

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

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AHMEDABAD — SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1956

TWO ANNAS

"LORD OF HUMILITY"

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Lord of humility, dwelling in the little
pariah hut,

help us to search for Thee throughout
that fair land

watered by Ganges, Brahmaputra and
Jamuna.

Give us receptiveness, give us open-
heartedness,

give us Thy humility, give us the
ability and willingness

to identify ourselves with the masses
of India.

O God, who does help only when man feels
utterly humble,

grant that we may not be isolated from
the people

we would serve as servants and friends.

Let us be embodiments of self-sacrifices,
embodiments of godliness,

humility personified, that we may know
the land better

and love it more.

Wardha, 12-9-'34

By Pyarelal

MAHATMA GANDHI — THE LAST PHASE

(Introduction by Dr. Rajendra Prasad)

Authentic Biography of Mahatma Gandhi dealing with the last phase of his life is in two volumes. The First Volume of nearly 800 pages with 44 pages of photographs will be released on 12th February, 1956, Mahatma Gandhi's Shradddha day. The second volume will be published in due course. It will contain equal number of pages. The volumes are priced at Rs. 20/- each. The registered postage etc. of each volume is Rs 3/-. Advance orders accompanied with the amount of price and registered postage etc. will be accepted and given priority in execution. Amount should be sent by M.O.

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WHITHER SWARAJ ?

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

I.

Three-fold Gateway to Hell

We had the ill fortune of witnessing again tragic happenings like those of the days of the Partition of India. Its poignancy is heightened by the fact that it was in Bombay city and in the 8th year of our independence! The movement for Sanyukta Maharashtra with Bombay city as its capital became the cause thereof.

It is said, man is a social animal; society civilizes him to an extent. Thus society wields a certain amount of social control over the brute in man. However, its influence is only skin-deep and no more. Like the skin over the body, it is only a beautiful thin layer covering underneath an equally ugly brutishness. Therefore whenever such a layer of civilizing social control is ruptured or bursts, the brutish ugliness comes out in all its hideousness.

Such a bursting of the layer of social control is generally caused by the eruption of some of the most sinful propensities that inhere deeply in us. Saints and Scriptures have repeatedly warned us about them, though in different terms. See for example, काम एवः क्रोध एवः रजोगुणसमुद्भवः. (It is lust, it is wrath, born of the guna-Rajas) (Gita 3-37); मा गुहः कस्यचिद् धनम् (Covet not the wealth of another at all) Isha Upanishad); पापमूल अभिमान (Pride and ego is the source of Sin) (Tulsidas); त्रिविधं नरकस्यैवं द्वारं ताडनमात्मनः । कामः क्रोधः तथा लोभः ॥ (Three-fold is this gate of hell leading men to perdition — Lust, Wrath and Greed. (Gita 16-21).

When desire or avarice and greed knows no bounds and has ego and pride as its ally, it transmutes itself as anger, malice and vengeance. These sentiments are like wild fire all devouring. The Sanyukta Maharashtra agitation had provoked such sentiments in regard to the question of Bombay city. And none forewarned himself about this dangerous feature of that agitation. Consequentially, the fire of anger, malice and vengeance overtook Bombay, and to extinguish it Government had to take precious lives and property worth crores of rupees got destroyed.

Even when such fire of mad frenzy was burning, there must have been unknown men and

women, who will have heroically staked themselves to quench this fire with the cool waters of human love for their fellowmen in danger and distress. It is on the strength of such virtues only that human society persists and helps keep on one's faith in humanity even under such trying circumstances.

When I write this I have not in mind Maharashtra only. What we see all round us in India today going on in the name of states reorganization (S.R.) is infected, more or less, with this virus of greed and infatuation. Let us all therefore meditate upon this with deep introspection and pray in our hearts with the saint-poet of Maharashtra—*पापाची दासना नको दावू दोळों* (Oh Lord, save me from tempting sin).

II

S. R. Development and Unity

Today is Independence Day. We gave to ourselves a Republican State six years ago. We are entering its 7th year today. During these years we have achieved tremendously great things. However, the situation today is so distressing that it would be as wrong to harp upon them as upon our glorious past. The whole situation is so ominous that all our achievements under independence might vanish in a moment. It therefore calls for all vigilance on our part.

Today we have launched upon a new venture of states reorganization. It is as important and consequential as the merger of Indian States of the British regime.

Fortunately enough, we started to achieve the Indian States merger at its right time. We had then in our midst such an astute administrator-statesman like Sardar Patel to tackle it. What would have been our plight if this had not been done then and would have remained to be done till now? I shudder to think of what would have happened to us!

