

CHAPTER ~~XXI~~ ~~XXII~~ ~~XXIII~~ ~~XXIV~~ ~~XXV~~

1938

← 1938 was the year of the General Election, and Parliament assembled on February 11 for a short pre-election session. There were seven newcomers, the three Natives' Representatives in the Lower House, and the four in the Senate. They did not ally themselves with any party, but they introduced a new and vigorous and independent note into Parliament. The two notable newcomers to the Lower House were Margaret Ballinger and Donald Molteno, and the two notable Senators were J.D. Rheinallt Jones and Edgar Brookes, Principal of the famous missionary school called Adams College. Margaret Ballinger made her maiden speech on February 23. She pressed for an increase of the miserably low wages paid to non-white employees on the railways, and used an argument new to the House, but one which she was to make well-known, namely that non-white people helped to create the wealth of the nation, and should have a just share in it.* When she sat down, the House cheered her.

2 words

roman w/c quoted

(c.t)

The impression that Hertzog, while as autocratic as ever, was yet depending more and more on Pirow, was gaining ground. At the opening of Parliament, without consulting Smuts, he arranged - or approved the arrangement - that the Afrikaans patriotic song, DIE STEM VAN SUID AFRIKA** was to be played after 'GOD SAVE THE KING', the British National Anthem, which had been played at the opening since 1910. Questioned by Stallard in the House, the Prime Minister precipitated a crisis by declaring that 'God Save the King' was not the National Anthem of South Africa, but that Die Stem might become so. Smuts immediately left the House and did not return for the subsequent questions which the Prime Minister freely allowed and answered. When Blackwell went to see Smuts, he found him white and shaken; Blackwell wanted Smuts to protest, but Smuts said, My position with the Prime Minister is much too delicate. Go and see him yourself.*³ Blackwell and his deputation warned Hertzog that his statement would stampede English-speaking voters from the United Party, and said that he himself had always considered God Save The King to be the national anthem; he and his colleagues however had no objection to accepting Die Stem as a co-equal anthem. Hertzog refused to admit that God Save The King was the national anthem of South Africa, but he said that whatever its status, he did not wish to supplant it; Die Stem would be supplementary to it.

*HANSARD 1938, Vol. 31, Col. 1365.

**Meaning 'The Voice of South Africa', words by the Afrikaans poet Langenhoven, music by the Rev. M.L. de Villiers.

*³Blackwell, FAREWELL TO PARLIAMENT, p. 7.



Satisfied, Blackwell and his friends went away, but Hertzog's statement to the Press revived their misgivings. After they had spent hours on yet another statement, Smuts sent for Blackwell and showed him a statement prepared by Hofmeyr, which proved satisfactory to Blackwell, and was finally passed by the Prime Minister.

So the crisis passed, but it revealed again the deep internal strains to which this fusion between English- and Afrikaans-speaking people were being subjected. It revealed something else too, the fact that Smuts, although second to the Prime Minister and acknowledged leader of the stronger section of the United Party, was no longer a member of the inner cabinet. Hertzog said he had consulted colleagues, but Smuts was not one of them. Crafford the biographer argues that the Smuts of this time was keeping the United Party together by his genius for compromise,* while Blackwell declared that he was being ignored. Pirow gives a picture of a Smuts forced to capitulate to a more determined man.** The truth seems to be all these judgments compounded, namely that Smuts was willing to endure almost anything to avoid a break in the party.

The big opposition assault was launched by Malan. During the debate on the Part Appropriation Bill he moved an amendment the third clause of which set out in essence the policy of the Purified Nationalist Party. It demanded separate residential areas for whites and non-whites in urban areas, separate spheres of employment as far as possible, limitation of certain occupations to whites, separate representation of coloured voters, and legislation against mixed marriages and employment of whites by non-whites.*³

*Crafford, JAN SMUTS, p.278.

**I think ^{M₄} Pirow's recollections of this relationship are sound, but his recollection of events is not. In his biography of Hertzog he confused this first anthem crisis with the second four months later. See p.203.

*³ HANSARD 1938, Vol. 31, Col. 750.

*⁴ After the Nationalists came to power in 1948, most of these objectives were achieved in the Group Areas Act, Job Reservation, Mixed Marriages Act, Separate Representation of Coloured Voters Act, and others.



