

# Indian Opinion

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## NOTES AND NEWS

**W**E extend to Mr. Ismail Gorah of the firm of Messrs. B. Ebrahim Ismail & Co. a hearty welcome back to South Africa after an absence of many years in India. Mr. Gorah during the years he was in Durban, it will be remembered, was one who took a great interest in our communal affairs.

Recently the Indian employees of the Durban Corporation in deputation submitted a number of grievances to the Town Council. Among other things they complained of the inferiority of the flour supplied to them as rations, and in this connection the *Natal Advertiser* publishes the following interesting information:—

At the latter end of July last the Council, it seems, accepted a tender for the supply of second grade flour at 34s. 10½d. per 98 lb. bag, and despite the fact that the market was then at its highest mark, it was agreed to take 6,000 bags. This flour has been refused by the Indians as rations, and at the request of Councillor Davis, a sample was submitted to the Borough Analysts, Messrs. Puntan and Kloot for examination. Their report has now been received and reads as follows:—

“London Chambers, Durban, Natal, 7th Dec. 1920.  
Dr. Murison, Medical Officer of Health, Durban Corporation.

Report on one sample “flour” received 4th Dec. 1920, from yourself, per Mr. Moning, and marked envelope: From M.O.H. sample of flour received from Town Clerk, 1.12.20, for analysis.”

The covering envelope contained an open envelope containing the sample. This envelope was addressed “Town Clerk, Municipal Buildings, Durban.”

The sample gives the following partial analysis:—  
Moisture, 8.78 per cent.; ash, 1.38 per cent.; acidity, (as H.S.O.), 0.186 per cent.; Alum, nil; Nitrates, nil.  
The sample is in good condition.

Microscopical examination reveals the presence of a considerable amount of maize. In my opinion this approximates to 20 per cent.

It is the presence of this adulteration which causes difficulty in obtaining Chupattis of good consistency.”  
(Sgd.) Alfred Kloot.

At a special meeting of the Town Council held on the 15th inst., in reply to the question of Councillor Mr. Davis if any action had been taken against the Natal Mill Elevator Company in respect of the report that 20 per cent of meal/meal had been discovered in the flour supplied, Dr. Francois, the chairman of the Finance Committee of the Town Council of Durban said that while no action had been taken by the Committee, payment had been withheld pending a further report by the analysts.

The *Natal Advertiser's* correspondent cables from London, Dec. 13 that the friction between the United States and Japan is growing more intense with the passing of time. The latest dispute between the two countries has regard to the control of the German cable system in the Pacific, including the important central station on the Island of Yap, from which the

cables radiate to Celebes, Shanghai and Hawaii linking up at those places with the general system of Pacific cables. Meanwhile, with the Peace Treaty unratified by the United States, it is considered probable that the new Administration at Washington may re-open the Japanese claim to the Carolines and Marshall islands, alleging that they are fortifications, which, however, Japan denies. The real issue in this dispute is the question of the naval supremacy in the Pacific.

It is most significant (says the same cable) that at the Assembly of the League of Nations at Geneva Viscount Ishii, the head of the Japanese delegation, protested against the proposal in favour of a general disarmament on the ground that “there were certain nations not members of the League who are not bound by its decisions.” It is manifest that he was thinking of the United States, though careful not to mention any nation by name. Meanwhile the old problem of the Japanese immigration into California has again cropped up in an acute form by the announcement of the intention of the Government of California to enforce the embargo of the Legislature of that State against the Japanese ownership of land. The position is obviously fraught with grave possibilities, and in diplomatic circles the outlook is regarded with considerable misgiving.

A change in the treatment of Indians and other coloured passengers for the worse on the platforms of Durban synchronises with the coming of the Assistant General Manager of Railways from Bloemfontein who is now at the head of affairs in Durban. The innovation is the separation of Indians and Natives from the Europeans at the entrance to the platforms in Durban. A long table has been placed in the centre of the entrance and a number of railway officials, for instance, on the arrival of a train busy themselves in the midst of the passengers in throwing themselves in the way of Indians and Natives so that in effect they are driven to one of the entrances leaving the other to the Europeans. The sight that suggests itself is that of a great number of sheep and goats with a few herd boys among them trying to separate the sheep from the goats. This latest form of interference with Indians, humiliating as it is, has the community into a state of consternation, and it is for it now to ask General Smuts to make good his promise of sympathetic administration.

