

PC 44/2/35-75
23 Lynton Road,
KLOOF,
Natal, South Africa.

24th May, 1965.



Dear Ismay,

It was very nice to receive your letter about HOFMEYR. You are quite right in supposing it was Don who gave me the picture of his home-life. You have given me another picture, and I may say it explains many things to me about Don which I did not fully understand. When you write 'Don was the only one who somehow was pulled into the DRC., its Sunday School, and the sort of God he has spent his whole life quarrelling with', it really tells volumes.

You say you wish I had scarified the racists more, but you go on to comment that probably it would not have been appropriate. I thought of this a great deal. I never tried to hide or obtrude my own view, and I always remember William Temple's famous remark that he hated to read history written by someone who had no point of view. I decided that I would have a point of view but would try to keep it in its proper place.

I do not know how a child or young person can be called guilty if he is brought up to believe that evil cannot overcome good. I was brought up that way myself, and I had to learn otherwise. Hofmeyr was also brought up to believe it, but his awakening was more painful I believe because everything that happened to him in his first forty years seemed to prove the truth of the fallacy.

I am very glad that you appreciated the book because I meant it to be the true story of a man's life. I am astonished by people who write to me and say that I have been too harsh. I must admit that my judgment of Mrs. H. was very severe. Some people have suggested that I did not know her very well. The truth is that I knew the one Mrs. H. very well. The other and ideal Mrs. H. I did not know at all.

Thank you again for writing. I close with warmest regards to you both.

Dear Alan Paton,

Basil and I have been living with you for the last few months and I thought you should know how much we have appreciated your Hofmeyr. You told us much that we knew, much that we had not remembered, and much that we never realised. I refer more to the general history of the worsening times than to the life itself.

You have made us realise how much, in a way, we are the guilty people. We did not see that evil might overcome good and that evil is more cunning than good, and believed, like Hofmeyr, that if people knew the good or could be told it they would want to carry it out. We did not realise the enormous necessity for vigilance, and for actual fighting. We blamed Hofmeyr in 1936 for not going into the wilderness with the eleven but never really knew that the battle was already joined - even as he did not really know.

I wished of course that you had scarified the racists more, but you were not writing a polemic and in any case have been most careful not to write with hindsight. In fact your re-creation of the actual day by day time of which in each case you are writing is supremely skilful.

I have a slight criticism to make of your reference to Don's religious country home. In fact my Mother was an extremely thoughtful and rational person and my Father came of a sect in Scotland which regarded all sacraments as non-magical, commemorative rather. He did not take communion in the Presbyterian church at Somerset East until he was well advanced in years and in fact of his five children four remained unconfirmed partly from the feeling that if the best man we knew was excluded, we then did not wish to be included in the conforming group. With the influence of my parents, both different, we early distinguished between "religion" and "church". Don was the only one who somehow was pulled into the D.R.Church, its Sunday School, and the sort of God he has spent his whole life quarrelling with. He often speaks as if his experience was the universal Craib experience and so must have given you your picture of our home life.

With great admiration and with affection,

hmay Schouland