

PC 11/7/9-38 Leo

CHAPTER XXXVIII

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1945

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← Meanwhile in San Francisco Smuts was witnessing and assisting in the birth of a new world. He was nearly 75, and, so Hofmeyr wrote to Underhill, very active and vigorous - always ready for new journeys, which of course add to my burdens.\* Hofmeyr never showed any jealousy of these journeys, or gave any hint that he thought Smuts should have stayed at home. On the contrary the Prime Minister and he kept closely in touch during these absences. To Hofmeyr Smuts revealed his anxiety that the San Francisco Conference would drag on, until events in Europe would call every European statesman of any importance back to duty, to attend to the new problems created by the lightning advance of the Russians into Germany. Smuts kept urging the Conference to hurry, and he himself was preparing the preamble to the Charter, with its noble emphasis on fundamental human rights, the sanctity of personality, the equal rights of men and women, and of nations large and small.

The Charter gave Britain, the United States, Russia, China, and France permanent seats on the Security Council. Provision was made to convert League of Nations mandates into United Nations Trusteeships, falling under a Trusteeship Council. Smuts formally reserved South Africa's rights in regard to her mandate over South West Africa. Smuts was not the figure in San Francisco that he had always been in London. The two giants of the world were America and Russia, and the first knew little and the second nothing of the veteran soldier so held in honour by the Commonwealth. Smuts had prophesied that the world would be ruled by the Trinity, but it was already clear that it would be ruled by the Big Two. Already the Commonwealth to which he had devoted so much of his life was beginning to decline in power. While he was working on the Charter, which was to enshrine all the freedoms longed for by men, people of the new nations were framing for Smuts the question, and would soon be asking it, 'What happens there in your own country?' He wrote to Hofmeyr:

□ / As regards the Conference I find not only power politics well to the fore, but also a strong humanitarian tendency, finding expression in provisions for equal rights all round, and other embarrassing proposals so far as we are concerned. The Conference has to be carefully and even anxiously watched, and I am doing my best in that respect.'

\*Hofmeyr to Underhill, March 4, 1945.

On the evening of May 8, Hofmeyr made a victory broadcast to the nation. He ~~said~~ <sup>gave thanks</sup> to God and to all who had made victory possible, he remembered the bereaved, the prisoners, and those still listed as missing. He said we have made a much larger contribution to the cause to which we pledged ourselves than at first we dared hope we would be able to make. <sup>He said that</sup> this had been a great period in our history, <sup>that</sup> ~~it~~ <sup>could</sup> ~~become~~ <sup>become</sup> a mighty force for the building up of a great, a truly united South African nation.

This broadcast brought a telegram from Smuts in San Francisco to the Secretary for External Affairs:

'I have read with deep emotion Mr. Hofmeyr's beautiful victory broadcast to the nation this week.'

'I congratulate him on a message which must have been as moving to our people as it has been to myself.'

'It is all true and I trust its hopes and prayers will also come true. Thank him for it.'

Hofmeyr also composed a United Party Victory message, in which he paid humble and generous tribute to Smuts:

'It was he who gave the lead that resulted in South Africa's choosing the path of honour and not of ignominy, it was he who guided and inspired us in the dark days that followed, those difficult years, 1940, 1941, when all seemed hopeless...'

Hofmeyr himself received many tributes, especially from those who knew how he had worked without sparing himself. Not even his enemies could imagine a Hofmeyr who shirked what he thought to be his duty. Some of the letters moved him deeply, so that he admitted - but not to many - that nothing in his life had moved him so deeply as they. ~~Did he weep? Some said that he did; if they knew that, then his mother must have told them. Perhaps the relationship between mother and son was such that he could have wept in her presence. The writer never met anyone who had known him to weep.\*\*~~

1. Rand Daily Mail, 9 May 1945

2. Despatched May 17, 1945.

~~\*\*In a tribute after his death I stated that he wept "unaccustomed tears". The statement was based on insufficient evidence.~~

SECRET  
PUBLIC  
OFFICE

Smuts wrote also, as he had written before, you must have a good deal of trouble carrying your Parliamentary and other heavy burdens.\*

On May 7, the day after Smuts wrote his letter, Hofmeyr received the secret cable that the German forces in Europe had surrendered to the Allies and the Soviet High Command. The next afternoon Hofmeyr announced in Parliament that the war was won. The members of the Dominion Party immediately began to sing God Save The King, and were joined by many members of the United Party and the Labour Party. Stallard sang with them, but Hofmeyr and the other Cabinet Ministers remained seated. Only once before had God Save The King been sung in the House, and that was at the end of the War of 1914-18. The crowd in the public galleries joined in the singing, and the attendants were powerless to stop this gross breach of ~~the peace~~. The House adjourned for two days, and then Hofmeyr and other Cabinet Ministers found themselves lifted high on the shoulders of M.P.'s and carried to the Lobby, where members of the public were dancing and embracing one another. Of the 152 M.P.'s who witnessed or could have witnessed these exciting spectacles, only 81 had been in the tense session of 1939 when Smuts took South Africa into the war by 13 votes.\*\*

On May 10, Malan called for unity. He recounted the humiliations which national-minded Afrikaners had to bear during the war, how they were thrown into camps and prisons without trial, how their cultural and economic efforts were bitterly attacked. Now Bolshevism would dominate Europe, and South Africa's destiny as a white man's country was at stake. There was only one salvation. National-minded South Africa, all indeed who truly loved South Africa as their fatherland, had to close their ranks and stand together. It was the call that Afrikaner Nationalism had used since its very beginnings. \*<sup>3</sup>

