

1947

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In January 1947 the United Party lost the Cape constituency of Hottentots Holland to the Nationalists. Sir de Villiers Graaff was the popular United Party candidate, but he could not prevent the conversion of a United Party majority of 1228 into a Nationalist majority of 637. It was a spectacular defeat.

On the eve of the election Graaff held a meeting at the Strand, and invited Hofmeyr to speak. Of this meeting Graaff said, 'Hofmeyr came with great delight to help me; he had known me as a child and was always most gracious to me.' At about 11 p.m., when everyone was wanting to go home, a Nationalist asked Hofmeyr a question on the franchise, and Hofmeyr repeated his parliamentary statement of 1946,

Natives will eventually be represented in Parliament by Natives and Indians by Indians.*

Was it this statement that lost the election? Graaff said it did not, that the election was already going against him, and that this statement might have lost him fifty votes. Graaff's opinion was supported by a meeting of the United Party M.P.s and Provincial Councillors, who at a post-mortem decided that the threat of food-rationing, the multiplicity of ~~control~~ Control Boards, the fear of immigration and immigrants, the housing shortage, and the shabby treatment of pensioners, were the causes of defeat. Hofmeyr's racial views were not cited, but the meeting declared that the Fixed Property Tax and the Excess Profits Duty were affecting Party funds.**

Others held a contrary opinion. When Mr. H.J. van Aarde, the victor of Hottentots Holland, was escorted into the House, a Nationalist called out, 'Hofmeyr should bring him in.' The SUNDAY TIMES of Johannesburg said that Hofmeyr had made 'a gift of the seat to the Nationalists', and that he must not race ahead of public opinion.³ Hofmeyr himself did quite a courageous thing; on the Saturday following the election he visited United Party supporters in the Hottentots Holland, and reported to Graaff that some of the old stalwarts had said to him, 'well, we don't think you were politically wise, but you didn't lose the election.'⁴

Parliament resumed on January 18 without ceremony, for this was merely a continuation of the adjourned session of 1946. The new session would be opened by King George VI on February 21.

Heir & Smuts,

*Quoted by Tom Macdonald, JAN HOFMEYR, p. 198.

**Meeting held in Cape Town, January 23, 1947.

³ ~~SUNDAY TIMES~~, January 19, 1947.

⁴ Told to me by Sir de Villiers Graaff.

The Nationalists decided in 1947 to launch a full-scale campaign against Smuts and Hofmeyr. They attacked Smuts because he was involving South Africa in an unwanted, futile, even hostile internationalism. They attacked Hofmeyr because his franchise policy would lead to the downfall of white civilisation. The first Nationalist attack was mounted by Malan on January 21, and it gave every evidence of having been thoroughly prepared.

South West Africa

Malan moved that the Union should reject the right of the United Nations to concern itself with South West Africa or South African Indians, that it should give South West Africa the status of a Province, and that it should repeal those provisions of the law which gave Indians parliamentary and provincial representation. Malan also moved the appointment of a Joint Committee of both Houses, to devise a comprehensive policy based on racial separation, politically, residentially, and as far as practicable, industrially; such a policy would be

(constructive and equitable in respect of the specific interests of each separate population group.*

Malan quoted Hofmeyr's reply at Hottentots Holland. He declared that once Indians and Africans were allowed in Parliament, all Barriers would go. ~~He said~~

□ Nor will you be able to maintain the dividing line in the social sphere, something that the Minister of Finance wishes still to safeguard. If Indians sit here in Parliament and natives sit in Parliament ... are you going to discriminate here between one colour and another? Are you going to partition them off in the lobbies, and in the refreshment rooms? You cannot do it. You will eventually end up by doing away with the social colour bar.**

When Smuts spoke, Swart confronted him with Hofmeyr's election statement, to which Smuts replied that he did not know what the views of the next generation would be. Strijdom pressed him about Hofmeyr, and Smuts declared all men had their own views. He himself had views that were not part of the policy of the party or the policy of the country. He said, perhaps that applies also to the Minister of Finance.*³

Nothing could have shown more clearly than this debate the fierce hostility of the Nationalists to any kind of internationalism that would come poking into their affairs and telling them how to run their country. Nationalists seldom look for strength outside,

*HANSARD, Vol. 59, Col. 10893). **~~1944~~, Col. 10906. ³ ~~1944~~, Col. 10927.

they look for it within, and they had found it in their victory at Hottentots Holland. Hofmeyr and Hottentots Holland, these were the two names with which the Opposition taunted the Government. Mr. P.J. Olivier, M.P. for Kuruman, declared that Smuts, 'incited by the Liberals under the leadership of the Hon. Minister of Finance,' was ready to capitulate to United Nations, but, Smuts being clever, this would be done adroitly.* Mr. M.J. van der Berg, M.P. for Krugersdorp, who had gone from the Labour Party to Malan, declared repeatedly that Hofmeyr had landed Smuts in his present terrible situation, by saying in public that the Union Government had not carried out its obligations towards its Indian community.** Mr. J.F. Haywood, M.P. for Bloemfontein District, declared that Hofmeyr had said he was in favour of the removal of all political colour bars, and what did that mean but a universal franchise?#3

The fierce debates of the 'thirties had caused painful stresses in Hertzog's United Party; so now did this debate tear the heart-strings of Smuts's more conservative Afrikaners. Mr. J.B. Wolmarans, M.P. for Losberg, lamented that the Nationalists gave Smuts no thanks for his struggle at United Nations. He said in his bewilderment:

I have sat and listened to the charge... that we are engaged in removing the dividing line between white and black. There is nothing... in that allegation.'

71 Sauer: Ask Hofmeyr.
Wolmarans: The United Party does not stand for that. The hon. member for Krugersdorp... requested that the Prime Minister should stand up and say: My Party and I stand for white South Africa.
Member: And he cannot say it.

