

Mysore population wins democratic rule in newly independent India, 1947

- [\(mainly or initiated by\) people of color](#) [1]
- [an example of paradox of repression](#) [2]
- [an example of regime change](#) [3]

Timing

Time period notes:

The Praja Paksha (People's Party) was founded in 1930 by K.C. Reddy with the aim of installing responsible government in Mysore. The "Mysore Chalo" Satyagraha was launched on 15 Aug 1947.

15 August

1947

to:

24 October

1947

Location and Goals

Country:

India

Location City/State/Province:

Mysore (Mysuru), Karnataka

Location Description:

The capital city of the then princely state of Mysore, people from all districts of the state mobilized

[View Location on Map](#)

Goals:

establishment of a democratically accountable state government including formation of an interim ministry and a constitutional committee for drafting a state constitution, and release of all political prisoners

Methods

Methods in 1st segment:

Methods in 2nd segment:

- 001. Public speeches
- 018. Displays of flags and symbolic colors
- 038. Marches
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 172. Nonviolent obstruction

Methods in 3rd segment:

- 018. Displays of flags and symbolic colors

- 038. Marches
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support

Methods in 4th segment:

- 018. Displays of flags and symbolic colors
- 038. Marches
- 104. Professional strike

Methods in 5th segment:

- 018. Displays of flags and symbolic colors
- 038. Marches

Methods in 6th segment:

- 018. Displays of flags and symbolic colors
- 038. Marches
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support

Additional methods (Timing Unknown):

- 016. Picketing
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 172. Nonviolent obstruction

Notes on Methods:

The specific timing of various student protests is unknown.

Segment Length:

12 days

Classifications

Classification:

Change

Cluster:

Democracy

Group characterization:

- Bangalore police officers
- Congressmen
- gold miners
- students
- villagers

Leaders, partners, allies, elites

Leaders:

Kyasamballi Chengalaraya Reddy

Partners:

not known

External allies:

not known

Involvement of social elites:

not known

Joining/exiting order of social groups

Groups in 1st Segment:

- Mysore State Congressmen

Groups in 2nd Segment:

- Students
- Villagers

Groups in 3rd Segment:

Groups in 4th Segment:

- Bangalore police officers
- gold miners

Groups in 5th Segment:

Groups in 6th Segment:

Segment Length:

12 days

Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence

Opponents:

The government of the Wodeyar (Wadiyar) Dynasty ruled by the Maharaja, Jayachamaraja Wodeyar.

Nonviolent responses of opponent:

not known

Campaigner violence:

not known

Repressive Violence:

police firing into crowds, abuse of jailed protesters, transport and abandonment of leaders and protesters in jungles outside of state

Success Outcome

Success in achieving specific demands/goals:

6 points out of 6 points

Survival:

1 point out of 1 points

Growth:

3 points out of 3 points

Total points:

10 out of 10 points

The British commissioner governed the state of Mysore in southern India from 1831 to 1881 when the administration reinstated the pre-existing Wodeyar (Wadiyar) Dynasty. Mysore became a princely state with the Wodeyar Dynasty ruling under the paramountcy of the British. The reigning Maharaja (king) during the Indian independence movement was Jayachamaraja Wodeyar. On 15 August 1947, India gained its independence from the British Raj.

The Maharaja then needed to decide whether to join the Indian Union or declare himself an independent ruler. The Diwan of Mysore, Arcot Raswamy Mudiar, advised against accession despite the general population's support of joining the Indian Union. The Indian Union encouraged but did not require rulers of princely states to hand government over to popularly elected assemblies. The Maharaja signed the Instrument of Accession but rejected the Mysore State Congress's demands for establishment of a democratic government.

Mysore state congressmen, Kyasamballi Chengalaraya Reddy and Deshamudre Mallappa, founded the Praja Paksha (People's Party) in 1930. It grew to become the Praja Samyukta Paksha (People's Federation) in 1934 and soon joined the Mysore State Congress. The aim of the Praja Paksha was to establish "responsible" government in the state of Mysore. Although strongly opposed to the activities of the Praja Paksha, the government promoted the spread of educational opportunities within the state and encouraged agricultural and industrial development. The progressive economic, educational, and political development in Mysore paired with the surrounding democratization processes of the Indian independence movement lead the people to desire a truly democratic government.