When Parliament met on May 11, Hofmeyr moved three resolutions. The first congratulated the King, and Malan moved an amendment thanking God, which was lost. The second thanked the men and women of the forces, to which Malan moved an amendment thanking those in the forces whose bravery and endurance had brought honour to South Africa; this was lost. The third honoured the dead, which was accepted by Malan, and adopted by all standing. The result was the same in the Senate where Nationalist Senator P.W. le Roux van Niekerk said that the fame of the Prime Minister at San Fiasco was not worth the lives of (50) young South Africans. Hofmeyr reacted strongly to this speech. He said that anti-Semitism and race and colour prejudice had increased in South Africa in the last few years. He thought that this was due to the growing tendency of people to think with their blood, as in Nazi Germany. It would be deplorable indeed if, having won the war against Nazi Germany, South Africa should lose the war against these Nazi tendencies.

~~Applies to Hofmeyr~~  
\*<sup>2</sup> May 6, 1945: \*\*~~Material~~ From NATAL MERCURY, May 9, 1945;

\*<sup>3</sup> ~~Material~~ From NATAL MERCURY, May 11, 1945.

It was regrettable, one might almost say tragic, that though Smuts had throughout the war remembered to mention Hofmeyr's burdens, that though he sent a special telegram from San Francisco to congratulate Hofmeyr on his beautiful victory broadcast, yet Mrs. Hofmeyr openly stated that Smuts was ungrateful, and Hofmeyr did not contradict her. Mrs. Hofmeyr no doubt meant that whatever statements Smuts may have made, none of them gave either mother or son a feeling of satisfaction. What was the truth? Mrs. Smuts knew that Mrs. Hofmeyr had this grievance, and she could only shrug her shoulders as if to say, well, it's a pity, but there it is. There seems little doubt that one is dealing here, not so much with Smuts's ingratitude, but with his insensitivity. Smuts did not know what his praise would mean to Hofmeyr. Perhaps if he had praised him publicly, explicitly, and generously, he might have put Hofmeyr under the spell again. But he did not. ~~Egeland related that he was once in Smuts's office, and a point arose which made it necessary to send for Hofmeyr; when Hofmeyr came he stood there, like an office-boy, although Egeland was sitting. This anecdote is meaningless. If Hofmeyr did not care to sit, then why did he not just sit? But if Hofmeyr did care to sit, but did not care to sit without an invitation, then he may well have looked like an office-boy, and Smuts was insensitive not to see it.~~ One feels readier to conclude that Smuts was insensitive rather than ungrateful, but that does not remove the tragic element, that the relationship between this brilliant leader and this most brilliant and selfless servant was marred by Smuts's ignorance of what his praise might mean. Yet he was not alone in that; Hofmeyr had the same insensitivity.

Smuts returned to South Africa on July 16. A great crowd was at Zwartkops Aerodrome to receive him, the cream of the diplomatic service and the public service, members of his Cabinet and his Party, and thousands of soldiers. The Chief of the General Staff was there, Sir Pierre van Ryneveld, the same who had with Major Quintin Brand flown from London to Cape Town in 1920. ~~But one of Smuts's high officers could not be there; that was General Dan Pienaar, who, five days before, with twenty-seven other South African soldiers, had been killed on their way home in an air crash at Kisumu, which had shocked the country.~~ Smuts was received with tumultuous enthusiasm, and spoke a few words to the crowd, mostly about victory and his soldiers. On July 21 he spoke to a great cheering crowd at the Union Buildings. He said <sup>that</sup>

in honour of 9,000 South Africans who will never return home, we should strive to make South Africa a land of honour, freedom, and justice.\*

From the Union Buildings he went to the Pretoria Market Square, where a great crowd of non-white people gave him a roar of welcome. He thanked them for their magnificent services, and they

\*NATAL MERCURY, of July 22, 1945, I think.

*Review of Hofmeyr  
Are you sure of  
this date?*

ped him with a roar of Pula! and three cheers. \*

On July 23, the Governor-General of Mozambique feted Smuts at a State banquet in Lourenço Marques. Smuts said that the white man's future in Africa depended on a modus vivendi, a just giving to Africans of opportunities for development within their capacities. White civilisation in Southern Africa had been justified and could bear the scrutiny of history. \*\*

On July 26, while Smuts was still responding to calls from all parts of the country, from people who wanted to see him and hear him and cheer him, Winston Churchill was swept from power, the Labour Party having defeated him by almost 200 seats.

On August 2 the United Party <sup>Party</sup> Caucus met in Pretoria to discuss the eternal Indian question. In particular they discussed the master zoning plan envisaged by the Natal Provincial authorities, a plan which would create separate residential areas, and move tens of thousands of Indian citizens from the land and houses they occupied; some of them had owned their land for almost a century.

On August 6, the United States of America dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan, killing 78,000 people and wounding 59,000 more, of whom a great number later died.

On August 9, at a reception to the Aga Khan in the Pretoria City Hall, Smuts said he intended soon to call a conference of South African Indian leaders.

On August 15, at 1<sup>a.m.</sup> 0 am, Japan surrendered. The Second World War was over.