An idea crosses my mind here—how would it have fared if we had immediately thereafter undertaken the venture of states reorganization? It was and is surely one of the first few things that should be achieved under Swaraj. But we missed the bus. Then vanished the right atmosphere for solving such a difficult thing easily and well. However, the thing itself was so arrestingly necessary that the country had to heed to it. But we could not prosper in it. Getting tired of it, there are some who, in despair, say we might better postpone or put it in cold storage. That would be another mistake, I think.

We began to implement it on the basis of the S. R. C. Report. Lots of impediments, opposition, strife and commotion started on that count. Seeing all this, there is now afoot a new idea that we might partition the country into five or six zones! If this suggestion is born of our weakness and fear to face the issues squarely—as an

escapist move, then we might take it that it will hardly profit us by delivering the goods.

Why are we asking for states reorganization? Is it not to secure better conditions to establish true Swaraj in our country? Then, this should fundamentally be thought out from the point of view of the dumb and illiterate masses who seem to be almost out of consideration here. It is necessary that all administration under Swaraj should be conducted in their language. If we let go this chief point of approach, then what else is the principle on the basis of which we might guide ourselves when thinking out the reorganization?

Today the question has got mixed up with the politics of industrial and economic development. Therefore it hangs too heavily on the minds of the politicians or the diplomats.

The nature of the development envisaged at present is centralistic. Crores of rupees that are distributed from the Centre for the purpose attract the covetous eyes of States leaders and politicians. Therefore, in this sphere also, what is principally provoked in the minds of the classes is **लोक—** avarice and greed.

That every region may proceed to so undertake broad-based countrywide development programmes on a decentralized basis as to enthuse common people to take interest in them, is a way that is today almost lost to us. Consequently, instead of healthy rivalry on a self-reliant basis, we see the scramble for power and influence to secure the largest advantage. The politician only aims to secure for his region the largest amount of influence over the developmental distribution of crores from the Centre. Under the influence of this urge, he is driven to measures like having bigger regions or even zones so that they may carry greater weight and influence in the central affairs of the land. The real constructive or nation-building works of people's education, health, small-scale and village industries, prohibition etc. become only secondary, even if they be considered worthy to be included in a development programme. Really speaking, these are the very things that directly touch the people. They can take part in their achievement with a feeling of national unity and patriotism; and their implementation will mean crores of rupees in national income even. But this living way of development that will touch the minds and the day-to-day life of the masses is almost out of any serious consideration.

Will our leaders think of this serious problem?

26-1-56

P.S. I am adding this on 30th January, 1956—Gandhiji's anniversary day. May we all search our hearts to see where we are! Whither we are going! What we are at!

30-1-56

(From Gujarat)

SHRI VINOBA WITH THE COMMUNISTS IN ANDHRA

The communists complained that the Government of Andhra wanted to deprive the Lankas of the lands of which they have been in possession for the last forty years, and distribute the same, of course as a reward for political suffering, to those who were already in possession of lands.

The communist friends pointed out how they have been harassed and arrested for raising their voice against the alleged injustice. Their first suggestion therefore was to distribute the lands to the landless political sufferers only. They wanted Vinobaji to support the Communist Party in their struggle against the policy of the Government. By another suggestion, they wanted Vinobaji to support the communists in preventing the evictions which were going on such a large scale by the landlords in Andhra.

His Approach and Method

Acharya Vinoba had asked the communist friends to make any positive suggestion in the direction of resolving the land problem and had assured that he would readily accept those if the same appealed to him. On hearing, therefore, the above two suggestions Vinobaji exclaimed:

"If what you say is true, the action of the Government in distributing the said lands to those political sufferers who were already in possession of land, is indeed wrong. It happened in Uttar Pradesh also. But there the recipients of such lands readily responded to the call of Bhoodan and surrendered their lands for the landless."

Regarding evictions, Vinoba pointed out how he had already declared long ago in unambiguous words that the tillers should refuse to quit the lands in their possession and be ready to face whatever might befall them, bravely and non-violently. Even at the A.I.C.C. session at Brahmapuri he had spoken on that point, in public as well as in private, and had more than once issued written instructions also, in this connection. The landlords, added Vinobaji, were now afraid as they did not know what legislative action the Government may feel called upon to take to prevent evictions.

Why Not Organize the Landless?