Malan said he wanted)

(a clear indication to all who can read that South Africa does not want to have the mixture of all races.*

He was supported by N.J. van der Merwe, one of Hofmeyr's co-delegates to India, who said, I second the amendment with all my heart.*

It was J.J. van Rensburg of Boshof who opened Malan's cupboard, in a way that most members of the House would have found devastating, but which left Malan unmoved. Van Rensburg reminded the House that Malan, on February 27, 1931, speaking on the Franchise Bill, had said *about the coloured people,*)

(the same political rights as we give the Europeans must also be granted to them in principle.*³

In December 1923 Malan sent a Christmas greeting to Dr. Abdurahman, the leader of the Cape Malays. Malan wrote,)

(You as well as the coloured people will receive a raised status, which will secure the giving of equal rights, economic as well as political, which you wished for.*~~4~~

On June 18, 1925, continued van Rensburg, DIE BURGER reported Malan as saying to the Malay Congress, the Government will always try to give the Malays...equal rights with the white man.~~5~~

Finally, said van Rensburg, Malan had said on March 2, 1928, in that very House,)

(I would like to give the franchise to the coloured women.*~~6~~

What had caused Malan to change? Was it political expediency? Or was he really beginning to believe that Afrikaner security depended on the segregation of all races? We may note that his

~~* HANSARD 1938, Vol. 31, Col. 759. ** HANSARD 1938, Vol. 31, Col. 760.~~

~~*³ HANSARD 1938, Vol. 31, Col. 801, ^{or seq.} *⁴ HANSARD 1938, Vol. 31, Col. 802 ^{et seq.}~~

~~* HANSARD 1938, Vol. 31, Col. 802 et seq.~~



political autobiography, ^{ital} AFRIKANER VOLKSEENHEID, EN MY ERVARINGS OP DIE PAD DAARHEEN, * was concerned almost solely with the constitutional rather than with the racial root of Afrikaner politics. His chapter headings dealt with the Commonwealth, the Crown, the Flag struggle, ~~Hereniging~~ ^{and} ~~Vereniging~~, rather than with the colour policies he was now advocating. As for his sustained anti-Semitic campaign of the thirties, one finds no mention of it in his book; and of the struggle, fierce and sustained, between himself and Hofmeyr, no word at all.** Were these experiences irrelevant to Afrikaner unity, or did he, in the days of his retirement when he was held in veneration, not wish to remember them? That may well be so. After Hofmeyr's death, he ~~told the~~ ^{claimed} writer that he had nothing to say about him, nothing to add after eighteen years to the formal words of eulogy that he had spoken in the House.*³

informed h

Racial separation is held out by its supporters to be a beautiful thing, offering peace to the land and justice to its people. Nationalists grow angry with those who will not believe it, but History will record that racial separation was in those days justified by the basest of arguments. Malan's amendment was strongly supported by Mr. J.L. Brill, who on the death of Major F.J. Roberts had won Vrededorp for the Nationalist Party, bringing Malan's strength to 20, and doubling the Transvaal tally of one.*⁴ Brill referred with revulsion to Dr. W.P. Steenkamp's speech at the farewell to Sir Raja and Lady Ali, where he had said,

^{ital} ——— 'We are all one. No colour, no class.
In me you are one ought to be the slogan of the world.*⁵

Coloured

Brill protested against the presence of Harry Lawrence, M.P. for Salt River, and H.C. de Wet, M.P. for Caledon, at a social given by the ~~Coloured~~ ^{Coloured} Voters Welfare Association in Caledon; such camaraderie led to communism. He protested against the presence of Duncan Burnside, M.P. for Umbilo, and R.W. Bowen, M.P. for Cape Town Central, at a meeting of Coloured citizens in the Cape Town City Hall, called to oppose Pienaar's Bill to control employment of white

^{and} *AFRIKANER UNITY, & MY EXPERIENCES ON THE ROAD THERETO.

**Hofmeyr appears once in his book in an unimportant context on p.116.

*³ Malan does not in his book exclude English-speaking people from Afrikaner unity, but he, like Hertzog, could calm them on Monday and terrify them on Tuesday.

*⁴ The other Transvaal member was Mr. J.G. Strijdom.

*⁵ THE SUN, February 7, 1938. Dr. Steenkamp, M.P. for Namaqualand, was quoting from Christ's prayer for his apostles, ~~St.~~ John 17, 21.

xvii. 21.



women by Indians. He protested because Hofmeyr, when the lift attendant refused to allow an Indian to use the lift, had sent Chris Dames down to take the Indian up.

He complained that at the beautiful ^{ten-}10-storey Lady Dudley Nursing Home in Johannesburg, 'if you want to see anybody in the building a pitch-black native takes you up there.' He said that every ~~third~~ lorry-driver was a black man, and asked, 'Can we any longer permit the whole of the industrial world in Johannesburg to be in the hands of the natives?'

Brill crowned his speech by reminding Pirow of his attack on Smuts in 1929, for 'being in favour of the vote for Kaffir women.' He quoted Pirow as saying amid roars of laughter,

'What a lovely state of affairs it will be when "aya" goes to the polling booth with a little monkey on her back.*'

But, said Brill, after fusion Pirow no longer said such things.

