Spelling Reform Anthology edited by Newell W. Tune

§4. Spelling Reforms in foreign languages.

While a number of countries have made limited improvements to the spelling of their language, very few have made extensive reforms. The two most notable examples of this are Turkish and Finnish. Herein are presented those articles which are available on this subject. They might be used as examples of how we can make improvements to English spelling. They also show us the obstacles we might expect and how to overcome them.

Contents

In addition to the eight articles presented in this section, there are a few others which were printed in S.P.B. which could not be included because of space limitations, viz.:
Kyöstiö, O.K. *"Written Finnish and its Development."* Summer 1973, pp11-14;
Bonnema, Helen, *"A Glance Toward Norway,"* Winter 1971, pp11-13;
Chappell, John, *"History of Spelling Reform in Russia,"* Fall 1971, pp 12-14;
Van Ooston, Wim, *"Spelling Reform in the Netherlands,"* Fall 1973, p13,15;
Damsteight, B.C. *"Spelling and Spelling Reform in the Netherlands,"* Fall 1976, pp9-16.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1977 pp6-8 in the printed version]

1. The Development of Danish Orthography
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A Brief Survey
A language may be characterized in a number of ways. One of them is to describe the relation between the written and the spoken language.

Any spoken language undergoes changes so that normally the spelling represents a pronunciation no longer current. Danish is no exception. In the following article we shall examine briefly the orthographic changes and spelling reforms introduced into Danish during the past hundred years.

During the 17th and 18th centuries, efforts were made to maintain the Danish language as an autonomous language with values of its own. The so-called civilized languages dominated public life. The mother tongue has had to compete with the established Latin practice of the church and the University, and with the German and French practice of the Court and the nobility. German was also commonly used in the army. Writers were encouraged to cultivate the Danish language as an adequate means of expressing themselves artfully both in prose and in poetry.

Throughout this period, Danish orthography is characterized by fortuitousness and personal preference because consistent dictionaries were scarce. Besides, printers were not sufficiently educated to secure a unified Danish spelling.

The Phonetic Principle

The first major work concerning Danish orthography was written by the Danish linguist Rasmus Rask (1787-1832) *Forsog ti1 en videnskabelig dansk Retskrivningslære med Hensyn til Stamsproget og Nabosproget* (1826) (Attempt at a Scientific Methodology for Danish Orthography with Regard to the Parent Language and the Neighboring Language). Rasmus Rask's fundamental principle is that pronunciation must form the basis for spelling (the phonetic principle). "Skriften for hver enkelt Lyd i Sproget ma have et enkelt Tegn, hverken flere eller færre" (1826:21-22) as quoted in Jacobsen, 1973. (p. 39) [1] (i.e. Each sound in the language must be represented by a single symbol, neither more nor less.) And foreign ways of spelling should be avoided, according to Rask. Thus, *q, x, z,* and in most cases *c* should be replaced by Danish equivalents (*k, ks, s,* and *k* or *s*).

However, problems soon arise with the purely Danish words. In some words, mute letters appear which are pronounced in other, etymologically related words; even different forms of the same word show this irregularity.
cf.: (mute letters italicized)

verden	- ver*d*slig	mindre	- min*d*st
(world	- worldly)	(smaller	- smallest)
tilbe*de*	- tilbeder	gi*v*e	- giver
(admire	- admirer)	(give	-someone who gives)

Furthermore, Danish has only one set of vowel symbols to represent both short and long vowels. That a vowel is short is therefore indicated by a following, mute consonant.
cf.:
kane /ka:nə/   - kande /kanə/
(sleigh)   - (pitcher)

(Compare English examples like *past-paste* where plus/ minus -e indicates both the quality and the quantity of the preceding vowel.)

This orthographic feature is typical of the letter *d*, especially in connection with *-nd-* and *-ld-*. It has often been argued that it would be simpler if the *-nd-* and *-ld-* were replaced by *-nn-* and *-ll-*, respectively, but in principle this in itself does not solve the problem of mute letters since *-n-* and *-nn-* would not be pronounced differently.

Another problem in Danish orthography, which Rask was aware of, is the f act that certain combinations of letters contain letters which are mute in Standard Danish (Rigsmal) but are pronounced in some major dialects. A typical example is the initial *h* in *hv-* and *hj-* combinations.

		Dania		*I.P.A.*
cf.	hjem	/jæm'/	or:	/jɛm?/ Standard Danish (home)
	(home)	/hjæm'/	or:	/hjɛm?/ Jutland Dialect

"Write Norse"

Beside the phonetic principle, which Rask advocated, the close connection between Denmark, Norway, and Sweden plays an important part in the orthographic debate. Among many others, N. M. Petersen (1791-1862) declared that the three countries should aim at a common orthography of original Norse words as well as foreign loanwords.

The Scandinavian principle applies to vocabulary, too. Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian (together with Icelandic and Faroese) originate from a common Norse language. But the languages have developed differently. Consequently, an original common word may now either: 1. exist in the Scandinavian languages with a slightly different pronunciation and almost the same meaning, or 2. with a slightly different pronunciation and completely different meanings, or 3. or not exist at all in one or two of the languages (which then use another word for that meaning). Besides, in numerous cases Danish happens to borrow one, Norwegian a second, and Swedish a third word for the same meaning. An example is *a piece of candy* which is *bolsje* in Danish (from Low German), *drops* in Norwegian (from English), and *karamel* in Swedish (from Spanish). The Scandinavian and the phonetic principles often clash because in particular Danish and Swedish are pronounced rather differently. (As to the connection between Danish and Norwegian, the readers are referred to *Spelling Progress Bulletin,* Winter issue, 1971, pp. 11-13.)

To Rasmus Pask, the phonetic principle was the more important one. After his death, his and N. M. Petersen's ideas were discussed at an interscandinavian orthography meeting in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1869, and they were generally accepted by the participants. The meeting recommended that:

1. mute *d*'s disappear where they had no bearing on relations between etymologically related words, though not in the numerous -*nd*- or -*ld*- combinations (thus: *tydsk> tysk (german), Grændse> Grænse* (border), *Kudsk> Kusk* (coachman), *Prinds> Prins (prince)*)
2. foreign spellings be replaced by Scandinavian ones (thus *Philosophi> Filosofi* (philosophy), *Quinde> Kvinde* (woman))
3. the letter å replace the short rounded back vowel formerly represented by *aa* in Danish and Norwegian (thus *maa> må* (may)), and finally
4. that the German (mal)practice of spelling all nouns (appellatives and proper names) with an initial capital letter be abandoned. Only proper names should keep this feature.

The meeting was only advisory, however, and the first official Danish dictionary (*Dansk Haandordbog,* 1872) still retained the vowel symbol *aa* and the capital letters, but mute *d*'s disappeared in many cases. (One may note that some words were later back-altered, e.g. *Gidsel> Gissel> gidsel* (hostage).)

The Spelling Reform of 1948

Since then, many fiery discussions concerning spelling have taken place, but few regulations have been introduced. It was not until 1948 that the *aa* and the capital letters were abandoned officially. The spelling reform of 1948 also included the change from -*nd*- and -*ld*- to -*nn*- and -*ll*-, BUT FOR THREE WORDS ONLY (i.e. *kunde, skulde, vilde,* became *kanne, skulle, ville,* all of which are modal verbs corresponding to *could, should, would*).

In 1955 a spelling "reform" laid down a new order of the Danish alphabet whereby the å changed its place. Formerly it was treated like *aa,* but now the å is found at the end of the alphabet.

Apart from these minor changes, nothing has happened to Danish orthography in general. In spite of rather heavy debate in the 1930's and 40's in favor of either the phonetic or the Scandinavian principle, modern Danish spelling resembles that of the previous centuries to such an extent that little extra skill is required to read books dating from the 18th century.

The changes which do take place concern the spelling of single, foreign words. There is a tendency to naturalize the spelling of a given loanword when it is thought that the majority of language users no longer feel it to be a truly foreign word. As an example, the French word *milieu* has become *miljo* by recommendation of the Dansk Sprognævn, although *niveau* has not yet become *nivo* officially.

The Dansk Sprognævn is an advisory institution in linguistic matters. It differs from the French Academy in that its task is not to inform the public how the language *ought* to be used but rather how the language *is* in fact used. So in theory at least, it is not a normative or prescriptive institution although the council is often asked to settle disputes as to what is correct and what is incorrect in the language. But concerning spelling, the council has become an authority in that it publishes and revises the *Dictionary of Danish Orthography (Dansk Retskrivningsbordbog),* the standards of which Danish schools are obliged to follow.

Pronunciation and Spelling

Danish pronunciation has developed tremendously and is developing still; but the orthography is almost as it was a hundred years ago. In modern Danish one cannot decide the spelling of a word from its pronunciation, or vice versa. The words *hver, vær, værd, vejr* are all pronounced quite alike, but *hver* does not rhyme with *ser, vær* not with *bær, værd* not with *hærd,* and *vejr* not with *lejr*. Because of this discrepancy between spelling and pronunciation, Danish spelling is rather difficult to master.

The improvements discussed or actually carried out are few indeed. The "write-as-you-speak" movement of the 1930's has almost died out. And one reason is, of course, that since spoken Danish varies with regional, social, and educational differences, not to mention the age of the speaker, both government and educators are very cautious about suggesting a new norm. And a norm there must be, most people agree. Nobody here is interested in a completely free orthography.

The Small Language Area

Behind this attitude lies also the very essential acknowledgement that Danish covers a small language area. If many and important changes in spelling are carried out during a short period of time, modern readers will be excluded from a considerable part of the literature of not so long ago.

Icelandic is an example of a language which by and large has remained unchanged. What was written 900 years ago can still be read by everybody.

Early Danish is far from being as accessible to Danes today. But 150 year-old Danish literature can still be read by "the man in the street" *without difficulty.*

Definitely the small size of the language area contributes to the fact that many people want few changes in spelling.

During the latest decades *reading* has been stressed more than *writing* - and this must be kept in mind. If one is specifically interested in spelling, the arguments for the optimally functional spelling will be other and stronger ones than is the case if one is specifically interested in reading.

Furthermore, we must note that Danish orthography is far from any ideal phonemic spelling but that instead of trying to change it, educators and linguists are trying to find better methods of teaching the existing orthography more effectively.

Importance is Attached to Spelling

It is symptomatic that *all* annual examinations, terminal examinations, leaving examinations, etc. have been abolished in the Danish primary school from grade 1 through grade 10 with one exception - a spelling examination has been retained at the end of grade 10.

This examination will now be modified in a characteristic way: the pupils will be allowed to use dictionaries. This means a compromise between the more 'liberal' pedagogics (stressing the content and not the form) and the more 'old-fashioned' attitude maintaining that "it is still important to know how to spell." And now the pupils will be allowed to use the same aids as are available outside school, and at the same time the demands on the orthography are maintained.

It should be pointed out that tests are only applied in connection with educational-psychological research and in the work concerning the diagnosis of pupils receiving special instruction.

It should also be mentioned that the daily press in Denmark has been losing a large amount of prestige because of the many *spelling* errors in the newspapers. Surely people are dissatisfied with the contents as well, but quite as frequently the criticism is levelled against a bad wording and the many spelling errors. Naturally, these are *partly* due to the fact that the newspapers are changing to a new printing technique.

The public opinion of the press and its (lacking) qualities are expressed currently and often includes an evaluation of the lacking spelling skill of the press and, to a lesser degree of the contents. This is not true of the intellectual, traditionally liberal circles, but, no doubt, in most other circles.

"Bad Spelling is Bad Manners"

Finally, it should be emphasized that this survey should not be interpreted as if spelling, the spelling skills of the pupils, etc. are disregarded in Danish teaching.

On the contrary rather a perfect spelling is expected, and it is hardly accidental that in many cases the mastering of the quite difficult Danish orthography has become synonymous with "general good manners."

Correct spelling is *expected,* even though (or because?) spelling is difficult in Danish.

Many educators argue against this attitude, but in vain. And the "Back-to-Basis" movement, which has (so far at least) not grown strong in Denmark, maintains even the smallest details of the orthography.

During the last 20-25 years, the teaching materials in Denmark have undergone great changes. In fact, drastic innovations have made the Danish reading market a definitely "advanced" market regarding design, adaptation, etc. of the materials. However, these renewals have not involved any essential changes within the area of spelling; changes are on their way, but characteristically they will reach this area last. The most sacrosanct field is the last to be treated.

References

[1] Jacobsen, Henrik Galberg, *Sprogrøgt i Danmark i 1930erne og* 1940erne. Copenhagen, 1973. Jansen, Mogens. *Chapter 13. Denmark.* In John Downing, *Comparative Reading.* The MacMillan Company, New York; Collier-MacMillan Limited, London, 1973. pp. 285-307.

2. Book Review, by Ismail K. Poonawala, Ph.D.*

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Tarazī, Fu'ād: *Fī sabīl taysīr al-'Arabīya wa tahdītihā* <Toward Simplification and Modernization of Arabic> pp. 152. Beirut, Lebanon, 1973.

Much ink has been shed on the problems and proposals for reform of Arabic over the past few decades. [1] The need for linguistic reform is widely accepted, however the approaches and ways and means to achieve it differ profoundly. The advocates of reform could be classified into two main groups: first, those who advocate the revival of Arabic in its classical form preserving its integrity in conformity with the past tradition and literary heritage; second, those who advocate reform from the standpoint of modern exigencies without consideration of its past history. Proposals for sweeping reform of the script and adoption of colloquial over the written standard Arabic have also been forwarded by the latter group.

In order to understand the problems involved in implementing any reform, one has to comprehend the significance and place of Arabic in the modern Arab-Muslim society. Arabic developed from humble beginnings and became one of the great universal languages such as Greek and Latin. It has a very rich literary heritage and the sacred character of the revealed book, Koran, places it in a special category. It is the language of prayer for the Muslims, both Arabs and non-Arabs. Arabic and Islam constituted the major bonds of kinship among the people stretched from Spain to the Indian sub-continent. The written language has remained common to all Arabic speaking countries in spite of different spoken dialects in different countries. Thus, Arabic played a unifying role and contributed greatly to cultural unity and continuity in the Islamic world. The language is also the mainstay of contemporary Arab nationalism. The problem of reform, therefore, is pregnant with far-reaching consequences. This is the reason why this debate still continues without bearing any fruit.

