



should regard us as a potential source of assistance in the present and the future. It is of real interest to South Africa that European civilisation should be established on a firm basis throughout the Highland belt which stretches through Eastern Africa. It is of real interest to South Africa that policies in regard to native questions should not be initiated to the north of us, which in these days of shrinking distance cannot but complicate our own handling of such questions in the future.\*



It is clear that Hofmeyr used the categories of <sup>The</sup> white thinking of these days. The overwhelming majority of white South Africans spoke then, not of the problems of race relations, but of Indian problems and "Native" problems. In those days many white South Africans and many other white men, thought of a great federation stretching from Cape Town to the northern border of Kenya. In 1929 white South Africa took it for granted that she would have an important say in the political development of Africa.

Hofmeyr was not merely using the categories of white thought, he was not really thinking at all. He was going to Jerusalem, Athens, and Rome, but it was the man from Pretoria who was writing the articles. It must have been embarrassing in later years for him to read what he wrote about Mussolini; he called him one of the great men of history, and said that, judged by the test of pragmatism, Fascism as a political philosophy had been magnificently vindicated. Worse than that, he compared Mussolini with the revered Augustus as though they had been equals.

It was in Jerusalem that he received Smuts's cable asking him to stand in the elections, which were to be held on June 12; to this he replied, 'Candidature unlikely, writing.' He was still determined not to stand, but he found it difficult to say No to Smuts in a firm voice. He wrote that at that moment he felt that it would perhaps be better if he took no part. But he had not decided finally. He would do so when when he reached London. 'Only sound reasons would move me to say No, if indeed, I do so decide.'\*\*

When he reached London, he wrote a final No to Smuts, and said he thought it would be important, when hereniging drew near, that there should be someone on our side who had not taken part in the struggle.\*\*\*

\*Written from Red Sea 4/3/29.

\*\*Hofmeyr to Smuts 12/3/29

\*\*\*Hofmeyr to Smuts 11/4/29



He thought that he and his mother would reach Cape Town on June 3 or June 10. If on June 3, then perhaps he could do a little to help, by addressing a couple of meetings on the Witwatersrand with the hope of turning the floating vote against the Labour Party; but he thought it better not to make it public.

A month later he wrote that he would not be back on June 3. His mother and he would arrive back in Pretoria on the day of the election, but he had that very day sent off to South Africa a full statement which would show clearly that he supported the South African Party.\*

Meanwhile Reuters cabled South Africa that although Hofmeyr adhered to his oft-repeated opinion that the gulf between the parties was a narrow one, and though his aim was cooperation between them, he indicated that on the chief election issues his sympathies were with the South African Party, even though he would arrive back too late to help it.

It was not only Smuts who was peeved. All those who believed that Smuts was the only bulwark against Nationalist isolationism, were peeved too. Some of the Nationalists felt that Hofmeyr had made a fool of them, but even they could laugh at the SAPs, whose famous new recruit, after having abstained from all the fighting, would arrive back in time to give them one vote on election day.

SAPs

What did Mrs. Hofmeyr make of all this? By this time she knew that it was to be politics after all. There can be no doubt that she, with her political neutralism, powerfully reinforced his decision to keep his hands clean, and gave him strength to keep their powerful kinsman at arm's length. Behind his reluctance to return was her own. And she was afraid of politics, lest it turn out like the Stibbe affair, and bring him suffering and despair. She had seen his joy in Balliol revisited, and in old friendships renewed, with Secretan and Jacks and Underhill and them all. To go to Mansfield College was like going back home. Oh, the joys of those quiet days, when his greatest responsibilities had been his books and his Boys' club! If only he could return there, and take up the life of a scholar behind those ancient walls, and leave others more suited to it to wrestle with the fears and the hates, and the harsh history so full of wrongs! She told him so, that she would have liked him to ~~have done~~ that. But both she and he knew it was only a dream. Even in his childhood, when they had learned how great were his gifts, they had known they must be used for his country.

Hofmeyr met Babu King of course, and visited his Commercial Road Boys' Club; he had a sausage dinner there, and listened to his praises being sung to boys who had never heard of him. King had

\*Hofmeyr to Smuts 9/5/29.

written to him



□ I hope to get the whole Club to come up for a week-end with you. That would be fine, wouldn't it, and we shall have a real good time.