This was the programme, and in the mouths of many there would be the arguments, on which Malan intended to fight the General Election. He told the United Party that they were too divided to put relations between white and black on a proper basis. He said,

'It is only the Nationalist Party which can affirm to the world that we intend to keep this a white man's country.**'

According to one observer, Malan was giving notice that his party intended to make all possible capital out of the presence of Hofmeyr and a small liberal group within the United Party.**

The great United Party was not really in danger. It had 117 seats out of 153 in the Lower House, and of the 36 members in opposition, 16 were hostile to Malan. In the event it lost six seats, and returned to Parliament 111 strong. The Dominionites

*Aya means a non-white servant or nurse-maid. This quotation is revealing; what might be considered touching in many countries was here considered laughable.

2. 3. 1938.

**NATAL MERCURY, March 2, 1938.

lost Stallard and Coulter, but went from 5 to 8, sweeping the city of Durban, whose citizens had been angered by Hertzog's statements on 'God Save The King'. Malan went from 20 to 27, and gave Hertzog a great shaking in his own constituency. Hertzog had won this by 1301 votes in 1929, and had been unopposed in 1933; but now in 1938 he beat his Malanite opponent by only 526, although the enfranchisement of women had doubled the number of votes. Hertzog's Minister of Commerce & Industries, ~~Mr.~~ A.P.J. Fourie, was defeated by the Malanites at Gordonia. The success of the United Party was in large measure to be ascribed to Smuts and the English-speaking members of the Party; they reminded their nervous voters that Hertzog had said that 'God Save the King' was not to be superseded but to be supplemented. Smuts assured tremendous meetings in East London, Durban, and Johannesburg, that 'God Save the King' would remain a national anthem for ever, for which he was tumultuously applauded. And of course his task was made easier by the Austrian Anschluss and Hitler's claim to the former colonies; whom could one trust better than Smuts?

from

For Hofmeyr the campaign was arduous. He had a desperately busy time, so he wrote to Underhill. During the campaign he had an unpleasant accident; the bumpers of two cars became interlocked, and in trying to release them in the dark two of his fingers were badly torn and crushed, and had to be given several stitches.* Hofmeyr was in considerable pain, but went on immediately to address a meeting in Durban North, after asking pressmen not to mention his injury in case his mother should be unnecessarily alarmed. He even found himself invited to speak for Heaton Nicholls in his Zululand constituency; between the two men some kind of mutual regard was growing up, no doubt because each recognised the integrity of the other.

Hofmeyr won Johannesburg North by 4721 votes to his opponents 1389. The United Party won all ^{5,870} Johannesburg seats, and lost only ^{8,730} on the entire Witwatersrand. Hofmeyr was not only pleased with this, he was pleased that Malan's appeal to colour prejudice and his attacks on Hofmeyr the Liberal, had failed to bring much result. Writing to Underhill, he deduced that white South Africa was making progress.** In fact the Nationalist vote had increased from ~~to 259,450~~ to 259,450. Malan had secured only 24% ^{of seats} of Hertzog's number of seats, but he had secured 58% ^{of votes} of Hertzog's number of votes. In Hertzog's own province of the Orange Free State Malan had won another two seats. It is one of the remarkable facts of South African history, that while it ~~was~~ commonly accepted that ^{today} in 1968 we are ruled by the ideology of the North rather than of the South, of the

considerably per cent

*Hofmeyr to Underhill, May 10, 1938.

**Hofmeyr to Underhill, June 12, 1938.

ALAN PATON
CENTRE
UNIP

Transvaal rather than the Cape, it was in the Cape that modern Afrikaner Nationalism was born and ~~here~~ nurtured.

abettred Hardly had the United Party won its great victory when Hertzog, ~~attended~~ by Pirow, or Pirow, abettred by Hertzog, perpetrated another unbelievable blunder. It was the custom to hold on Union Day, the anniversary of May 31, 1910, when the four provinces came together, military parades throughout the country. 'God Save the King' was not played at these parades unless a direct representative of the King, such as the Governor-General, were present. Pirow, as Minister of Defence, chose this occasion to introduce 'Die Stem van Suid-Afrika' as a slow march. It is hard to imagine a greater stupidity. Stuttaford, Hofmeyr's successor in the Interior promptly resigned, and Hertzog, without consulting Smuts, called Harry Lawrence of the Cape at once to Pretoria. Hertzog showed his pugnacity by telling his secretary to put all protests in the waste-paper-basket, and then showed his reasonableness by agreeing that if one tune was played on any formal occasion, the other would be played also. The Government also confirmed Hertzog's view that the Union had no official anthem. Stuttaford withdrew his resignation, and Hertzog gave Lawrence the portfolio that had belonged to Fourie, the defeated Minister.