The book under review is one of the recent works on the subject. In his brief introduction, the author points to the fact that there exists a disparity between the written (fushā) and the spoken ('āmmīya) language. Hence, efforts should be made to bridge the gap and eliminate the linguistic dichotomy by simplification of the written language before the local dialects would encroach on it. Next, the principles of reform are outlined as follows:

1. Need to reconcile the ancient Arabic philology with modern linguistics.
2. Need to get rid of the effects of olden dialects on grammar and lexicography.
3. Need to make away with divergent views on one grammatical problem.
4. Need to abandon the linguistic anomalies and to make it possible to employ deduction by analogy.
5. Need for spelling reform so that the written would conform to the spoken.

The above principles are applied to three specific areas of reform: grammar, lexicography, and orthography. More than two thirds of the book consists of proposals to simplify the grammar. The main thrust of the author's argument is that the complexities of Arabic grammar arose as a result of different dialects and over concern of the grammarians to record the linguistic anomalies and their obsession with the principle of *'awāmil* (word governing another word in syntactical regimen). There is some truth in the above argument, but it is not the whole truth. Time and space do not permit us to go into the details, therefore, summary of the main proposals is attempted below:

Grammar:
1. Certain nouns that could be read in two or more ways, such as *jabd* or *juhd,* only one reading should be adopted.

2. Instead of two forms of the dual: *āni* for the nominative case and *ayni* for the accusative and genitive cases, only the latter should be adopted for all the three cases.
3. There are five forms of plural:
    i. masculine sound plural with the ending *ūna* for the nominative case,
    ii. masculine sound plural with the ending *īna* for both the accusative and genitive cases,
    iii. feminine sound plural with the ending *ātun* for the nominative case,
    iv. feminine sound plural with the ending *ātin* for the accusative and genitive cases,
    v. broken plural with three case endings or two when it is a diptote.
    Instead of these five forms, only two, numbers ii and iii, should be adopted for all the three cases by reading the last letter as silent (vowelless).
4. Some of the derived forms of the trilateral verb no longer in use should be dropped.
5. Certain verbs, either in perfect or imperfect tenses, that could be read with two different vowels on the middle radical, only one reading should be adopted.
6. The imperfect tense has three cases:
    i. with *damma* for the indicative mood in the nominative case,
    ii. with *fatha* for the subjunctive mood in the accusative,
    iii. with *sukūn* for the jussive mood in the vowelless final consonant.
    The latter case ending should be adopted for all the cases and moods.
7. The complex and difficult phenomenon of different case endings should be eliminated by adopting the silent reading of the final consonant.

Lexicography:

Most of the proposals presented in the book deal with the compilation of a new lexicography that would serve the need of modern times. The coining of scientific and technical terminology should be handled by joint academies of various Arab countries rather than disjointed endeavors of some individuals or one country.

Orthography and the spelling reform:

The short vowels in Arabic *(damma=u, fatha=a, kasra=i)* are written outside the word. Hence, a non-vocalized word could be read in various ways, for example *k-t-b* could be read as: *kataba, kutiba, kutubun, kattaba, etc.* This phenomenon presents some difficulty to the reader because he will not be able to read correctly unless he understands what he reads. Dr. Tarazī, therefore, proposes to use the letters *alif, wāw,* and *yā'* (they are used for long vowels and written within the word) for short vowels and the same letters with a macron over them for long vowels.

The form of Arabic alphabets vary according to whether the letter is isolated, initial, medial, or final in a given word context, although the letter has a simple basic form. Thus, besides one basic isolated form, there are three additional forms when a letter is joined either to the succeeding letters, or the preceding letter. The author proposes that either the initial form or a new system of unified alphabets be adopted to simplify the script.

Some letters in Arabic are written without being pronounced while others are pronounced differently than the way they are written. In order that the written word would conform to the spoken, the author proposes some spelling reforms, for example *hādhā* should be spelled with *alif* after *hā',* and the *alif* at the end of third person masculine plural form in the perfect tense should be dropped. Moreover, Arabic lacks symbols for certain sounds, such as *p, v, g,* so they should be added to the script,

Disconcertingly, there are numerous typographical errors in the book. In conclusion, it should be stated that any reform which does not affect the spirit of the language and its integrity should be welcomed.

[1] For listing of articles, especially in the Western languages, cf. J. Pearson, *Index Islamicus,* Cambridge, 1958-, under the heading "Arabic language and literature." Anwar Chejne, "Arabic: its significance and place in Arab-Muslim society," *Middle East journal,* XIX,/4, 1965, p. 447-70; idem, "Arabic: problems and proposals for reform," *Studies in Islam,* II/4, 1965, p. 195-227. The latter article sums up various proposals put forth by their advocates and contains a good bibliography.

3. Th' Watermelon Hound, by Newell W. Tune
(Transliterated into Wurld Inglish)

Ie'l bet yoo never sau a wautermelun hound. Wel, Ie did. Ie hav wun!

But furst, Ie shuud preepaer yoo for the unuezuel. Kwiet a fue yeerz agoe, wee serched for an unuezuel Christmas prezent for our litel boi. Hee wanted sumthing living, which hee kuud plae with, bee hiz kumpanyun, and on which too beestoe hiz afekshun. Wiefee toeld mee too get a short-haerd, smaul daug. Wun ov mie frendz toeld mee her daug had the kuetest pupeez and shee wanted them too hav guud hoemz. Shee didn't tel mee thae wer long-haerd, larj daugz. A kros beetween a full sizd Poodl and a Sheep daug. Eether a Sheepoo or a Pooshee! And I'v bin heering about it ever sins!

Soe shee sed, "Hav yur boi kum oever th' dae bifoer Christmas and hee kan taek hiz pik ov th' lot. Soe wee did. Ov th' foer pupeez, our sun pila out the whiet wun with blak eerz - rather strieking - and veri afekshonit, az shee likt hiz hand az soon az hee tried too pet her. It wuz a caes ov luv at furst siet. Th' laedi askt him what hee wuz goeing too kaul th' pupee. "Wel," hee sed, "Az shee kums frum a French familee, Ie'l knul her 'Paulette.'" Soe Paulette wuz hiz moest apreshiatid Christmas prezant.

Shee haz bikum wun ov th' familee - and shee noez it too! Shee thinks ov herself az "wun ov th' familee," eksept, ov kors, when shee kumz noez-too-noez with anuther daug - which shee iz shoor too chalenj. But moest ov th' tiem shee thinks shee iz "a peepel" and ekspeks too eet "peepel" food. Shee begz foer everithing wee eet and luuks askans at what iz plasd in her eeting pan - unles wee preetend too eet sum ov it - or tel her hou guud it iz - yum-yummi. (This uezli works). This iz hou shee got startid on eeting wautermelun. It sounded soe guud th' wae Ie wuz slurping oever it, shee whiend foer sum. Soe Ie kut auf a chunk and auferd it too her. Suspishusli shee likt it. Lieking it, shee fienali aet it and whiend foer moer. Az Ie had neerli finisht mie pees, Ie held doun th' riend for her too lik. Soon shee wuz chomping awae at it til shee chood awae everi pink bit on the riend. Shee bikaem a kunfirmd wautermelun adikt. Nou if wee kuud oenli get her too eet daug food!

4. On Reforming Written Chinese by Wen Hua

August 10, 1973. *Peking Review, No. 32*

THE written language of our country, said Chairman Mao in 1951, must be reformed and oriented to the use of a phonetic alphabet as is common with the world's other written languages. He added that alphabetization of the Chinese characters requires much preparatory work and before realizing this it is necessary to simplify the characters in order to facilitate their present-day use. In 1958, Chairman Mao called on all cadres to learn *putung hua*, the "common speech" which is the standard spoken Chinese.

Chairman Mao's instructions are the guiding principle for reforming the Chinese written language.

Necessity

Chinese characters currently used constitute one of the time-honoured written languages with far-reaching influence in the present-day world. Historically, they have made indelible contributions over the past several thousand years. These characters still serve as a media which we must use today and for a considerable period of time to come, and they will continue to play their due role. However, we have to admit that the Chinese characters - ideograms - have their serious drawbacks mainly because they must be learnt and memorized one by one since each has its own special form. Most characters require numerous strokes and are complex in structure, not to speak of the total number of characters. The commonly used ones number around 5.000 and these together with those used in specialized fields of work, the names of people and places and classical writing amount to somewhere between 8,000 to 10,000. Since the Chinese characters are difficult to pronounce, recognize, memorize, write and use, the Chinese people have long wanted a language reform. But in the old society their hope was no more than castles in the air. It was only after the masses of the people were liberated politically and economically under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and demanded raising their cultural level that reform of the written language has become realistic.

While engaging in the cause of socialist revolution and construction, the masses are eager to master the written language as quickly as possible so as to study Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought and obtain cultural and scientific knowledge. But the complicated and difficult characters are an obstacle to their efforts. Hence the necessity to reform the written language.

The advantages of reforming the characters are manifold. It helps lessen the students' burdens, improve teaching quality and shorten the time for study, all favourable to implementation of Chairman Mao's proletarian line on education. It creates favourable conditions for typing, printing, telecommunications and other work to become highly mechanized and automated as well as computerized. It also helps strengthen the unity of our country's various nationalities and facilitates the study of the Chinese language, both spoken and written, by foreign friends, thereby promoting mutual study, friendship and unity between the Chinese people and other peoples of the world.

A written language never remains unchanged. Its development is governed by its own objective law. The history of both Chinese and foreign written languages proves that they generally have gone through a process of gradual development from pictographic to ideogrammic languages. Judged by its historical development, each letter of the Latin alphabet which is a phonetic one stands for the shape of a specific object and is a "pictograph." After a prolonged process of development, the letters finally became purely phonogrammic ones and at the same time their forms were simplified. This is also true of the Chinese characters. Following the development of

Chinese society and the evolution of writing tools down through the centuries, not only have the forms of these characters undergone many evolutions and become more and more simplified, but their phonogrammic components have gradually increased with the appearance of more and more picto-phonogrammic characters. At present, the many new simplified characters created by the masses are a reflection of the tendency of the development of these characters. This notwithstanding, the characters still have not been freed from the ideogrammic system and many problems which are hard to solve still exist in studying and using them. Therefore, to develop the Chinese written language into one using a phonetic alphabet is the pressing demand of the masses and conforms with the objective law governing the development of the Chinese characters.

Figure 1.
1st row: Evolution of the character ma (horse). 1. pictograph. 2. characters in complex form. 3. simplified character.
2nd row: Evolution of the character dou (struggle). 4. pictograph. 5. characters in complex form. 6. simplified character.

Threefold Tasks
The change from characters to a written language using a phonetic alphabet means a fundamental reform of the system of written Chinese. This calls for a greater amount of arduous and complicated work and takes a longer transition period compared with written language reforms in some countries (in most cases they only switch from one phonetic alphabet to another). On behalf of the Party and the People's Government, Premier Chou En-lai put forward in 1958 three tasks for the reform of written Chinese, namely, simplification of the characters, popularization of the common speech and implementation of the Scheme for the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet. These are important tasks which should be actively and persistently carried out before alphabetization becomes a reality.

The first task involves simplification of the forms and reduction of the number of Chinese characters. Although this is only a reform within the framework of the present character system and not a fundamental reform of the written Chinese, it suits the urgent needs of the masses and, in particular, makes it easier for school-age children and old people who were deprived of any schooling in the old society to learn to read and write. The simplified characters recommended for use since 1956 have been widely used in the nation's newspapers, magazines, books and textbooks and have gained popular approval. Through practice in the past decade and more, the masses have more and more keenly felt the need to continue the work of simplifying the characters. They have taken the initiative to simplify them of their own accord and this has become an irresistible tide of the times. The simplified characters originate from the masses and in turn serve them. In simplifying the characters, therefore, it is necessary to follow the mass line and carry out the principle of **"from the masses, to the masses**." This requires the department in charge of language reform to go deep among the masses, collect, sift and classify the simplified characters and work out a second Scheme for Simplifying the Chinese Characters, so as to do a good job of this work step by step on the basis of soliciting the opinions of the masses and the experts concerned.

The second task, popularizing the common speech which uses the Peking pronunciation as its standard, the dialect spoken in north China as its basic form and the modern vernacular style of writing as its grammatical structure, is an important preparation for alphabetizing written Chinese. With a vast expanse of territory, China has a great diversity of local dialects. Such a state of affairs adversely affects the political, economic and cultural file of our people and makes for difficulties in alphabetizing our written language. It is therefore necessary to make big efforts to popularize the common speech so as to meet the needs of the present development of our socialist revolution and construction and the need to orient our written language to alphabetization as is common with other languages in the world.

Since the directive on the popularization of the common speech was issued by the State Council in 1956, there has emerged a nationwide upsurge in spreading and learning it and more and more people are able to understand and speak it. The popularization work has achieved some success and stress is now laid on popularizing the common speech in commercial communications, post and telecommunications departments and the service trades as well as in schools in areas using local dialects. Meanwhile, special attention is paid to handling the relations between the common speech and dialects well. That is to say, popularizing the common speech does not mean prohibiting and abolishing the dialects.

Carrying out the Scheme for the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet and popularizing the phonetic alphabet - the third task - is another important preparation for achieving alphabetization. The Scheme for the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet approved by the National People's Congress in 1958 has been warmly welcomed by the masses and widely used in various fields of work. Teachers in most primary schools throughout the country have used the phonetic alphabet to teach their pupils to learn the Chinese characters and the common speech.

