

1916-1918



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On June 28th Hofmeyr and his mother sailed from Plymouth in the R.M.S. NORMAN, and two days later the TIMES announced that he had achieved a First in the Final Classical School.

class

What was he going to do now? He was considering at least three possibilities. His old teacher at the South African College, Professor Ritchie, was looking for an assistant in the Department of Classics, and had naturally thought of his one-time pupil. Hofmeyr had also discussed with Secretan the possibility that he might get a non-combatant job with the YMCA, serving the South African troops in East Africa. But his first hope was that he would be given a job with the Students' Christian Association, where he could join Bull in the work that meant so much to them both. However, in the meantime he was appointed Lecturer in Latin under Professor Ritchie, and in August ~~commenced~~ his teaching duties at the College. He and his mother lived at Stellenbosch, thirty miles away, in the house Delft in the Avenue, the Beyers home, and he came in to Cape Town each day by train.

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The Rev. Dr.

At end of August he heard from the Christian Association. G.B.A. Gerdner wrote in the emerging ~~new~~ written form of Afrikaans that enquiries had been made "from a responsible quarter" in regard to Hofmeyr's church affiliation. He himself had been under the impression that the young man was an adherent of the Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk (the largest of the Dutch Reformed Churches), although he remembered his student activities with Ernest Baker, the well-known Baptist minister. In September Gerdner wrote that the church affiliation was not a stumbling block to him, but it might be to others, and a few days after that he wrote that such indeed was the case; further he wrote that the Separatists were working for a separate Dutch-speaking Students' Christian Association, and because of that danger the ~~predikants~~ of the NGK must not be alienated by a wrong appointment.

ministers
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So Hofmeyr was not employed by the interdenominational Association for which he had done so much, for the reason that he was an Afrikaner who did not belong to one of the Dutch Reformed Churches. This was in fact the religious counterpart of Hertzog's two-stream policy, the doctrine that the Afrikaner people must develop independently, with a Church, a language, a culture of their own. It is difficult to define Hofmeyr's own attitude, because up to a point he himself believed in the independent development of the Afrikaner. When he was angered by English arrogance, he became an Afrikaner at once; but it was not a permanent condition. Nor could he really be enthusiastic about one's own Church, one's own language, one's own culture. Although a churchgoer, he himself belonged to no one Church, but showed merely a preference for Presbyterianism after

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a Baptist upbringing. He championed Afrikaans, but his own language was really English. As for his culture, it was certainly not Afrikaans, but it was equally certainly not English; it was the culture of a man of the world (though not in a worldly sense), of a Christian and humanist, versed in the classics, and an admirer of British institutions. He was however no cosmopolitan - he was much more a South African. But narrow allegiances, especially when they were exclusive and intolerant, were distasteful to him.

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He was therefore not attracted by Hertzog, whom he considered an apostle of a narrow nationalism, but all the same he held aloof from Botha's South African Party. He greatly respected Botha, but he considered that the Party was neglectful of Afrikaner traditions, and especially did he criticise Smuts for carrying his pro-Britishness to unnecessary lengths. Botha was in fact in no easy situation; in the 1915 elections he had lost eleven seats, securing only 54. The Unionist Party, largely English-speaking and strongly pro-British had secured 40 seats. But the really important event, omen of greater things to come, was the advance of Hertzog's Nationalists from 16 to 27. In 1910 Botha had won 16 seats in the Orange Free State; in 1915 it was Hertzog who won them. Botha continued to govern therefore at the pleasure of the Unionist Party; his own Afrikaner support was declining, and he had to seek support from the English-speaking. Hertzog's "two streams" were beginning to run with a vengeance.

So Hofmeyr continued his policy of political neutralism as between Botha and Hertzog, and maintained his ambivalent attitude towards the War. His views were still of the pacifist kind that Lusk had criticised, but for all that, he still wanted to get into some kind of war activity. He was frankly unhappy at what he called the "soft job" that he was doing. He was keen on doing YMCA work with the forces, but wrote that "family circumstances" made it impossible. ^①What these were we do not know.

