



April 10th 1962.

At long last herewith a few and I am afraid disjointed comments and reflections of your letter of the 27th February last and its enclosure, your draft Indian chapter.

I don't know how urgent the matter of publication now is, but if at any time in the near future you should find time or occasion to be in Johannesburg I would much enjoy a chat with you about the Indian tour of 1936 or on Hoffieana in general.

First to deal seriatum with the points you raise in your letter.

- 1) In Hyderabad Hoffie and his mother stayed with Sir Akbar and the rest of the delegation were farmed out amongst leading personalities of the State.
- 2) His Exalted Highness, the Nizam of Hyderabad (who seemed to me much more appropriately His Exhausted Highness) had two sons both of whom were married to daughters of the last Sultan of Turkey and Caliph at Constantinople. The older son and Crown Prince was married to Princess Dureshawar, a tall lovely, regal, white skinned daughter of the Sultan by his principal Caucasian wife. Her sister-in-law, Princess Nilofer, a vivacious young brunette of about 19 was married to the Nizam's younger brother and was herself a child of the same Sultan, by one of the less important of his harem.

I don't recollect either of these ladies being referred to as Ranee, but they both certainly were Princesses. Mrs. Hoffie gave me the photographs which had been sent to Hoffie respectively from Dureshawar and her husband and the other of Nilofer and her husband. Dureshawar is tall and Regal, serious minded, and every inch the ideal potential queen, whereas her sister-in-law Nilofer, for whom Hoffie fell like a log, appeared to be much more of a cocotte, heavily made up and clearly of a less serious and more fighting disposition.

flight

- 3) To the best of my recollection the period when Hoffie dodged

his mother on the train was from the time we left Hyderabad until the train again stopped an hour or two at least thereafter, when first it was possible for Hoffie to leave the Dining coach and reach the carriage in which he and his mother travelled. So far as I can recollect Chris Dames and myself as well as Hoogenhout and others were present in the dining car at the time when Hoffie expatiated on the merits of Nilofer and managed to do justice to a glass or two of champagne in the process.

- 4) I don't think the difference between Kemp and Hofmeyr were particularly serious, though possibly the former as the Senior Cabinet Minister may have felt a bit uncomfortable and sensitive at his Junior almost monopolising the limelight and doing nearly all the speeches, and generally functioning as the leader of the delegation, presumably by virtue of his port folio being directly responsible for Indian Affairs in the Union. The real friction was as you rightly mention between the women and Mrs. Hofmeyr was certainly very difficult in this regard.

The Hydari who tried to smooth things over was not Sir Akbar, the most distinguished citizen of Hyderabad and a privy Councillor and the Confidential Adviser to the Nizam, but his son Saleh Hydari, who was a Senior official of the I.C.S. and who had been especially detailed to manage our tour and to accompany us throughout. Saleh, who was a very cultured, tactful official, tall and dark skinned and rather semitic in appearance, was married to a very attractive blonde Swedish girl. It struck us as rather odd that the Indian Government should have allocated a mixed married couple to look after us, but both Saleh and his wife discharged their functions with extreme tact and social acceptability.

The foregoing more or less covers the points mentioned in your letter. Now for a few odd comments on the trip.

- (a) Hyderabad, where we spent about three days was perhaps the most colourful and feudal part of our trip, and the quite extensive programme included a most interesting afternoon excursion to the celebrated Adjunta Caves about which you know doubt know, as well as a visit to the Nizam's spectacular modern Falaknuma Palace.

The Nizam himself who had the reputation, despite being possibly the world's richest man, of being frugal and miserly to a degree, ~~and~~ himself resided in a much

less pretentious Palace in the centre of the City. There he entertained us one forenoon to some inexpensive entertainment including the poorest cigars I had anywhere on the tour. I remember particularly that his Exhausted Highness was most shabbily dressed and wore a turban which had been palpably darned.

Several of his numerous unmarried daughters resided with him there. The reason for their unmarried state, according to our information, being that the Nyzam was too miserly to provide them with adequate dowries. The Nyzam himself, we were told, used quite frequently to honour some of his subjects by graciously appearing at the weddings of their daughters but always on the understanding every time a gold collection was taken so that the Nyzam could take away with him a suitable present for himself.

I cannot recollect that when the train pulled out from Hyderabad we were loaded with gifts from his Highness, but I do recollect that the special and very luxurious white train in which we travelled for most of the tour was superbly stocked with all comforts in the way of food, drinks, smokes, etc., and we all had individual personal servants assigned to us to look after our clothes and ourselves generally.

I do recollect that at Peshawar where we stopped over for our most interesting visit to the Northern Frontier and the Khyber Pass, that the then resident Minister of the Indian Government sent an extensive collection of locally made shoes, slippers as a gift to the delegation. This gift was duly delivered to Mrs. Hofmeyr who proceeded to regard same as having been made exclusively to herself, somewhat to the amusement and disappointment of other members of the delegation who rather expected to share in it.

- (b) A highlight of the Hyderabad stay was a most sumptuous banquet given by the then Prime Minister of Hyderabad, a very ancient and autocratic old gentleman in his most sumptuous palace, the banqueting hall of which was on the top floor of a very luxurious building.
- (c) Calcutta (Page 10). I agree with what you say about the climate of Calcutta, where the humid heat was terrific and where I remember having to change from one wet shirt into another as much as a half a dozen times in the course of a day. HOFFIE was indefatigable and impeccable, always brilliant in his speeches, though this was the only place so far as I can recollect

that he delegated one of his duties namely in asking me to make the speech to the Calcutta Rotary Club when the delegation were its guests.

