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# An Open Letter

To

The Hon. C. Rajagopalachariar, B.A., B.L.,  
Chief Minister to the Government of Madras.

From

S. Somasundara Bharati, M. A. B. L.,  
Professor of Tamil, Annamalai University.

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**From**

S. Somasundara Bhacati, M. A., B. L.,

*Professor of Tamil, Annamalai University.*

**To**

The Hon. C. Rajagopalachariar, B.A. B.L.,

*Chief Minister to the Government of Madras.*

Sir,

You are now the Head of the Congress Cabinet. People cast their votes for Congressmen, and the Tamils more than others, in the recent elections; for, the Congress stood as the champion of complete freedom for the country and liberty for all. But no sooner you assumed office than you seem to start showing your cruel love for coercive measures and intense intolerance of differences in views and of opposition to your proposals. Though I may cite many instances of this tendency of yours from your official acts and measures within your brief ministerial career, I intend to confine my appeal to you in this letter only to your announced attitude towards the compulsory introduction of Hindi in schools in the Tamil area under your administration.

And to you, who know me for about 30 years, I think it is unnecessary to add that unlike many of your new recruits, I have been a Congress-Nationalist consistently and continuously since 1904, and that I can have no personal motive now to raise the standard of revolt against the Congress as such. You will be aware of my work and active sympathy for the Congress Candidates in general in the recent general elections, and in particular of my efforts to see that as many votes as possible, including mine of course, were cast for you. If I now oppose your proposals regarding Hindi, it is because of my settled conviction that



coercion in matters like this is not only unwarranted, but is inexpedient if not also unwise in the extreme. It is my anxiety for the fair name of Congress and love for its declared principles of liberty, as much as my compelling sense of duty, that constrain me now to resist every endeavour calculated to curtail or encroach upon the civil liberties of citizens and to adversely affect the independence and individuality of the Tamil Language and Tamilian or Dravidian culture as such.

You proclaim that you have resolved to introduce Hindi in all schools in the first instance in Tamil areas as a compulsory subject for all students in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd forms, regardless of all opposition. You no doubt add an assurance that you know this would not affect any-wise the Tamil language. The Hindu and Dhinamani report that you also reiterate, that the apprehensions of all who differ from you in this respect are "foolish fears of ignoramuses." "அறிவிலிகள்" is the word attributed to you under quotation in the Congress organ, Dhinamani. We can have no quarrel with your own personal opinions in this matter, if you do not use your official position and powers to enforce them on the country. But as you threaten to put through your proposals by administrative coercion, I take leave to request you to pause and consider before you go forward.

In all your reported speeches and repeated declarations so far published, you seem to support your policy of compulsory introduction of Hindi in all schools in our country only on two grounds : (1) You have given an undertaking in a private meeting of some North Indian leaders that if the Congress accepts office, you would introduce Hindi compulsorily in the Tamil country; and you now intend to carry out your personal undertaking. (2) The reason for your giving and now trying to redeem that undertaking is in your opinion a common language is necessary for the future federal or confederate India, and as Hindi is the only language already known to about seventeen crores of the Indians, the Tamils also should learn it compulsorily. It is only relevant therefore to canvass the legitimacy and adequacy of these reasons to warrant your coercive policy as regards the compulsory intro-



duction of Hindi in all our schools. To avoid all misunderstanding, it is only fair that I should add here that far from personal hostility to Hindi, I favoured the propaganda for spreading Hindi by persuasion and voluntary adoption. When the President and Chief representative of the Hindi Prachar Sabha visited the Annamalai University, I arranged for and presided over the first meeting he addressed, and I advocated the Hindi propaganda in deference to Mahatmaji's desire for its spread. I was willing to become a life-member of the Hindi Prachar Sabha, and also persuaded some other brother Professors of this University to become life-members. These facts will clear my personal attitude towards Hindi. Nevertheless, I feel your present attempt to force this language on your sole responsibility and at your own sweet will and pleasure on all the Tamil youths is anti-Congress and autocratic in spirit, and must be resisted at all cost by every liberty-loving and self-respecting Tamilian.

Regarding your reason (i): To introduce Hindi compulsorily in all schools in the Provinces, has not been discussed and much less decided upon by the Congress, by the A.I.C.C. or by even the Working Committee so far. Neither Mahatmaji, nor the Congress President has so far advocated any such compulsory measure. No Congress leaders in their individual capacity, whatever may be their eminence, may legitimately presume on their personal wisdom so far as to force their wishes and views in such matters on the people at large without taking their consent. No North Indian Leader can justly ask, and you have no right to give any unconditional undertaking to introduce Hindi compulsorily in all schools in the Tamil or Dravidian India. On your own showing, you were not even a Minister when you gave this undertaking. In the circumstances, you cannot as a responsible minister legitimately seek to use your present official position, prestige and powers, for the sake of your promise to some North Indian friend of yours, which has no higher moral basis so far than your own personal predilections. Your bonafides are not and need not be questioned. I only point out your pre-official personal promise to outsiders was unwarranted and unwise;



and your present attempt to force Hindi on the Tamil country is autocratic and tyrannical. Your own bonafide belief that universal adoption of Hindi by all the folks is in the interests of the Province, cannot absolve you as a responsible minister from your obligation to consult and secure public opinion, irrespective of party-divisions and political differences, as popular support in all such matters is a *sine qua non* for all Government measures according to the declared policy and accepted principles of the Congress. Despotism and callousness to people's wishes, are the characteristics of bureaucratic rule. And the Congress aim was to end, and not merely to change the colour of bureaucracy. I dare say the most cherished aim of the Congress is to establish governments in which every minister should strive to consult and carry out the people's will, and not compel the people to swallow in blind faith everything that he may in his wisdom prescribe to be good for them. The Congress Cabinet did not sit on its saddle quite firmly before you started your shafts thick and fast on the people, regardless of public opinion and people's sentiments.

