

PROTEST AGAINST COMPULSORY HINDI USE OF CR. LAW AMEND- MENT ACT CONDEMNED

Ill-Treatment Of Anti-Hindi Prisoners Criticised

SIR P. T. RAJAN ON CONGRESS MINISTRY'S POLICY

Mass Meeting At Triplicane Beach

Madras, Aug. 6.

To protest against the introduction of compulsory Hindi in schools and condemn the repressive policy of the Government, a public meeting of the citizens of Madras was held at the Triplicane Beach under the presidency of Sir P. T. Rajan on Sunday last, (31-7-38).

Processions carrying Anti-Hindi placards came from all over the city. Long before the scheduled time of the meeting, thousands of people poured in, and at about 6-30 p.m. the sands of the beach appeared as if it were a sea of human heads.

At about 6-15 p.m. processions marching through some of the streets of the city, terminated at the meeting place. There was a large gathering of ladies present, for whom special accommodation was provided for near the platform.

The audience assembled is estimated to be well over 50,000.

Loud speakers were installed to enable the audience to listen to the speeches distinctly.

As the Anti-Hindi leaders arrived, they were accorded a rousing welcome by the audience. Great enthusiasm was evinced, and the meeting lasted till 11 p.m.

The proceedings of the meeting commenced with the singing of songs, referring to the glory of Tamil literature, specially composed for the occasion.

The Late Sir M. Krishnan Nair
At the outset, Sir P. T. Rajan moved the following resolution from the chair:—

"This meeting of the citizens of Madras expresses its profound regret at the death of Sir M. Krishnan Nair, one of the respected leaders of India, who had rendered valuable services as a politician and as an administrator."

Moving the resolution, Sir Rajan said: "I need not say much about Sir M. Krishnan Nair, as most of you present have known him and his work in detail. I have known him for nearly twenty years as a member of the Legislative Council and as a member of the Government. He had a very lovable personality. Whoever came across him, had nothing but affection for him. He was the very pink of courtesy. He started his career as a lawyer, became a High Court Judge in Travancore and ended his services there as a Dewan. After his retirement as Dewan of Travancore, he entered the public life of this presidency. Both as a politician and as an administrator, he has done very well in the cause of the people. His political career was as brilliant and useful as it was useful. He died full of honours. Not only the Non-Brahmin public, but the presidency and the country as a whole mourns his loss to-day."

The resolution was then put to vote and carried unanimously. Sir P. T. Rajan, referring next to the object of the meeting said:—

"Our activities are described as Anti-Hindi one. I am afraid that it is not correct to say so. What we are against is, the compulsory introduction of Hindi. This question has been discussed fully and arguments against the Ministry's policy have been advanced. The Premier having failed to meet those arguments has raised a constitutional bogey. He says he has been returned by the electorate by an overwhelming majority; therefore he can do anything he likes. He asks a question whether he should rule or yield to a few disgruntled persons. Before I answer that question, I should like to ask him as to what stands in the way of solving the problem of Anti-Hindi agitation, amicably. Recently, he said that he had expected a lot of opposition to the Prohibition Act, and the Debt Relief Act, but he could not understand why people of this province should make such a fuss over a trivial matter as this."

A Trivial Matter !

"If this is a trivial matter, why should he be so obstinate? I think it is a sense of false prestige that stands in his way of solving the problem. Perhaps, he thinks that if he yields to this agitation, he and his Ministry will lose its prestige. Probably he thinks that if he does so, his political opponents, by utilising this movement, may oust him from the Ministry. This is a nightmare he is suffering from. I think, no one, in this assembly, any party which is opposed to the Congress is willing to get into its shoes immediately. Personally, I want the Ministry to be in office for the rest of its usual period. Because the Congress Ministry have sown the seed let them reap the fruits thereof. Perhaps, those who elected them last year would have something to say when they go and seek their suffrage. We once more, retire that there is every opportunity for the Premier to re-consider his case and to decide this question in a way which would be acceptable to the people of this province. It is late, no doubt, but, it is not too late."

Constitutional Issue

Referring to the constitutional issue raised by the Premier, Sir P. T. Rajan said: "If you want to make us slaves by forcing down our throats a language, alien to us, alien to our customs, alien to our culture, alien to our very existence, we shall say we shall not be slaves. Much"

greater men than Mr. Rajagopalachari, men who claimed kingship, men who claimed divine right, men who had arms and resources at their disposal, have attempted to tyrannise over their people. What became of them, and what their fate has been, you all know. I would respectfully point out to the Premier that, if he attempted this joke, he would share their fate. What is wanted in the Congress Ministry is political sense, and not mere cleverness. This cannot be learnt from books. It can be learnt only by moving with the people. If the Premier had any respect for his opponents, I am sure, he would not have faced the problem in the way in which he has done."