Wolmarans: I say this: Yes, the United Party stands for white South Africa, and the best proof that I can offer of that is this: should the day break when the United Party no longer stands for a white South Africa, you will no longer find John Wolmarans in their ranks.

Member: It will then be too late.

*HANSARD, Vol. 59, Col. 10963.
** ~~Hansard~~, Col. 10993
* ~~Hansard~~, Col. 11001.

Wolmarans: ...The Government and the United Party are now accused of being in favour of natives sitting in this House... of allowing Indians to sit here as Indian representatives. There is nothing in that allegation...*

In his distress and confusion, Wolmarans, forgetting perhaps that Malan had moved for a Joint Committee, made an emotional appeal for white unity: ~~He said~~

□ (...I ask that today our leaders should get together and discuss the matter. What must people overseas think when they read this debate? They will at once say: That crowd are divided amongst themselves. If we stand here as one man and as one bloc and say that we will sacrifice our treasure and our blood for the survival of a white South Africa, we will have done something; but we have not done that.**

~~Mr~~ F.E. Mentz, M.P. for Westdene, Johannesburg, taunted Wolmarans for asking for the same thing that Malan had already asked for. In his attack on Hofmeyr he made in brief compass as honest a confession of white South African fear as anyone could have done. He said:

□ The Minister of Finance is now seeking a solution - a middle course between separation and equality. There is no such thing as a compromise. On the one hand we can have separation and, failing that, we must have total equality. There is no middle course. If we endeavour to effect a compromise between the two, it will only mean that we are digging the grave of separation in South Africa, and at the same time we are digging a grave for European South Africa. We cannot have a compromise.*³

~~Mr~~ J.N. le Roux, M.P. for Ladybrand, hammered yet harder at Smuts's party. He said:

□ Numbers of honourable members sitting on the other side feel on this matter just as we feel about it. But the policy that is triumphing in that party is that of a small

~~the SA~~
*HANSARD, Col. 11005.
**~~Id.~~, Col. 11006.
*~~Id.~~, Col. 11014.

section and a small group of liberals... Today there is at stake the survival or downfall of our fatherland; there is at stake the survival or downfall of Christian civilisation; there is at stake the weal and woe of South Africa, and when all this is at stake, we have only one duty, and that is for our part to do our duty with all our might for our fatherland and for the future of our people.*



Two days of this debate were enough to make Hofmeyr sick at heart. There was poor Wolmarans, who when Smuts would not declare that the United Party stood for a white South Africa, himself declared it. There were Nationalists who declared that Smuts, far from trying to explain away the colour bar at United Nations, should have openly affirmed it. Yet there was something else too; the Nationalists were saying in effect to the Smuts party, 'We'll get rid of you, but we'll get rid of you quicker if you don't get rid of Hofmeyr.'

On the third day of the debate, Strijdom, the Lion of the North, roared to the attack. He declared that Smuts's policy and Hofmeyr's were one and the same. But Hofmeyr stated his policy clearly, and Smuts put his vaguely so that he could satisfy now one side, now the other. Strijdom declared again that Hofmeyr stood for 'the removal of the colour bar in the political sphere.' Strijdom read Hofmeyr's words from Hansard,

'I am in favour of the ultimate removal of that colour bar from the Constitution.'

Strijdom went on to argue that that meant the swamping of Parliament by non-white representatives and the downfall of 'white civilisation'. Yet only racial separation could save the country from bloodshed.

When Hofmeyr had made his famous remark in Parliament in 1946, he had challenged the Nationalists to use it against him. And they had done so, with Strijdom leading the attack. For a Nationalist any breach in the colour bar was the breach in the dyke that would let in the sea, the innocent cup of tea that led to other forms of intercourse. But for Hofmeyr, the Nationalist accusations were distortions. He had been speaking about communal franchise, but the Nationalists declared that his remarks must apply to all franchises, and to many other things also. Had Hofmeyr not refused to forbid mixed marriages? Had he not refused to forbid the 'white' universities to admit non-white students? Who thought for a moment that he stood only for the removal of one, specific, parliamentary colour bar?

OK 54

both reasoned up to us,

no quotes

When Hofmeyr rose to reply to Strijdom, he was angry in a way that no one had seen him angry before. Both Macdonald and Scott Haigh thought it was his finest hour. Scott Haigh thought it the most magnificent speech Parliament had ever heard. Why was Hofmeyr so angry? Was it because the Nationalists were arguing that when Hofmeyr said, 'Remove this colour bar,' he really meant, 'remove all colour bars?' Did Malan's thrust go home, that if you removed this one colour bar, then the social colour bar - which Hofmeyr approved - would begin to yield?

Was there not pain too in Hofmeyr's anger? Never before had his position in the Party appeared so impossible. Every Opposition speaker had turned on him. Could he go to Wolmarans, rural constituency of Losberg and tell them that he could not stand for a white South Africa? Could he tell the farmers of Losberg that he wanted Indians in Parliament? Who would appeal more to that community, he or Strijdom, especially when Strijdom reminded them that the constitution of the old Transvaal Republic laid it down, 'no equality in Church or State?' While Strijdom was speaking, he pointed out that Wolmarans was not in the House. He spoke contemptuously of a meeting Wolmarans had held recently at Losberg, where a resolution was adopted supporting the Prime Minister 'in his policy of granting no further rights to Indians.' * Imagine that, said Strijdom, when the Prime Minister's policy was the opposite! Challenged by Mr. J.M. Conradie, United Party M.P. for Rustenburg, Strijdom read from the Party's official handbook,

'Our policy is to grant political rights gradually to those who prove that they are capable of meeting the corresponding obligations.'