Regarding your reason (ii): (a) A common language for a country, if practicable, may be useful for certain purposes, and may be desirable under certain conditions. But for a federal political government in a vast country with many autonomous provinces, a common language is not indispensable; and therefore to compel a people to learn another new language in addition to their own mothertongue is unwarranted. Neither history affords any precedent, nor reason can find any justification for governmental coercion for introducing a second language in any country. Vast Empires were built and endured through long centuries without any common language. The Persian, the Chinese and the Roman Empires of yore,—the Austrian, the Russian, the Turkish and the Moghal Empires in the middle ages,—and the democratic and ultra-democratic modern states like Canada and the Soviet Russia flourished and are flourishing, without the Imperial or Central governments, albeit their omnipotence, never feeling that a common language is a desideratum to be secured by administrative coercion. Even alien and cruel tyrants, who



pitilessly prostituted their powers to persecute people for religious and political purposes, have never dared or desired to force a new language on any people compulsorily. The lack of a common language by itself never stood in the way of political unity of communities if and when they otherwise desired such unity. Nor on the other hand a common language contributed to avert strife if and when people were disposed to fight among themselves. Hindus and Muslims who speak Hindi and Hindustani have frequently fought and are still found to fight each other despite their closest kinship in language. Saivites and Vaishnavites, Thengalais and Vadakalais have not given up their battles-royal although they all have one language as their common mother tongue. In fine, not a single instance is known to history whether ancient or modern, of any language rivalry leading to political strife and disruption of States. But religious differences are known to lead frequently to bitterest strifes. Yet no one on that account would ever suggest standardising or compulsorily introducing some common religion even to secure nation-wide harmony and concord in a huge country.

Thus the utmost that may be said on your side is that a common language for India may be desirable, if practicable. But that can never justify the policy of compulsion to introduce any language favoured by any politicians in power. For, no political philosophy will justify governmental coercion to enforce everything that may be deemed desirable by politicians.

(b) Again enthusiasm for a common language ought not to blind the enthusiasts to the natural limitations inherent in any endeavour to give a new language to communities, who have already highly developed tongues of their own suited to their genius and culture. The difficulties, the protagonists of Hindi will have to face, will be two-fold: one of a general nature common to all human societies, and another of special application to the Dravidian and even more particularly to the Tamilian India. The story of the Tower of Babel really points to the operation of a law of human nature. No language may perpetually suit even all the diverging branches of a society. If a



community outgrows its original environment or its scope of social conditions and ideals, it naturally divides itself into different sections, varying according to their differing requirements and environmental, sociological and cultural changes. The insistently growing number of the different branches of the few original Aryan or Indo-European sister-languages, the development of distinct but advanced dialects of Sanskrit in India, and of German and Latin languages in Europe, each dialect ordinarily unintelligible to all sister communities other than that whose vernacular it happens to be, the formation of different though kindred languages like Hebrew and Arabic among the Semetic races, are all instances which prove the inevitable and invariable operation of this law of linguistic diversity. Everyone knows that even the Dravidians living relatively in a compact area in the extreme south of India, could not resist the operation of this law, and had gradually to grow into divergent dialectic divisions and subdivisions. No imperial authority would even dream of restoring to the whole Dravidian India any one advanced branch of the Dravidian family of languages. It is in the nature of things that every language should, in course of time, cease to be the spoken language of all the groups of an original racial stock, making room for natural dialectic varieties suited to the varying times, places and other environments. Even Hindi, which is not older than five-hundred years at the most, has already as many dialects as about eleven in different localities. At least three of them are so sharply distinct one from the other, as to be reckoned as three different vernaculars, viz., the Western and Eastern Hindis and Mythili Hindi. Competent authorities aver that each of these three dialects is ordinarily unintelligible to the common folks outside its own particular area, even though their vernacular happens to be one of the other two Hindi dialects. It is therefore impracticable and even impossible in the long run to try to make anyone of these undeveloped non-literary dialects of Hindi a universal common language for all the communities in the Continent of India for all time to come. It is unthinkable in the circumstances that efforts to force such a dialect upon all Indians including communities, who are already blessed with highly-developed and fully advanced



languages like Tamil, Telugu and Bengali with a wealth of literary treasures rivalling those in classical languages like Sanskrit and Greek, would not meet with the utmost possible resistance.