Referring to the Government's repressive policy, the Chairman said:—"It has been the boast of Congressmen in general, and Congressmen of this province in particular, that they were going to teach the Britishers many lessons. The last lesson that they will probably teach is how to use the repressive laws and put down their own countrymen. (cries of "shame, shame") Perhaps the Premier thinks he can cow us down by employing the Criminal Law Amendment Act. Congressmen say they do not believe in Ahimsa, but they have now shown they have full faith in brute force. Once more, we request the Hon. the Premier to consider the matter dispassionately, and I am quite sure if he does so, it will be possible to come to an agreement which would give peace to this province and enable him to devote his energies to the economic improvement of the people. (Cheers.)"

Mr. K. M. BALASUBRAMANIAM

Mr. K. M. Balasubramaniam, who, on rising to speak, was given a tremendous ovation, said that it might be recalled by those present that he addressed a meeting at the very same place not long ago. They would remember to have seen, at the last meeting, a man who was struggling between life and death. Further, they would remember having heard him (the speaker) saying that he would go to jail. They might, he felt sure, ask him as to why he was still at large. The reason was not far to seek. The Prosecution closed its case against him, and he had not yet been sent to jail. He felt certain that in a few days he would be sent to jail. Tamil Sanyasins had gone to jail. Who knew that a day might dawn when the Chairman would have to go to jail? If Jagadeesh who was hovering between life and death on that occasion, had not died, it was because the Tamil Mother was not in need of his life. The presence of Sir P. T. Rajan, a prominent leader of South India, would stir up the feelings of those who had assembled there. It was more than a month since they had last held meeting at the Triplicane Beach, and many were the events that had taken place since then. The Hon'ble the Premier had completed his tour. Everywhere the Premier went, he was welcomed with black flags. The Governor of Madras, acquainted as he was with the tumultuous excitement and seething confusion in Tamil Nad seemed to have asked Mr. Rajagopalachari as to why there was so much of unrest. The Premier told His Excellency that it was only the Tamilians who did not like him, and that the Governor would find that what amount of support he (the Premier) had in Andhra Desa. The Premier went on tour to the Andhra country. Words adequately failed him to describe the Premier's reception in the manner in which it was organised particularly in Vizagapatam. There the Premier addressed a large gathering, but he was shouted down. His tour in the Andhra country, made him realise that the agitation for separation for Andhra Province was gaining ground day by day. The Premier must have felt that the trouble in Andhra was far more serious than in Tamil Nad.

The speaker then referred to the speeches of some Ministers against the British Government and said that the Ministers were liable for prosecution under Sec. 124, I. P. C. (Sedition) in as much as they have spoken something which came within the purview of the section. He wished to ask what the Governor of Madras was doing when Mr. Raman Menon and Dr. T. S. S. Rajan went about creating class hatred. He next referred to the recent utterances of the Congress Ministers during their tours and asked whether they were living under the British Raj or Congress Raj.

Referring to the decision of the Congress Working Committee with regard to the Anti-Hindi agitation, he said they thought there were some persons there endowed with sense and sanity, but it seems to be the other way about. The Working Committee had dismissed the whole question on the ground that the agitation was due to some misunderstanding. On more than one occasion, the Anti-Hindi propagandists and speakers had stated that they had written letter after letter to the President of the Congress, but no reply came.

Mr. Satyamurthi had thrown out a challenge to Sir K. V. Reddy to stand for election on this issue. He did not think that Sir K. V. Reddy was necessary to defeat Mr. Satyamurthi, for a Tamil volunteer would be enough to accept the challenge and defeat him (cheers). If Mr. Satyamurthi really meant what he said, he should have resigned first and stood for re-election. But, on the contrary, he had been keeping silent, even after his challenge was accepted.

They would all remember Congressmen having breathed fire and brimstone against English language. To learn the once much maligned language, Pandit Nehru and Dr. Subbaroyan had sent their daughter and son respectively to England for studies. No less a person that Sarojini Devi had said at a meeting that she would speak in a language which was known all over the world. The day was not far off when Hindi would be sent out along with the Congress Ministry. (Cheers.)

