

Indian Opinion

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INDIAN COUNCIL OF STATE

DEBATE ON SOUTH AFRICAN INDIAN QUESTION

THE following is a report of the debate that took place last month in the Council of State of India in connection with the Indian question in South Africa which we have extracted from the *Times of India*—

Non-official business in the Council referred to the position of Indians in South Africa with particular reference to the recent anti-Indian legislation there. To this there were several amendments.

Sir Devaprasad Sarbadhikari had on the agenda a resolution that immediate steps be taken for the protection of Indians in South Africa against the effects of anti-Indian legislation there and that adequate measures should be taken without delay under the provisions of the Immigration into India Act of 1924, but he moved Mr. Natesan's proposition that in connection with the recent anti-Indian legislation and of the Bill now impending before the South African Parliament immediate steps should be taken to secure and safeguard the rights of Indians in South Africa. Sir Devaprasad Sarbadhikari prefaced his speech with an expression of appreciation of the work done on behalf of Indians abroad by Sir B. N. Sarma and Sir Mahomed Habibullah and felt satisfied that Sir Fazli Husain had taken on the burden in the proper spirit. He admitted that on this question the Council had to exercise restraint and self-control. Appeals previously made for such self-control had not been disregarded, but as the position of Indians in South Africa was very much

threatened by the anti-Indian legislation it was the right and duty of this House to strengthen the hands of the Government of India and induce them to make effective representation to the Colonial Office and see that dangerous legislation was dropped. There were six lakhs and sixty thousand Indians now in South Africa. They went there first as indentured labourers and having finished the work they had settled down and owned vested interests. He did not move his own proposition but the proposal of Mr. Natesan because the door for negotiation was still open, by moving this resolution. Therefore he wanted the Government of India to take note of the intense public feeling and take steps to bring about a better state of things.

A Direct Violation

Mr. G. A. Natesan in a vigorous speech pointed out that the Reservation of Areas Bill was more drastic than the Class Areas Bill, regarding which the Council had passed a resolution last March. This was the opinion expressed by public bodies in South Africa. The President of the Natal Indian Congress had described the measure now before the South African Parliament as a deliberate deprivation

of Indians' vested rights and privileges. Mr. Gandhi also had described the measure as one, the effect of which would be that there would be no Indian settlers in South Africa in a few years time, and that the Bill made no distinction between Indians born in South Africa and those domiciled there and the safeguards provided were illusory and could be rendered perfectly nugatory. Indeed the Bill was intended to drive the Indians out of South Africa. Mr. Natesan contended that the Bill was a direct violation of the vested rights of Indians who were promised not to be interfered with. There were some Indians who suggested repatriation of Indians as the best solution out of the difficulty. Mr. Natesan assured he was reflecting the opinion of those who paid some attention to this question when he said that that was an ill-advised and suicidal step. They would only be playing into the hands of the South African Government and giving up the case which the Indian Government was fighting hard by adopting repatriation. Some others had suggested retaliation. But Mr. Natesan advised the Council to consider the effects of such a step before embarking upon it. Retaliation could only be the last step when all other measures had failed. An Indian Deputation from South Africa was expected in India, and Mr. Natesan asked the Government of India to ascertain their views in this respect. Moreover the Government of India should use all possible but constitutional methods to ascertain the wishes of Indians on the spot. There

the situation was still not hopeless. Indeed Dr. Malan, Minister for the Interior, in introducing the Reservation of the Areas Bill, had said that the Union Government would negotiate with the Indian Government in regard to the suggestion for a Round Table Conference. The Durban Town Council had supported this idea but if all the efforts of the Government of India and Indians failed, let His Majesty's Government disallow the Bill even as it did on a previous occasion. (Applause).

Dangerous Provisions

Mr. Karandikar moved an amendment in addition to the resolution to the effect that with this object in view Government should examine the provisions of the Areas Reservation and the Immigration and Registration Bill and take steps without delay to signify to the Union Government total disapproval of the provisions prejudicial to Indian rights and privileges. Mr. Karandikar traced the history of the emigration of Indians to South Africa and pointed out that assurances were given that Indians would settle in South Africa after a period of indenture in 1800. In response to the Deputation from South Africa the Government of India suspended the

MESSAGE FROM MAULANA SHAUKAT ALI

The following cable message has been received by the hon. Secretaries of the Natal Indian Congress from Maulana Shaukat Ali:—

“Central Khilafat Committee and Muslim hearts with you. Doing utmost. Be brave and firm. God protect you.

