

Indian Opinion

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NOTES AND NEWS

MR. TIELMAN ROOS again thundered at the thirteenth Congress of the Nationalist Party of the Transvaal held in Pretoria. In the course of his speech Mr. Roos emphasised that the Nationalist Party should maintain its ideals. It was necessary for the people of the country to take a keen interest in politics. There was always hope for a nation which kept its interest in politics of the right sort. Politics meant work in the interests of the State. The interests of the State were the first. It was also necessary that they should hold their ideals high. The ideal which kept the Nationalist Party together, the ideal which was its very soul, was that of the independence of South Africa—its absolute independence! (Loud applause). That independence would come as the result of unanimity of all sections of the people of South Africa. A man was only a man when he was independent. (Applause.) That independence had nothing to do with secession. Secession was a word he rarely employed. Their eventual independence would come as a matter of agreement with all parties in South Africa and agreement with England. Sooner or later they would get independence by purely constitutional means. Independence to this country would mean much larger co-operation and friendship.

Independence is the ideal of the Nationalist Party says Mr. Roos. And yet Mr. Roos would deprive Indians and Natives of their God-given independence! "Do unto others as you would they do unto you." If only Mr. Roos would have that instilled into his brains?

Dr. Stals, M.L.A., representing the Cape Nationalist Party at the above Congress, is reported to have said, the Indian question was a national question, and the Cape would support the Minister through thick and thin.

The death of Mr. S. Govindasamy Naidoo removes a very old and prominent resident of Kimberley. The late Mr. Govindasamy came to South Africa in 1884. He lived on the Diamond Fields for forty years and won the respect of the European, coloured and native communities. In 1921 he retired from his business in Kimberley and Barkley West and two years later paid a visit to India. He leaves a widow, six sons and three daughters to mourn their loss to whom we extend our heartfelt sympathy.

Commenting on the resolution of the Indian Legislative Assembly permitting women to become members of the House the *Rand Daily Mail* writes as follows:—

Supporters of women's suffrage in South Africa will read with greatest interest the cablegram published in another page announcing that the Indian Legislative Assembly has agreed, with acclamation and without a division, to a resolution permitting women to become members of the House. From the political point of view, this indicates a very

striking and almost revolutionary advance, for India has long been regarded as one of the countries in which women have received least recognition—an attitude justified by the fact that they have themselves been content, until recent years, to remain obscurely in the background. Indeed, a hundred years have not elapsed since the practice *suttee* was discontinued. The purdah system, which is the antithesis of freedom, is still widely prevalent, although it is difficult to see how it can possibly survive so enlightened a step as that now taken by the Legislative Assembly. Important as the Assembly's resolution is in itself, as directly affecting the huge population of India, it is not less so a presage of changes in the social life of the people. Thus women have acquired a new status, and the effect of this momentous change, due, it can scarcely be doubted, to the influence of Western ideas, must naturally be felt in many directions throughout the "Great Dependency." Meanwhile, those South African women who have fought so long, and hitherto unsuccessfully, for political rights will be inclined to regard with envy the victory which has been gained in India. The decision of the Simla Legislature may, at any rate, be expected to give an impetus to the woman's movement here.

MR. READ'S ALLEGATIONS

SERIOUS allegations against coloured people residing in Madras Road have been made by one Mr. H. S. Read, who happens to reside in the vicinity, about their filthy habits, loose morals and disgusting actions. In the course of a letter to the Mayor and Councillors of Durban Mr. Read has alleged that this coloured quarter is "the nest of prostitutes, mostly black, who openly tout in the street at all times of the day and night among degraded white men, Indians and native ricksha boys." Mr. Read goes on further to say that "apart from the moral aspect, there is the health aspect to consider and the smell and flies that emanate from this festering sore in the summer are really terrible."

Madras Road is at the foot of what is known as the Berea and close by the race-course and is occupied by Indians, coloured people, and poorer class of Europeans.

Mr. Read is quite justified in making the above complaint and if the facts he has stated are true it certainly casts a bad

reflection on the Durban Town Council whose sanitary department, we are glad to say, has been fairly strict in enforcing the observance of sanitation. We are glad to note also that the Indian Ratepayers Association of the Ward in question has taken prompt steps to investigate the allegations made by Mr. Read and has offered to assist the Town Council in removing any menacing conditions that may be existing. That is a step in the right direction.

