

To Sri Prof. Tripurari Chakrabarty  
with my best compliments  
Invarajunda

20/6/54

MEMORANDUM  
OF THE  
INDIAN ASSOCIATION  
TO THE  
STATES RE-ORGANISATION COMMISSION  
1954

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**MEMORANDUM**  
**OF THE**  
**INDIAN ASSOCIATION**  
**TO THE**  
**STATES RE-ORGANISATION COMMISSION**  
**1954**

The Memorandum of the Indian Association to the States Reorganisation Commission is divided into five parts. Part I discusses the principle of the basis of the States of the Indian Union. India is almost naturally divided into a number of language and culture groups. As far as possible, people speaking the same language and having more or less a particular type of culture should be grouped together. There should not be any delay in such re-grouping of areas in any part of the Indian Union.

The unity of India should be maintained. But it will be unwise to try to impose uniformity in the name of unity. Indian unity has always been federal unity. In social, religious, cultural and political life, she has followed the course of developing unity through diversity. By following the line of federal unity, India can save herself from the dangers of disintegration. Free growth of the various languages and cultures of India does not stand in the way of securing for India a permanent Union of the States based on their willing co-operation.

Part II deals with the case of Bengal specially ; and shows how repeated attempts were made by the British to weaken her economically and disrupt the unity of her linguistic and cultural life. If the other provinces of India grew without a 'scientific plan,' planned attempts were made to divide Bengal, reduce her area, weaken her economic staying power, and scatter her very large population. The communal

partition of her province was one result of these attempts ; the other was to create inter-provincial jealousies, as between herself and her sister States in Bihar, Orissa and Assam.

Part III of the Memorandum deals with specific proposals for the transfer of certain Bengali-speaking areas, now included in Bihar and Assam, to West Bengal, namely, the district of Manbhum, Dhalbhum Pergana of Singbhum, the Bengali-speaking areas of the Santal Perganas, and the narrow strip of territory lying to the east of the river Mahananda in Purnea district from Bihar, and the district of Goalpara from Assam. Evidences of historical records, facts as recorded by impartial observers, conclusions of linguistic and other surveys—all prove conclusively, in the opinion of the Indian Association, that these areas really belong to Bengal, and should therefore be re-included within its boundaries.

Part IV of the Memorandum deals with the issue of administrative necessity, and how it applied to the case of Bengal. The division of Bengal into Eastern Pakistan and Western Bengal has snapped the link that would otherwise keep intact the contiguity of its territories. The territory to the east of the river Mahananda in Purnea, is claimed not only because rightfully it should go to Bengal on linguistic and cultural affinities but also because it will help to link the north and south portions of the territories of the present State of West Bengal.

Part V presents the factual condition of the present State of West Bengal. Because of the communal partition of India, it is the smallest of Part A States now, though it has about the highest density of population in India. It has a larger percentage of people dependent on livelihood other than agriculture than almost any area of India. It has reached the high percentage of land utilisation, 85·1%, the highest of all States in India. "The per capita tax in West

Bengal is the highest among Part A States, and equal to Bombay State. But the total per capita expenditure on social services, education, medical and public health in West Bengal is Rs. 6.3 only, while in Bombay it is Rs. 10.7." West Bengal has the highest percentage of literates among the States of the Indian Union, except Travancore-Cochin. There are in West Bengal now 7 cities and 107 towns. But her industries, inspite of 'heavy population pressure and extreme overcrowding in agriculture, are not expanding proportionately, but what is worse, they are actually shrinking.' Her literary unemployeds are increasing at an alarming rate. Over and above, she has her baffling refugee problem. The result of all these is that large sections of her people are in the grip of despair and frustration. The crisis in West Bengal must be met,—for the well-being of this State and for India as a whole.

A people with a glorious past, with capacity for sacrifice for patriotic ends, with education, energy and skill, and still being made to bear almost alone in this part of India, the enormous difficulties of a Partition before entering upon the responsibilities of political freedom—is thus being driven to a state of desperation, economically, culturally and socially. We have tried to indicate in our Memorandum a way out, so far as that falls within States Reorganisation. West Bengal feels that she has a right to demand now justice and fairness from her co-partners in the democratic Republic of India.

Satinath Roy

President

Indian Association

Calcutta,

27th. May, 1954.

Harendranath Mozumder

Secretary

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**MEMORANDUM OF THE  
INDIAN ASSOCIATION, CALCUTTA  
TO THE STATES RE-ORGANISATION COMMISSION**

( May 31, 1954 )

I

FUNDAMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. The Indian Association is firmly of the opinion that a re-organisation of the present boundaries of the constituent States of the Indian Union is necessary, particularly in those areas where the retention of the British administrative units has been retarding the progress of the people, creating a sense of frustration among them, and leading to embitterment of feelings between one section and another of the people of this great country. Such a condition can never help "the preservation and strengthening" of the unity of India, or further "the great ordered plan for economic, cultural and moral progress", upon which she has embarked.<sup>1</sup>

2. The Indian Association firmly believes in the need for unity of India, and maintains that all claims for re-adjustments of boundaries must be judged not only from the point of view of the particularistic interests of the individual States but also from the larger stand-point of the well-being and solidarity of the Indian nation.

3. Our Association can claim that it has always stood for the advancement of India as a whole. Founded nearly ten years before the birth of the Indian National Congress, in 1876, it declared as one of its main objects to be "the unification of the Indian races and peoples upon the basis of common political interests and aspirations."<sup>2</sup> Even in those early days, the leaders of the Indian Association recognised the urgent need for Indian unity. Surendranath Banerjea, acknowledged to be the Father of Indian Nationalism, was also a founder of the Indian Association. Soon after the establishment of this Association, he

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1. Terms of reference of the present Commission.

2. 'History of the Indian Association' by Sri Jogesh Chandra Bagal, 1953, p. 13

delivered an address on 'Indian Unity' to the Calcutta Students Association in 1878, in the course of which he said: "Let us hold aloft Surendranath's address on 'Indian Unity' in 1878 the banner of our country's progress. Let the word 'Unity' be inscribed there in characters of glittering gold. We had enough of past jealousies, past dissensions, past animosities.....There may be religious differences between us. There may be social differences between us. But there is a common platform where we may all meet, the platform of our country's welfare. There is a common cause which may bind us together, the cause of Indian progress. There is a common Divinity, to whom we may uplift our voices in adoration, the Divinity, who presides over the destiny of our country.<sup>3</sup> How true these words are even to-day! Indian unity has been an article of faith with us.

4. But it is time we understood the full import and significance of the noble ideal of Indian unity. And the first thing that we must remember in this connection is that Indian national life cannot be reduced to a uniformity imposed by the will of a centralised administration. It must be federal unity, built up from the bottom through Federal Unity the growth of democratic institutions among the masses of our people. Our modern leaders of thought, Rabindranath Tagore and others, have repeatedly stressed federalism as a fundamental trait of our civilisation and culture. To quote from one of his writings on the subject: "From the early dawn of our history, it has been India's privilege and also its problem.....to harmonise the diverse elements of humanity which have inevitably been brought to our midst, to synthesise the contrasting cultures in the light of a comprehensive ideal."<sup>4</sup> Bipin Chandra Pal said in the same strain in his book "Soul of India": "India had developed this federal type of nationality ages and ages ago.....Our religion has been organised after the federal ideal.....Our social economy has similarly been of a distinctly federal character.....Our States were also of this federal type."<sup>5</sup> Even much earlier than that, during the middle ages, the celebrated Indian saint Kabir, among others, had preached a synthesis of diverse cults and cultures of India as the only solution of India's complicated problem. And Kabir, we should remember, stands at

3. Speeches and Writings of Surendranath Banerjea, (G. A. Natesan & Co.) p. 230

4. Rabindranath Tagore on Rammohan Roy in 'Rammohan Roy Centenary Booklet' 1933, p. 3

5. "Soul of India," 3rd Edition p. 117

the fountain-head of Hindi language and literature.<sup>6</sup> The unity which these seers and thinkers of India have preached is not uniformity but federal unity. And the essence of federal unity is unity in diversity. This has been the line of evolution of India's age-long culture. And this federal ideal we must sincerely pursue in the development of the national polity of free India.

5. Even British politicians were compelled, since the early decades of the present century, to recognise the principle of federation as the solution of the complex political problem of India and the way to a peaceful settlement of India's conflict with Britain. It was indicated first in Lord Hardinge's Despatch of 1911, and was reiterated in successive pronouncements of British statesmen, until it was practically incorporated in the Government of India Act of 1935.

6. On the attainment of independence, the "Objectives Resolution" of the Constituent Assembly in 1947 frankly adopted also this principle as the regulative idea of the constitution of free India.<sup>7</sup> But unless we are able to enter fully into the spirit of the federal ideal, and allow it to permeate all the departments of our national life, social as well as cultural, a mere federal State constitution will lose its dynamic force and character. It is, however, heartening to find Indian Nationalist thought expressing itself boldly on this federal ideal as early as the beginning of the present century, in the midst of a bitter conflict with Britain for political freedom. In the periodical called "Swaraj," published from London in 1909, we find the following words: "The Federal Ideal.....reconciles the absolute autonomy of its members with the perfected unity of the whole. And India is the meeting place not of fluid tribal organisations.....but of perfected and fully developed nationalities, and the growing Indian nation will be of a new type of nationhood, the real Federated Nation."<sup>8</sup>

#### LINGUISTIC RE-GROUPING—THE RATIONAL WAY

7. India is a country of many languages, representing diverse patterns of socio-cultural life. These have developed in India through the growth of many centuries, and not imposed by the will of imperial conquerors. Royal patronage of particular languages or literatures should not be taken as linguistic impositions forced on unwilling peoples. English may be cited

Growth of  
languages in  
India

6. Charu Chandra Bandopadhyaya—'Madhayuger Bharatiya Sadhak.' p 37.

7. "Objectives Resolution" of the Constituent Assembly, January 22, 1947, Appendix I.

8. Quoted in 'Nationality and Empire' by Bipinchandra Pal—Introduction, p. ix.

perhaps as a case of such imposition, but it is still a foreign language in India. Several original racial currents have acted and reacted on each other to develop the principal languages of modern India. According to linguistic scholars, "four great linguistic families are represented in India: the Austric, the Dravidian, the Indo-European (Aryan), and the Sino-Tibetan."<sup>9</sup> The Indian Constitution has recognised fourteen regional languages in India, namely, Assamese, Bengali, Gujrati, Hindi, Kanada, Kashmiri, Malayam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telegu and Urdu."<sup>10</sup>

8. The modern Indian languages and literatures have not only grown through the ages, but may be said also to divide our great country almost into definite cultural and linguistic areas. The report of the Committee of All Parties, appointed in 1928, "to determine the principles of the Constitution of India," (known as the Nehru Committee, having been presided over by Pandit Motilal Nehru) states:

Natural linguistic areas of India "In looking at the map of India today we see definite linguistic areas. There is the huge Hindusthani block all over northern India, with its slight variation into Punjabi in the Punjab. Then there is the Bengali area, the Assamese, the Oriya, the Telegu, Tamil, Malayam, Canarese, Marathi, Gujarati and Sindhi."<sup>11</sup> The Indian languages map appended to Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee's pamphlet on "Languages and the Linguistic Problem" furnishes also a proof of this statement.<sup>12</sup> India is not naturally divided thus merely on a territorial basis; it is divided more truly perhaps culturally, represented by the language of each culture-group. To recognise the linguistic basis, therefore, as the principle for a division of India into the States that will comprise the Indian Union is both natural and rational.

The acceptance of this principle does not mean, however, that no other consideration should be taken into account or that linguistic demarcations should be too rigidly drawn, ignoring historic and other associations. Administrative, economic and political considerations must also have due weight in arriving at a solution of this vital and delicate problem. But, as has been pointed out by the Nehru Committee, "the main considerations must necessarily be the wishes of the people and

9. Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji—'Languages and the Linguistic Problem', p. 12

10. 'Indian Constitution,' Eighth Schedule.

11. Nehru Report, 1928, p. 63

12. 'Languages and the Linguistic Problem' by Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji,—map given on inside cover.

the linguistic unity of the area concerned.”<sup>13</sup> A word of caution may be uttered here. The wishes of the people, as a rule, are sufficiently indicated in the language or dialect they use. The language census figures, where not manipulated for political purposes, are a record of the wishes of the people in a particular area. A fresh ascertainment of the people's wishes does not seem to be called for, unless in special circumstances, particularly when an atmosphere of calm and a condition of impartiality—the two requisities of an honest plebiscite—are not easy to obtain.

#### DIFFERENT LANGUAGES NOT A SOURCE OF WEAKNESS

9. The natural linguistic division of India into different groups is not a source of India's weakness, as we are apt to think. It is not one language or one religion that has made India into a nation.

India is a land of many races, many tongues and many religions, but still she stands divided from the rest of the world not only geographically but also consciously as a nation through a continuous process of synthesis, developing into distinct cultural or linguistic areas. “The unity of India is neither racial, nor religious, nor political nor administrative, says the author of “Soul of India.” It is “a peculiar type of unity, which may perhaps be best described as cultural.”<sup>14</sup> It is felt, therefore, that any arrangement that will ignore this cultural basis of our national life or deny the linguistic principle its rightful place in re-grouping the States of the Indian Union, on the plea of safeguarding the interests of Indian unity or more correctly speaking uniformity, will not help the evolutionary progress of the complex life of free India.

10. It is not true that the development of distinct languages and cultures in the different areas of our vast continent has helped the growth of an unhealthy jealousy or bitterness among the various sections of our people. To take one example only. Bengali is spoken of by 53½ million people. In the State of West Bengal of a total population nearly 25 millions more than 21 millions have Bengali as their mother-language.<sup>15</sup> “Considering the number of people speaking it has their mother-tongue”, says Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, “it is the seventh language of the world, coming after Northern Chinese, English, Russian, German, Japanese

13. Nehru Report, 1928, p. 61

14. “Soul of India” (3rd Edn.) p. 82

15. Census of India, 1951, Paper No. I (Languages), p.

and Spanish. Hindi or Hindusthani is the *home language* of a much smaller number than Bengali.”<sup>16</sup> This phenomenal growth of the Bengali language has been made possible through a larger mass awakening in these parts, and the friendliness of her immediate neighbours. The Bengali language has powerfully influenced and on its turn been influenced by the languages of sister regional units. Assamese is “very like Bengali”, the script of both being almost similar, while Bengali’s relationship with Oriya and Maithili has been of long duration and intimate. Of those whose mother-tongue or dialect is different from Bengali, a large number speak Bengali as a subsidiary language, in the border areas of Bengal. Special mention may be made of the Santal people. Speaking of Manbhum, H. Coupland writes in the District Gazetteer : “To a large extent the members of the aboriginal tribes are polyglot, speaking Bengali or Hindi, *usually the former, (italics ours)* in addition to their own dialect, even where, as in the case of the Sonthals, they are a sufficiently numerous community to force a knowledge of their own language on their neighbours, and on the courts and offices with whom they come into contact.”<sup>17</sup> This belies the impression that these different peoples, owning different languages and cultures, have always looked upon each other with the mistrust and suspicion which they do now.

#### INTER-PROVINCIAL JEALOUSIES A CREATION OF THE BRITISH

11. In fact, inter-provincial jealousies, like inter-communal differences, have been the creation of British Colonial Imperialism.<sup>18</sup>

International  
Jealousy  
creation of the  
British

This was sufficiently evident to Indian fighters for political freedom as early as the beginning of this century, if not earlier. “It is an open secret”, wrote the Nationalist weekly “New India” in 1905, “that since some years past the policy of the Government in India has been to create and increase differences and divisions among the people. Inter-provincial jealousies have been fomented by the enunciation of a narrow provincial standard and spirit, as the guiding principle of selection for the provincial services. ....While the new attempts to partition administrative wholes and cut up consolidated vernaculars come as the crown-piece of this policy

16. Dr. Suniti Knmar Chatterji, “Languages and the Linguistic Problem,” p. 14

17. Manbhum District Gazetteer, p. 72

18. Sir John Strachey writing in 1888, said : “The truth plainly is that the existence side by side of these hostile creeds is one of the strong points in our political position in India”—quoted in ‘India Today’ by Rajani Palme Dutt.

of 'divide and rule', which has all these years been silently and secretly working in the Government of this country."<sup>19</sup>

12. Neighbourly languages have influenced each other, and cultural comminglings between sister provinces and groups have, in fact, materially helped the growth of a federal cultural nationalism in India. The alien political power that held sway over us for more than a century and a half, had little knowledge and less appreciation of this characteristic of our national life. They imposed instead an administrative unity on India, and the incubus of that idea of centralised uniformity has not evidently lost its hold upon us yet. That is the reason, it seems, why the spectre of disintegration of India is raised before our vision as soon as the perfectly natural and just claims for the consolidation of linguistically contiguous areas are put forward.

