

# The Sunday News of India

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## COLOUR PREJUDICE

FEW questions of the day are more urgent than the problems arising from the clash of colour, whether it be in South Africa, the United States, or elsewhere. Sir Alan Burns' new book, *Colour Prejudice* (Allen and Unwin, 12s. 6d.), is a sympathetic examination of this difficult phenomenon. As a former administrator in the West Indies, and as Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Gold Coast, he speaks with the authority derived from experience; the conclusions he reaches are sound. Though the book deals primarily with the relationship between Whites and Negroes, it has much to say which is relevant in other cases.

The author points out that there is nothing inherently inferior in the fact of colour, in spite of the prejudice of certain 19th century writers, culminating in the Aryan obsession of Germany, itself an exploded fallacy, since anthropologists believe that mankind is descended from a single primitive stock which, adapting itself to different environments, has developed in varying ways. The rise of nationalistic feeling in recent years, however, has intensified all racial problems, accentuating divergence rather than fundamental likeness, to such a degree that the main problem of the 20th century is that of resentments and conflicts arising from unsympathetic approaches to colour problems.

The most difficult of these clashes, to be observed from two standpoints, is now taking place in South Africa, where the double problem of Whites v. Indians, and Africans v. Indians, had suddenly reached an explosive stage. In India, the disintegration of the caste system under the pressure of modern ideas, is indirectly a solution of a problem possibly arising from a colour bar imposed by Aryan conquerors on defeated peoples.

Universally, man has failed to realise the basic fact of the brotherhood of mankind, and is digging his own grave by his lack of imagination. The white races, until recently pre-eminent in the modern world in power, preaching the Christian doctrine of equality of mankind through their Christianity, democracy, socialism or whatever it might be, have diametrically failed to translate this doctrine into practice where colour is concerned, though so-called class-less societies have evolved in various countries.

### Coloured Races' Clamour

Elimination of privilege and levelling of class within a nation, however, are not of themselves a sufficient corrective to mistakes made in the wider application of world relationships. The great disasters in the East during the recent war, the bad influence of the films in the portrayal of the less desirable aspects of Western life, and the mad self-annihilation of the white races in the wars of the 20th century have finally burst the bubble of white supremacy. The coloured races, refusing any longer to submit to their present disabilities, have set up a clamour which can no longer be disregarded.

The author dealing at considerable length with each examines their grievances, the lack of economic advantage—since political power and control of the land belong to the European races—legal discrimination and social ostracism, and attempts to suggest a solution. Though sympathetic in his attitude, and refuting certain allegations against the Negro, he examines fairly and frankly their weaknesses and the reasons for their failure to hold their own. The book has relevance for this country in that both Negroes and Indians have suffered and developed certain traits of character from the domination of white races, which although arising from different circumstances, and differing in the exercise of power, produced characteristics which, though dissimilar in many cases, are nevertheless fundamentally related.

The question of miscegenation, for instance, has resulted in a different reaction in India, where inter-marriage of Indian with European created a class which, though in some respects under-privileged, had nevertheless, more privilege than the Indian. In the U.S.A., however, miscegenation has been entirely to the disadvantage of the white. In both cases, for a variety of reasons, the results of the inter-mingling of races has not been a success.

The book is a useful contribution to the colour question on three scores:—firstly, by its dispassionate airing of the Negroes' case, secondly, for its reminder that the fault does not lie with the white races alone, for brooding on past slights, suspicion and resentment can hinder the progress of improved relations; and thirdly, for its attempt to suggest an answer to a problem which has hitherto been regarded as impossible of solution. Sir Alan Burns believes that the real problem is one of economic fears, and that, given the opportunity for development and the removal of the chief cause of racial discord by a change of attitude in the treatment of the coloured races by the white, a better world relationship may be effected, in which the gifts of all nations may co-operate for mutual benefit.

## DELHI DIARY

THE curtain was rung down here in the Red Fort last Thursday in a trial that will go down in history as one of the most sensational ever witnessed in the world. It was the trial of less than a dozen men who, by the irony of fate, removed through violence the Prophet of Non-violence and India's greatest man. Since January 26, 1948, when Mahatma Gandhi fell a victim to the assassin's pistol at the Birla Mandir with "Ram, Ram" on his lips to the day of judgment, the proceedings of the court-day after day were read with a kind of morbid and even bitterness. The epilogue of the epic trial naturally attracted all Delhi's attention but only with permits could persons enter the hall of judgment. It was surprising to find a large number of women among the audience when journalists had to struggle for seats.

