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OW

Ans 17.10.51

13/4/51

LIFE OF J.H. HOFMEYR

My dear Alan,

As a member of the Hofmeyr Trust I was delighted when you were asked to write the life of Hofmeyr. There are, I feel, strong reasons why the Oxford University Press should publish it. First, there is Hofmeyr's abiding connection with Oxford which was very much his spiritual home. (I travelled with him to England when he went over in 1946 and he told me that he was ostensibly going for financial discussions but that, to him, the real reason was the honorary degree at Oxford!) Secondly, we have been concerned to publish the lives of South African liberals - Schreiner (which was before my joining the Press), Rose Innes and Saul Solomon (which I dealt with personally). Finally, there is my own friendship with Hofmeyr. All these factors would, I think, combine to give a publication by us the kind of personal interest that would ensure a worthy job. There is another reason - we would do it (print and everything) in South Africa, though, of course, it would be published in other countries as well as here. But South Africa would be its home.

I realise that you will have feelings of obligation to Jonathan Cape - for all I know you may be legally bound to offer them anything you do. But I would like to urge you strongly to consider the points I have mentioned and to write to Cape explaining the circumstances. This is a very different kind of book from your previous one; and the fact that you were invited by the Hofmeyr Trust to undertake it alters the situation. I feel quite sure that Cape would, if you explained the circumstances, release you from any moral or other obligation that may exist.

I shall be very glad to hear what you feel about this question.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,

L. Marquard