(c) Apart from the general linguistic law that tends to enforce variation and variety of vernaculars in every extensive country and among expanding communities, there is a very special and particular objection to your proposal to compulsorily make Hindi, a common language in South India. Even where there are no racial or cultural differences, a growing community by the sheer weight of its own need for expansion breaks itself into differing dialectic divisions, as you have seen in the above instances. But where for centuries and millenniums, historical, geographical, racial, social and cultural differences have developed sharply and through long centuries to mark-off people like the Tamils from the sub-Aryan and conglomerate communities in the Trans-vindhian upper India, it would be unnatural and injudicious to try to force the dialect of either upon the other communities.

It is a sheer camouflage to say that the Tamils have no cultural differences whatever with their Aryan brethren. Not only the Aryanized North Indian communities and the Dravidians of South India have lived apart for centuries without close contact and with sharp differences and contrasts between them noticeable in every sphere and activity of communal life such as cultural, linguistic, social and racial; but the very South Indian Brahmans have been deliberately striving to keep alive a consciousness of their racial segregation and cultural isolation. Even the noble efforts of the great teacher Sri Ramanuja to coalesce all the communities in the name of Sri Vaishnavism were effectively neutralized by his aryophil vadagalai successors, who did not blush to proclaim their notion of the inferiority of Tamil to Sanskrit, spiritually, culturally and linguistically. Despite the catholicity and cosmopolitanism of the Tamils, people with Aryan pretensions have always maintained, if not also widened, the gulf between the Aryans and the Tamils. In the face of these hard facts it will be hypocrisy to ignore cultural and communal differences in South India. An undeveloped Aryan dialect of recent origin like Hindi is not adaptable



to, and therefore cannot be adopted by the Tamil people as a common national language in their own country. Any attempt therefore to force Hindi on the Tamil people can only serve to embitter and exacerbate all the Tamil people.

(d) The canard that Hindi is already a common language of seventeen crores of the Indians is only to be stated to be laughed out of countenance; and it does not require any elaborate refutation. The Hindi in which poet Tulasi-Das has composed his Ramayana is the Mythili dialect. It is not spoken outside the districts where it is a vernacular; and it is hardly intelligible ordinarily to the common people even in North Indian provinces like Bengal, Punjab, and Gujerat or Bombay. Periodically conferences are being convened to evolve formulae and laws of grammar to synthesise and systematise even the Mythili dialect. It is yet in a state of flux, if not quite inchoate as a literary tongue. It has nothing particularly attractive or of precious value to make it acceptable to non-Hindi communities with their own advanced literary languages; much less to contribute anything to enrich a highly-polished and fertile language like Tamil. There are other vernaculars in India, far more advanced linguistically, and richer in literature, and counting more adherents numerically than Hindi. Undoubtedly Urdu is more polished and more widely spoken or understood in the country than Hindi. And yet no one has ever suggested to make Urdu a compulsory common language for all India. Where then is the necessity or justification for the feverish attempt now to force Hindi down the throat of the people in the Tamil country?

The fact that no other Congress Cabinet, in any province other than Madras, has even thought of a similar proposal regarding Hindi cannot but arrest attention in this connection, and cannot fail to provoke serious thinking. All the Congress ministers and leaders in other provinces cannot be accused of want of patriotism and lack of prescience not to realise the need for a common language, or the practicability and prudence of introducing compulsorily in their own province in which, according to you, Hindi will not be so alien as in the Tamil-Nad. This must suffice



to show that in their opinion there is no need, nor any urgent necessity for Hindi being made a compulsory common second language for all future citizens. Even in the Madras Presidency it is well-known that this proposal for compulsory introduction of Hindi originated solely from yourself. It does not appear that you ever cared either to consult the people on whom you are forcing Hindi, or the Education-department and the responsible departmental officers before taking decisions or formulating proposals in pursuance of your personal views. You know that not a word was said in the election campaigns even remotely to suggest that Hindi would be forced on the Tamil youths. You have thus no mandate either from the people or from the Congress high-command. In truth, you were not outspoken even as regards your own attitude regarding the acceptance of office. You were sitting on the fence, while leaders like Mr. Satyamurthi and a few others were fighting desperately for office-acceptance. But when their efforts were about to bear fruit, you suddenly strided to the front keeping out of the local assembly, and thus out of rivalry, not only the champion-warriors for office-acceptance, but also the popularly elected Tamil-Nad Congress President; and assuming the role of Premier-ship, you are acting as the sole arbiter to dispense patronage, and to forge arbitrary measures both administrative and legislative, regardless of the views of even your own party-men. Your dictatorial and domineering ways, and intolerance of opposition are only the common-talk of your Congress-colleagues in their private circles, and are being freely and frequently adverted to in the respectable Press. The demoralisation of the Congressmen is so complete that even those who do disagree with you dare not openly express their views. Your power and patronage paralyse even persons like Mr. Nadimuthu Pillai, or reconvert and reconcile even calcitrant rebels to become your present staunch honourable colleagues. In these circumstances it is really refreshing to note that the honourable Education minister, after his recent mass-contact tour and despite his plighted loyalty to his chief, had to confess that the popular opposition to your proposal regarding Hindi is so wide-spread and intense that 'he has found it was not going to be too easy for the Government to carry (your)



proposal, and that even (your) congress government ought to change its opinion as the public desired". Would you accept this loyal advice of your own colleague, and pause and desist from a perverse policy at least now in response to the ascertained people's desire? You proclaim in one breadth that the Congress-ministers are only servants of the people bound to carry out the people's wishes. And at the next moment you threaten to introduce Hindi compulsorily in all schools heedless of all oppositions and agitations of the Tamil people. I wonder how these totally opposite asseverations of yours are to be reconciled to each other.