#### A BASELESS FEAR

13. Such consolidation, it is feared, will make a linguistic area strong, and this added strength may be used against weaker neighbours. The observations of the Linguistic Provinces Commission, 1948, on the question of a linguistically integrated Maratha State are significant. The Mahrathas, it said "are an able and virile people.....They are able to hold their own in any struggle for political power. But unfortunately, the Poona school of thought, which is also the dominant school of thought in Maharashtra, does not see eye to eye with the rest of India as to the future destiny of this country, or with regard to the part which Indian provinces should play in the evolution of the Indian nation ; and the desire for a Sanyukta Maharashtra is the natural expression of their ideology, and the real or imaginary apprehension of Gujarat and Mahakosal domination are its natural allies."<sup>20</sup> But why inside a people's democracy, which is our aim in India, should there be a struggle for power among its constituent units? The freedom of India has raised hopes of radical improvement in the economic life and also in the social life of the common man and woman of India. If we work sincerely to that end, and if India develops into a real Welfare State or a Union of Welfare States, then there can be no room for any struggle for power or privilege between the different parts of the Indian Union. The cure for any possible fissiparous tendency must be found in removing the

19. "Swadeshi & Swaraj" by Bipinchandra Pal, 1954, p. 8

20. Report of the Linguistic Provinces Commission, 1948, p. 10

causes of frustration in any area and among any section of the people and not in suppressing the natural desire of the different peoples to develop along their own cultural lines.

#### MORE EQUABLE DIVISION OF STATES

14. The way in which the principal States of the Indian Union are now constituted, leaves room, however, for the growth of an unhealthy jealousy among them and a desire to dominate the less advantageously positioned units. There is a great disparity among these States both in area and in population. The following table will show it :

#### AREA AND TOTAL POPULATION : 1951 CENSUS

State	Land Area in square miles	Population
Uttar Pradesh	113,409	63,215,742
Bihar	70,330	40,225,947
Bombay	111,434	35,956,150
WEST BENGAL	30,775	24,810,308
Orissa	60,136	14,645,946
Assam (without tribal area)	85,012	9,043,707

A re-distribution of their boundaries, following, as far as possible, linguistic affinities, should be effected to prevent such a dangerous growth.

#### PROVINCIALISM AND REGIONALISM

15. This is not the same, we submit, as provincialism or regionalism. Provincialism, as has been aptly pointed out, has not inspired the demand for linguistic re-grouping of States. "Provincialism is not the demand for such province (or State), but it is the opposition to this demand."<sup>21</sup> Provincialism, like regionalism, is essentially territorial; the conscious or sub-conscious motive behind it is political and economic power. In the anxiety to retain as much power as possible, a State, with such narrow provincial bias, becomes intolerant of cultural and linguistic minorities with in its own zone and refuses these latter even common justice

21. Sri Atul Chandra Gupta's address to All-Bengal Linguistic States Re-distribution Conference, 1952.

and fair-play. Happenings in Bihar and Assam, and particularly now in Bihar, affecting the Bengali-speaking minorities in those States, some instances of which are appended to this Memorandum, will substantiate this statement."<sup>22</sup>

16. Excessive regionalism has been rightly condemned by our national leaders.<sup>23</sup> It will be a misfortune if our youthful students are affected by it. Regionalism emphasises the division of the country territorially, based on economic, political or administrative considerations; sentiments of language, culture and religion are often utilised to further parochial or communal ends. In a composite State like the Indian Union regionalism, based on territorial unity, may easily develop into a formula of strife, each regional unit scrambling for power at the expense of the other. An excess of regionalism may therefore break up the unity or solidarity of the Indian nation, already partitioned on sectarian religious basis. A linguistic re-grouping of the States, we hold, will check such perilous growth. In linguistic States you do not create new divisions; you allow only the cultural and social life of the different peoples to flow uninterrupted along their natural lines, helping forward the process of federation of these diverse currents into a grand unit,—a process that has remained through the ages a characteristic of the composite national life of India. Let it be remembered also that language and culture develop through association and assimilation; they do not thrive in an atmosphere of strife. It is through mutual and friendly intercourse, and under the influence of new and humanising movements that our present languages and literatures have grown, and taken their modern shape and form. The linguistic and cultural patterns of modern India have developed not through the imposition of any one language or culture over another or others but by the natural process of association and assimilation. Whatever deviations there have been, have been of recent occurrence, resorted to from political motives; and rather than disproving our contention, they go to prove and confirm it. These broad and fundamental facts of our historic evolution should not be ignored in any attempt to make things apparently easy or administratively convenient.

22. Appendix II.

23. Please refer to Sardar Panikkar's address to the students of Bihar at the last University Convocation.

## IMPORTANT PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

17. There are equally important practical reasons also for not ignoring the claims of linguistic homogeneity in discussing the problem of rational re-grouping of the States of the Indian Union. To quote from the report of the All-Parties Committee (1928): "It is well recognised that rapid progress in education as well as in general culture and in most departments of life depends on language....It becomes essential therefore to conduct the business and politics of a country in the language which is understood by the masses. So far as the provinces are concerned, this must be the provincial language. ....If a province has to educate itself and do its daily work through the medium of its own language, it must necessarily be a linguistic area. If it happens to be a polyglot area, difficulties will continually arise, and the media of instruction and work will be two or even more languages. Hence it becomes most desirable for provinces to be re-grouped on a linguistic basis. Language, as a rule, corresponds with a special variety of culture, of traditions and literature. In a linguistic area all these factors will help in the general progress of the province."<sup>24</sup>

18. In a Welfare State, welfare is to be secured by the people for themselves, and not to be distributed as doles. It means that the people must be politically educated by conscious participation in the affairs of the State. And this cannot be possible unless the language of the State be also the language of the people. It is on this ground that we have sought to discard English; being a foreign tongue it cannot be expected to do the work which a mother-tongue can do. If Hindi, which is provided in Article 343 of the Constitution, to be the official language of the Indian Union, is sought to be imposed as the official language of the State, where it is not the mother tongue of the majority of the people of that State then the same difficulty will arise in the development of self-help and self-reliance among that people and they will inevitably fail to be trained in the art of self-government by not being able to take an intelligent and active interest in the conduct of public affairs. We, having no national language for all India, must resist the temptation of imposing Hindi on people whose mother-tongue is different, or for that matter any language on a group or section of the people, having a mother-tongue different from it. Linguistic freedom is among the fundamentals of human freedom. We can only try to suppress it to our peril. The Nehru Committee, inspite of its decided leaning to make Hindusthani

24. Report of the All-Parties Committee, 1928, p. 62

(which is however different from Hindi) "the common language of the whole of India," observes; "..... But granting all this, the provincial languages will have to be encouraged, and if we wish the province to make rapid progress we shall have to get its work done in its own language."<sup>25</sup>

#### LINGUISTIC MINORITIES

19. Though not, strictly speaking, within the purview of the question the boundaries re-distribution, the consideration of the issue of linguistic States raises the problem of linguistic minorities also, and a universally accepted formula guaranteeing the liberty of such minorities to develop along their own cultural lines should be incorporated in the Constitution as part of the "Fundamental Rights", under "Cultural and Educational Rights," the main lines of which may follow the unanimous resolution of the Education Ministers' Conference held in August, 1949.<sup>26</sup> The urgency of a satisfactory solution of the problem was stressed at that Conference by the Central Education Minister. "If we allowed grievances to grow over basic things like the question of the mother-tongue," he said, "..... the consequence will affect all aspects of our nation's life." But unfortunately the grievances over mother-tongue have grown very considerably since then, and Bengali-speaking minorities in Bihar are just now particularly suffering from it.<sup>27</sup>

Our Prime Minister, Sri Jawaharlal Nehru's extremely well reasoned speech on the language issue, at the meeting of Congress Parliamentary Party, published on 16th May, 1954, should be accepted by all those who are anxious to propagate Hindi as an all-India language as their guide.<sup>28</sup>

## II

### AN OLD CRY IN BENGAL

20. We have dwelt at considerable length on the issue of linguistic States, as we are firmly of the opinion that within reasonable limits it is a correct principle to follow, and a dangerous thing to ignore. Let it not be said that the cry for linguistic consolidation is a recent move, and a sign of disintegrating tendency. To speak of Bengal only. As early as 1874, when the district of Sylhet (now mostly included in Eastern Pakistan), was snatched away

25. Report of the All Parties Committee, 1928, p. 62

26. The Position of Linguistic Minorities—Report of the Secondary Education Commission, 1952-53, p. 62. Appendix III

27. Extracts in Appendix IV

28. Prime Minister Sri Nehru's Statement published on 16-5-54. Appendix V

from the Bengal homeland, and tucked on to the new Chief Commissioner's province of Assam, she strongly objected to it, and continued her agitation without abatement for more than fifty years for being amalgamated with Bengal.<sup>29</sup> In 1896, when the Government of the day wanted to transfer Chittagong Division to Assam, there was universal popular protest against it. The strength of the protest led to the abandonment of the proposal.<sup>30</sup> In 1903, a new proposal was put forward by the Government to include not only Chittagong Division but also Dacca and Mymensingh districts into Assam. The publication of this proposal "was the signal for an outburst of opposition from the people", and no immediate action was taken over it. The silence of the Government raised a hope that no further attempts would be made to divide Bengal. But it was not to be "All of a sudden, in July, 1905, a Government Resolution announced the partition of Bengal." A "new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam was formed, by the amalgamation of Assam and Surma Valley with fifteen districts of the old Bengal province." The result was an unprecedented upheaval of protest against it. The main ground on which the partition of Bengal was opposed was that it divided the people, who spoke the same language, and had intimate ethnic and cultural affinities, though its two main communities professed two different religions. In 1911 the Partition was annulled, and the province of Bihar and Orissa was created. The move was hailed with approval by educated political opinion in the country, particularly as it laid down the principle that people speaking the same language should be grouped together in one administrative unit. But though the principle was accepted on paper, its full application was not made in practice. In Assam the districts of Syllhet, Cachar and Goalpara, and in Bihar and Orissa, the district of Manbhum, Dhalbhum Pargana of Singbhum, portions of the Santhal Parganas, and a part of the district of Purnea to the east of the Mahananda river,—which were all dominantly Bengali-speaking areas—were kept out of Bengal. The Indian Association under Surendranath demand a restoration of these areas to Bengal, and *The Bengalee*, Surendranath's organ, carried on an incessant campaign, pressing the claim.<sup>31</sup> This old history is recorded here to show that the demand for linguistic consolidation is not new in Bengal, nor has it ever been

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29. Excerpts from presidential address of Bipinchandra Pal at the Surma Valley Conference, 1918, Appendix VI

30. "A Nation in Making"—Surendranath Banerjea, p. 185

31. Memorandum of the Indian Association, dated January 23, 1912. Appendix VII. Also *The Bengalee*, January to March, 1912.

considered as of minor importance. In the south also, as well as in other parts of India, linguistic grouping of areas has been an old cry. In 1928 the Nehru report said: "The National Congress recognised this linguistic principle eight years ago, and since then so far as the Congress machinery is concerned, India has been divided into linguistic provinces."<sup>32</sup>

#### WHEN BIHAR MADE INTO A SEPARATE PROVINCE

21. The Indian Association and the Bengal leaders demanded the integration of all Bengali speaking areas, but they were not actuated by narrow selfish motives in doing so. It was with them the justification of a principle,—that of granting to the different units of India full scope and freedom for linguistic and cultural development along their own lines. That has been a basic principle of Indian nationalism also. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, among the members of the All Parties Committee, 1928, stressed the creation of the separate province of Orissa, and the inclusion of Bengali-speaking areas of Bihar into Bengal.<sup>33</sup> It may be noted here also that in the Memorial, which Surendranath drew up in June, 1911 for a "modification of the partition of Bengal," and to which he had the support of almost the entire Bengal, the claims of the Beharis and of the Oriyas to have separate provinces of their own, were warmly supported.<sup>34</sup> The Memorial said: "..... The Beharis have throughout prayed for their separation from Bengal, while the Oriyas likewise in a petition submitted five years ago (i.e. in 1906) prayed for being freed from Bengal administration." It suggested a division of the then provinces of Eastern Bengal and Assam, and Bengal, Bihar and Orissa into two provinces, Bengal and Assam, and Bihar and Orissa, and remarked: "The proposed arrangement would be welcomed by the people of Behar as well of Bengal and would afford equal facilities to Bengal and Bihar to work out their destinies." "There is indeed a strong and growing feeling among the people of Bihar (it continued) for separation from Bengal. This will sooner or later, sooner rather later, be one of the pressing problems which the Government will be called upon to deal with. We respectfully submit that its solution now will be timely and prevent an agitation which is inevitable within measureable distance of time; and there is no form of agitation more acute than that connected with territorial

No selfish  
motives of  
Bengal Leaders

32. Nehru Committee Report, 1928, p. 62

33. Do, p. 63

34. Appendix VIII.

re-adjustment." This Memorial reads almost like one direct from the people of Bihar. Surendranath writes in his autobiography that "some of the arguments ..... in the memorial were accepted by the Government, as reasons for the modifications of partition, and were emphasized in the Despach" of August, 1911.<sup>35</sup> Reading between the lines, it means that Bengal's support played a considerable part in the creation of the separate province of Bihar and Orissa in 1911.

22. This the Bihar leaders themselves evidently knew, and they reciprocated it by supporting Bengal's claim to the Bengali-speaking areas included in Bihar. The Congress resolution on the subject in December, 1911, was supported by Sri Parameswarlal, a Bihari leader. The resolution in the same breath in which it expressed "profound gratitude to His Majesty the King-Emperor for the creation of a separate province of Bihar and Orissa," prayed that "in readjusting the provincial boundaries, the Government will be pleased to place all the Bengali-speaking districts under one and the same administration."<sup>36</sup> The Bihar leaders went even further. In a communication to "The Bengalee," dated January 4, 1912, they specifically mentioned the areas which, in their judgment, belonged to Bengal, and should, therefore, be restored to that province. They said: ".....the portions of Purnea and Malda to the east of the river Mahananda, which is the ethnic and linguistic boundary between Bengal and Bihar, should go to Bengal, and the western portions of these two districts come to Bihar. Similarly such tracts in the Santhal Parganas, where the prevailing language is Bengali, should go to Bengal, and the Hindi-speaking tracts of the district remain in Bihar. As for Chota Nagpur, the whole district of Manbhum and Parganah Dhalbhum of Singhbhum are Bengali-speaking, and they should go to Bengal, the rest of the Division which is Hindi-speaking remaining in Bihar."<sup>37</sup> This communication, strange as it may seem now, reads almost as coming from a group of Bengal patriots. The communication was signed by five Bihari leaders, including Sri Parameswarlal and Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha. They were among the most active of Bihar politicians to work for separation of Bihar from Bengal. If Bengal's claims were not just, not only from the view-point of Bengal, but also from the larger stand-point of Indian nationalism, it could not possibly have the support of such an eminent constitutional lawyer as the late Dr. Tej

35. "A Nation in Making"—Surendranath Banerjee, p. 285

36. Congress Resolution, 1911, Appendix IX.

37. Appendix X.

Bahadur Sapru, who moved the Congress resolution of 1911, mentioned above, urging for the transfer of Bengali-speaking areas included in Bihar to Bengal.

#### SO-CALLED UNITY UNDER THE BRITISH NOW ILLUSORY

23. The urgency of a satisfactory solution of the problem of territorial re-distribution of the States of free India cannot be over-emphasised. It would be suicidal unwisdom to think that whatever unity or stability had been established by the British rule in India would be maintained if only we retained their political and economic set-up.<sup>38</sup> The urgency of the problem The unity under foreign rule was based on a common political serfdom. That urge would naturally be absent in free India. How can we expect, therefore, that the Punjabi, the Bihari, the Bengali, the Maratha, the man from Andhradesa and others who combined in their fight against British domination, would continue to remain so combined when that domination ceased, unless freedom meant for them, as members of their own socio-cultural groups, something positive to aspire after, not only in the abstract but also in the concrete? These various peoples must start now to look about themselves, seek justice where it had been denied, and expect fulfilment of pledges that had been made but never redeemed—under the callous administration of the foreign political power in the country. The socio-cultural patterns of life of the different peoples of India were suppressed under an un-understanding foreign subjection. Can we hope for happiness or peace among these various peoples unless the opportunities we lacked then were opened up now?

#### BRITISH POLICY TO WEAKEN BENGAL

24. History has recorded the progress of British rule in this country. "From small beginnings in the coastal towns of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras," states the Linguistic Commission's report (1948), "the British rule went on expanding and adding territory after territory which were transformed into administrative provinces without any rational or scientific planning." But this Bengal must be subdued is not the whole story. With the rise and growth of a new national consciousness in India, political motive,—the motive of keeping the

38. Report of the Linguistic Provinces Committee 1949 said: "Whatever the origin of these provinces, and however artificial they may have been, a century or so of political, administrative and to some extent economic unity in each of the existing provincial areas has produced a certain stability and a certain tradition, and any change in this would naturally have an upsetting effect."

people in abject subjection, played an important part in the making and re-making of the boundaries of the different territories of the vast conquests of the British in this country. This was particularly true in Bengal. The founding of the Indian Association in 1876 may be said to synchronise with the birth of new nationalism in India. The Government of the day was determined to crush the new spirit in India by subduing the Bengalee people. In 1874, as already stated, Assam was taken out of the big administrative unit of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, and made into a Chief Commissioner's province. To make it viable, i.e. capable of maintaining itself, the Bengali-speaking districts of Goalpara, Cachar and Sylhet were included in it. Besides the official reason of administrative necessity, it is not unreasonable to think that the interest of British capital invested in the tea plantations of Assam, required it to be secluded from the centre of growing political consciousness in Bengal. The Inland Emigration Act was passed a few years after, in 1882, which did not, however, repeal the earlier enactment on the subject of 1859. This last Act, evidently an improvement on the prior legislation, was described by so sober a politician as Kristodas Pal as a veritable "Slave Act".<sup>39</sup> This characterisation would give us some idea of the conditions of tea garden labour in Assam at this period, and the need for isolating Assam administratively also from the larger province of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The Bengal patriots, under the leadership of the Indian Association, started a countrywide agitation for the amelioration of the condition of tea-garden labourers;<sup>40</sup> and it was largely due to that effort that the iniquities of the British tea planters of Assam was checked, and some improvement in the condition of tea-garden labour was made possible.