—Shaukat Ali.

standing orders and allowed Indians to proceed to South Africa assuring them full rights of citizenship. Indian labourers went out there as British citizens, but the provisions of the latest Bill on the anvil of the South African Parliament were really dangerous. They must be examined, so that the rights and privileges of Indians would be protected. Mr. Sastri had on a former occasion said, "If Kenya is gone, India is gone." To this Mr. Karandikar added "if India is gone, the British Empire is gone." India had every right to follow and help Indians wherever they were settled and the Indian Government were responsible in safeguarding the rights and privileges of Indians.

Sir Umar Hayat Khan, in supporting the resolution as amended emphasised that His Majesty's Government had a duty in holding the scales even between the various parts of the Empire. If the British Government felt helpless, then let the Government of India be allowed to settle the question with South Africa direct, if necessary by force of arms. Sir William Birdwood with his army in India was quite capable of bringing South Africa to their senses. (Laughter). There was no use going with folded hands like beggars. If the Government of India felt powerless, let us tell Indians in South Africa that if they felt unhappy they could come back to India. In India there were hundreds of acres of land lying waste. They could come and cultivate them here.

The amendment of Mr. Karandikar was passed unanimously Government not opposing it.

Gross Abuse Of Power

Mr. V. Ramdas then added a rider to the resolution as amended urging Government to ascertain the conditions and views of the Indians in South Africa. He was encouraged to move this amendment by the Government of India's helpful attitude. He charged the South African Government with gross vilifications of the Smuts-Gandhi Agreement by passing recently no less than six anti-Indian ordinances. Mr. Ramdas explained in detail the provisions of these measures as affecting the rights and privileges of Indians. It was a gross abuse, he said, of the powers of self-Government granted to South Africa. India might be a helpless dependency but the least that the British Government could do was to see that the Bill before the South African Government, if passed, was disallowed by His Majesty.

Mr. K. O. Roy in supporting the amendment of Mr. Ramdas pressed for a Round Table Conference being formed for consideration of the whole question as suggested by Mr. Thomas when the Labour Government was in office.

Government's Reply

Sir Fazli Hussein in a very sympathetic speech accepted the resolution and the amendments moved. He admitted that this was a very important, difficult and extremely delicate subject. His Excellency Lord Reading, speaking on 20th January, referred to the Natal Boroughs Ordinance, which had been given assent to in spite of representations from the Government of India, and said that a solution of the problem connected with a self-governing dominion in its internal matters was not easy to find. Indeed when one saw measure after measure adopted to the prejudice of Indians in South Africa despite the Government of India's representation, there was justification for Indians in India and in South Africa to feel that the problem was altogether hopeless and yet the proverbial patience of the Orient must come to their help. As Mr. Natesan pointed out by referring to Dr. Malan's speech the door for negotiations was not closed. Sir Fazli Hussein was not before, altogether without hope. He recognised a time when the Indian Government was pressing for a Round Table Conference, this

bomb-shell in the form of the Reservation of Areas Bill was introduced in the South African Parliament, a Bill which had caused the deepest resentment, not only among Indians but also Europeans in India. As Lord Reading, replying to a deputation that waited on His Excellency in Delhi pointed out, this question of Indians in South Africa had a possible reaction on Imperial relationship. The Government of India had very rightly adopted the process of continuous representation. There was nothing that Indian publicists could suggest should be done for the benefit of Indians in South Africa which the Government of India was not prepared to do provided it was within its competence to do. Government could not do more than that. Whether Government efforts in future would be fruitful or not he could not say. The answer must depend on one's temperament. But he was not a pessimist, although he was not a strong optimist either.