(e) There is only one thing more I wish to touch upon in this connection. You prophetically repeat pour assurance that the compulsory introduction of Hindi will not adversely affect the position of the Tamil language or the interests of the Tamil people. You have not chosen to invite or consult the considered views of competent scholars or leaders of Tamilian opinions. Savants and great teachers like Dr. Saminatha Iyer and Swami Vedachalam are reported to have expressed dissent from your prophecies. All the members of the Teaching Staff of the Tamil department of the only Tamil University in India have emphatically protested against your proposals, and maintain that the future of Tamil language and interests of Tamil culture would be seriously and detrimentally affected, if Hindi were to be compulsorily introduced in the schools. All the Pandits in the country are known to be opposed to your proposal, and have been consequently denounced as fools by your goodself and by some of your new colleagues in the Cabinet.

(f) Apart from the opposition of all these competent authorities, there are some strong objections raised specifically against your policy which appear to be irrefutable. Almost all the experienced educational experts like Dr. Arundale and Principal Saranatha Iyengar, and veteran Head-masters like Messrs. Ranganatha Iyengar of the Training school and Masillamoni of Trichinopoly have declared that compulsory study of Hindi for the students in the first three forms will be an infliction of too heavy a burden on pupils, and will be injurious both to their mental progress and physical health. The answer to this undeniable



objection appears to be that in the West, children are taught two or even three or four languages, and what is possible for them must be easy for the astute and assiduous South Indian pupils. In your prefatory introduction to one of the latest Hindi Primers, you have excelled yourself by suggesting that the children in the Tamil Nad or in South India should be asked to learn not only 2 or 3 languages, but a minimum of five languages (viz.,) (1) one's own mother-tongue for intercourse among one's own folks, (2) another Dravidian vernacular to move freely among his immediate neighbours (3) Hindi for travelling in All India and for federal-political-unity. (4) English as a Universal world-wide language and (5) Sanskrit for cultural perfection. This expresses the latest and most advanced phase of your educational aims and ideals. This may excite the admiration and earn the applause of your Boswellian Press. But as you must be aware, more responsible and respectable papers like the Hindu and the Mail unhesitatingly, promptly and pitilessly pilloried this argument of fallacious analogy. It is common knowledge that in Britain or America, there is no governmental interference, and much less coercion in any educational institution. All the Universities, Colleges and Schools are private endowments. Among these private institutions, only a very few like Oxford or Eton offer courses in the classics along with studies of English and other modern languages. Here again, classics were compulsory only to candidates seeking degrees or diplomas in language groups. All other students have to learn only their chosen special subjects in their own mother-tongue, Another noteworthy feature about them is that these few special schools and colleges are intended exclusively for the children of the most affluent and leisured classes, whose old-world fashions and fancies for parading acquaintance with classics and modern tongues were there sought to be pandered to. Times and tastes have changed even in those few private institutions; and courses of studies are being rapidly recast in unison with more rational modern requirements. But the most important thing to remember in this connection is that in the innumerable ordinary schools in those countries a plurality of languages are not being enforced for all the children, regardless of



their talents and tastes, careers and wishes. Were the facts even otherwise in those western countries, why should we copy such irrational and unnatural systems in our schools, where the existing courses are decidedly healthier and ought to be improved by being revised in a manner to give the maximum of information with minimum efforts to the children. And this has been demonstrably established to be possible only by making the mother-tongue a compulsory subject in itself and also the medium of instruction for all other subjects and through all courses and classes in schools as well as in colleges. The published reports, of the results of experiments carried on in this direction in the High schools in the Canarese districts have amply proved the wisdom of this demand for vernacularisation of all courses of studies in addition to making the local vernacular a compulsory language subject in all schools and colleges in every province, and also for enforcing the use of the vernacular for all public and social purposes, in courts, in legislatures, and in official communications in the provinces. To bring in Hindi anywhere in a province by compulsion or governmental coercion will cause the greatest and gravest injury to the cause of education of the children in their tender age. This is the considered judgment of almost all the experienced and expert educationists. You said in your speech to the Christian College students that you would not do anything in haste nor arbitrarily, and you would invite opinions and change or give up your proposals according to the advice of experienced teachers. Nevertheless, since most of them declared against your policy and proposals, you seem entirely to ignore their opposition, so you are reported, as if you are irretrievably committed to a policy, and you are impervious to all opinions and reasons opposed to your proposals. I still venture to hope that these reports do you more wrong than the reporters are aware of.

(g) This is not all. There is yet another objection to your proposals which should receive dispassionate and serious consideration at the hands of all disinterested statesmen in administering provinces with cultures and communities coming into close contact but yet do not coalesce. No one can and I



daresay you yourself would not deny that youths of some communities would enjoy at least at present and for sometime to come greater natural aptitude and advantage in learning Hindi, which is alien to Tamil but is closely allied to Sanskrit, than the Tamil-children whose mother tongue differs radically from Sanskrit and its dialects, as cheese from chalk. These two families of languages are poles asunder phonetically, morphologically and syntactically. The customs and cultural traditions have kept some communities in the Tamil-Nad in close and living contact with Sanskrit for religious and many social purposes. And these would learn Hindi with decidedly greater advantage than their Tamilian compeers.