The investigation of the sub-committee appointed by the Association has made some interesting revelations. The sub-committee inspected some 31 Indian-owned houses. They found two doubtful cases of prostitution, and two of white men married to native women and living with them. "There were also five native house-boys living on their respective premises and one native single woman. All other residents were either Indians or coloured people of respectable character." A few premises were not in conformity with the sanitary laws of the borough but the sub-committee have impressed upon the owners the necessity of cleanliness and the dangers of over-crowding.

A *Natal Mercury* representative who also investigated Mr. Read's allegations one night found the locality to be practically deserted and as quiet as the proverbial graveyard, and did not notice any of the soliciting alleged in Mr. Read's letter. What, however, he did notice was that the street was filthy and the houses were eye-sores. Unpleasant smells pervaded the atmosphere which could not fail to be offensive to those acquainted with decent European standards of living. Another unpleasant feature of the locality the *Mercury* representative noticed was that several of the houses of the Corporation housing scheme directly overlook the backyards of the houses in Madras Road. A satisfactory result of these investigations is that Mr. Read's statements are not entirely true. If it is a question of only improving the sanitary conditions that can easily be done and the Council, we have no doubt, would have the whole-hearted co-operation of the Indian community in that matter. But if the very presence of the coloured people is obnoxious to the white residents then there is no remedy. We have had bitter experience of the methods adopted to hound out the Indians and let us hope that Mr. Read's letter is not another trick in that direction.

Another Trick to Hound Out Indians ?

Allegations Against Madras Road Coloured Location

The following appeared in the *Natal Advertiser* dated August 23 :—

Something is rotten in the state of the coloured location in the neighbourhood of Madras Road, if the complaint of a citizen resident in the vicinity is a fair statement of the conditions existing there.

This complaint is set out in a letter addressed by Mr. H. S. Read to the Mayor and City Councillors, which runs as follows :—

"As a resident in the near vicinity of the coloured location around Madras Road, I find it my duty to bring before you the disgusting conditions that exist in this quarter and the degrading influences the tenants of Municipal Housing Scheme No. 1 have to live and bring their children up under. The cosmopolitan collection of humanity of all races and colour that occupy hovels in this location are filthy in their habits, loose in their morals and disgusting in their actions, and I feel sure that you, as our city fathers, cannot be aware of the conditions that your housing scheme has forced us to live under. This quarter is the nest of prostitutes, mostly black, who openly tout in the street at all times of the day and night among degraded white men, Indians and native ricksha boys, and the drinking, fighting and filthy language we are treated to is becoming beyond endurance to respectable citizens.

Outbreak of Disease Feared

"I, together with many of my neighbours, have young children whom we are trying to bring up as good citizens, and I feel sure you will realise what an impossible task it is under these circumstances. Apart from the moral aspect, there is the health aspect to consider, and the smell and flies that emanate from this festering sore in the summer are really terrible. I am convinced that if no action is taken, then an outbreak of some disease is bound to take place before long.

"It seems hard to believe that such conditions have been allowed to exist, especially right at the entrance to one of Durban's beauty spots, the Botanic Gardens, and I appeal to you to take whatever action is within your power to afford us relief. I have been 20 years a citizen of this town and have to thank the Council for the opportunity to become the owner of my property at some future date, but I am afraid that if the existing conditions are allowed to continue I shall have to ask your permission to dispose of my interest in this property to some person whose nature is more in common with the life in coloured locations."

In a covering letter to the Town Clerk, Mr. Read adds :—

"It is with the greatest reluctance that I have taken this step, but the conditions existing cannot be tolerated any longer, and although the white residents have made various efforts to bring the state of affairs before the Council we have not been successful in obtaining any relief. I might say that the surrounding residents would have been quite prepared to sign a petition to the Council on this matter, but I have refrained from adopting this course, as I feel that this should not be necessary.

"I feel sure that the Council cannot be aware of the facts, and trust that my action will be the means of some action being taken."

The General Purposes Committee will have this emphatic indictment before them at this afternoon's meeting.

A Reply to the Indictment

The General Purposes Committee, after consideration of the matter, resolved that the complaint be referred to the Chief Constable for investigation.