Struggle Between the Two Lines

Written language is a system of symbols recording speech. It does not bear any class nature itself, but the work of reforming it has a clear-cut class nature. Subordinated to the political line of a particular class, reform of written language serves the interests of that class. The language reform which we are now carrying out is part and parcel of our socialist revolution and construction and serves to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat. Precisely because of this, the fierce struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and between the proletarian revolutionary line and the bourgeois reactionary line at home inevitably finds expression in the reform work. The bourgeois Rightists wildly attacked this work in 1957. A handful of class enemies who had usurped the leadership in the cultural and educational departments even more rabidly opposed Chairman Mao's many directives on reforming the written language. They slandered alphabetization as "slavish imitation" and spread the fallacy that "simplified characters are helpful for immediate needs, but will cause losses in the long run." While advocating preserving the dialects, they mouthed such nonsense as "everything will be all right even if the common speech is not popularized for a hundred years." Even more, they abused that part of power in their hands to abolish the study of the Chinese phonetic alphabet in primary schools, and restricted and obstructed its use in various fields of work.

They opposed reforming the Chinese written language simply because this is favourable to the labouring people in their effort to study revolutionary culture and master revolutionary theory. They advertised the landlord and capitalist classes' culture and deprived the working people of their right to learn to read and write for the purpose of fooling and deceiving the people and pushing their counter-revolutionary revisionist line, subverting the dictatorship of the proletariat and restoring capitalism. All this serves only to expose them as vassals of the reactionaries at home and abroad.

Since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution began, we have smashed the counter-revolutionary revisionist line of Liu Shao-chi and other political swindlers. As in other work, language reform is now being brought to a new phase of vigorous development. While making energetic efforts to study Chairman Mao's directives on reforming the written language, the department concerned is now conscientiously summing up experience, relying on the masses to carry out deep-going investigations and study and soliciting opinions from all quarters, so as to actively and steadily reform written Chinese.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY JULY 8, 1973

Peking Is Stressing Latinized Alphabet in Sinkiang
By TILLMAN DURDIN
Special to The New York Times

HONG KONG, July 7 -

Peking is intensifying efforts to spread the use of a new Latinized alphabet for the languages of more than 4 million people and concedes that a major motivation is anti-Soviet.

A recent broadcast monitored from Urumchi, capital of the Sinkiang region, reported that a conference had called for a quickened pace in popularising the new script among the Uigurs and Kazakhs of Sinkiang and said this was necessary for "enhancing unity among nationalities, insuring unification of the motherland, consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat and strengthening the anti-Soviet struggle."

The Uigurs and Kazakhs in Sinkiang in Central Asia have resisted giving up their script because of its links with their faith, Islam, and because, through the new symbols, a new ideology and terminology are being introduced.

To represent sounds peculiar to Uigur and Kazakh, letters have been added, making a 33-letter alphabet, with 8 vowels for Uigur and 9 for Kazakh.

Close Links to Chinese
The anti-Soviet aspect of language reform for the two scripts indicates the Chinese desire to minimise cultural ties between Sinkiang's Uigurs and Kazakhs and the same ethnic groups on the Soviet side of the 1400-mile border.

The traditional script used by the two peoples in the Soviet Union is Arabic in origin, dating from the conversion to Islam, a thousand years ago. The Cyrillic alphabet used elsewhere in the Soviet Union is also widespread.

The Chinese, in trying to supplant the Arabic script, will give the two minorities written languages different from those in Soviet Central Asia. It will also provide the same alphabet to be adopted in the eventual Romanization of the Chinese national language, displacing pictographs and ideographs.

The Urumchi conference stressed the necessity of strengthening leadership in the popularizing of the new script and of organising "cadres and masses so as to enable them to learn and use the new script earnestly."

The conference decided that use of the script in administrative organs and publications must be speeded up. It pointed out that "as many as 70,000 spare-time teachers" were giving instruction in the new writing and said that all Uigur and Kazakh schools "at primary and middle levels" had switched.

Works by Lenin, Marx and Mao Tse-tung were reported available in the new writing. The Sinkiang and Ili newspapers using it were said to have doubled in circulation.

Introduction of the script in Sinkiang - officially called the Sinkiang Uigur Autonomous Region - began a decade ago and appears to have gone rather slowly.

The Turkic Uigur people are the most numerous ethnic group in Sinkiang, their number usually being given as 4 million. This is an old figure, so the total is probably greater. The Kazakhs number a few hundred thousand.

The population of Sinkiang, which is about the size of Texas, is believed to be around 9 million - the Chinese gave the figure of 8 million in early 1970 in a broadcast from Urumchi - and the steady, heavy migration of Han Chinese from the eastern provinces of China, principally from the Shanghai area, is believed to push the Hans too half or almost half the total.

The region has many other smaller minority groups - Khalkhas, Mongols, Uzbeks, Tajiks and Huis.

Figure 2.

The New York Times/July 8, 1973
The call to "study Chairman Mao's writings, follow his teachings and act according to his instruction" is shown at the top in the new Latin type Peking is urging on the Uigurs in Sinkiang, and at bottom in old Arabic form that has linked them to Uigurs on Soviet side. Similar change is being pressed on Sinkiang's Kazakhs.

5. Special Problem is of the Hebrew,
by Werner Weinberg*

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The reform of Hebrew orthography, which is a live issue in Israel, faces all the problems the orthographies of other languages have plus some knotty ones of its own.

History of the Hebrew Script

In order to present here these problems, as well as the attempts that have been made to solve them, a review of the history of the Hebrew script is called for together with a characterization of the orthography up to the time when the need for a reform was first pronounced.

Three languages, Phoenician, Hebrew, and Moabite, only slightly different from each other lexically and grammatically, were using the same alphabet in epigraphic monuments, dating back to the Tenth Century B.C. Of Moabite, we possess mainly the famous Stele of King Mesha (Ninth Century, cf. II Kings, 3:4 ff.), which can be admired in the Louvre in Paris. Phoenician is rich in inscriptions, many on stone sarcophagi unearthed at the sites of Byblios, Tyre and Sidon. (The Phoenician alphabet served as a model for the Greek, and all Western alphabets go back to this source.) Hebrew inscriptions, finally, are either carved in stone, written with black ink on potsherds or pressed into soft clay, which was then baked.

There are, of course, paleological differences, depending on the time and also on the method of writing (e.g., the ink script on potsherds tends to be cursive). But this "North-West Canaanite" script had in common for all languages that it was an alphabetical script (rather than a syllabic or logographic one), that the basic shape of the characters was the same in all the inscriptions, that it consisted of twenty-two characters, and that these were consonantal. Two of them, /y/ and /w/ inclined toward the vocalic and are sometimes referred to as "semi-vowels" or "consonantal vowels." At any rate, the script recorded no purely vocalic phonemes at all. For the small caste of scribes and priests, the consonantal skeleton of words sufficed for reading. (The Greeks later transformed Semitic characters for consonants not in their inventory into vowel signs.)

In Hebrew, the use of some of the 22 signs as vowel letters came into being through a change in pronunciation. Diphthongs formed with /y/ and /w/ "straightened out" to monophthongs as follows: ay/>/e:/, /iy/>/i:/, /aw/>/o:/ and /uw/>/u:/. When the process of monophthongizatian was completed, /y/ and /w/ (their names are *yod* and *vav,* i.e. /w/ has changed to /v/ in modern pronunciation) were not dropped from the script; rather, they came to stand for the new monophthongs. In places where they had not been a part of a diphthong, they continued to serve as consonants so that each of the two now had three values: yod= /y, e, i/ and vav=/w,o,u/.

As reading spread to wider circles, the need for greater vowel differentiation in the script became apparent. In answer to this need, the vowel letters *yod* and *vav,* found their way into words where they had not before served as consonants, in order to express /e/ or /i/ and /u/ or /o/ respectively. In a separate linguistic development, the letters *alef* (glottal stop) and *he* (which in Greek had become the vowels *alpha* and *epsilon*) weakened in Hebrew, losing their consonantal values altogether at the end of a word or syllable. They were added to the inventory of Hebrew vowel letters, but were inferior to *yod* and *vav* because they occurred in their new function only in those

places where they formerly had expressed consonants, they could not be freely inserted (there are a few exceptions for *alef: he* remained confined to the end of a word). Furthermore, due to their specific development, *alef* could stand for each of the vowels /a, e, i, o, u/ and *he* for /a, e, o/; they were therefore no great help toward an exact vocalization.

These four alphabet letters, *yod, vav, alef,* and *he,* called *matres lectionis* by the grammarians, thus acquired several vocalic values each, while retaining their consonantal value. During this period of development in the Hebrew script, the Bible was written down. In the Hebrew *textus receptus,* we can still observe that the earlier parts, dating approximately from the Ninth to the Sixth Century B.C. show considerably fewer vowel letters than the latest books from about the Second Century, B.C. The "filling" of the consonantal script with vowel letters is called *scriptio plena* or *plene* script, its opposite, *scriptio defectiva* or defective script. Both terms are relative, i.e., they render no exact quantitive account of the vowel letters contained or lacking in a word. Since the completion of the biblical canon, the text has been copied countless times. Even though the scribes doubtlessly took pains to avoid copying mistakes, there are indications in the Talmud and opinions among the medieval grammarians that they were not bound by strict rules when it came to questions of *plene* or defective. [1] Thus the spelling became irregular and contradictory (i.e., there are different spellings of the same word as far as number and place of *matres lectionis* are concerned).

From the Sixth to the Ninth Centuries, A.D., generations of sages, called the Masoretes (from Heb. *masoret, mesorah* "tradition"), occupied themselves with the biblical books in order to establish a pure and unified text and develop a method that practically guaranteed faultless copying. They faced a double challenge: the text which they had received with its inconsistencies of defective and *plene* script was sacred and, therefore, could not be changed; secondly, they wanted to assure that in the future every word in the Bible should be read in an unambiguous way. They solved the first problem by "freezing" the mixed *plene* and defective script in status quo. From this time on, copyists could not add or omit a *mater lectionis* in the text. With regard to the second problem, they developed a system of vocalization. known as "pointing," which consisted of dots and lines and combinations of them placed below, above, and inside the alphabet letters in such a way that they could be lifted off again, if so desired, whereby the "unpointed script" was restored.

Several masoretic pointing systems were developed in Palestine and Babylonia. The system of the Masoretes of Tiberias found widest acceptance and is in general use to this day.

In a move from one extreme to the other, the Masoretes created a vocalization system so exact that it records no less than the seventeen vowel notations. This was achieved by varying the combinations of dots and lines and sometimes adding the *matres lectionis yod* and *vav* to them. Beyond the vocalic notations, it also split one of the consonants into an s, and a /š/ sound, differentiated silent from sounded *he* and plosive /b, g, d, k, p, t/ from their spirant counterparts (the total system, furthermore, provided for word and sentence stress, pitch, intonation, and phrasing!).

Originally, the masoretic pointing system was designed only for the Bible. But as the centuries passed, it was applied to certain other texts where the exact pronunciation of each word was deemed important. Thus it was expanded to the Prayerbook, to poetry, to grammatical treatises, dictionaries and – in modern times – to children's literature and reading matter for new immigrants to Israel.

The pointing system for vocalization might well have replaced that of vocalization by the four *matres lectionis,* but as we have seen, the *matres lectionis* were not dropped from the biblical text that was now vocalized by the vowel points. Since the time of the Masoretes, Hebrew has had *de facto* two vocalization systems, a very ambiguous one by vowel *letters* without pointing, and an

exceedingly detailed one by vowel *points,* in which *matres lectionis* play only a small role.

After the Babylonian exile, when Hebrew, as a spoken language had largely been replaced by Aramaic (and the invention of the pointing system still lay in the far future), some scribes tried to make the vocalization of Hebrew as clear as possible by using a great deal of *matres lectionis.* It also became customary to double *yod* and *vaf,* when they stood for consonants. Copies of certain biblical books found among the Dead Sea Scrolls display a great abundance of *matres lectionis.* But also non-biblical books -- the beginnings of rabbinic literature, Midrash and Mishnah, which fall in this time, display a much more generous use *of matres lectionis* than does the Masoretic (biblical) Text (MT). Therefore, the script of the latter is usually designated as "defective" in spite of the *matres lectionis* which it does contain. The proliferation of *matres lectionis* continued in other areas of writing even while the Masoretes applied their vowel points to the Bible text. Manuscripts from the Cairo *Genizah,* **[2]** originating in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries A.D., especially liturgic-poetic works, show an even greater proportion *of matres lectionis* in their words than do the Dead Sea Scrolls.

During the latter part of the Middle Ages the use of *matres lectionis* in unpointed texts (which was 90% or more of the large *corpus* of mostly rabbinic writing at that time) receded, settling slowly to some kind of average, generally called *plene* script. In the late Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, a Hebrew renaissance took place in the wake of the Enlightenment. The language entered modern times (although only as a w*ritten* language for the time being). During that period, a further shrinkage of *matres lectionis* in prose fiction and essays can be observed. It was a conscious return to the "defective" spelling of the great classical book, the Hebrew Bible. But, in contrast, this modern writing was unpointed and, therefore, of use only to those who knew Hebrew well. In the 1860's, the cultural and social enlightenment and the emancipation of the Jews in Europe began to awaken their national consciousness, leading to the beginnings of Zionism. Consequently, Hebrew books, periodicals and, finally, even daily newspapers (all unpointed) began to appear and the steadily growing readership brought with it the necessity to increase the number of *matres lectionis*. For the next several decades, Hebrew again showed a higher degree of *plene* script.

Problems about pointing

The reader may have asked himself by now why all Hebrew was not written in and printed with the Masoretic vowel points. This would have obviated the constant fluctuating between an increase and decrease of *matres lectionis:* in fact, they could have been discarded altogether and the vowel points applied to the original, purely consonantal script. The answer to this question must be given on several levels, and it is still valid for the present time.

(1) The pointing system requires a high degree of specialized knowledge by the writer. It cannot be applied mechanically; the pointer must thoroughly know normative grammar (the reader does not have to know the full theory behind the vowel points).