Hofmeyr meanwhile was keeping out of trouble. When trouble flared up between Smuts men and Hertzog men on matters such as flags and anthems he found himself always ready to accept any reasonable compromise. He thought Pirow had acted stupidly, but he was prepared to accept, unlike many others, that Pirow's decision to use 'DIE STEM' as a slow march had no ulterior motive. Hofmeyr had no real interest in these matters, and could even watch them with amusement, especially when Hertzog in caucus, having returned to his pugnacious self, soundly rebuked those English-speaking members who had protested against the Union Day incidents. There were those like Blackwell who thought that the United Party was on the point of breaking up over these repeated anthem troubles, but Hofmeyr was not one of them. The Party was certainly in a jittery state, and this was not improved when at the opening of Parliament, by ~~his~~ ^{his} management, a fanfare of trumpets drowned 'God Save the King'. Malan's motion for one wholly indigenous anthem caused no division in a Party which had weathered so much.

What was going on? Was Hertzog smarting under the losses of two more Free State seats, and the loss of Fourie at Gordonia? Was he smarting under the knowledge that his English-speaking support had increased, and his Afrikaans-speaking support grown less, that he was more dependent on Smuts's support than he had been? Had the old dislike for Smuts, the jealousy of Smuts, returned? Pirow wrote quite frankly that Hertzog and he were almost inseparable, and that if the matter were important, Havenga was called in, and thereafter General Smuts joined us to complete the Inner Cabinet.* At this

*JAMES BARRY MUNNIK HERTZOG, *by Pirow*, p. 216.



point Hertzog seemed indifferent to the crises he provoked whether by action or by intemperate words. He would plunge the Party into a crisis, and Smuts, without appearing to be too important, would have to get it out again.

Hertzog was now determined to bring back Fourie into the Cabinet. Fourie had stood by him in the experiment of Fusion, and now he would stand by Fourie. The obvious way to get him back was for some United Party M.P. to resign his seat, but no one was willing. Meanwhile Hertzog created a twelfth post in the Cabinet, ready for Fourie. Hertzog's actions became the subject of jokes and taunts. Burnside said the only way to get Fourie elected was to create a new constituency on Robben Island, with two lighthouse-keepers for voters. Burnside did not want any more Ministers; he said they were always travelling, and the more of them were away, the better the country was run. But he had a good word for Hofmeyr. He said the Trade Unions wanted him back as Minister of Labour, because they had confidence in him.*

Hertzog now decided to get Fourie back as a senator. There were 44 senators in the Upper House, of whom 36 were elected** The remaining ~~eight~~⁸ were nominated by the Governor-General-in-Council,*³ and ~~four~~⁴ of these were nominated because of their thorough acquaintance with the reasonable wants and wishes of the colored races. One of these now resigned.

It was now well known in the United Party, or at least in the Smuts wing of it, that Hofmeyr would resign if Fourie were appointed as a person thoroughly acquainted. He told Smuts so, and Blackwell records that Smuts and Hofmeyr persuaded de Wet of Caledon to offer his seat to Fourie. However, Fourie would not accept. He had already been humiliated, and he could not face another election, where he would probably have polled fewer votes than de Wet. Hofmeyr then went to the Prime Minister, and said that he could not agree to the appointment of Fourie as a senator thoroughly acquainted. Hertzog's response was to create Fourie a senator at a meeting of the Cabinet on the morning of Friday, September 9. Neither Smuts nor Sturrock was present at the meeting. Hofmeyr shortly afterwards sent in his resignation.

*HANSARD 1938, Vol. 32, Col. 513 et seq.

**⁸Eight for each province, and ⁴four Natives' Representatives.

*³The Governor-General-in-Council was the Governor-General meeting with the Cabinet. The Governor-General was usually represented by the Prime Minister, and the Council was therefore in effect the Cabinet.



rel

The House was crowded in the afternoon. Smuts had been addressing a meeting of the Botanical Society at Kirstenbosch in the morning, and did not return to the House. It was reported that he was studying grave and important news from London, and that he would support the Prime Minister in the Fourie affair, so that Fusion could be saved. It was also known that Sturrock, who was away for the day cruising on HMS AMPHION as the guest of the Admiral, would follow Hofmeyr's example; and it was believed that if Hofmeyr were forced out of the Party, some ten or twelve ordinary members would follow him. The atmosphere of the House was electric; there was always the possibility that the great experiment of Fusion would end, that Hertzog would be reunited with Malan, that the Dominionites would return to Smuts and that Afrikaner Nationalism would gain new strength and momentum. Such a prospect exhilarated the Purified Nationalists, but it was dreaded by most English-speaking South Africans, who felt that Hertzog, whatever his shortcomings, stood between them and the implacable Afrikanerdom of Malan.

Hofmeyr told the House that he could not lay his hand on his heart and say that Mr. Fourie was being appointed because of his thorough acquaintance. He said:

□ I consider it as nothing less than a prostitution of the constitution that that provision should be used to assist the Government out of a temporary political difficulty...but this issue is not merely a constitutional issue... it touches the whole question of the relations between the European and the non-European peoples in South Africa... and this issue is simply this...are we going to allow the non-Europeans to be made pawns in the white man's political game? That is what this thing means. One constitutional safeguard goes today, the next will go tomorrow. I for my part cannot accept that.*

□ Hofmeyr reminded the House that Pirow had once been brought into the Cabinet in the same way, and that the Prime Minister, when asked what special acquaintance Pirow possessed, had replied, that acquaintance which is possessed by every enlightened son of South Africa who takes an intelligent interest in the people of South Africa and their welfare.

