

**A Public appeal to
the Rulers and People of the Deccan States
on the subject of
the formation of the United Deccan State.**

We, the undersigned rulers of states in the Deccan mentioned below, desire to address this open appeal to our brother Rulers and People of the Deccan States on the subject of the formation of the United Deccan State. We have thought it fit to approach you today with this personal appeal because we have this day informally signed the Covenant which is the first and fundamental step in the inauguration of the New State. This document embodies our solemn pledge to transfer at once, maximum possible power to the people of our states and retain only such minimum authority as is deemed necessary for working the constitution satisfactorily. Moreover, we have gone to the length of declaring that, subject to this minimum, all power shall emanate from the people. Besides, we, the rulers participating in this scheme, have decided to pool together even this minimum power and authority and exercise it jointly through one of us who will by yearly rotation assume the office of the constitutional head of the New State. The boundaries of our individual states shall henceforth vanish. There will be only one legislature, one executive, one judiciary, one treasury and one central seat of the Government, in future. But this is not all. The Covenant contains a clause by which Kanarese-speaking and Marathi-speaking areas of the New State could each opt out and join a linguistic province of their choice as and when formed, if the bulk of the people from that area is desirous of doing so. Thus, it will be noticed, that it is a drastic self-abnegation by the rulers in favour of their people. We have got our privy purse amounts determined by a most impartial and influential Board of arbitration consisting of (1) the President of the Indian Constituent Assembly - the Hon'ble Dr. Rajendra Prasad, (2) the President of the All-India States' Peoples' Conference - Dr. Patabhi Sitaramayya, and (3) the General Secretary of the All-India Congress Committee - Shri. Shankarrao Deo. It may be noted in this connection that although it was agreed that the rulers should nominate two nominees of their own on the above Board, we refrained from doing so in order that the award may be completely the award of peoples' trusted and venerated leaders. The suggestion for a decision on this point by a Board was accepted in accordance with the wishes of the Deccan States' Regional

Council of the All-India States' Peoples' Conference and we have thus succeeded in settling a knotty point to the satisfaction of all. The Covenant embodies all the ten fundamental points first suggested by Congress leaders and later confirmed by a resolution of the Standing Committee of the All-India States' Peoples' Conference at Delhi in last June. The great Prime Minister of India, the Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, was present at the meeting of the committee and took an active interest in the passing of the resolution. After this, four prominent Congress leaders of all-India status, closely and thoroughly examined the draft of the Covenant prepared by the well-known constitutional lawyer, Mr. K. M. Munshi, and satisfied themselves that our Covenant embodied all the ten fundamental democratic principles referred to above. Later, the popular ministers from our states held conferences of their own and again scrutinized the draft of the Covenant. They suggested a number of amendments and most of the important ones have been accepted by the rulers. The ministers and public leaders seemed to have been convinced of the importance of the great step as a result of the free and frank exchange of views which took place in the meetings held in the middle of this month in Bombay at which the rulers, ministers and some leaders of the public from the Deccan States were present. The latter pressed the rulers to hasten their step and ratify the Covenant without the least delay. We could not ignore this suggestion of theirs and have, as stated in the beginning of this appeal, informally affixed our signatures to the Covenant. Thus, though we have bound ourselves to stand by the terms of the Covenant, we have purposely delayed the formal ratification for a few days the reasons for which we proceed to give below.

2. It will be easily seen that this is a unique and perhaps the most revolutionary step in the long history of our states. But we are prompted to take it, firstly, because we think that it is the most righteous action and secondly, because it is perfectly in tune with the modern times. It is a matter of common knowledge that we have not been forced to take this action because of any insistent demand by our people (who, as a matter of fact, remained non-committal for a long time). Nor, could it be said, that the British paramountcy has exercised any influence on our action; for, we are taking it at a time when it has completely disappeared. The real thing is that in future not even big countries can hope to live by themselves. From financial considerations too, it will be seen that no state in the Deccan, unless it joins in such a co-operative union, can hope to cope with the ever-increasing demands of modern and democratic administration—not to speak of nation-building schemes for all-sided development. We

have, therefore, to so shape our policy that we could jointly be fit to become a unit of the great Indian Dominion, that is just born. Without co-operation and combination amongst ourselves and without transferring the greatest amount of power to the people we can never hope to be in harmony with the Dominion and all that it stands for. Our object, therefore, in addressing this public appeal is to invite our brother Rulers in the Deccan and their people to join us in achieving this great ideal which, we are sure, is as much theirs, as ours. We may state here that we have purposely postponed the formal signing and ratification of the Covenant for about two weeks for enabling the states which have not yet joined, to think the matter over and join us, if they felt satisfied. It is true that they can also join some time after the United Deccan State becomes an accomplished fact. But then, it must be remembered, that the people of such states will be deprived of the opportunity of taking part in the Constitution-making Body and being instrumental in shaping the Constitution of the New State.

3. One thing, however, we must make clear before closing. It is that even the states which think of coming in now, cannot hope to effect any alterations or modifications in the terms of the Covenant; for, it is our understanding that though no legal consequences can follow by our informal signatures to-day until the document is formally signed and ratified, still, for all practical purposes, the Covenant is, an accomplished fact and as good as executed. But the elections to the Constitution-making Body are still to take place and there will be full scope for the states which choose to join us before we formally execute the document, to participate in the work of the constitution-making, which is perhaps the most important part of the business.

4. If unfortunately this appeal of ours fails to carry conviction, and none of our brother rulers to whom this appeal is addressed, choose to come in this Union, still, we, the undersigned seven rulers, are determined to make a small beginning. We hope we will thus be paving the way, which sooner or later, might attract other states for whom the door will always be kept open, and whose entry will be welcomed, no matter when they choose to come in.

5. We wish to address a few words of special appeal to our people and leaders. The Covenant which is the fundamental scheme of the Union of the Deccan States has now been accepted by us and is now before you in its final form, and we invite you all, in all earnestness, to give it your full and active co-operation and support and to come forward to work it in the spirit in which it has been given. It is well-known that the Rulers of the Deccan States were among the first in India to establish representative legislative

assemblies and initiate popular governments. But the present step, as you will see, goes much farther than that, in as much as, it gives almost complete power to the people, and brings about a unification of our different states for the creation of one single democratic State. Of course, it is not given to human ingenuity to devise anything which is perfect. Let our people and leaders, therefore, now resolve to work the scheme for all it is worth. The critical times through which the whole country is passing demand the exercise of all the constructive powers that each one of us may happen to possess, and we feel sure none of us will be found wanting in this respect.

Poona,
29th September, 1947.

- (Sd.) Bhavanrao
Raja of Aundh
- (Sd.) R. S. Pantsachiv
Raja of Bhor
- (Sd.) C. B. Patwardhan
Raja of Kurundwad
Senior
- (Sd.) M. B. Patwardhan
Raja of Miraj
Junior
- (Sd.) Malojirao
Raja of Phaltan
- (Sd.) R. V. Bhawe
Raja of Ramdurg
- (Sd.) C. A. Patwardhan
Raja of Sangli