South Africa's Best Interest

"I feel the South African Government will, in the course of time realise on the basis of our representations, that its true interest lies not in proceeding with the policy which may for the time being be economical and beneficial but in looking forward to the future and discovering that the co-operation and contentment of Indians in South Africa is in their best interests and that of their country. We are not a dominion power as South Africa is and therefore we cannot feel very enthusiastic when we call upon the Imperial Government to interfere in the internal affairs of South Africa. As I am a new and temporary member in charge of this subject I consulted the Standing Emigration Committee as well as Sir Devaprasad Sarbadhikari, Pundit Motilal Nehru and Mr. Jinnah. We had an interesting discussion in which the whole position was dispassionately reviewed. They said that they had not the slightest intention of asking the higher authorities to interfere with the internal affairs of a self-governing dominion, but that they merely wanted to know the condition of the people in South Africa and urged that the Government of India should use its good offices in the interests of the Indian people in South Africa and in the interests of the South African Government in order to bring about a better understanding of each other's position. I am really indebted to the Standing Emigration Committee for their valuable assistance and it was as a result of that discussion that certain proposals put down on the agenda to-day were not moved. I am glad to say that the resolution is in very wide terms and allows the fullest possible liberty to the Government of India to take such action as is found necessary in the best interests of Indians. The Government of India has already scrutinised the Bill and submitted a representation to the South African Government. We have already expressed total disapproval of certain provisions and we would follow it up soon with detailed representation." (Applause.)

Proceeding, Sir Fazli Hussein said the Government of India would ascertain the conditions and views of South African Indians from a deputation that was shortly coming to India. The Government of India would be pleased to receive the deputation. The Government of India also contemplated other steps by which to ascertain the condition and views of South African Indians. Nothing that could be done would be left undone and the Council could have implicit trust in the desire of the Government of India to do all it could in this matter. India did not want certain privileges nor any licenses for Indians in South Africa. What was wanted was justice and fairplay, and this the Government of India was trying to secure so far as lay in its power. (Loud applause.)

The resolution of Sir Devaprasad Sarbadhikari as

amended by Messrs. Karandikar and Ramdas Pantulu was carried without any dissentient voice.

Notes and News

FROM a Reuter's message published in the daily papers it would appear that Mrs. Sarojini Naidu's appeal last week to India to observe the 11th of October as a day for expressing the national sentiment against the Asiatic Bill has been well responded to, large meetings being held on that day throughout India. Mrs. Naidu presided over the meeting at Bombay, at which a message from Mahatma Gandhi was read emphasising that "there can be no compromise and no repatriation, even when it is euphemistically described as voluntary." The only effective remedy, in Mahatma Gandhi's opinion, is the diplomatic pressure which Lord Hardinge had applied successfully. Our contemporary the *Natal Mercury* describes this as "Gandhi's new slogan."

It is reported in the latest exchanges from India that Mrs. Sarojini Naidu has obtained the highest number of votes as the president of the forthcoming Indian National Congress to be held at Cawnpore in December. It will be the first time in the history of the Congress that an Indian lady will preside over its annual deliberations. Indians in South Africa, we have no doubt, will join our brethren in India in congratulating Mrs. Naidu on her success.

Bishop and Mrs. Fisher have sailed yesterday from Beira per *s.s. Karoa* for Mombasa and Bombay. Bishop Fisher hopes to be present at the National Christian Council which meets in Calcutta on the 4th of November. Both Bishop and Mrs. Fisher wish to express their love to all the friends they have made in South Africa. While reciprocating the same to them we thank them for what they have done for us and wish them a pleasant voyage and safe return to their home.

In the course of a comment on the action of the Union Government in introducing the Asiatic Bill, *The Mahratta* (Poona) writes:—"South Africa must be given to understand that in wounding the feelings of India, the tiny Colony is eliminating the sympathies of a great nation like India."

At a mass meeting of Indians of the Town and District of Ermelo, held on the 6th instant under the chairmanship of Mr. I. A. Jassat a resolution protesting against the Asiatic Bill was passed unanimously and forwarded to the Minister of the Interior.

A farewell meeting attended by prominent Indians was held under the Transvaal Memon Association in honour of Mr. Hajee Cassim Adam at the Indian Library Hall, Pretoria, on the eve of his departure for India. Mr. A. C. Tayob presided. An address enumerating the various services rendered by him was presented to Mr. Cassim Adam and speeches were made by Messrs. Suleman Ebrahim, Abdul Carim, T. M. P. Mahomed and A. A. Mirza wishing Mr. Hajee Cassim Adam a pleasant voyage and a safe return. Mr. Hajee Cassim Adam in a suitable reply thanked the Association for the honour done to him and urged the gathering to support with all their heart the Transvaal British Indian Association, the only representative body of the Transvaal Indians which was doing everything necessary to protect the interest of the Indian com-

munity. Mr. Cassim Adam donated £10 to the Transvaal Memon Association.