### Unrepentant

In deliberate and unflinching tones, the Judge, Mr. Atma Charan, read the operative portion of the judgment. The men in the dock seemed unrepentant; the slogans they raised reflected their inner feelings. Behind the exchange of their smiles, there was a grimace. Standing erect with a grave face, Godse received his death sentence in a composed manner as also Apte, although he could not stand till the sentence was completed. Biting his lips at the time, stout-hearted Karkare, wearing a Gandhi cap, seemed relieved to learn that he was to serve only transportation for life. Then came the turn of Madanlal, whose pinkish pullover and dark green gloves attracted attention. When the name of Savarkar was mentioned, there was a stir in the hall. The Hindu Mahasabha leader, who looked old and tired, heard the order of acquittal quite calmly, but the next moment felt suddenly disturbed by the phrase "unless otherwise required," but the Judge hastened to assure him that he had

Mr. H. Bottomley

Celebrating his forty-second birthday quietly in the Indian capital is the Secretary of British Overseas Trade, Mr. Harold Bottomley. Sturdy, unassuming and forthright, Mr. Bottomley belongs to the school of Messrs. Attlee and Alexander who rose to fame through a mixture of trade unionism and local politics. The British Secretary is no stranger to India. He came to this sub-continent in 1946 as a member of the Parliamentary delegation and has a large circle of friends. Last week he renewed his contact with the Prime Minister, Sardar Patel, and Mr. C. C. Neogy, the Minister of Commerce.

Another prominent person who is having a short holiday in Delhi before proceeding to Assam as the Governor is Mr. Sri Prakasa, former Indian High Commissioner in Pakistan. Mr. Sri Prakasa told me that he had become accustomed to life in Pakistan like a bride after marriage, but his new sphere of work made him nervous. He is, however, happy to be back home.

K. S.

# Evolving National Language For India

I AM writing this article not as Prime Minister but as an author and as a person intensely interested in the question of language. I am interested in this question because of its political and, unfortunately, communal aspects. Of far greater importance, however, are the wider cultural aspects of this question.

Though I am not a scholar in any language, I have loved the beauty of a language, the music of its phrases, and the magic and power that lies in words. I believe that a language is a greater test of a nation's character than almost anything else. If a language is strong and vigorous, so are the people who use it; if it is rather superficial, ornate and intricate, the people reflect it.

Of course, this may be more correctly put the other way about, for it is the people who create the language. But there is some truth also in the language moulding the people. A language which is precise makes the people think precisely. Lack of accuracy and precision in meaning leads to muddled thinking and, consequently, confused action.

### Vigour And Growth

A LANGUAGE, which is confined in a strait-jacket, with no doors and windows open for progressive change, may be both precise and graceful, but is apt to lose touch with a changing environment and the mass of the people. This inevitably leads to a loss of vigour and a growth of a certain artificiality. At any time this would not be good, but in the present dynamic age, with almost everything changing round about us, a strait-jacket will deaden a language.

The courtly languages of previous ages had much to commend them. But they are totally unsuited to a democratic age, where we aim at mass education. A language, therefore, must fulfil two functions: it must base itself on its ancient roots and, at the same time, vary and expand with growing needs and be essentially the language of the mass of people and not of a select coterie.

This is all the more necessary in this age of science and technology and world communication. Insofar as possible, that language should have common or similar words with other languages in regard to scientific and technical terms. It must, therefore, be a receptive language, accepting every word from outside that fits into its general structure. Sometimes that word may be slightly varied to suit the genius of the language.

### Classical Languages

CLASSICAL languages have played a very great part in the development of human society. At the same time they have rather impeded the growth of popular languages. So long as the learned thought and wrote in the classical language, there was no real growth of the popular language. In Europe Latin came in the way of growth of the European languages till about the 16th century.

In India Sanskrit had such a dominating influence that the Prakrits and what subsequently became provincial languages were rather stunted. Later Persian also became a language of the learned in large parts of India and this also came in the way of the growth of popular languages in some parts of India.