MR. N. V. NATAR JAN

Mr. N. V. Natarajan, a member of the Madras District Congress Committee, spoke next. He announced that he had resigned his membership thereof Congressmen paid no heed to the wishes of the people. It had been often stated that the agitation was carried on only by Self-Respectors and disgruntled men. To say so was absurd. He asked whether women did not take part in the agitation. Thousands in women at a meeting held in Peddunakkenpet recorded their emphatic protest against the introduction of Hindi, because they felt that their mother-tongue was at stake and would be relegated to the background. Mr. Achariar had stated in some of his speeches that whatever he had done he had met with opposition. All those who had assembled must have known whether there was any opposition either to the Prohibition Act or Debt Relief Bill by way of such protest meetings. He asked why should Mr. Achariar mislead the public by uttering falsehoods. The Hindi Pracharak Sabha, as they all knew, had been in existence for the past twenty years. Divisional Sabhas were organised in all parts of the City and collections were made. The Justice Ministry, which was then power did not oppose it because there was not the element of compulsion in it. To say that the opponents of the Congress were playing a prominent part in the agitation against compulsory Hindi was preposterous. He asked whether Mr. T. R. Venkatarama Sastri was the Premier's opponent. He asked whether Mahamahopadaya Swaminatha Iyer and other Brahmin scholars of Tamil were his opponents. Even Congressmen were opposed to the introduction of compulsory Hindi. He said that there were many

Congressmen who, in their heart of hearts were opposed to Hindi. The fear that the disciplinary action would be taken against them if they oppose the Government of the day, was haunting them, and that was why many did not come to the forefront to record their emphatic protest. The agitation, he concluded, would be carried on till such time the word "compulsory" was deleted.

SWAMI SHANMUGANANDA

Swami Shanmugananda, speaking next, said that for the past two months the Achariar Government had been trying to suppress the free expression of opinion. Mr. Achariar dared not do such things with Andhras for they would not spare him. He would like to put a plain question to Mr. Achariar whether any one of his forefathers was a Minister. He wished to say for the information of Mr. Achariar that many Sanyasins were prepared to go to jail for this cause. They would even oppose the introduction of Hindi as an optional subject.

SRIMATHI JALAJAKSHIAMMAL

Srimathi Jalajakshiammal said that if, she a woman, had come forward to speak at the meeting, it was because, she strongly felt that her mother tongue was in danger and it was her duty to protest against the introduction of an alien language. A curious argument, she said, was often put forth by some Congressmen that if Bharati were alive to-day, he would no doubt support Hindi. Personally, she said, she remembered to have seen the late Bharati in her childhood. She recited some songs of Bharati showing his passionate love for Tamil.

PANDITHAI NARAYANIAMMAL

Pandithai Narayaniammal said that two Sanyasins and many sons of Tamil were sent to jail for no crime they had committed, except for the fact that they had shouted "Long live Tamil" and "Down with Hindi." The treatment meted out to those who were sent to jail was unbearable and intolerable. Mr. Achariar, she said, were he to be a fair-minded person should feel for what he had done and apologise for his acts. In conclusion, she criticised the action of the Government in applying the Criminal Law Amendment Act against the Anti-Hindi agitators.

MR. SARANGAPANI

Mr. Sarangapani said that had the people known that Mr. Achariar would thrust an alien language unwillingly down the throats of their children, he was sure, they would not have elected him. The promises made at the time of elections were many, but the promise that he would introduce compulsory Hindi was not at all made to the electorate. The electorate now felt their folly in electing Mr. Achariar, and he felt sure that at the next time the Premier went to seek the suffrage, he would not be elected.

MR. MARAI THIRUNAVUKARASU

Mr. Marai Thirunavukarasu said that not only the Self-Respectors, and others opposed Hindi, but Pandits also. On behalf of the Tamil Pandits, he wished to say that he opposed Hindi.

MR. MOHAMED IBRAHIM

Mr. Mohamed Ibrahim appealed to parents not to send their children to schools where Hindi was compulsorily taught. By that way, he said, Hindi could be got rid of.

SRIMATHI NARAYANI AMMAL

Srimathi Narayani Ammal spoke condemning the action of the Government towards the peaceful Anti-Hindi demonstrators.