Hofmeyr was not a man to base a speech on pain or anger. He was not a man to reveal pain at all. But now he was fighting for those values which, whatever his faults, were his very life, and therefore, he was fighting for his life too. His strong clear voice rang out over the chamber, asking the members to get away from Strijdom's 'supercharge of emotion,' and to return to calmer waters. Yet he himself was in the grip of emotion. He spoke of Strijdom's 'career of distortion,' and reproved by the Speaker, said he would not repeat the phrase, and finally withdrew it. He and Strijdom entered into a heated exchange, he saying that he was referring to one specific colour bar, Strijdom saying that he referred to the general colour bar. Four times Hofmeyr struck the volume of HANSARD from which he quoted, with Strijdom, van der Berg, Sauer, Serfontein, all interrupting. Hofmeyr challenged them to bring a single proof that he had ever lifted a finger to get the succession.

*HANSARD Vol. 59 Col. 11084



position. His passion was now subsiding, the interruptions died down, and the House fell under the spell that he could cast when he spoke without the aid of memory.

If Malan believed, said Hofmeyr, that Indian representation spelled the end of white civilisation, then he must demand the abolition of 'native representation', the abolition of the coloured vote on the common roll, the abolition of coloured representation altogether. Malan disapproved also of the Native Representative Council, and called its members agitators; therefore they must go too, but what would he put in their place? Was South Africa to go back to United Nations, and tell them that neither Indians nor Africans would be represented in the House? Malan wanted racial policy to be definite, but his own policy was political separation, residential separation, and industrial separation 'as far as practicable.'* Therefore Malan acknowledged their common interests, but in regard to these common interests only white people would decide. Malan wanted a great non-white University, but what would he do with the Matthews and Morokas that the university would produce, people whom he branded as agitators?

Hofmeyr declared that Malan had no logic on his side, but some of his followers had. Strijdom was logical because he said openly that the policy of racial separation was to preserve, not justice, but white domination. Logic was on the side of those Nationalists who had opposed bigger grants for Native Education.

In conclusion Hofmeyr suggested the proper attitude towards the United Nations:

HOFMEYR: I say stand firm where we can. It is quite right that we should say to UNO that we do not feel called upon to submit a trusteeship agreement... We can quite rightly say... that before we can submit a report to UNO, we want to know more specifically... in what respect we have not acted in conformity with international agreements and the provisions of their Charter.

Malan: That would be admitting the right of UNO to interfere in our domestic affairs.

Hofmeyr: I say it would be proper to say that, without any act of defiance, but we certainly cannot go to the length of the acts of defiance the hon. member for Piketberg proposes... the right policy for us is that

of standing firm where we have right on our side, and for the rest being conciliatory and acting with a view to strengthening our own position within UNO itself. The policy of defiance without the basis of moral principle which this resolution or most of it proposes, would mean the acceptance of the very gravest risks for our future. It is not along those lines that the preservation of the things which we hold dear in South Africa can be secured.*

After Hofmeyr's speech the storm died away in a postlude of flashes and rumblings. Nationalist Dönges interrupted United Party Cilliers to ask if he would like to have coloured people sitting with him in the train. ~~Cilliers replied:~~

CILLIERS: I should like to be honest. I do not want to travel with them. Keep them in their place, but then you must say clearly what you mean.**

Nationalist Strauss in his speech asked Cilliers if he wanted himself and his wife to have a ride on a bus among coloureds, and even among the dirtiest kaffirs! ^{to}

Cilliers: And you are prepared to allow a kaffir to bake your bread.

Strauss: Yes, if he is clean, he can bake my bread, but not sleep in my bed or ride in my motor-car if I can help it.

Cilliers: He can bake your bread, but he may not travel with you on a bus.

Strauss: ...when we speak of segregation, we are not opposed to the servant girl boiling the kettle in the kitchen, but we do not want Europeans and non-Europeans to travel with one another on the trains. Or do you simply want them to travel together day and night?*

W The thunder rolled again when Swart attacked Hofmeyr's paper ~~THE~~ FORUM for its equivocal race policies. He quoted at length from an article by René de Villiers, the editor, which

* ~~Foot.~~ Col. 11098.
** ~~Foot.~~ Col. 11109.
* ³ ~~Foot.~~ Col. 11114.

stated the essentiality of maintaining a social colour bar by mutual consent, applying to attendance at schools though not necessarily at universities, applying by mutual consent to places of entertainment, hotels, and the like. De Villiers favoured communal roles for Africans, but a common roll with whites for Indians, who would however need higher qualifications than whites. Swart challenged Hofmeyr to come to the Free State and state his colour policy. Swart asked Hofmeyr what would be the rights of black members of the House:

Swart: If Mr. Speaker invites us to dinner, are those natives going to have the right to come and sit next to me at the same table? ...Will the native be able to take his wife and family into the dining-room?

Dönges challenged Hofmeyr to state whether he would extend the municipal franchise to non-whites in the Transvaal and the Free State. Serfontein said Hofmeyr was dishonest; in the election he predicted the extension of rights, but here in the House he tried to bring people under the impression that he was not in favour of extension. Malan in his concluding speech said that Hofmeyr endeavoured

to disguise his real attitude and policy by making an attack on the principle of separation.*

Not in the whole history of the Union Parliament from 1910 to 1947 had any member suffered such a sustained attack, always fierce, sometimes ~~vicious~~ virulent, sometimes contemptuous. Was it true that Hofmeyr tried to disguise his real attitude? The truth was that he, as second Minister in Smuts's cabinet, could not answer the questions that were being put to him. If he had answered them, in some private capacity that he no longer possessed, he would have caused a crisis of the first magnitude in the United Party. But that was not his only difficulty. His other difficulty, just as great, was that he also was a white politician, dependent on white support, and would have had to resort to the same compromises as René de Villiers had advocated in ~~THE~~ FORUM, a social colour bar by common consent, a colour bar in schools but not universities, a communal roll for Africans but the common roll for Indians, yet with higher qualifications for Indians than would be needed by whites. It is quite meaningless to say that Hofmeyr never compromised. He was a Christian moralist and a Minister of the Crown, in a society where power had reached almost no mutual accommodation with justice, and he could do nothing else but compromise. Here one remembers John Gray's remark that Hofmeyr was born to be a Charles James Fox, but that he wanted to be a Pitt. No one understood his

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*~~See~~ Col. 11500.

predicament better than the Nationalists. They said to Hofmeyr the moralist, You say you hope to see the end of colour bar A, but what about colour bar B? They said to him, You think colour bar C is wrong, why don't you think colour bar D is wrong too? Then they ⁴² TURNED TO Hofmeyr the politician and said to him, Come to the Free State and tell us about your colour bars. Therefore when one writes that January 23 was one of Hofmeyr's finest hours, one must write also that it was one of the most terrible. Only thus can one understand the anger that possessed him, and made him strike a book four times with his hand. It became clearer than ever - except to those who would not give up hoping - that Hofmeyr would not be Smuts's successor. Yet who else was there?