Replying to the query of the communists whether it would not be advisable to organize the landless instead of walking from village to village and house to house for collecting land-gifts, Vinoba explained:

"Our meetings are attended by both the landless and the landlords. We present our demand for land as a right and as the representatives of the landless. As a result, a tide of awakening is evident in the landless of this country. The sales of land have received a set-back because people are confident that they will receive land through Bhoodan. In Orissa the Gram-dan movement has presented a unique phase. Not one or two but all the landholders in seven hundred villages have surrendered their right of ownership in favour of the landless. Could this happen without the awakening in the landless?"

Social Transformation

The communist friends pointed out how they did not believe in the collective transformation of the society as a whole through the process of Bhoodan though they admitted its efficacy in bringing about a change in the selected few.

Appreciating their point of view Vinoba said that his was the mission to create a universal awakening and without an exception. That was exactly why he demanded and accepted donations from the poor also. He was as a matter of fact, trying to form a society which would voluntarily renounce its ownership, at least in part if not in full. It will be an army which will have its moral effect

on the society as a whole. "Our approach, therefore," he said, "is fourfold. First we try to create the awakening among the people. Secondly, we try to bring about a change of heart in the landholders. Thirdly, we try to bring pressure on the Government. And last but not least, we want to raise a non-violent army to be ready to make necessary sacrifices in case all the above threefold attempts do not bear the desired fruit."

"The success of our mission," continued Vinoba, "depends on our efficacy and on the intensity of our work. There is however no room for any misunderstanding about our goal." He made it clear that he did not consider it either a sign of merit or of strength to be either landless or poor. "Were there not men among the landless and the poor," he asked, "who were addicted to drink, and void of character, cleanliness, and what not? Our mission was, therefore, to convey our ideas to them and inspire them to give to the society whatever they possessed—land, wealth, energy, talent—everything. The various donations mentioned above, through their process of self-purification, will qualify even the poorest of the countrymen to enrol himself in the non-violent army, which we want to form."

Regarding their lack of faith in the theory of change of heart, Vinoba pertinently asked if they themselves did not stand as an illustration of such a change. For, during his first Telangana tour the communists not only had no faith in this movement but had actively opposed it in various ways. Today this position had changed and they were now convinced at least of the goodwill of the man as well as his mission; and hence the sympathy that was so much evinced by them in the mission.

The Only Two Parties

Referring to the different political parties in the country Vinoba pointed out that as a matter of fact, there existed not many but only two parties—the liberals and the misers, and that the latter had penetrated in all the parties. It would indeed be a great achievement if the Communist Party got rid of the niggardly element in it. If the parties are but purged of this element, their organizations will indeed be strong even if the membership is counted in but hundreds instead of in thousands and lakhs. "Bogus members, whether they are communists or Congressmen, do not and cannot indeed add to the strength of their respective parties," he asserted.

Bhoodan and Material Good

To the allegation of the communists that the Bhoodan movement, except its moral aspect, did not materially benefit the poor, Vinoba asked if the two and a half lakhs of acres distributed among seventy-five thousand families did not really amount to material benefit? He pointed out that the country could not be benefited unless the morality and the integrity of the people were enhanced. Material good therefore, was to be combined with spiritual progress and Bhoodan movement did combine the two. Moreover, had he not, through the movement, tried to bring pressure on the Government? And was not the movement responsible for creating an awakening among the different political parties in the country? Did not all this contribute to the material good of the people?

(Abridged from *Bhoodan*, January 24, 28, 1956)

By K. G. Mashruwala
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Feb. 11

1956

REPLACEMENT v. RETENTION OF ENGLISH

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

Some prominent public men of Tamil Nad have issued a statement from Madras pleading for indefinite retention of English as the official language for inter-State and Union purposes, i.e. for continuing the use of English as it obtained under the British rule.

We know that the Constitution of India provides for the retention of English as the official language upto 1965. Even so, the President has the power, under the Constitution, to authorize the use of Hindi, the Official Language of the Union, in addition to the English language. After 1965 the Parliament may, by law, provide for its retention for specified purposes only, if and as felt necessary.

Further, under Article 344 of the Constitution, the President has to constitute a Commission twice every five years from the commencement of the Constitution, the first of which is, as we know, already appointed last year and is working at present. And the President has further powers to issue directions restricting the use of English for all or any of the official purposes of the Union, according to the recommendations of such a Commission and a Parliamentary Committee to be specially constituted for the purpose under Article 344 (4).

This shows that the Constitution lays down restriction on the use of English as the official language of the Union, and its progressive replacement by Hindi by 1965, with a safeguard that English might be retained for specific purposes by a special law of Parliament, if replacement by Hindi could not be negotiated fully well by then.