#### MEASURE TO SUPPRESS PUBLIC OPINION IN BENCAL

25. Bengal, under the leadership of the Indian Association (the Congress was not born yet) started a regular fight with the British Government, whenever its acts and policies went against the interests of the Indian people. Bengal's part in the agitation against the Civil Service Regulations is well-known. But perhaps it is not so well-known that the 'native' press of Bengal during the eighties of the last century carried on a tearing agitation against British policy in India, a policy that drained India's wealth, brought famines to her land, and saddled her with

39. "Memories of my life and Times"—Bipinchandra Pal, Vol. II, p. 53.

40. Memorial of the Indian Association, dated May 5, 1888, Appendix E of "History of the Indian Association," 1953—Sri Jogesh Chandra Bagal.

the liabilities of an unnecessary frontier war. The Government took action against the vernacular journals, and the Vernacular Press Act was passed in 1878. That the Government's aim was particularly to suppress the Bengali journals (there were 35 vernacular journals in Bengal at this time) would be evident from the overwhelmingly large number of extracts that were cited from the principal vernacular periodicals of this province in support of this measure.<sup>41</sup> The Act was directed against 'Bengali journals in particular', says Sri J. C. Bagal in his *History of the Indian Association*.<sup>42</sup> A special target was the 'Amrita Bazar Patrika', which was bilingual then.

#### TO DIVIDE HINDUS & MAHOMEDANS IN BENGAL

26. This was part of the general policy of the British Government to suppress Bengal. It came out in repeated attempts to disrupt the unity of Bengal, by snatching away areas that belonged to it, in language, association and culture, and grafting them to other units, like Assam in the earlier stages and Bihar and Orissa after the annulment of Partition in 1911. We have seen how it was done in 1874, 1905 and 1911, besides the still-born attempts in 1896 and 1903. It served a number of purposes, all designed to weaken Bengal. It reduced natural area and population of Bengal ; created inter-provincial jealousies and inter-communal bitterness ; and deprived her of her resources to meet her growing economic needs. In creating the province of Assam in 1874, we have seen how three Bengali-speaking districts, Goalpara, Cachar and Sylhet were taken away from it. It not only meant a loss to Bengal materially but it sowed seeds of bitterness also between the Bengali and the Assamese. And that spirit of dissension subsists even to-day.<sup>43</sup> But a new move, immensely more mischievous than the earlier ones, of dividing the two Bengali communities, Hindus and Mahommedans, was started, and it culminated in the famous Bengal Partition of 1905. The British Government's resolution creating the new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam said : "the territories now comprising Bengal and Assam will be divided into two compact and self-contained provinces, by far the largest constituents of which will be homogeneous in character and which

41. Report of the proceedings of a public meeting on the Vernacular Press Act held in the Town Hall, Calcutta on April 7, 1878.

42. "History of the Indian Association," p. 33

43. Among many instances may be cited one regarding domicile, as enunciated by the then Chief Minister of Assam Assembly on 20-3-48, where it was stated that a non-Assamese to acquire Assam domicile must 'live continuously at least for 10 years' in the district where he has his homestead, and that there must be no 'interest or connection whatsoever with his native people.'

will possess clearly defined boundaries and be equipped with the complete resources of an advanced administration.<sup>44</sup> The British Government thus contrived to destroy the homogeneity of Bengal and set up instead two 'homogeneous' administrations,—one with Moslem majority (18 million Moslems, 12 million Hindus) and another with Hindu majority. No better foundation could have been laid for the future State of Pakistan in Eastern Bengal.

#### INTER-PROVINCIAL JEALOUSY—NEW MOVE IN 1911

27. This Partition had to be modified in 1911, but the motive to break up Bengal's solidarity, politically, linguistically and economically continued to shape British policy in making the new administrative arrangement that created the province of Bihar and Orissa in 1911. This time it was to sow the seed of jealousy between the Bengalee people and her immediate neighbours in Bihar, Orissa and Assam, and particularly in Bihar. Otherwise why should the district of Manbhum, Pargana Dhalbhum in the district of Singhbhum, portions of the Santal Parganas, and a strip of territory to the east of the Mahananda river in Purnea district—all of which had a dominantly Bengali-speaking population, be retained in the new province of Bihar and Orissa? The leaders of Bihar did not want it; the people of these areas did not desire it. The Government of India Despatch of August 25, 1911, which wanted to create an atmosphere of calm and peace in Bengal, raised hopes also that adjustments would presently be made to keep all Bengali-speaking areas in Bengal. But all such imaginings were set at rest by the definite announcement of the then Viceroy at the meeting of the Geological and Mining Institute at Dhanbad on January 20, 1912, that no further adjustments of boundaries would be made.

#### PROPAGANDA OF PROVINCIALISM

28. Not only certain Bengali-speaking areas were disignedly included in Bihar, systematic efforts was also started to make the Propaganda against Bengalis in Bihar Biharis feel in every department in life that they were a separate people, whose interests clashed with those of the Bengalis. Certificates of domicile were introduced, which were humiliating to the Bengali residents in Bihar, and conditions were created by the policy of the British Government that allowed friction between the two communities to continue and grow. A feeling against the Bengalis was sedulously cultivated, and they were pointed out as the

44. Text of the Government Resolution on Bengal Partition, 1905.

'exploiters' of the land. The Bengalis held a number of jobs, as we all know, in the different branches of the administration, at a period in the history of this State, when the Biharis, as a class, did not aspire for them, being unmindful of securing the necessary qualifications; and many of these Bengalis settled in Bihar also. Service, provided it is secured on the merit of competence, cannot make a service-holder an 'exploiter'. Clerks, teachers, munsiffs, medicalmen and engineers serve a country, provided they are honest and competent; by no stretch of imagination can they be said to 'exploit' a country'. The British exploiters did not send to this country an army of clerks, school teachers, subordinate judicial officers, medicalmen and engineers to toil for life in the lower grades to carry on the process of exploitation. But such half-truths were spread from the motive of fomenting inter-provincial jealousies. The Government of India Despatch of 1911, creating the separate province of Bihar and Orissa, said: "The people (meaning the Biharis) have hitherto been unequally yoked with the Bengalis, and have never therefore had a fair opportunity for development."<sup>45</sup> Successive Lieutenant Governors of the new Province, and officers under them set to work to systematically cultivate the spirit of separateness between the Biharis and the Bengalis. Sir Charles Bayley, the first Lieut. Governor of Bihar and Orissa said: "Now that Bihar and Orissa are a separate province it is in the opinion of the Lieutenant Governor of great importance that the claims of the natives of the province to appointments under the Government should receive careful and sympathetic consideration at the hands of those responsible for filling vacancies." Sir Edward Gait, who succeeded him, remarked: "I am not at all sure that as rapid a progress is being made as can be desired in giving a due share of appointments to *genuine* natives of the province."<sup>46</sup> (Italics ours.) The situation became so serious in the course of about three decades, that the Working Committee of the Congress, (presided over by Sri Rajendra Prasad, had to take note of it, and by a resolution dated January 11, 1939. it recommended the abolition of the issuing of domicile certificates, and laid down certain general principles to govern appointments etc. in Bihar and other provinces. Though couched in persuasive language, the report of the Congress Working Committee, gave its seal of approval to the British Government's policy of provincial separateness. As a result inter-provincial jealousy between these two neighbouring provinces

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45: Quoted in 'Bengali Behari Question', p. 24

46. Do.

has gone on increasing, so much so that an arrangement that was considered by the Bihari leaders themselves as just and fair in 1912, both to that province and Bengal, are vehemently opposed now.

29. It forebodes ill both for Bihar and Bengal and also for the solidarity of the new Indian Union. We have referred to the letter of the five Behari leaders just after the formation of the new province of Bihar and Orissa, in which they recommended the inclusion of Manbhum, Dhalbhum, Bengali-speaking areas of Santal Parganas and the territory to the east of river Mahananda in Purnea to be included in Bengal, as they really belonged to Bengal. We would now quote the remarks of Dr. Sri Krishna Sinha, Chief Minister of Bihar, at the Bihar Assembly last year and would request the members of the Commission to note the difference between the two in tone and in substance. "We bitterly resent (said the Bihar Chief Minister) this attempt at dismemberment of our State ; and those who constitute the Government of Bihar to-day will do all that lies in their power to defeat this attempt.<sup>47</sup> This is not the language either of neighbourly fellow-feeling or reason, nor does it indicate a regard for the unity of India, to which we offer often lip sympathy to suit our purpose.

#### FEELING IN BENGAL SINCE INDEPENDENCE

30. Bengal felt that she was not receiving the consideration which the justice of her case demanded and that a spirit of inter-provincial Indifference to Bengal jealousy, the seed of which had been sown by the British, was unfortunately working still, clouding the understanding of the present political leadership in the country. In 1948, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the President of the Constituent Assembly of India, appointed a Commission to report on the desirability or otherwise of the formation of the new Provinces of Andhra, Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra in pursuance of the recommendations of the Drafting Committee "to enquire into all relevant matters *not only as regards Andhra but also as regards other linguistic regions.*" Bengal felt that the question of re-grouping of her boundaries also might justifiably be included in the terms of reference to this Commission. The Bengali Consenbly members submitted a memorandum to this effect also to the President of the Constituent Assembly. The Nationalist press of Bengal supported them.<sup>48</sup> We need not go into an examination of the

47. Sri Krishna Sinha's speech at the Bihar Assembly, 1953.

48. Quoted in Sri Sachchidananda Sinha's Memorandum to the Constituent Assembly on 'West Bengal's Claims to Some Bihar Areas'.

technical difficulty that was raised in the way of inclusion of Bengal in the terms of reference to this Commission. It will be academic now. The fact, however, remained that the tests and conditions for the formation of a linguistic State, as laid down in the report of this Commission, were fully satisfied in Bengal, and there could remain no justification, therefore, for refusing the Bengali-speaking areas included in Bihar, Assam and Orissa, lying contiguous to the present State of West Bengal, to be re-grouped within its boundaries. Bengal felt naturally aggrieved at its non-inclusion in the terms of reference to this Commission. The Linguistic Provinces Committee, composed of the Prime Minister, the late Sardar Patel and Dr. Sitaramayya, after consideration of the problem again, submitted its report in 1949. It also regarded the West Bengal issue as beyond its terms of reference. The case of West Bengal fell within "petty adjustments of boundaries," such as were "demanded in parts of northern India." The people concerned, however, were advised not to raise such questions now ; the time was not opportune for discussing such issues. That was the opinion of this important Committee regarding West Bengal. It is true that both the Linguistic Provinces Commission of 1948, and the Linguistic Provinces Committee of 1949 decided against the formation of linguistic States anywhere in India at the present moment. They did not want to disturb the present arrangements. According to them, India had more urgent matters to deal with. But apart from the general disappointment felt over the decisions of these two Committees, Bengal felt particularly sore that her circumstance,—the particularly difficult circumstance of gaining independence through a partition of her province .....did not receive the attention it deserved at the hands of her sister States and the Central Government of the Indian Union.

### III

#### SOME SPECIFIC PROPOSALS RE: WEST BENGAL

31 In the preceding paragraphs, we have discussed the broad principles that should govern the boundaries problems of the different States of the Indian Union, and have also indicated what areas should come to West Bengal on an application of these principles.

In this and the following paragraphs, we shall deal with the specific Bengali-speaking areas that should come to Bengal on the grounds of historic association, language and administrative needs, and above all

from a consideration of the future permanent well-being of India as a whole.

#### MANBHUM

The people of West Bengal, since the creation of the separate province of Bihar and Orissa in 1911, have asked for the district of <sup>Manbhum</sup> Manbhum to be included within its boundaries. The <sup>part of Bengal</sup> <sup>historically</sup> people of this district have also wanted such transference. A long gap of more than forty years, including full popular administration of nearly eight years, has not been able to still that cry into silence. The district, as at present constituted, was first established in 1833. It then "included the estate of Dhalbhum, now attached to Singhbhum, besides a large part of the present district of Bankura and Shergarh, now a part of Burdwan."<sup>49</sup> There were several changes between 1833 and 1879, when Manbhum was reduced "to its present limits." A brief note on the earlier history of this area, by Sri P. R. Das, given in the Appendix to this Memorandum, will show that in pre-British period also it formed really a part of the political administration of Bengal.

We will mention here only that in the Ain-i-Akbari, Subah Bihar was divided into seven Sircars, and in none of these Sircars the present district of Purnea, or Chota Nagpur or Santal Parganas are found to be included. Sircar Mandaran, shown in the Ain-i-Akbari as a frontier Sirkar of Subah Bengal, was divided into 16 Mahalabs, which included the present district of Manbhum. In Jaffar Khan's settlement of 1772, Sircar Mandaran was included in Chakla Burdwan. Rennel's maps (1799) also show that Pacheet or Manbhum did not belong to Bihar but that it belonged to Bengal. The map given in "A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sunnuds" (1862), shows too the boundaries of Bengal and Bihar at the time of the grant of Dewany in 1765. It will be seen therein that Bengal included the "whole of Parganah Dhalbhum, the entire districts of Manbhum and Purnea, a very small bit of Bhagalpur district, and about three-fifths of the Santal Parganas."

#### LANGUAGE OF MANBHUM

32. "The prevailing vernacular of the district is the western dialect of Bengali, known as Rahri Boli, which is used by 72% of the population", said the District Gazetteer in 1911.<sup>50</sup> In 1931, <sup>Language of</sup> <sup>Manbhum :</sup> <sup>Bengali</sup> according to the Census, the percentage of Bengali-speakers was 67.5, while that of Hindi-speakers was 17.8. In the last

49. Manbhum District Gazetteer, p. 67

50. Do p, 72

Census (1951), the percentage of Bengali-speakers is recorded as 43.5 and that of Hindi-speakers as 42.9. We are thus told that between 1931 and 1951, there has been a decrease by 24% among Bengali-speakers and an increase by 25.1% among Hindi-speakers in this area. In the absence of some very special circumstance—the mass emigration of Bengali-speakers out of this area, and the mass immigration of Hindi-speakers into this area, such reduction in the case of Bengali-speakers with such increase in that of Hindi-speakers is difficult of comprehension by the ordinary understanding. The only explanation can be that there has been manipulation of these figures, evidently, for political purpose. Many of those who were enumerated as Bengali-speakers in the previous Census, were now recorded as Hindi-speakers. This could be done conveniently in border-areas as one dialect gradually merged into another.

33. The remarks of Dr. Grierson may be worth quoting in this connection. He distinctly says that “Manbhum is a Bengali-speaking Dr. Grierson’s district, and the same language is spoken in that part view of Singhbhum known as Dhalbhum.” “The western dialect of Bengali (says he) is spoken in its extreme form in the east coast of Chota Nagpur Division, in the district of Manbhum, and in the tract called Dhalbhum in the east of Singhbhum district.” Dr. Grierson estimated (about 1901) that 9,04,930 persons spoke the western dialect of Bengali in Manbhum, i. e. more than 72 per cent of the population. The Census figures for 1901 also agreed practically with this estimation. The district of Manbhum has a large population of Kurmis. Of them and their language he says: “In Manbhum the language is principally of the Kurmi caste, who are numerous in the Division of Chota Nagpur and in the Orissa tributary State of Mayurbhanj. They are an aboriginal tribe of Dravidian stock, and should be distinguished from the Kurmis of Behar .....The two quite distinct tribes have been mixed up in the Census, but...their habits are also distinct.....These Kurmis do not speak corrupt Bihari. Many of them speak Bengali and Oriya.” On an examination of the peculiarities of the dialects of these polyglot areas, Dr. Grierson remarked” .....from the point of view of actual existing linguistic facts, and from that point of view, Bengali-speakers are amongst the speakers of Aryan languages, the people who are in possession of the district at the present day.”