In the meantime the Ward V Indian Ratepayers' Association has bestirred itself actively and, after investigation, Mr. B. A. Megbraj, Chairman of the Association has addressed a letter to the Mayor in the course of which he says:—

"The attention of my association was drawn to a letter which appeared in the local Press on the 23rd inst., addressed by Mr. H. S. Read to you, with regard to certain undesirable conditions reported to be existing in the neighbourhood of Madras Road. In consequence whereof, a meeting of my association was held and a sub-committee was appointed to investigate the truth or otherwise of the allegations made by Mr. Read. The sub-committee has carefully inspected some 31 Indian-owned houses in that locality and, after thorough investigation, has come to the conclusion that Mr. Read has greatly exaggerated the position and raised undue alarm.

Inspection Invited

"I enclose a copy of the report of the sub-committee submitted to my association, which speaks for itself. The locality no doubt is populated by Indians and coloured people, but to say that 'it is the nest of prostitutes who openly tout in the street at all times of the day and night' is, to put it mildly, preposterous. From the sub-committee's report you will notice that there are one or two doubtful cases of prostitution, but such conditions exist in other parts of the town as well. No doubt, Mr. Read has seen white men in one or two of the houses in this locality, but from our investigation these men are married to native women and live with them. The locality therefore affords a convenient haven for these men to hide the shame of their mixed marriages.

"Indians and coloured people have been living in this district for the last 40 years as peaceful and law-abiding citizens, having given no cause for complaint whatever, and it is most unfair on the part of Mr. Read, who came to this district with eyes wide open well knowing it to be a coloured locality, not only to heap insults on the unfortunate residents and degrade their moral character, but to cast a reflection on the fair name of the Durban Town Council and the police authorities for tolerating the so-called 'menace.'

"My association will be pleased at all times to co-operate with you or the police authorities or any other body for eliminating any nuisance that may exist or in dealing with any undesirables, be they white or black, and would welcome an early inspection of the district."

House-to-House Investigation

The following report was submitted by the sub-committee:—

"Your sub-committee inspected some 31 Indian-owned houses, and made searching inquiries from the owners and lessees regarding the number of families, the nature of their means of subsistence, nationality, and other particulars. We also investigated the inside of the premises with a view to seeing if they were clean.

"We found two doubtful cases of prostitution, and two cases of white men married to native women and living with them. There were also five native house-boys living on their respective premises, and one native single woman. All other residents were either Indians or coloured people of respectable character—peaceful and law-abiding citizens. A few premises were not in conformity with the sanitary laws of the borough, but we have impressed upon the owners the necessity of cleanliness and the dangers of over-crowding

"On the whole, the locality compares favourably with any other coloured locality of the town. We have therefore come to the conclusion that the sweeping assertions made by Mr. Read are most uncalled for, and that he has greatly exaggerated the position and raised undue alarm.

"We recommend that our investigations and report be brought to the notice of His Worship the Mayor and the Town Councillors of Durban, and the local Press."

"Mercury" Representatives Visit the Locality

A *Mercury* representative who recently paid a visit to Madras Road to investigate the allegations contained in Mr. Read's letter found the locality to be practically deserted and as quiet as the proverbial graveyard. Whether it was an off-night he is unable to say, but the fact remains that during the two hours that he patrolled the district he saw only four persons in the street, and all were men.

The only noises he heard were the wheezing strains of a gramophone and the unmusical twang of a string instrument played by a young Native on a vacant plot at the town end of the lane.

There can, however, be no two opinions on the other points raised by Mr. Read in his letter. The street is filthy and the houses are eye-sores. Unpleasant smells pervaded the atmosphere which could not fail to be offensive to those acquainted with decent European standard of living.

One every unpleasant feature of the locality which the *Mercury* representative noticed was that several of the houses of the Corporation housing scheme directly overlook the backyards of the houses in Madras Road. Although it was too dark to see into yards, it is easy to believe, judging from the front appearances of the houses, that the aspect would be anything but pleasant.

It would only be fair to emphasise the fact, says our morning contemporary, that on the evening in question its representative noticed none of the soliciting alleged in Mr. Read's letter.