The Tamil Nad statement referred to above, surprisingly enough, is entirely silent about the above constitutional requirement of the place of Hindi in the new set-up and says that English be retained indefinitely! This is a big omission which needs to be explained.

There is another thing in the Madras statement which is also significant. It says that the following two matters—1. What should be the State official language? and 2. What should be the medium of instruction?—“are kept distinct inasmuch as they have to be governed by totally other considerations and should not be mixed up with this issue” of the Official Language of the Union.

This is obviously not a correct or justifiable position to take. These two issues are vitally interlinked with the larger issue of the Official Language of the Union. Therefore, it will be

wrong to approach the language problem in such a piecemeal or distorted manner.

Again if we look at the Constitution of India, we see that it presents us with a whole idea or general picture of how we should tackle the language question in all its aspects and solve it to the complete satisfaction of all the true and legitimate claims and aspirations of our great regional languages and the States; and it also requires us to develop an **आन्तर भाषा** (a common all-India language) of our own (which is not to be English) as “the medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India”—as the expression of the great Indian people's new life and endeavour as a free and independent—“sovereign democratic republic,” and consequently as an instrument of forging the nation's unity by securing to it the A-I. medium of a living *Indian* language.

The Tamil Nad statement needs clarification about the points of omission and commission noted above. It claims its justification on *practical* grounds which do not bear any serious scrutiny. And more: they are anti-democratic and bad from the point of view of our national self-respect. Retention of English, a language known to some extent to barely half a per cent of our people, as the official language will mean the rule of a microscopic class—an English educated bureaucracy though Indian. It will continue to govern our educational system, to the detriment of true education,—to mention only a few of its evils. We did not fight for Swaraj to retain this humiliation. However, I may not dilate upon this any more.

5-2-'56

P. M. ON BHOODAN

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru distributed 1,000 acres in Nilambur during his recent Kerala Tour. He evinced great interest in the movement. The distribution was done in a big public meeting. He very warmly shook hands with the Adivasi who was chosen as the representative of the donees. He made the following reference about Bhoodan during his speech which mainly dealt with the harm done by the communal bodies taking part in politics:

“You saw that I distributed a *pramanapatra* to a landless Adivasi friend just now.

“I am glad to be associated with the Bhoomidan movement here at Nilambur. It was a particularly happy thought to have chosen an Adivasi, of all people, to receive this *pramanapatra* from me. I congratulate the donors on their generosity and wish this worthy example will be copied by others as well. I congratulate too all those who received this land as also the Bhooodan workers who arranged this function.”

During a speech in another public meeting in Malabar where he was dealing with eviction of tenants by landlords he spoke the following about the Bhooodan movement:

“We have put an end to big landlords and Zamindars. But the land problem is not solved yet. You know Acharya Vinoba Bhave is carrying on the Bhooodan movement. His is the best method for the solution of the land problem in our country. He has already received millions of acres of land all over India. That is a remarkable thing which probably would not have happened in other countries. That is the Indian way of tackling even social problems where vested interests come into conflict. So we must certainly encourage the Bhooodan movement. But that is not enough. We have

to proceed otherwise by legislation and other means to complete this work of land reform."

The land distributed by Panditji is very rich and fertile and steps are being taken to rehabilitate the donees before the next monsoons.

(Reproduced from *Bhodon*, 24-1-'56)

HINDI IN TAMIL NAD SCHOOLS

(By S. R. Sastri)

There is a popular demand that Hindi should be made an integrate part of school curriculum. At present in the schools in the Madras State, Hindi is taught as an alternative to craft from Form I to Form VI and marks in the examination are not taken into consideration either for class promotion or eligibility to the University course or Government service. Hence, students are indifferent towards the study of Hindi and concentrate their attention on the examination subjects, such as English, Maths., Science, Social Studies etc.

In Travancore-Cochin State and Andhra State schools,* marks obtained in Hindi are counted for promotion or eligibility, why should not the Madras State follow the system obtaining in the neighbouring States? Why should the Tamil boys lag behind in equipping themselves with the knowledge of Hindi? Or Madras Government may give a reward of Rs 15/- (S.S.L.C. Examination fee) to the students who obtain marks 50 per cent and above in the S.S.L.C. Public Examination in Hindi—third language, to encourage the study of Hindi. This additional expenditure say about Rs 10,000/- Madras Government may get from the Central Government as a special grant for propagation of Hindi in non-Hindi speaking areas. This step will give a great fillip to the study of Hindi in schools.