34. This position is sought to be altered by creating confusion

of dialects in this multi-language border area of Bengal, evidently for political purpose. The political motive has clearly led those responsible for preparing the 1951 language Census of this district and other areas where Bengali-speakers have been occupying a dominant position to devise new methods of computation for simultaneously increasing the number of Hindi-speakers and reducing the number of Bengali-speakers. In 1931 the absolute number of Bengali-speakers in Manbhum were as follows :—

BENGALI-SPEAKERS	1951	HINDI-SPEAKERS
1223		322
	1951	
991		979

That this is a manipulated figure, will be evident if we take certain clear facts into consideration. According to the 1951 census about 2,42,000 Hindi-speakers migrated to this area during this period. Taking the normal increase of Hindi-speakers at about 48,000 in this area in 20 years (between 1931 and 1951), we arrive at 6,12,000 as the approximate correct figure of Hindi-speakers in Manbhum district in 1951 on the basis of former classifications of Bengali and Hindi dialects. But it is shown to be 9,79,000 as the number of Hindi-speakers in Manbhum in 1951. This increased showing of nearly four lakhs in the number of Hindi-speakers in Manbhum is evidently a manipulation. Let us see it from another angle. In 1931 the number of Bengali-speakers is recorded as 12,23,000. Adding the figure of about 1,85,000 as the normal increase of Bengali-speakers in 20 years in this area, we arrive at the figure of about 14,00,000. In the 1951 Census the figure given is 9,91,000 i.e. less by about four lakhs. It means, therefore, that about four lakh Bengali-speakers were enumerated as Hindi-speakers in the 1951 census.

#### A FRANK ADMISSION

35. This is frankly admitted too. In Paper no. 1, Census of India (Languages), 1954, occur the following words : "There is.....admixture of distinctly Bengali elements in the Bihari sub-dialects spoken in Manbhum, and it is not always easy to distinguish between the Bihari dialects and the western Rarhi form of the Bengali which is spoken in Manbhum. During the ten years or so, however, there has been a growth of social and political consciousness among the Kurmi and other indigenous elements, who are mostly backward socially and educationally, and many of them prefer to return

A Frank  
Admission in  
Govt. Note

Hindi as their mother-tongue and Bengali as their second language. No less than 3·9 lakh persons have returned Bengali as their second language." This figure, it will be seen, more or less agrees with the abnormal increase in the number of Hindi-speakers in Manbhum in the 1951 census as compared to that of 1931 figures.

This Government Paper gives also a reason for the growth of "social and political consciousness" among the indigenous backward populations of Manbhum. It writes: "Till about 10 years ago, there were practically no schools teaching Hindi in Manbhum district. In the course of the last six or seven years, Hindi has been introduced in most of the schools which were existing from before. In addition, 400 Hindi schools teaching upto the Upper Primary standard, and 500 night schools, which also teach Hindi, have been started in this district. The establishment of these schools appears to have contributed indirectly to the increase in the number of Hindi returns."<sup>51</sup>

We said of manipulation of 1951 Bihar language census figures. This explanation shows that it is something more deep-rooted. Systematic attempts have been made to alter the foundation of Hindi and Bengali speakers, in the name of propagating *Rashtra-bhasa*, i.e. Hindi. It will help Bihar in two ways; she will be able to feel moral exultation as a vigorous propagator of *Rashtra bhasa*, and she will gain materially by ousting Bengali from within its present extended borders. Attempts to forcibly introduce Hindi in these areas started really long before the attainment of Independence, and the decision to make Hindi *Rashtra-bhasa* for the whole of the Indian Union. The New Bengal Association's Memorandum No. 4, dated December 7, 1948, contains evidences of such attempts by British officials since 1912. The present may therefore be said really to be a continuation of this process, ignoring the basic fact that dividing one community or one provincial people from another now would dangerously weaken the very foundation of the united national life of free India. It unfolds to us the psychological background also of the movement of Tusu songs in Manbhum. It is a movement to keep the spirit of the Bengali language alive against the efforts of the Bihar Government to suppress it. These facts, incomplete as they are, will be found sufficient, we believe, to make an impartial observer refuse to accept the 1951 census figures as correct. We give below the census figures from 1881 to 1951 of the

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51. Census of India—Paper No. I (1954) Languages

Bengali and Hindi-speakers of Manbhum, and will leave the Commission to draw their own conclusion :—

Percentages of Bengali and Hindi speakers in Manbhum		
	Bengali	Hindi
1881	78.5	10.5
1891	76.1	10.2
1901	72.4	12.5
1911	63.5	21.5
1921	66.8	18.6
1931	67.5	17.8
1941	—	—
1951	43.5	42.9

#### CASTES AND TRIBES OF MANBHUM

36. But manipulated language figures are not the only means of judging whether a particular community were the dominant class in a particular area. In Manbhum the principal caste and tribe divisions are as follows:—Kurmi, Santhal, Bhumij, Bauri, Brahman, Kumhar, Ahir Goala, Bhuiya, Rajwar, Kalu, Kamar and Lohar. The Kurmis of Manbhum are however not the same as the Kurmis of Bihar. "The Chota Nagpur Kurmis have many customs clearly tribal, whereas the Kurmis of Bihar are practically orthodox Hindus."<sup>52</sup> H. H. Risley says : ".....the totemism of the Kurmis of western Bengal stamps them as of Dravidian descent, and distinguishes them from the Kurmis of Bihar and the United Provinces."<sup>53</sup> The Santals and the Kurmis of Chota Nagpur are closely related to each other racially. "The Santals consider the Kurmis to be descended from the same stock as their own and will eat cooked rice from them."<sup>54</sup> Again, "The Kurmis of Chota Nagpur, Manbhum and Orissa, however, can hardly be distinguished from a Bhumij or Santal."<sup>55</sup> "The distinction first drawn by Dr. Grierson", says H. Coupland, "between the Bihar and the Chota Nagpur Kurmis, which is now generally accepted, is exemplified in this district (Manbhum) by the fact that marked traces of the characteristic Kolarian village system remains, the Mahato or the village headman of the Kurmis corresponding exactly with the Manjhi of the Santals, the Sardar of the Bhumij and the Munda of the Ho races. The Hinduisation of the Kurmis is

52. Tribes and Castes of West Bengal, (Census 1951) p. 80

53. Manbhum District Gazetteer, p 76

54. Tribes and Castes of West Bengal, (Census 1951) p. 80

55. Do.

much more complete than that of either the Bhumij or the Santal."<sup>56</sup> These evidences should help a lay reader to understand which way the natural filiation of this group lies—whether towards Bengal or towards Bihar.

Referring to the Bhumij, they are described as the "autochthones race of the Manbhum district.", and "the bulk of the tribe in Bengal is to be found in Midnapur."<sup>57</sup> Regarding the Bauri, the District Gazetteer of Manbhum records; "...they are found in the largest numbers in the areas adjoining to what is called by Mr. W. B. Oldham, the Bauriland of Burdwan and Bankura."<sup>58</sup> "The Bhuiyas are most numerous in the Dhanbad sub-division.....Col. Dalton considered the Bhuiyas, including those of northern Manbhum, to be Dravidian." "According to Risley Bhuiyas of Orissa States, Hazaribagh, Ranchi, Santal Parganas and West Bengal have the same origin." In West Bengal "they are found chiefly in Burdwan, Midnapur and Bankura." "The Rajwars are a cultivating caste of Bihar, Chota Nagpur and Western Bengal, probably of aboriginal origin."<sup>59</sup> The more we look into the researches of scholars as to the origin and customs of the more important and numerous castes and tribes of these areas, the more we become convinced of the natural kinship and historic association of these peoples with their brethren in the contiguous districts of West Bengal. Mention may be made of one more caste, the Sarak, who congregate mostly in Manbhum, and are also to be found in small numbers in West Bengal and Orissa. Of them it is said; "Saraks of Burdwan, Birbhum and Manbhum are Hinduised but retain the tradition of immigrating from up-country and being originally Jains."<sup>60</sup> In Orissa, "they have a tradition that they immigrated from Burdwan."<sup>61</sup> We reserve our observations on the Santhals later on.

#### POPULAR FESTIVALS OF MANBHUM

37. Popular village festivals of Manbhum are also similar to those as obtain in W. Bengal. "Durga Puja, Kali Puja, Manasa Puja, Village festivals Jita Shashti, Basanti Puja and Pous Parban are performed in Manbhum in the same manner as they are done in the neighbouring districts of Midnapur and Bankura."<sup>62</sup> "The peculiari-

56. Manbhum District Gazetteer, p. 78

57. Do.

58. Do. p. 79

59. Tribes and Castes of West Bengal, (Census 1951) p. 76

60. Do. p. 81

61. Do. p. 80

62. See Memorandum of Dhanbad Bar Association

ties of cooking, the mode of putting on dhooties by men and saris by women, the manner of mutual greetings on all social occasions, marriage ceremonies.....indicate that the people of this district are only a section of the Bengali society."<sup>63</sup> "It should also be stressed..... that the Dayabhaga school of Hindu law is in vogue here, and not the Mitakshara as in other parts of Bihar."<sup>64</sup>

#### DHANBAD—ITS FLOATING POPULATION

38. We have given a general account of the historic association, languages, customs, and social structures of the different castes of the people of Manbhum district, to show that judged by all these considerations it should be included in West Bengal. We have not considered Dhanbad separately in this context, as the observations that are true of Manbhum district are generally true for this sub-division of it also, except that owing to a large influx of colliery labourers, the floating Hindi-speakers here outnumber the permanent settlers, mostly Bengali-speakers. According to the 1931 census, out of 196,000 people of Manbhum born outside the district, nearly 136,000 were from Hindi-speaking areas, and a very large percentage of them represented the floating population in and around the colliery centres. According to the 1931 census the sex proportion of Bengali-speaking and Hindi-speaking population of Manbhum district was as follows :

No. of females per 1000 males.	
Bengali-speaking	Hindi-speaking
985	757

And sex proportion is an indication of the floating nature or otherwise of the population of an area. For reasons already stated, we have not taken the figures of 1951 census.

Another important fact may be mentioned to show that Bengali has been the language of this area all through.

"The language of court records and the court has been all along Bengali. Even when Hindi was made a court language, along with Bengali, in Dhanbad court, very few documents came to be written in Hindi, and the position continues to be the same, although Bengali has lately been abolished as a court language."<sup>65</sup>

63. See Memorandum of Dhanbad Bar Association

64. Do.

65. Do

## DHALBHUM

39. What has been said of Manbhum applies with equal force to the case of Dhalbhum. Both are equally Bengali-speaking majority Dhalbhum areas, and tribes and castes of both have the same intimate kinship with similar communities in West Bengal. "It is an estate in the district of Singhbhum, extending over 1,187 miles. Dhalbhum formed part of the Midnapur district until 1833, when the district of the Jungle Mahals was broken up. It was then constituted a part of the Manbhum district, and in 1846 it was transferred to Singhbhum."<sup>66</sup> Dr. Grierson described Dhalbhum, as already noted, as a dominantly Bengali-speaking area. "Outside Jamshedpur", states the 1931 census of Bihar and Orissa, "Bengali is the dominant language in Dhalbhum, Oriya comes a very bad second, and Hindusthani a poor third."

40. Let us discuss now population figures. According to the 1951 census, the population of Dhalbhum is 6,135,14, of which the share of Jamshedpur is 2,18,162. The figures of 1931 census were: Dhalbhum (including Jamshedpur) 3,94,595, Jamshedpur alone 83,738. The enormous increase in the population of Jamshedpur has been due to the steel and other allied industries of this city. To Jamshedpur has flocked artisans and labourers from different parts of India, and, as can only be expected, the population is mainly a floating one. This can easily be seen from the sex proportion in the population of Jamshedpur. According to the 1941 census figure, while the number of females per 1000 males in the rest of Singhbhum was 1,012 that of Jamshedpur alone was 712. The sex proportion among Bengali and Hindi-speakers of Singhbhum district according to the 1931 census was:

No of females per 1000 males	
Bengali-speakers	Hindi-speakers
951	740

Even according to the manipulated 1951 census, the number of females among Bengali-speakers is 944, and of Hindi-speakers 880. The proportion has been raised among Hindi-speakers by counting many Bengali-speakers as Hindi-speakers. Several causes have contributed also in raising the sex-proportion of the Jamshedpur population in recent years. Three main causes have been mentioned in this connection:

"(i) inclusion of large rural areas within the township recently. Its area in 1931 was about 22 square miles, now it is 28.5 square miles;

66. Singhbhum District Gazetteer, p. 212

“(ii) heavy immigration of female labourers since the prohibition of employment of women in the coal mines ;

“(iii) local migration of the Bengalis with families to enjoy the amenities of the township of Jamshedpur,”

The percentage of speakers of the principal languages in Dhalbhum (including Jamshedpur) is given below :

	Dhalbhum (entire)			
	Bengali	Hindi	Oriya	Ho
1891	48·8	1·3	21·1	1·0
1911	40·0	1·0	11	1·0
1931	35·7	12·4	11·0	1·9
1941	—	—	—	—
1951	30·8	21·3	21·3	2·0

The increase in the percentages of Hindi and Oriya speakers is due to the growth of Jamshedpur city as a cosmopolitan industrial town.

#### CASTES & TRIBES OF DHALBHUM

41. “The whole Pargana of Dhalbhum.....is largely peopled by the same castes as are found in the neighbouring districts of Midnapur, Bankura and Manbhum.” “For practical purposes the district may be divided into three parts as regards the distribution of the different tribes and castes. The Kolhan, as the name implies, is the home of the Kols, or more properly the Hos, who form the bulk of the population with a minority of other aboriginal tribes, such as Gonds, Tantis, Kamars and Kumars. Porahat has a more mixed population, for though the Hos predominate, Mundas and Bhuiyas are numerous, and also to a less extent, Goalas, Tantis and Kurmis. Dhalbhum, however, shows the greatest diversity of castes and tribes. There the Bhumij, the Bhuiyas, the Santals, the Kharias, numerous other aboriginal tribes, live in close juxtaposition with Brahmans, Kayasthas, Dhobas, Napits, Kumhars, and many other Hindu and semi-Hinduised castes. The Santals are almost entirely confined to Dhalbhum, 72,390 being resident there. Dhalbhum indeed is probably the part of the tract in which the Santals lived before the great exodus to the Santal Parganas in the early part last century.....The Santals of Dhalbhum mainly speak Santali.”<sup>67</sup>

“The Bhumij predominate in Dhalbhum. In Manbhum they have become Hinduised, speaking the Bengali language, and eschewing cow’s flesh, but the unreformed Bhumij of Singhbhum still indulge in this meat

67. Singhbhum District Gazetteer, p. 57

and speak the Bhumij dialect of the Mundari.....They observe many of the Hindu festivals, but retain their sacred groves in which they still sacrifice to the old gods.....In Dhalbhum, however, the Bhumij will not admit that they are in any way connected with the Mundas, Hos or Santals".<sup>63</sup>

These extracts from the District Gazetteer (1911) will convey to us in broad outlines the kinship of these peoples with similar classes in the contiguous districts of West Bengal.

"The court languages are Bengali for Dhalbhum, and Hindi for the rest of the district."

In Dhalbhum, Dayabhaga is the law among the Hindus, unlike Mitakshara obtaining in Bihar and other parts of India.

#### SANTAL PARGANAS

42. There are in West Bengal 845,395 Santals distributed mostly in Burdwan, Birbhum, Bankura, Midnapur, Malda, West Dinajpur and Jalpaiguri. The Santhals' preference for Bengali to Santal Hindi cannot be denied. At least it was not denied till Santal Parganas recently. The Santals are a major bi-lingual people in this part of India. According to the 1931 census :

Percentage of Santal Bi-linguals in Bengali & Hindi was	
Bengali	Hindi
6.5	1.3

In the 1951 census the figures have, as could be expected, gone an unusual transformation. According to this census, the percentage of Santal bi-linguals in Bengali was 4.0, i.e. reduced by 2.50, while in the case of Hindi it rose to 5.0, an increase of 3.7%. Political motive evidently played a part in such recording.

43. The census report of 1931 says : "The Santal Parganas are the scene of a tug-of-war between Hindusthani and Bengali. Although Special features of Santal Parganas the number of persons speaking Hindusthani as mother tongue is nearly four times as great as the number speaking Bengali, the latter language is more current among the aboriginal peoples of the district. In the sub-division of Dumka, for instance, Hindusthani is the mother tongue of about 1,80,000 persons, Bengali of only 46,000 ; yet 14,844 Santals speak Bengali as a subsidiary language, and only 1,898 speak Hindusthani. Again, it is

63. Siugbhum District Gazetteer, p. 60

68A. Singbhum District Gazetteer, p. 51

noteworthy that, taking the district as a whole, 42 per cent of the Hindusthani speakers have acquired the use of Bengali also, whereas only 1.7 per cent of the Bengali speakers have acquired the use of Hindusthani. The influence of Bengali is particularly strong in the subdivisions of Jamtara and Dumka ; in Godda and Rajmahal Hindusthani is the dominant language ; in Deogarh and Pakur there is little to choose between the two."

We have already noticed the remarks of H. Coupland about the Santals of Manbhum, and how they speak Bengali in preference to Hindi "in addition to their own dialect".

The Santals are a simple people, with a fascination for joyous life. The Bihari landlord and the money-lender together with their counterpart among the Bangalis, could easily tyrannise over them. And the desire to take revenge on the money-lenders was the prime cause of the Santal rebellion of 1854, when they rose against the British power also. "It was not without bloodshed that the insurrection was suppressed, but it led to their being re-established under a more genial administration in what are called the Santal Parganas."<sup>69</sup> This was how the Santal Parganas were created.