(2) The system was designed exclusively for the Bible. Even early post-biblical (rabbinic) Hebrew already showed considerable lexical and morphological differences, and modern Hebrew still more (aside from neologisms based on old words, modern Hebrew has thousands of foreign, i.e., international words such as *telefon* or *universita*)*.* We thus face the facts that (a) the pointing of words for which there exist no exact biblical patterns is uncertain, and that (b) the Masoretic vocalization system doesn't fit post biblical, and certainly not modern, Hebrew phonology. **[3]**

(3) In longhand and typewriting use, the writer will simply not point because he would have to interrupt the hand stroke or the typing rhythm. **[4]** When a person is engaged in writing

Hebrew, unpointed script seems sufficient for communication, especially when he adds an occasional vowel point in a place where a mix-up could occur (when the writer becomes a reader who is not aware of the context, the matter is different).

(4)   It is difficult and expensive to produce pointed script in print. **[5]** Therefore, common reading matter, books, periodicals and newspapers must be produced in unpointed script. Pointed printed books (see above) as well as pointed newspapers for immigrants are either subsidized, very expensive, or poorly produced from worn-out plates.

To point Hebrew script for general use is, therefore, forbidding, and the estimated proportion for an earlier time of at least 9:1 of unpointed to pointed script in use is probably still valid. Pointed and unpointed scripts virtually became two different orthographies of Hebrew. It also became an accepted fact that pointed script was defective and unpointed, *plene*. Without any clear definition of how defective the one and how *plene* the other was supposed to be, a few spelling patterns emerged on either side as more or less established.

Handicaps for the spelling reformer
These, then, are the *special* handicaps which Hebrew places in the path of the spelling reformer: the question of defective vs. *plene,* and of pointed vs. unpointed. When we consider that these are not mutually exclusive pairs but do indeed appear in intermingled states, we have actually four, not two, existing orthographies:

(1)   defective-pointed,
(2)   defective-unpointed,
(3)   *plene*-unpointed, and
(4)   *plene*-pointed.

When one further considers (and the matter here becomes somewhat mind-boggling) that none of the four terms is quantitatively defined, that, for instance, "pointed" may well mean "partially pointed" and that "unpointed" does not exclude the use of certain diacritic points, that "defective" seldom means the total lack of *matres lectionis,* and that "*plene*" has practically no limits as to the amount of *matres lectionis* one might as well say that Hebrew has no definite orthography at all.

There are a few more "extras," but they are of minor importance compared to the others. I refer here to the fact that the letter signs are so forbiddingly different from the Western alphabets and that the direction of writing is from right to left.

But does Hebrew also share the classical problem of the orthographic reforms of other languages, namely the phonetic problem which always emerges because a writing system is by nature more conservative than the spoken language, and a gap between the two is bound to appear? The answer yes: Hebrew also has a phonetic problem with regard to its spelling.

It has already been mentioned that the Masoretic vowel-points do not fit the modern Hebrew vocalic system. Modern Hebrew has five or six vocalic phonemes, i.e., it has for certain /a, e, i, o, u/; and according to some linguists the diphthong /ey/ is a separate phoneme rather than an allophone of /e/. Consequently the Israeli reads three different Masoretic combination vowel points as /a/, four others as /o/, six as /e/, and two each as /i/ and /u/ respectively. He has no trouble equalising those vowel points in reading, but if he is called upon to produce a pointed text featuring the original differentiations, which to his ear and speech are non-existent, he has great trouble indeed. Fully pointed writing is for the average Israeli limited to school exercises and examinations. In "real life," pointing is done by specialists.

Regarding consonants, great changes have taken place since the original twenty-two characters expressed as many consonantal phonemes of the language. As was shown above, the Masoretes had already registered the split of one grapheme into /s/ and /š/ and of six others into plosive and spirant allophones. Actually, the Masoretic Text has thus twenty-nine different consonantal graphemes (eight of them set apart by a diacritical dot). But there is no saying whether some of them had not already then fallen together in pronunciation. As far back as tradition reaches, the pronunciation of several consonantal graphemes had fallen together both in the Ashkenazic and the Sephardic traditions (although Sephardic has kept more of them differentiated). In general Israeli pronunciation which is far from being a pure Sephardic), [6] no less than twelve of the twenty-nine consonants are pairs of homophones, viz: the letters *alef* and *ayin* (their common value varying from glottal stop to zero), *vet* and *vav*, *chet* and *chaf* (*ch* to be pronounced like in German *ach*), [7] *tet* and *tav, kaf* and *kuf* (pronounced /kuf/), and *samech* and *sin*. Furthermore, three of the six letters which could appear either as plosive or as spirant have lost spirant variant (but the difference is still shown by the dot in the pointed script); they are *eivel, dalet* and *tav*. In total, we find that nine of the twenty-nine Hebrew consonantal graphemes, almost a third are carried in the script (that uses the diacrital dots) as doublettes, at least phonetically. The first six still fulfill a role by identifying words in the written language; e.g., the word *kol* with the letter *kaf* means *all*, and with *kuf* it means *voice, kara* with *alef* is *to call*, with *ayin*, *to tear*. But these homophonous letters greatly aggravate the learning orthographic writing. (It should be said here, in anticipation, that the reform attempts described below will concentrate on the vocalization and hardly ever touch the consonants; the idea of dropping one member of the pairs of doublets is practically unthinkable.) When reading completely unpointed script – i.e., script which also lacks the one dot that differentiates consonants *vet* from *bet*, *kaf* from *chaf, pe* from *fe, sin* from *shin;* and silent from spoken *he* -- these five alphabet letters remain ambiguous, a difficulty added to that of the lacking of vocalization.

The idea of reform

The idea of a reform of the Hebrew orthography came up first as the consequence of the rebirth of Hebrew as a spoken language and the manifold increased need of reading and writing the language. During the 1880's, the first Zionists (almost all Russian Jews) settled in Palestine. It took the action of one man, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, a scholar, patriot, and fanatic in matters Hebrew to accomplish the language of the Jews in their old-new homeland becoming indeed Hebrew, even though that language had existed for 2000 years only as a written and prayer language. [8] Soon children were growing up whose native Hebrew became the language of instruction in the schools of the Jewish settlements.

Chronologically, the first spelling reform proposal was published in Vienna in 1898 [9] in a Hebrew grammar by Isaac Rosenberg. Perhaps, typically, this first proposal belongs to the most radical strain of proposals in the inventory of the reformers still to come -- namely, the Latinization of the Hebrew script.

In order to appreciate the implications of this kind of proposal for Hebrew, another glance back into history is necessary. As part of translating the Bible, Hebrew words were already early *transcribed* into other alphabets. In the Greek translations, begun in the Third Century B.C. (The *Septuagint*, later Origen's *Hexapla*), all proper nouns, personal and geographical, as well as certain other words, e.g., *halleluja*, [10] were transcribed in Greek letters. Transcriptions into Latin must be assumed to have begun in the First Century B.C. They culminated in Jerome's *Vulgate* in the Fourth Century A.D, thus the "romanization" of Hebrew is very old. This process of transposing Hebrew words into the Latin alphabet never stopped. After the Bible translations, it was continued in the textbooks for teaching the Hebrew language, beginning with those of the humanists in the Sixteenth Century (e.g., the Hebrew Grammar by Reuchlin, 1506). It is important to understand that the purpose of these romanizations was to render the sound of Hebrew, during the beginning

steps, in the alphabet familiar to the learner. After the first dozen or so lessons, romanization usually ceased, and Hebrew took over fully. Thus, transcription was never intended to *replace* the Hebrew script, but rather, to *render the sound* of the Hebrew language by means of a familiar script. A great number of systems and non-systems of transcription and transliteration came into being, none of them official or binding. They coexist to this day, and are themselves badly in need of a "spelling reform," i.e., of standardization. [11]

What Rosenberg proposed in 1898, however, was not an intermediary transcription in Latin letters, but a scheme of transliteration designed to replace Hebrew letters permanently. He wanted to Latinize the Hebrew script.

The direction of reform

Let us now leave the chronological order and report on this direction in the attempts to reform the orthography of Hebrew. Rosenberg was followed by others. It soon became apparent that the Latinization of the Hebrew script was full of thorny problems. There was, first of all, the question of transliteration vs. transcriptions, i.e., a transposition from letter to letter or from sound to letter. In either case, the degree of "narrowness" or "broadness" of the romanization had to be determined. Further, there were the questions of Hebrew letters/sounds for which there was no Latin equivalent and, vice versa, of "leftover" Latin letters (like *q* or *x*). Suffice it to say that new proposals of how to Latinize the Hebrew script have not ceased to come forth to this day. A high point of this movement was reached in the 1920's and 30's when two prominent Jewish personalities put themselves in its forefront: Ittamar Ben-Avi, the son of Eliezar Ben-Yehuda, and Zeev Jabotinsky, leader of the Zionists' right-wing. The former published two weeklies and a biography of his father in (changing) versions of Latinized Hebrew script; the other wrote a textbook in his own system of Latinization. In our days, for "Latinizers" have made a comeback; several professors at Israeli universities are counted among them.

Concerning Latinization as one of the avenues for a spelling reform, the following can be said:
(1) All proposals have come from individuals; there has not been an organised popular movement, nor has it ever been backed by official bodies.
(2) The aforementioned difficulties inherent in Latinizing Hebrew script can be overcome, but they are diminutive compared to the emotional opposition from the past majority of Jews in Israel and all over the world. What was possible in Turkey in 1928, when the script was changed from Arabic to Latin, is anathema to the Jews.

When hearing about attempts to switch to the Latin alphabet, even the most secular-minded Jew will not hesitate to invoke the "holy language" and its "twenty-two sacred letters." Latinization will be shrugged off by most as a crazy idea of some fanatic, ignoramus or traitor. (Incidentally, the "Latinists" never fail to argue that the Latin letters are direct descendants of the old Canaanite ones, which Hebrew abandoned after the Babylonian Exile for the foreign Aramaic alphabet; ergo, they are only re-establishing the ancient alphabet!). This writer does not believe that the Latinization has any chance of success in the foreseeable future.

Before proceeding to the more realistic reform proposals made by representative groups and official bodies, I shall characterize some of the suggestions from individuals (many of whom are indeed fanatical about their particular ideas) that have kept turning up in the newspapers or in pamphlets which are usually produced in the proposed innovated script. The stream of such proposals has not dried up in some seventy years. [12]

As mentioned previously, most would-be reformers carefully steer clear of the problem of the homophonous consonants; rather, they direct their efforts towards designing new vocalization schemes. Scorning the Masoretic pointing system and aware of the pitfalls contained in, and the

riddles posed by the unpointed script, they offer systems of vowel signs being of the same height as the Hebrew consonant letters and placed between them. Once this premise is established, there remains two considerations: the first is whether to leave the Tiberian differentiations intact by introducing new signs for all of them or to phonemicize the present Hebrew inventory of vowels and make do with five or six new signs. The second consideration is the *shape* of the new signs. It is in this area that one cannot help admiring the ingenuity contained in some of the proposals.

One recurring scheme that has been offered in numerous variations is blowing up the Masoretic points to full letter size and placing them (all, or the remaining five or six) between the consonant letters, thereby solving the problems of linotype setting, while at the same time holding on to tradition.

Other schemes take their vowel signs from the Latin or the old Canaanite alphabets; or they consist either of characters put together from parts of alphabet letters, or of vowel points connected with lines; or they are freely invented. Interestingly, though, most "inventors" -- for all their revolutionary doings -- anxiously maintain and are willing to prove that their new schemes, in one way or another, are related to the traditional Hebrew vocalization.

In addition to introducing new vowel signs, some reformers propose to abolish certain elements of the historical ballast the script has perpetuated, especially the final letters (five Hebrew letters have different shapes at the end of a word), or completely quiesced letters, like *alef* and *yod* in certain positions.

The vast majority of would-be reformers, the "Latinists" included, will emphasize that their proposals are intended for modern use only and that all classical writings should remain and be reprinted in their respective traditional orthographies (thus the Bible and the Prayerbook defective-pointed, the Mishnah, Midrash and Talmud *plene*-unpointed).

Most Israelis, if they take notice of such reform proposals at all, write them off as folly. The inventors, on the other hand, may spend their lifetimes refining the systems and trying to win proselytes for it.

Reform proposals by official bodies

The remainder of this paper will deal with reform endeavours by official bodies.

Around 1900, the teachers of the Jewish settlements schools brought the problem of their uncertain orthography into the open. They were simply at a loss as to the teaching of the spelling of the revived Hebrew language. For them, it was not so much a matter of *reform* but, rather, of teaching orthography according to an *authorized standard*.

In 1904, the educator, scholar, and president of the newly founded Hebrew Teachers Federation in Palestine, David Yellin, came forth with a proposal of a standardized Hebrew orthography along the following lines:

(1) The irregular distribution of *matres lectionis* known from biblical orthography was to be fixed and regulated according to scientific-grammatical principles with heavy reliance on the orthography of Arabic. Where biblical orthography had both defective and *plene* writing of the same word, a decision in favour of *one* should be made (preferably, the defective one).

(2) This regulated defective-*plene* orthography could be used *with* or *without* that Tiberian pointing. And in contrast to the age-old practice, unpointed forms could no longer get any extra *mater lectionis* to compensate for missing vowel points.

Yellin's system was endorsed by leading European Semitists and Orientalists, both Jewish and

non-Jewish. It was published as a monograph the following year [13] and, without any official action, was introduced into the schools. This unusual speed was due to the teachers' clamouring for unity of spelling, their inclination as grammarians toward the defective mode of writing, and to the great personal prestige of Yellin. With some modifications, the "Yellin system" is still taught in the schools of Israel to this day.