(...we can glide up and down the upper reaches of the Thames to our hearts' content. Wytham always seems so far away from everywhere although one can see the railway in the distance. While I am up there I have no newspapers at all, and it is very nice and quiet and lonely and restful... I hope I have not said anything that will make you throw up your post immediately and sail for England. In case I have, I will quieten your zeal with a little about the awful weather we have had this winter.)\*

They did not get a weekend, only a night, Hofmeyr, King and three of the boys. Photographs were taken, and Hofmeyr was hard put to it to explain why he was not black. There were jokes, too, some of them about Hofmeyr's weight and corpulency, (which certainly had not decreased since the Balliol days. Yet of course they were trying to recapture the unrecapturable. Perhaps that is why it was only a night, not a weekend. When Hofmeyr returned to South Africa, he wrote to King asking him to drop the jokes about weight and corpulency. King called it a reprimand, and accepted it humbly; in his own words, 'The offence was never repeated.' Hofmeyr softened his request by twitting King because the wrestling match about which so much had been predicted, had never taken place. King wrote:

□ (Re the neglected wrestling match at camp, did you really expect me to catch hold of you, my guest, and calmly throw you into the stream a mangled corpse....

(...now I must close. Hope I have not overdone the sarcasm. If I have, please forgive me for I am in a jolly mood.)\*\*

Though Hofmeyr might not be able to recapture the past, the present was surely enough. London, Oxford, old friends, and - strangest of all, something he did not really believe in, but found very pleasant - freedom without responsibility. Both he and his mother were enjoying it, and were reluctant to give it up. So they resisted the return to Smuts, she stubbornly, he with indecision.

\*\*King to Hofmeyr 15/1/28,

\*\*King to Hofmeyr 1/10/29.

This vacillation must not be taken to be fundamental to his character. It was something to do with Smuts alone; Hofmeyr, even while he resisted him, stood in awe of him, as indeed might any modest young man. Hofmeyr had had a career that was steadfast and brilliant, and there was no reason to suppose that the rest of it would be different. Some people now called him a fence-sitter, but he considered he was keeping his hands clean to tie the knots of hereniging. Other people called him the future Prime Minister, but he was not aiming at that either; three years earlier he had read Raymond's DISRAELI, and had considered the question ~~as to~~ whether political success comes to those who do not seek it. ~~It~~\*

He even wrote a memorandum on it which made it clear that he would do nothing to attain the ~~P~~remiership as such. He had set himself a course, and that was to serve his country in accordance with his principles. If the ~~P~~remiership lay at the end of it, well and good; if not, then well and good too.

He asked himself whether he had political ambition. His answer was that by temperament he was fitted to be, not a Gladstone, but a Bright, influencing the policy of the government, especially on questions of moral bearing. Looking back, he admitted that at the University, politics had attracted him (as a way out of a position which was very burdensome and in some respects distasteful).

He asked himself whether one who had no political goal, and who would never subordinate principle to party, could succeed politically. His answer was No. If it proved otherwise, then surely it would be the working of the divinity that doth shape our ends.

In all this Hofmeyr showed considerable insight into his own nature. It would have saved others from too great expectations had they known that he thus thought of himself. Many awaited a lead from him while he awaited a lead, or even a push, from God. It was clear that if he was to be Prime Minister, God would have to do it; for he himself had already decided that the ~~P~~remiership was not only not essential, but would almost certainly be burdensome, to the kind of political course he meant to follow. It was Onze Jan come back to life again.

It seems certain that man is so made that if he is to reach some high goal, he must have some kind of personal ambition, not only an aspiration, but an intensity of ambition to be the one who achieves it. J.H.H. ~~de~~ Waal had a name for this lack of intensity in Onze Jan; he called it timidity. There are no doubt intimate connections amongst the several qualities of timidity, modesty, loyalty, gentleness, and lack of ambition; but one's enemies will use one word, and one's friends the other.

*rom. no quotes*  
~~of 2/5/36~~ \* His own memorandum of <sup>5.</sup> 2. May 1926.