Apart from this uncharacteristic restlessness he found it pleasant to work under Ritchie, but he did not regard a lectureship at the South African College as anything more than a stepping-stone. His work left him a good deal of time to spare, and he could not bear to be idle, industry meaning as much to him as food and sleep. He therefore decided to compete for the J.B. Ebdon Prize, which this year was being offered for the best essay on "History and Control of National Debts with special reference to their liquidation". He who had always had so little money, now began to study the control of big money. ~~It was a prophetic undertaking, for he was going to control the finances, first of a university, then of a province, and finally of the nation.~~

① Hofmeyr 24.9.16.
*Letter to Secretan 24/9/16

this style throughout footnotes

~~CHAPTER XA~~

- P. 12. as before.

H.J. Mandelbrote, later Professor of History at the University of Cape Town (into which the South African College developed), who had been a contemporary of Hofmeyr at the College and was now a lecturer there, was impressed all over again by his colleague's genius. Hofmeyr would take ten or twelve books out of the library and take them up to Stellenbosch for the weekend; when he returned on Monday he had extracted from them all that he needed. Without difficulty he won the Ebdon Prize of ~~forty~~^{£40} pounds with an essay thought to be an extraordinary achievement for one whose main study had been the classics.

He was not satisfied to remain a lecturer. Up in Johannesburg the South African School of Mines had created nine new professorships, one being in the Classics. Hofmeyr applied for it.

In December the Senate of the School of Mines sent for Hofmeyr to see what he looked like. Mandelbrote urged him to buy a new suit, for he was wearing the jacket of one suit and the trousers of another. Hofmeyr's response was to buy a black Homburg hat, and resplendent in this, the jacket, and the trousers, he set out on his venture to the interior, from which he returned, at the age of 22, a professor-to-be.

~~(NOW CONTINUE AS P. 3 - It was a tender age)~~

P 4. as before.

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For many people it was a surprising departure for Hofmeyr to tackle such a subject as national debts. They looked on him as a scholar rather than a man of action, but they misunderstood him. It is true no doubt that his upbringing and his precocity prepared him ill for a life of action, but his religion, his whole philosophy of life, was one of doing; faith without works was meaningless to him. He had great gifts of intellect, but he meant to use them for something, and he thought he would learn about the management of money. What is more, he thought that he had a gift for management; he had learned that in his work at the Balliol Boys' Club. Instead of burying his talent in the ground, he let it win for him the Ebdon Prize of forty pounds with an essay that was regarded as extraordinary for one who had never studied anything but the classics. H.J. Mandelbroke, later Professor at the University of Cape Town (into which the South African College developed), who had been a contemporary of Hofmeyr in his student days and was now a lecturer at the College, was impressed all over again by his colleague's genius. Hofmeyr would take ten or twelve books out of the library and take them up to Stellenbosch for the week-end; when he returned on Monday he would have extracted from them all whatever he thought was relevant to the subject of his essay.

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Meanwhile, up north, in the ever-growing city of Johannesburg, where, said Langenhoven, there were only two kinds of people, those who were in gaol and those who ought to have been, the South African School of Mines was preparing to expand itself into a thorough-going university institution, and had created nine new professorships, Classics being one of them. For this young Hofmeyr decided to apply. The Hon. F.S. Malan, Minister of Education, friend and associate of Onze Jan, chairman of the committee which guided the young biographer's labours, wrote to him in Hollands hoping he would be successful, though he would rather have seen him associated with one of the other institutions. However, he wrote, you should have opportunity in Johannesburg to let your light shine.

In December the Senate of the School of Mines decided to call the young applicant to Johannesburg to see what he was like. One of his colleagues urged him to buy new clothes for the occasion, especially as he was now wearing the jacket of one suit and the trousers of another. Hofmeyr's response was to buy a black Homburg hat, and resplendent in this, the jacket, and the trousers, he set out on his venture to the interior, from which he returned, at the age of twenty-two, a professor-to-be.

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It was a tender age at which to be chosen a professor, even in a young country. The choice was determined partly by the brilliant record of the candidate, partly by the desire of the governing Council of the School of Mines to appoint South Africans where this was possible and profitable. Although the School was an English-speaking institution, and although many of its sentiments outraged

Afrikaner Nationalists, being directed to Britain rather than to South Africa, yet its Council was ready to embark on a moderate policy of indigenisation.