MR. DEVASUNDARAM

Mr. Devasundaram, who till recently was the Treasurer of the Peddunakkenpet Congress

Sabha, spoke next. He said that at a time when there were people who could not read and write their own mother tongue, the Government of the day had thought fit to introduce a language by compulsion. The argument of Mr. Achariar that Swaraj could be achieved only through Hindi was ridiculous. The Working Committee had stated that the Andhra Province question could be decided only after Swaraj was achieved. Why should not the same principle be applied in the case of Hindi? Referring to the clove boycott of Congressmen, Mr. Devasundaram said that those responsible for the boycott were not taken to task. Was not the Anti-Hindi satyagraha conducted in the same manner? Why should the Anti-Hindi Satyagrahis be sent to gaol? The Congressmen thought that whatever they did was fair, just and reasonable, and if others had done anything they were unfair. He said that the Congressmen could never take a long view of things, but that they were mean-minded.

MR. ALBERT JESUDASAN

Mr. Albert Jesudasan then addressed the meeting. He said that if he was present on that platform, it was because he wanted to express the opinion of labourers whose humble representative he was. Every labourer considered the move on the part of the Congress Government in introducing Hindi in schools as a compulsory subject as harmful and dangerous. Their children could not learn three languages at a time. The essential need of the day was the removing of illiteracy in the land. Instead of taking steps towards that direction, the Government were not only closing down schools but forcing an alien language. Therefore it was the unanimous opinion of the labourers of Madras that Hindi should go.

Referring to the repressive policy of the Government, Mr. Jesudasan added that it was most unthinkable that the Congress Government should treat the anti-Hindi agitators who were being convicted, in a way that was not done even in the case of worst criminals. When Congressmen went to jail in spite of the fact that they were enjoying all comforts, they wanted an additional diet, namely butter-milk. But when they (non-Congressmen, i. e. anti-Hindi agitators) went to jail their heads were shaven, ragi was given and they were treated as worse than criminals. If that policy were to continue, the speaker concluded, there was bound to be greater discontent among the people which might end in disastrous consequences.

SWAMI NITYANANDAM

Swami Nityanandam said that very soon the Congress Ministry would be dragged down to dust, for it was the curse heaped on them by the Sanyasins for threatening the existence of their very language and culture. The Sanyasins, he said, were in no way behind others in going to jail for the cause of their language. The Congressmen characterised those who were in power before they accepted the leaves and fishes of office, as "Desa Drohis". He wished the people who had assembled there to draw their own conclusions as to who were the Desa Drohis in fact. The speaker could claim to have travelled all over India as a Sanyasin, and he could say without any contradiction that Hindi was a language spoken by a microscopic minority such as and as could not be called a language common to the population of India. It would be wise statementship, he said, if Mr. Achariar reconsidered his decision, and did not fall a victim to the curses of Sanyasins.

Mr. Namasivoya Bharathi appealed to those present to take an active part in the agitation for the upkeep and preservation of a language which was

PROTEST AGAINST COMPULSORY HINDI

(Continued from page 5)

more dear to them than anything else.

MRS. MEENAMBAL SIVARAJ

Mrs. Mennambal Sivaraj said that there was a rumour afloat that the three Knights of the Justice Party would be arrested for identifying themselves with the Anti-Hindi agitation. She pined and longed for the day when the Chairman (Sir P. T. Rajar) and his other colleagues of the party would be arrested. The Congress had foes on all sides. On the one hand there were the Self-Respectors, on the other, there were the San-yasins who poured forth their vials of wrath and curses on them. Now another group had risen in revolt, and that was the women. She felt that by this time, Mr. Achariar would have got afraid of the forces that were at work against him. Every Tamilian, whoever he or she is, would, she felt sure, fight in this noble cause.

Resolutions Passed

The following resolutions were then passed unanimously, at the meeting:—"This meeting of the citizens of Madras strongly criticises the action of the Madras Government in introducing Hindi as a compulsory subject of study in the first, second and third forms as being wasteful overburdening the capacity of young children, and as being of no practical value, and that it cannot by any means become the national language of India, but will hinder the progress of education and culture of the people of this country."

"This meeting of the citizens of Madras strongly condemns the action of the Government in applying the Criminal Law Amendment Act to persons who are carrying on the Anti-Hindi agitation adopting the very methods which are prevalent among the Congressmen in the agitations which they had been carrying on during the last fifteen years."

"This meeting of the citizens of Madras protests against the treatment meted out to under-trial prisoners and convicts in the Anti Hindi Movement by giving ragi diet and subjecting them to harsh manual labour."

With a few remarks from the chair and a vote of thanks by Mr. Salasundram, the meeting terminated at 11 o'clock in the night.