Hofmeyr admitted at once that he wanted to be a participant in politics rather <sup>than</sup> an onlooker, but not a responsible Minister or one of the leading men of the Party, only a private member with influence in the House.)

(Therein would lie great satisfaction, and I am not sure if it is not the kind of political role which my outlook and temperament best fit me to fill.)\*)

These words he wrote when he was in what might justifiably be called the prime of his life, with his ears full of praises.

Hofmeyr was beginning to learn that in human conduct, the 'will to do' is not everything. The prizes do not always go to those who work for them, nor to the virtuous; they go, especially the biggest of them, to those who are fitted, by no act of virtue of their own, to receive them. The University had taught him that he had limitations, which no amount of virtue or industry could overcome; and now he was being taught it again by his great kinsman, before whom he often felt like a child.

Meanwhile he was having a wonderful time in London. The Royal Empire Society gave him a luncheon, and he gave it a speech to remember. Speaking as one who had not a drop of British blood in his veins, he told his audience that South Africa had come to regard the question of its relationship to the British Empire as definitely and finally settled. To its member nations the Empire gave status, to the world it was a bulwark of peace.

The Rt. Hon. L.S. Amery thanked the speaker, and said he had listened to many speeches in that room, but not he thought to one more interesting or inspiring. The Chairman had said that Mr. Hofmeyr had started young, but Mr. Amery was not sure that he had really started at all. 'We all look forward with interest and confidence to the part he is destined to play in the history of South Africa and the Empire.'

A few days later Hofmeyr was at a dinner given by the British Empire League to the South African cricketers. Mr. Eric Louw paid tribute to the role played by sport in bringing the two white races together. Mr. Taberer recalled, amid much laughter, that after taking part in a freshmen's cricket match at Oxford in 1889, the SPORTSMAN described him as 'a coloured gentleman from South Africa', while the FIELD, with less reserve, called him 'a coloured cousin from across the waters'.

\*From the same memorandum.

SECRET

□ My Lords ~~and~~ Gentlemen: that will indicate to you how we have progressed, for those incidents will reveal to you how we in South Africa were at that earlier time regarded by the people of England. If a person had been born in South Africa it was confidently assumed that he had coloured blood in his veins. If you examine the finger-nails of the boys representing the South African cricket team you will not find any indication of coloured blood.

Things have changed in South Africa since that time, most people would think for the worse; yet such a speech would today be unthinkable. ~~South Africa's present shame is not that she has not coloured blood in her cricket teams, but that she will not have any.~~

N.P.U.  
Tom.

Hofmeyr did not pursue the theme; he made one of his jokingly serious cricket speeches, and told about the tour where he had made more speeches than runs. He was making many speeches now, at the opening of Rhodes House, at the South African Luncheon Club, at the British Empire Producers' Organisation. He was received by the Prince of Wales, he visited Spurgeon's church and Bermondsey Mission, had dinner with Sybil Thorndike, saw his first talkie and thought that ultimately it would turn out to be boring, and people would return to the silent film and the theatre. He made one venture into continental politics, and that was when he suggested that an East and South African conference should be held without delay, to discuss Matters of Native Policy. But nothing came of it.

On Smuts's birthday, which was also Empire Day, 24th May, mother and son sailed for Cape Town in the "Carnarvan Castle." A few days before they landed, Hofmeyr's statement was published. It covered well-trodden ground. Again he drew attention to the unimportance of the issues separating the parties; this would have made him a half-hearted contestant, and he looked forward to a realignment of the parties. He repudiated the suggestion that he was waiting to see which way the cat would jump; he thought it would jump in Smuts's direction, but even had he thought it would jump in the other, he would not have jumped with it. He had three reasons for not supporting Hertzog.

↳ He thought Hertzog should not have made an election issue of his solutions for the "native problem"; such solutions involved constitutional changes and required a two-thirds majority in both Houses sitting together.

He objected to the trade treaty with Germany, which he reckoned would weaken Commonwealth bonds.

He was revolted by Hertzog's "Black Manifesto", which

accused Smuts of wanting to see white South Africa swamped in a black sea,\* and called all voters to the defence of South Africa as a white man's country.\*\*

Hofmeyr therefore came down on the side of the South African Party, but kept the door open for cooperation. As for the Labour Party, he hoped it would be destroyed, as it had sold its soul for the loaves and fishes of office, and had abandoned the protection of the interests of the real underdog in South Africa.