Matriculation
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Hofmeyr's appointment as professor at 22 was received with pride by his family and friends. It was of a kind with his earlier achievements, his Matric^{ulation} at twelve, his degree and Rhodes Scholarship at fifteen, his double first at Oxford. Where could such a talented young man be going? More and more people prophesied that he would one day be Prime Minister, but if they did so in Mrs. Hofmeyr's presence, her voice would rise and the little stammer would come into it and she would say, 'Politics! Politics! when I'm dead he can go into politics.' She had reason too, for people were saying of Louis Botha, the big burly affable man, that politics were breaking his heart. And had not Onze Jan said, 'I am sick and tired of the whole business?' And did she not know what her son was like, with his gentle and upright and religious nature, and what would he be doing in politics, which broke much harder men? She still thought he would make his mark on the world; who could doubt it now? But she did not want it to be in politics.

He was homesick for Oxford and the Club all this time. The reserved Hofmeyr wrote to the reserved Secretan, "perhaps if you knew how much I look forward to hearing from you, you would write more often." ② It was six months since he had left, and Secretan could pay only occasional visits, yet they discussed the Club at length. Hofmeyr had heard that A- had been made a Club officer, "perhaps the best choice possible under the circumstances". He had heard "with joy" that B- was now in the Army. He hoped it would be possible to keep track of C-; the Club had done much for him, but it would be dangerous to leave him too much alone. It might be worth while, in view of the dearth of other candidates, to try D- as an officer, but of course Secretan and Paradise ③ would be able to judge. Hofmeyr was sorry to hear about E-, but it was F- who was the plague-spot, and it would be for the good of all if he could be got out of Oxford.

~~He concluded~~

~~"...the war news is beastly, and the political news from England even more so. We Dutch people out here are beginning to feel that the English don't deserve to win the war".~~

~~He was referring to.....~~

② Hofmeyr to Secretan 10/12/16.

③ S.H. Paradise was the new President of the Club, Rhodes Scholar, Balliol 1914-17, then Military Service.

Babu King, who was with the British Expeditionary Force, somewhere in France, wrote to him:

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'That incident to which you refer, viz., depositing me on my back in the gym, never did happen, and certainly never will, because you would now be like butter in my hands, so take warning, TYRANT and SWANKER.' ④

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In February, 1917, Hofmeyr wrote modestly to THE CLUB AT

WAR:

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'In a day or two I am going right away north to Johannesburg, about a thousand miles away...I am going to settle up there now, as I have got a new job....'

King, wounded in the arm, wrote to his friend in Johannesburg from a hospital in Scotland:

full

'I do wish we could get on the mat again. Just 15 minutes and I would show you what I could do with my sound arm. When you read this you will no doubt shiver with fear and a cold sweat will break out on your noble brow.' ⑤

So the young soldier and the young professor wrote to each other, not about military or university matters, but about past contests in the Balliol Boys' Club, and contests still to come. When, years later, King learned that his illustrious friend had kept all his letters, he was not only astonished, but ashamed that he had not begun to keep Hofmeyr's letters till 1939. 'I never thought', he said, 'that some day someone would want to know what we wrote to each other.' ⑥

④ King to Hofmeyr, 13.10.16.

⑤ King to Hofmeyr, ~~13/10/17~~ 9.5.17.

⑥ To the ^{writer} author, 1952.

Hofmeyr arrived in Johannesburg to find that city determined to have a University. The South African College had just become the University of Cape Town, and the Victoria College had become the University of Stellenbosch. The Government had permitted the Beit bequest of £200,000, which had been left for a future University of Johannesburg, to be diverted to the new University of Cape Town. The Johannesburg public was stung into action, and at a big meeting in the Town Hall on March 17, 1916, the Witwatersrand University Committee was set up. In 1917 the Council of the School of Mines created nine new departments in the arts and sciences, of which Hofmeyr's was one.

It was a bold step, for there were only 171 students, ^{fewer} ~~less~~ than half of them fulltime. The Witwatersrand owes much to that Council. The Chairman was Samuel Evans, chairman of the Central Mining and Finance Corporation, of the famous Corner House. R.N. Kotze was the Government Mining Engineer, soon to be knighted for his services to the industry. William Dalrymple was the head of the Anglo-French Corporation. H.J. Hofmeyr was a highly respected lawyer, with influential business and mining connections; he was a distant cousin of the new 32-year-old professor, and had been Chairman of the Council in 1913. People said that the Council was really the Chamber of Mines. This was an exaggeration, but the Chamber was well represented, and that was to be expected, for the primary function of the School was to train skilled men for the tremendous industry which the Chamber controlled.

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(NOW CONTINUE - P. 2 - H.J. Hofmeyr was a Cape Afrikaner)

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this they did, for the Council was able to announce that in 1917 no fewer than nine new departments would be established in the arts and sciences.