On August 16, The Native Representative Council passed a motion of appreciation for Smuts and his war effort. Dr. Moroka, the Chairman, commended his courage in entering the war with the white population divided, but they reminded him that the African people had been unanimous. Councillor S. Thema said:

□ 'The Natives participated in this war because they felt they must be on the side of democracy. I hope now that General Smuts... will address this Council so that we can convey to our people how they stand as far as the San Francisco decisions are concerned.... Recently the Prime Minister said that there is room enough for both races in South Africa. We want to know in what way there is room for us both.\*

\*The Basuto greeting to chiefs, meaning Rain.

\*\*NATAL MERCURY, July 24, 1945.

\* NATAL MERCURY, August 17, 1945.

Another distinguished member of the Council, Professor Z.K. Matthews, asked that Africans should be drawn more and more into the ordinary life of the nation.

The Council a few days later criticised the Government for passing the Native (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act without putting it before the Council. The Chairman, Mr. W.J.G. Mears, a white official versed in what were called native affairs, a man known for his courtesy and humanity, could not understand the resentment against a mere consolidating measure. But the laws that were being consolidated were always restrictive, often humiliating, and sometimes quite cruel and inhuman. The Council demanded a complete overhaul of all laws governing the movement and residence of Africans in urban areas.

Up North the new world spirit still brooded over the Army. South African soldiers in Rome decided to launch a great national fund to found clinics throughout the reserves and all areas of dense African population. Not for nothing had Malherbe and Marquard and Hoernlé done their work, of scraping the scales off men's eyes so that they could see their brothers.

Down South the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) made history by admitting by 11 votes to 3 the Fort Hare Native College. J.P.G. Eksteen, Afrikaans-speaking Vice-President of the Students' Representative Council of the University of Cape Town, said NUSAS was offering the Afrikaans Universities affiliation with one hand, and hurling Fort Hare in their faces with the other. ~~Mr.~~ Arnold Klopper, Afrikaans-speaking Vice President of the Students' Representative Council of the University of the Witwatersrand, said his students were interested only in a fighting policy. The following day the University College of the Orange Free State announced that it had broken away from NUSAS.

In Durban on August 24, a tremendous crowd, greater even than those which had celebrated V-E Day and V-J Day, gathered at the City Hall to see Smuts arrive to accept the freedom of the City.\* Smuts told the people that he thought the San Francisco Conference and the A-bomb would mark the end of the era of wars. The NATAL MERCURY photographed the Prime Minister talking to Mr. A. Mtinkulu and Chief Albert Luthuli. Smuts did not mention the Indians, and he demonstrated again his dangerous gift of affirming great principles and keeping silent about their infringements. Smuts owed a great deal of his popularity to this gift, and Hofmeyr a great deal of his unpopularity to his lack of it.

On September 7 Smuts experienced a tremendous defeat in the Parliamentary constituency of Kimberley, where the Nationalists won by a majority of 244 a seat which the United Party had held by a majority of 511.\*\* Hofmeyr's taxation policy received the lion's share of blame

~~\*V-E Day was May~~ ~~the day of Victory in Europe~~  
~~\*V-J~~ ~~the day of Victory over Japan~~

\*\* This is a tremendous change in a constituency of 6000 voters



for this, then the delays in demobilisation, the shortage of housing, the cost of living. The businessmen declared that business was being crippled by the Excess Profits Duty and the Trade Profits Levy, and that they should be abolished forthwith. Piet van der Byl, the Minister of Native Affairs, defended Hofmeyr at the Durban General Council of the United Party. He pointed out that in the United States, Canada, and Great Britain, the national debt now exceeded the national income, while in South Africa the national debt was only 83% of the national income; the ratio of loan account to total expenditure was also lowest in South Africa. Hofmeyr defended himself at the Congress of Chambers of Commerce, where he admitted what he had hitherto denied, namely that other countries had been more successful than South Africa in combatting inflation, and said that they would therefore be able to reduce taxation more quickly. He declared that the Minister of Finance was the taxpayers' only real friend in Parliament.

□ The average M.P. is always ready to advocate increased spending. The only time spending is criticised in Parliament is when it is based on Party policy; thus those who opposed the war policy criticised war expenditure.\*

Hofmeyr defended war taxation as a means of curbing inflation; now he promised tax relief as a means of stimulating prosperity. But he said there could be no return to pre-war taxation or pre-war expenditure; the public demanded better health services, social security, and other measures.

When Hofmeyr had left the meeting, his speech was attacked. Delegates reaffirmed the view that only increased production could give social security. The President said that the Government clearly intended to follow a policy of extravagance. The NATAL MERCURY declared that Parliament should be summoned to abolish the Excess Profits Duty and the Trade Profits Levy.

This then was post-war South Africa, Smuts acclaimed, Kimberley lost, Nazism defeated, Indians to be restricted, the Native Representative Council generous and moderate, many soldiers still earnest about the things for which they had fought, the National Union of Students reaching out across the colour line, and the Free State students withdrawing. Already there were signs that the new South Africa would not be born. Many of the returned soldiers, especially those of the Springbok Legion, were already being accused of being too far left. Strongly anti-Nationalist, and contemptuous of Smuts and Hofmeyr, they were demanding far-reaching reforms in South Africa, especially in matters of race. When the Nationalists

\*NATAL MERCURY, October 11, 1945.

attending the Party Congress, held a "victory" procession in Johannesburg to celebrate the capture of Kimberley, the police charged ex-soldiers with batons and drove them off. Werth declared in the City Hall that this was the first clash between Nationalists and Communists, and the Nationalists had won. Malan said, This Congress has a motto, to save South Africa from Communism.\* After the meeting Malan was spirited away by the police.