Indians In Kenya

Mr. D. B. Desai writing from Kenya to the *Indian Daily Mail* says that segregation in the Mombasa Township is the general cry now in the whole of British East Africa. The White Paper of 1923 led the Indian community there to believe that there would be no segregation in the township areas of Kenya. But the strength of the white settlers is so dominant over the officers of the Kenya Government, from Governor downwards, that the will of the white settlers is the law in Kenya. "One thing is absolutely certain that Indians' rights are in danger in Kenya, and immediate attention is to be given now to safeguard the same." Mr. Desai refers to a latest proposal of the Kenya Government to sell twenty-one plots on the seaside nearabouts in the Mombasa Township area only to Europeans as being contrary to the instructions laid down in the 1923 White Paper. Commenting on this, the writer says:

This means that the Indian community, which forms an integral part in the British Empire will be debarred from purchasing any plot in the sale of these 21 plots. It may be true that prior to the issue of the 1923 White Paper, plots in the locality were sold to Europeans only but at that time the question of segregation was not solved; but now, after the issue of the White Paper there is no justification whatsoever to restrict the sales.

It is argued by the white settlers that they were led to believe and given to understand that the plots in the area in question will never be offered to Indians. Whatever that may mean, the Kenya Government had no power to give any such assurance,

if any given under any ordinances and further these illegal assurances are now overruled by the White Paper decision in July 1923. In reply to this Mr. Desai says :—

The present Governor of Kenya, has from the day he landed adopted an attitude favouring the whites and repugnant to Indian interests. Prior to his arrival the white settlers had the late Sir Robert Coryndon and now they have Sir Edward Grigg to champion their cause.

Mr. Desai makes the following appeal to the Government of India for taking this matter up seriously with the Home Office in order that the sales which are going to be held shortly be postponed and getting it declared once again that the British Government will not allow segregation in the Township areas of Kenya :—

The sooner this is done the better will it be, otherwise there will be serious consequences of the segregated sales. It seems that it is the desire of Sir Edward Grigg and his Government to see whether his policy in a particular area succeeds as regards segregation, and if it does succeed, the same practice will be adopted in other townships.

The Story of My Experiments With Truth

[BY M. K. GANDHI]

XII. Outcaste

With my mother's permission and blessings, I set off exultantly for Bombay, leaving my wife with a baby of a few months. But on arrival there friends told my brother that the Indian Ocean was rough in June and July, and as this was my first voyage, I should not be allowed to sail until November. Some one also reported that a steamer had just been sunk in a gale. This made my brother uneasy and he refused to take the risk of allowing me to sail immediately. Leaving me with a friend in Bombay, he returned to Rajkot to resume his duty. He put the money for my travelling expenses in the keeping of a brother-in-law, and left word with some friends to give me whatever help I might need.

Time hung heavily on my hands in Bombay. I dreamt continually of going to England.

Meanwhile my caste-people were agitated over my going abroad. No Modh Bania had been to England up to now, and if I dared to do so, I ought to be brought to book! A general meeting of the caste was called and I was summoned to appear before it. I went. How I suddenly managed to muster up courage I do not know. Nothing daunted, and without the slightest hesitation, I came before the meeting. The Seth—the headman of the community—who was distantly related to me, and who had been on very good terms with my father, thus accosted me :

"In the opinion of the caste, your proposal to go to England is not proper. Our religion forbids voyages abroad. We have also heard that it is not possible to live there without compromising our religion. One is obliged to eat and drink with Europeans!"

To which I replied : "I do not think it is at all against our religion to go to England. I intend going there for further studies. And I have already solemnly promised to my mother to abstain from the three things you fear most. I am sure the vow will keep me safe."

"But we tell you," rejoined the Seth, "that it is not possible to keep our religion there. You know my relations with your father and you ought to listen to my advice."

"I know those relations," said I. "And you are

as an elder to me. But I am helpless in this matter. I cannot alter my resolve to go to England. My father's friend and adviser, who is a learned Brahmin, sees no objection to my going to England, and my mother and brother have also given me their permission."

"But will you disregard the orders of the Caste?"

"I am really helpless. I think the caste should not interfere in the matter."

This incensed the Seth. He swore at me. I sat unmoved. So the Seth pronounced his order : "This boy shall be treated as an outcaste from to-day. Whoever helps him or goes to see him off at the dock shall be punishable with a fine of One Rupee four annas."