It was a bold step to take. There were only 171 students, and less than half of these were full-time. In 1906 a smaller experiment had failed, but now the School was never to stop growing. In 1917 Johannesburg had a population of 240,000, with neighbouring towns totalling another 200,000. In 1960 the figures are five times as great.

The Council in 1917 was composed of influential men. Its Chairman was Samuel Evans, a powerful man in mining circles, chairman of the Central Mining and Finance Corporation, of the famous Corner House. R.N. Kotze was the Government Mining Engineer, soon to be knighted for his services to the industry. William Dalrymple was the head of the Anglo-French Finance Corporation, another powerful figure. H.J. Hofmeyr was a highly respected lawyer, with influential business and mining connections; he was a distant cousin of the new 22-year-old professor, and had been Chairman of the Council in 1913. People said that the Council was really the Chamber of Mines, that powerful organisation which exercised a central supervision over one of the richest industries in the world. This was an exaggeration, but the Chamber was well represented, and that was to be expected, because the primary function of the School had been to train men for the more skilled work of the mines.

H.J. Hofmeyr was a Cape Afrikaner; that could have been told from his names, Henry John. He was in his profession a man of the world, in morals a puritan, in politics a moderate. He was an Afrikaner who "understood the English"; his brother Willie was famous as a die-hard Nationalist, but he himself accepted British rule without difficulty, and was himself so acceptable to the English that they made him Mayor of Johannesburg. It is not known whether he smiled to himself when the Council granted leave of absence to its English-speaking members to go "home", which meant of course to England, and when the Council decided to slow up the development of the embryo Medical School because it was impossible to get men from "home". Outwardly he took such things in his stride.

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There was only one thing that could infuriate the Nationalists more than reference by English people in South Africa to England as "home", and that was when born South Africans did it. That was not the only reason why the School was suspect; it brought too many teachers from England, it was loyal to King and Empire, and it had a high percentage of Jewish students. What was more, it was situated in Johannesburg, the town that had plotted mischief against



President Kruger; and here it was that South African gold was taken out of the ~~earth~~ South African earth, and put into the pockets of ~~the~~ Witlanders. ⑦ And to cap it all, it was a wicked town. The hotels were rowdy and violent, there were sports and amusements on Sundays, and prostitutes walked about openly in the night streets, a thing unknown in Pretoria.

~~In fact Pretoria and Johannesburg stood for two conflicting strains in South African life, if we think only in terms of the white population. They stood respectively, not quite for Kruger and Rhodes, not quite for Religion and Gold, not quite for Tradition and Change, but also not quite not. This conflict is by no means over, though the two cities are more like each other today than they were in 1917. Johannesburg was dominant when Hofmeyr went north, and it was said then, and for thirty years afterwards, that the Chamber of Mines could make and unmake governments. But today Afrikaner Nationalism plays that role, and can keep a President of the Chamber waiting just a week longer for a new passport, just to show what is what.~~

Nevertheless, although the Nationalists would hardly have perceived it, the School of Mines was already embarked on a process of indigenisation. The word "home", meaning England, would eventually drop out of its vocabulary. Its students, today one of the most vigorous anti-apartheid groups in the country, owe nothing of their opposition to "imperialistic influences". The Council of 1917 had appointed Hofmeyr to Classics, and J.D.A. Krige to German and Nederlands, and not long after would appoint Eustace Cluver, Margaret Hodgson, and Theo Haarhoff, all born South Africans. The ~~present University of the Witwatersrand owes a great deal to that~~ early Council, ~~its members~~ knew really little about education, but they had vision enough. For 61 full-time arts and science students, 31 of whom were medicals who would spend only one year in the ordinary classes, the Council had opened nine new departments; with only 44 full-time technological students, it planned an expansion of the engineering courses; and with 31 medicals, it was planning for a grand new Medical School.

members of that

Of all the new professors, the 22-year-old Hofmeyr, now almost 23, was by far the youngest. Among the old stalwarts were Dr. Corstorphine, who had become Principal in 1913, John Orr who had started teaching at the original School of Mines in Kimberley, Lehfeldt who had just switched from Physics to Economics, Dalton the mathematician, Ogg the physicist, Herbert le May the applied mathematician. A notable newcomer in 1917 was W.M. Macmillan, the economic historian, who was to write important works on South Africa and the continent.