The practical disadvantages soon became clear. On the one hand, schoolchildren continued to be taught the phonetically antiquated and complicated Tiberian pointing system. On the other hand, when the vowels were omitted, the result was and is a defective script that can be read correctly *only by those who know the language and its grammar perfectly*. Even they often have to read and reread a sentence to clear up ambiguities caused by homographs that can be read half a dozen ways. Consequently, the newspapers, periodicals and books (all unpointed) did not accept the Yellin system. On the contrary, as more Jews settled in Palestine and the printed word increased, more and more *matres lectionis* were once again inserted into the script as the only way of making unpointed Hebrew somewhat more readable. Thus, a gap developed between school and "real life" orthography.

As early as 1890, a Hebrew Language Council had been founded in Palestine It always comprised the leading scholars, educators and writers and, in time, became the highest authority for the immense linguistic work required to fill the old language with new life. While the main burden was lexical -- thousands of new words had to be coined -- many other areas came under its jurisdiction, one of these being orthography. The Teachers Federation relinquished its authority in matters linguistic in favour of the Language Council, but in the realm of orthography the teachers never quite saw eye to eye with the Council when the latter began to move away from the Yellin principles.

In 1930, the Language Council appointed a special committee on orthography, charged with formulating positions that had developed in the discussions on this topic during the past years. By that time, the Yellin system was clearly obsolete outside the classroom, and the unpointed script used by newspapers, etc., varied from publishers to publisher (and often from word to identical word on the same page). But worse, while the language rejuvenated itself and blossomed, standing up beautifully and almost miraculously to the tasks of a modern age, it still had a primitive script, consisting of consonants with an insufficient and ambiguous vocalization. The committee could not find its way out of a triple dilemma: should it aim at an orthography of

(a) pointed script,
(b) unpointed script ("pointed" and "unpointed" had by that time become more or less identified with "defective" and "*plene*," respectively), or
(c) a dual spelling in which both methods were sanctioned.

In 1938, the Language Council appointed its second Spelling Committee, which agreed on a number of principles, [14] among which stand out that a spelling reform may not be brought about by "revolutionary" or "extremist" means, the *plene* script must not be considered ungrammatical, and -- most important of all -- that the pointed-defective and the unpointed-*plene* systems could well coexist, provided that each was assigned to different areas of writing and literature. The last principle constituted a victory for the "dualists".

The pointed-defective system and normative grammar were one and the same thing; therefore, the system was well-defined and no voice was raised in favour of *its* reform. But since the unpointed-plain system which had been given status in the principles was so obviously unregulated, the logical next step entailed giving it an orthography, i.e., setting up rules for the distribution of *matres lectionis* in unpointed script. When the committee published a set of such rules in 1942, [15] it was

the most important step forward in the orthographic reform of Modern Hebrew.

These rules were phonetic in nature, i.e., they did not attempt to express Masoretic vowel points by means of *matres lectionis;* rather, they addressed themselves to the question of how to express vowels /u, o, i, e/ (about /a/, see below) by *matres lectionis* and, as the letters *vav* and *yod* had to be used for that purpose, how to distinguish them when they stood for the consonants /v/ and /y/.

The premise sounded simple enough, but a number of complex problems remained:

(1) In the history of Hebrew writing, only *vav* and *yod* had been freely used, while the two other *matres lectionis, he* and *alef,* had been restricted to certain word patterns and places and had expressed three and five different vowels, respectively. Using them freely, now, and for definite vowels only, would constitute a "revolutionary and extremist" act, which was ruled out by the guidelines. Therefore only *vav* and *yod* could be used for a modern vocalisation by *matres lectionis.*

(2) Making *vav* and *yod* do for the five Hebrew vowels was impossible, however. It was decided to waive the realization of the most frequent vowel, /a/, in the hope that absence of any vocalization would direct the reader toward supplying the vowel himself. (This was a misjudgment, since the absence of a *mater lectionis* could also mean actual vowellessness or any of the vowels /o, i, e/, as the rules allowed for quite a number of cases in which these were not expressed by *vav* or *yod* or anything else.)

(3) Of the four remaining vowels to be realized, only /u/ offered no special problems and would always be expressed by *vav.* Each of the vowels /o, i, e/, however, had a long list of etymological and grammatical implications, which some members of the Committee were unwilling to ignore for the sake of phonetic expediency. As a result, remarks, exceptions, and subrules were introduced which specified exactly when /o/ could or could not be expressed by *vav* or /i/ and /e/ by *yod.*

(4) While the question of the consonants /v/ and /y/ was, in principle, solved by doubling *vav* and *yod* to realize them, again historic-grammatical reseervations interfered with a consistent application of such a rule. Consequently, /v/ and /y/ had to be indicated under various circumstances by the *single vav* and *yod,* and these circumstances were not the same for /v/ and /y/.

While the "1942 Rules" were thus rife with compromises, this was not enough for several committee members to appease their consciences. They had their individual opinions recorded separately in the body of the rules, adding options to ambiguities.

A further complicating factor was that the Language Council published at the same time, but separate from the Rules themselves, **[16]** the decision stipulating that certain letters should receive the Masoretic dot which differentiates them from other letters, namely the consonants *bet (vet), kaf (chaf), pe (fe), sin (shin),* sounded *he* at the word end (unsounded *he*), and the vowel /u/ (*vav* with center dot, called *shuruk*). This last decision was even in direct contradiction to the main set of rules.

It seemed as though the valiant attempt of the Second Spelling Committee to formulate orthographic rules for *plene* script had only brought into sharper focus how hopelessly complicated a reform of this script actually was. However there was one positive side to it: the 1942 Rules established the *principle of phoneticity* in orthography, and they set the basic patterns and structure which could be emulated in the future.

Even with the serious threat to Jewish survival during the war years, and the uncertainty of a future for the Jewish population in British Mandate Palestine, the Hebrew Language Council carried on,

organising two public hearings of the Rules in 1943 and 1944. At the end of the second hearing, the Council formed a new committee, its third, charged with formulating new rules based on those of 1942, together with the criticism and counter-proposals that had emerged in the hearings. **[17]**

In 1948, the committee published its proposals. **[18]** The "1948 Rules" deviated from the earlier ones mainly in that no individual opinions were recorded in them and that the following "alternate rules" were listed with regard to the vowels /u/ and /o/: /u/ was to be rendered by a *vav* with a center dot (*shuruk),* but "if there was no *shuruk* among the printing types," a plain *vav* could be used. Correspondingly, /o/ was to be rendered by a *vav* with an upper dot (*cholam*), or by plain *vav* "if there was no *cholam* among the printing types."

As a corollary, the rules for writing consonantal /v/ needed an alternative: if *vav* with center and upper dot were the "among the printing types," plain *vav* could be used for realising consonantal /v/. If not, double *vav* would have to be written in specified cases.

The introduction to the 1948 Rules contained a reminder of the separate decision of 1942 (now called "recommendation") concerning the differentiating dot for /b/ - /v/, /k/ - /x/, /p/ - /f/, /h/ -zero, /s/ - /š/. It, too, was not made part of the rules proper. **[19]**

Actually, the 1948 Rules did not signify much progress. Thus for instance, the letter *vav* still could express /v/, /u/ or /o/, the letter *yod*, /y/, /i/ or /e/, while all /a/'s and most /e/'s, which together form 70 to 80% of the Hebrew vocalization, went unrealized. Furthermore, the sub-rules and exceptions, stipulating when and when not to double *vav* and *yod* for realizing the consonants or when not to realize the vowels /o/ and /i/, required considerable grammatical expertise. But despite all drawbacks there was the obvious achievement that the Language Council had agreed on a system of orthography for unpointed Hebrew.

It will be remembered that the same year, 1948, saw the proclamation of the State of Israel. In due time (1953), the Language Council gave way to the Academy of the Hebrew Language, an official government agency. This new body saw itself faced with the fact that the 1948 rules had remained enshrined in the journal of the Language Council. They had not "conquered the market," be it in books and periodicals, in business or private correspondence, in State agencies and, most importantly, in the schools. They simply were too complicated, too ambiguous, and there had been no serious attempt to enforce them.

In the course of the years, three more new spelling committees were consecutively appointed by the Academy. They reported back to the plenum in 1962, 1964, and in 1967. **[20]**

Conclusions
Upon studying these proposals, one arrives at the following conclusions:

(1) All of them agreed that the 1948 Rules were inadequate;
(2) all attempted ardently to find a better solution for the thorny problems;
(3) none of them succeeded.

By now, twenty years had passed since the publication of the last Language Council Rules. At a historical plenum meeting on April 4, 1968, the Academy, facing up to its inability to accomplish a satisfactory reform of Hebrew orthography, pressurised by the Department of Education (instead of a handful of teachers from rural settlements) and by a small but militant citizens "Movement For an Unambiguous Hebrew Spelling," resolved to endorse the Language Council Rules of 1948 and to adopt them as the Academy's own. (Other parts of that resolution comprised *de jure* recognition of a dual orthography for Hebrew, one pointed, the other unpointed; the decision that the pointed

orthography was to be the "traditional," i.e., Tiberian and Masoretic one; and finally, the formation of a special committee to oversee the practical application of all decisions and proposed adjustments where necessary. **[21]**

The following year, on May 27, 1969, the Secretary of Education and Culture, Mr. Zalman Aram, signed the Academy resolution into law. **[22]** With that, the 1948 Rules for the spelling of unpointed Hebrew became official for Israel.

End of spelling reform?

One year after the Secretary's endorsement of the Academy's endorsement of the Council Rules, the Academy published those rules anew. **[23]** Only they did not read the same way as they had in 1948! The new version eliminated the alternate rules concerning /u/, /o/ and /v/ (apparently the *vav*'s with center and upper dots were now considered to be "among the printing types"), and the "recommended" dotted letters for /b/, /k/, /p/, /s/ and audible /h/ were now taken up into the body of the rules, in fact they formed Rule #1.

At the time of this writing, five years after that publication, the rules are still not introduced into the school system, and writing and printing appear hardly aware of them (except for some, not all, of the publications of the Academy itself). It seems as if the Hebrew-writing world were holding its breath. More probably, though, it just keeps on writing and producing an amount of literature unparalleled in any language on a per capita basis, unmindful of the crying need for rules and reform of spelling.

The question of the spelling of Hebrew is so intricate, moves on so many different planes, and is so emotionally loaded that it cannot be solved by compromise. Some day, the appropriate government office will have to *decree* a mode of spelling, be it single or dual, pointed or unpointed, *plene* or defective, phonetic or etymological, simple or complicated, moderate or radical. In fact, the government will not only have to decree a reform but also to enforce it (possibly in steps) -- otherwise there will be no reform and no standard orthography.

Footnotes

[1] A talmudic statement in the Tractate *Menachot* 29b-30a, that a *missing* letter rendered a Torah Scroll unfit, while an *extra* letter did not, has been interpreted as giving the scribe some leeway for an increased use of matres lectionis. Among the medieval grammarians, the Tenth Century Chayuj (*Two Treatises*, ed. John Nutt, London, 1870, p.26) was under the impression that "it is in order that the defective be written *plene* and the *plene* defective." Similarly, the Twelfth Century grammarian Abraham Ibn Ezra remarked in his book *Sajah Berurah* (Hebrew, ed. Lipmann, Fürth, 1839, p.7b) that the ancient scribes could write *plene* "when they wanted to make it explicit that the word must not be confused" or defectively "in order to take the short way."

[2] Storage room of Hebrew books too old to be used. They may not be burned or otherwise destroyed for fear all desecrating the Devine Name contained in them. The Cairo Genizah was rediscovered in the last century. It contained a rich treasure of manuscripts.

[3] The Tiberian Masoretes may have already tried to reconstruct an ancient pronunciation rather than render their contemporary ones through the pointing system. Moreover, their system referred to the solemn, high formal reading from the Bible in public worship. At any rate, many of their vowel signs have fallen together in today's pronunciation, while one of them has split into two vowels.

[4] A Hebrew typewriter can be custom-equipped with the vowel signs as dead keys. In order to fit them on the keyboard, the owner has to sacrifice all non-essential symbols. But ordinarily, one would type the consonants and, in a second going over, fill in the vowel points by hand.

[5] The consonant characters are of different widths. Therefore, the centering of vowel points below and inside the letter, as well as placing them closely to their upper right or left, is mechanically complicated. The inexpensive Linotype process can be applied to it only with complicated modifications. Most printers resort to the more expensive Monotype method or even to hand setting.

[6] Cf. W. Weinberg, "Our Sephardic is no Sephardic...," *Central Conference of Amer. Rabbis Jour.* v.12, #4 (1965), pp. 43-50.

[7] In the so-called "oriental" -- as differentiated from "general" -- Israeli pronunciation *ayin* and *chet* are differentiated from *alef* and *chet*, respectively.

[8] Many books and countless articles have been written about Ben-Yehuda. The most recent book is Jack Fellman, *The Revival of a Classical Tongue: Eliezer Ben Yehuda and the Modern Hebrew Language.* The Hague, 1973.

[9] *Hebräische Conversations Grammatik*. Vienna.

[10]   The Second Column of the *Hexapla* constitutes a transcription of the entire text, not only isolated words. Tradition has it that much older Greek transcriptions -- now lost -- preceded the first translations; they are said to have been used in the public Bible readings, just because the unpointed Hebrew text was ambiguous.

[11] Some of the competing systems are those by the Royal Asiatic Soc., the Royal Geographic Soc., the American Board on Geographic Names, The Jewish Encyclopedia, The Library of Congress, The Encyclopedia Britannica, the Israeli Academy of the Hebrew Language, and the International Standard Organisation. Recently, a committee under the aegis of the American National Standard Institute (ANSI), which has already published Romanisation systems for Arabic and Japanese, has concluded work on a standard for Hebrew which is now being published by ANSI. This writer has been involved in its preparation.

[12] I have collected a great number of these in my book *The Reform of Hebrew Orthography* (Hebrew), Jerusalem, 1972. Proposals containing *graphic* changes are contained in my English article "A Bibliography of Proposals to Reform the Hebrew Script," *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore* (Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati), v. 10, (1972): 3-18.

[13] David Yellin, *Pronunciation and Spelling in Hebrew* (Hebrew), Jerusalem, 1905.