In India we are rightly committed to the growth of our great provincial languages. At the same time we must have an all-India language. This cannot be English or any other foreign language, although I believe that English, both because of its world position and the present

widespread knowledge of it in India, is bound to play an important part in our future activities. The only all-India language that is possible is Hindi or Hindustani or whatever it is called.

### Prejudice Harmful

THESE are certain basic propositions which we must bear in mind in considering this vital question. We must remember that any hurried decision of it on a political plane or under the influence of momentary passions or prejudices, may well prove harmful. We have to build for the future, and a false foundation may well stunt our future growth not only linguistically but in the wider domain of culture and human advancement. It is far better to go slow and avoid every kind of rigidity. Language is a very delicate instrument, evolved in its higher aspects by fine minds and strengthened by the popular use of it. It grows like a flower and too much external compulsion retards that growth or twists it in a wrong direction.

It is not very material what we call this language, whether Hindi or Hindustani, except for the fact that every word has a history behind it and connotes something very definite, which limits its meaning. What we must be clear about in our minds is the inner content of the language and the way it looks at the world, that is, whether it is restrictive, self-sufficient, isolationist and narrow, or whether it is the reverse of this. We must deliberately aim, I think, at a language which is the latter and which has, therefore, a great capacity for growth. The English language, probably more than any other today, has this receptiveness, flexibility and capacity for growth. Hence its great importance as a language. I should like our language to face the world in the same way.

### Lack Of Vision

I AM distressed at the way this question of language is considered and debated in India today. There is little of scholarship behind this argument and less of culture. There is no vision or thought of the future. Language is looked upon more as a kind of extended journal and, a perverted nationalism demands that it should be made as narrow and restricted as possible. Any attempt to expand it is branded as a sin against this form of nationalism. Beauty in a language is often supposed to be an extreme ornamentation and the use of long and complicated words. There is little vigour or dignity in evidence and one gets the impression of extreme superficiality and shallowness.

Just as poetry is not a mere collection of rhymes and metres, so also a language is not just a display of intricate and difficult words. Real attempts to translate well-known common words from English are fantastic in the extreme. If this tendency persists, the surely is murder of a fine vehicle for the expression of thought.

### Our Finest Heritage

IF I was asked what is the greatest treasure the India possesses, and what is her finest heritage, I would answer unhesitatingly it is Sanskrit language and literature and all that this contains. This is a magnificent inheritance and so long as this endures and influences the life of our people, so long will the basic genius of India continue.

By



Pandit Nehru

Apart from its being a treasure of the past, it is, to an astonishing degree, for so ancient a language, a living tradition.

I should like to promote the study of Sanskrit and to put our scholars to work to explore and bring to light the buried literature in this language that has been almost forgotten. It is surprising that while we talk so much of language in terms of an extreme nationalism, only lip homage is paid to it or it is exploited for political ends. Very little is done to serve it as a language should be served.

Whether in Sanskrit or in the modern Indian languages, constructive work is rare. We often follow a dog-in-the-manger policy of disliking any other growth and at the same time not doing anything ourselves. A language will grow ultimately because of its inherent worth and not because of statutes or resolutions. Therefore the true service of a language is to increase its value, practicability and inherent worth.

However great Sanskrit may be and however much we may like to promote its study, as we should, it cannot be a living language. But it must be, as it has been the base and inner substance of most of our languages. That is inevitable. But an attempt to force this is neither inevitable nor desirable and is likely to lead to evil results.

### Role Of Persian

PERSIAN has played an important role in the last few centuries in developing some of our provincial languages, more especially Hindustani and has affected our ways of thinking also to some extent. That is an acquisition and it makes us richer to that extent. It must be remembered that no language is nearer to Sanskrit than Persian, and indeed Vedic Sanskrit and Ancient Baheli are nearer to one another than Vedic Sanskrit and classical Sanskrit.

So a certain overlapping of the two

is easy and does no violence to the genius of our language or our race. In any event a few hundred years of history and the life of the people have fashioned us for what we are and it seems to me rather absurd and certainly unwise, to try to undo this work of history.

From the cultural point of view, such an attempt at undoing and going back would mean depriving us of a cultural heritage which we possessed. It would mean making ourselves poorer. We should rather aim at richness and at accepting whatever adds to that cultural content. Therefore, any attempt at excluding what we have already absorbed is wrong from every point of view.