44. "There is no doubt.....that the Santals colonised parts of the Hazaribagh and part of Birbhum district at a very remote period and it is chiefly by migrations from those colonies that the modern Santalia has been formed.;"<sup>70</sup> "The Santals are found at intervals sometimes in considerable masses, but more generally much scattered in a strip of Bengal, extending for about 350 miles from the Ganges to the Baitarini, bisected by the meridian of Bhagalpur or 87° east longitude, and comprising the following districts : Bhagalpur, the Santal Parganas, Birbhum, Bankura, Hazaribagh, Manbhum, Medinipur, Singhbhum, Mayurbhanj and Balasore."<sup>71</sup> "The above extracts from E. T. Dalton's 'Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal' give us a picture of the Santal people and their native regions, and do they not point out a close relationship of this fine aboriginal tribe with West Bengal ? "Rennel's map of jungle terry of 1779," observes Sri P. R. Das in his booklet entitled "What is Bihar Soil" shows that the jungle terry district of 1772-79, as administered by Cpt. Brooke and Brown, included almost every portion of the present Santal Parganas, and in addition a considerable tract in the west and north-west. Sir Hugh

69. 'Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal'—E. T. Dalton, quoted in 'Tribes and Castes of West Bengal', p. 229

70. Do.

71. Do.

McPherson in his Settlement Report, at p. 12 says: "This striking proportion of the aboriginal elements marks the district out at once as a place apart from its neighbours in Bihar and Bengal." Of the Santals in Manbhum, the report says: "The other races (especially the Santals) when compelled to adopt a foreign tongue, turn with one accord to Bengali."

45. Bengal demands (and this demand is as old as 1912, when Bihar was made into a separate province) that the Bengali speaking Santal Parganas: areas of the Santal Parganas be restored to Bengal. As we areas demanded have seen, this was the suggestion also of the Bihar to be included in W. Bengal leaders, including the late Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha, in 1912. The Bengali-speaking sub-divisions of Jamtara and Pakur, half of Dumka sub-division, and a portion of Rajmahal....in all of which Bengali-speakers are in majority compared to the Hindi-speakers, are all that Bengal has been wanting since 1912 to be included in Bengal. Is it unjust? The Santals, as we have seen, are more intimately associated with Bengal than with any other people of India, including the Biharis. We give below approximate figures of each of the areas demanded, following the 1931 census:

#### BENGALI-SPEAKING AREAS OF SANTAL PARGANAS

Sub-division or area	Area in sq. miles	Total population	Number of persons with mother-tongue			
			Beng.	Hindi	Santali	othrs.
Jamtara	693	2,43,858	73,091	70,362	99,117	1,288
Half of Dumka	730	2,33,000	42,000	28,000	1,60,000	3,000
Pakur	700	2,75,574	68,792	44,455	145,626	16,701
Portion-Rajmahal	370	1,66,000	34,000	22,000	10,000	10,000

46. The Santals are simple, hard-working and honest. They are the best manual labourers in our parts of India. But they are improvident. And this has led plantation-owners, colliery-proprietors and collective farmers to exploit them. In this work of Close relationship of Santals with W. Bengal exploitation the British capitalists have shared the credit with the Indian capitalists, and the Bihari *Mahajan* and the Bengali traders have been close co-partners. But the days of such exploitation are numbered. A new danger in the life of the so-called backward and aboriginal tribes has appeared. It is of cultural domination. And the present leadership of Bihar, in the name of propagating *Rashtra-bhasa*, have evidently started this work vigorously. The Santals have nothing in common with the Aryanised, Brahminical, orthodox Hindi culture of north

India. Bihar, as such, and particularly those portions of it which are contiguous to Bengal, have not also much in common with this Hindi culture. To quote Dr. Grierson: "The language of Bihar has often been considered to be a form of the 'Hindi', said to be spoken in the United Provinces, but really nothing can be further from the truth. In spite of the hostile feelings with which Bihar regards everything Bengal, their language is a sister of Bengali, and only a distant cousin spoken to its west. Like Bengali and Oriya, it is a direct descendant of the Old Magadha Apabhransa. It occupies the original seat of the language, and still retains nearly all its characteristic features.....Bihari is not the vernacular of Bihar only, but is also spoken far beyond the limits of that province. To the west it is spoken in the eastern districts of the United Provinces, and even in a small portion of Oudh. Its western boundary may be taken as roughly the meridian passing through Banares, although it really extends a short distance beyond that city. On the south, it is spoken in the two plateaux of Chota Nagpur." This picture, drawn with the precision of a scientific scholar, will show that intrinsically Bihar has no solid ground of conflict with Bengal in language and to a large extent also in culture. Close historic association, at the dawn of Indian history, an association which continued for centuries in the course of the development of multiple creeds, rituals and philosophies of Buddhism, ought to have made Bengal and Bihar intimate associates as the standard-bearers of the progressive culture of modern India. But unfortunately events have taken a different course, and Bihar, as Bengal feels, out of a regard for immediate political gains, has been following the old British imperialistic policy of keeping this State weak economically and disrupted culturally. Otherwise there seems to be no reason to refuse to transfer to Bengal those 'fringe areas' that have the closest ties with it ethnologically and linguistically. Can any one deny that ethnologically and linguistically and also historically the Santhal Parganas in general, and the areas specified above in particular, are not parts of West Bengal ?

#### PURNEA

47. About the portion of the district Purnea to the east of the Mahananda river, the District Gezetteer of Purnea (1911) has no hesitation in saying in the very first page : "The district forms part of the alluvial tract known as North Bihar, but *its eastern portion more properly belongs to Bengal.* (Italics ours.) It formed, in fact, the northernmost *Sarker* of that Province under Mughal rule, the river Kosi, which used to flow through the centre of Prunea, being the boundary between it and the sub-province

of Bihar. The population in the east and west is, moreover, ethnically and linguistically different. The Rajbansis, a characteristic caste of Northern Bengal, predominate east of the river Mahananda, while to the west they give place to the common castes of Bihar. Mahananda river also forms a linguistic boundary, Hindi being spoken to the west and a corrupt form of Bengali to the east of its course."<sup>72</sup> The figures for area, population and language etc. of this portion of Purnea, which is demanded to be included in West Bengal, as given in the 1931 census, is reproduced below :—

	Area	Population	No. of persons with mother-tongue.			
			Bengali	Hindi	Santali	Others
Purnea, east of river Mahananda	800	3,54,000	1,35,000	1,74,000*	33,000	12,000

\*Many of those enumerated as Hindi-speakers speak the Siripuria dialect, which according to Dr. Grierson, is analogous to Bengali.

#### GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS AREA

48. About the general characteristics of Purnia and particular of the eastern portion of the Mahananda river, the District Gazetteer says : "Purnea is essentially a border district. On the west it adjoins Bihar ; on the east are typical Bengali districts : on the north it marches with the Nepal Tarai : and on the south it is only separated from the aboriginal races of the Santal Parganas by the river Ganges. More remarkable, however, is the ethnical, religious and linguistic boundary formed by the river Mahananda. The country to the east is more nearly allied to Bengal, and the bulk of the inhabitants are of Rajbanshi (Koch) origin, while to the west the castes are the same as in the adjoining Bihar districts. Mussalmans number two-thirds of the population east of the river, but only one-third to the west of it. On the confines of Dinajpur and Malda again, Bengali is the mother-tongue of the people. The farther west one goes, the more faint becomes the traces of the Bengali tongue, till in the neighbourhood of the river Kosi in pargana Dharampur, one comes to a stronghold of Mithila Brahmanism, where all connection with Bengali ceases.

"To go into further detail, the tract lying east of the river Mahananda consists of thanas Kishenganj, Islampur and Gopalpur,

72. Purnea District Gazetteer, p. 1

while the tract to the west, which comprises the greater portion of the district, consists of thanas Bhadurganj Araria, Forbesganj, Raneegunj, Purnea, Kadwa, Damdaha, Korha, Amur Kasaba and Katihar.....In portions of thana Kadwa, in Gopalpur, Amur Kasaba and Katihar, a large proportion of the population appear to be more Bengali than Bihari and speak the Bengali tongue, while the majority of those living along the border line between the two divisions speak a corrupt dialect, partly Hindi and partly Bengali. This state of things continues till the thanas of Gopalpur, Kissenganj and Islampur are reached. A portion of Kissenganj and Gopalpur borders on the districts of Dinajpur and Malda, while north Islampur touches the confines of Nepal, and a small portion of the districts of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri. In this area the character of the people is like that of inhabitants of the neighbouring tracts.’<sup>73</sup>

49. Dr. Grierson estimated about 1901 “the number of persons speaking Bengali to be 603,000 or nearly a third of the inhabitants.

Siripuria  
a Bengali  
dialect

According to him, the dialect in question is, in the main, Bengali with an admixture of Hindi, but it is written in the Kaithi character of Bihar, in which Hindi and not

Bengali is written.

The Siripuria dialect is a border form of speech, Bengali in the main, but containing expressions borrowed from Maithili. The character of the dialect is described as follows by Dr. Grierson: “The western limit of northern Bengal extends into Purnea district. That language may be taken as occupying the eastern third of the district, that is to say, the whole of the Kishanganj and the eastern half of the Sadar subdivisions. In the Kishanganj subdivision, and in the Kasba Amur and Balarampur (now Amur Kasba and Gopalpur), thanas, the Mussalmans who are said to be of Koch origin, speak a mixture of Bihari and Bengali, closely resembling the Koch Bengali of Malda. This dialect is called Kishnaganja or Siripuria, and is returned as spoken by 603,623 souls. Although in the main, a Bengali dialect, it is written in the Kaithi character, which is one of those used for the Bihari. It is unnecessary to give an analysis of its forms, as it closely resembles, on the one hand, the dialects of Malda, and on the other hand, the forms borrowed from Bihari, the dialect existing in western Purnea.” The census of 1901 showed that “Hindus number 1,080,091 or 67.6 of the population, while Mahomedans numbered 793,672 or 42.3 per cent.”

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73. Purnea District Gazetteer, p. 56

50. ' In this district there is only a faint dividing line between the religious beliefs and practices of the lower class Hindus and Muhammadans, which has been well illustrated in Mr. Byrne's Settlement Report. In every village can be found a Kalisthan and Hindus and Muhammadan celebrate their characteristic festivals together. At the time of marriages, Muhammadans perform some ceremony at the Bhagwati Ashtan and put vermillion on the bride's forehead. Attached to almost every house, even of Muhammadans, is a little shrine called Khudai Ghar or God's house, and prayers are offered there in which the names of Allah and Kali both figure. When ill, even Muhammadans call in a Hindu Ojha; who recites some mantras over the sick man. They freely offer goats, fowls, pigeons, and the first fruits of trees and crops to purely Hindu deities, and specially to the village godling, who generally lives in the most convenient tree. The actual sacrifice is done by a Hindu. Hindus and Muhammadans alike yoke cows in their ploughs in this locality.....the most popular deity of the lower grades, both Hindu and Mussalman, is Devata Maharaj, and his door keeper Hadi."<sup>74</sup>

51. These extracts from the records of non-partisan observers reveal two peculiarities. One is that the language and general culture of the eastern portion of the river Mahananda in Purnea district are distinctly Bengali in character,—contributed not so much by the so-called higher castes of the Bengalees but by the large mass of suppressed humanity represented by the so-called lower castes and tribes of Malda and Dinajpur. Secondly, that even a change of faith of the Mahomedan community could not obliterate the natural ties of language or erase the traces of sociological structure of the parent Hindu community from which they have been converts. And this could happen because these communities belonged to the so-called lower Hindu castes, which admitted of much larger flexibility than the so-called dominating higher castes.

Besides the Mussalmans or Sheikhs, as they are called, who formed "one-third of the total population" of the district, in 1911, the Kissingunje sub-division contains such castes as Rajbanshi, Kaibarta, Hari etc., who largely inhabit the contiguous districts of Dinajpur, Malda and Jalpaiguri, of West Bengal.

This portion of Purnea district thus really belongs to Bengal, as linguistically and ethnologically the people of this area are more

74. Purnea District Gazetteer, p. 58

intimately related to Bengal than to Behar. Historically also Purnea really belonged to Bengal since Mughal rule. It has been rightly pointed out that "in the north, River Kosi was the boundary, Purnea belonging to Bengal. Lower down Teliagadhi pass was the boundary, and five-sixths of modern Santhal Parganas was within Bengal, including the important places like Rajmahal, Pakur, Dumka and Deaoghar; and lastly, river Subarnarekha was the boundary between Bengal and Chota Nagpur, the whole of Manbhum being within Bengal."<sup>75</sup>

#### GOALPARA

52. Goalpara, a Bengali-speaking majority area, was first transferred to Assam in 1874 together with Cachar and Sylhet, when Assam was made into a separate administrative unit under a Chief Commissioner. Regarding this first dismemberment of the country of the Bengalee people, Surendranath Banerjea writes in his "A Nation in Making": "...the province of Assam was separated from Bengal in 1874, and made a separate administrative unit under a Chief Commissioner. The separation did not, at the time, excite much criticism, although in the province thus separated from Bengal there were three Bengali-speaking districts namely, Sylhet, Cachar and Goalpara. Public opinion was not then much of a power, and the solidarity of the Bengali-speaking people and their growing sense of unity had not become so pronounced a factor in the public life of the province. The change was acquiesced in without demur; possibly it was welcomed by the people of Assam, who hoped that special attention would be paid to their interests."<sup>76</sup>

53. Goalpara is a contiguous district of Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri, According to Statistical Handbook No. 2, of the Constituent Assembly of India, issued in 1947, and based on the 1931 census, the area and linguistic composition of Goalpara were as follows:—

1931							
Area in sq. miles	Bengali	Assamese	Hindi	Mundari	Nepali	Oriya	Santali
3,985	4,76,433	1,61,179	24,759	1,180	12,540	572	42,598
				Tribal languages	Others	Total population	
				1,55,806	7,681	8,82,748	

It will be seen thus that Bengali-speakers formed an absolute majority of the population of this district, even after a separation from the

75. Purnea District Gazetteer, p. 59

76. Note by Sri P. R. Das

Bengal home-land for nearly fifty years. Goalpara formed an integral part of Rangpur till 1822, when it was taken away from it and made into a separate district. Thus historically also it formed a portion of the province of Bengal until it was transferred to Assam in 1874.

54. The high percentage of Bengali-speakers in Goalpara attracted the attention of the authorities of the Assam administration, as will be seen from the following remarks of the Assam Census Report of 1931:—

“After a special enquiry held in 1911 it was found that the census figures showed too many Bengalis and too few speakers of Assamese, and the correct number of Bengali-speakers in Goalpara in that year was about 3,17,000, while Assamese-speakers numbered 1,15,000. In 1921 the census figures gave 4,06,000 Bengali-speakers and 1,39,000 Assamese-speakers, which Mr. Lyoyd accepted as approximately accurate, the great increase in Bengali-speakers being due to the immigration of Eastern Bengal settlers. At this census, the number of Bengali-speakers has risen to 4,76,000, and the number of Assamese-speakers to 1,61,000. Allowing for an increase of population, the 1931 figures agree with those of 1921.”

55. In the 1951 census, however, a completely different picture is given, as will be evident from the figures given below :—  
A different rate in 1951 census

	Population	Bengali speakers	Percentage	Assamese speakers	Percentage
1931	8,83,288	4,76,000	54.0	1,61,000	19.4
1951	11,08,124	1,93,000	17.4	6,87,000	52.0

To an ordinary mind, this sudden decrease in the number of Bengali-speakers in Goalpara may seem to be the result of the exodus of the Moslem population of this area to Pakistan. Let us see separately the figures of Moslems in Goalpara in the different census periods :—

#### Moslem Population of Goalpara District

	Males	Females
1931	2,05,386	1,82,323
1941	2,48,332	2,20,592
1951	2,53,520	2,22,305

Thus there has been an actual increase in the Moslem population in the two census periods, 1941 and 1951,

A number of refugees from Eastern Pakistan, all presumably Bengali Hindus, came over to Goalpara, the number being 44,945. It will reduce further the percentage of Assamese-speakers of Goalpara, taking only the natural inhabitants of the place.

Deducting the immigration of Assamese-speakers into Goalpara during this period, who number about 30,000, the number of Assamese speakers, taking natural inhabitants of this area, shows an increase from 1,61,000 in 1931 to 6,57,000 in 1951. How this could be possible is beyond the understanding of an ordinary man. It means an increase of 308% as the normal growth of Assamese-speakers in Goalpara in the course of 20 years ! The answer evidently is manipulation for political purpose.

#### IV

#### ADMINISTRATIVE NECESSITY

56. Though language should form the fundamental consideration and be the basis of the re-organisation of the States of the Indian Union, it must not be taken to mean, as we have already said, that the number of States should be multiplied to strictly conform to the number of dialects spoken in our country. That will make the administration neither economic nor efficient, nor be beneficial to the people concerned. There must be areas and communities, which cannot have separate administrative units or States of their own, and they must be integrated to well-knit contiguous States ; and the question as to which State such an area and such a community will form part, will depend on past historic association,—an association that must have no bitter trail and administrative necessity from the point of view of strengthening the solidarity of the federated Indian Union. Linguistic and cultural freedom must be guaranteed to such integrated areas, and the economic development of those areas must mean also an advancement of the economic well-being of the local people ; and together with these, equal scope and opportunities must be provided for the people of those areas to be able to actively join in the works of legislation and administration of the State unit to which it forms part.