When India gained its independence and the Maharaja declined to install a democratically accountable government, K.C. Reddy, then leader of the Mysore State Congress, called for the launch of a satyagraha (a campaign of nonviolent resistance) named "Mysore Chalo," literally "go to Mysore." On 1 September, K. C. Reddy stated the demands of the satyagraha in Subashnagar, Bangalore. The satyagraha would persist until the government issued a royal proclamation of the formation of a democratically accountable government. This included the formation of an interim ministry and establishment of a constitutional committee of roughly 25 persons for the drafting of a state constitution. The satyagraha also demanded the release of all political prisoners. Over 40,000 people attended K. C. Reddy's speech during which he unfurled the Indian Union flag. He stated that until responsible government was established, supporters of the Mysore Chalo would only fly the national flag, not the Mysore state flag.

K.C. Reddy mobilized the population of Mysore, calling on people throughout the state to march to the palace. On the first day of the Satyagraha, a mile-long procession organized by the congress of men, women, and students marched to the town hall of the capital city where congress members raised the tri-color national flag.

The Mysore population was eager to see the installment of a truly democratic leader. With the declaration of the Mysore Chalo, villagers from all nine districts of Mysore, as well as supporters from out of state, began marches toward the capital city to urge the Maharaja to relinquish his throne and establish democratic government. Laborers and students marched through the main streets of Mysore city carrying Indian Union flags.

On 4 September, police arrested K. C. Reddy and other congress leaders. Police arrested march leaders as they attempted to enter the city and transported and abandoned many in jungles outside of the state to prevent them from reaching the capital. Congressmen, villagers, and students detained in city jails were subject to violent treatment by police. Arrests of protesters and police brutality agitated the crowds, and efforts to force the Maharaja to establish democratic government intensified. Many marchers from in and out of state never succeeded in reaching the capital but they saw the act of marching in itself a significant display of will.

Throughout the campaign, the government imposed curfews on major cities, censored many daily newspapers, and closed schools. During a student protest at Maharaja College, police forces moved in to disperse a peaceful protest. One officer fired into the crowd, killing a student. On 6 September, police opened fire on a crowd of protesters attempting to break into the Maharaja's palace, killing one person. In response to the incident, the government clamped down on protests, imposing a 48 hour curfew on the city. On the same day, police overcame crude roadblocks set up by protesters in Malleswam, Bangalore, and opened fire into agitated crowds, killing two people. Over the course of the campaign, police firing killed over 20 people.

The Indian Union had set 14 September as a deadline for rulers of princely states to join. On this day, in a display of nationalism, the Mysore State Congress called on people to intensify their efforts in showing their will to the Maharaja. Despite police efforts to prevent protesters from reaching the palace and new groups from entering the city, crowds persisted in marching through the streets, picketing law courts, barricading main roads, and displaying the national flag.

On 19 September, city police officers in the district of Bangalore went on strike in support of the Mysore Chalo campaign and marched from station to station imploring their colleagues to join them. Then on 25 September, 8,000 workers in two of Mysore's four gold mines abruptly stopped work.

Protesters continued flooding into the capital city. Rural areas of the state rejected the Maharaja's right to rule and began setting up their own parallel governments. Losing the support of both the police and laborers and in face of massive protests by the collective population, the government was unable to function. The government had no choice but to yield to the satyagraha. After discussion between the Diwan and jailed congress leaders, the Maharaja announced the establishment of the new democratic government on 24 October.

K. C. Reddy was sworn in as the unofficial Chief Minister of the state of Mysore on 27 October 1947. He served as Chief Minister in the interim ministry until elections took place in 1952. He did not seek re-election as Chief Minister but was elected as a member of the Mysore Legislative Committee in the same year.

Research Notes

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Name of researcher, and date dd/mm/yyyy:

Molly Murphy 19/9/2015

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