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BLAVATSKY LODGE
FRENCH BRIDGE
BOMBAY 7.

To

1708

Dear Sir/Madam,

Enclosed please find a printed copy of our article, INDIA IS GREATER THAN HINDI - a case for the continuance of the english language.

We are printing only a couple of thousand copies to be circulated among the leaders, educationists, and legislators in India. Our aim is to print at least one lakh copies for distribution among the principals and teachers of over ten thousand high schools and about fifty thousand middle schools and primary schools, about five thousand legislators, twenty five thousand Municipal Councillors of the corporations as well as the district Municipalities, secondary school teachers, parents' bodies, and various other institutions that are interested in the continuance of the english language both as the medium of instruction as well as the medium of communication throughout this subcontinent of India with its diversity of National and social characteristics constituting a veritable museum of races and religions, castes and communities.

May we request you for your kind co-operation by way of contribution of at least one thousand sheets of paper either in cash or kind. One thousand sheets of good quality paper costs about fifteen rupees and the printing charges about Rs. 5/-

A line in reply or a word of encouragement from you will also go a long way in keeping up our enthusiasm and spurring us on to further attempts of a national character towards the upliftment of our country and the betterment of our people.

Thanking you ever so such.

Very truly yours

INDIA IS GREATER THAN HINDI

A CASE FOR THE CONTINUANCE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

By

ISAAC MATHAI M. A. (Hons.)

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India is even greater than its four hundred millions of people of the present day. India is an inheritance of the past hundreds of millions of people, to be handed over to the future generations to come.

Our last two hundred years of inheritance of the English language, with its present pre-eminent position as the language international, with all the wealth of wisdom, knowledge and experience of generations of real internationalists—the Britishers of course! Are we to throw this legacy away at the behest of a few tenth rate tin-gods of professional politicians? This generation will be answerable before the bar of world history.

What right have we to withhold from Indians of the future, this priceless inheritance handed down to us through the medium of English? What right have we to come in the way of the future generations in their continued study of the language? What would have been the result, if some two thousand years ago, Sanskrit, the language of the invaders, were dubbed as a foreign language and its study discouraged or even discontinued? India and the world would have been the poorer for it today. It is very strange indeed that the Sanskrit enthusiasts of our country are the bitterest opponents of the study of the English language. If Sanskrit is important, then English is doubly important—nay three times! If Sanskrit had a glorious past, English had an equally glorious past, a more glorious present, and a still more glorious future as the world's language.

And who are these political opportunists to decide against the unanimous verdict of the educationists all over India?—the Universities, Headmasters' Associations, Vice-Chancellors, Secondary Teachers' Associations, Parents' Associations, Municipal Councillors, & c. & c.—All the EDUCATED people of this country. Politicians in India may come and go, but the great English language will go on for ever. Otherwise, the very same politicians breathing fire and brimstone against the English language would not have sent their own and their relations' children abroad for their studies.

Who said English is not one of our languages in India? Were not Indians learning this language for the last two hundred years? Was not this country ruled through the medium of English for the last two hundred years? Did not the very Indian National Congress start functioning through the medium of English. Even today, do they think they can dispense with this language in an all-India setting? Was not our very constitution drawn up in the English language? and then shameless enough to admit that we could draw up the very life-breadth of our nationhood—the Constitution—in a foreign language! How ridiculous! Who will now have the courage to dispute the fact that English is not one of our languages? And what is exactly the criterion for any one of the so-called fourteen languages to be called Indian?

Since when have these mushroom politicians started realising the worth and value of a language called Hindi, the vocabulary of which is so meagre that one has to use the same word "kal" to convey the meaning of yesterday or tomorrow! A language where the yesterday and the tomorrow can be distinguished only by the context! A great language indeed to be made to play the important role of the national language of India! And why should one be apologetic over this issue of opposing Hindi as the official language merely because it is supposed to be spoken by the majority of people in Central India!

Not the majority of people in India. The majority of people in India speak their own regional languages. About thirty millions of Hindi speaking people is certainly not a majority in a country of four hundred millions! A majority in four hundred millions, at least two hundred and one millions should speak the Hindi language. Thirty millions as the majority in India! What a dope before the gullible public!

And talking of Hindi, its own family controversy is still there. Basic Hindi, Sanskritised Hindi, highly Sanskritised Hindi, Persianised Hindi, Colloquial Hindi, Roman Hindi, and Urdu vs Hindi. They say that their lexicographers are busy trying to coin new words in Hindi. But where's the hurry and why this indecent haste, unless it be for the much suspected desire of the North to dominate over the rest of India? Do the protagonists of Hindi believe that the feeling and conviction of a nationalised India will get confirmed in the minds of men and mice by such quixotic ideas like changing over from English to Hindi, changing Cape Comorin into Kanyakumari, Trichnopoly into Thiruchirapalli and Thiruchi, Banares into Banaras, Kasi, Varanasi or Vanarasi. Mohamedbin Tughlak was not so mad as he is portrayed in history. Only his ideas were far ahead of his times.