*that*  
Hofmeyr's statement, though welcomed by the Transvaal Press, drew two stinging editorials from two powerful editors, B.K. Long of the CAPE TIMES.\*<sup>3</sup> and Kingston Russell of the NATAL MERCURY.\*<sup>4</sup> Long was angered with Hofmeyr could not see the difference between the South African Party and the Nationalists, that he thought that the existing divisions were transient, that he could not distinguish between the narrow isolationism of the Nationalists and the broad vision of Smuts. Kingston Russell was angry for the same reasons, that this young man could not see that South Africa needed Smuts more than ever. Here was the world hanging on Hofmeyr's words, and all they got was the voice of a goatherd bleating musically from the foothills of Parnassus. Russell thought that W.S. Gilbert could appropriately be quoted here:

*ivay.*  
And everyone will say  
As you walk your mystic way  
If that's not good enough for him  
which is good enough for me,  
Why what a very cultivated kind of youth  
this kind of youth must be.\*

He urged Hofmeyr to drop the Delphic role, and win his spurs as a humble musket-bearer.

Hofmeyr's election forecast was wrong. The Nationalists secured for the first time an absolute majority in the Lower House. Out of a total of 148 seats, they secured 78, Smuts 61, Labour 8 with ~~one~~ Independent.\*<sup>5</sup> Hofmeyr wrote to Underhill that it was

\*Smuts made a speech at Ermelo in which he envisaged a great African dominion of which South Africa would be a part.

~~\*\*One might say with fairness, I hope, that racial fear is used by the Nationalists at every election, and while this is regrettable, it is inevitable.~~ C.M. van den Heever, Hertzog's biographer, seems to disapprove of the Manifesto,<sup>on</sup> p. 532.

\*<sup>3</sup> 6.6.1929. June 6, 1929: \*<sup>4</sup> 7.6. June 7, 1929.

\*<sup>5</sup> The previous election: Nationalists 63, Labour 18, S.A.D.<sup>p</sup> 53, Independent 1. Note the number of constituencies had been increased from 135 to 148.

not so much the result that was disquieting, as the fact that it was won by an open and unashamed appeal to colour prejudice; \* Hertzog himself spoke from every platform of the 'native menace'; \* Hofmeyr's letter of 1929 reveals the same fears as are strong in ~~1927~~ 1964. He wrote of the increasing tendency among Africans to write off Christianity as a fraud, and said that the creation of a sullen hostile population was a poor foundation for a policy of preserving European civilisation. AS for himself, he said that the election had left him high and dry. If there had been a stalemate, or if Smuts had won, he might have done something, but now he could see nothing to do.

Although Hofmeyr had declared for the South African Party, he was still resisting it. He wrote to Roos, who was still undergoing treatment in Germany, lamenting that the election had been fought on racial lines, which, he said, seems to me to hold the seed of great evil for South Africa.\*\* He was still convinced that the future depended on white racial cooperation, and asked whether Roos would be willing to work towards that end. He asked Roos to be quite frank about the matter, and if he would rather not commit himself, to destroy the letter and leave it unanswered. Roos replied that the consolidation of the two parties was essential, not only to the economic development of the Union in peace, but to bring about the incorporation of at least the two Rhodesias in the near future.\*<sup>3</sup> Hofmeyr replied that there was a good deal of pressure on him to take a definite party line, but he thought he would continue to resist; and in any case he would not commit himself until Roos's return.\*<sup>4</sup>

~~Although he could see nothing to do politically, he was otherwise active. After hesitating over his lack of qualifications, and after receiving encouragement from Smuts, who said he was the best man for the job, he had in 1927 accepted the Presidency of the South African Association for the Advancement of Science. Smuts wrote, you know what my wish and plan is, and this unique honour will do much towards their fulfilment.\*<sup>5</sup> So in July, after a week at the Boys' camp at Anerley, he went to Cape Town to deliver the inaugural address to the joint meeting of the South African and British Associations, one of his distinguished hearers being the Prime Minister himself. His theme was the development of science in South Africa, and the great opportunity that lay before South Africa of helping forward the scientific and economic development of the whole continent. The newspapers were agreed that it was a remarkable performance. It was the kind of speech at which both Smuts and Hofmeyr~~

*Hofmeyr to Underhill*

\*30/6/29; \*\*Hofmeyr to Roos 19/6/29.