(h) Again there are proposals of reorganisation and impending changes regarding the courses and future of the Secondary School Education<sup>o</sup> in our province. It is envisaged, of course in the name of lofty ideals of higher education, that an effective block will be introduced at the end of the third-form-course, to prevent over-crowding in the high schools; and that all except a few securing a very high percentage of marks at the end of their lower secondary course would be denied admission into the high school or upper secondary classes, which are preparatory to advanced University education. This filtration is to take place with Hindi as an additional item of the obstacle race. The disastrous results to the pupils of non-Sanskritic or pure Tamil communities of a competition on such unequal terms with the rivals of privileged castes do not require any arguments to bring conviction at once home to all unbiassed judges. What is to be the future of the youths of these communities who may be debarred from higher education and all it may imply, and who will be hard hit for no fault of theirs, but by unsympathetic if not maliciously hostile new policies introduced in the educational systems of their own province. There is also another fact mentioned in this connection which deserves some considered answer and cannot be dismissed off-hand by all anxious to avoid communal jealousies. There are about 8,000 lower secondary schools in this province; and if Hindi now were to be compulsorily introduced in all these schools in the lower three forms, at



least as many if not more teachers would have to be employed. At present almost all the available trained Hindi-teachers are either outsiders or non-Tamil persons: not only now but for a good long time, this cadre of teachers will not be open for representatives of all communities in the Tamil area on equal terms.

(i) More than all these, a language organically embodies, and therefore naturally represents and stands for the culture of the race or people whose mother-tongue it is. The connection between a vernacular and the culture it represents is so intimate and organic that it cannot bear being trifled or tampered with. Hindi is alien to the Tamils and represents a culture different from that of the Tamils. If Hindi were to be studied as a mere optional, and only by such as may find some use for it, it may not seriously matter to the Tamil-race and to their indigenous culture. But if Hindi were to be made a compulsory common language for all people in future, their racial genius and culture cannot escape being adversely affected. You may perhaps prophesy a newer culture born by the forced fusion of Tamil with Hindi: but it would not be the Tamil culture any way. The organic growth and development of a culture and its language by natural contact with others of their ilks is one thing, which may even be desirable. For, only a few elements and suitable factors will then be assimilated in such natural processes. But unnatural and artificial forced fusions will only breed undesirable mongrels; if not also monsters. Voluntary and very limited contact with foreign languages like English, and that only for securing jobs for individuals under alien rulers, did not and could not touch the heart or the arteries of the Indian vernaculars, particularly of the advanced types like Tamil. There can be no analogy between the casual individual contacts of a few job-hunting Tamils with English, and the threatened universalisation of Hindi in the Tamil-Nad as a compulsory common language. The Tamil culture therefore stands to lose its individuality and priceless value by forced fusion with Hindi.

All these ills may have to be put up with only if it were inevitable. Will a Congress Premier be justified to reward the Tamils with such a precious present for the votes they enthusi-



astically cast to elect the Congress candidates and to form the Congress Cabinet?

(j) You say Hindi will offer profitable advantages adequately to compensate for all these inevitable ills and evils. One of your suggestions is that Hindi may reduce unemployment in the Tamil-Nad by opening out avenues to the Tamils in non-Tamil India. This is more than reckoning without the host; this is really counting the chicks even before your fowl lays its eggs, not to say of their not being hatched at all. Hindi must first be accepted as a common language in all non-Hindi provinces of India. In the first place there seems to be no near prospect of any such urgent demand of Hindi elsewhere, perhaps because there are no Congress ministers blessed with your patriotic fervour and prophetic vision. And then, the problem of unemployment is no special misfortune of the Tamil-Nad, but prevails and promises daily to grow worse in every other province and country. This promise therefore of yours to help the Tamils to find more jobs outside their province than may be open to outsiders in our country will afford little real solace worth musing.

(k) The only other advantage you reiterate is the occasional and temporary use of Hindi to such of the Tamils as may have to go to North India. You were reported in one of your speeches to have declared, you would not allow Hindi to be used by any persons for any purpose in the Tamil area. Where then is the justification, and much less the need to make Hindi a compulsory common language for all the Tamil children for all time to come. Those merchants and politicians whose business, profession, or profit may require Hindi or any other language may be left to acquire it voluntarily. At the most some facility for studying Hindi as an optional subject in addition to the local vernacular may be provided for within reasonable limits in special areas or particular institutions, but the policy of making Hindi a compulsory common language for the whole Tamil-Nad is supremely unwise as it is unwarranted.