But now was the time to put these problems away for a while, and to enjoy the excitement of the Royal Visit. Parliament sent a message of welcome to the King and Queen and the two Princesses, and Malan did not oppose it. The Royal group, with the King in the white uniform of an Admiral of the Fleet, was met at the Cape Town docks on February 17 by the Governor-General and the Prime Minister. Guns boomed and bands played. The Royal route up Adderley Street to Government House was all flags and bunting and illuminations, and was lined by the densest crowd ever seen in Cape Town, cheering their heads off. At Government House the King received a joint Address of Welcome from South Africa's legislators. Only eleven Nationalist M.P.'s were present; Malan and the provincial leaders of the Party did not attend. After the address had ~~been~~ been presented, the King invested Smuts with the Order of Merit. That night there was a State banquet, and Smuts spoke of the great opportunity given to all the people in South Africa of showing their loyal affection.* The King replied, paying tribute to South Africa's soldiers, to Botha and to Smuts, of whom he said, The whole Commonwealth is indebted to you. That evening the orchestra, correctly as it transpired, at one point played only DIE STEM VAN SUID-AFRIKA, but Stallard disapproved of this, and began singing GOD SAVE THE KING, and was joined by both crowd and orchestra.

~~The next evening there was a Royal Ball in the City Hall, and five thousand women rushed the cloakroom after stories had been put around that their mink coats were being stolen.~~

On Wednesday the Royal Family visited the Parliamentary sportsground at Fernwood, and were photographed with a ~~gripping~~ Hofmeyr, dressed in immaculate white. The Queen tried her hand at the game of jukskei. On Thursday, Mrs. Hofmeyr, at the Prime Minister's special request, accompanied him to Stellenbosch, where 15000 people gathered to give the Royal Family a decorous welcome.

On Friday, February 21, with Malan and all the Nationalist M.P.'s attending, the King and Queen drove to Parliament. As the

*NATAL MERCURY, February 18, 1947.

W.F.C.
? illustration
Smiling
etc

Royal pair sat down in the House of Assembly, the band played GOD SAVE THE KING. The King, after a brief and formal speech, declared the fourth session of the ninth Parliament to be opened, first in English and then in Afrikaans, and thereafter the band played DIE STEM VAN SUID-AFRIKA.

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Then the Royal Family set out in the White Train on their strenuous 9000-mile tour of the Union, a journey marked by no unpleasantness. It is true that the Transvaal Nationalist daily, DIE TRANSVALER, under its editor Verwoerd, ignored the tour altogether, but that did not prevent Nationalists in all centres from going to have a look at the English King and Queen. The King won many hearts by calling on President Steyn's widow in Bloemfontein, and by restoring President Kruger's Bible to his heirs. African and Coloured people turned out in hundreds of thousands to see the great-grandson of Queen Victoria, for the less sophisticated of them did not understand the constitutional sovereignty of the Union Parliament. Though the Indian Congress and the Passive Resisters called for a boycott of the visit, on the grounds that this was no time for joy, the Indians of Durban and Pietermaritzburg joined in heartily.

Smuts was in his element. He once said to Egeland, speaking of Queen Elizabeth, 'Beside her, my boy, we are all small potatoes.' He was thoroughly at home with the Royal Family, and they with him. Hofmeyr's latent republicanism was brought out, not by the presence of the Royal Family, but by the ubiquity of the Prime Minister. Smuts was there in Cape Town, at Government House, at the Houses of Assembly, at the Ball, on the top of Table Mountain. He was there at Stellenbosch and Paarl. On their way north, he met the Royal Party at Harrismith, escorted them to Ladysmith, and accompanied them to the Mont-aux-Sources National Park in Natal. Then he took them to Pietermaritzburg, and having seen their Natal tour well launched, he flew back to Parliament. He was there at Standerton to welcome them to the Transvaal, and accompanied them to Pretoria and Johannesburg. Mrs. Smuts was not well, and the King and Queen paid a special visit to see her at Doornkloof. Smuts was photographed with the party in a dozen places, wearing well-cut suits, white tie and tails, and climbing kit, always smiling in a way that managed to be both loyal and benign. Hofmeyr, always so circumspect in relation to his chief, thought it was going a bit far. He who had been declared by Oxford University to be the 'strength and stay of the British Commonwealth', thought that Smuts need not have been so openly royalist. He was a little peeved too, because, so he told Kilpin, he thought that Johannesburg should have been left to him. He wrote to Secretan that the Royal visit had proved strenuous for him 'when the PM and half my colleagues were away from Cape Town in attendance on the Royal Party, and I was left to mind the Parliamentary baby'. Mrs. Hofmeyr was of course

more forthright. She would say of Smuts with that look in her eye that did not invite further comment, (At his age he ought to know b-better.) She also had reason to be peeved. Owing to Mrs. Smuts's illness, Smuts asked Mrs. Hofmeyr to accompany him to the State banquet in Pretoria, but when the banquet was over, he forgot all about her, and friends had to take her home. She was however not humiliated by this, but told the story with gusto, adding in her own ~~ix~~ inimitable fashion, (Of c-course I am not Royalty.)