*HANSARD 1938, Vol. 32, Col. 2485 et seq.

HJF



□ Hofmeyr went on:

I am not prepared to share responsibility for a breach of the constitution and I propose to go. I realise of course that my action will be criticised. I have already been told that this issue is not big enough for resignation. Of course for those whose primary concern is political expediency, no issue is ever big enough.

Hofmeyr dealt with the charge that he had not taken into account the gravity of the international situation. He said,

(No one in the country knows the international situation better than the Prime Minister. He knew yesterday...he knew what were the consequences of the step he proposed to take.)

□ Hofmeyr then dealt with the perennial rumour that he would start a new Party:

□ I am told also that I am breaking up the United Party and that I am proposing to start a new party of my own...I intend to do nothing of the kind. I believe in the United Party and what it stands for. I helped to create the United Party. I have done my share to make the achievement of the United Party and the Government possible.

□ Hofmeyr thanked the Prime Minister for the consideration he had always extended to his colleague,

(Sometimes it may be that I have been rather a difficult colleague, but at least there has never been any lack of goodwill, I may say, on either side.)

□ Hofmeyr also expressed regret at leaving Smuts.

(...I shall no longer be a colleague in the same Government as the Deputy Prime Minister. For my part I hope our close association of long standing will continue in the years to come to be equally close.)

~~***HANSARD 1938, P. 2485 et seq.~~

~~***HANSARD 1938, P. 2489.~~



□ Hofmeyr concluded,

Mr. Speaker, may I in all modesty express the hope that this action of mine will be a clarion call to the younger generation of South Africa to set principle above expediency in the approach to public affairs.

Hofmeyr's speech was described in the English-language press as magnificent, moving, dramatic. There were unusual scenes in the galleries and public bays while he was speaking. Ushers had to eject people who shouted 'hear, hear', and those who clapped at the end of the speech. Hertzog's reply was poor by comparison, and the quorum bells had to be rung on several occasions while he was speaking, owing to the numbers of members who wanted to get to the lobbies to discuss Hofmeyr's speech and the general situation. Hofmeyr showed nothing of the nervousness of 1936, and sat listening to the Prime Minister in what was almost a ~~judicial~~ judicial manner.

The Prime Minister had not at all been soothed by Hofmeyr's reference to him. He first delivered himself of an astounding judgment by saying,

I just want to point out that we can of course feel just as deeply as we may, but the best proof whether our feelings are right or not is the extent to which others agree with us, and when we stand alone, then one must not say that one is right.**

□ Hertzog denied Hofmeyr's charge that Fourie was not competent to represent the coloured races. He said,

Mr. Fourie was born in their midst, he grew up in their midst, he had to do with them all his life, just as much as with the Europeans.**

What is more, said Hertzog, Fourie had been the Administrator of the Cape, and had to deal not only with the coloured races, but with the natives as well, and to look after their needs and interests. That surely was one of the chief things with which an Administrator was

*HANSARD, 1938 P. 2489

**HANSARD, 1938 P. 2492. Col. 2492. et seq.

*³ HANSARD, 1938 P. 2490 et seq. The Prime Minister was speaking in Afrikaans; ~~what the reader is reading~~ is the official translation.
 this

10

ALAN PATON CENTRE LIB.

entrusted. Hertzog declared that it was not necessary for Hofmeyr to go out of the Cabinet.)

(...he could have remained in it - but owing to his own obstinacy, or because of his deep respect for principles - which I am prepared to assume in this case, he wants to say that I and the whole Cabinet should have yielded to him. He wants us to respect his obstinacy, but he will not consider our view ...we were not prepared, we did not consider it reasonable that such a demand should be made of us. I just want to say that the whole question was considered; my honourable friend could have remained in the Cabinet if he had wanted to. It was at his own wish and desire that he has left the Cabinet, and he must not try to punish us a little as he has tried to do, because if he does that, then I cannot permit it.)

So Hofmeyr left the Cabinet, followed three days later by Sturrock. Frederick Claud Sturrock was a Scot with an agreeable accent, engineer turned business man and financial authority, and respected for both his ability and his integrity. When he resigned he told the House that he did so partly out of loyalty to Hofmeyr, but mainly because of his duty to what he conceived to be right. Sturrock was a Conservative rather than a Liberal, but he agreed wholeheartedly with Hofmeyr that the appointment of four special senators was part of the pact of Union, and he would be no party to its abrogation.