- (d) I disagree however, with Hoffie's reported view of Bombay as dreadfully hot. Admittedly particularly to those of us who were quartered in luxurious residences on the Malabar Hill Bombay impressed one as a beautiful city strongly reminiscent in some respects of Durban. Only in the streets in the centre of the town where thousands of homeless Indians spent the night would one come across conditions similar to Calcutta or indeed Hong Kong.
- (e) From Calcutta we had a welcome break in driving up one afternoon through the hills up to Barrakbore, the summer residence of the Governor established by Lord Mornington the brother of the Duke of Wellington, a seat with an unforgettable view of the Himalayas.
- (f) Ghandi (Page 12). I remember Hoffie showing me the letter he had received from Ghandi beautifully written in long hand on paper handmade from rice, as Ghandi mentioned in his letter. Incidentally, we also received at this time a warm personal invitation from that other great Indian intellectual Sir Rabindranath Tagore conveyed in a letter to myself who had had the privilege of being with him at Oxford some years previously, asking us all to visit his famous educational centre at Santiniketan. Unfortunately time did not permit of any of us accepting this invitation.
- (g) At Lahore in the Punjab we had a very pleasant interlude where the delegation were entertained to an afternoon reception in the world famous Shalimar Gardens where our hostess was that most beautiful and talented Indian Lady the Begum Shah Mawaz.
- (h) Re Mrs. Hoffie (Page 15). I agree with Dames' opinion as to the mistakenness of having taken Mrs. Hofmeyr. The old lady dropped quite a number of bricks but she was honest enough to admit this. During the return voyage whilst I was busy showing her some snapshots I had taken including a close-up of my mother where through inefficiency on my part I had produced a picture in which the top half of her head was out of the picture, Mrs. Hofmeyr looked at it and said "so your mother has lost her head, same as I did on this trip."
- (i) Porbunda (page 12). The days visit to this birth place of Ghandi from which so many of Natal's Trading Class

Indians had come, was one of the colorful highlights of the tour. Our reception there was warm hearted generous and enthusiastic, and full of pagentry, colorful and happy crowds lined the streets as we passed and gave us almost a ticker tape reception. The proceedings terminated with a State Luncheon in the Maharajah's Palace. The Maharajah himself was the perfect host and amongst other things a celebrated sportsman and keen cricketer. Just as keen as Hoffie himself though a much more competent player.

- (j) Mention of the cricketing Maharajah of Forbunda makes me wonder whether somewhere in your book you have referred to the important role cricket played in Hoffie's life. He was a most enthusiastic amateur lover of the game. When in about 1934 I was instrumental in Capetown in establishing a parliamentary cricket team, I think we did a very good thing for South Africa when we persuaded Hoffie to become our first Captain. His keen participation in cricket (as you know for some years he ran a cricket ll of his own which during Parliamentary recesses used to play matches against such other amateur sides as the Governor General's eleven and the staff of the Wits University) was one of the joys of his life and I really believe prolonged his life and kept him fit. He was an execrable fielder, but a most determined if unorthodox batsman who rarely achieved runs and enjoyed himself as a wicket keeper who accumulated a wealth of bruises, many of which might have been avoided had he not had such bad eyesight.

On the occasion of my own wedding in 1942 Hoffie officiated with admirable efficiency as my best man. In paying tribute to him in that capacity at the wedding reception I had occasion to say. That as a member for someyears of his Parliamentary cricket team I had admired the way in which he had developed as a batsman and a wicket keeper, but felt sure he would agree that there was more to cricket than batting or wicket keeping. In fact there was nobody present who was not longing to see him bowl his first maiden over. Hoffie was visibly disconcerted at this sally, and when his turn came to make the speech for the parents and bridal attendants he spent almost all the time trying to explain to the assembled company why the prospects of matrimony for him were so remote.

- (k) Another point that occurs to me which you may or may not have dealt with elsewhere in your book about Hoffie is the paradox of how so keen a champion of liberalism

H. spoke of
his conjugal
incapacity -

should at times himself be so illiberal. Two instances occur to me, the first was his acquiescence in order to save the additional expense of approximately £60,000 in the then Government's decision to exclude Non-europeans from the national census of that year. The second was his decision whilst Minister of Education to cut down the amount of the Government's assistance to the Durban Technical College to a very miserly figure. I remember at the time that C.P. Robinson then member for Stamford Hill and myself representing Durban/Berea, went to Hoffie to urge him to reconsider his decision and step up the grant to the Durban Tech. We went to see Hoffie and pleaded with him but without success. At one stage C.P. Robinson remarked that there was hardly a constituent in his or my constituency who did not have some friend or relative connected with the Tech. To this Hoffie indignantly replied that he would not allow political expediency to influence him in such a matter. C.P. and I were so irritated by Hoffie's attitude that we went behind his back and obtained an interview with the Prime Minister Gen. Hertzog, who quite readily saw our point. The upshot was that Hoffie was made to toe the line and did agree to an increase for the Tech. Colleges, but he announced this after he had received an allegedly non-party deputation of M.P.'s led by Mr. Christopher, a Dominionite from East London. Christopher with some show of justification subsequently claimed that the increase had been granted in response to his representations, somewhat to the discomfiture of dear old C.P. and myself.

I return herewith the draft chapter which you sent me and only hope that some of the disjointed comments in this letter may prove of help to you. I should much have preferred to have had a chat with you not merely concerning the Indian trip, but concerning Hoffie generally. I often wonder what role he would have played on our political scene had he survived.

It seemed to me looking at the scene during 1948 from London until he died so suddenly in December, that there were signs during the last few months of his life of an attempt to try and put over the liberal ideal less aggressively and more persuasively than had been the case before the General Election of that year.



Whether he could have adapted himself so as to retain the following of the more Afrikaner and less urban segments of the United Party as in 1948, is a question to which one could only guess the answer. In any event his sudden death was an incalculable loss to the country.

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