Hindi Prachar Sabha Quarters,
Tennur Tiruchirappalli, Madras.
31-1-'56

[I agree with Shri Sastri's suggestion. I rather think that the study of Hindi should be made compulsory in schools all over the non-Hindi area of our country. Hindi is not to be a *third* but a *second* language in New India, the first being the regional language. The latter will have the unquestioned field of its region, i.e. the entire administration and education in that region will be conducted therethrough. Hindi in the new set-up will be complementary to it as the 'Antar bhasha'—the language for inter-State and Union purposes. Viewed thus, the language problem is clear that we should begin to learn Hindi as a second language. It becomes one of our patriotic duties to do so.

3-2-'56

M. P. J

"B. C. G. DAY" OBSTINACY

To

Editor, *Harijan*,

I do not wish to repeat all that I have been so earnestly saying and writing on this subject of B.C.G. Vaccination. An announcement has been made that February 20 will be an All India B.C.G. Day. It is a pity that the Health Ministry of India refuses to yield to reason and persists in pushing this useless vaccination which has been practically rejected by the American health authorities. The U.K. Health Department is still investigating

and its special committee has not yet thought fit to issue its long-awaited report in spite of Dr. Benjamin's optimism about it. Dr. Carol Palmer has recently and publicly supported I.N.H. oral administration as better than B.C.G. or at least as good. Why should this live bacilli injection be persisted in by the Health Ministry of India when Dr. Carol Palmer himself has expressed himself thus?

It is well known that all those or almost all those that get a fatal or serious attack of TB were "positive" for years before the appearance of clinical T.B. The aim and object of B.C.G. Vaccination is to produce artificial 'positives'. How can an artificial 'positive' condition do what the normal "positive" condition has not been able to do so far, viz., to prevent clinical T.B.? Something is better than nothing. But something useless is not better than nothing, in dealing with the human body. It is a pity that Shri Rajkumari Amrit Kaur is obstinate in this as she has been in the export of monkeys for being tortured with artificially injected diseases.

4-2-'56

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

MAHATMA GANDHI—THE LAST PHASE

(Continued from the previous issue of *Harijan* of 4-2-'56)

II

The earliest demonstration in India—and in a sense the most remarkable because it happened at a time when Mahatma Gandhi had not attained the great public stature which he did later in life—of his method, which is seen in action in its full maturity in this book, was in Champaran. For a hundred years or more British planters had been carrying on plantation of indigo from which dye was derived, and in doing so had not only acquired a lot of land from the landlords and cultivators but had also by various oppressive methods forced them to cultivate the land with large resulting profits to themselves and misery and suffering to the tenantry. Protests and agitation with occasional outbursts of violence resulting in murder and arson had availed nothing. The first thing that Gandhiji did on his arrival in Champaran, when he went there on the invitation of the cultivators to investigate their grievances, was to declare that he did not look upon the planters as enemies and wished them well. This was unintelligible at that time not only to the planters who stood to lose all their unjust and long-enjoyed profits but also to many of us. The planters received the declaration with incredulity, even suspicion. But these were turned into an agreeable surprise and even amazement as their contact with him developed and they came to know him better, and by the time the report of the Commission which the Government appointed to inquire into the tenants' grievances, and of which Mahatma Gandhi also was a member, was made they came to esteem him as a true friend of theirs, as the sequel proved it beyond a shadow of doubt. Apart from the magic of his personal contact, what impressed them most was his conduct as a member

* As far as I know in Mysore also. — Ed.

of the Commission. There was a large volume of evidence—drawn mostly from records of judicial proceedings and reports of successive officers of the Government over a period of several decades—supporting and confirming almost every allegation of oppression, corrupt practices and recalcitrance against the planters and their agents, and there was no escape from a most damaging indictment of the planters and their agents, if the Commission put on record its findings on them. But at an early stage of the discussion after evidence had been recorded, Gandhiji set the fears of the planters' representative on the Commission at rest and completely won his confidence by declaring that he was not concerned with the past so much as with the present and the future and would not insist on a finding on the complaints being recorded; he would be content if the oppressive system of indigo plantation was abolished and the planters' tyranny ceased. He did not insist on full reparation either for the exactions made in the past but said he would be content with refund only of part—twenty-five per cent. of the amount exacted—as a guarantee that no more exactions would be made. The result was a compromise which pleased both sides—the tenants were happy that indigo plantation with its concomitant tyranny and oppression would go; the planters who had already made their pile were happy that they were not condemned before the whole world as oppressors and tyrants or made to disgorge the whole of the amount illegally realized by them. Legislation was passed with the support of their representative in the legislature. They paid monetary subscriptions and, with the exception of one or two, otherwise helped Gandhiji in starting and maintaining village schools for the education of the children of the tenantry. Within three or four years, finding that the cultivation of ordinary crops was not as lucrative as cultivation of indigo, they gradually sold away their land in small bits to the very cultivators whom they had oppressed so long and were happy to get a good price for it. The tenants were happy to get back the land and get rid of the planters and where their luxurious bungalows stood, tenants' houses including their cattle-sheds are to be seen today all over the district.