#### LINKING UP NORTH & SOUTH OF W. BENGAL STATE

57. To improve the administration of the State of West Bengal it is necessary that its southern and northern portions must be linked up to form one contiguous administrative whole. The division of Bengal into West Bengal and Eastern Pakistan has broken the contiguity of these two areas of West Bengal. The present State of West Bengal, contains two administrative Commissioners' Divisions—the Presidency Division and the

Burdwan Division—and fifteen administrative districts. But there is no link at present except through Bihar between the districts in the south and the northern districts of Jalpaiguri, Cooch Bihar and Darjeeling. A glance at certain basic facts of West Bengal's present administrative set-up will convince an unprejudiced mind of the need for such link between these two disjointed portions. The population figure of this State shows that it has not only the highest density of all States of the Indian Union, its population, as natural, is not also evenly distributed. The density figures of the different areas of West Bengal are given below :—

District	Density per square mile	
	1951	1921
Burdwan	810	530
Birbhum	612	489
Bankura	498	385
Midnapore	639	508
Hughly	1,286	894
Howrah	2,877	1,781
24-Perganas	817	468
Calcutta	78,858	31,921
Nadia	759	472
Murshidabad	828	591
Malda	674	493
West Dinajpur	520	354
Jalpaiguri	385	292
Darjeeling	371	236
Cooch Behar	507	448

58. In West Bengal the contrast between rural and urban growths is glaring. "For West Bengal, as a whole, (says the informative booklet 'West Bengal To-day') the growth has been as little as 35% on the rural population in the course of 50 years, and this too with a large displaced population, without which the rate of growth is only 27.4%. By contrast, urban growth, with displaced persons, has been as much as 205.6 per cent, on the urban population of 1901 and without displaced persons, as considerable as 135.5 per cent." This over-crowding in urban areas is not a sign of steady industrial development, as the unemployed in these areas have been increasing at an alarming rate. It means that we must make all-out efforts to develop all the areas of our truncated State economically and in all other respects. The State of West Bengal holds a high place, among the

States of the Indian Union, in fact, the highest except Travancore-Cochin, in literacy. But "many areas are still lagging far behind, and there has been an enormous concentration of literacy in and round Calcutta." In Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri the percentages of literates are 15.09 and 14.46 respectively, while in Calcutta it is 53.12. This disparity should be reduced as far and as quickly as possible. There are in West Bengal, nearly 46,96,205 members of scheduled castes, for whom larger efforts should be made in the matter of educational advancement and economic opportunities. In Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri the scheduled castes number 2,69,344 and 2,35,203 respectively. In addition there are scheduled tribes in West Bengal numbering about 11,65,337. Of these Jalpaiguri alone contains nearly 1,89,192 persons.

59. Apart from the distance of Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling to the centres of educational and industrial activity in the State Reasonableness of West Bengal—which are near about Calcutta and the of the claim districts surrounding it—the uneven distribution of population and the large number of suppressed or backward classes in the former areas require these to be brought into more intimate contact with the more developed areas of the State than what is now possible. The demand for the strip of territory to the east of the river Mahananda in the district of Purnea, now included in Bihar, is, therefore, a very fair demand, as it will connect the northern districts of Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar and Darjeeling with the other twelve districts of the State of West Bengal, and thus will make it a completely integrated whole. Fortunately for West Bengal, and for Bihar also, linguistic considerations make the claim for the transfer of this territory to West Bengal unassailable. We should not forget that the present district of Purnea upto the bed of the old Kosi river belonged to Bengal historically, and if we add historical to linguistic considerations, this entire area should come to West Bengal.

60. Administrative necessity may, in fact, should, be looked at from a larger view-point also. That view-point is the view-point of Economic the Indian patriot and statesman and not of the provin- Unity of India tial politician. The sovereign Republic of India is a Union of democratic States. They are not isolated units, each independent of the other. It should not be possible for any State of the Indian Union to try to thrive at the expense of its neighbours. As the political life of India is one, a united political life,—though it must be of the federal type because of the vastness of its area and the diversities of its peoples—so the economic life

of India must be one—the economic life of each component State being dependent on the economic position and structure of sister States. This sense of economic inter-dependence is not, we are afraid, sufficiently developed among the various States of the Indian Union. The British have left a legacy of inter-provincial jealousy and bitterness. We are still suffering from that malaise. Added to that is another factor, the factor of our lack of training in democracy. Democracy is always built up from the bottom, it is broad-based. Our villages have lost that strength to organise the people's economic life from the base, and build up gradually from the village upward the superstructure of the democratic States of the India Union, a federation of which will comprise the sovereign Republic of India. The hand of the foreign political power being removed, different groups have, it seems, started dreaming of a hegemony of India. Mounting inter-provincial rivalry and a gradually accentuating sense of aloofness as between one unit and another are signs, feeble as yet, of this tremendous danger to the unity and solidarity of the Indian nation.

61. The effective remedy to it is the steady working out of the scheme of Planning with all its economic and social implications. “Under the Constitution, India is organised as a federation,” says the report of the Planning Commission, 1952, “in which the Central Government and the Governments of States have their assigned spheres of action. There are certain concurrent subjects in which the Centre as well as the States can undertake legislation. Economic and social planning is in the concurrent list, as this is a subject in which the Centre as well as the States are interested and have to work in unison. The Centre has certain emergency powers but normally co-ordination of policies has to be effected through mutual consultation. This system of consultation and of formulation of policies on the basis of over-all national requirements will have to be strengthened in the interests of planning. Care will have to be taken to see that the plan is implemented throughout the country as a single coordinated whole.” These words of the Planning Commission's report should be the guiding principle of economic development of the different States of the Indian Union. No State of the Indian Union has got an immense store-house of produced wealth, which is to be jealously guarded from the covetous eye of the needy neighbour. We have to create wealth for the people of India by developing our material resources and also our human resources. That is the great task of planning. The responsibility of the different States of the Indian Union is to initiate measures

Planning  
effective  
remedy

for the largest development of its resources in the most economic way feasible, both in time and in monetary outlay, and with as much co-operation as possible of sister States. Bengal cannot hope for any large improvement in her agriculture unless the Damodar Valley project is brought to a successful completion. This project embraces a co-operation of two States, Bengal and Bihar. Can we hope for full benefit to accrue from it, either for Bengal or for Bihar, unless there be complete coordination between the two in the successful carrying out of the project? As in river valley projects, so in any project for the development of mineral wealth, the question of real importance is not to keep the source of mineral wealth within the boundaries of a particular State but to see that it is developed in the quickest time and in the most economic method. That will be the way of planned economic development, benefitting all. Economic exclusiveness must be eschewed if we want to raise the standard of life of the general body of our masses, and also political solidarity. In States reorganisation, the plea of economic isolation or self-sufficiency as it is euphemistically called, must have no place or valid basis.

62. The Indian Constitution, as we all know, has made a 'division of financial resources between the Union Government and the State Governments', following 'closely the pattern of the Government of India Act of 1935. The States of the Indian Union are not like the old provinces of British India before provincial autonomy, when provincial governments meant the Central Government working in the provinces. The different States of the Indian Union have now very heavy and growing responsibilities, which they have to carry out by proper utilisation of the financial and economic resources placed at their disposal. It is a hard and difficult problem, which every State has to face and to find a solution of. It may be natural therefore (though not rational) for a State to feel nervous at the prospect of any diminution of its territory or economic resources, even when the claim of a neighbouring State to such territory and such resources is perfectly just and fair. But when a territory is thus transferred from one State to another, under a scheme of rational re-grouping, the people of the area as well as the responsibility of developing to the full the economic potentiality of the region are also transferred. Such an arrangement therefore need not be harmful, nay, may be beneficial, to the respective States and to India as a whole. The opposition of Bihar, for example, to transfer to Bengal what really falls within her rightful boundaries from a consideration of linguistic and cultural affinities, is evidently due to a sense that she

would economically be a great loser thereby, and a feeling that by keeping these areas, however unjustly it may be, to herself, she would be immensely benefitted economically. What we claim is that India being one economically, Bihar or for that matter any of the present States of the Indian Union need not be a loser from the broad economic view-point by such rational re-arrangement provided the economic potentiality of the areas is kept unhampered thereby.

63. Our neighbours in Bihar, Orissa and Assam are nervous at the prospect of parting with certain territories—an insignificant portion of their large land area—to meet the just claims of this State. They are terribly afraid of a possible economic loss to them. We have tried to show that viewed from a broader economic stand-point such fear is baseless. West Bengal does not want these areas only—it will be a mistake to view it in this light. We want the people who have the closest kinship with us to be integrated to our State, and with these people must come also the areas which have been their homes for generations. You have been keeping them by force and suppressing their mother-tongue. The bitterness that is thus created cannot be helpful for the economic and social advancement of these areas. The inevitable social and also economic loss that such a process will entail can hardly compensate for the possible economic gain which the unjust retention of these areas might bring to the State concerned.

#### BENGAL SUFFERS IN OTHER WAYS TOO

64. It may be noted in this connection, that the State of West Bengal is made to suffer in other ways too. According to 1951 figures 1,881,000 immigrants from other States earn their living in West Bengal. The number of immigrants has been very considerably increasing. "In 1881, the percentage was 2.2, in 1951 the percentage, excluding displaced persons, has risen as high as 10. Moreover these immigrants are merely birds of passage." "It is quite valid to assume...that the bulk of the immigrants do not settle here for good but earn their livelihoods in West Bengal and maintain their families in their States of origin." The Census Report, 1951, says: 'Few are permanent settlers in this State, and by the look of things West Bengal is regarded primarily as a place of business and earning, the proceeds of which are sent away or taken back home for utilisation there. This applies more to immigrants from the adjacent States of Assam, Bihar and Orissa than from other remoter States...Immigration from other States of India has therefore much of

the character of a sponge which soaks earnings in West Bengal for use elsewhere...Bihar by far and away tops the list in sending immigrants to West Bengal." Even Dr. Sri Krishna Sinha admitted in his speech at the Bihar Assenbly in 1953 that "more than 11 lakh Bihari immigrants were found in West Bengal at the last census while West Bengal's immigrants in Bihar numbered only 1.37 lakhs." As most of them are wage-earners, who earn here and send their earnings to their native homes outside, we may perhaps take it that this State feeds about twenty-five lakhs of outsider Biharis out of its present depleted resources. This encroachment in economic value is not perhaps less in importance than land encroachment. The Bihar Chief Minister pleaded the poverty of the Bihar people as a reason for such large-scale emigration of Biharis to West Bengal. He said : "It is highly significant that the trend of immigration, which is governed by the free operation of economic forces, has throughout been, and is at present, from Bihar to West Bengal, and not the other way about. If anything, the trend has become stronger during the last decade." It is an admission of the fact that Bihar, inspite of a large land-area, and, what Bengal feels, and rightly, the unjust inclusion of Manbhum, Dhalbhum and other areas, her economic condition continues to be fundamentally weak. It shows the urgency of a rational re-organisation of the States of Bengal and Bihar from fundamental economic considerations also. Bihar is agricultural primarily, and she must be helped to develop her agriculture as her first need. West Bengal is definitely moving to an industrial economy; and she must be encouraged to fulfil her promise. Her claims to get back the areas and the peoples that belong to her in language, culture and tradition, will be materially helpful to her in this direction.

## V

### PRESENT CONDITION OF WEST BENGAL

65. In this, the last section of our Memorandum, we shall try to give a brief picture of the factual condition of our State, to show how urgent is her need for a re-organisation of her boundaries. West Bengal "has now a very small area, the second highest density in India, a very large population, a very high extent of land-utilisation, over-crowding in different occupational groups, uneven distribution, a very large number of immigrants, a recent and huge influx of persons, and signs of an

ageing population." This is a dismal picture, reproduced from 'West Bengal Today'. As compared to the other States of the Indian Union, West Bengal's density of population, will be apparent from the following table :—

## Density : 1951 Census

State	Density of population per square mile
All India	287
Uttar Pradesh	557
Bihar	572
Bombay	323
<b>West Bengal</b>	799
Orissa	243
Assam (without tribal areas)	106
Punjab	338
Madhya Pradesh	162

"This figure", to continue from 'West Bengal Today' for overall density however does not give the complete picture. The distribution of population is very uneven in West Bengal. Out of a total area of 30,775 square miles, only 4,126 or 13.4 per cent of the State's area, covering 104 police stations, containing 62 cities and towns, have densities of 1,050 to the square mile. On the other these 4,126 square miles or 13.4 per cent of West Bengal's area contain as many as 10,589,149 persons or approximately 42 per cent of the State's entire population. Density is also extremely high vis-a-vis occupational opportunities, and overcrowding has been reached in all major occupation groups."

West Bengal has "the highest proportion of non-agricultural classes". But to understand "how deep her crisis" is, "we must understand certain factors ; "(1) land is now spilling out surplus population, but there is no adequate employment in other sectors ; (ii) even in other sectors immigrants from other States are overcrowding."

The result of all these is that the "population problem of West Bengal is a deep, complex and difficult one. Compared to other States in India, historical processes began comparatively early in West Bengal. The effects of the new land system made themselves first felt in Bengal ; later on, the new society, and the new impetus and the fresh signs of decay—which we find all over India—had their first beginnings in this State. There was a complete decay of cottage industries of the earlier type ; the whole population was thrown back upon agriculture ;

consequently land utilisation reached a very high level, but unfortunately overcrowding still continued ; the modern type of industry that grew up in and around Calcutta could not and did not absorb the surplus population. The influx of immigrants was another great factor ; there was consequently an increased overcrowding in agriculture and even a regression towards agriculture. Population movement completely reflected this picture. Now we are also set in for a population increase, also we have a large number of displaced persons. Unless radical and bold steps are taken, this extreme overcrowding, together with the deep crisis in the economic life of the State, may lead to a total disintegration of the entire social structure."77

These copious extracts from a Government publication give a realistic picture of the economic condition and the social prospects of the people of this State. The only way out is a bold policy of statesmanship, by which it may be possible to restore its economic equilibrium, and lead it to a path of steady progress. And that programme of bold statesmanship must include, as one of its important items, a reorganisation of its boundaries, by transferring to it the areas which belong to it historically, linguistically and culturally, and which economic and administrative necessity also urgently dictate.

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77. "West Bengal Today", p. 41

## APPENDIX I

### Objectives Resolution of the Constituent Assembly.

*The following is the text of Sri Jawaharlal Nehru's resolution on "Objectives" which was unanimously passed by the Constituent Assembly on January 22, 1947 :—*

Wherein this Constituent Assembly declares its firm and solemn resolve to proclaim India as an independent sovereign republic and to draw up for her future governance a constitution the territories that now comprise British India, the territories that now form the Indian States, and such other parts of India as are outside British India and the States as well as such other territories as are willing to be constituted into the independent sovereign India shall be a Union of them all ;

And wherein the said territories, whether with their present boundaries or with such others as may be determined by Constituent Assembly and thereafter according to the law of the Constitution shall possess and retain the status of autonomous units, together with residuary powers, and exercise all powers and functions of Government and administration, save and except such powers and functions as are vested in or assigned to the Union, or as are inherent or implied in the Union or resulting therefrom and wherein all power and authority of the sovereign independent India, its constituent parts and organs of government are derived from the people ;

And wherein shall be guaranteed and secured to all the people of India justice, social, economic and political ; equality of status, of opportunity, and before the law ; freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, worship vocation, association and action, subject to law and public morality ;

And wherein adequate safeguards shall be provided for minorities, backward and tribal areas, and depressed and other backward classes ;

And whereby shall be maintained the integrity of the territory of the republic and its sovereign rights on land, sea and air according to justice and the law of civilised nations, and this ancient land attain its rightful and honoured place in the world and make its full and willing contribution to the promotion of world peace and the welfare of mankind.

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## APPENDIX II

### Instances of Ill-treatment of Bengalees in Bihar.

*(Cited by Sri N. C. Chatterjee, M. P., Bar-at-law in his Note to the Central Education Minister, dated, 17. 5. 54.)*

"In Sadar Sub-division of Manbhum the first and the only college was started at Purulia in 1948, with the first year classes of Intermediate Arts section on a few subjects. The total number of students were 91, out of whom 88 students preferred Bengali medium whereas the rest three preferred Hindi medium. This was the actual state of things. But for such an institution Government gave affiliation to this J. K. College of Purulia on condition that :—

"(i) Medium of instruction must be Hindusthani, Bengali being an additional medium provided separate classes are held."

(Letter of Deputy Registrar, Patna University on the 11th. June 1948.)

"Santomoyee Girls' High School of Purulia is the oldest Girls' School of the District and one of the best Girls' Schools in the State of Bihar. Since 1949 the School has been making uniformly brilliant results every year in the Matriculation Examination of the Patna University (now Bihar University). But the School has been systematically denied recognition by the Board of Secondary Education, Bihar. This was being done in the interest of a Girls' High School on Hindi medium started by Government of Bihar at Purulia as a rival institution to Santomoyee Girls' School. The number of Hindi-speaking girls in this School will hardly be 30.

"Various representations were made for the last four years to the Board of Secondary Education, Bihar, for its recognition but with no effect. Even the visit of Chief Minister, Bihar, to the institution a year back and promises by Divisional Inspectresses for early recognition did not improve the position. It was only a couple of months back that the School obtained a conditional recognition."