So in the months immediately after the victory over Nazism, the Nationalists laid down the pattern for their campaign. The goal was - as ever - the preservation of white supremacy. The dangers were Communism, the new United Nations with its licentious Declaration of Human Rights, Liberalism, and as always, the black flood. Liberalism was in some ways the most dangerous, because - wittingly or unwittingly - it opened the way for Communism; in the striking language of a later Nationalist Minister of Justice, Communism kills, but Liberalism leads one into ambush in order to kill.\*\* And if Liberalism was ever embodied in a man, that man was Hofmeyr. Wittingly or unwittingly, he was leading South Africa into ambush. Strijdom said, Hofmeyr must be destroyed. The anti-Communism of the Nationalists had many elements. It could call on the Churches, because Communism was godless. It could call on big business, because Communism would destroy big business. It could call on Afrikaner workers and persuade them they were Afrikaners before they were workers. It could call on all conservatives, and seduce many who should have known better, because Communism meant revolution and change. But fundamentally the anti-Communism of the Nationalists was not religious or capitalistic. There was one change, one revolution, which the Nationalists feared more than they feared God or poverty, and that was the easing of the colour bar, that perilous opening of the door to see what stranger was knocking outside. Malan was beginning to drop the word segregation, and was beginning to use the word separation, which in Afrikaans is Apartheid, the word which was to find its way into the languages of many countries. Strijdom was more outspoken; he used the word baasskap, which means the condition of being boss, and that meant white supremacy. The anti-Communism of the Nationalists was primarily and fundamentally based on the determination to maintain the colour bar. Therefore Hofmeyr, though anti-Communist himself, though also religious and conservative, was ~~declared the greatest enemy of the anti-Communism of the Nationalists.~~ *accused of assisting the advance of Communism.*

from  
from ital.  
ital

It is easy with hindsight to see that within a few months of the end of the war, it was almost as though the war had never been. It is easy to see with hindsight that the old struggles were being renewed with a new intensity. Some people saw it even then. The apostles of social security had to learn the bitter lesson that

\*NATAL MERCURY, September 19, 1945.

\*\*Mr. B.J. Vorster, in 1962.

people, the great bulk of people, wanted taxation to be eased so that they could have more money for themselves. Earnest soldiers ~~returned~~ returned from the North to find that nothing had changed. There was an exciting theme for a story - used more than once - of the white soldier who had met a black soldier up North, and perhaps the one had saved the life of the other, and they had vowed ~~that~~ when they went back home to ignore the evil colour bar that kept one man from another. But when they got back home, the colour bar was too much for them; the white civilian was embarrassed, the black one was disillusioned.

Hofmeyr was in two minds about the post-war world. He wrote to Underhill: ~~on 12 August:~~ \*

(What a joyous thought that the world is at peace again. We have indeed much to be thankful for - perhaps we shall only now be able to realise for how much.) \*

Yet the next line stated his disquiet over Russia, but still more over the atomic bomb. He had spoken on the theme before, but now he did it more often - the ascendancy of intellectual man over moral man. Both Smuts and Churchill thought the world would be frightened into peace, but Hofmeyr doubted it. He, who had once believed that a man could do almost anything, who had judged harshly those whose careers seemed to stick and start and stick again, wrote,

(I don't think anything can really save us except a change in the character and outlook of the peoples - but one just does not see how that is to be brought about.) \*

He was disquieted about South Africa too. He knew well - as well as anyone in South Africa knew - that the defeat of Smuts would be an event far more portentous than the defeat of Churchill.

Yet he himself was cheerful. And he had reason to be, for he had been offered an honour which for him was the greatest in the world. Oxford University had offered him the Honorary degree of Doctor of Common Laws, the D.C.L., in recognition of his services during the War. He wrote to Underhill, That satisfies my ambition. but of course he did not say that to others. When he spoke of the coming honour, a little smile of pleasure could be seen on his face.

only

SST - \* Hofmeyr to Underhill, August 12, 1945.

\*\* Ibid.

\*<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

NP

He did not talk excitedly, nor did his eyes shine; there was just this small smile of pleasure to indicate that something had happened to him, to him personally, the like of which had not happened, say, since 1924, when the great Smuts had made him Administrator. He was excited in the same fashion over the thought that he would visit England, be honoured in Oxford, see Secretan, Murray, Underhill, King, Jacks, look in at his old rooms at Balliol, and inspect the buildings of the Balliol Boys' Club. // He wrote to King, using an adjective he had not used for years.)