[14] *Leshonenu* 11 (1942): 233-34. Nine principles are enumerated there.

[15] *Ibid.*, pp. 235-37.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 234.

[17] *Leshonenu* 16 (1948): 82.

[18] *Ibid.*, pp. 84-87.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 83.

[20] *Zichronot Ha'akademiah*, 9: 74: 10-11: 185-186: 14: 41-44.

[21] *Zichronot Ha'akademiah*, 13: 65.

[22] In the Government Gazette: *Reshumot:Yalkut Hapirsumirr* of 2 June, 1969, p. 1535.

[23] Lesbonenu La'am, vol.21, no. 206, *April, 1970.*

A wise man said: A reform will come only when the people concerned really want it.

6. The Story of Spelling Reform in Turkey,
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The dramatic story of Turkish spelling reform, announced in the fall of 1928, made headlines around the world. Almost overnight the old Arabic system was abolished and the Turkish people were required to use a new westernized alphabet and rational spelling system. The abrupt spelling change-over was only one of the series of sweeping social, economic, and political reforms initiated by Mustapha Kemal Pasha, founder of the new Republic and its first president. Education was nationalized and made compulsory for children from seven to twelve, a Western-style legal system was adopted, Islamic influence was eliminated from the Constitution, women's rights were recognized, the international 24-hour day was introduced, the Gregorian calendar, the Western number series, and the Metric system were adopted. European-style dress, although not required, became the rule. Wearing the fez was prohibited. The new government launched a systematic campaign to advance knowledge and skills among all social classes. In the long run, the new alphabet made all other reforms possible thru improved communication.

The story of the Turkish alphabet reform in brief is as follows:

The President appointed a commission of language scholars who were directed to devise a new Roman-style alphabet by the end of the Summer, 1928, to replace the age-old Arabic calligraphy then in use for printing and writing. Fitting the Turkish sounds to Roman letters did not prove to be too complicated for the Commission, working under the vigorous leadership of the President. By September, it was ready to be presented to the legislature. Announcement of the change became the most important news of the day. Even before legal adoption on Nov. 1st, the new alphabet had come into use. All Arabic lettering was ordered removed, to be replaced by New Turkish street and shop signs, advertisements and bulletins, names on trams and trains. Even the railroad stations that yesterday were labled in Arabic, were now lettered with the new alphabet. Names on Turkish steamships in the harbor were painted over with bold Roman letters.

Teaching the alphabet to everyone, young and old, began at once even tho there was at first a scarcity of materials in the new spelling. The Minister of Education took charge and ordered blackboards and chalk set up everywhere in public places for demonstrations: in coffee houses, on the sidewalks, in front of shops, wherever a crowd gathered. The President himself took a hand in teaching the new letters to his ministers and other high officials at his palace during the Summer. A local cinema theater flashed on the screen each week a short humorous story to educate audiences in the new alphabet.

The arrival, on short order, of high-powered printing presses from the United States, which were retooled for the new alphabet, speeded up the transition through volume production of printed matter. The opening of school in the Fall was delayed a few weeks to give teachers time to learn the new spelling system and to obtain textbooks printed in the new alphabet. The Grand National Assembly meeting in Ankara Nov. 1, 1928 set deadlines for the adoption of the new spelling system. Laws were passed forbidding the use of the old Turkish according to a calendar schedule.

The use of the old writing was forbidden in newspapers and other periodicals after Dec. 1, 1928; in state documents after Jan. 1, 1929; in civil documents after June 1, 1929; other documents and business records after June 1, 1930. For adults a system of national school courses was set up beginning in January, 1929, one course of two months duration for those who were already literate in old Turkish or other languages, another course lasting four months for the illiterates. Jan. 1, 1931 was the date set for the end of the transition period.

The alphabet change which came so swiftly was by no means an entirely new idea. In fact it had been proposed for about 75 years. The foreign element in the population may have exerted some influence in Latinizing Turkish spelling. Occasionally the advantages of the Roman Alphabet had been mentioned. Foreign writers: French, German, English, transliterated Turkish words and phrases in their own unique spelling systems. For instance, Pierre Loti (Louis Viaud) French novelist, writing in Constantinople fifty years before, sprinkled his exotic tales with Turkish words and expressions transliterated in his own French spelling.

Until 1928, Arabic print and writing were universal thruout the Moslem world. Religion gave sanctity to both the script and the vocabulary. Arabic script symbols had been fitted to the Turkish language after the tribes adopted Islam many centuries before. Thru the years an extensive vocabulary of Arabic words and phrases had been absorbed. All the literature available to literate Turks who lacked knowledge of Western languages was printed in Arabic, but many of the words in this literature were no longer heard in colloquial speech. The main source of literature for those who could read was the Koran. There were no children's story books containing fairy tales, fables, folklore, all modern stories - not even transliterations from the great reservoir of this material in European languages. Most certainly the times called for a change. As the President expressed it, "The Turkish language has been a prisoner for centuries and is now casting off its chains."

Reasons for Alphabet Reform
The reasons for alphabet reform in Turkey seem self-evident, tho some are not so obvious. One argument was that the Arabic characters did not fit the sounds of Turkish adequately. Language experts declared that Turkish phonemes could be represented better with a series of modified Roman-style letters. However, there were no systematic experiments to test out this theory. It would be true if colloquial Turkish contained sounds not represented by Arabic characters. If Arabic was not a good fit, the alphabet could have been modified, but this idea would have been an acceptable to Moslems.

A more telling argument for reform was that Arabic calligraphy interfered with easy access to education because the system was too complex to be mastered easily. The President (sobriquet: Ataturk) was convinced that the continued use of Arabic characters for the Turkish people was an impediment to the spread of literacy. Twelve years were needed to learn to read and write to the level of functional literacy, according to some authorities. One schoolman who had supervised primary classes in his early years said that an entire year was spent on the mastery of the symbol-letters and syllables alone, before the children were introduced to a whole word, not even "kedi (cat). A teacher of Arabic-speaking children in the middle East observed that 7- and 8-year-olds needed long hours of outside coaching to catch on to the system. In the days before reform, the Arabic characters and orthography had not been simplified as they were later on.

Up to this time, literacy in Turkey had been the accomplishment of an élite, learned class. As a matter of fact, only 9% of the population at the time of the change-over was literate. The uneducated had to depend on professional scribes located in every quarter to write letters and

interpret documents for them. Literate Turks were often bilingual or even polyglot, obtaining their information about government and international affairs from foreign language newspapers to be found at local newsstands or obtained by subscription. Among the leading young Turks were many who had been educated at Robert College on the Bosphorus, an institution chartered under the state of New York 50 years before, which gave instruction in English: and the American Girls' College, almost as old, that provided an English Language education for the Turkish young women.

With a Roman-style alphabet, a larger proportion of Turkish people could become familiar with Western publications printed in similar letters, and foreigners could more easily learn to interpret Turkish signs and notices.

The idea of Latinizing the Turkish alphabet may have come from Atatürk himself. He was born in Salonika, Greece, of Albanian descent. With his Greek background and as a well-educated person, familiar with French, he was in a good position to recognize the advantages of Roman-style print as a means of liquidating Turkish illiteracy. Within the Turkish borders there was not only a Greek minority who were familiar with their language in print, but a substantial Armenian population with a practical 38-letter Graeco-Roman-based alphabet that was said to be responsible for their universal literacy and prosperity.

Some Features of Arabic in Print

Before dismissing printed Arabic as hopelessly archaic (after all, this language is read by millions of Muslims around the world), several facts about Arabic in script and print should be noted. The letter forms are derived from the flowing, cursive handwriting used in manuscripts of Holy Writ, the Koran. The lines move across the page from right to left, and books are read from "back to front" in contrast to the Western mode. The spelling system is phonetic as far as the consonants are concerned, with matching of a sound to each letter almost exclusively. There are no silent letters and no double letters except to make a break in pronunciation. This phonetic advantage is offset by several disadvantages from the standpoint of an ideal system. In print, the separate characters are often run together instead of being separated by small spaces as they are in English print. 28 symbols are listed as the basic alphabet in a modern Arabic dictionary, but there are different forms for the majority of the characters depending upon their position at the beginning, in the middle, or at the ends of words. The intermediate forms are a sort of shorthand of the basic forms. Only 9 of the letters have the same form in other than initial position.

In Arabic print the long vowel sounds and consonants are indicated, but the short vowels are omitted except where confusion might result. A system of 15 or more vowel points (diacritical marks) is used to indicate vowel sounds. One character is a vowel lengthener. The missing vowels create reading problems unless the reader is familiar with the structure and grammar of Arabic. Printing and typing Arabic is tedious and subject to error due to the numerous diacritic marks that must be added. When these are omitted, confusion and misunderstanding may result.

In printed Arabic there are many instances of joined letters that form ligatures standing for syllables. At least 130 of these are widely used in printing the language. Formerly children had to learn nearly 500 of these joined letter symbols to be able to read. Arabic spelling, unlike English and the new Turkish, is not completely standardized. Slightly different forms are used for the same word. Even people's names have different versions in print or writing.

Turkish Alphabet Reform as a Political Expedient

There can be no question that in the last analysis, changing the alphabet was primarily a political move. Atatürk was determined to separate his government from Moslem rule and influence. He wanted to establish a strong Turkish nationalism oriented towards modern Western developments in science, philosophy, political thought, education and social advance, industry and business practices. To achieve this goal, it was necessary to rid the government of Moslem domination in thought, dress, living and education, and to overthrow the old Ottoman traditions that were holding back progress. Along with the alphabet reform, Turkish scholars were directed to eliminate all strictly Arabic words from the Turkish vocabulary whenever feasible. The rejection of other modern alphabets: Greek, Armenian, Russian or a simplified version of Arabic, support the theory of political motivation for reform.

People who are accustomed to resisting any form of tyranny over their personal lives may wonder whether there was any strong opposition to a change that upset their habits, e.g., writing from right to left. There was some grumbling in the Assembly on occasion when the President's back was turned; the work of the Commission was attacked on the ground that it was impious and contrary to Faith and morals to abandon the script of the Koran. A few argued as people sometimes do today that primary education should not be made too easy for the children. On the whole, people thruout the country were eager to learn the new system, and there was little opposition to this fundamental change.

Features of the New Alphabe

Turkish is an inflected language with word endings that do the work of English pronouns, articles, propositions and verb auxiliaries. The language has several sounds not heard in English; and vice versa, not all English sounds occur in Turkish. For a rational system of fitting printed symbols to a spoken language, the one-to-one matching of graphemes to phonemes is required, with each alphabet character assigned to a single distinguishable sound of the language. To meet this criterion for Turkish, there had to be some adjustment and reassignment of the English 26-letter alphabet to fit the sounds of Turkish. The characters "q", "w", and "x" were omitted, an undotted "i" (ı) was added to represent the gutteral "u", or sometimes the neutral vowel. The word Topkapı, popularised by the moving picture of that title, illustrates the use of the undotted i (ı). Since "c" was not needed either for the hard sound which was represented by "k" or for the soft sound (as in "city"), it could be used for "j" as in "jail," hence the letter "c" became "j." The letter "j" in turn was assigned as in French to the "zh" sound as in "measure." The "sh" and "ch" sounds were assigned to "s" and "c" respectively, with cedilla added: ş, ç. The letters "u" and "o" with added diaeresis formed ü and ö for vowel sounds as in French "jus" and "oef."

Here are the resulting 29 characters of the Turkish Alphabe:
a b c ç d e f g ğ h ı i j k l m n o ö p r s ş t u ü v y z

Both lower case letters as shown here and capitals are used. The diacritic marks with the lower case letters are also found on the capitals.

In Turkish orthography there are no double or treble consonant groups as in English and no double letters to mark syllable division. The print and script are oriented across the page from left to right as with other major European languages. In Turkish, with a few exceptions, every letter in a word is pronounced and always pronounced the same. One exception is ğ which has no sound at all between certain vowels or may have the sound of "y" between certain vowels, and after some vowels before a following consonant. The long vowels are sometimes marked with the circumflex

sign or with ğ before a following consonant, or they may not be marked at all. The circumflexed vowels are not included in the list of 29 alphabet letters because their use, tho standardized, is not invariable. Other minor defects according to the criterion of one-to-one letter-matching are detailed in Turkish language text books. The fact is that no set of two or three dozen arbitrary letter symbols can represent all the sounds of words in any spoken world language.

Clues to the sounds of the letters in the Turkish alphabe and the simplicity of the spelling system can be gained from observing and pronouncing loan words from foreign languages which have been added to modern Turkish, all spelled phonetically with the alphabe. On my arrival in Istanbul in 1959 for a year's stay, I was billited in the *Teras Otel* (the terrace was a bower on the roof) in the Beyazit quarter near the *Üniversitesi.* The main *şose* (avenue) led to the great walls. Just across the *stret* from my *adres* was a *Kuafür* (say it in French), convenient for a shampoo. At the beginning of the school year, the *Dikan* gave a *koktelye* for the *Fakültesi.* President Eisenhower, on a visit to Ankara, was pictured in the papers delivering a *mesaj*. Here are other illustrations of loan words from European languages that illustrate the spelling system and the sounds of letters in Turkish:

büfe-buffet	lise-lycée	kampana-large bell
oto-auto	manto-coat	şerbert-sherbert
şik-chic	kolej-college	çaket-jacket
polis-police	vagon-carriage	jelatin-gelatine
dans-dance	balkon-balcony	Amerikan-American
blok-block	istasyon-station	hamak-hammock
gaz-gas	pasaj-passage	fotograf-photograph
şef-chef	bagaj-baggage	telefon-telephone

By this time the new American word, *zeroks* must surely have been added to the Turkish business vocabulary. Russian words stay the same in Turkish *palto*-overcoat, *dede*-grandfather, *samovar*. But few words of Slavic origin are to be found in the lexicon.

The schwa sign that linguists would like to see added to reformed English spelling, to represent the indistinct vowel in unaccented syllables, is indicated in Turkish spelling of English words with the letter "a."

