal and commercial relations with foreign
countries or from having Trade Commissioners in foreign lands for the furtherance of the States’ trade. However, such trade commissioners will have to work in complete co-ordination with the representative of the Dominion of India, confining themselves strictly to trade and commerce of Travancore State. For diplomatic purposes they will be deemed to be part of the office of the Dominion representative.

f) The inherent right of the Travancore State’s fiscal autonomy and its rights to levy and retain its own export and import duties will not be affected in any way by the Instrument of accession.

g) Negotiations for fresh agreements in respect of matters which come within the scope of the Inter-Portal Convention of 1865 and the Cochin Harbour Agreements of 1925 and 1936 which the Travancore Government propose to denounce on the lapse of Paramountcy must take a little time and pending negotiations the existing agreements as provided for in the stand still agreement must have to be continued.

h) Neither the Instrument of Accession nor Standstill Agreement will interfere with the State’s internal currency or coinage,
financial arrangement or taxation or the internal postal or telegraphic system or tariff policy.

i) While reserving to itself the freedom of action in regard to export and import for its own purpose, the Travancore Government will have to co-ordinate its policy and take steps to prevent smuggling and other unfair practices.

j) As regards the jurisdiction of the Railway Police neither the Instrument of Accession nor any reference to it in the Stand Still Agreement will affect the existing arrangements on the Schencottah-Thiruvananthapuram lines. However, for the sake of uniformity of police administration, the Travancore Government was expected to delegate to the Dominion Government police jurisdiction in respect of the Shoranur-Cochin line.¹⁴⁵

A close examination of these promises would reveal that Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer was eager to extract as much concessions and privileges as possible, to the Royal Family. On the basis of these assurances the Maharaja signed two copies of the Instrument of Accession and the Diwan two copies of the Standstill Agreement and the States Department was telegraphically informed of this on 12ᵗʰ August 1947.¹⁴⁶ These

¹⁴⁵. File No.639/1947/C.S./Political, Cellar Records, KGS, TVM. Also see A.Sreedhara Menon, Ibid.

signed documents were sent to Delhi on 13th August 1947. Thus the accession of Travancore to the Indian Union became a reality. The accession of the State to the Indian Union also fulfilled one of the four demands put forward by the State Congress. On August 19th 1947 Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer tendered his resignation from the post of Diwan of Travancore handing over the charge of the post to P.G.N. Unnithan, the senior most officer in Travancore Civil Service.

Having not been granted Responsible Government so far the Travancore State Congress decided to press its demand and decided to observe August 1, 1947 as Travancore People’s Day. A seven point programme was chalked out and the people were requested to observe these programmes in “a thoroughly peaceful and non-violent way.” They were:

1) All the labourers and ‘industrialists to strike work;

2) Shop keepers to close down their shops;

3) Workers to stop the running of buses and boats;

4) Students to abstain from classes;

5) Volunteers to hold meetings and demonstrations;

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148. Ibid.
6) People to organise public processions, to sing national songs and to hoist the national flag over private houses and public institutions, and

7) The reporters to give full details to the Congress central office regarding lathi charges, firing and other incidents.¹⁴⁹

Of the seven point programme the item hoisting national flag caused much alarm and anxiety to the administration and to prevent such actions the district magistrates were given strict instructions to take all kinds of precautionary measures.¹⁵⁰ The Government also issued orders to the police and military to deal with the situation firmly and in a manner they found appropriate.¹⁵¹

Responding to the call of the State Congress August 1, 1947 was observed as Travancore People’s Day throughout the State. Innumerable meetings were held and processions taken out in various parts of the State in a peaceful manner.¹⁵² All educational institutions remained closed for an indefinite period because of students participation in the movement.¹⁵³ The wise decision of the Government to lift ban on

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¹⁴⁹. The details of the deliberations of the State Congress leadership meeting are contained in the report submitted to the A.S. to the Diwan by the I.G. of Police, Travancore dated 29th July, 1947. See for details File No.439/1947/CS Cellar Records, KGS, TVM.

¹⁵⁰. C.S. to Government, Trivandrum, express phonocom to the District Magistrate, Quilon dated 31st July 1947, file No. Ibid.