(It is quite a thrilling prospect - it is only to be regretted that the time of the year will not be such as to make it possible to use your tent, or to have a swimming race.\*)

King replied,

(Yes, it is a pity the weather will probably not permit even a couple of hours on the river (singing 'Mush, Mush') but never is a long day and that will come in time.\*\*)

It was the English weather and his mother's age that decided mother and son that he should go alone, and that her sister would come to stay with her. She was nearly 82, and cold, damp weather was bad for her, but she was up long before dawn on (October 17) to see her son take off for England. There was a special plane to take the Deputy Prime Minister to receive his great honour, and only a few passengers - Hofmeyr and his private secretary Kenneth Clark, Steyn of the Treasury, John Schlesinger <sup>the</sup> millionaire, and Leo Marquard, who was going to attend the first meeting of the United Nations Educational and Scientific Committee (UNESCO). Marquard had a great affection for Hofmeyr, and was therefore a kindly observer. He said that the Deputy Prime Minister was like a boy freed from school, going from one seat to the other, disappearing for hours to go and talk to the pilots, talkative, vivacious, and friendly. Marquard had never seen him like that before. They came down at Nairobi, Khartoum and Rome, with an official dinner at Khartoum, and a special dinner at the South African officers' mess in Rome, at which Hofmeyr made a speech. Frank Theron, the South African ambassador to Italy, suggested that Hofmeyr should be received by the Pope, but Hofmeyr was no more anxious than he had been the year before. Marquard and Hofmeyr talked a great deal, for they had a great deal in common. They were both Afrikaners, both Rhodes Scholars, both were repelled by exclusive nationalism. Both used English more than they used Afrikaans,

and cultural organisation

General

\*Hofmeyr to King, August 16, 1945.

\*\*King to Hofmeyr, September 15, 1945.



both and English

but they spoke to each other always in Afrikaans. Hofmeyr told Marquard about his honorary degree, and Marquard recorded that he was bubbling with enthusiasm and pleasure about it. By now he knew that the King would make him a Privy Councillor, but the degree was still the supreme honour.\*

He was met at the London airport by Heaton Nicholls, the South African High Commissioner in Britain. They were photographed smiling broadly at one another, as though Hofmeyr had never thought Nicholls a reactionary, and Nicholls had never thought Hofmeyr a prig. Hofmeyr was taken to his suite at the Hyde Park Hotel, and then to his temporary office on the fourth floor of South Africa House. Clark had special cards printed for him, but Hofmeyr refused to be designated as Deputy Prime Minister, which he declared was a title without standing; he wished to be known as the Minister of Finance and Education.

Although he was also a delegate to the UNESCO Conference, he was seldom there. He was being lunched and dined by Cabinet Ministers, high officials, and Commonwealth societies. He met fifteen of the twenty members of the Cabinet, and had long discussions with many of them. Mr. Clement Attlee, the new Prime Minister, gave him a lunch soon after his arrival, and Hofmeyr was greeted by laughter and applause when he said to his host, 'You and I had to do the work at home, while our brilliant No. 1's ran all over the world.' That afternoon he sat in the Dominions' Gallery and heard Mr. Hugh Dalton delivering the budget; Dalton, who was dressed not in morning coat and striped trousers, but in an ordinary blue lounge suit, announced drastic cuts in taxation, leading many to hope that Hofmeyr would take note. Hofmeyr could not hear the whole speech, for he had to leave for an audience with the King at Buckingham Palace, who thanked him for his outstanding services during the war.

Number One

It was a strange holiday, full of appointments. He paid a special visit to Mr. Winston Churchill in his new home at Hyde Park Gate, to convey to him Smuts's good wishes. He discussed Parliamentary procedure with the Clerk of the House of Commons, and the problem of expediting business without restricting freedom. He discussed financial matters with the directors of the Bank of England; He visited Secretan's home at Dulwich Grove, and Underhill's home at Mill Hill, and renewed the friendships that had counted for so much thirty years before. He saw H. S. Scott, whom he had promoted to the Directorship of Education twenty-one years before, thereby causing a minor insurrection. He met Viscount Addison, Mr. Ernest Bevin, and Sir Stafford Cripps. Cripps was the man who was supposed to be so much like himself, clever, remote, upright, puritanical, but Hofmeyr did not take to him. As for physical rest, Hofmeyr took none. He told the EVENING PRESS that there were three reasons why

Transcribed

NP

News

\*Whether Smuts played any part in having Hofmeyr made a Privy Councillor, the writer could not ascertain.

he could work so hard. He said,



'I do not smoke. I hardly ever drink - when I do, it is merely to be sociable, not because I like it. And I am a bachelor.'\*

He confessed his inordinate love of cricket:

'I am the captain of the South African Parliamentary XI. But I am afraid that I owe the distinction to seniority, not to merit.'

13 On October 24, he spoke at a lunch given by the Royal Empire Society, before whom he had last spoken in 1929. He spoke confidently of the future of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and its success in reconciling imperialism with liberty, which had been a favourite theme of his younger days. He recalled how the South African Parliament had decided by only thirteen votes to enter the war, and how when South Africa had done so, it was her intention to do no more than to guard the great sea lanes round the Cape; yet that limited objective had been transformed. He said that South Africa was a unique laboratory for the study of the problem of creating unity out of diversity. ~~He said~~

'I believe that a study of the experiments in progress in that laboratory which is South Africa in this matter of racial contacts, cannot but be of value for the British Commonwealth and Empire as a whole.'\*\*

What experiments did Hofmeyr mean? Did he mean the removal of the Cape African voters to a separate roll? Or the repeated pressure from the City of Durban for compulsory residential segregation of Indians? Or the decision not to arm coloured soldiers? Or did he mean the private efforts of interracial Joint Councils and the Institute of Race Relations and the Universities of Cape Town and Johannesburg to create some small oases in the desert of the colour bar? It would have been easy to embarrass him, but who wanted to embarrass such an upholder of the Commonwealth? In any case, ~~Mr~~ L.S. Amery, who moved a vote of thanks to ~~Mr~~ Hofmeyr in 1929 at *The Royal Empire Society luncheon*, would not want to embarrass him. He said there was no South African statesman in that generation who had contributed so much as Mr. Hofmeyr, by his foresight and courage, to the right development of the relationship between black and white in South Africa. He would have been far more correct if he had said that no one had resisted so courageously the erosion of civil liberties, that had it not been for Hofmeyr not even those pitiful advances

\*EVENING NEWS, October 1945.