\*<sup>3</sup> Roos to Hofmeyr 10/7/29; \*<sup>4</sup> Hofmeyr to Roos, undated.

\*<sup>5</sup> ~~Smuts to Hofmeyr 29/10/27 and 14/12/27.~~



39  
A. H. ...  
young people

But while he was contemplating working with Ross and simultaneously giving praise to the United Party, he took part briefly in yet another adventure which seemed to show beyond doubt that he did not know his mind. On June 22 of 1929, Mr. Ludwig Japhet, a young Johannesburg attorney, whom his friends thought vigorous and his enemies pushing, wrote a letter to The STAR, maintaining that a young country should be governed by young people. They would not shrink from the native problem. Mr. Ludwig Japhet, would advocate equal pay for equal work, and would assure his readers that the native does not wish to fraternize with the whites; he wanted only equal opportunity. Japhet declared that a new party must arise, representative of both Boer and Briton; when it does, South Africa will find a solution to its problem.

Japhet's writing might have ended there had Hofmeyr not responded to it in the next issue of The STAR. He agreed that youth longed to close the old chapter and make a fresh start; it must mobilize itself against the day when the call will come to it. Hofmeyr wrote:

□ Now when we have a reasonable prospect of political stability with no general elections threatening us, is the time for young South Africans, the younger folk of all parties, to come together in such an effort. ... Will not Mr. Japhet take the initiative?

On the next day it was announced that Hofmeyr would take the chair at a public meeting in Johannesburg, and that a new party would be launched on the day following. Hofmeyr denied that there was any question of a new party; Japhet declared that talk of a new party was a gross misapprehension, and that Hofmeyr's support for his views was great encouragement. In the afternoon Japhet declared that a new party was the goal, and Hofmeyr declared that the goal was to get young people of all parties together, to think things out a bit.

... nevertheless ... nothing ... attack ... for his part ... in the ... Japhet episode. The STAR described talk of a new party as unwise; South was indispensable. The RAND DAILY MAIL said the whole thing was Hofmeyr's biggest blunder. His first blunder was to be absent from South Africa during the general election; his second was to lead the public to expect from him an important pre-election announcement and to give them instead a complete misreading of the situation. DE VOLKSTEMAD said that Hofmeyr had no conception of the pride and self-confidence of Nationalist youth; it wanted no centre party.\*<sup>3</sup>

26.66.  
\*THE STAR, June 24, 1929!  
\*\*THE STAR, June 25, 1929!  
\*<sup>3</sup> June 27, 1929.



The HAZEL ADVERTISER, in an editorial called Japhet is Search of a Party, asked what kind of example Hofmeyr was for youth.

□ A few months ago he chanted blessings on the South Afr's an Party. He chanted blessings all the way to England as he was borne away from the battleground... He chanted blessings as he sailed leisurely back... With a maiden rapier skill unscathed he passed judgment on the flight when the fighters were well-nigh spent; and when he landed in Cape Town on the eve of the poll he was just in time to see the cause he had so elegantly espoused suffer eclipse because too few men had been found to fling away their sabres when blows rather than platitudes could have turned the day. \*

What was Hofmeyr doing? Japhet had in his first letter clearly asked for a NEW PARTY. Hofmeyr had just as clearly asked Japhet to take the initiative. Yet few days later he announced that he withdrew his consent to act as chairman of the meeting, and would not attend in any capacity whatever. Japhet was left with no choice; he announced that he had abandoned the project. The DAILY MAIL showed Alchamist Hofmeyr staring with horror at a chemical retort labelled Mixtur of Jewish Party, from which not a drop was coming.