The Transvaal British Indian Association has sent the following cable to the Associated Press, Bombay:—

"Conformably to the pronouncement of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, president South African Indian Congress, Transvaal Indians have resolved to observe October 11 as a day of pretest against Union Government's high-handed, outrageous policy against Indians."

The hon. Secretary (Mr. P. R. Pather) informs us that the Prize Distribution of the Hindu Tamil Institute, 17 Cross Street, Durban, will be held at the Rawat's Bio Hall on Sunday the 18th instant at 2 p.m. All are invited to attend. Apart from the training given in this Institute to Tamil boys and girls the Institute has been very useful to the public for holding meetings and public functions. Many Congress Committee meetings have been held at this Institute by courtesy of the management.

PLIGHT OF THE TRANSVAAL INDIANS

WHILE the Indian population in Natal can be said to be somewhat large—and that is owing to the large labour population—and the complaint of the Province being faced with an Asiatic question might be justifiable, we cannot possibly understand the constant cry of the Transvaal being killed by Indians. The Indian population in that Province is but a handful in comparison with the vast white population, the former numbering not more than fifteen thousand at the most against five hundred thousand of the latter. Moreover they have no vote nor have they the right to own landed property. The only right they do possess is the right to trade. Emigration into that Province is entirely closed excepting that six educated Indians may enter annually. Thus there is not the slightest fear of that Province ever being flooded by Indians nor are Indians given the least chance to do so. And yet the anti-Asiatic cry in the Transvaal is just as acute if not more than in Natal.

The Transvaal Provincial Council has recently passed the General Dealers (Control) Ordinance, with the express purpose of curtailing the right of Indians to trade in that Province, which is the only means of their livelihood there. This Ordinance was rushed through the Council without any opportunity given to those concerned to even consider it or to lodge their protest against it; even the European Chamber of Commerce raised a protest against it on that ground, and the Governor-General-in-Council has been pleased to give his assent to it. Apart from this, we understand, that although the Asiatic Bill has not yet been passed some of its provisions are already being enforced. Those who have been given exemption certificates, we learn, are being re-examined by the Principal Immigration Officer, and the three year clause is being inserted in the Identity Certificates issued to those who go on a visit to India. The result of this will be that such Indians although holding their registration certificates will be deemed to be prohibited immigrants if they arrive here a little after the term of three years and they will have to prove their domicile before they can get the right to enter the Province—and yet, the very officer examining them may have issued to them the certificate. What a farce! And all this for no other reason but to

Buckingham Palace, she wore a magnificent gown of blue silk, and a black veil covering her face, with slits to look through, for Bhopal still adheres to the custom of Purdah. On her headress was a jewelled coronet.

In 1922 when the Prince of Wales visited India there was a reception at the Royal Palace. The Prince and the Begum sat on thrones of Turquoise blue and gold. The reception hall was of marble, with its arches lined with gold.

In 1911 she brought to England with her, in her suite a woman doctor, cooks skilled in the preparation of curries, and an astrologer. A Priest presided at the killing of the fowls for the curries. Last year the veiled queen as she is called, lost two of her three sons, and the present visit to England is understood to have for its object the securing of the succession of the third.

Mr. Paul Robeson an American Negro is acting as "The Emperor Jones" in the play of that name. Mr. Robeson who is six feet three, qualified as a barrister-at-law, at the University of Columbia in America, but the call of the stage was too strong for him to resist. He, however, believes that as a Negro, he can render a service to his people, by interpreting their innermost feelings in negro plays and in negro songs. Europeans may imitate the negro, but a negro alone can spiritualise things that are negro. The play at the Ambassadors, where he is appearing is drawing record crowds. With him in London, is his wife of his own race.

The King of Iraq has recovered after several weeks' medical care in London, and is now moving in the city.

Since the taxes on silk and artificial silk have come into operation, the papers are full of attempts at smuggling.

M. Caillux is about to visit America, for the purpose of arranging terms in respect of France's War debt to the United States. Senator Borah of that country stands out for 100 per cent payment. The ex-service men of France are returning an American Medal, given to a Frenchman for saving the life of an American, wooden legs and a helmet symbolising the sacrifices of the Frenchmen in the War. The action of the Frenchmen is typical of them. They are impressionists.