\*SOUTH AFRICA, October 27, 1945.

would have  
~~had~~ been made.



Now it was time to go to Oxford for the great day. THE TIMES said it was perhaps the most distinguished company ever to be presented together at a single ceremony of the kind.\* Just after two o'clock in the afternoon of October 25, the honorands gathered at the Codrington Library, All Souls. Now Hofmeyr was really among the generals. There were General Dwight Eisenhower, General Mark Clark, Lieutenant-General Sir Bernard Freyberg, V.C., Admiral of the Fleet Sir John Tovey, Field-Marshal the Rt. Hon. Lord Alanbrooke of Brookeborough, Field-Marshal Sir Bernard Montgomery, and Sir Arthur Tedder, Marshal of the Royal Air Force. The civilians were His Excellency John Winant, American Ambassador at the Court of St. James; Professor Max Huber, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross; the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Gange V.C., War-time Governor-General of Australia; and Hofmeyr himself. THE TIMES photographed them at the Codrington ~~Hall~~ Library, Eisenhower in front with legs apart and wearing his gown like an army raincoat, Hofmeyr half way back, smiling and happy.

Gown

From the Library the honorands walked in procession to the Sheldonian Theatre where the Convocation had first to approve their honours. This done, the bedells were sent to bring them, and the great standing assembly greeted them with tremendous cheering.

Hofmeyr was capped fourth, and Mr. T.H. Haghm, the Public Orator, praised him in witty Latin. He said:

□ It was a true saying of the poet Ennius, "All mortals fain would hear their praises told," but because it is a little distasteful to be praised in public, it is the task of your Orator to veil the words of tribute "in the decent obscurity of a learned language."

Why?

(Whatever am I to do now? I have beside me one who for seven years was Professor of Classics in the flourishing University of which he is now the Chancellor; one who will not only understand what I say and himself show embarrassment, but make "one vast blush" of me as well, should my Latinity "be at fault in a single syllable.")

~~Why?~~  
Why?

□ The Orator concluded,

(I present the Hon. Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr, C.M.G., strength and stay of the British Commonwealth, sometime Rhodes Scholar, Master of Arts of Balliol College, for admission to the honorary degree of D.C.L.)

~~Handwritten scribble~~

\*October 26, 1945.

ALAN PATON CENTRE  
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Hofmeyr then knelt before the Vice-Chancellor, Sir Richard Livingstone, and rose to his feet amidst thunderous applause, honoured by the University which commanded from him a devotion which he gave only to her, his country, his mother, and his duty.

1945 9 25

The RAND DAILY MAIL editorial, 'Cum Laude', was as witty as the Public Orator. Why should Hofmeyr be embarrassed by praise? He had been praised in public ever since he became a Professor, for it is not he but his Excess Profits Duty which has been without honour in his own country.

The editorial concluded:

- (It is good to note, too, that though among generals and air-marshals, Mr. Hofmeyr was thought worthy of the longest introduction of all. That may have been of course merely because General Eisenhower knows no Latin and Field-Marshal Montgomery has forgotten his. We prefer to think, however, that it was a subtle compliment to the most eloquent of all South Africans, in whose presence the Public Orator of Oxford had to show himself eloquentissimus too.)\*

After the honorands had been capped, the Vice-Chancellor dissolved the Convocation, and he, the Proctors, the Burgesses, and the Graduates left the Theatre in procession, all others standing. Now for the second time in his life Hofmeyr had to ask people not to call him Doctor. He had to tell them, too, that he was not a C.M.G.†

He spent four days in Oxford, except for a day's trip to London to have Friday morning coffee at South Africa House. He wrote to Egeland, (I have had the time to see old friends, and to revisit old haunts, not without a catching at the heartstrings.)\*\* He met his old tutor Cyril Bailey, and greeted him with the words, 'How's the Boys' Club?' His last day, a Sunday, he set aside for Babu King. They met by appointment at ten-thirty outside Balliol.\*<sup>3</sup> 'Our reunion was not spectacular,' said King; 'neither of us was ever fussy or sentimental about partings or meetings.'\*<sup>4</sup> The nostalgia that filled their letters gave way to a reserve that neither found embarrassing. King found his friend 'a bit grim, with a nervous twitch, but no complaining.'\*<sup>4</sup> They climbed into King's car 'Swallow', and drove to Osney Abbey, then back to Red Bay, 174 Botley Road, the house whose name reminded Secretan's friend Graham Hamilton of Bloody Square, Moscow. There Hofmeyr met King's sister and her husband, and their

\*The writer of the editorial must have counted the words, for in printed form, all the eleven introductions seem of equal length.

\*\*Hofmeyr to Egeland, October 27, 1945.

\*<sup>3</sup>Where he was lodging in the rooms of one of the Balliol dons, part of which accommodation were his own rooms in 1913.