What made Mahatma Gandhi almost unique among leaders of men was his capacity to harmonise and co-ordinate widely different, sometimes even opposite points of view so that instead of hindering the prosecution of the common goal, they became complementary and contributory to its attainment. An outstanding instance of this was the way in which he dealt with his colleagues in the Congress organization who differed from him. It can well serve as a pointer for workers in all organizations where many have to work together and cannot get on without the fullest co-operation notwithstanding differences of a fundamental nature. In 1921 there was unanimity

amongst all Congressmen and Khilafatists as regards the practical programme although there was not cent per cent. agreement in regard to the underlying principle and many had mental reservations. But after Mahatma Gandhi's incarceration in 1922, clear-cut differences of opinion in regard to the practical programme of work came to the surface, particularly in regard to the question of seeking election to and entering legislatures under the constitution of 1920. This created a split in the Congress: one group led by Deshbandhu C. R. Das, Pandit Motilal Nehru, N. C. Kelkar, M. R. Jayakar, Hakim Ajmal Khan and other Swarajists supporting what came to be known as Council entry, and the other led by C. Rajagopalachari, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Seth Jammalal Bajaj opposing Council entry. In the open session of the Congress held at Gaya in December 1922, where Deshbandhu Das presided, the resolution opposing Council entry was passed by a large majority despite the fact that no less a person than the President himself had put in a strong plea in favour of Council entry in his presidential address. The controversy continued until in a special session at Delhi in the latter half of 1923 a compromise was reached which permitted those who wanted to contest elections to the legislature to do so provided that they did so on behalf of the Swaraj Party, which had been formed by them, and not on behalf of the Congress and no Congress funds were used. The elections held in November-December, 1923, were fought and won by Congressmen on behalf of the Swaraj Party. When Mahatma Gandhi was released early in 1924 as a result of serious illness in jail, he set himself to bring about a compromise between the two wings, although he himself held firmly that Congressmen should not enter the legislatures and agreed with the so-called non-changers. At a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee at Ahmedabad, a vote was taken not on this question directly but on another matter which had the support of Deshbandhu Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru. They with their supporters walked out and their proposal was defeated by a small majority in their absence. But Mahatma Gandhi instead of claiming victory, as constitutionally he was entitled to, declared that he was humbled and defeated. On the death of Deshbandhu Das a few months later, he took a further step. He declared that parliamentary activity had come to stay and in recognition thereof, made over the Congress organization to the Swarajists for the prosecution of the Council-entry programme, himself taking charge of what was called constructive work and founded the All-India Spinners' Association for the revival and spread of Khadi. As a result at the next elections, in 1926, the Congress achieved an even greater success than in 1923. At the same time, the work of the revival and spread of Khadi went ahead with great speed. Both the wings helped each other without giving up their respective

convictions. Later on when active Satyagraha had to be adopted and carried out, those who had entered the legislatures on behalf of the Congress came out and voted Mahatma Gandhi to be the dictator of the Congress for implementing the Satyagraha programme.

A similar if somewhat more difficult situation arose in 1940-41, when India was declared by the British Government as a belligerent country in the Second World War. The British Government wanted all-out support of the Congress in its war effort. Within the Congress there were many who were prepared to give such all-out support provided the British gave India power and responsibility and full share in the administration, including defence and war effort. Mahatma Gandhi was prepared to give moral support only and was opposed to giving help in men and money in any circumstance. The matter was discussed by the Working Committee and when Mahatma Gandhi could not convince his colleagues, he withdrew from the deliberations of the Congress Working Committee and left those from whom he differed to carry on without any obstruction from him or even opposition in the session of the All-India Congress Committee on his behalf or on the part of those who agreed with him. The British Government did not, however, accept the Congress offer and so the question of Congress co-operation did not arise. In spite of the rebuff, however, many in the Congress continued to harbour the hope that as the fight thickened the British Government would relent and enlist the co-operation of the Congress on Congress terms. The discussion with Sir Stafford Cripps in early 1942 was carried on in this hope. But instead of relenting, the British attitude stiffened and the Indian opposition to the war effort expressed itself in the slogan *Na ek bhai na ek pie* — not a single recruit nor a single pie. Individuals offered Satyagraha by advising others not to help the British war effort in any way and courting imprisonment for doing so. The candidates for offering Satyagraha were selected by Gandhiji himself. The bulk of them were elected representatives of the people such as members of legislatures, district boards and municipalities, Congress Committees and other elective bodies, showing that the people as a whole were opposed to Government war effort. This movement culminated, after the failure of the Cripps negotiations, in the "Quit India" movement of 1942, when Mahatma Gandhi was once again offered and took up the leadership of the Congress. This movement resulted in the wholesale incarceration of Congressmen and Congress supporters who remained behind prison bars until about the end of the war in 1945.