Reuter's message, London, Dec. 12 (delayed), conveys the information that the non-co-operation movement in India has assumed the form of intimidation in Lahore, where wild scenes occurred during the elections to the reformed Councils. Members of Mr. Gandhi's non-co-operation party assembled at the polling stations and roughly handled the voters and assaulted several candidates and numbers consequently were afraid to vote. The crowd stormed an Indian honorary magistrate's residence, whose son fired three shots from the house, wounding three boys. The crowd tried to rush the house, but the police dispersed it. The Seditious Meetings Act framed in order to

prevent violent and inflammatory speeches has been passed. The Indian volunteer bands which have been interfering with the voters and are trying to secure a boycott of their political opponents, have been declared unlawful.

Reuter's Special Service from London dated 9th December conveys the interesting information that with regard to the possibility of a modification of the Turkish Treaty, at a joint meeting of the Financial and Foreign Affairs Committees of the French Chamber, M. Leygues (Premier) is reported to have declared in favour of such a modification so as to make a peace which will not clash with Moslem susceptibilities. For example, if it is necessary to return Smyrna to Turkey under safeguards for the protection of minorities, M. Leygues expressed the conviction that a complete agreement between Britain and France on the Turkish question will shortly be reached on the basis of the modification of the Treaty.

The Statistics issued by the Public Health Department in Durban on the 15th inst. shews that the epidemic of influenza is abating. There were altogether 104 cases under treatment on that date in the hospitals, of which barely a dozen are Indians.

The news of the departure of the Revd. Mr. & Mrs. Bone owing to the ill health of the reverend gentleman from Durban will be received with regret by the Indian community in which both are held in very high esteem. Mr. Bone apart from his Mission work has been a great service to the Indian community especially in the founding with Miss Cole of St. Aidan's Hospital, on the flood relief committee and in connection with the work of the V.A.I.B.C. comforts Committee. He was also engaged in the educational work carried on at St. Aidan's College at Sydenham of which he was the Principal. Mrs. Bone has also been happy in these activities of Mr. Bone and was herself at the head of the Ladies Committee of the Comforts organisation. Mr. Bone leaves Durban to join the teaching staff of Rodebosch College at the Cape. Durban's loss will be Rodebosch's gain. We wish him a speedy recovery.

#### INDIAN MEDICAL FEES

THE Privy Council has found against Mr. Govindasamy on the appeal of the Trust Board on the principle of the payment of medical fees by employers of Indians introduced under the indentured Indian Immigration system and their descendants. The Privy Council has indicated the remedial measure we may seek for the repeal of a law which certainly does not fit the circumstances in which Indians live and work and as the indentured system has ceased and as the descendants of these immigrant Indians are generally speaking well able to look after themselves and will not submit to treatment in any of the hospitals run by the Trust Board, forceable payment of the 9d tax will be vigorously resented. It will be within the memory of our readers that strong exception was taken by the community against use of these hospitals in Durban being set aside for Indians and to the treatment of any Indians in it by the Durban Municipality owing to the unsatisfactory conditions prevailing in it for dealing with influenza cases during the epidemic. The hospital was considered by the members of the Indian Committee that then visited it as not fit or suitable for Indian patients who were accustomed to better conditions and even for those serving under indenture. Apart from the consideration of the suitability or otherwise of these, on principle Indians who have never known these institutions other than as hospitals for those who were actually under terms of