\*<sup>4</sup>Said to the writer



son, John Tomokins. In the afternoon Hofmeyr opened the Autumn Exhibition of the Oxford Folk Art Society, of which King was the Secretary. There Hofmeyr met two of the old boys of the Balliol College Boys' Club, Chick Godfrey, and Percy Withers, both men near-  
 50 ing fifty. He also met Marion, the daughter of King's friend, Arthur Rhymes, the girl after whom Hofmeyr had named his car in 1940,  
 11 the girl, now eleven years old, with whom King had fallen in love when she was a year and a half old. King, so he said, was a confessed woman-worshipper, and had once written to Hofmeyr, I am always in love with someone or other. Hofmeyr was extremely congratulatory about King's work, both his painting and his pottery, and his Folk Art Society; he took back to London with him a scraper+board drawing made by King's nephew, and accepted a clay cuckoo and a small pot from King, to be brought out to South Africa by Maurice Jacks, if he could ever get a passage. Then the day came to an end. King described it in a piece written for the biographer, in which he referred to himself always in the third person.)

(He motored to London that same afternoon and Babu just saw him across the High and into Longwall where they parted for the last time.)

Yes, it was the last time, so that the canoeing and the swimming race and the singing of Mush, mush in that clear musical voice that King remembered, never came to pass. They wrote to each other faithfully till Hofmeyr died, but there was less mention of the canoeing and the swimming and the singing. Were they both getting old? Or was there some foreknowledge? Now they wrote about politics, art, and women. When Hofmeyr was back at home, King wrote to him about the opening of the Art Society Exhibition.)

✓ I think your being there helped (attracted the ladies). I have had 37 requests for your photo and 84 for your address, but of course I haven't let on.\*

Hofmeyr wrote back to him; )

(Of course the best part of my visit was the time I spent in Oxford. Now I can but look forward to the next visit. When that will be, I cannot even guess - but I feel pretty sure that it won't take 16 years again.\*\*

The next afternoon he went again to Buckingham Palace, where at a Council held by the King, he was appointed a Privy Councilor; Thus he became the Rt. Hon. J.H. Hofmeyr, ~~which indeed he always had been.~~ That evening the South African Club honoured him at a reception at the Savoy.

\* King to Hofmeyr Nov 13, 1945  
 \*\* Hofmeyr to King Dec 22, 1945

On the following day he addressed a private meeting of the Empire Parliamentary Association in the late afternoon at Westminster Hall. Hugh Dalton presided, and gave high praise to the speaker, but Hofmeyr complained that Dalton had omitted to mention that he was also captain of the South African Parliamentary team. He was in great form, and said he was older in sin than Dalton, having already introduced six budgets and one interim budget; however he was less fortunate, for Dalton had already been able to reduce taxation. He complained that Education and Finance did not go well together; the one Minister wanted to spend money, and the other Minister stopped him. He was in the position of the old Scottish housewife who said, I have two things to do; one is to mind the kitchen fire; and the other is to mind my husband. When I mind my husband the fire goes out, and when I mind the fire my husband goes out. Then after Hofmeyr had given high praise to the courage and sacrifice of the British people, he began his subject, which was South Africa Today.

He told his audience that there was only one alternative Government in South Africa, and that was a Nationalist Government. Such a change of Government would be revolutionary; that was why (some of us) could not take a rest, such as the British Electorate had given to Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden. He was full of hope for the part returned soldiers would play. He said,

...they are now returning to civilian life as peaceful protagonists of national unity, concerning themselves with economic questions, bread-and-butter questions, rather than with these old issues.\*

Hofmeyr then turned to the question of <sup>the</sup> relationship between white and black. It was strange that he should return on such an occasion to the phrases he had once forsworn, the Native problem and the Indian problem. He said that he himself was often described as a Liberal, which in South Africa was a term of reproach. Yet the general attitude of white South Africa was one of goodwill, and the average white South African would accept the concept of trusteeship\*\*

☐ You may ask me where then does the difference lie between what I have called the average South African and those who like myself are dubbed Liberals.)

\*SOUTH AFRICA TODAY, ~~publ.~~ Empire Parliamentary Association, London, 1945.

\*\*Hofmeyr did not use the adjective (white). When he used the <sup>term</sup> ~~words~~ (South African), he meant white South African.



The difference lay in the fact that for the average white South African, trusteeship was something that never came to an end. In the mind of the average white South African there was a struggle between the desire to be just and the fear of being just. Yet fear produces hatred, and hatred produces disaster. Therefore one must go forward in faith, not fear.

Hofmeyr was quite outspoken in regard to the Indian problem. White South Africa had retrogressed since the Round Table Agreement of 1926.

He concluded with a brief statement of his belief that scientific progress had outstripped moral development. Unless man could catch up, he was afraid that the future would be dark.

As a general exposition, which did not and indeed could not go deep, Hofmeyr's speech was sound. He answered questions for an hour, and was thanked with acclamation.

Before he left he addressed the UNESCO Conference in his capacity of Vice-President. He declared there was no essential conflict between nationalism and internationalism. In South Africa the promotion of internationalism must be linked up with, indeed founded upon, its own indigenous culture. ~~It~~<sup>His</sup> was not a great speech, but it contained one sound observation in regard to foreign aid.