The newspapers liked to give Hofmeyr a drubbing, but most of them liked to make it up to him again. Their chance came soon. In 1927, after hesitating over his lack of qualifications, and after receiving encouragement from Swits who said he was the best man for the job, Hofmeyr had accepted the Presidency of the South African Association for the Advancement of Science. Swits wrote, You know what Mr. Fish and I did in. And this welcome honour will be yours should Swits fail. So in July, after a week at the boys' camp at Anerley, he went to Cape Town to deliver the inaugural address to the joint meeting of the South African and British Associations, one of his distinguished honorees being the Prime Minister himself. His theme was the development of science in South Africa, and the great opportunity that lay before South Africa of helping forward the scientific and economic development of the whole continent. The newspapers were agreed that it was a remarkable performance. It was the kind of speech at which both Swits and Hofmeyr

266.

June-26, 1929. The title of the editorial is a play on the title of one of Frederick Martyat's books, JAPHET IN SEARCH OF A PARTY.

references to Hofmeyr 20/10/27 and 14/12/27.



were adept, and, to do them justice, the kind of speech that was expected of them; they both could see in public great visions of the future, and persuade their audiences that they were within grasp, when the hard truth was that a South Africa whose rulers thought of the majority of their people as a menace, would never be able to offer any kind of leadership to the continent at all. The CAPE TIMES asked what reflection there was of Hofmeyr's vision in the public life of South Africa, whose white people despised vision and built altars to a despicable racial fear, and wondered what General Hertzog was thinking while he listened.

The University of Cape Town used the great occasion to honour its guests, and who more deserving than the most brilliant of her sons? What Hofmeyr had refused from the Witwatersrand, he took from Cape Town, an honorary degree. He became a doctor of science, but he would not be called by the title except on academic occasions. He had by now almost completely succeeded in shedding the title Professor. Both titles he regarded as damaging to a politician, and thought Professor Doctor Hofmeyr the most damning of all.\*

When he returned to Johannesburg, he had three tasks awaiting him. The first was to write a chapter on South Africa for the Cambridge History of the British Empire, and the second was to write a book on South Africa for the Modern World Series. The third was the most immediate, and had come out of a discussion with E.B. Woolff, ~~the Johannesburg~~ <sup>the Johannesburg</sup> ~~a well-known surgeon~~, and Herbert Frankel, one of the most brilliant graduates of the University of the Witwatersrand, and a man who was devoted to Hofmeyr, and willing to be his disciple. The year 1931 was the year of the coming of age of the Union of South Africa, and the proposal was for a group of young South Africans to examine the achievements and the problems, and to chart a course for the future. Oliver Schreiner wrote quite independently to Hofmeyr to suggest to him a similar scheme that Ronald Currey had put to himself and ~~Harold~~ <sup>Harold</sup> Ramsbottom.\*\* Currey was keen because he thought that English-speaking South Africans

\*Hofmeyr to Underhill 9/3/30

\*\*These are the young students mentioned in the earlier chapters. Oliver Schreiner became Appeal Judge, <sup>was</sup> passed over for Chief Justice by Prime Minister Strijdom in 1965, on retirement became Chancellor of the University of the Witwatersrand in succession to the Hon. Richard Feetham, who himself succeeded Hofmeyr. Currey became Rector of Michaelhouse, and then Headmaster of St. Andrews, his old school. Ramsbottom became Judge-President of the Transvaal Division of the Supreme Court.



or

were being driven, ~~and~~ felt they were being driven, into becoming  
Uitlanders. Currey wrote to Hofmeyr that whereas in 1900 his  
father's attitude had been dubbed pro-Boer, today it seemed vaguely  
Jingo. \* Edgar Brookes, Professor of History at the Pretoria Univer-  
sity College, and English-speaking liberal who tried to understand  
Afrikaner Nationalism, was brought in and also J.D. Rheinallt Jones,  
who was now the Adviser to the newly-formed Institute of Race Rela-  
tions. The Institute had been founded by the Hoernlès, Loram of the  
Native Affairs Commission, the Rheinallt Joneses, Professor Jabavu  
of Fort Hare, and other liberals, and while its task was to gather  
and disseminate objective information about all racial affairs, this  
was to be done from the point of view of those who believed in a  
common South African society, and who regarded segregation as both  
impossible and unjust.