If these considerations are borne in mind, it follows that the all-India language that we should seek to promote must be flexible, receptive and must retain all the cultural features that it has imbibed through the ages. It must also be a language essentially of the people and not of a small coterie of learned men. It must be dignified and full of power and it must vigorously try to put down artificiality, shallowness and ornamentation.

### Basic Word List

IT would be desirable to collect a number of basic words say 3,000 or so which would be considered well-known common words, used by the people generally. These may often include alternative words for the same idea, provided both are in common use. This should be the basic vocabulary which every one, who desires knowledge of the all-India language, should know.

Yet another list of technical words should be prepared on the lines indicated above. I must say that many of the new words being used for technical terms are so extraordinarily artificial and meaningless in the real sense of the word, because they have no background or history behind them, that they horrify me.

If these two lists are prepared, the rest should be left to the natural growth of the language. No limitations should be put on anyone writing on what might be called pure literary Hindi or pure literary Urdu or anything in between. With the growth of education and the vaster reading public, this itself will exercise a powerful influence on the writers and speakers. Gradually, I have no doubt, that a fine and vigorous language will grow from above.

### Need For Dictionary

IT is an astonishing thing that while we argue so much about a language, we have hardly any proper dictionaries. Look at any other great language of the world, how many dictionaries and encyclopedias and the like there are in it! Our test of language has become something which is used in a court room or in a school text-book. Our dictionaries are also meant for schoolboys. One of the earliest

steps to be taken, therefore, is to concentrate on the production of scholarly and comprehensive dictionaries, both for Sanskrit and our modern languages.

As I have said above, it is the content of a language that counts and not the name so much. Judging from the content I have indicated above, and using the words as they are used today, the word Hindustani comes nearest to the content of my choice.

As for the script, it is clear that the Nagari script will be the dominant script. But again, because I think it wrong to be exclusive, both from the cultural and political point of view, I think that the Urdu script should be recognised and taught, where desired. We cannot ask all people to learn both these scripts. That is too much of a burden. But the Urdu script should be recognised more especially for presentation of documents and other papers and for teaching in schools where a sufficient number desire it.

This fits in with our general language policy, which has been declared both in the Congress and the Constituent Assembly, to be: that every child should be given primary education in his or her mother tongue, provided there are a sufficient number of pupils in a particular place to make this practical. Thus in Bombay or Calcutta or Delhi, if there are a sufficient number of Tamil-speaking children, they should have an opportunity to have their primary education in Tamil. If in any part of India there are a sufficient number of children, whose home language is Urdu, they should be taught the Urdu script, in addition to the language of the province.

This principle has been accepted and it is desirable to give effect to it in practice as soon as possible. Many difficulties arise at present, more especially in the areas where two provinces meet together. On either side of this border, there is a bilingual area. It is necessary here, even more than elsewhere, that primary education should take place in the mother tongue.

### Roman Script

I DO not think it is possible for us to adopt in any wide scale the Roman script. But it must be remembered that the Roman script has been used with great effect in the Army. It has been found very easy to teach the Roman script and it has proved a certain unifying force in the Army. Therefore it would be desirable to explore the possibilities of the Roman script and to use it where possible or desirable.

I stated at the beginning of this article that I wrote as an author. May I put in a word for authors, more especially for authors in Hindi and Urdu? It has pained me greatly to see how some of our best and most promising authors have suffered at the hands of publishers and have often been exploited by them. While journalists flourish, the real author of talent has little chance.

I know of cases where publishers have bought up the copyright of books in Hindi for a mere song, because the poor author was starving and had no other choice. Those publishers managed to make a good deal of money out of these books, and yet the author continued to starve. I think this is a scandal and a public disgrace and I would appeal to the publishers of such books not to take this unfair advantage of authors.

Publishers will only flourish if authors flourish. It is a foolish policy, even from the publishers' point of view, to kill the author or to prevent him from doing worthwhile work. But from a national point of view, this question is even more important, and it is up to the nation to see to it that our authors of talent have an opportunity to do good work.

# Food Policy Bungle

By Politicus

PARLIAMENTARY searchlight, which was directed last week on the Food Ministry, brought into bold relief some of the disquieting and dangerous aspects of India's serious food problem. Never have members of the Dominion Parliament been so angry about any feature of the Congress administration as about the bungling over the food policy. Read in the context of the rosy pictures painted by the Food Minister now and then while actually the situation was deteriorating and the prices of food were soaring, the temper and content of the proceedings of the two-day debate become understandable.