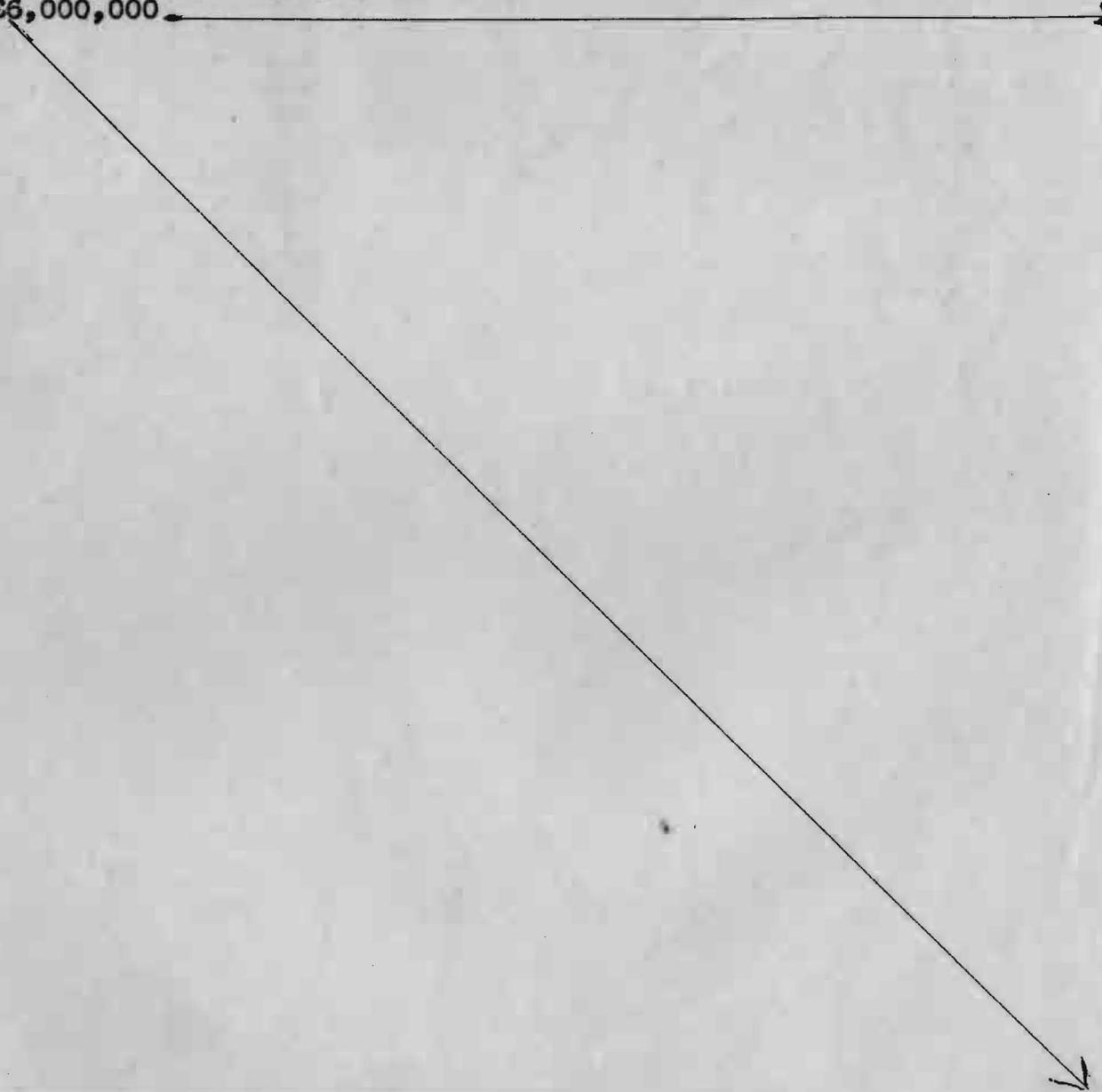
There seems little doubt that Smuts was attracted by royalty and by the institution of royalty, with its pomp and proprieties and protocol. When the Royal Family of Greece had to leave their country in 1941, the Crown Prince Paul and his wife Princess Frederika made their temporary home in South Africa. Princess Frederika was a striking-looking woman, and Smuts was certainly attracted to her, and she to him. When the Crown Prince returned to Europe and the Middle East, the Princess stayed in South Africa, and saw a great deal of the Smuts family. In Cape Town she and her children stayed in a wing of the Governor-General's residence, and when it was destroyed by fire, they were taken in by General and Mrs. Smuts at Groote Schuur, the Prime Minister's residence. When Parliament rose and the administration moved to Pretoria, the Princess would often visit Doornkloof, and walk with Smuts over the farm, learning about grasses and flowers. When Parliament resumed, she found a large pleasant house in Cape Town, and there her third child was born, Smuts standing as godfather. ~~Prince Paul returned to South Africa for this event, and when duty recalled him to Egypt, she insisted on going back with him,~~ ^{Cairo} However, ^{and did so.} when Rommel threatening Egypt, she returned to Cape Town, and took to rock-climbing as a pastime.

It was natural that the Princess should try to use Smuts's enormous influence to secure the return of the Royal Family to Greece, for there were strong forces in Athens seeking to overthrow the monarchy. After the return had been effected, Smuts formed the habit of dropping in at Athens on his journeys to and from Europe. With the true nature of the attachment this book has nothing to do, but there was a certain amount of amused talk about it, though not in very wide circles. For a collector of Mrs. Hofmeyr's rank, it was the find of a lifetime. She would survey her guests with that famous look in her eye, and say, (General Smuts has g-gone to Greece again.) If the company was very select, someone might add something. But in one company not so select, no one said anything at all, until she spoke again, as though she were adding an inconsequential after-thought, (He's having a r-royal time.) Then the company knew that the subject was closed; it was as though a witch had lifted the lid off her brew, and allowed one to smell it, and had put the lid on again, all on condition that no one said a word. In more select company she was scathing about the attachment, and used both ridicule and censure. Hofmeyr himself was more temperate in judgment, but he too

thoroughly disapproved of the whole business, and thought it did neither Smuts nor his causes any good.