(b) Further, the compulsory introduction of Hindi in schools in the first three forms will be worse than useless. You are forced to admit the objection of the school masters that it will add to the burden of the already heavy curriculams and syllabuses in schools, and hamper the children's education seriously. Your alternative to reduce or cut out other informing subjects to make room for Hindi is objected to by all competent educational experts as unnecessarily reducing the quality and value of education needed in the interests of children and the country at large. There is yet another side to this shield to which you seem to turn a closed if not a blind eye. A smattering of an alien tongue like Hindi taught only in three higher elementary or lower secondary classes, and then discontinued and therefore forgotten by non-users in their further school and college courses, could serve no useful purpose whatever to any one at any time. It will be only so much time and energy wasted, and may tend only to torpedo the higher education of most of the unfortunate school-going Tamil-children. Were Hindi to serve any purpose even to the few who may require it in their after life, they must learn it only at the end of their courses of studies as a sort of post-graduate, or post-diploma course; and that must be entirely optional to such as may voluntarily desire such extra-equipment. An infliction of Hindi on all children in the first three forms in schools will be thoroughly unprofitable and can avail no useful purpose whatsoever.

How do the Tamils alone of all people in this presidency deserve this vissitation which for the present at all events you do not choose to inflict on the other Dravidian communities. Again you have also assured already in response to the protests of the Muslims that you won't force either Hindi language or Nagari script on any Mohamedan against his own will and without his consent. Why should you not make this gesture of good will to all the citizens of Tamil Nad alike? It cannot be that you surrender to the Muslims' militant threats of revolt and choose to ignore the mild protests and appeals of the peace loving Tamils. And you have not told us yet any other reason for this invidious discrimination.



(m) You want us all to believe that Hindi will not affect the future of Tamil. You may be a great authority in pure politics and political strategy. With all deference to your patriotism and political wisdom, you should grant us leave to differ from you in academic, linguistic, and cultural problems which are outside the purviews of your special field of politics. Hindi is one of the Indian vernaculars. Clothed with prestige and privileges peculiar to an imperial state language, Hindi is sure to become a dangerous rival to Tamil. You are already coaxing the unthinking Tamil youths to look sweet upon Hindi which you are introducing to them as a new mistress. You are offering, at least in promise, tempting dowers by way of prospective employment to all the young men to dispose them to receive and flirt freely with this foreign damsel of Hindi. Any language enjoying special favours of the government in power would enjoy undue advantages over the local vernaculars, which the former with the adventitious state-aid, would gradually eclipse and emasculate, even if it could not exterminate the latter. English has done mischief enough in this direction although the rulers never endeavoured compulsorily to make it a common language in India. It is undeniable that Tamil has suffered by calculated neglect of her children, induced & caused by the importance given to English by the rulers for the time being. The Congress and the Tamils fought and only recently won a victory over our alien rulers to drop the undue importance to English in our schools. We should not allow Hindi to stalk into the void and become even a worse ghoul than English, perpetually to tantalise Tamil in her own home. And yet English is much more foreign, and has had much less aid and inducement than Hindi will receive, to be a rival to Tamil in the Tamil-Nad. No thoughtful Tamilian could be deceived by the platitudinous propaganda that Hindi will be no rival to Tamil. If Hindi were only an optional, there may be force in such argument. But when Hindi is made a compulsory subject, and is put up as the imperial state language with added prestige and special privileges, coupled also with prospects promised by persons in power, it requires no seers to foretell the mischief Hindi may work against Tamil as a national language in the Tamil Nad. If any future Federal Government were to



threaten the Tamil province with such a misfortune, it should be the duty of the government of the Tamil province to resist it with all its might; and the Tamil people would stand behind it solidly, and support such a fight. But what is to be said, if instead of that, persons calling themselves Tamilians when called to power propose measures calculated to put Tamil at a disadvantage in her own house as against a new upstart-rival they deliberately invite and introduce into the home.

(n) Apart from this baneful effect of Hindi, if and when made a compulsory common language, on the present and future prospects of Tamil as a vernacular, the cultural individuality and linguistic development of Tamil would also be deleteriously affected by the compulsory introduction of Hindi as a common language in the Tamil Nad. In the system of alphabet, in the phonetic values, in the orthographical, etymological, morphological and syntactical principles, in the vocabulary as well as in grammar, in idioms and conceptual arrangements, in fact in every respect Hindi is the antipodes of Tamil. Their constant intercourse under compulsion can never be cordial; nor would it conduce to the healthy development of Tamil language and literature. The effects of reaction of such a contact cannot be contemplated with equanimity. Tamil is often accused of perversely refusing to forego her linguistic integrity and independence by adopting the letters of Sanskrit alphabet and the Sanskrit vocabulary freely as her other sister Dravidian languages have done. But the Tamils themselves are unrepentent, and pride themselves on this perversity which has maintained the integrity of their language against all odds and in spite of many vicissitudes that confronted them through ages of unostentatious and unflinching resistance to the aggressive Aryanism. They cannot now therefore stand by and allow their cherished heritage to be poison-gassed or torpedoed in the name of a pseudo-patriotic cult of a common language for a whole continent and at the bidding of neopolitical pontiffs. Already half-educated demagogues are torturing Tamil with their gibberish in the press and on the political platforms; men incapable of avoiding even spelling mistakes proudly parade their mistakes as reformed styles and new fashions. Writings with unpronounceable consonants at the