The order had no effect on me, and I took my leave of the Seth. But I wondered how my brother would take it. Fortunately, he remained firm and wrote to assure me that I had his permission to go, the Seth's order notwithstanding.

The incident however made me more anxious than ever to sail. What would happen if they succeeded in bringing pressure to bear on my brother? Supposing something unforeseen happened? As I was thus worrying over my predicament, I heard that a Junagadh Vakil was going to England, for being called to the bar, by a boat sailing on the 4th of September. I met the friends to whose care my brother had commended me. They also agreed that I should not let go the opportunity of going in such company. There was no time to be lost. I wired to my brother for permission which he granted. I asked my brother-in-law to give me the money. But he referred to the order of the Seth and said that he could not afford to lose caste. I then sought a friend of the family and requested him to accommodate me to the extent of my passage and sundries, and to recover the loan from my brother. The friend was not only good enough to accede to my request, but he cheered me up as well. I was so thankful. With part of the money I at once purchased the passage. Then I had to equip myself for the voyage. There was another friend who had experience in the matter. He got clothes and other things ready. Some of the clothes I liked and some I did not like at all. The necktie which I delighted in wearing later, I then abhorred. The short jacket I looked upon as immodest. But this dislike was nothing before the desire to go to England which was uppermost in me. Of provisions also I had enough to spare for the voyage. A berth was reserved for me by my friends in the same cabin as that of Mr. Trimbakrai Mazumdar, the Junagadh Vakil. They also commended me to him. He was an experienced man of mature age and knew the world. I was yet a stripling of eighteen without any experience of the world. Mr. Mazumdar told my friends not to worry about me.

I sailed at last from Bombay on the 4th of September.

XIII. In London at Last

I did not feel at all sea-sick. But as the days passed, I became fidgety. I felt shy even of speaking to the steward. I was quite unaccustomed to talking English, and excepting Mr. Mazumdar, all the other passengers in the second saloon were English. I could not speak to them. For I could rarely follow their remarks when they came up to speak to me, and even when I understood, I could not reply. I had to frame every sentence in my mind, before I could bring it out. I was innocent of the use of knives and forks and had not the gumption to enquire what dishes of the menu were free of meat. I therefore never took my meals at table but always had them in my cabin, and they consisted principally of sweets and fruits which I had brought with me. Mr. Mazumdar had no difficulty, and he mixed with everybody. He would

move about freely on deck, while I hid myself in the cabin the whole day, only venturing up on deck when there were but few people. Mr. Mazumdar kept pleading with me to associate with the passengers and to talk with them freely. He told me that lawyers should have a long tongue, and related to me his legal experiences. He advised me to take every possible opportunity of talking English, and not to mind making mistakes which were obviously unavoidable with a foreign tongue. But nothing could make me conquer my shyness.

An English passenger talking kindly to me, drew me into conversation. He was older than I. He asked me what I ate, what I was, where I was going, why I was shy, and so on. He also advised me to come to table. He laughed at my insistence on abjuring meat, and said in a friendly way: "It is all very well so far (*i.e.*, before we had reached Port Said) but you will have to revise your decision in the Bay of Biscay. And it is so called in England that one cannot possibly live there without meat."

"But I have heard that people can live there without eating meat," I said.

"Rest assured it is a fib," said he. "No one, to my knowledge, lives there, but is a meat-eater. Don't you see that I am not asking you to take liquor, though I do so? But I do think you should eat meat, for you cannot live without it."

"I thank you for your kind advice, but I have solemnly promised to my mother not to touch meat and therefore I cannot think of taking it. If it be found impossible to get on without it, I would far rather go back to India than eat meat in order to remain there."

We entered the Bay of Biscay, but I did not begin to feel the need either of meat or liquor. I had been advised to collect certificates of my having abstained from meat, and I asked the English friend to give me one. He gladly gave it and I treasured it for some time. But when I saw later that one could get such a certificate in spite of being a meat-eater, it lost all its charm for me. If my word was 'not to be trusted' where was the use of possessing a certificate in the matter?

However, we reached Southampton, as far as I remember, on a Saturday. On the boat I had worn a black suit, the white flannel one which my friends had got me, having been kept especially for wearing when I landed. I had thought that white clothes would suit me better when I stepped ashore and therefore I did so in white flannels. Those were the last days of September, and I found I was the only person wearing such clothes. I left in charge of an agent of Grindlay & Co., all my kit, including the keys, seeing that many others also had done the same and I must follow suit.