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### APPENDIX III

#### Report of Secondary Education Commission ( 1953 )

The Central Advisory Board of Education considered in 1949 the case of pupils belonging to certain minority groups, whose mother-tongue was different from the regional language, and passed the following Resolution :—

“That the medium of instruction in the Junior Basic stage must be the mother-tongue of the child and that where the mother-tongue was different from the Regional or State language, arrangements must be made for instruction in the mother-tongue by appointing at least one teacher to teach all the classes, provided there are at least 40 such pupils in a school. The Regional or State language where it is different from the mother-tongue should be introduced not earlier than Class III, not later than end of the Junior Basic stage. In order to facilitate the switch over to the Regional language as medium of instruction in the secondary stage, children should be given the option of answering questions in their mother-tongue for the first two years after the Junior basic stage.”

“If, however, the number of pupils speaking a language other than the Regional or State language is sufficient to justify a separate school in any area, the medium of instruction in such a school may be the language of the pupils. Such arrangements would, in particular, be necessary in Metropolitan cities or places where large populations speaking different languages live or areas with a floating population of different languages. Suitable provision should be made by the provincial authorities for the recognition of such schools imparting education through a medium other than the Regional or State language.”

## APPENDIX IV

### Restrictions On Meetings

( *Extracts from Sri Bimal Chandra Sinha's statement dated 17. 4. 54.* )

"All sorts of impossible restrictions are attached to permission, if given at all, to the public for holding meetings. The conditions usually laid down are :—

(1) "There should not be any communal, political or provincial discussions.

(2) "Names and addresses of persons presiding or taking part in the meeting must be sent beforehand together with a list of local gentlemen arranging the meetings.

(3) "Copies of the resolutions to be adopted from day to day or speeches to be delivered are to be sent in advance.

(4) "The programme for each day must also be sent a day earlier."

"It is obvious that no meetings can be held under these impossible conditions. Such restrictions are imposed not only on political meetings but even on other meetings including purely literary meetings as Rabindra birth-anniversaries, and so on. But as we shall see presently, meetings sponsored by the authorities or meetings having the blessings of the authorities can be held easily while the public have been gagged in this manner.

"I need not refer to the repressions of Tusu song."

### Police Watch

"I think everybody still remembers the photostatic copy published in the Calcutta papers of the confidential memo No. A/XXV-i-47 issued by the D.I.G.S.R. Dhanbad on 23-10-47 which ran as follows :

"You should obtain reports on the activities of the individuals mentioned, and if they are found agitating or actively supporting the agitation (for inclusion of borders of Bihar in West Bengal) a full report should be sent immediately."

"The situation has rather worsened than improved. Intimidation has now gone so far that letters which may be construed to have the slightest political tinge have to be posted now not in the border areas in Bihar but from the neighbouring areas in Bengal.

"Persons suspected to be of the opinion that the Bengali-speaking areas of Bihar should come to West Bengal are often watched by the police and questioned about their activities. I am prepared to cite specific cases if there is an effective guarantee that there would be no repression on the individuals so suspected."

APPENDIX V  
The Language Issue

*Extracts from Prime Minister Sri Jawaharlal Nehru's  
Statement on the Language Issue, dated 16.5. '54.*

"In a question of this kind, there are bound to be different approaches. But I would beg everyone to remember that while there should be argument, there should be discussion, there should be no controversy of the aggressive and bitter type. I have not a shadow of doubt that if we approach this question in that rather hostile way to each other, the result is not advancing the cause we seek to advance, but raising hostility. It is not a question of deciding this by majority of votes—many things are decided by a majority of votes of course—it is a question of creating a certain atmosphere in the country which is favourable to the growth of what we want to grow. Now that is important all over India. It is more important—let us face it—in regard to the south for various reasons into which one need not go.

"I am quite sure that because of various factors, circumstances, etc., the south generally has widely accepted the decision in the Constitution and what is more not merely accepted it, but is acting up to it ; may be, you may think somewhat the pace is slow, but still acting up to it fundamentally. It is no good for people in the north to shout too much and say that you are not doing enough and all that (cheers).

"If any criticism is to be made it should be made by people in the south of the south and not by people in the north of the south. So, what I would beg of all of you—and if I could address a wider audience, I would beg them too—to remember this tremendous achievement of ours in getting this vast degree of support and agreement over a question which bristles with difficulties. That is the main thing. And if there is argument, well, it is natural ; why should not there be over a question like this ? The main thing is that we should always lay stress on the common agreement and not on the element of controversy or dispute or rather treat that element of controversy or dispute as an argument between friends who may differ, but who, no doubt, will come to an agreement step by step.

"Therefore, we must in whatever we may do, do our utmost to encourage the regional languages and the all-India language. Hindi

certainly, but always keeping in view that we encourage it constructively to create no impression of opposition to any other. That is all. If not, you immediately create difficulties for yourself and then fight for its life and you spend your energy in opposing each other. That is one point I should like you to remember."

Sri Nehru said "Hindi had to be thought of in two ways, as a regional language on exactly the same footing as other regional languages and separately, as an all-India official language.

"The two are somewhat different, although they overlap; of course, naturally because as a regional language you want it to have the richness of a regional language. If you want to impose that richness on the all-India language, we make it too difficult for others. As I said, there is no hard and fast line between the two. A person from South India who has learnt Hindi as an all-India language can easily develop more knowledge of it, you have opened the door to him. The first thing is to make him feel at ease in the official and other works that he does, whether in Parliament or in the Congress or anywhere else. He knows that much language, he is not out of it. The second is—which is open to him—there is no compulsion to know Hindi as a fine language."

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## APPENDIX VI

### Linguistic Province—An Old Cry

(*Extract from the presidential address of Sri Bipinchandra Pal  
at the Surma Valley Conference, 1920*)

'The acceptance of this principle of proportional representation will help us in the solution of another problem, namely, the reconstitution of the provinces according to the wishes of the people. We in the Surma Valley are most intimately interested in this problem. I remember the opposition which the people of Sylhet offered to the proposal of the Government of Lord Northbrook to cut it off from Bengal and join it to the new administration which was proposed to be set up under a Chief Commissioner in Assam. That was in 1874. I remember that agitation with some personal interest, because my father took part in it. Forty years have passed since then, and Sylhet has not forgotten the wrong which she felt was done to her by cutting her off from all living political associations with Bengal. By race, by language, by common traditions and history, we belong to Bengal, and separation from the main currents of Bengalee life has been starving our moral and intellectual life more or less for the last 40 years. After the repeal of the Bengal Partition and the re-distribution of the territorial jurisdictions of different Governments which accompanied that act of justice and reparation to the outraged sentiments of Bengal, we prayed to be retained under the Governorship of Bengal. But our prayers were not heeded. We cherished some hope of its fulfilment when the new reform scheme was formulated, because this question had already commenced to press itself upon public attention, from more than one quarter. The people of Orissa did not like the idea of playing second fiddle to Bihar; and the awakened self-consciousness of the Andhra people rose up in revolt against their continuance as an appendage to Madras. Though the exigencies of the British administration created artificial provincial jurisdictions, the most reasonable thing ought to be to divide the provinces according to ethnic, linguistic, and cultural affinities, and allow the fullest and freest scope for the healthy evolution of vigorous provincial life, and culture as contributory to the common life and culture of the composite Indian nation. Disregard of these considerations inevitably result in arresting the natural development of provincial life, and

creates needless and artificial jealousies and conflicts which hinder the advancement of the people. There is absolutely no reason why all the Bengali-speaking people should not be permitted to live together and grow as one homogenous unit which nature has made them. The time, I think, is not very distant when we shall have to give up English as the language of official communication in India, except in the dominion of the supreme or the central government. The Bengal legislative council will sooner or later have to conduct its proceedings in Bengalee. If this is not done the real intellectual and moral value of our progress towards responsible government will be entirely lost to us. The ideal of responsible government demands an intelligent exercise of the vote : this again demands an intimate and intelligent study of public questions specially of proceedings in the council. This condition can never be fulfilled unless the legislatures conduct their business in the language of the man in the street. For all these reasons, we in the SurmaValley demand our return to Bengal."

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APPENDIX VII  
Indian Association's Memorial, 1912

The Indian Association Office  
62, Bowbazar Street,  
Calcutta, the 23rd January, 1912.

From : Babu Surendranath Banerjea,  
Hony. Secretary, Indian Association.  
To : The Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal.  
Sir,

On behalf of the Committee of the Indian Association, I have the honour to submit the following representation on the question of the redistribution of boundaries, consequent on the modification of the Partition of Bengal, for the consideration of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor in Council and for submission to the Government in India.

2. In the despatch of the Government of India, dated the 25th August, 1911, the principle was laid down that the Bengalee-speaking divisions should form one province and that "it is in the highest degree desirable to give the Hindi-speaking people now included within the province of Bengal a separate administration." Thus the principle of linguistic affinity is made the basis of the territorial redistribution which is about to take place. My Committee desire to congratulate the Government on this decision and to accord to it their whole-hearted support. Among other advantages, it will ensure closer intercourse between the European members of the Civil Service and the people by reducing the difficulties which arise where a number of languages have to be mastered. In the Presidency of Bengal, with its population speaking only the Bengalee language, European officials need master only the Bengalee language to enable them to hold free and direct communication with the people.

3. The principle of the despatch being that the Bengalee-speaking population should be placed under one and the same administration, I desire to point out that there are some tracts lying beyond the five Bengalee-speaking divisions which should be included in the new Presidency of Bengal. These are (1) the districts of Sylhet and Goalpara (2) the district of Manbhoom, (3) the Sonthal Pergannas, (4) the Perganna of Dhalbhoom in the district of Singbhoom, and (5) the portion of the district of Purneah to the east of the Mahananda River.

4. The district of Sylhet formed a part of Bengal from early times up to the year 1874, when it was transferred to Assam, in spite of the protests of the people. Ninety-two per cent of the population of Sylhet speak the Bengalee language, and they form 6 per cent of the entire Bengalee speaking population. The district unlike the rest of Assam, is a regulation district and the land tenure is the same as that of Bengal. Its linguistic and racial affinities with the neighbouring districts of Comilla, Mymensingh and Dacca are of the closest kind; and from time immemorial, Sylhet has exercised a profound influence upon the social and spiritual thought and aspiration of the rest of Bengal and in turn has been influenced by them. No movement in modern times has left so deep an impression on the life of the people of Bengal as Vaishnavism; and the founder of Bengal Vaishnavism, the great Chaitanya had his home in Sylhet. The great Raghunath Siromani, the founder of Nabya Nyaya, the new School of Logic, was a native of Sylhet. If popular feeling counts for aught in the scheme of redistribution which is to be adopted, then the fact cannot be ignored that the Hindus and Mussalmans of Sylhet are united in the demand that Sylhet should form a part of the new Presidency of Bengal. Numerous meetings have been held in which Hindoos and Mahomedans have taken part and they are unanimous in the prayer that Sylhet should be restored to Bengal. It has been urged that the new Province of Assam cannot for want of funds be formed without Sylhet. Fortunately, the revenue of Assam without Sylhet has exhibited steady growth and expansion. In 1874, the total land revenue of Assam including that of Sylhet, was less than 50 lakhs of rupees a year. In 1909-10, it was nearly 60 lakhs of rupees a year without Sylhet. Further, Assam is to be more or less a frontier province. The area and population of the North-Western Frontier Province which is under a Chief Commissioner are less than those of Assam without Sylhet. Goalpara also is a Bengalee-speaking and a permanently settled district. At one time it was a part of the district of Rangpur. By reason of its linguistic affinities, my Committee submit it should form part of the Presidency of Bengal.

5. The District of Manbhoom stands on the same footing. It is a Bengalee-speaking district. Eighty per cent. of the people speak the Bengalee language. They are united to the people of the neighbouring districts of Beerbhoom and Bankura by the closest social and other ties of fellowship, and it would, my Committee submit, be a grievous hardship to them if they were to be separated from their kith and kin linked

to an administration formed for the benefit of a population different from their own.

6. My Committee further submit that the Santhal Paraganas should form a part of the new Presidency of Bengal. The court language of this area is Bengalee, and the bulk of the population speak Bengalee. The Santhal Paraganas were formerly included in the district of Beerbhoom which is now a part of the Burdwan Division. Even now the District and Sessions Judge of Beerbhoom is the District and Sessions Judge of the Santhal Parganas. It was after the Santhal rebellion of 1855 that the Santhal Parganas came to be included in the Bhagalpur Division.

7. My Committee submit that upon the same principle the Pargana of Dhalbhoom in the Singbhoom district should be included in Bengal. The Pargana is inhabited by a Bengali-speaking people, and the court language is Bengalee. The court language is a safe and officially recognised basis to go upon. The court language would not be Bengalee, unless the bulk of the litigants quite understood the language or spoke it. It is inconceivable that in a Hindi-speaking district the language of the courts should be Bengalee.

8. With regard to the Santhal Parganas, Manbhoom and Singbhoom, there are one or two other points which the Committee submit deserve careful consideration. The mining districts are all situated in this part of Bengal, and the mining industries are controlled by firms which have their head-quarters in Calcutta. It is in the interest of these industries with a view to secure their further and effective development and expansion that my Committee would respectfully request the Government to favourably consider the view which they are putting forward. Nor is the fact to be overlooked that the Presidency of Bengal, as it will now be constituted, will not have many healthy districts. The inclusion of this area will meet this want.

9. The total area of Manbhoom, Giridih and the Santhal Parganas is about 11,000 square miles. Under the new arrangement, Bengal comprises an area of 70,000 square miles and Bihar an area of 1,13,000 square miles. The transfer of these districts, covering an area of 11,000 square miles, to Bengal will tend towards an equalisation of area in the two provinces. Furthermore, it will provide the overpopulated province of Bengal with a field for the growth and expansion of population. This arrangement, without causing any substantial loss to Bihar, will be an immense gain to Bengal.

10. As regards the district of Purneah, my Committee observe that nearly one-third of its inhabitants speak the Bengalee language. The eastern portion of this district may be joined to Bengal. In this connection, my Committee take the liberty to quote the following from a letter which appeared a few days ago in a local newspaper over the signatures of some prominent Beharee leaders and which entirely supports the view put forward here :-

“In accordance with the resolution of the last Congress the sound principle would be that enunciated therein that all the Bengali speaking tracts should be brought under the Government of Bengal and all the Hindi-speaking tracts placed under the Lieutenant-Governor of Bihar. According to this arrangement, the portions of Purneah and Malda to the east of the river Mahananda—which is the ethnic and linguistic boundary between Bengal and Bihar—should go to Bengal and the western portion of these two districts come to Bihar. Similarly, such tracts in the Santhal Parganas, where the prevailing language is Bengali, should go to Bengal and the Hindi-speaking tracts of the district remain in Bihar. As for Chota Nagpore, the whole district of Manbhoom and Parganah Dalbhoom of Singbhom District are Bengali-speaking and they should go to Bengal—the rest of the Division which is Hindi-speaking remaining in Bihar.”

11. My Committee beg leave to observe that the Government of India Despatch, dated the 25th August, 1911, definitely lays down that the five Bengalee-speaking Divisions which include the whole of the district of Malda should form part of the new Presidency of Bengal, and Gour the old capital of Bengal, is situated in the district to the west of the river Mahananda.

I have the honour to be,

Sir

Your most obedient servant

SURENDRANATH BANERJEA,

Hony. Secretary.

## APPENDIX VIII

### Memorial of Bengal Leaders in 1911

'If, however, for any reasons which we are unable to anticipate, your Excellency's Government finds itself unable to accept the proposal we have submitted for the creation of a Governorship for Bengal, and it is deemed expedient to divide the provinces into two Lieutenant-Governorships we beg most respectfully to submit that the present division has been made at the wrong end. The Bengalees resent the dismemberment of their people by being placed under two separate Governments. The Beharees have throughout prayed for their separation from Bengal, while the Oriyas likewise in a petition submitted five years ago prayed for being freed from the Bengal administration. As we have already pointed out, neither the Beharees nor the Oriyas have much in common with the Bengalees either in language, manners or customs. Under these circumstances if a partition of the Province were needed to relieve the administration of Bengal the most appropriate division would be to place the five Bengali-speaking divisions with the neighbouring Province of Assam and a portion of Chota Nagpur under another. The following table illustrates this proposal as regards area and population :

#### I. LIEUTENANT-GOVERNORSHIP OF BENGAL

	Area	Population
1. The five Bengali-speaking Divisions ( Burdwan, Presidency, Rajshahi, Dacca and Chittagong ) ...	76,000	41,250,000
2. Two Districts of Chota Nagpur ( Manbhum & Hazaribagh ) ...	11,000	2,500,000
3. Assam ...	56,000	5,600,000
	1,43,000	49,350,000
4. Feudatory States of Cooch- Behar, Sikim and Hill Tipperah ...	8,000	800,000
Grand Total ...	1,51,000	50,150,000

## II. LIEUTENANT-GOVERNORSHIP OF BEHAR &amp; ORISSA

	Area	Population
1. The 3 Divisions of Behar (Patna, Bhagalpore and Tirhut) ...	44,000	24,000,000
2. Three Districts of Chota Nagpur (Palamau, Ranchi and Singhbhum) ...	15,000	2,500,000
3. Orissa with Sambalpur ...	13,000	5,000,000
4. Feudatory States of Chota Nagpur and Orissa ...	<u>30,000</u>	<u>3,500,000</u>
Grand Total ...	1,02,000	35,000,000

The present Government of Bengal possesses an area of 141 thousand sq. miles with a population of 52 millions and the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam an area of 106 sq. miles with a population of 31 millions. The proposed arrangement would proceed on the line of least resistance and would be welcomed by the people of Behar as well as of Bengal and would afford equal facilities to Bengal and Behar to work out their destinies. There is indeed a strong and growing feeling among the people of Behar for separation from Bengal. This will sooner or later, sooner rather later, be one of the pressing problems which the Government will be called upon to deal with. We respectfully submit that its solution now will be timely and prevent an agitation which is inevitable within measurable distance of time ; and there is no form of agitation more acute than that connected with territorial readjustment.