To him the Prime Minister replied,

(I am not going to stand by and see my colleague hounded out of the Ministry in the treasonable and disloyal manner in which people have tried to do so. They knew that very well.)

Hertzog placed the guilt for the whole affair squarely on Hofmeyr and Sturrock, who had stood by and watched every constituency prejudiced against Fourie, until only one way of return was left. Then they, who had so far done nothing, tried to block that too.

Those were Hertzog's real grievances against Hofmeyr - first that he had done nothing to help Fourie back to Parliament, second that he had expected the Cabinet to bow to his will. In a strange inexplicable way, he was prepared to bear with Hofmeyr; he could stand it when Hofmeyr opposed parts of the grand segregation



← programme, but he could not stand it when Hofmeyr opposed him himself.

Paul Ribbink, librarian of Parliament, related that he asked Smuts, 'General, what do you think of it all?' And Smuts put his hand on Ribbink's and replied, 'Paul, don't you think that many a time I wanted to resign myself, crossings of my will, unwise policies, I thought I couldn't stand them. But I never felt free to take an easy way out.'

~~There was also the story that Mrs. Smuts, without consulting her husband, congratulated Mrs. Sturrock on her husband's action. Mrs. Sturrock, pleased by this, stopped Smuts in the lobby to express her gratification. Smuts looked at her out of cold blue eyes and said, yes, the position in Czechoslovakia is very critical. Then he walked sternly on.*~~

Clearly Smuts did not think the issue big enough, and he was by no means alone in this. Sir Abe Bailey wrote to Hofmeyr that he felt the resignation very much, especially in these dangerous times, and that the Cabinet was hopeless without Hofmeyr. Two months later he wrote again; he was in great pain, and perhaps not thinking clearly, because he urged Hofmeyr to go back to the Cabinet. He wrote, 'I don't think you realise how very dangerous the world is.' John Martin was filled with dismay that Hofmeyr should consider Fourie a greater issue than Hitler. Rayner Ellis, of the RAND DAILY MAIL, a big effeminate man who combined a great self-diffidence with a wounding tongue and pen, tried to persuade Rose McLeod his editor to write that Hofmeyr paraded his political conscience too much in public, and George Heard, their gifted political correspondent, nearly resigned in consequence.

Now the letters and the telegrams poured in, from judges, teachers, ministers of religion, students and professors, big men in mining houses, old campers, all sorts and conditions of people. Marie

~~*Told me by Lief Egeland.~~

d

Hansen wrote that he must have a party of his own; during the day I work as a shorthand typist, but in the evenings I could along with others, work for your party. *

Mrs. Greig wrote, I have asked my daughters who are mothers of sons to keep your farewell speech and read it to their children.

A.L. Gaxshon of the DAILY EXPRESS wrote to congratulate him on his speech:

It made my blood race and in future if ever I could do something which will help you to fulfil what you hope to fulfil, I shall do everything in my power to help. It all sounds very hopeless but the call you sounded to youth made me feel as though I would like to follow you to the end of the earth.

Hannah le Roux wrote from Nyasaland, West Africa has given us an Aggrey. May not South Africa give us a Hofmeyr of Africa.

Tommie Theron wrote that a new party must champion the rights of all South Africans to a good education and an opportunity to serve, it must forbid all shades of racialism within its ranks.

Denys Lefevre wrote that Hofmeyr had now taken into his hands a great trust, which he would not and could not ignore. Williams of the Parktown High School wrote that he had taught his boys to recite Hofmeyr's speeches; now one could see those sentiments expressed in action. Allan Davis wrote that Hofmeyr reminded him of Benjamin Franklin, who struggled alone and yet left a never-to-be-forgotten name in his country; you will do the same. Of these hundreds of letters and telegrams most were informed by this love of justice; most of the writers were white South Africans, who, ill at ease with their country's racial policies, found in Hofmeyr their champion. Oliver Schreiner struck a more practical note; he wrote that he hoped that Hofmeyr would now finish his law exams, and then come to the Bar in Johannesburg. The one discordant note was from D. Buchanan. ****

(I may be dense, in fact I know I am, but does it not strike you as savouring of

* This and the following letters are from the Hofmeyr papers, Box 2, files 20a and 20b.

~~*/** Box 2, File 20a, Hofmeyr Papers.~~

~~*/3/4/5 " " File 20b, " "~~

** ~~6 Ibid~~ Name illegible.

*** ~~7 Ibid~~ Initials illegible. * ~~Box 2 File 20b Hofmeyr Papers~~

*** This was certainly not Douglas Buchanan who later became a Natives Representative.

19

dishonesty to resign from the leadership of a party because of its political dishonesty but yet at the same time to continue to be a member of such a party.*