I had four notes of introduction: to Dr. P. J. Mehta, to Mr. Dalparam Shukla, to Prince Ranjit Singji and to Dadabhai Naoroji. Some one on board had advised us to put up at the Victoria Hotel in London. Mr. Mazumdar and I accordingly went there. The shame of being the only person in white clothes, was already too much for me. And when at the Hotel I was told that I should not get things from Grindlay's the next day, it being a Sunday, I was exasperated.

Dr. Mehta to whom I had wired from Southampton called at about eight o'clock the same evening. He gave me a hearty greeting. He smiled at my being in flannels. As we were talking, I casually picked up his top-hat, and, trying to see how smooth it was, passed my hand over it the wrong way and disturbed the fur. Dr. Mehta looked somewhat angrily at what I was doing and stopped me. But the mischief was done. The incident was a warning for the future. This was my first lesson in European etiquette, into the details of which Dr. Mehta humourously initiated me. "Do not touch other people's things," he said. "Do not ask questions as we usually do in India on first acquaintance; do not

talk loudly; never address people as 'Sir' whilst speaking to them (as we do in India); only servants and subordinates address their masters that way." And so on and so forth. He also told me that it was very expensive to live in a hotel and recommended that I should live with a private family. We deferred consideration of the matter until Monday.

Both Mr. Mazumdar and I found the hotel to be a trying affair. It was also very expensive. There was, however, a Sindhi fellow passenger from Malta who had become friends with Mr. Mazumdar and as he was not a stranger to London, he offered to find rooms for us. We agreed, and on Monday as soon as we got our baggage, we paid off our bills and went to the room rented for us by the Sindhi friend. I remember my hotel bill came to £3, an amount which shocked me. And I practically starved in spite of this heavy bill! For I could relish nothing. When I did not like one thing, I asked for another, but had to pay for both just the same. The fact is that all this while I had depended on the provisions which I had brought with me from Bombay.

I was very uneasy even in the new room. I would continually think of my home and country. My mother's love always haunted me. At night the tears would stream down my cheeks and home memories of all sorts made sleep out of the question. It was impossible to share my misery with any one. And even if I could have done so, where was the use? I knew of nothing that would sooth me. Everything was strange—the people, their ways, and even their dwellings. I was a complete greenhorn in the matter of English etiquette, and continually had to mind my p's and q's. There was the additional inconvenience of the vegetarian vow. Even the dishes that I could eat were tasteless and insipid. I thus found myself between Scylla and Charibdis. England I could not bear, and return to India was not to be thought of. Now that I had come, I must finish the three years, said the inner voice.

અડવાડીક પંચાંગ

વાર	ખ્રીસ્તી	હીંદુ	મુસલમાન	પારસી	સુર્યોદય	મુચરિત
	૧૯૨૬	૧૯૨૨	૧૩૪૫	૧૨૬૬	ક. મી.	ક. મી.
	સપ્	શુક્રવા	સ્પીડિલ	કદમી		
	૨૨મ્		અવલ	શહે.		
શુક્ર	૧૦	સુદિ ૩	૨	૨	૬-૦	૫-૪૫
રવિ	૧૧	" ૪	૩	૩	૫-૫૯	૫-૪૫
સ્વી	૧૨	" ૫	૪	૪	૫-૫૭	૫-૪૬
સોમ	૧૩	" ૬	૫	૫	૫-૫૬	૫-૪૭
મંગળ	૧૪	" ૭	૬	૬	૫-૫૫	૫-૪૭
બુધ	૧૫	" ૮	૭	૭	૫-૫૪	૫-૪૮
ગુરુ	૧૬	" ૯	૮	૮	૫-૫૩	૫-૪૮

સંવત ૧૯૮૩ ના નવા સાલની ડાયરીઓ
 થોડીજ નકલો આવી છે. ભાવો નીચે પ્રમાણે છે.
 તદ્દન નાનો સાધક ડાયરી ૧ ૦
 સ્ટેબ એનાથી થોડી " ૧ ૬
 પોકેટ સાધક " ૨ ૦
 સ્ટેબ થોડી પોકેટ સાધક " ૨ ૬
 બહુવાલી " ૩ ૦