Behind the brilliant facade of the ~~Royal~~ Tour of South Africa, politics proceeded as usual. The white voters of Durban, in a 37% poll, rejected the Administrator's proposals for an Indian municipal franchise, by 15,066 votes to 1,639. A Nationalist ~~pamphlet~~ pamphlet predicted that there would be 180,000 new voters in 1948, of whom 116,000 would be Afrikaans-speaking, and recorded that even as far back as 1936 more than two-thirds of white children under seven were in Afrikaans-speaking families. Hofmeyr presented his second post-war budget, and after transferring a surplus of over £6,000,000.

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(1600,000)

to Loan Account, sacrificed £18,000,000 of revenue. He wiped out three hated taxes, the Excess Profits Duty, the Trade Profits Special Levy, and the Fixed Property Profits Tax. He sacrificed £400,000,000 of postal revenue, £2,685,000 of import and excise duties, £400,000 of income tax, £2,200,000 of gold-mining revenue, and £410,000 on diamonds. A scoop for Hofmeyr was that he repaid the country's lease-land debt of £25,000,000 without asking the taxpayer for a penny.* He continued to make generous grants for demobilisation, the further education of ex-volunteers, and pensions; and created additional subsidies to keep down the price of foods. He provided an extra £1,600,000 on the Social Welfare vote, and he announced that £476,000 would be used to increase the salaries of African teachers.

Critics called it a rich man's budget, ~~that~~ largely because Hofmeyr forewent over £18,000,000 in taxes on commerce and industry, and reckoned to get only £4,000,000 back again in normal and supertax. Hofmeyr did not deny it; he said that during the war the rich man had been made to bear the lion's share, and now he was being given the lion's share of relief.

In the Budget debate he was as brilliant as ever. He pointed out that it was the Nationalists who pressed for the abolition of the taxes on profits, and now that the taxes were abolished, they didn't like it. P.J. Olivier of Kuruman argued that a man earning £600 before the war, now paid 235% of his previous tax; but Hofmeyr pointed out that before the war such a man had paid nothing, and that one could not pay 235% of that. J.R. Sullivan, who with his social security schemes wanted more expenditure, not less, thought that Hofmeyr should have raised £30,000,000 by taxing the rich; but Hofmeyr pointed out that the total taxable income of South Africa, of people with incomes over £2000, was only £30,000,000. He said he respected Sullivan's opinions on economics, but not on budget-making. He was not as witty as usual, but was persistently good-tempered. He not only arranged the business of the House, he not only had to guide the annual Appropriation Bill through many sittings, he also piloted 15 other Bills through both Houses. Yet those who knew him best could sense some change in him. The brilliance was still there, marred only by an occasional lapse of memory; it was some joy that was gone.

Hofmeyr himself thought his health was good. He wrote to Underhill, that his health was much better than it had been in 1946. Loveday told the writer however that the King had felt it his duty to speak to the Prime Minister about the health of the man who might

*Actually the £25,000,000 covered more than lease-land obligations. See HANSARD, Vol. 60, Col. 212.

**In fact one could. 235% of nothing is nothing.

*3 Hofmeyr to Underhill, May 11, 1947

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succeed him, and had expressed concern about the amount of work that he was doing. The Royal Tour was now over, but Smuts had not yet spoken to Hofmeyr.

About this time there were persistent rumours of disaffection and dissatisfaction in the ranks of the United Party. While the food planners reported progress, the newspapers reported shortages of meat, sugar, butter. The Nationalists were, as always, trying to split off the conservative members of the United Party, but now they hoped for more. The political correspondent of the NATAL ~~WITNESS~~ MERCURY reported that there was criticism within the caucus, not only of the incompetence of Ministers, but of the party leadership itself. There was no doubt truth in the report, yet when Smuts returned to Cape Town during the Royal Tour, he was cheered when he walked into the United Party caucus. He offered to hand over the leadership if the caucus was dissatisfied; after that the criticism died. Hofmeyr wrote to Underhill on 11 May;

□ At the moment the general political position is not quite as satisfactory as we would like it to be. We are getting into the trough of post-war discontents, and the Government's unpopularity has suffered as a result. Many people, especially on the English-speaking side, are, because of individual grievances, prepared to forget the appallingly bad war record of the Nationalists. Much however may be expected to happen before the general elections which will probably come in the latter part of next year, and in any case the Nationalists will have a very long way to go before they can get a majority.

To whom indeed could the Caucus entrust leadership? Sarel Tighy, the tough United Party member for Johannesburg West, wrote to Smuts and warned him that Nationalists might win the 1948 election on the colour issue. It was urgent to lift the issue out of the political arena. It was urgent, in fact, to do the very thing that Malan had asked for, and to appoint a ~~Subsidiary~~ Committee ~~delegates~~ to study the whole question. Tighy wrote that Smuts's rejection of this suggestion had made a powerful weapon for the Nationalists at Wakkerstroom.

Something like the Social and Economic Planning Council, to

It will be remembered that Smuts had rejected Malan's suggestion because Malan had insisted that the basic assumption of such a Committee should be racial separation. What ^{was} more, Malan

*Hofmeyr to Underhill, May 11, 1947.
**Tighy to Smuts, March 28, 1947.



knew that that was the basic assumption of many Smuts supporters. The United Party remained in its insoluble predicament. Harry Lawrence, the Minister of Social Welfare & Demobilisation, would not introduce a colour bar into the Board controlling welfare bodies, but gave a verbal assurance that he would not appoint a mixed board, so long as feeling in the country is as it is at the present. Erasmus called this a policy of deceit. W.D. Brink of Christiana wanted the colour bar embodied in the Bill. What would happen, he asked, if the Minister of Finance became the Minister of Social Welfare? Haywood of Bloemfontein District declared that Hofmeyr, because he pleaded for absolutely equal political rights, was encouraging agitation and communism.* A United Party member interjected that Hofmeyr had done no such thing, and the whole sorry subject was reopened. Piet van der Byl, the Minister of Native Affairs, stated that Hofmeyr had absolutely refused to give in to the demands of the Native Representative Council.