¹⁵². File No.439/1947/C.S./Political, Cellar Records, KGS, TVM.

public meetings and processions sufficiently early on 31st July 1947 helped to avoid untoward incidents in the State. It also helped the people to observe the Travancore people's day without obstruction from the administration. Though in general the condition was peaceful at two places, Vadakara and Changanacherry in north Travancore the police used force to disburse the students. Police tried to seize the National flag at Vatakara from the students which ended in a lathi-charge, and fourteen students including three girl students sustained injuries. At Changanacherry a procession of about 300 students holding the National Flag in their hands was disbursed by force.

The State Congress decided to continue the agitation for Responsible Government and the camp at Ernakulam under the leadership of T.K. Narayana Pillai chalked out a programme for the following week, and a circular was issued on August 2nd 1947 in which they appealed to the people as follows:

1) To hold public meetings in all villages of the State to explain the political situation and to raise contributions for the agitation;

2) To form an Action Council in each taluk and to prepare a list of succession 'dictators'.


3) To enlist students for full time political work; and

4) To organise jathas consisting of 300 volunteers from each taluk for marching to Trivandrum at short notice.\textsuperscript{156}

At this stage the leaders of the Travancore State Congress thought that they should get the consent and support from national leaders like Sardar Vallabhai Patel before launching this agitations and Pattom A. Thanu Pillai and T.M. Varghese went to Delhi on 31\textsuperscript{st} July 1947. Sardar Vallabhai Patel suggested the suspension of direct action and not to press for the removal of the Diwan and also informed them that New Delhi would not interfere in the internal affairs of the State. This was because of the fact that Travancore had already agreed to accession and he did not want to create any embarrassing situation to the Travancore administration. Vallabhai Patel also knew that with the signing of the Instrument of Accession Travancore had come to the heels of the Central Government and that there is no meaning in continuing agitations in Travancore. He could not reveal it for political reasons and therefore, the request. The leaders of the State Congress, without knowing this fact were very much disgusted and disappointed in the meeting. However, the leaders returned without much promise and to their surprise Travancore acceded to the Indian Union on August 13, 1947. August 15\textsuperscript{th} was celebrated as Independence of India Day by the State Congressites throughout

\textsuperscript{156} Confidential Daily Report (Extract) dated 9\textsuperscript{th} August, 1947. For details see File No.D. Dis./387/1947/C.S./Political, Cellar Records, KGS, TVM.
the State of Travancore. As a surprise Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer relinquished his position as Diwan on 19th August 1948.

The Travancore State Congress thought that of their four demands, the second demand was also granted with the exit of Sri C.P. Ramawami Aiyer from Travancore politics. P.G. Narayanan Unnithan, the senior most officer in the Travancore Civil Service resumed charge of the Diwan.

Till his exit from the Travancore politics, Sir C.P.Ramaswami Aiyer upheld the monarchical system of administration in the State. To him it provided administrative stability and continuity of national life and that the Royal Family and the Ruler would be above party politics. He also pleaded that economic prosperity of a State could be achieved only in such a set up. Even while introducing constitutional reforms in the State he took sufficient safeguards to retain princely and Diwan rule in Travancore. But whatever might have been the stand taken by the Diwan including Independent Travancore, when he realized that this scheme is not workeable in free India, he rose to the occasion and changed his stand and advised the Maharaja to accede to the Union of India, against the wishes of the Ruler. This averted a possible bloodshed in the State. If the Maharaja remained adamant on his idea of Independent Travancore the Central Government would have resorted to police action or military interference as in Junagad and Hyderabad.

On analysis, though the actions of the Diwan cannot be justified, it is doubtful whether he could be blamed for it. As a servant of the State working in a monarchical system, he was forced by law to obey the orders of the Maharaja, and this was what he had done. He only acted in a way to achieve the aspirations of the Royal Family of Travancore. His opinion on many matters including ‘Independent Travancore’ were rejected by the Maharaja by ordering ‘fight it out’. A clear admission regarding the role of the Palace in this regard came from none other than a member of the Royal Family of Travancore, Gouri Lakshmi Bai and this exonerated the Diwan. She said in an address delivered to the IAS Probationers at the Institute of Management in Government at Thiruvananthapuram in October 1997 that the decision on ‘Independent Travancore’ was taken by the Royal Family itself in order to ward off the possibility of North Indian domination. This could be seen as finding some excuses for the unjustifiable and anti-national actions of the ruler. Instead of swimming in favour of the currents they acted against the wishes of the people, and abandoned it when defeat was certain. The Diwan, as clever and wise he was, realized the danger and impracticability of the scheme. In the letter dated January 31, 1949 he wrote to Sardar Vallabhai Patel he stated thus: “As for my advocacy of independence, you are aware of its history, but it was not due to any selfish or personal motives. I worked as I thought in the interest of the State whose stewardship was committed to me and which I firmly believed had a special position in India. I knew that the cause I espoused was