indenture can hardly be expected to accept quietly the position that has arisen upon the decision of the Privy Council. We are at a loss to understand the determination of the Trust Board in pursuing the matter as far as the Privy Council and we do not wish to associate ourselves with the thought that the quest was for a creation of work in place of the loss of that consequent upon the stoppage of Indian indentured immigration in order that the Trust Board may have cause to exist and we think that the Trust Board as it becomes in due course a Government institution will not seriously take itself to the decision of the Privy Council but would consider the conversion of these hospitals into institutions independent of any of its Indian Departments in regard to which conditions more or less on the lines of that obtaining at the Addington Hospital should prevail in respect of admissions thereto. In any case the laws which were passed to meet the conditions while the indentured immigration system was in operation has largely ceased to exist and the whole of the Indian Immigration Laws should be repealed and the Indians brought under the general laws of this Province and the Union. And this is a question that will be an irritant to the community until it is removed. Mr. Govindasamy is to be congratulated in defending the attacks of the Trust Board and even though the appeal went against him, he has indeed done a service to the community and in this regard his solicitor here, Mr. W. T. Clark, and the local Counsel Mr. J. H. Nicolson and the Counsel in London Mr. Upjohn K.C., and Mr. B. Dube with whom we must bracket our indefatigable Mr. H. S. L. Polak who acted as solicitor in the matter, have done all that was legally possible to defend the interests of our community. And now the future lies in the first instance in the hands of the community.

#### PANDIT MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA AND HINDUS AND KHILAFAT

So far as the Khilafat is concerned we used to hear that England regarded Turkey as a great friend. English statesmen used often to acknowledge the friendly services of Turkey in the past, and they were anxious to protect Turkey as long as there was a danger of invasion from Russia. Times changed, and policies changed, and then came the Balkan War, and after it came the Great European War. By stress of circumstances, into which it is unnecessary for me to enter, Turkey joined the War against the Allies. The Allies triumphed and the Allies have now to lay down the terms of the Turkish Treaty. If the Allies had only remembered the promises that they had made during the progress of the war, if the Allies had only acted up to the pledges which they had given to our Mussulman fellow subjects in India, who went to fight against Turkey on behalf of England, this question of the Khilafat would not have arisen to-day. But the question has been the creation of England; it is not of our creation. We Hindus feel, apart from any considerations of diplomacy, that the great fight which was fought for righteousness has ended in an unrighteous attitude on the part of England. We feel that instead of the victory proving the harbinger of a new era of freedom for small and great nations it has served to be a new instrument for enslaving other peoples on earth. That is the reason of the sympathy which, I believe, the Hindus generally, the Parsees generally, the Indian Christians generally feel with our Mahomedan fellow countrymen. It is the unrighteousness of the attitude adopted by England. We feel also that a great nation like the Mussulman nation, which has had a glorious past, ought not to be subjected to the position, reduced to the position to which they propose to reduce Turkey. For all these reasons, knowing that millions of our Mahomedan countrymen and our countrywomen are sore at heart

and feel deeply on this Turkish question, we are face to face with this situation that the feelings of the Indian Mussulmans have been outraged and they are undergoing mental pain, and that pain shall not end until some remedy has been found for it. That is one situation that has arisen.

### TREATING INDIANS AS CHILDREN

Following is a letter written by Mr. T. H. CAMPBELL HOWES, Managing Director, Tata Publicity Corporation, to the Editor of *The New Statesman* :—

Sir,—I have never seen a copy of the *Daily Herald*, so this letter is not written in defence of that newspaper. But as an Englishman who has lived in India for seventeen years, I should like to suggest that the order forbidding it to enter India is the fruit of mistaken policy. To begin with, educated Indian opinion will be irritated just at a moment when it is important to smooth it down. Educated Indians will ask what would happen if the Government of Canada, Australia, South Africa or New Zealand, were to ban the appearance in any of those countries of an English newspaper because of fear that it might spread Bolshevism or Socialism? There would be a movement of an angry protest. "We are not children," the people would say.

Next, is it not mistaken policy to attempt to smother any fire, however small, by throwing inflammable material on to it? Like the mothers who forbid their daughters to read certain novels, the Indian Government is simply stimulating curiosity and making many who would never have heard of the *Daily Herald* wish to see it just because it is forbidden. When the Government of India interned Mrs. Besant they secured for her such prominence that she gained in a short time four times as many supporters as she would have attracted if she had been left alone.