—Annual Report of the Indian Association 1911. Extracts from the Memorial submitted to Lord Hardinge, Viceroy of India, in 1911.

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APPENDIX IX  
Congress Resolution of 1911

"That this Congress desires to place on record its sense of profound gratitude to His Majesty the King Emperor for the creation of a separate province of Bihar and Orissa under a Lieutenant-Governor in Council and prays that, in readjusting the provincial boundaries, the Government will be pleased to place all the Bengali-speaking districts under one and the same administration."

APPENDIX X  
Letter of Bihar Leaders

*Published in the Bengalee on January 4, 1912*

"In accordance with the Resolution of the last Congress the sound principle would be that enunciated therein, that all the Bengali-speaking tracts should be brought under the Government of Bengal and all the Hindi-speaking tracts placed under the Lieutenant-Governor of Bihar. According to this arrangement, the portions of Purnea and Malda to the east of the river Mahananda, which is the ethnic and linguistic boundary between Bengal and Bihar, should go to Bengal and the western portions of these two districts come to Bihar. Similarly, such tracts in the Santal Parganas where the prevailing language is Bengali should go to Bengal, and the Hindi-speaking tracts of the districts remain in Bihar. As for Chota Nagpur, the whole district of Manbhum and Parganah Dhalbhum of Singhbhum District are Bengali-speaking and they should go to Bengal, the rest of the Division, which is Hindi-speaking remaining in Bihar."

DREP NARAYAN SINGH  
SACHCHIDANANDA SINHA  
M. FAKHRADDIN  
NANDKISHORE LAL  
PARAMESHWAR LAL

APPENDIX XI  
Brief Historical Note on Manbhum.

*(Extracts from Sri P. R. Das's booklet "What is Bihar Soil?")*

In Ain-i-Akbari, Subah Bihar has been divided into seven Sircars. (1) Sircar Bihar, which obviously included the modern districts of Patna and Gaya ; (2) Sircar Monghyr, which included Bhagalpur ; (3) Sircar Champaran ; (4) Sircar Hajipur ; (5) Sircar Saran ; (6) Sircar Tirhoot, and (7) Sircar Rhotas. Later, Sircar Rhotas was divided into Sircar Shahabad and Sircar Rhotas. It is clear that we do not find either Purnea or Chota Nagpur or Santhal Parganas in Subah Bihar. So far as Purnea is concerned, there is no difficulty whatever ; for Purnea is one of the Sircars in the Subah of Bengal (See Vol. II, page 193). It is clear that the river Kosi formed one of the boundaries between Bengal and Bihar."

"I now propose to deal with different districts of modern Chota Nagpur division. I will first begin with Manbhum, The name Manbhum is of course a creation of Regulation XIII of 1833. Pacheet was, however, familiar to the Muhammedan administrators. It is not mentioned in Toder Mull's Settlement at all, but Sircar Mandarun is shown as the frontier Sircar of Subah Bengal. (See Ain-i-Akbari Vol. 2 page 179). Jaffar Khan's Settlement of 1722 shows that Pacheet is in Bengal. As is well-known, Todar Mull's Settlement divided each Subah into different Sircars. But Jaffar Khan adopted a different plan ; he divided each Subah into different Chucklahs., Chucklah Burdwan was formed out of Sircars Sharifabad, Mandarun, Peschush, the greater part of Salimbad with a portion of Satgong and included the rich zamindary of Burdwan and one-third of Birbhum and the whole of the tributary districts of Bishenpur and Pacheet. (See Firminger's Edition of Fifth Report. Vol. 2 page 189). Pacheet is throughout shown as part of Bengal (See page 248 and 259, 2nd Vol. Fifth Report) and situated in Sircar Mandarun, Chucklah Burdwan (see Fifth Report, Vol 2, page 398).

"It is clear, I think, that Pacheet was part of Bengal in Muhamma-

Bengal and all the Hindi-speaking tracts placed under the Lieutenant-Governor of Bihar. According to this arrangement, the portions of Purnea and Malda to the east of the river Mahananda—which is the ethnic and linguistic boundary between Bengal and Bihar—should go to Bengal and the western portion of these two districts come to Bihar. Similarly, such tracts in the Santal Parganas, where the prevailing language is Bengali, should go to Bengal and the Hindi-speaking tracts of the districts remain in Bihar. As for Chota Nagpur, the whole district of Manbhum and Pargana Dhalbhum of Singbhum District are Bengali-speaking and they should go to Bengal, the rest of the Division which is Hindi-speaking remaining in Bihar.”

#### 7. The Demand not a new one—

Surendranath Banerjea's Representation :

On the 23rd of January, 1912, a representation was made to the Government by Surendranath Banerjea, then Secretary, Indian Association, pointing out that in the Despatch of the Government of India, dated the 25th August, 1911, the principle had been laid down that Bengali-speaking areas should form one Province and the Hindi-speaking areas another separate Province, and it was urged that (1) the districts of Sylhet and Goalpara, (2) the district of Manbhum, (3) the Santal Parganas, (4) Pargana Dhalbhum of the district of Singbhum and (5) a portion of the district of Purnea to the east of the Mahananda river be included in the Presidency of Bengal.

#### 8. Government of Bengal's Reply :

Replying to this representation the Government of Bengal observed that the redistribution of the boundaries consequent on the modification of the Partition of Bengal.....was “under consideration”.

#### 9. Resolution of the Bengal Provincial Conference :

On the 7th April, 1912, the following Resolution was passed by the Bengal Provincial Conference :

“That, in view of the declared policy of the Government of India to place the entire Bengali-speaking population under one and the same administration as expressed in their Despatch of the 25th August 1911, this Conference urges that in any case the districts of Sylhet, Goalpara, Santhal Parganas, and Manbhum, together with the Dhalbhum Pargana of the district of Singbhum, and the part of the district of Purnea to the east of the river Mahananda be restored to the new Presidency of Bengal.”

This demand was reiterated by the Bengal Provincial Conference year after year.

10. Representation to Mr. Montagu and the Governor-General :

In 1917, a Memorandum was submitted to Mr. Montagu, Secretary of State for India, and Lord Chelmsford, Governor-General of India, by the Indian Association relating to the future administration of India. In the course of this Memorandum the Association reminded the two distinguished personages of the definite promise given by the Government which had not yet been fulfilled, and urged as follows :

“For the purpose of introducing Responsible Government we submit that it would be an advantage to have to deal with homogeneous provinces—provinces the people of which speak one and the same language, are kindred in traditions, and if possible, in race. Bengal, as at present constituted, is such a province. But outside the Presidency of Bengal there is a fringe area, the population of which speaks the Bengali language, which is Bengali in race and traditions, but which is now included in Bihar, Orissa and Assam. We submit that a territorial redistribution should take place and it should be included in Bengal.”

11. Nehru Report and Bengal Provincial Conference Resolution :

In 1928, the All-Parties Committee (Nehru Committee) proposed the formation of provinces on a linguistic basis. The Bengal Provincial Conference of that year reiterated the demand of Bengal for the re-amalgamation with Bengal of the Bengali-speaking areas in Bihar in pursuance of this principle.

12. Simon Commission Report :

The Simon Commission expressed the view that “the use of a common speech is a strong and natural basis for Provincial individuality”, and proposed as a matter of urgent importance, that the Government of India should set up a Boundaries Commission, with a neutral Chairman, which would investigate the main cases in which provincial readjustment seems called for.”

13. Resolution of the Linguistic Convention :

On the 8th December, 1946, a Convention was held in New Delhi, at which a Resolution was adopted demanding the creation of some new provinces and the redistribution of the existing provinces on linguistic and cultural basis.

14. Administrative changes in areas predominantly Bengali-speaking:

In the nineteenth century, the areas comprising the districts of Burdwan, Midnapore and Bankura were redistributed for administrative

convenience on several occasions, forming the new districts of Manbhum and Santal Parganas and sub-division of Dhalbhum. Manbhum had always formed part of Bengal. It was at first administrated from Midnapore, and then from Birbhum. In 1805, a district known as Jangal Mahals was created, including portions of Burdwan, Bankura and the areas comprising the Manbhum district. In 1833, the district of Jangal Mahals was broken up and a new district called Manbhum was formed which included Dhalbhum. In 1845, Dhalbhum was transferred to the Singbhum district owing to pressure of criminal work in the Manbhum district.

#### 15. Language :

Dr. Grierson observes in his famous work, *The Linguistic Survey of India* : "Bengali is the language of that portion of the Santal Parganas which adjoins Hazaribagh and of the whole of the district of Manbhum." He states further : "Manbhum is a Bengali-speaking district and the same language is spoken in that part of Singbhum, known as Dhalbhum."

According to the District Gazetteer of Manbhum, 72 per cent of the inhabitants spoke Bengali and Hindi was the language of only 12½ per cent of the population in the beginning of the twentieth century. The Census Report of 1931 showed that 81 per cent of the Sadar Sub-division of Manbhum spoke Bengali. It was observed in this Report that Bengali was the mother-tongue of over 19,37,587 persons in Bihar and Orissa and that about 75 per cent of them was to be found in the district of Manbhum and the Dalbhum Sub-division of Singbhum.

The total territory demanded in this Memorandum for re-inclusion in Bengal is less than what is described as Bengali-speaking territory in Dr. Grierson's *Linguistic Survey of India*. The demand is thus a very modest one as it takes into account the changes which may possibly have occurred in linguistic affinity during the last 45 years.

#### 16. Manbhum :

Out of the total population of 18,10,890 in 1931, Bengali was the mother-tongue of 12,22,689 in Manbhum, Hindusthani that of 3,21,690, and Santali that of 2,42,091. The percentage of Bengali-speaking people in the whole district was thus 67. The Santals of the district also used Bengali as a subsidiary language. The court language of Manbhum has always been Bengali. In the Sadar Sub-division documents are written either in Bengali or English. In the Dhanbad sub-division Hindi was prescribed as a court language in addition to Bengali in 1914, but very few, if any, plaints, petitions or written statements have so far been filed in Hindi. Documents registered at Dhanbad are written in Bengali or in

English, but not in Hindi. This proves conclusively that Manbhum is a Bengali-speaking area. Culturally as well as linguistically, Manbhum belongs to Bengal and not to Chota Nagpur.

#### 17. Dhalbhum :

Dhalbhum, like Pacheet and other estates of Manbhum district, was a part of Sarkar Mandaran of Subah Bengal (Ain-i-Akbari. Vol. II. Part II). At the time of the Nawab of Bengal's grant to the British in 1760, Dhalbhum formed part of the Midnapur district and it continued to be administered as a part of the Midnapur district till the year 1833, when it was made a part of the district of Manbhum. Later, in 1846, it was transferred to Singhbhum. The people of Dhalbhum never refer to Singhbhum as their country. Culturally and linguistically, Dhalbhum is still a part of Bengal and has very little affinity with either Bihar or Chota Nagpur. According to the Census Report of 1931, the total population of the sub-division is 3,94,595, of whom 1,34,105 persons have Bengali as their mother tongue. Tribal languages are spoken by almost an equal number ; but the tribal people also speak Bengali as a second language. Thus a very large percentage of the population is Bengali-speaking. Oriya and Hindusthani are spoken by much smaller numbers of persons, viz., 44,640 (11 per cent) and 49,624 (12 per cent) respectively. The same castes as are found in the neighbouring districts of Midnapore, Bankura and Manbhum exist in Dhalbhum. The court-language for this sub-division was exclusively Bengali till the year 1934, when Hindusthani was introduced as an additional court-language. The 'Settlement Record of Rights is in Bengali and documents are written in that language. Mr. Lacey, in his Census Report, remarked in 1931 : 'Outside Jamsedpur, Bengali is the dominant language in Dhalbhum, Oriya comes as a bad second and Hindusthani a poor third.'

#### 18. Santal Parganas :

From an early period of British administration a large tract of Burdwan, Birbhum and Bhagalpur districts was in a state of extreme disorder. In 1855, this area was separated from the districts of Birbhum and Bhagalpur and formed into four sub-divisions, viz., Dumka, Deoghar (including Jamtara), Godda and Rajmahal (including Pakur), which were collectively formed into the district known as Santal Parganas. Subsequently, two other Sub-divisions were created, namely, Jamtara and Pakur.

The area now comprised within Rajmahal, Pakur, Jamtara and Dumka Sub-divisions was part of Bengal for a very long time. Rajmahal was for some time the capital of Bengal. Bengali was the predominant

language in the greater part of Santal Parganas from very early times. But after the transfer of the district to the province of Bihar in 1912, the Hindi language began steadily to gain ground. The author of the Census Report of 1931 observed : "In the Santal Parganas, Singhbhum and the Feudatory States it (Bengali) has experienced a setback. The influence of Bengali is particularly strong in the sub-divisions of Jamtara and Dumka." Bengali is a court language in addition to Nagri (or Kaithi) in all the sub-divisions of Santal Parganas, except Godda. In these circumstances, the proper thing to do would be to transfer the entire subdivisions of Pakur of Jamtara and one-half each of the subdivisions of Dumka and Rajmahal to West Bengal.

#### 19. Purnea :

That part of the district of Purnea which is to the east of the Mahananda river is contiguous to the Dinajpur and Malda districts of Bengal ; it had always remained within that province. From the point of view of linguistic affinity, this area belongs to West Bengal. An additional reason for transferring this area to West Bengal is that this will provide a connecting link between the two districts of Jalpaiguri and Dinajpur which has been broken by the Radcliffe Award.

#### 20. The need for the settlement on a recognised principle :

It is clear from the facts stated above that Bengal's case for the readjustment of boundaries is just, strong and unassailable. There is no reason why the principle of linguistic affinity, which led to the formation of Bihar as separate province and is about to lead to the formation of a few new provinces, should not be applicable to the question of re-amalgamating with West Bengal the Bengali-speaking areas in Bihar. It is also evident that the grievance of Bengal is a real, genuine and long-felt one, and is a source of considerable bitterness. The time has come when the question should be faced in all seriousness by the Congress Government of the Indian Union and the Constituent Assembly. A fair and final settlement of the matter is sure to lead to harmony and goodwill between the inhabitants of the two neighbouring provinces. It may be mentioned here that, even after the transfer of the Bengali-speaking areas to West Bengal, the area of Bihar will still remain very large and its natural resources will continue to be vast. Bihar, indeed, will be the second biggest province in India after redistribution of the provincial boundaries on a linguistic basis.

#### 21. Urgency of a settlement :

The urgency of the matter has been greatly emphasised by the appearance of a new factor in the situation. Since the middle of August

last there has been an increasingly large exodus of Hindus from East Bengal. This unilateral migration has already put considerable pressure on the land and the economic life of West Bengal. If this state of things continues for some time, it will be impossible to accommodate the evacuees for want of space. The situation is fast becoming a serious one, especially in view of the fact that the territory allotted to West Bengal by the infamous Radcliffe Award is only one-third of the total territory of Bengal. In these circumstances the transfer of Bengali-speaking areas from Bihar to West Bengal will help to ease the situation to a substantial extent.

## 22. Conclusion :

The people of Bengal challenged British authority in India and were determined to fight relentlessly for the country's freedom. Naturally, the British Government and the bureaucracy in India did their best to curb Bengal's power and influence. Lord Curzon's Partition of Bengal was designed to serve this purpose. But when it was found that the spirit of resistance which that unpopular measure had evoked was too strong to be suppressed by direct methods, the authorities in Britain and India resorted to indirect devices to achieve their end. The real object of the modification of the Partition of Bengal, in the particular manner in which it was modified in 1911, was to weaken the Bengali people. That was why the solemn pledge, accompanying the proposal for modification of the Bengal Partition, was not redeemed by the British rulers. But now that power has been transferred to Indian hands, the National Government is expected to act in a more just, honest and honourable manner. It is a duty incumbent on them to redeem now the pledge which was given by the Congress as far back as 1911. Bihar obtained the fullest benefit of Bengal's struggle and suffering ; but Bengal instead of grudging Bihar's new autonomous position, actually rejoiced at her good luck. Let Bihar reciprocate this feeling and behave handsomely towards her sister province. Bengal seeks no favour, desires no undue advantage : what she demands is equity, justice and fairplay.

62, Bowbazar Street,  
Calcutta.

P. N. Banerjee  
President, Indian Association  
1949