

The Language Question

Language is an essential component of a nation or nationality. It is, therefore, quite natural that the question of state language in a multi-national country should stir up people's emotions. The bourgeoisie in every country resorts to their favourite tactic of keeping various sections of the people divided against themselves. In a multi-national country the dominant section of the bourgeoisie uses the language question to this end. This section tries to make their own language the state language and thus to impose it on the other nationalities having different languages, and thus rouses their suspicion and animosity. In our country also, the leaders of the Congress government, the mouthpiece of the imperialist-big bourgeois-feudal interests, have all along been playing the same nefarious game. They managed, by virtue of the precarious majority they were able to rally over the question of state language in the so-called Constituent Assembly to get Hindi, which is the language of only one nationality, recognized as the state language of India. By the same majority they had it incorporated in the Constitution also. Having thus secured their objective they have, time and again, used the issue of the so-called Language Bill as a weapon to rouse mutual distrust and animosity among the peoples of different nationalities.

Quite recently the reactionary Congress ruling clique introduced an Amendment to the Official Languages Bill in Parliament, thus fanning once more the dark flames of rancour and animosity among the people, the evil effects of which spread far beyond the confines of the Parliament Bhavan, even to the farthest corners of our country. The violent turn that the *Angrezi Hatao* (Banish English) movement took in certain parts of Northern India, particularly in places like U.P. and Bihar, triggered off a more violent anti-Hindi movement in some states of Southern India. The emotions and passions have since subsided somewhat but the factors which brought about such upheavals remain and can at any time cause similar explosions. One cannot overlook the fact that the Official Languages Amendment Bill and the form in which it was approved by Parliament, were unable to satisfy completely the aspirations of even a single nationality; on the other hand, it earned the hostility of all the nationalities, though in widely varying degrees and for different reasons. Thus, the existence of the Bill itself, not to speak of its eventual implementation, has embittered our people and tends to deepen and perpetuate mutual distrust and hostility among the various nationalities. With the prospect of Hindi becoming the sole all-India official language, i.e., a language dominating the others a few years hence, the sop cynically doled out by the Congress chieftains in the form of a concession, namely, to allow English to continue as an alternate link language while raising Hindi to the status of the all-India link language, can in no way allay the fears and suspicions of other nationalities but can only deepen them.

Only the reactionary imperialist-big bourgeois-feudal combine, which rules India today, stands to gain by the perpetuation of the division and mutual distrust and animosity among various nationalities of our country. Such division, mutual distrust and animosity constitute a powerful force working against the successful development of India's democratic revolution. Yet no radical transformation of Indian society can be brought about unless the domination of the imperialist-big bourgeois-feudal reactionary combination is thoroughly eliminated by carrying

the democratic revolution to a victorious end. Such a victory is possible only through the united efforts of the Indian people, particularly through the united efforts of the basic classes, i.e., the workers and peasants of all the nationalities inhabiting India. That is why we, the Marxist-Leninists of India, can never afford to be indifferent towards the language question. Therefore, it is imperative for us immediately to take up in right earnest the work of educating the peoples of all nationalities about how the language problem can never be solved by the reactionary ruling classes and how they are trying to bolster up their rule of exploitation and oppression by subjugating and subduing various nationalities, their culture and languages — and finally, how a just, lasting and truly democratic solution of the language problem is possible only by carrying the democratic revolution to a victorious end through the conscious and united efforts of the workers and peasants and other toiling people of the various nationalities. We must devote ourselves whole-heartedly to this task.

How the Marxist-Leninists look at the question of nationalities and the question of language is well-known and how they have been able to provide in practice the only just and lasting solutions of these questions and thus proved the scientific truth inherent in their theory, have been clearly and convincingly demonstrated.

Marxist-Leninists always and unwaveringly uphold the view that in a multi-national country, every nationality, big or small, must enjoy the right of self-determination and every language must have equal status. This is an inviolable principle of Marxism-Leninism. It is this that divides the Marxist-Leninists from the revisionists, bourgeois reformists and social-chauvinists of all hues. Starting from this viewpoint, Marxism-Leninism considers that in a multi-national country it is neither necessary nor just to upgrade one particular language to the status of the official language for the whole country. Provided we earnestly and steadfastly uphold the principle of equal rights and status for all the different nationalities inhabiting this country, it is not at all impossible in practice to give equal status to all the languages and to carry on the work of the central government on this basis.

In our country, however, the leaders of the renegade Dange clique and of the CPI(M), who for forty or more years have usurped and shared among themselves the leading positions in the Marxist movement in India, never cared to uphold this universal principle of Marxism-Leninism, a principle that alone can guarantee a just and lasting solution of the national question in our country. The Seventh Congress of the CPI(M) also failed to uphold boldly, rather betrayed, this proletarian scientific principle for the solution of the national question. These leaders never dared to cross the limits set by the Nehru policy in respect of the national question. No wonder that they failed to pursue boldly an independent programme in Parliament on the language question. They have proved unable to unite the people, especially the basic classes, i.e., the workers and the peasants, by dispelling from their minds the suspicion and mistrust sown by the reactionaries and to chart an independent course of action to be followed by the united workers and peasants in order to defeat the reactionary game of sowing disruption among the people. As a result, the entire revolutionary movement and the unity of the basic classes are seriously endangered by the frequent outbursts of rabid chauvinism, provincialism, etc.

The revolutionary Marxist-Leninists must now firmly and earnestly take up the task of educating the people, especially the workers and the peasants about the Marxist-Leninist principles for a just and lasting solution of the national and language questions in our country.

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