⑦ ~~an uitlander was an~~ Aliens or foreigners. Johannesburg was largely an uitlander town.

Hofmeyr's first salary was £850, which must be reckoned a considerable sum for those days. He and his mother took a modest house in St. George's Street, Yeoville, and although they lived unostentatiously, it was well known in the neighbourhood who they were. The legends grew up around them, of the prodigious intellect, the fantastic achievements, the untidy dressing, the mutual devotion, the cats, including the one which was lost, and was found in the bathroom on Saturday night. Hofmeyr would caress the cats, when he left in the morning, and when he returned in the evening, he would lean his bicycle against the wall, and pick them up and stroke them. His name Hennie had now dropped out of use; at Oxford his mother had decided that Jan was to be used, and she herself called him by the diminutive Jantjie.

Mrs. Hofmeyr soon gathered around her a new circle of friends. There were her neighbours the Joneses, Rheinallt and Edith, who had worked with the young Hofmeyr at the Strand seaside services in 1912. Rheinallt, not himself qualified, was working for a firm of lawyers in Johannesburg, and Edith was devoting herself as always to good causes; she was a big woman, unattractive physically, tireless in endeavour, generous of spirit (especially to the humble), devoted to justice. She was a wonderful hostess, and it became a custom for the Hofmeyrs to eat Sunday supper at her home in Saunders Street. Other neighbours were Rheinallt's brother, Cleaton, and his wife; the Jones brothers were Welsh immigrants, and were fascinated by the whole question of the significance of and destiny of the Afrikaner in Africa. Also frequent visitors to the house were the Henry John Hofmeyrs, and Herbert le May and his wife. Through Henry John the young professor learned a great deal about the Council, and though le May, a great deal about the School and its teaching staff. Most of the conversation took place around the tea table, accompanied by the eating of Mrs. Hofmeyr's excellent cakes, scones, and biscuits; most of the conversation was about persons, and a great deal of it was about their weaknesses and lapses rather than their virtues. There is hardly one of us who does not like some gossip, even some scandal; but it must be said that in the Hofmeyr home, otherwise so frugal, so moderate, it became an excess.

It was natural that the young professor with the brilliant academic career should be much in demand as a speaker in Johannesburg and Pretoria. His themes revealed his interests, Augustus and the Empire, Imperialism, and Liberty, Kruger, Rhodes and Hofmeyr. Empire was not something to be thrown away because of one's nationalism, nor was Nationalism to be sacrificed to Empire. If Kruger stood for Separatist Republicanism, and Rhodes for Jingo Imperialism, then Onze Jan's greatness was that he bridged the gulf between them. This stuff was by no means universally popular; DIE BURGER reported that at the Atheneum Club in Pretoria,

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'consternation was caused when one stately personage rose in anger and exclaimed, 'Such a bumptious little pup talking in that way about men he has never seen or known,' and stamped loudly out'. * (8)

J.L. van Eyssen, who was present, wrote to Hofmeyr that such a thing had never happened, but admitted that the English did not altogether like the lecture. The Nationalists liked it still less; they did not approve of this cold and objective view of history; for them Kruger was a hero, Rhodes was a rogue, and Onze Jan was a milksop who either did not recognise robbery when he saw it, or was too afraid to say so. Discussion after the lecture got warm, and according to the papers, Pretoria notabilities such as Ewald Esselen and van Alphen "folded their tents like the Arabs", and stole away rather than become involved. The Minister of Mines, however, the Hon. F.S. Malan, joined in after coaxing, and said that Onze Jan's policy would triumph, and that "the two races would make one nation, peaceably flourishing under the British flag".

Afrikaner Nationalism had a mesmeric fascination for those who were outside its sacred circle, and this fascination contained an element of fear. Its opponents said that time would kill it, that no one could do without the British fleet, that the Afrikaans language would die out, that the Nationalists always fought among themselves anyway. But they were fascinated nevertheless. The newly formed Eclectic Club in Johannesburg, which was supported by Hofmeyr, Macmillan, and other members of the staff of the School, concerned itself with many kinds of problems, but it too was fascinated by Afrikaner Nationalism, and Cleaton Jones persuaded Hofmeyr to give them his thoughts on Republicanism. ~~The Eclectic Club was devoted to the cause of free discussion, but Hofmeyr's address was an eye-opener to the members, nevertheless. He Hofmeyr~~ told them frankly that for the overwhelming majority of Afrikaners, British policy had been one of oppression, and that proof of his contention was to be found in the title of Smuts's celebrated book A CENTURY OF WRONG. ~~Hofmeyr then proceeded as vigorously as any Nationalist could have done. He called the annexation of the diamond fields by Britain in 1871 a robbery, and the annexation of the Transvaal in 1877 a crime. He referred to the fate of the 26,000 Afrikaner women and children who had died in the concentration camps, and advised his hearers to go and contemplate the sombre Vrouemonument at Bloemfontein if they wanted to understand Republicanism. He told~~

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(8) ~~of~~ November 5, 1917. DIE BURGER was, and still is, the outstanding Nationalist newspaper.