German Colours were recently placed at the foot of the Cambridge War Memorial, attached to a wreath with the following inscription: "In memory of the heroes of this Borough and County, and in gratitude to the University of Cambridge, by a German student of the vacation course 1925." Over 300 foreign students have been in attendance at the University Summer School this year, of which number 89 were Germans.

The Seamen's Strike continues, but it is not so far gaining ground here. For the last four weeks important boats, both to South Africa and America, have sailed to the scheduled time. It is true on each occasion there were attempts on the part of the strikers to prevent the sailing of these boats, sometimes it was by picketing, at other times by demonstrations. The strikers even endeavoured by obstructing in numbers the train which carried seamen from other ports, from reaching a boat in Southampton waters. The crews of the Channel boats, for a short space of time refused to man the boats, but they too, like a number of others on the bigger boats have gone back, and the channel boat services are again in full swing. The regular sailing of the big boats has, no doubt, discouraged many of the seamen, especially as in some cases new men have been taken on on the boats that have sailed, with the consequent displacement of those men from those boats who are on strike. The existence of two sea-

men's Societies in England has somewhat weakened the position of the strikers. The major society is against the strike, the minor society favours the unofficial strike. Unfortunately for the seamen, an attempt made to amalgamate both these societies within recent times failed, with the result that the minor society finds an opportunity in the present strike to thrust itself forward in the hope of winning members from the greater and more powerful society, which has been recognised as representing the seamen, in questions relating to them, and was as a matter of course the body which got the seamen a rise of £1 some time back, and which has since agreed to the reduction of £1 as a result of conferences between the ship-owners and the seamen. It is said that the arrangement then arrived at by the executive of the society, was referred to its branches who had agreed to the adjustment, the understanding being that as soon as things in the shipping line improved, the £1 would be restored. The seamen receive about £9 a month, in addition to their keep etc. on board. Apart from the question of the adequacy or otherwise, of this rate of pay, the seamen were bound by the collection of their society, and it was for them, through their society to have re-opened the question, if they thought they had a just claim to make. It is doubtful that whether the question would have been raised, even by way of an unofficial strike, had not the seamen on the boats to Australia been moved to strike there by local influences. It has spread to South Africa, and there are evidently more men out on the boats at these dominion ports, than there are out here. It is not clear what steps the ship-owners will yet take in regard to the sailings from the dominions to England, though so far they have maintained the services from this end to the dominions.

Original Correspondence

The Editor, INDIAN OPINION.

Aryan Benevolent Home

Diwali is on us and I wonder how many of the readers or the masses of the Hindu community are going to turn their thoughts to the poor and needy in the hours of their pleasures and recreations. Will they think of the poor and unfortunate human beings that are not possessed with the worldly pleasures or comforts, and will they do their duty to alleviate their cares and sufferings even for a few hours? It remains to be seen.

At the above Home, there are 14 males, 2 females and 1 child, the majority of whom are practically helpless. Gifts of foodstuffs, clothing, &c., will be gratefully received. Monetary contributions and donations of any kind are very rare indeed at the Home, and had it not been for the untiring efforts of a few persons, the unfortunates at present domiciled at the Home, would have been on the streets at the mercy of everyone.

Any contributions for the Home can be called for on the receipt of a note addressed to the Secretary, Box 1770, Durban.

S. L. SINGH,
Hon. Secretary.

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IS RACE HATRED ESSENTIAL FOR NATIONALISM ?

MR. GANDHI'S ADDRESS IN CALCUTTA

MR. M. K. Gandhi delivered an address on the subject 'Is Race Hatred Essential for Nationalism?' at a meeting held under the auspices of the Meccano Club at the Y.M.C.A. Over-toun Hall. We reproduce below an extract of Mr. Gandhi's address from *Young India* which we have no doubt will be read with very great interest in this country:—