But for the party discipline, a censure motion would have been carried against Mr. Jai Ramdas Paulatram with an overwhelming majority, but it would have meant a Cabinet crisis in view of the principle of joint responsibility.

### Cornered By Critics

THE Food Minister was cornered by his critics in such a manner that at one stage he stood dumbfounded before the microphone. Sensing the strength and intensity of feeling on the question, Mr. Jai Ramdas had got ready, evidently after consultations earlier with his colleagues in the Cabinet, a statement which he read out to the House, saying that the food question would be reviewed by a Cabinet sub-committee and speedily and effectively solved. That calmed the storm.

In his statement, the Food Minister was almost apologetic, and blamed all including weather for the difficulties "inherent" in the situation. That made Mr. B. Shiva Rao retort that, whatever might have been in the past, one of them at least was self-inflicted; that was the folly of decontrol. Throughout his speech, the Food Minister gave the impression that he had not changed his views even if his Government had. For instance, his attempt to link up growing imports, which drain away our dollar resources, with the reimposition of control led some to believe that he

was still for decontrol and had no heart in the new policy calling for a crusading spirit. On the other hand, it was reserved for Sardar Patel to impress on the provinces from another platform to intensify procurement of food. The Food Minister must realise that procurement is the lynchpin of the new food policy, and yet why is it that procurement showed such poor results and disparity between provinces? He should have sent directives long ago that the provinces must procure a certain percentage by a specified date and that unless procurement was stepped up, the new policy would fail.

In coming to a decision on future food administration, the Government have to settle two fundamental issues, leaving aside the personal factor

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of a charge against the Food Minister that he had "imported" Sindhis into his department. They are the machinery to tackle the crisis and remedy for lack of co-ordination at the Centre, and inference drawn by Mr. Jai Ramdas himself from the debate. Some of his colleagues in the Cabinet are stated to be resentful of the latter suggestion as food has been given the highest priority. The Prime Minister's task in the circumstances is rather difficult and delicate, but the country will support him in any decision he takes.

### The Nizam's Gesture

THE unity forged at New Delhi in the ranks of Congressmen of Hyderabad synchronised happily with the Nizam's decision to hand over to the State administration his private lands known as "Sarf-i-khas," extending to nearly 7,000 square miles and yielding an annual revenue of about three crores of rupees. The privy purse of His Exalted Highness will be fixed comparatively with his obligations, partly inherited and partly resulting from his own ways of life. These lands will hereafter be administered as part of government lands known as "Diwani." As the Military Governor Major-General J. N. Chau-

dhry, pointed out, the Nizam's action is a landmark in history. It is indeed the first blow at the root of feudalism in Hyderabad, struck by the very man who foraged in the past its main prop. Inevitably, such other subsidiary feudal elements as jagirs, samasthans and paighas, will have to go in no distant future.

### Reds And Congress

IT has been urged by some observers that the feudal system gave a ready handle to Communists to extend their power and influence in Hyderabad. The Communists are already entrenched in the districts of Telengana and Nalgonda. The Hyderabad Congress leaders, who have been quarrelling among themselves should utilise their newborn unity for the purpose of consolidating the national organisation and canalising popular energies in constructive channels of thought and action. Both the Military Government and the able hand of Indian officers now manning the administration will hand over to them in a few months' time a going concern. It is for them to make or mar their future.

### Publicity

IF the Information Ministers and other officers of the Centre and provinces who gathered in Delhi last Monday had grasped the subtle distinction between publicity and propaganda, then the deliberations of this conference would not have been in vain. Speeches made by the Prime Minister, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Mr. R. R. Diwakar, the Minister-of-State for Information and Broadcasting, indicated realisation of the need for a new approach to the whole problem and co-ordination of publicity work between different departments at the Centre, on the one hand, and between the provinces and the Centre, on the other. External publicity has hitherto lacked vigour and drive. It has to tell the world, with facts and figures, all about the new India and her gigantic programmes of reconstruction and her foreign policy of peace and progress for all mankind. Internally, it should not degenerate into a ministry of misinformation or social activities of Ministers or their officers, although important pronouncements on matters of policy by them make news.

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