(9) Hofmeyr called it "A Century of Injustice", but the other name is better known.

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them that the British flag was hated by many as the symbol of oppression, and that the benefits of British rule had not availed to efface the very real and abiding scars of eighteen years ~~ago~~ before.

If there were any amongst his hearers who thought that the young professor was merely describing for them the emotions of others, they should have been disabused by his statement: ~~that~~ ~~that~~

□ It is a painful fact that to the ordinary Dutch-speaking South African the idea of an Englishman naturally arising (and I fear we could hardly expect anything better) is that of a fearfully superior individual who won't learn his language, who treats him, if not like a piece of dirt, then as a being in some grade between his exalted self and his native boy, and who is continually waving over him the glorious folds of the Union Jack.)

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How deeply the arrogance of the British, especially the English, bit into the Afrikaner soul! How deeply it had bitten - more deeply than ever Secretan or Jacks or Underhill knew - into the soul of this impassive, apparently unhurttable boy, who at the age of eight had thrown up his cap in all innocence to celebrate the defeat of his people's commander! And how deeply Afrikaner arrogance bites today into the souls of others. And this comment is no tu quoque, but rather the cry of the old doctor who watched Lady Macbeth walking in her sleep, "God, God forgive us all!"

Hofmeyr warned his hearers not to try to crush Republicanism by direct opposition, and he put forward his own solution, that of an independent South African Republic, a member of a group of equal sister states. Thus the Englishman would lose his flag but save the British connection, and the Nationalist would have his own flag and President, and would perhaps find it not impossible to learn the lesson that the day of the completely isolated community

U/C X ENJOYING FULL LIBERTY IS PAST.

Hofmeyr's views of the future of South Africa were certainly Nationalist rather than Imperialist, and followed the Hertzog rather than the Botha line. It certainly was strong stuff for the English-speaking supporters of Botha to swallow at a time when the first Great War was still raging. If this was the kind of talk that one got in Johannesburg from a Rhodes Scholar and a Balliol man what might the young man be saying in Pretoria and Potchefstroom, Bloemfontein and Graaff-Reinet!

But while Hofmeyr propounded these Nationalist views, he still remained a neutral. He was writing in Afrikaans to Haarhoff,

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now at Worcester College, that Malan was an absolute failure. Both of them wrote scathingly about the imperialism of Smuts, whom they thought to be diabolically clever; but they were as fascinated by him as the Eclectic Club was fascinated by the Republicans. Smuts had been to England twice in 1917 on ~~was~~ business, and each time Haarhoff had gone down to London to hear him, each time reporting to Hofmeyr on his diabolical cleverness. (10)

But while the School-of-Mines Hofmeyr was remembering British arrogance, the Balliol-Boys' Club Hofmeyr was remembering British friends. Maurice Jacks, wounded and discharged from the army, had returned to Oxford, and was the 1917-18 President of the Club.

Sully □ 'I almost stood on my head for joy and de-claimed in Aristophanic language when I heard that M.L.J. was to take control, and that what I had feared was a mere fantas-tic hope, was to be realised. (11)

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Hofmeyr was ~~shocked~~ sad to hear of the death of Reg Wakelin, and was shocked a few months later to have his own letter to Wakelin returned to him, marked Killed in action. Yet may it not be true again, he wrote, that the blood of the martyrs is the Church as it should be. ~~the~~ seed of the church? And after all our club is, I suppose, very much like the Church as it should be. (12)

Hofmeyr now felt that the defeat of Germany was essential for peace. He wrote that 'jingoism should be defeated, where now it seems it alone survives', and by that he meant, not South Africa, but Germany, which he reckoned was the obstacle to the spread of the Boys' Club spirit throughout the nations. He wrote to Jacks hoping that the Club would not leave No. 9 Littlegate Street, as it might lose its soul; but Jacks replied with fine realism that he would risk the loss of a soul if he could get a place which kept the rain out and had a W.C. door that shut.