While the Nationalists, with their eyes on the elections, were asking for the abolition of the Council, Smuts, with his eyes on the outside world, was trying to make it work. Those two illustrious parliamentarians, the Native Representatives Margaret Ballinger and Donald Molteno, urged the Government to end the deadlock. In May, Smuts invited Prof. Z.K. Matthews, Chief Victor Poto, Chief F. Maserumule, the ex-Regent of Zululand Mshayeni ka Dinizulu, R.V.S. Thema and P.R. Mosaka to meet him. Smuts's two proposals to the Council were that African trade unions (except mining unions) would be recognised, and that the powers of the Council would be increased, especially in respect of the development of the Native reserves. ~~The story was circulated that Matthews or Mosaka had reminded the Prime Minister of the Council's demand for the abolition of discriminatory laws, and that Smuts had exploded and said, but your people are still barbarians. Whether that were true or not,~~ the six Councillors asked to be allowed to consult their colleagues. Almost immediately Dr. A.B. Xuma, the Chairman of the Working Committee of the African National Congress rejected the Smuts proposals. He said,

(We do not accept any proposal that does not provide for direct representation of all sections of the community in all legislative bodies.*³)

The Nationalists had no sympathy for Smuts in his difficulties. They declared that the Council was impudent and truculent and should be abolished.

vol. 61,
 *HANSARD, VOL 61, Col. 5001.
 ** ~~Ibid Col 5013~~
 *³ NATAL MERCURY, May 12, 1947.

Smuts was in a difficult situation. Every ~~new~~ concession he made to the Native Representative Council meant that a few more white voters decided to support Malan; every rebuff by the Council meant a few more still. Smuts's problem was that he was trying to delegate power, and that white South Africa was either determined not to delegate power or was nervous about doing it. It is often said that Smuts failed to use his great influence to get white South Africa to move with the times; people suggested that this was because he was at heart a Boer. If Smuts can be judged, then History may be able to do it. All that one can say now is that his problems were immense. History may well say that far greater than Smuts's power was the intransigence of white South Africa, which was to evolve, under the Nationalists, a new way of dealing with the problem of power. The Nationalist solution was to keep white power intact, and to create new centres of black power somewhere else.

Limited
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^{one} But if Smuts was in a difficult position, the United Party was in, yet more difficult. On May 24, Smuts turned seventy-seven.⁷⁷ He was given a great party in the caucus room, and he said:

(No one at 77 should still need to be in harness and I hope that it will not be necessary for me for very long now either. An old fellow must be spared to have at least some rest at the end of his life.)*

→ p de la Rey

It was both a grave and a jolly occasion. At the end of it Senator A.J. Delarey, who had been with Smuts on commando half a century before, led the assembly in singing, 'Dats Heeren Segen on u daal, (God's blessing descend on you). *Out 3*

But would God's blessing descend on the United Party? That was the question. It was almost impossible for two members of the Party to be together long without talking about the succession. Though Hofmeyr had no desire that he should succeed Smuts, it was painful for him to know that so many members of the party shared his desire. At some time - perhaps during this year or the next - he put amongst his papers a cutting on Benjamin Franklin.

□ Ordinarily we think of Franklin as basking in the admiration of his countrymen. The fact is that he withstood enough vituperation to reduce a modern politician to a quivering panic....

(We must not in the course of public life expect immediate approbation and immediate grateful acknowledgment of our

*NATAL MERCURY, May 24, 1947.

services. But let us persevere through abuse and even injury. The internal satisfaction of a good conscience is always present, and time will do justice in the minds of the people, even of those the most prejudiced against us.'



Hofmeyr's dislike of his Finance job grew steadily. His desire to get rid of it had nothing to do with the theory that a future Prime Minister should steer clear of the Treasury, especially when the time for succession draws near. His dislike was no secret. Smuts knew of it, but did not respond to it. Dr. Loveday spoke to Smuts more than once of Hofmeyr's health. It may have been Loveday's doing, or the King's, but Hofmeyr was surprised when in May 1947, Smuts suggested to him that he should drop Finance and take over Smuts's own portfolio of External Affairs. Hofmeyr said he would welcome the change; in any case he felt that his job at the Treasury was finished. After that nothing happened. Two months later Hofmeyr raised the matter again, and Smuts told him that while he could find someone to succeed Hofmeyr at the Treasury, it would be difficult to find a substitute for his successor. Smuts indeed indicated to Hofmeyr that there was no likelihood of any immediate change. Hofmeyr wrote to Egeland that it was clear to him that Smuts wanted no change before the 1948 election, and that he was not anxious to give up External Affairs, 'in which', Hofmeyr added with his extraordinary honesty, 'he is probably correct.*

Hofmeyr appeared to accept the situation almost as though he were saying, 'One can't argue with Smuts.' Of course Hofmeyr had often argued with Smuts, but not about Cabinet-making. Presumably Smuts intended Sturrock to succeed Hofmeyr, and could think of no way to find a successor for Sturrock. There is no indication that Hofmeyr suggested any way of doing it. Smuts either couldn't do it, or didn't want to do it, and that was that. But one person did not accept the situation so passively, and that was Mrs. Hofmeyr. She knew what it cost her son to be Leader of the House, Minister of Finance, Second Minister, and substitute for sick and travelling Ministers. She made no jokes about it, she was unsmiling and silent. But her anger against Smuts mounted.