Dialect differences in Turkish pronunciation were not considered in the new spelling scheme, and word origins were disregarded. Homophones, words with different spellings that are pronounced the same -- sew-sow, read-reed, pear-pair-pare, are not differentiated in Turkish. The meanings of these words can only be inferred from the sentence context.

The convenience of a consistent orthography can be observed in the ease with which school beginners learn to read and spell, providing they can speak the language clearly when they enter school. They experience little difficulty in learning to recognize printed words that are already in their oral vocabulary. Separate phonics and spelling drills are unnecessary. The letter-sounds are learned in pronouncing printed words. The ABC's are learned in parallel writing lessons employing words of the reading lesson. The modern manuscript (print) style handwriting taught to beginners facilitates this learning activity. Children who attend school regularly from age seven catch on to the reading technique within a few months. By midyear the more mature children help themselves to bright little picture-story books the teacher places on the table and they read independently. After 3 or 4 years typical pupils, even those from laboring class families, are accomplished readers.

Boys of 9 read the sports section of the newspaper to younger children. Girls become absorbed in stories related to their interests. Children's libraries are located in all quarters of the larger cities. Adults who have learned both the new and old spelling systems note the distinct advantages of the alphabe for promoting literacy.

Gains in Literacy with the Adoption of the New Alphabe
Following the official adoption of the new Turkish Alphabe and orthography, children and illiterates learned only the new system. Annual statistics showed large gains in literacy. Whereas, up to 1928, only about 9% of the total population were literate, far more men than women, by 1935, the over-all literacy rate was 20%, males 30%, females 10%. By 1940, literacy thruout the country was 22%; by 1960, 59% (women 43%, men 75%). These figures may not seem high compared with Western literacy rates, but the large gains with modernization are directly attributable to Turkish spelling reform.

One might ask, if the new Alphabe was such a boon to literacy, why are the figures not much higher compared with those of better developed nations? It is because there is so much more to achieving universal literacy than the character of the alphabet. Turkish data prove that literacy rates are directly proportional to primary school attendance of children ages 7 to 12. Even today, not over 60% of Turkish children in this age range attend school for as long as 4 or 5 years. Schools are still lacking in sparsely settled rural and mountinous regions. The long prevailing attitude that girls have less need for formal schooling than boys persist thruout the Moslem world. The greater proportion of illiterates among women than men reflects the disproportion of the sexes involved in primary schools. In the cities, schooling is free and available to all, but school attendance is not enforced. Poorer class, uneducated parents depend upon children's earnings to help support the family.

Persistence of Arabic in the Turkish language
The drive to eliminate Arabic words from the Turkish language was only partly successful. An inspection of a Turkish dictionary published in 1959 indicates that a number of words in common use are the same in Turkish and Arabic, or very similar in pronunciation and meaning. Among these are:

han-inn	çanta-hand bag	kervan-caravan
haman-bath	çami-mosque	kandil-small lamp
kitab-book	sabun-soap	inşallah-a greeting
çay-tea	Nisan-April	imam-religious leader
kaftan-cloak	çorba-soup	muezzin-who chants to
çuma-Friday	şehir-city	Call to Prayer
kahve-coffee	şark-East	araba-carriage

Greek-derived words that are the same in both Turkish and Arabic include: law (cannon), horizon, music, lantern.

The graceful Arabic calligraphy persist today thruout Turkey in imperishable tiles and mosaics on the walls of mosques, tombs, shrines, fountains, in commerative tablets; engraved on silver, glass, pottery; in priceless collections of the Koran, and in gloriously beautiful rugs and tapestries.

Implications of Turkish spelling reform for the English language in print

What can be learned from the history of Turkish spelling reform that is applicable to modernizing English spelling? The English-speaking world already has a Roman alphabet with a number of discrete, clear-cut letters to represent the sounds of the language even tho the matching of characters to sounds is far from perfect. And unlike the situation in the new Turkish Republic, there is no political crisis that demands a radical shift to an entirely new alphabet and spelling system, with new typewriters, printer's type, textbooks, change in the direction of writing from right-to-left to the opposite.

The most impressive implication of Turkish spelling reform is the convenience and efficiency of a highly regular system of matching sounds in words to the letters on a one-to-one basis. English as spelled today, is about half and half phonetic and morphemic. The matching of letters to sounds on a one-sound-one symbol basis is negligible. There is no question that much learning time could be saved with a rational spelling of English. Hours of time now spent by schoolchildren on phonics, spelling rules, and tedious repetitive learning could be released for more enriching learning experiences.

Another lesson to be learned from the Turkish experience is that strong leadership in the central government seems essential for national spelling reform. Insuring the "Right to Learn" for every educable citizen, improvement of literacy rates, are important goals, but they require strong support from the government.

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7. Adventures with the Turkish Alfabe,
by Gertrude Hildreth, Ph.D.*

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A pleasant surprize on my arrival in Turkey for a year's stay in the fall of 1959, was to find the Turkish language spelled phonetically with our familiar ABC's. Within a short while I was able to read and write a few words, especially those most frequently seen or used: *telefon, polis, otobüs, restoran*. My <u>adres</u> was the <u>Teras Otel</u> - (the terrace was on the roof in the new style). Fortunately, there was a *kwafür* "just across the <u>sose</u> (avenue), so that getting a shampoo was not difficult (just say these words in French), and - below - was a convenient <u>terzi</u> (tailor shop); but the <u>eczane</u> (drug store) was further down the *stet* (street). These words illustrate the simplified spelling of the loan words and others - with a phonetically regular system which is found consistently throughout the Turkish vocabulary.

The old Turkish system of writing and printing up until 1928 was in Arabic with its 612 script-like symbols. At that time Turkey had a literacy of only 9% of the population. In 1940, after only 8 years of the new phonetic alphabet, the literacy had been raised to 22%. (There was a transition period of 3yr 4mths). Today, it is nearer 60%.

The modern Turkish *alfabe* (alphabet) consists of 29 symbols - the Latin ABC's with "*q*" and "*x*" omitted, the addition of an undotted i (ı) and diacritical marks for other letters to provide for the entire array of sounds, using one symbol for each sound almost exclusively. Since "c" is not needed for either "soft" or "hard c", as in "city" and "can", this letter has been assigned to the sound of "j" as in "jail". The letter "j" was assigned in the French manner to the sound of "zh" as in *measure*. The *sh* and *ch* phonograms are represented by "*s*" and "*c*" with cedilla (ş, ç)There are also a "u" and an "o" with dieresis (ü, ö) for the sounds in the French words "*jus*" and "*oeuf*".

There was time, before my *universite* classes began, to visit beginning classes in the public schools, where I had an opportunity to see the ease with which 7-year-old beginners learned to read, write and spell their mother tongue with this simplified spelling system.

Each child was supplied with an *Alfabe*, a small ABC book and primer of some 60 pages, a bag of hard white beans, a note book, pencils and crayons. With this equipment, costing about 30¢, most of the youngsters made rapid progress. Learning the sounds of all the letters in all positions in the words of a common oral vocabulary was a simple process of conditioned learning. The beans are used for forming words and short sentences copied from the board, a card, or book, preliminary to writing.

By mid-year, when I made return visits, the more mature children were making independent use of a flock of easy little story books the teacher had piled on each table. They tackled the new words by sounding right through them. Occasionally, a pupil might stumble on a letter, but usually pupils had no difficulty with words they could pronounce and of which they knew the meaning. To guard against mere word calling and to insure meaningful reading in early practice, the children's comprehension was checked through oral questions on the story and by comprehension exercises of many types.

How about the turkish children's reading vocabulary? Altho Turkish children, after a year in school, can sound out just about any Turkish word, long or short, if they have been properly instructed (as in any good school), they cannot be expected to have a large "word bank" of words easily recognized at sight, because this is a process of growth and development of linguistic experience, and long continued reading practice. In these early years the reading vocabulary cannot run very much ahead of the child's oral spoken vocabulary - the words they use and understand that relate to everyday experience. The great advantage of the phonetic alphabet for the Turkish children is that they can so readily help themselves with new or forgotten words without having to wait for the teacher to tell them the words.

Attractive little picture-story books published under the supervision of the Ministry of Education are to be had for a few cents each in any corner shop where the children run in to make their selections, much as ours do for comic books. A frequent sight is a young school boy standing in the street eagerly scanning the news sheet for sports news, the outcome of the latest *futbol maç*. There are excellent well-patronized libraries exclusively for children in convenient locations.

One day I visited a *Kiz Okul* - girl's high school (the Turkish word for school, less commonly used, is *mektep*), where I observed a class studying *Inglizce*. Later on, I was invited to visit a *Lise*, and a *Kolej*. During vacation, I made a trip to Ankara, taking the *tren* from the *istasyon* across the "*Bosfor*".

These experiences set me to thinking more seriously than before about the advantages of simplified, consistently phonetic spelling for any language. If it can be done for Turkish, Dutch, Spanish, Russian, Yiddish, why not also for English? News of the George Bernard Shaw new alphabet contest appearing in the newspapers at about that time, also stimulated my thinking about a new English alphabet. One evening, after *şiş*, *kebap* and *pilav* at the neighboring *lokanta*, by starting with our present ABC system as a basis, and borrowing some ideas from the Turkish alphabet and inventing several new symbols to relieve our confused vowel system, I devised a new phonetic alphabet to correct the faults of our present system.

It should be noted that certain criteria must be observed in devising a new alphabet:
1. The new alphabet must faithfully represent all the basic sounds of English speech, with a minimum number of symbols.
2. The letter-sound relationship must be consistent, with each sound invariably represented by one and only one symbol.
3. The new alphabet should be compatible in style and appearance with the old so far as possible, to permit easy translation from the old to new style print and vice versa.
4. The capital letters should in all cases be identical with lower case except for enlargement of size. This saves the need to learn two letter styles for the same alphabet.
5. The symbol system should have maximum simplicity; letters that are clear and distinctive, not easily confused with each other, for ease of legibility.
6. The new letter styles should be equally convenient for writing. It should be possible for all letters to be written in a plain style with only natural joinings, in contrast to our present cursive script writing which employs letter styles quite different from plain printed forms.

A system modeled on this simplified plan would save time and space, and be much easier for school beginners, adult illiterates and foreigners to learn. It would also speed the day when talk, clearly enunciated, could be electronically recorded and reproduced in readable form, without the intermediate step of written dictation. The production of a simplified English spelling system is a project worthy of thorough going scientific research.

8. Language Reform in the Netherlands,
by Helen Bonnema

The Rotterdam newspaper, *Handelsblad*, 18 April, 1972 issue, reported on a public opinion survey concerning spelling reform. 65% of the men and women responding favor further spelling reform, particularly of verb forms. It was found that more men than women desire simplifications. Men from ages 24 to middle age were more accepting of it than older ones. The group most opposed to change was the 15 to 24-year olds.

In Brussels, Belgium, where Flemish is used (a language differing from Dutch no more than American from British English), 83% of the people are against much change in spelling. Their objection is that their authors are not good in revised Dutch forms and will write in the English language instead. However the Belgians would accept anything adopted by Netherlands in order to retain uniformity with their northern neighbours.

The Dutch Society of Translators is opposed to any further changes, and states that the government has been too drastic on previous occasions in going far beyond their original goals, and has made revisions which detract from clear meaning.

Throughout the news article, the "previous changes" mentioned are those which have now been adopted by people in general, and were incorporated in *De Nieuwe* (new) *Spelling*, which has for over 20 years been the official orthography of Netherlands and Belgium. It had been used side by sided with the older or previously official orthography for over a half-century before its adoption by the government on 14 February, 1947. Its changes consisted mainly of the omission of superflous vowels and consonants and of flectional endings which had long ceased to be pronounced. In 1954, the Dutch and Belgium governments issued a publication entitled *Woordenlijst van de Nederlandse* which introduced further changes, chiefly in the spelling of "foreign" or loan words and became the official dictionary after 1955.

Continued simplifications are being made. The above-mentioned newspaper survey concerns current proposals. Such considerations have been a perennial concern of the Dutch for the past century.

In 1875, De Vries and Te Winkel demonstrated the vexations of spelling, and they tried to make matters easier for writers of their language by stating a number of rules.

For example:
If the long /i/ sound is heard in a word which is derived from one spelled with a /i/ in French, it is spelled with /ij/, but if from one spelled with /ee/ in French, it is written /ei/.

    French *carvi* becomes /karwij/ (caraway seed)
    French *carvée* becomes /karwei/ (work, task)
Both Dutch words are pronounced identically.

De Vries and Te Winkel's rules also included those for pairs of words which are identical in pronunciation except for the initial consonant:

    ruischen (spelled /sch/ vs. bruisen (spelled with /s/)
    rauschen (spelled /sch/ vs. brausen (spelled with /s/)

A young child could not spell correctly by hearing the sound of these and similar words. He had to know how each was spelled in Old French, or in Old German from which it was taken!

De Vries and Te Winkel wrote 25 rules for just the /o/ vs. /oo/ and /e/ vs. /ee/ spellings.

They also showed the difficulty arising from the fact that a different definite article *de, des, den,* or *der* was used before nouns of different gender. Yet the gender could not be determined by commonsense:

    a woman's coat was masculine
    a man's jacket was feminine
    a woman's coat was masculine
    a man's pants was feminine

During the 70 years between 1865 and 1935, numerous proposals were made for improving the situation. The most influential person was Dr. R. A. Kollewyn who in 1899 founded the "Vereneging tot vereenvoudeging van onze spelling" - Society for Simplifying Spelling. His suggested improvements were not accepted by the government at that time. In 1934, by royal decree, a compromise between Kollewyn's proposals and De Vries-Te Winkel's models was authorized for use in connection with specified examinations. The instructions included this note:
"There is no intention yet on the part of the Dutch authorities to apply the terms of the Decree to general use." It was accepted in July 1936 by the Minister of Education. Further improvements were made and adopted in 1946 in Belgium, and on Feb. 14, 1947 in Netherlands, as mentioned earlier herein. The understanding was that geographical names and other changes would be added later. Apparently the "other changes" are the subject of debate now in 1972.