Start
a blow
~~That was quite a point. If one reverences life, should one eat lettuce? If one rejects apartheid, should one go to a cinema, travel in a train, swim in the sea? If one will not strike to save oneself, should one strike ^{to} save others? Or should one follow Henry Ford, who when told what would happen if one of his ideas were carried out to its logical conclusion, said, well don't carry it to its logical conclusion. It is also probable that D. Buchanan was one of those who when angry with someone who has moved away from his own immoral position, points out that the real immorality was not to have moved further.~~

of Natives
There was still a third class of critics besides those who blamed Hofmeyr for causing a crisis and those who blamed him for not causing a bigger one. There were those who agreed that if he had been going to resign on a matter of principle, he should have done it in 1936, over the ~~Natives~~ Representation Bill, not on a small matter like Fourie's appointment. That was a highly debatable argument. The first action was certainly bigger and more spectacular than the second, but both were examples of white supremacy at work, regarding all national affairs as white men's affairs. ~~One might even argue in Hofmeyr's defence that the first action, if unethical, was at least constitutional, whereas the second was plainly unethical.~~ In a way ~~the~~ argument is irrelevant. What Hofmeyr could not do in 1936, he could do in 1938. The break that Hofmeyr could not make in 1936, he could make in 1938. He was two years older, two years wiser, two years more advanced in his emancipation from the bonds of custom and tradition that hold white South Africa in thrall. He was two years more understanding of his responsibilities, not only to the voiceless people of South Africa, but to hundreds of thousands - no, say one hundred thousand, including men, women and children, including the young woman who would work nights for him and the young men who would have liked to follow him to the ends of the earth - one hundred thousand white South Africans, who faced by the dragon of fear and hate, their own as well as others, looked to Hofmeyr as to a new Saint George.

~~There was yet another class of critics who also criticised Hofmeyr for not resigning in 1936, but did so on practical, not ethical grounds. They were in fact criticising him for lack of boldness and for believing that liberalism had a home in the United Party. This criticism must be dealt with later.~~

As for Hofmeyr himself, for a while his diffidence left him. For a while he was not wanting to be a John Bright. No doubt the

support of many exhilarated him, he who did not go in much for exhilaration; for one thing he distrusted it, for another it was a strange visitor in the house of his temperament. Not only was there the support of many, but the visions of those few who saw him as an Aggrey and a Franklin and a Hofmeyr of Africa. Such praise goes to the head like wine, and being intoxicated, one does not abjure it. And if one is inclined to abjure it, then one such as Hofmeyr must ask the gravest of all questions, 'is this God's plan for me?' Who would remember better than Hofmeyr that Moses the shepherd, when God called upon him to become the liberator of Israel, pleaded his inadequacy and his lack of eloquence, till God's anger was kindled against him? Could he hear Sarah Millin's voice speaking, 'The future is yours if you will take it?' Could he hear her saying, 'I hope you come out on the high side?' And could he hear himself replying, 'One must choose one's ground carefully; no, it's not just caution, nor just timidity, but one must choose one's ground carefully?' And she replying, 'if not today, then tomorrow the people will want the just man?' Hofmeyr of Africa? Was that God's plan for him?

Note position
of quotes

But now for a while he is not questioning. He is not asking questions and hearing questions. For a while certitude possesses him. Sarah Millin telegraphs, then she writes and congratulates him on his resignation. He writes to her ~~with a~~

□ From the personal point of view, I feel I have been given a stature in the country such as I never had before. Moreover I am much more conscious than before of what might be called a sense of vocation in our political life. At last I really think I am going to be Prime Minister!*

He closes his sentence with an exclamation mark, but there is no irony in it, just that faintest suggestion of self-deprecation that he should be discussing such things. Sarah Millin is not the only person to whom he makes this observation - there are a few others too.** Is this not exhilaration, housed for a while by an unlikely temperament? And why exhilaration, at this very moment when he is moving, not towards power, but away from it? And why exhilaration from the man who two years before had said, 'I know I am speaking against the feeling of the great mass of the people of this country?' Of course he had meant white people, but were the great mass of the white people any different from what they had been then? Like many good men, Hofmeyr is now uplifted, not only by the knowledge that he has done what he thought right, not only by the knowledge that many others think he has done right, but also because they look to him to lead them in their just cause. And because he is uplifted, he thinks he will be what in his reflective moments he has already decided he could never be. For a while youth is restore

red.

18.9.1938

*September 18, 1938.