beginning of words and abominable syntactical aberrations, all jarring to the ears of the Tamilians, are getting prolific day by day in the name of linguistic reform. Sanskrit is the highly developed and polished language. Nevertheless the Tamils ordained that all the usages in Sanskrit should not be received as they are into Tamil; and specific rules for suitable assimilation were framed with a view to maintain the genius of their language in tact. To reverse the rules of syntax or recklessly violate all the rudimental principles of etymology and orthography, cannot be tolerated in any language, and much less admired as attempts of linguistic reform when indulged in by persons insolently ignorant of even the elements of grammar. Hindi has neither a literature to inspire, nor a system of grammar, nor vocabulary to enrich Tamil, which for its polish and poetic wealth is considered the equal of Greek and superior to every other classical language by competent European savants. By affording facilities for borrowing incongruous sounds and unassimilable words, the only effect of the contact of Hindi on Tamil would be blighting and baneful. As a mere optional, the number of those who may study Hindi may be very limited, and their power to hurt Tamil may be negligible. On the contrary by introducing Hindi as a compulsory common language for all, Tamil as an independant linguistic entity will be doomed. These are only some of the evils, which your proposals, if carried out would inevitably cause to Tamil. While numerous classical languages have died down, Tamil alone has survived and is still flourishing now for over 5000 years, only because she has maintained her native simplicity and did not allow deleterious injections, unnatural manipulations and monster-graftings into her constitution. Reckless experiments to dovetail the recently Hindi-ised Sanskrit with the pristine-pure Tamil tongue may produce disastrous consequences both to the future of the Tamil people and to the destiny of Tamil language.

Thus your proposal to compulsorily introduce Hindi in all schools in the Tamil Nad will not only produce no lasting benefit to the Tamil people, but may lead to serious detriment to their language and culture. No one will attribute to you any deliberate motive to cause injury to the future of the Tamil language or to



adversely affect the interest of higher education of the Tamil children. But if inevitably your proposals are to lead to such injuries and impairments, you cannot escape the charge of intending such consequences. Intention, you know, is not equivalent to motive; and ethics and logic as much as law would presume every rational man to intend all consequences which may naturally flow from any specific act of his. I have tried to show that your proposals will lead definitely to the detriment of the Tamil people in more ways than one. And if knowing this, you do not desist from carrying out your disastrous proposals unparalleled in the political history of any country, you must of course accept responsibility for intending all the evils and injuries which would result from your proposals to the Tamil people as well as to their language and culture. This is a step which no statesman would be likely to take in the teeth of universal opposition of all who are competent to speak about the matter.

And yet it is reported you are bent upon carrying your proposals through and compulsorily introducing Hindi in all schools, for the present at least, only in the Tamil area. You are known to be one of the most intelligent, and after the late Lokamanya, the most astute and sagacious political leader. It is difficult to believe that you would launch a new policy all of a sudden and without a purpose. Your sangfroid and tenacity are only too well-known. Nevertheless you cannot be insensible to the great responsibilities of your new position.

While in office, you cannot be thinking only of your position and strength of following as a party leader. The goal of the Congress is to serve the whole community; and as a responsible Chief minister to the Local Government, you would allow, I daresay, all the people in the province, irrespective of their political and economic party leanings, may have a claim on your consideration and official conscience; and they may expect that you would put your declared democratic ideals into practice in all measures of your administration. Without a mandate either from the Congress High command or from the people concerned, why should you threaten the Tamil people with compulsory



introduction of Hindi in all schools for their children ? As it is your policy appears to be incomprehensible to the public. But for your letting the cat out of the bag in your speech to the members of the Sanskrit Society in the Loyola college, the objective behind your proposal would yet remain inscrutable. You were pleased to frankly declare in that speech of yours in Loyola College that you wanted Hindi to be made a compulsory subject because you wanted every future citizen in Tamil Nad should study Sanskrit. You further elaborated your thesis by explaining that Hindi was virtually Sanskrit, and therefore compulsory study of Hindi by all would effectuate compulsory universal study of Sanskrit. This object may do you great credit as a staunch and devoted follower of the great Desikar's school of Vaishnavism. But you should permit the ordinary Tamil people to doubt the wisdom and efficacy of your proposals either in the interest of the Tamil people as whose minister you make these proposals, or even in the interest of Sanskrit which you so much wish to serve by vicariously forcing the study of Hindi. The tolerance and open-handed welcome of the Tamils for Sanskrit are known to have commenced at least 3000 years ago, and to have continued through all these long centuries in this country. From the time of Tholkappiar, Tamil scholars cordially maintained contact with Sanskrit and made even provisions in their great grammatical treatises for the reception and adaptation of Sanskrit words not phonetically conforming to the Tamil alphabet. This voluntary association of Tamil with Sanskrit has been fruitful and healthy in building up mutual regard, and increasingly friendly intercourse between the representatives of these respective cultures. But any attempt to enforce exclusive or enhanced respect for Sanskrit would only rouse resistance and may even lead to avoidable hostility. Moreover Hindi might even impair the devotion for Sanskrit even more directly and effectively than you seem to be aware of. For, the members of the Sanskrit Academy in Madras after mature consideration passed a resolution protesting against the compulsory introduction and spread of Hindi not only as injurious to the progress of the vernaculars, but as also detrimental to the study of Sanskrit among the people on whom Hindi is thrust. Thus you will see that not only the Tamils oppose your proposals, but that