The difference of Mahatma Gandhi with his colleagues was fundamental. Gandhiji was not prepared to make any compromise on the issue of non-violence. He refused to be a party to any form of effort in support of a violent war even if what looked like Swaraj could be obtained in return. But while holding to his own principle, he allowed his colleagues full scope to serve the country according to their light. One result which

flowed from this was that not only mutual confidence between them remained unimpaired and most intimate and personal relations continued between them but also those who differed from him ultimately came round and worked under his leadership, giving up for the time being their own programme.

(To be continued)

LINGUISTIC REVOLUTION WE NEED

(By B. G. Kher)

[From an address delivered by Shri B. G. Kher, Chairman, Official Language Commission, at Madras on the 12th January, 1956.]

[Continued from the issue of 28-1-'56]

II

Our Great Regional Languages

We have in our country some 13 or 14 important regional languages, several of them with an enormous wealth of literature and a continuous literary tradition going back many centuries and in the case of some of them, notably the Tamil language, going back more than 2000 years. A language, as I said once before, is a standing record as well as contemporary expression of the culture and experience of the group speaking that language. Just as we cherish within the unity of the Indian cultural tradition the diversity of its regional expressions, so we must treasure and cherish these regional languages which embody the literary thought and history of the different linguistic groups which speak these languages. Many of the regional languages in India are spoken by a larger number of human beings than several of the advanced languages of the West. There should therefore be no question of the regional languages being allowed to suffer from neglect for any reason whatsoever.

Indeed, both Hindi, that is the Union language, and the great regional languages mentioned in the VIII Schedule of the Constitution suffer today from identical lacks and deficiencies and have similar problems to face. Mahatma Gandhi said as early as in 1928 that, "among the many evils of a foreign rule this blighting imposition of a foreign medium upon the youth of a country will be counted by history as one of the greatest." In the same article in the *Young India* he goes on to say, "the youth of a nation to remain a nation must receive all instruction including the highest in his own vernacular or vernaculars. Surely it is a self-demonstrated proposition that the youth of a nation cannot keep or establish a living contact with the masses unless their knowledge is received and assimilated through the medium understood by the people.... There never was a greater superstition than that a particular language can be incapable of expansion or expressing abstruse or scientific ideas."

Owing to the fact that the higher literati of the country learned and conducted their affairs almost wholly in the English language, our regional languages failed to keep pace with the advance of science and industrial techniques whereby enormous changes were brought about all over the world in the physical circumstances of living. It is possible that if the physical impact of scientific discoveries had come upon us in the normal way, our regional languages might have responded to the requirements of the situation. As it is, we find that all the regional languages are lacking in certain respects, such as in scientific, legal and professional terminology etc., because another and a more favoured means of expression, namely, the English language, was used by all groups having occasions to express ideas relating to these spheres of activity. Since the ideas of social organisation that we now cherish require equal opportunities being proffered to all citizens and since science, economic affairs, governmental and public policies can no longer be the preserve of a limited coterie, it is essential that the indigenous languages are developed to make good these deficiencies. The problem of the development of the language, therefore, confronts us not in respect of the Union language alone, but to a

more or less degree in respect of all the other regional languages also.

Classical Languages

Apart from the common problems confronting our regional languages at the moment, there are, of course, other very strong affinities, individually as well as between groups of them. All our languages including what are known as the 'Dravidian' languages draw heavily upon that vast and inexhaustible treasure-house of vocabulary, phrase and idiom, which has served each one of them through many centuries, namely, the Sanskrit language and its literature. Indeed, many of the Dravidian languages have a far higher proportion of vocabulary directly embodying Sanskrit words or derivatives therefrom than some of the so-called Indo-Aryan languages. Then there are very close relationships and in many cases an identity in the alphabets and the scripts in which the various regional languages are currently written. We also find that Persian, Arabic and other languages have had a great share not only in enriching the vocabularies but affecting the style of some of the regional languages.