'Is it possible to love one's country and not to hate those who rule over it, whose domination we do not want and dislike from the bottom of our hearts?' was the problem, said Mr. Gandhi with which the younger generation was faced to-day. And the answer given by many, expressed in some cases and secretly nourished in most, was that it was impossible. As a student of the question for over 30 years, the speaker was there to declare his conviction that nationalism was perfectly consistent with the love of those whose rule we did not like. The disabilities with which he had been face to face all these years in South Africa and India were really enough to make one hate his fellow-beings if he did not preserve his sanity. 'Correctly or incorrectly one feels he is subjected to the grossest tyrannies, for no reason but that he is not the same colour as the rulers. How is he then to love those rulers?' was the question. Love being a positive force may be considered out of the question—how could he help hating the tyrant? Illustrations were taken from recent wars and administration of law in civilised societies to prove that hatred seemed to be of the essence of nationalism. Nevertheless it was the grossest of delusions. "So long as a large body of men and women retain that attitude, the progress of this country, the progress of the world is retarded. The world is weary of hate. We see the fatigue overcoming the Western nations. We see that this song of hate has not benefitted humanity. Let it be the privilege of India to turn a new leaf and set a lesson to the world. Is it necessary that three hundred millions of people should hate one hundred thousand Englishmen? That is the concrete form to which this evening's subject can be reduced. In my humble opinion it is derogatory to the dignity of mankind, it is derogatory to the dignity of India to entertain for one single moment hatred towards Englishmen." But it were well-nigh impossible for masses of humanity to eradicate hatred. Transfer then your hatred, said the speaker, from the evil-doer to the evil itself. Hate the evil, but not the evil-doer, was the maxim he would offer them. And in a few sentences burning with noble fervour he declared his creed: "Heaven knows, no one in India, perhaps, can claim better than myself to have spoken as fiercely and as fearlessly of the many misdeeds of English rulers and the corrupt nature of the system under which we are governed. My freedom from hatred,—I would even go so far as to claim for myself individually, my love—of those who consider themselves to be my enemies does not make me blind to their faults. That is no love which is extended simply because of the possession of some virtues fancied or real in the beloved. If I am true to myself, if I am true to

mankind, if I am true to humanity, I must understand all the faults that human flesh is heir to. I must understand the weaknesses of my opponents, their vices, and yet in spite of them, not hate but even love them.....I have not hesitated to call the system of Government under which we are labouring "Satanic," and I withdraw naught out of it. But I know that I shall not deal with it, if I begin to devise means of punishing the evil-doer. My business is to love them and by patient and gentle handling to convert them. Non-co-operation is not a hymn of hate. I know that many who call themselves Satyagrahis or Non-co-operators do not deserve to bear that name. They have done violence to their own creed. Real non-co-operation is non-co-operation with evil and not with the evil-doer." That was, however, not the place to go into the intricacy of that doctrine. It was a law that was applied in all well-organised families and he appealed to them to extend that law in the political field. A father or a son did neither seek to punish or encourage a son or father inclined to do evil, but tried to correct him. Of course there were fathers and sons who under a false sense of love doted on the erring sons or fathers. But he was talking of the 'love that discriminates, love that was intelligent, love which was not blind to a single fault—the love of the reformer.' The moment we realised the secret, that very moment evil would go out of sight.

And he instanced cases in which the reformer's love could play and had played an effective part. It could be applied as between members of the same community, not to speak of different races. There were Hindus who considered untouchability as part and parcel of Hinduism, and quoted scriptures as authority. Were the more enlightened Hindus to hate or cut off the heads of those unenlightened ones? No. The secret was persistent non-violent conduct—or, better still, suffering in one's own person. Vaikam was an instance in point. It was the silent, patient, loving suffering undergone by the young men of Vaikam that had made untouchability in Travancore lose its foothold.

Summing up Gandhiji said. "Suffering then is the secret. Hatred is not essential for nationalism. Race hatred will kill the real national spirit. Let us understand what nationalism is. We want freedom for our country, but not at the expense or exploitation of others, not so as to degrade other countries. For my own part I do not want the freedom of India if it means the extinction of England or the disappearance of Englishmen. I want the freedom of my country so that other countries may learn something from my free country, so that the resources of my country might be utilised for the benefit of mankind. Just as the cult of patriotism teaches us to-day that the individual has to die for the family, the family has to die for the village, the village for the district, the district for the provinces, and the province for the country, even so a country has to be free in order that it may die, if necessary, for the benefit of the world. My love therefore of nationalism or my idea of nationalism is that my country may become free, that if need be