even the votaries of Sanskrit fight shy of Hindi. I cannot think that for the sake of prestige you would sacrifice the more sacred democratic Congress principle of respecting people's sentiments and view-points. Firmness will be a virtue only when righteously used in defence of unforsakable moral principles. Unyielding attitude in defiance of public opinion in matters involving no principles, but only questions of expediency admitting bonafide differences of opinion will be obstinacy, of which with your culture wisdom and experience as a leader you will be entirely incapable. As a matter of fact Mahatmaji's nobility owning what he chose to call his Himalayan blunders has only heightened his great prestige; accepting one's own error of judgement may not and need not affect one's prestige. Your reputation as a congress statesman will be considerably enhanced if even at this stage you realise the error of your hasty proposals and declare your readiness to act up to the wishes and will of the people. But instead of desisting from hasty decisions and giving consideration to your opponents, you are resorting, if one is to believe the Press reports of your speeches which remain uncontradicted, to frequent fusillades of facetious raillery against them. In the "Dinamony" dated 16-10-'37 and in the "Tamil Mani" dated 17-10-37, you are reported to have treated your opponents in the following choice language: ஹிந்தியைக் கட்டாய பாடமாக்குவதால் தமிழுக்கு ஆபத்து வந்துவிடும் என்று சிலர் கூக்குரல் போடுவதைப் பற்றிப் பிரதம மந்திரி இக்கூட்டத்தில் பிரஸ்தாபித்தார். "இதுவரையில் இவர்களுக்குக் கொஞ்சம் அறிவு இருக்கிற தென்று நினைத்தேன். ஆனால் இவர்கள் அறிவிலிகள் என்பது இப்போது நன்றாகத் தெரிகிறது.....ஹிந்தி கட்டாய பாடமாக ஏற்பட்டுத்தான் தீரும்"

Again in the "Hindu" you were reported to have said that if the Tamils do not heed your advice and fail to learn Hindi, your North Indian friends would soon call the Tamils as the "Vanaras" from the South. Your facile claim for a monopoly of wisdom and to call all your opponents fools may be passed over as the weakness of old age and of irritation. But the hauteur that found expression in such vile abuse of the whole Tamil people as monkeys for their fault, if fault it were, of refusing to learn Hindi is, in my humble opinion unpardonable. Your brusquerie and discourtesy to persons in not even acknowledg-



ing their official communications addressed to you may be due to the exigencies of your new official position, But on no account can even your friends justify lapses amounting to unprovoked insults to the whole race of the Tamils. I confess I was somewhat puzzled to find a leader like you who strove so long to earn the sobriquet of South Indian Gandhi should so suddenly show such sneering contempt for the South Indians as to confront them with unacceptable and startling proposals without even the formality of consulting their views. And now this insult you are reported to have offered to the Tamil makes me feel very uneasy even more on your account than that of the people you insulted. You are a true Vaishnavite, and as such a worshipper of 'Siriya Thiruvadi'. The *Vanarasenas* by keeping their plighted truth to Rama deserve better than a reproach from all true Vaishnavites. The alien *Vanaraks*, who honourably helped the Aryan Rama to rescue his wife are more respectable than the Aryan Rakshasas who robbed him of his wife and attempted to ravish her; and thus they deserve more to be praised than despised. I do not know what you meant by suggesting that the North Indians might call the Tamils '*Vanarasenas*'. If it were only a compliment, there is no meaning in that reference. If an insult were intended, the reference is doubly unhappy. Apart from the unseemly and inappropriate reference to the Vanarasena as a term of abuse for the Tamils who might refuse to learn Hindi at your bidding, may I take leave to point out to you the logical inaccuracy involved in your analogy? Almost all the Vanara leaders knew and spoke Sanskrit. Hanuman in particular was a *Navavyakarana Panditha*. Rama is not said to have conversed with his Simian friends and allies in monkey's gibberish. Your reference to monkeys therefore would be more apt only for people who might willingly learn to talk Sanskrit in its modern metamorphosed Hindi; and the recalcitrant Tamils refusing to learn Hindi, could not be the kinsmen of the Vanara whose common second language was some Simian Sanskrit.

I venture to think such thoughtless and unthinking raillery is unbecoming of leaders of your position, and ought to be scrupulously avoided. You may or may not think your critics worthy of a reply to their communications. But I still hope that as a



declared Congressman you would not fail to consider the volume and strength of opposition to your proposals in the Tamil country which the Education-minister after his recent mass-contact tour frankly and publicly admitted in a speech reported both in the Madras Mail and in the Hindu, and also to pause and weigh the potential dangers to Tamil in the future of the Congress government and to the peaceful progress of the people in the Tamil Nad. If you do so, I feel assured that you will not hastily allow your proposals to be rushed through, but would change your policy in deference to the people's desire as suggested by the Hon'ble Dr. Subbarayan candidly and courageously in his last speech touching on this very question, which he delivered at a public meeting to your benefit I venture to think, even more than that of his listeners.

Hoping you will not mistake my opposition to your proposals regarding Hindi as any unfriendly personal acrimony, and with regards as ever.

*I have the honour to be,*

*Sir,*

*Your most obedient servant,*

(Signed) **S. S. Bharathi.**

ANNAMALAINAGAR, }  
25-10-37.

*S. S. Bharathi*