Bolshevist propaganda is entering India by underground means. The best way to counter it is to discuss its arguments openly and show how fallacious they are, not to be afraid of them and lend colour to them by arbitrary action. What in my opinion does more harm, however, to our cause among the Indian peoples is the reactionary attitude of the Anglo-Indian Press. If the Government wish to calm public opinion they should make an effort to persuade these journals to desist from embittering the relationship between the races. Indians have lost faith in the honesty of their rulers, and if we wish to regain their confidence we should clean out our own stable first before barring the door to papers that in any case carry little weight.

### AN OPEN LETTER TO MR. GANDHI

By Miss Helena Normanton, ex-Editor of the paper *India*, published in London, and reproduced from *Young India* :—

Dear Mr. Gandhi,—As a convert from the polar opposite to non-co-operation, I venture to send you a few observations upon that policy, and do so in the form of an open letter to you, because it has been my high honour and serious responsibility until recently to edit *India* the official organ of the Indian National Congress. Hence it is possible that the reasons by which I have been led to your policy may have some little interest for believers in Indian Self-Government.

As late as December 1919 I was upon the whole a hesitating believer in Indian co-operation with the Government of India Act. Its grave inadequacy had been borne in upon me in the course of sedulous attendances at all the Joint Select Committee sessions and at the Debates in Commons and Lords, but it seemed to me that if India held aloof from it, her lack of enthusiasm might be construed by the world at large as an apathetic and oriental unfitness for democratic political life. When, however, the news of the Punjab Tragedy was released on December 13th last after

India could only co-operate with any dignity upon two conditions, viz :—

(1) That Britain should redeem her own honour and make amends by sternly proportioned measures of justice upon the Punjab offenders.

(2) That as an earnest of good will and appeasement towards afflicted Mahomedan India she should use her undoubted predominance in the Supreme Council to obtain as lenient terms as possible to vanquished Turkey. It was a special case for special treatment. It was the numerically greatest Mahomedan power dealing with the spiritually supreme one.

Neither of these two conditions has been observed. The Punjab arch-offenders have even been praised and their commander is still Secretary of State for India. Turkey has been harshly dealt with.

It has become therefore the duty of every loyal Indian to do whatever he can to prove that he will not in servility lick the hand that has lashed him. A zeal to work the reforms, which leave the Central Government untouched in its tyrannical powers immediately after the greatest demonstration of that tyranny, the express denial in Parliament of a Charter of Rights, and the degradation of the Khilafat, would be treachery to the very soul of India or of any nation fit for liberty. It is quite possible that India's non-co-operation will be misrepresented and misconstrued for a time, but that is a risk she must take. The penalty of political courage has ever been misconstruction.

I foreshadow, however, a graver risk than misconstruction and slander. It is that you will have followers who will cause confusion in the eyes of outside nations, by adopting the easy and less vital elements in your policy in order to camouflage their non-adoption of the one essential thing. *The crux of the whole matter is abstention from working the new Councils under the Government of India Act.* I write this in ignorance of any detailed knowledge of what part or parts of your policy the Special Congress has just adopted, but a child could have foreseen that the self seeking type of political climber would be willing enough for others to renounce their titles or refrain from entering the army or Police—he himself could easily enough renounce such a career—and would like well enough any sort of non-co-operation which did not interfere with his own personal advancement. If there be any such, these would be the ones who would sell the pass into the enemy's hands. Why? Because in political strategy one must always consider what the enemy desires and not do it; also what the enemy does not desire and do that. It is obvious that Britain's face would be saved by even half a dozen prominent Congressmen who would enter the Legislative Councils. I therefore earnestly hope that until the conditions noted above are fulfilled, no Indian worth the name will sell his country for a pin or two of power, that any who do so will not long retain the respect of the Congress, but will soon be as much a laughing-stock in India as in England. And I hope that political India will be alive to the danger of any policy whereby one province or constituency might co-operate whilst another might not. Such a course would merely prove India not to be a nation and would adorn the imperialistic motto "Divide et impera" with fresh possibilities. *(To be Continued.)*

\* A telegram from Geneva (according to Reuter from London dated 16th Dec.) states that at the meeting of the Armaments Sub Committee M. Ishii said that Japan objected to observing the conditions of disarmament proposed by the League of Nations while other big Powers outside the League would not observe them. He said that Japan would increase her armaments in accordance with the programme laid down next year, and probably the year after.