**Including the writer.

to him, after the kidney trouble and the constant attacks and the physical weariness of his superhuman labours; now he can see again the holy city, where there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain. For a while he is again that young Administrator, who, exalted above all earthly strife, can make the young men see visions and the old men dream dreams. For who but the young Administrator would have said in the Lower House of the Parliament of South Africa, that he hoped his action would be a clarion call to the younger generation of the country to set principle above expediency in their public life? Who else but the young Administrator would have said in that House;

'Be prepared to go down, if need be, into the valley of misrepresentation and contumely, while you keep your eyes fixed on the heights above. So only can you be assured that in public life you will still be the master of your fate, still the captain of your soul.*

One can hear Heaton Nicholls grinding his teeth. In this mood he continued his letter to Sarah Millin;

□ I am sorry for Smuts. He has been sorely humiliated. To a large extent it is his own fault. He is really no match for the Prime Minister in simple directness and in straightforwardness of purpose. He is now Hertzog's prisoner in the Cabinet. He must do whatever he is told to do. His only possible escape is through the outbreak of war and the almost inevitable Cabinet split which will result. At the moment our relations are somewhat strained, mainly, I think, because, knowing he has let me down badly, he is sensitive about the whole business... I know that he would like to find a way of getting me back into the Cabinet, but how can he possibly expect Hertzog to agree to what must inevitably be my terms?'

To Underhill he wrote that if Smuts had taken a stronger line, the Prime Minister would have abandoned his intention to nominate Fourie as a senator thoroughly acquainted; but when it became clear that Smuts would not resign, Hertzog grasped the chance to get rid of two troublesome Ministers. He added,

'So that I suppose one can say that the real reason for our departure... is not so much... Fourie, but the fact that our views... especially mine, are too "liberal" for the Prime Minister and some of his colleagues.'

* Hofmeyr was quoting from a speech he had made a few days earlier to the Cape Town Junior Chamber of Commerce, he told the August House that he was doing so.

488



Hofmeyr's version was therefore not quite the same as Hertzog's. Hofmeyr thought Hertzog wanted him out because of his liberalism, Hertzog said Hofmeyr was going out because of his obstinacy. Probably there was little difference between the two explanations.



But was Hofmeyr right about Smuts? Was he Hertzog's prisoner? Was he really being outgeneralled by his colleague? Was it true that if Smuts had been firm, Hertzog would have climbed down about Fourie? There was Malan saying that Hertzog was captive to Smuts as Samson had been to Delilah. There was Crafford the biographer writing that it was Smuts and his genius that held the United Party together. There was Pirow agreeing with Crafford that it was the Commonwealth that mattered to Smuts, and not the political rights of Africans. There seems good reason to reject Hofmeyr's description of Smuts as a prisoner, even though we accept that he had to suffer humiliations. The first part of the judgment was probably another by-product of Hofmeyr's exhilaration.

As was his rule, Hofmeyr did not criticise Smuts in public. On the contrary he expressed the opinion that in his context Smuts was right.* Nothing could more clearly show the difference between the two men. Smuts was prepared to countenance present wrong for the sake of future good, but for Hofmeyr the only time to do right was the present.

Was Smuts really sensitive about the whole business? Was that because he knew he had let Hofmeyr down? Whatever the answers may be, there was certainly a constraint between them. The idol of the British people, the man for whom the elite of England stood up as if for royalty, found it uncomfortable to meet the unsmiling gaze of Deborah Hofmeyr, who judged him and found him wanting. She might know little about politics, but she knew that four special senators were appointed from amongst men who had special knowledge of the problems and aspirations of non-white people, and she knew that Fourie was not one of them. What more was there to say? Smuts felt that some explanation was due to her, but he was afraid to face her, so he sent Mrs. Smuts, who was given the worst hour she had ever had. Hofmeyr and his mother had been frequent visitors to Doornkloof, most often on a Sunday for dinner. But now the two families were estranged and the estrangement lasted until the outbreak of the Second World War.**

The Hofmeyr home now became the Mecca of his admirers, and they would gather round the celebrated tea-table. No one said anything about Smuts, but Mrs. Hofmeyr would say, speaking of Fourie,

*Blackwell records this, FAREWELL TO PARLIAMENT, p.38. The writer supports the statement.

**Told to ^{the writer} me by Mrs. Smuts.



SP-special

Cap Who knew that Attie had such ~~sp~~special knowledge? It was one of her questions that was answered by her very asking. It was one of those topics not really meant for popular discussion. She would close it herself by saying, Now again we are p-poor relations.

So Hofmeyr went to Pirow at Hertzog's command, and handed over all his portfolios. Perhaps they remembered the day in 1937 when they had saved the nation, It was one of the few things they had in common. In a way it was a relief to get rid of the work that threatened to eat up his life. Now he could finish those law exams, and, so he wrote to King, come over to England in 1939, and camp down there at Wytham. King answered ~~by November 9~~ ;

(There is one bad point about Wytham. It is too near home; very useful when getting all the gear there, but relations drop in very frequently. However,,,your presence should go far to keep the lovely ladies away.)*

There was one pity though, and that was to leave the Wool-sack and the peace and the trees. And not to be able to go back to the big spacious house at 743 Schoeman Street. They moved into a smaller house, 735 Pretorius Street. He retained his title of Honourable, which any person who has been a member of the Governor-General's Executive Council keeps for life, ~~but his salary dropped from £ to £~~

* 9.11.1938

~~King to Hofmeyr~~
 *November 9, 1938.
 Nov. 1938.