159. A. Sreedhara Menon, op.cit., p. 258.
unpopular and even my sons and close friends differed from me but I followed the path I thought I should tread in utter loyalty to a Ruler, who from his early years trusted in me and whom I kept fully informed of the problems and its difficulties and perils.\textsuperscript{160} This brings to light that the Diwan's efforts were to safeguard the interests of the Palace, though he was aware of its ultimate failure. Till his retirement from service he remained a true servant of the master.

In Travancore, though two of its four demands had been granted, the Travancore State Congress decided to intensify the agitations, in spite of strict instructions from Sardar Patel not to initiate any direct action. The working committee of the State Congress which met on 29\textsuperscript{th} August 1947 at Alleppey under the presidency of Pattom A. Thanu Pillai decided to fight for ending Diwan's rule and for the establishment of an interim Government in the State and also for the final goal of attainment of Responsible Government in the State.\textsuperscript{161} Elaborate preparations were made by the Travancore State Congress for the final agitations and they constituted Action Committees in different taluks.\textsuperscript{162} It is probable that the decision and proposed action on its part was unwarranted as advised by Sardar Vallabhai Patel, but the State Congress was left with no other option, lest they should be considered as a defunct

\textsuperscript{160} Ibid., pp. 258-259.

\textsuperscript{161} File No.D.Dis/508/1947/CS/Political, Cellar Records, KGS, TVM.

\textsuperscript{162} File No.D.Dis/446/1947/CS/Political, Cellar Records, KGS, TVM.
political organisation by the people of Travancore if no political activity was carried out.

The Communists who could not come to the political scene after the suppression of the Punnpra Vayalar, were watching for an opportunity to make their presence over the political scene of Travancore. The decision of the State Congress gave them such an opportunity. They promised their full support to the movement of the congress, especially at a time when the administration had softened its stand towards political agitations. The workers also supported the move. As a result the Communists could assume greater influence over the State Congress. The Inspector General of Police informed the Government of Travancore that “The Communist sympathisers are striving to revive the Communist Movement in the State and as a first step they are spreading objectionable leaflets and other publications surreptitiously. At Koothattukulam and Poonjar, these elements are slowly growing active and they are making common cause with the State Congress and pretend to be under their banner to exploit the situation to foment troubles. The Congressites are courting their help in their struggle. A few of those who are underground and absconding are trying to win over the labourers to their side again.” In spite of their commitment on the observance of non-violent methods in the agitations, the Administration Reports suggest that they were forced to submit to the Communist group and change their

Propaganda meetings and demonstrations were arranged on a large scale throughout the State which were addressed by leaders of both parties. They reiterated the demand for responsible Government and threatened direct action.

In the face of the threat of agitations, the Government took all possible measures to check Communist activities once again in the State, but they failed to single out the Communists. Strict instructions were issued to the police officers to detect and arrest all Communist activists throughout the State. The Government also directed that "In view of the present political agitation and of the possibility of the Communists in the State engaging in subversive activities, specific action should be taken in all directions to detect Communist activities, if any, by continuing in an increased measure the work done in this direction. Local officers have to be instructed to watch communist activities, if any, and take immediate deterrent action and communicate to the superior officers so that the position of Communist trouble may be clearly understood by all concerned." The Government however failed to take stringent measures due to the fast changing political situation of the State especially after the attack on the life of C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer.

164. The report submitted by the Tahsildar of Harippad to the District administration on 16th August 1947 gives us a detailed picture of how the Communists were able to press their demands over the State Congress leadership in their joint venture of the agitations. For details See File No.D.Dis/508/1947/CS/Political, Cellar Records, KGS, TVM.

