

BLITZ

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What Kind Of Hindi?

IN the normal course of events there should have been little or no controversy over the adoption of Hindi as the national language of India after nearly 18 years' Independence. Responsibility for plunging the pride of a free nation in its own national language into an ugly and violent conflict rests mainly with the Hindi fanatics who have misused our freedom years to transform it from a developing, flexible language of the people into a monstrosity of jaw-breaking words hostile to the usage and requirements of the masses.

If Hindi was desired to be the language of the Indian people, then its first imperatives should have been those of simplicity, flexibility and adaptability. Its sponsors should have made it easy for the people to use something like basic Hindi, in the first place. They should have adopted Urdu, English and colloquial words in common usage and absorbed them into Hindi. They might have gone further to overcome the main difficulty of script between the South and the North with the temporary usage of the Roman script.

But the Hindi fanatics would have none of the common touch. Hindi for them had to be a highly classicized, Sanskritized, deep-frozen monopoly of the scholars and pandits, with everything that smacks of the common currency of the bazar treated with offensive Brahmanic untouchability.

The result became a language of fun and caricature. For example, Telephone becomes *Doorbhash*, Television, *Doordarshankariyantra*; Doctor, *Chikitsak*; Judge, *Nyaya-dheesh*; Admiral, *Naubaldhyaksha*; Cement, *Vajrachoorana*; and Tribunal, *Nyayadhikaran*!

Such aberrations of Hindi have caused nation-wide protest against the imposition of a pedantic monstrosity masquerading in the name of a national language. The leader of the protest, let it not be forgotten, was none other than the late Jawaharlal Nehru. No other leader had done more to popularise the common man's Hindi — that is, Hindustani — as the national language, or the people's language, in the South no less than in the North. Yet, it was Nehru's constant complaint that he could not comprehend the Hindi used by All-India Radio. Indeed, we know of numerous sound, patriotically-minded Indians who find it easier to follow Radio Pakistan than All-India Radio.

Some time ago, under Nehru's inspiration, your paper launched a Hindi edition. This was published in simple Hindi which sought to absorb Urdu and English words in common usage. The public response as is well known, was overwhelming, almost overpowering. And the most heartening feature about it was the enormous demand from the non-Hindi speaking areas of the South which we have not been able to meet.

The success of Hindi-BLITZ in the non-Hindi regions should serve as an example to the Hindi fanatics. If they want to create a demand for Hindi in the non-Hindi regions, they must make the language simple, for the people to read and write. Any other way will inevitably smack of imposition, coercion, even imperialism. After all, this is not merely a problem of a national or patriotic language; it affects the employment and economic security of the population of the non-Hindi-speaking regions. Disruptive and secessionist elements like the Old Fox of Salem will be ready to exploit this problem for creating more divisions, partitions and Pakistans.