I hope that if it is decided that assistance shall be rendered to war-devastated nations in the matter of educational reconstruction, the primary aim will be the building up of the culture of the country assisted, and not their cultural permeation by countries which lend aid.\*

Now it was time to go home. He left on November 3, and took five days for the journey. It was indeed these five days and the four days at the beginning, that made up his real holiday. Again he moved about the plane very like a small boy let loose. He spent hours in the cockpit, learning map-reading and dead-reckoning navigation. A friendly columnist wrote:

△ He found a seat next to the navigator and soon had a grasp of the intricate calculations, which, read from a computer, give the course.... But as fast as the navigator worked, I am told Mr. Hofmeyr gave him the answer out of his head - and it was invariably correct. (What hope has an income-tax

\*SOUTH AFRICA TODAY.

payer got with a Finance Minister like that?)\*



Mark / Another columnist declared that the crew renamed the computer Hoffy Ms. 2.\*\*

It was a pity that Hofmeyr could not evoke this friendliness more often. It is easy to discern that these columnists regarded him with respect and affection. Hofmeyr had that effect on many newspaper men, just as he had on his cricket companions, and the young men and boys of the camps. ~~Wordsworth's words could well have been used of him, that shades of the prison-house had closed upon the growing boy.~~

The return flight was memorable to two other people. It was in those days almost impossible to get a passage by sea or air from England to South Africa. Hofmeyr, under circumstances unknown to the writer, brought out Mr. Eric Lloyd and his wife Marie, he convalescing from illness or perhaps wounds, she anxious to see her mother for perhaps the last time. Lloyd declared that these were ~~perhaps~~ the most memorable five days of their lives, made yet more memorable by Hofmeyr's kindness and consideration.\*<sup>3</sup>

Hofmeyr landed in Pretoria on November 7, refreshed in mind and body,\*<sup>4</sup> and grateful to find his mother cheerful and well. On November 8 he was back in his office. On November 13 the Natal Provincial Congress of the United Party greeted him with shouting and cheering. On November 21 the Transvaal Congress gave him a standing ovation, and elected him unanimously to the chairmanship. Bailey Bekker, retiring Vice-Chairman, congratulated Hofmeyr on his honours. He said,

In spite of all his high distinctions Mr. Hofmeyr will always remain one of us. He remains Mr. Jan Hofmeyr for us, one of our inspiring leaders. It is for us indeed a privilege and an inspiration to have him for our Chairman! \*<sup>5</sup>

History was repeating itself. On November 14, 1889, at Graaff-Reinet, the Chairman of a meeting of the Bond for the first time called another Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr, Onze Jan, to which that Hofmeyr had replied that he did not know what there was in him to

\*I could not identify the paper. \*\*Judging from the style, these two columnists may have been one and the same person.

\*<sup>3</sup> Lloyd to Hofmeyr, Nov 8, 1945. \*<sup>4</sup> Hofmeyr to King, Dec 22, 1945.

\*<sup>5</sup> DIE VOLKSTEM, November 21, 1945.

deserve such a name. <sup>(1)</sup> The Hofmeyr of 1945 replied to Bailey Bekker's compliment that for him there was no higher distinction than to be regarded as one of them.

Full

Political activity abates in December, but Hofmeyr had a strenuous few weeks, dealing with accumulated work, and preparing for his budget. But he was able to bring a vigorous and happy year to a quiet end. The great social event was the 82nd birthday of his mother, and the guests called at 743 Schoeman Street in an endless stream, from half-past seven in the morning until late at night. Hofmeyr's elder brother A.B. had introduced a discreet supply of alcoholic refreshments, to which his mother turned a blind eye. A special room was set aside for this, and Dr. Loveday told the story that Hofmeyr once said to him, 'if you want a drink, you can join the toughies in there.' On this occasion Mrs. Hofmeyr was at her most vivacious. Hofmeyr wrote to King,

(The mounting years have little effect on her vigour and vitality - which is a very happy thing. <sup>(2)</sup>)

He wrote to all his English friends for Christmas, telling them that he had been happy to see them, assuring them that he would not wait sixteen years before he saw them again. Underhill wrote on Christmas Eve a rare kind of passage.

□ (It was a great privilege to see you, and a joy to find you just the same inside. This is not intended to suggest that you have changed much outside, because you haven't, but it is the inside which is important. The outside expresses an increase of power, but the inside is of the same metal as thirty years ago.)

It was a good year, but one of the best and last things in it was never known. In the month of December Hofmeyr asked Edgar Brookes if he would act as one of the trustees of a small fund which Hofmeyr wanted to call the Deo Gratias fund. Jackie Louw of Pretoria would be the second trustee, and Hofmeyr would be the third. Into this fund Hofmeyr would pay four-fifths of his Ministerial salary, which at that time stood at £3000 per annum. The fund would be built up and would be used mainly for the advancement of African education. Should the donor die, any unspent money would be given to the Jan Hofmeyr School of Social Work, an institution started by the YMCA, which was under the principalship of that notable man, Dr. Ray Phillips, and was destined to open up social work as a profession for some of the most talented African men and women.

an Hofmeyr fund  
repetition  
repetition?

<sup>(2)</sup> December 22, 1945.  
<sup>(1)</sup> The life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr, p. 366.  
~~See next page for this footnote.~~



Hofmeyr's reasoning was simple. By now he had saved sufficient money to produce the income upon which his mother and he were accustomed to live. Therefore he wished to save no more, but would give four-fifths of his salary out of thanks to God for the mercies of his mother and his honours and his industrious life. The money would be used for African education, the cause which lay closest to his heart, and most heavily on it. When he died, a sum of £6000 was handed over to the Jan Hofmeyr School. So the cause benefited from the generosity of this frugal man. Who, having read all the tale of his virtues and his vices, would deny him the epithet of noble?