Similarities between Dutch and English
The Dutch language might be called a halfway house between German and English. It is less conservative than its neighbor on the east, and less radical than its neighbor across the North Sea. Its treatment of the ancient grammatical genders exemplifies that middle position. German has preserved the three genders intact, English has effaced the distinction altogether, and Dutch has retained only two.

One of the relationships with English is obvious in the consonants:

Dutch	*English*
bloed, doen	blood, do
gras, hand	grass, hand
jaar, kan	year, can
lip, man	lip, man
naam, plug	named, plug
recht, tong, winter	right, tongue, winter

The former /f/ and /s/ are now /v/ and /z/

vinger	finger
zingen	sing

The former /th/ and /d/ have coalesced as /d/

dief	thief
diep	deep

/al/, /ol/ before /d/, /t/ have changed to /ou/

koud	cold
bout	bold

/ft/ has changed to /cht/

zacht	soft

Dutch words given to English include: *easel, landscape, etch, boss, cookie, Santa Claus, snoop, wafle,* and *Yankee.*

Reform in other Dutch Speaking Nations

In his book *The Dutch*, Adrian Barnouw now makes the following comments about spelling reform: "The problem is aggravated by the lack of uniformity in spoken Dutch. Within the borders of Queen Wilhelmena's kingdom there is a recognized standard language which, thanks to the schools, is more or less known and accepted by all her subjects. But the Dutch language covers a larger territory than Her Majesty's realm. The northern half of Belgium is also a Dutch-speaking area. Belgium Dutch, called Flemish, is a patchwork quilt of local idioms, many of which have preserved the inflected article and other archaic traits such as have not survived in Holland Dutch. The educated Flemings are doing their best to adopt standard Dutch as their model, but find it hard to reconcile themselves to the new orthography, as it bears less resemblance to their local speech than did the old. They are anxious to promote a cultural *rapprochment* of Flemish Belgium to Holland, and they regret the official adoption of an orthography that tends to emphasize the difference between Belgium and Holland Dutch.

The Dutch people in South Africa, on the other hand, have no cause for sharing the Fleming's objections. Their language is a radically simplified form of Dutch, and its speakers find it easier to read the Holland Dutch in the reformed than in the archaic spelling.

Contrasts Between the Achievement of Spelling Reform for Dutch and English

To Americans and Britishers, even the faulty Dutch spelling of the century ago seems regular when compared with English. They marvel that Hollanders have succeeded in improving an already fairly logical orthography. Yet it may be that reform is easier where changes required are not as drastic as those needed in English.

Perhaps the compactness of the country should also be taken into consideration. Reformists need persuade a much smaller number of people living in a more compact land area. The area of Netherlands, 12,978 miles, is comparable to that of Maryland, which ranks 42nd in size among our 50 states. The population of continental Netherlands is 12,220,000, which is comparable to that of Pennsylvania, ranking 3rd among the other states.

If each of our states had its own distinctive language, it may be that its governor would have an easier task of achieving spelling reform than would the president of our whole country.

The enormity of our task certainly is greater, yet we can hope for the day in which we can match our record with that of the Dutch.

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9. The Historic Portuguese Spelling Reform, by Robert Mayhew*

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Most English-speaking people are only dimly aware of the growing importance of the Portuguese language, mother tongue to nearly 100 million people, and the official language of Portugal, Brazil, Angola, Mozambique, Portuguese Guinea, and several smaller geographic entities; these latter being the remnants of the once far-flung Portuguese empire. Owing to the Brazilian population explosion and other factors, Portuguese is surely destined to grow in importance, outstripping such languages as French and German in number of native speakers.

Inasmuch as Portuguese, like English, is a language spoken in more than one country, its ongoing spelling reform should be of interest to those who see the need for similar reform in the English language. In particular, the Portuguese experience should prove to skeptics that spelling reform is both possible and desirable.

The Portuguese language is divided into two main dialects: Brazilian Portuguese and Continental Portuguese. The orthographic differences between the two dialects are negligible. The simplified spelling now prevailing thruout the Portuguese-speaking world is the happy result of a series of agreements and disagreements reaching as far back as 1911.

Before the reform began, Portuguese spelling was burdened with incredible difficulties and incongruities. Tho not as irregular as English spelling, it was worse in one respect, namely that meny words were not orthographically standardized. There was much disagreement over how words should be spelled, with the result that virtually everyone spelled poorly. The most common spelling was based on etymology, but etymology was often disregarded, and numerous analogical errors had crept into the spelling, including an almost chaotic doubling of consonants without rhyme or reason.

The following are the principal reforms that have been implemented thus far in Brazilian Portuguese:

I. Single letters:
    H between two vowels disappears, e.g. *comprehender* becomes *compreender*.
    K becomes QU, e.g. *kioske* becomes *quiosque*.
    Y becomes I, e.g. *rhythmo* becomes *ritmo*.
    Z becomes S at the end of some words, e.g. *atraz* becomes *atrás*.
II. Digraphs with H:
    CH (= K) becomes QU, e.g. *monarchia* becomes *monarquia*.
    PH becomes F, e.g. *philosophia* becomes *filosofia*.
    RH is now R, e.g. *rhythmo* is now *ritmo,* as sed above*.
    TH is now T, e.g. *theatro* is now *teatro*.
III. Consonants groups:
    CC is now C, e.g. *direcção* is now *direcão*.
    CT is now T, e.g. *actual* is now *atual*.
    GM is now M, e.g. *augmentar* is now *aumentar*.

MPT is now NT, *assumpto* is now *assunto*.
PT is now T, e.g. *adoptar* is now *adotar*.
MN is now N, e.g. *somno* is now *sono*.
NCT is now NT, e.g. *instincto* is now *instinto*.
SC is now C, e.g. *sciencia* is now *ciência*.
S after a prefix ending in a vowel becomes SS, e.g. *proseguir* becomes *prosseguir*.
IV. Double consonants:
BB becomes B, e.g. *abbade* becomes *abade*.
Likewise CC, DD, FF, GG, LL, MM, NN, PP, and TT are all reduced to single letters. Hence *bocca, addido, effeito, aggravo, cavallo, commun, anno, apprender, attentar* and all other such words are now spelled with single consonants.

Because of generally more conservative pronunciation in Continental Portuguese, it retains a few of the consonant clusters that have been simplified in Brazil. Thus we have Brazilian *inseto, fato, colecionar, objeção, exeto*, but Continental *insecto, facto, coleccionar, objecçao, excepçao, excepto.* Otherwise Continental Portuguese has to all intents and purposes the same spelling as Brazilian Portuguese.

In 1973 another important step forward was taken when a much-needed simplification of the written accents was put thru by governmental decree.

One result of this orthographic progress is that written Portuguese now bears a striking resemblance to Spanish, even tho the phonetic systems of the two languages are quite different, that of Portuguese being much more complex.

The man who initiated this great reform was the Portuguese philologist Gonçalves Viana, whose work began with his *Bases da Ortografia Portugueza* in 1885, and was crowned by the adoption of the *nova orthografia* in Portugal in 1911. Four months after the overthrow of the monarchy in 1911, a ministerial decree set up a commission whose purpose was to simplify the regular Portuguese orthography. The findings of that commission formed the basis of the reformed spelling, which with only minor alterations has been in official use in Portugal since 1911. Tho the question of a simplified spelling had for decades occupied the attention of publicists and philologists, it was not until the advent of the republic, with its clean sweep of monarchial anachronisms, that the reform became possible in official circles.

In 1931, 20 years later, the next great milestone of the reform was reached when the Brazilian Academy of Letters and the Portuguese Academy of Sciences jointly issued their *Bases para um Acôrdo Ortografico Luso-Brazileiro.* However these Bases, owing to their ambiguity and the failure of the two governments to fully endorse them, did not in themselves bring about complete uniformity in orthographic precept or practice, tho they did result in remarkable progress towards that end in the ensuing decade.

The Portuguese government had amended the *nova ortografia* in 1920, and instead of formally approving the *Bases*, simply issued (in 1931) another slight amendment to the *nova ortografia.* In this second amendment, certain of the clauses of the *Bases* were approved with altered wording. The Brazilian government approved the *Bases* in a general way in June, 1931. This decree was implemented by an interpretation set forth in a *Formulário Ortografico* published in July, 1931, and most of the terms were in turn approved by decree in 1938.

The reforms of the *Bases* were made compulsory in all Brazilian schools in 1933 by order of President Vargas, and in effect became the official government-endorsed spelling. However the reformed spelling met with considerable opposition in Brazil during the 1930s. Meny people

refused to go along out of sheer inertia: they were agenst eny change simply because they were more accustomed to the old spelling. The few Hispanophobes complained that the new spelling made Portuguese look too much like Spanish. Some Brazilians based their opposition on misguided patriotism, going so far as to maintain that Brazilians did not speak Portuguese, but a separate and distinct Romance language. Thus the *Cámara Municipal do Distrito Federal* stipulated in 1935 that textbooks used in the *Distrito Federal* for the teaching of the national language should refer to the language as Brazilian and not as Portuguese. In 1934 the Brazilian Constituent Assembly managed to get a clause inserted in the Constitution of that year to the effect that Brazilian spelling must be that of the 1891 Constitution, which would have ment a return to the anarchy of the old spelling. Orthographic reform had become something of a political football, but President Vargas stedfastly favored reform, and one year after his 1937 coup d'etat, he once more determined that Brazilian orthography should be that of the 1931 Accord, albeit with a few changes, particularly in regard to the written accents.

General international accord was finally reached in 1943 with the promulgation of the historic Orthographic Agreement (*Convençâo Ortográfica*). It was signed by the representatives of Portugal and Brazil in December, 1943 and reads in English translation as follows:

His Excellency, the President of the Portuguese Republic and His Excellency, the President of the United States of Brazil, being desirous of ensuring the defense, expansion and prestige of the Portuguese language thruout the world and of regulating the system of orthography by mutual agreement in a stable manner, have decided through the intermediary of their plenipotentiaries, to sign the present Agreement.

Article 1. The High Contracting Parties pledge close collaboration with each other in everything which may have to do with the maintenance, defense and expansion of the Portuguese language, which is common to both countries.

Article 2. The High Contracting Parties undertake to establish as the orthographic system of the Portuguese language the principles laid down in the system agreed on by the Academy of Sciences of Lisbon and by the Brazilian Academy of Letters for the organisation of the vocabulary accepted by the two Academies.

Article 3. In harmony with the spirit of that agreement no legislative measures or regulations governing orthographic subjects may in future be put in force by either of the two governments without the previous agreement of the other, after the two Academies have been consulted.

Article 4. The Academy of Sciences of Lisbon and the Brazilian Academy of Letters are hereby declared to be the advisory organs of their governments in orthographic matters, and they are expressly charged with studying the questions that may arise in the execution of the present Agreement and with everything that they may deem useful in maintaining of the orthographic unity of the Portuguese language.

The present Agreement shall come into force, independently of its ratification, on January 1, 1944.

Thus after more than a decade of trial and error, in the course of which the opponents of the new spelling were either won over or simply decided to give in to the inevitable, the above Agreement was signed and implemented.

The current Portuguese spelling is a vast improvement over what prevailed before, but it falls short of being thoroly regular or phonetic. As matters now stand, the spelling is really a compromise

between phonetic considerations and respect for etymology and tradition. Much remains to be done before the spelling can be sed to approach the phonetic ideal. There are still hundreds of words with the silent H, as in Spanish. The X is pronounced four different ways. The ZH sound is shown two ways; the Z sound is often shown by S (the reform produced *realizar*, *batizar*, etc. but *analisar* is so spelled for etymological reasons); and the unvoiced S is shown variously by S, Ç, X, and SS. There are still some curious exceptions to the rules which have been left intact.

It is safe to predict, however, that there will be further changes. That the matter is by no means a closed chapter is proved by the afore-sed simplification of the system of diacritics, decreed in 1973. There are those who advocate further beneficial changes, such as the wholesale use of J for the ZH sound, still shown by G in meny words.

Meanwhile, none of the horrible things feared by the opponents of spelling reform has come to pass. The reform has not caused orthographic chaos; it has ushered in a more orderly spelling. The reform has not isolated eny Portuguese-speaking country from eny other. There has been no great problem or expense involved in the reprinting of books, no severing of cultural ties with the past. The present consensus is that the reform has been greatly beneficial from all points of view. Modern-day Portuguese speakers find it hard to understand why there should have been opposition to such an obvious boom.

Present-day dictionaries give the old spellings short shrift: the message is clear that the old forms are superseded and obsolete.

The reform has undoubtedly been made easier by the fact that such simplifications as PH to F, TH to T, and Y to I had alredy taken place in Spanish, the great sister language of Portuguese, and were standard in Italian as well. So hundreds of simplified forms like *filosofia, ritmo*, and *teatro* did not look terribly unfamiliar to literate Portuguese and Brazilians.

It should be noted that the reform started in one country with no prior international agreement. The international agreement came *after* the *nova ortografia* was alredy well-established in the country where it was first adopted. This fact is probably relevant to the problem of how best to approach the question of spelling reform in English. Certainly it shows there is no point in waiting for international agreement before starting the reform. Such prior agreement may be impossible to achieve!

The reader has perhaps been struck by the important, perhaps decisive role played by the two prestigious *Academias* and by the governments involved. Needless to say, the English-speaking world has no comparable bodies of similar prestige or such authoritarian governments whose word is virtually law even in matters orthographic, so our approach to spelling reform will most likely have to be somewhat different.

However the Portuguese-Brazilian experience proves that spelling reform is not a trivial issue as claimed by its detractors. On the contrary, the Portuguese reform occupied the attention of the highest echelons of government, even the heds of state, and has been taken with the utmost seriousness by linguists, writers and other intellectuals in whose hands lies the responsibility of cultural continuity and advancement.