Babu King wrote from France,

Sully 'I suppose you are working as hard as ever. Mr. Secretan says he is up to his eyes in work, so I told him he must be standing on his head. (13)

(10) See Haarhoff to Hofmeyr, 20/5/17.

(11) Hofmeyr to Secretan 27/6/17.

(12) Hofmeyr to Secretan 11/11/17.

(13) King to Hofmeyr 17/6/18.



And again, *Z*

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Yes, it would be alright to go up the river in a canoe, not to mention "Mush Mush" which I sing now and again still. Would the Town Hall be big enough, or should we have hired the Albert Hall for our great contest? *(14)*

Hofmeyr wrote to his friends that he liked Johannesburg and his work, both of them being interesting. He had told Rheinallt Jones that one of the reasons he had wanted to leave the South African College was that the people still treated him like a boy. But here at the School of Mines he was put on many sub-committees of the Senate, and discharged his duties on them not only industriously but also with an efficiency that showed he was not merely a scholar.

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One of the most striking changes that took place at the School of Mines in 1917 was the emergence of a strong Senate; it had doubled in size, and it had now been strengthened by the addition of strong personalities. From this time on, it began to play a part in the expansion of the School as important as that of the Council. Its Chairman, the Principal, Dr. Corstorphine, was suffering from ill-health, and in June 1918 was given three months' leave; he recommended to the Council that Professor James Ogg, head of the Department of Physics, should be appointed Acting Principal in his place, and he told the Senate that ~~he~~ intended to appoint him. The Senate, while not opposed to the appointment of Professor Ogg, considered that it had a right to be consulted, and asked the Council to receive a deputation; but the Council, while assuring the Senate that its suggestions would always be welcomed, decided that there was no obligation to consult over the appointments of Principal, Vice-Principal, and Acting Principal.

There was yet another point of difference. At each Senate meeting the Principal was expected to report back to the Senate the full proceedings of the Council; this was a Senate rule which was binding upon its chairman, the Principal. Dr. Corstorphine had always reported back whatever he thought was advisable, but of course he had been a member of Council for some years before he became a member of the Senate. Professor Ogg however was a vigorous believer in the Senate's prerogatives, and he advised Council that there was such a rule, and asked for a decision. The Council then decided that the Principal would report back only those matters which concerned the Senate. It is not surprising then that at this time Senate was pressing for a fuller representation on the Council, by extra members who would not be afflicted by the same

(14) King to Hofmeyr, from France, 27/1/19.

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reticence that afflicted a Principal.

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Meanwhile, at the end of 1918, young Professor Hofmeyr informed the Senate that he had been appointed to the new Chair of Greek at the University of Cape Town, and that he would take up his appointment on the first day of April, 1919. His resignation was received with regret on all sides; he was regarded as an able head of a department, and being only ~~twenty-four~~, he had doubtless a brilliant university career ahead of him.

Yet it is improbable that Hofmeyr was contemplating a university career. His real interest was politics, not classics. Had he not espoused the causes of Onze Jan, and taken Augustus as a model for rulers, and was he not now fascinated by Smuts, his diabolically clever kinsman-in-law? Was he not fascinated by the events that centred round the persons of Botha, Smuts, Hertzog, and Malan? His opponents often despised him for being not a (true Afrikaner), and certainly in the sense in which they used the words, he was not. What they failed to understand is that he was in every bone a South African, and that Oxford and Balliol had not made him less of one. Although they did not know it, it was not his non-existent Englishness that they hated; it was his growing belief, immature as yet and full of contradictions, in the brotherhood of all mankind.

South Africa differed sharply from older countries in 1917, in that there was no big career, no really important honour, outside politics. There were no high offices in the church to compare with Canterbury or York, no old universities, no famous public schools, no Army or Navy, no great titles, no public honours. If a young man was ambitious, and wanted recognition, he must go into politics. But in any event people were already saying of Hofmeyr, 'There goes the future Prime Minister.' ~~Stanley Morrison, his Oxford friend, camper at Radcot, conscientious objector, devout Christian, wrote to him in 1917 that he heard on reliable authority that General Botha was watching him.*~~

The question was not whether Hofmeyr would go into politics but when.

*Morrison to Hofmeyr, 23/8/17.