165. Letter from the Additional Secretary to the Diwan to the Inspector-General of Police Trivandrum dated 5th August 1947, for details See File No.D.Dis/448/1947/CS/ Political, Cellar Records, KGS, TVM.
The renewal of agitations had its results. People thought that the decision of the administration to accede to the Union of India and Ramaswami Aiyer’s exit were the result of popular agitations by the Travancore State Congress. It also created a feeling that the grant of Responsible Government was also not a far cry and that the State Congress would achieve it soon. The State Congress leadership also gave an ultimatum to the Government to take a decision in this regard immediately but not later than September 2, 1947.166

The political condition in the State of Travancore was changing very fast consequent on the exit of the Diwan Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer and the assumption of office by P.G.Narayanan Unnithan. As he was a native of Travancore people welcomed this appointment. He had a tough task before him in dealing with the political situation of the State. High officials advised him to establish peace by compromise,167 and it was suggested that a meeting of the representatives of all political parties to discuss the issue of Responsible Government be convened.168 Representing the major political party, the State Congress, Pattom A. Thanu Pillai and T.M. Varghese met the Diwan and he promised them to consider their demands favourably.

166. File No.D.Dis/508/1947/CS/Political, Cellar Records, KGS, TVM.

167. Ibid.

168. Ibid.
The Working Committee of the Travancore State Congress which met at Trivandrum on 30th August 1947 requested the Government to release its prominent leaders like C.Kesanavan, K.Sanku Pillai and S.V. Muthukaruppa Pillai. The Government again held discussions with State Congress leaders on 1st September 1947 and later held discussions with high officials. Subsequently the Diwan advised the Maharaja to grant Responsible Government to the State of Travancore and accordingly the Maharaja issued a Royal Proclamation on 4th September 1947 granting Responsible Government ending all political agitations in the State on that issue. The decision was welcomed with joy and rejoice by the people of the State. The State Congress celebrated their victory by organising public meetings and demonstrations throughout the State.

Before the formal transfer of power, a representative body was constituted by the Royal Proclamation consisting of elected representatives on the basis of adult suffrage. A Reforms Committee was also appointed for drafting a new constitution for the State. There were some disagreements with regard to the constitution of the

169. Ibid.
171. Ibid.
172. This Committee had 15 members with Pattom A. Thanu Pillai as President. The members were P.S. Narayana Pillai, T.A. Abdulla, M. Ramakrishna Pillai, S. Krishna Aiyer, T.M. Varghese, C. Kesavan, A.J. John, M. Govindan, C. Ravi Varma, E.P. Varghes, S.I. Pandya Nadar, Mannath Padmanabha Pillai, P. Vivekanandan and T.M. Chithambarathan Pillai. See Ibid.
Reforms Committee and the Tamilnadu Congress represented that it was not given due representation in it. However, the Government did not yield and the demand was rejected.\textsuperscript{173}

The Reforms Committee submitted its report on 20\textsuperscript{th} November 1947 and accepting the recommendations the Government issued orders for elections to the new Representative Body during January-February 1948.\textsuperscript{174} Some untoward incidents took place between the State Congress and the Tamilnadu Congress at various places – in particular Keezhukulam and Mangad in the then Vilavancode Taluk of Travancore. When the situation went out of control police opened fire in which 3 persons died.\textsuperscript{175} In the elections the Travancore State Congress captured 94 out of 108 while the Tamilnadu Congress won in 14 seats.

The first meeting of the representatives of the new legislature was held on 20\textsuperscript{th} March 1948 under the presidency of the Diwan, P.G. Narayanan Unnithan and elected A.J. John as the new President. On the recommendations of the new Legislature the Maharaja promulgated the Travancore Interim Constitution Act VI of 1948, by which the new representative body was named the Legislative Assembly and the Council of

\textsuperscript{173} See for details of the representation submitted to the Diwan by the Tamilnadu Congress and the reply of the Government, File No.D.Dis./527/1947/CS/Political, Cellar Records, KGS, TVM.

\textsuperscript{174} See for reports on elections, \textit{The Hindu}, 24th December, 1947.

Ministers was made responsible to the Legislature.\textsuperscript{176} On the retirement of the Diwan on 24\textsuperscript{th} March 1948 a Council of Ministers was sworn in with Pattom A. Thanu Pillai as Prime Minister and C. Kesavan, T.M. Varghese as ministers.\textsuperscript{177} Thus the first popular Ministry fulfilling the aspirations of the people for Responsible Government was achieved in Travancore after a prolonged fight.

\footnotesize{176. Travancore Administration Report, 1947-48, p.10.}

\footnotesize{177. Travancore Government Gazette Extraordinary, 24 March 1948. It was only later that the term ‘Chief Minister’ began to be used.}