There were members of the United Party who would have liked to see Havenga return to the Treasury, and thought he would come if asked. The story was told that Hofmeyr was adamantly opposed to it, and that he influenced Smuts, thereby changing the course of our history. The first part of the story was true, but

*Hofmeyr to Egeland, January 25, 1948.



according to J.C. Smuts, the younger, ~~man~~, his father had a poor opinion of Havenga, and thought him a man of ambition rather than principle.* As for Hofmeyr, he had no time for a man who had flirted with Pirow's New Order and the Ossena Brandwag.

Gossip was brought to an end by a statement that Havenga's Afrikaner Party and Malan's Nationalist Party would cooperate politically in the next elections. Havenga and Malan declared that

(the foremost national interest of South Africa demands the rejection of the Smuts-Hofmeyr regime.**

The next day the South African Press Association announced that in publicising the statement it had inadvertently omitted reference to dangers threatening our white civilisation.³ This was to be the clarion ~~and~~ cry, to be sounded again and again, throughout the rest of 1947, and the ensuing months before the 1948 election. And of all the dangers threatening white civilisation, the greatest was Hofmeyr.

Yet in Oxford they were still remembering him with pride. They had just reformed the Balliol Boys' Club into four houses, each to be called after a Balliol man. The four men commemorated were Prince Olaf of Norway, the Nawab of Pataudi, the Marquis of Glydesdale, and the Rt. Hon. J.H. Hofmeyr. Hofmeyr did something that for him was exceptional, especially in his later years. He went to René de Villiers and asked him to see that the news was given to the daily press.

Babu King wrote to him,

(I knew you would be pleased and proud to think that your name has not been forgotten in St. Ebbe's, and you would have been proud to see the window full of silver cups and medals that the B.B. Club had won during the current season.)⁴

King recalled how Fred Slatter had first met Hofmeyr. They were playing in the bashing room with a football, and when the South African toff Hofmeyr poked his head round the door, the ball hit him straight in the bloody clock. Then Hofmeyr took off his coat and specs and said, Now if you want a rough house, you can have

J. C. Smuts,
 *JAN CHRISTIAN SMUTS, ~~by J.C. Smuts~~, p. 487.
 **NATAL MERCURY, March 22, 1947.
 *³ Ibid., March 25, 1947.
 *⁴ King to Hofmeyr, June 13, 1947.

Sam Murray

it.' Ah, that was thirty-four years ago!



In 1947 Parliament was prorogued fairly early, on June 5. Parliament was over, the Budget was over, the War was over, but Hofmeyr gave himself only five days in July, which he spent with the campers at Anerley. At one time it looked as though Smuts might send him to represent South Africa at the wedding of Princess Elizabeth to Prince Philip. But Smuts decided to go himself. Hofmeyr wrote to Underhill:

I am not entirely sorry since I am loath to leave my mother for any length of time. She is getting old - almost 84 now - though happily not showing any signs of it.*

He was always solicitous for her, but that did not prevent him from thinking what his life might have been had she not been there. Before he left Cape Town, Brookes had gone to see him on some matter of business, in the office of the Minister of Finance. After ²⁵twenty-five years of married life, Brookes had asked his ~~imperious and self-willed~~ mother to leave him and his wife and family, and to make her home somewhere else. It was a step he had wanted to take many times before, but only now had he felt able to take it. When he and Hofmeyr had finished their business, Hofmeyr said to him, 'So your mother's left you.' Then Hofmeyr added, with all gravity, 'How did you manage it?' Brookes, not yet recovered from his painful experience, was embarrassed and constrained, and evaded the question. But afterwards he was remorseful, and felt that he had failed Hofmeyr in some important way. Yet in all probability he had not. Hofmeyr was not asking advice on how to do it, he was probably only fascinated ~~in knowing how it could be done.~~ ^{to know that}

Back in Pretoria Hofmeyr had to take his part in the preparations for the election of 1948. Usually he had a zest for elections, but this time he had not. He knew it would be a colour election, and that meant it would be a Hofmeyr election. That was hardly something to look forward to, the thought of the future being like a cloud over his life. He wrote to Secretan: ** ^{hungry}

□ In my own mind there is a growing sense of unsettlement. It would be difficult for me, if Smuts were to fall away, to

*August 10, 1947.

** 20.7.1947

**I like to regard Edgar Brookes's telling of this story to me as a tribute to this biography. Brookes had withheld it from me, but when he had read the biography in manuscript, he decided that it should be withheld no longer.

lead the United Party, without either doing violence to my convictions or taking a line which would split the Party.*

ALAN PATRICK
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1947

He was not only unsettled, he was in a graver situation. He still worked hard, as he had always done, but now the work did not satisfy him. Winning the war, that was something, it was something to have been the Minister of Finance during the war. But now the job seemed to him more and more negative. Then his mind was full of the everlasting and unsettling question, not only of the succession^{to}, but of what would happen when Smuts went. The question was made still more urgent because Arthur Keppel-Jones, Senior lecturer in History at the University of the Witwatersrand, had just finished a frightening forecast of the future, called WHEN SMUTS GOES. According to him, the United Party would disintegrate, the Nationalists would come to power, and would embark on a programme of racial legislation, the like of which the ~~world~~ had never seen. English-speaking ^{people} would leave the country in great numbers, and finally black and white would meet headlong in a catastrophe of violence and destruction. America and Britain would intervene, with the result that the Black Nationalists would take over, and those white people who were left would ask earnestly and pathetically of anyone who was prepared to listen to them, But what did we do wrong?

African
continent

With a mind full of these unsettling thoughts, and a soul seeking confidence and peace, Hofmeyr decided to keep a diary. His immediate reason for doing so was that he had just read the diary of the Italian politician, Ciano. He opened his diary on Friday, August 22, 1947, with these words,

(I have decided to commence a Diary in the hope that if I am able to keep it up, it may, in future years, be of interest to myself and, possibly, to others.)

In the Hofmeyrian sense, it was.

~~*Hofmeyr to Secretan, July 30, 1947.~~