Coming to the question of a pure national language for India, which is really the Indian language? There are fourteen languages listed. Are they all Indian? Most of them developed in India through either of the two languages, Sanskrit or Tamil. So really speaking there are only two really Indian languages—Sanskrit and Tamil. Even Sanskrit has been imported into India by the Aryans. So Tamil is the only Indian language. Will the North accept this theory? Then Tamil should be accepted as the national language.

So the quarrel over the languages can be carried to any desired or undesired height—or depth shall we say. It is therefore better to be practical. We have the great English language already accepted as the official language. Can anyone deny that English is not a great language, that it was not profitably in use for the last hundred or two hundred years? Can any one deny that this language is not the eyes and ears of the world, that it is not the language international? By deliberately ignoring these and many other facts these advocates of reaction are determined to keep this country and its people in ignorance and superstition for another five hundred years, and drag this country back to the dark ages? And what is their purpose?

Domination? If not, what else? Can the rest of the country—the Punjab, Bengal, and the entire South be all wrong in their suspicion? All men of eminence, scholars and educationists are found behind this agitation—rather in the vanguard of the agitation. Is it not sheer administrative bankruptcy on the part of the centre to refuse to read the writing on the wall? So did France once before during the reign of Louis XVI. Make no mistake. The people are on the march—the people from the South, the East, the West, and the extreme North.

And who benefits by the removal of English? Not Hindi, certainly not. The regional languages perhaps. Some Universities are already switching on to the regional languages. And with what disastrous consequences? Take one example for instance: Medicine. Only one department of Medicine—Midwifery and Gynaecology.

A book of about fifteen hundred pages. What will be the cost of production in any one regional language? At a conservative estimate it will cost fifteen thousand rupees for composing, ten thousand for printing, and five thousand for paper. Total cost, thirty thousand. And how many copies of this specialised book will sell? Hardly fifty copies! And each copy will cost about six hundred rupees! And by the time this book is in circulation, new methods and discoveries in the field of gynaecology will make this copy obsolete. So repeat the same process every three years! And the impracticability which we shall be confronted with is in one subject only, in one field of study—Medicine. What about the other departments—Engineering, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Zoology, Mining and Mineralogy, Fisheries, Agriculture, Aeronautics, and other higher specialised technical studies.

English—Oh! It is a foreign language. Except one's own mother-tongue, which is not a foreign language? Is not Hindi a foreign language to the people from the South, North, East and West. It is really somebody else's language—the language of the people of the central portion of India. But then Hindi is hailed as the national language. Who made it the national language? Just a single solitary one—vote majority. National language! Have we not, in this world, enough of this brand of narrow parochial patriotism. Are not national barriers breaking up? League of Nations, Commonwealth of Nations, United Nations. Man is slowly and surely evolving out of the national into the international, into the one-world, into the one-universe. To this growing concept of internationalism, should we not also contribute? The realm of language is an ideal beginning. Internationalism is inevitable. That is the goal of the future—Internationalism in ideas, customs, language, growth and civilization. Of these, language is the beginning. Fortunately for us for the last two hundred years, by the turn of events in History, we had the chance to learn and assimilate one of the greatest living languages of the world. And make no mistake! It is the one language of communication through the diverse races and religions of the world today. Why should we throw it away, merely because a few of our unthinking, self-seeking, yes-men politicians want it their own way—rather in somebody else's own way. Our politicians have only one goal—the state legislature, the state cabinet, the central legislature, the central cabinet—and the Prime minister's gadi. How can these politicians have the interest of their country or the people at heart? They have only one aim—to please the Hindi-wallahs, who distribute the loaves and fishes of office! They have brought enough confusion and ruin in the country. It's time, we cry halt: the people cry halt. The educationists should resist; the intelligentsia should resist. The people should resist. Let us have an English language centre in every town and district in India—at least in the South, East, West and the extreme North, where the people have already realised the worth and value of English education and where the people are really intelligent and discriminating. The rest of India will not be able to resist the avalanche of advance all around them.

And so let us strive to realize the ideal of an English Language Society in every town. Let us make the start right now. Those who stand for this ideal may communicate to, the General Secretary, the English Language Society, to their temporary address C/o. Mathai's Publications, Blavatsky Lodge, French Bridge, Bombay 7.

Well begun is half done. Let's begin well. And all will be well.