Rapprochement between Languages

Apart from the development of the Union language and the various regional languages of the country in order to enable them effectively to take their appropriate place in the country's linguistic map, one of the objectives which ought to be aimed at is a growing and closer 'rapprochement' between the various regional languages of the country and their literatures. I must confess in this context that I was quite amazed at the volume of opinion, in the evidence given until now to the Commission, which favoured steps being taken for promoting the adoption of a common script for regional languages, at any rate alternatively over and above their respective scripts. I might add that some of the strongest exponents of this view were from regions where the script currently used for the regional language is quite different from the Devanagari script. This shows their anxiety to foster unity in our literary and cultural life. Whether and how far effect could be given to any such idea is a matter for deep consideration. I am concerned here only to emphasize the strong feeling entertained by many responsible and thoughtful persons for working actively towards greater rapprochement between the various Indian languages.

I am sure that the same sentiment prevails in respect of literatures in the different Indian languages also. Already there are strong affinities and common elements in our literary tradition. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata for instance have been the reservoir of ideas, sentiments, axioms and parables drawn upon uniformly over the country for the literary output in many of our languages. It is therefore only right and appropriate that we should undertake the publication of the classics of each regional language into the Union language and as many of other regional languages as possible. Thus, for instance, I would maintain that the rich literary inheritance of the Tamil language should be made available to me through my mother tongue which happens to be Marathi. In all these matters there is a tremendous amount of work to do for our linguists and literateurs, politicians, administrators and public workers. I am quite hopeful that with the growing realization that the interest of each regional language marches in step with that of all the others, efforts will be forthcoming from scholars in all these languages to develop them individually as well as to develop greater points of contact with the other languages.

Need of English

When I say that the English language will eventually have to yield place to the Union language and to the regional languages in their appropriate fields, I am not oblivious of the importance of the English language as a foremost means of international communication in the world today or unmindful of the beauty of its literature and the wealth of scientific knowledge in it. We cannot afford to lose our hold on the knowledge that is presently available only through the English language to us and which know-

ledge we badly need for the prosecution of technological advances in our country and for its economic development as well for the attainment of higher standards of academic knowledge. While we change over the medium for all general purposes we must not suffer detriment due to any constricting of the 'pipeline' of knowledge and scientific progress thereby. Therefore the progress of Indianization in languages must be so phased and graduated as to keep pace with the development of those languages and the special literatures relating to different branches of knowledge including especially the sciences. Indeed for a long time to come I expect that we will have to equip our graduates both in the natural sciences and humanities with a sufficient command of English and/or another suitable foreign language, to serve as a key to the storehouse of the knowledge not yet available in the Indian languages and as a "window" to the rapid progress which is taking place in the outside world in technology and scientific knowledge. But there is a vital distinction between using a foreign language as a means for such specific purposes and using it universally as the sole or principal medium of our education, and as the sole means of inter-communication at the all-India level and for the conduct of the day to day business of the country.

Solution of the Problem

The problem that circumstances have set before us in this respect is therefore multiple and of much complexity. I am not aware that a problem of equal complexity has had to be faced by any other multilingual country in the world so far. Nevertheless I am confident that given the right approach on all sides its solution can be accomplished. We want to replace in certain fields English by the Union and the regional languages, yet we do not want to miss any of the technical and scientific knowledge of which English has been the vehicle hitherto and will continue to be the principal conduit for a considerable time in future. We want to develop the Union language in order to serve all official purposes at the all-India level and as a means of inter-State intercourse both official and non-official and as a common forum for the formulation of and expression of national opinion over the whole country; we want to achieve this simultaneously with the growth and development of our great regional languages which must also be similarly enabled to take their appropriate place amongst the linguistic groups inhabiting this country. Ancillary to the last objective we want to promote a greater mutual comprehension of each other's language by different linguistic groups in the country and a larger and growing measure of affinity amongst them. It is thus a very complex and comprehensive linguistic revolution that we have to bring about.

On another occasion I appealed for the practical problem being approached as a problem of language policy from a secular, as distinct from a religious or revivalist standpoint; from a national, as distinct from a provincial or communal standpoint; from a pragmatic, as distinct from an axiomatic or ideological standpoint. If the problem is so approached, unprecedented in the history of any country in the world as it is, I have no doubt that we will be able to solve it satisfactorily.

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