It was agreed to call the book COMING OF AGE, and the  
group settled down to decide the topics and preparé the material.  
Hofmeyr was chosen as chairman, and Frankel undertook to do all the  
'secretarial work. Meanwhile, however, a little post-election drama  
was being played in the constituency of Johannesburg North, which  
was going to complicate Hofmeyr's life. ~~Mr.~~ Lourens Geldenhuys had  
won the seat for the South African Party by beating the Labour can-  
didate, ~~Mr.~~ John Duthie, by one vote. \*\* His majority was challenged,  
and one of his votes declared invalid. According to the Electoral  
Law, the issue should then have been decided by ~~the~~ drawing ~~of~~ lots,  
but before that could be done, ~~Mr.~~ Geldenhuys died. The seat was  
then declared vacant, and the Divisional Council of the Party, headed  
by the same Colonel Stallard who had acted as Arbitrator in the  
Stibbe affair, decided to ask Hofmeyr to stand for the South African  
Party.

One thing seems clear, and that is that up to this point  
Hofmeyr did not feel himself committed to Smuts, not even by the  
statement he had made a few days before the election. Whether he  
saw Roos on his return from Germany, or whether Roos had by that  
time returned, one does not know. Roos had been elevated to the  
Appeal Bench, and it was said that he was both too ill to be a poli-  
tician, and too political to be a judge; he may well have felt physi-  
cally unable to go chasing with Hofmeyr after the will-o-the-wisp  
of hereniging. Therefore when Colonel Stallard came to the Hofmeyr  
house, both mother and son knew that the hour had come.

She used to say thereafter that Stallard persuaded her son,  
but in fact he needed no persuasion. He was now satisfied that no  
hereniging would come from outside Parliament, therefore into Parlia-  
ment he must go. He wrote to Underhill that he had no political

\* Currey to Hofmeyr 2/9/29

\*\* Constituencies were small then, one-third of their present size.

ambitions and would as readily have washed his hands of the whole thing.\* But it was to be a kind of test. 'If I win, full steam ahead! If I don't, I am going to keep quiet for a few years and find other things with which to occupy myself.' He was already thinking of the law, which he could have studied in his spare time, and for which his gifts so clearly qualified him.

Of all this his mother said, 'It was a nail in my soul.' She and he made an agreement that there would never be politics in the house; by that was meant no political argument and no polemics, but of course it did not exclude conversations between him and others, provided she was not present. It was a necessary arrangement, because her friends came from both parties, to her tea-table and dinner-table, and to sit on the stoep. Then she shrugged the whole thing off, saying that politics was in the Hofmeyr blood. But the real fear she put away and would not speak of, that they would do again to him what they had done at the university, and that this time they would break his heart.

By many others Hofmeyr's decision was received with joy, especially those who were disturbed by the tendency of white politics to become more and more obsessed with racial fears and the struggle for survival. His colleagues in the writing of COMING OF AGE, though they had barred all politicians, would not now let him go, because after all he was going to do the things that they were merely writing about. Bull was delighted at the thought that one of his old campers might get to Parliament and witness there to Christian principles. Judge Saul Solomon, who had always followed Hofmeyr's career with fatherly concern, wrote to send him best wishes, but he warned him not to exhaust himself prematurely, and reminded him that Macaulay cracked at 51 through excessive intellectual effort. He urged Hofmeyr to alternate strain with proper relaxation.

Hofmeyr, perhaps remembering Kingston Russell's words, announced that he was entering the battle as a humble musket-bearer. He believed that Anglo-Afrikaner cooperation was essential for the welfare and prosperity of South Africa and all its people; therefore he supported the South African Party which had the same ideal. But he was going to work for the modification of the present lines of party division. The CAPE TIMES cartoonist showed him leaving his tent as Achilles Uriah Hofmeyr and saying, 'But I am so very, very humble,' while the CAPE TIMES editor faintly rebuked the cartoonist and gave Hofmeyr an effusive welcome. S.H. Heaton Nicholls, a beetle-browed Imperialist who called spades spades, asked (although he was a Smuts man) the public question, 'Is he fit only to open shows and make beautiful after-dinner speeches, or is he a real leader who has pondered deeply over our problems and seen the dawn of a brighter future rising over the hill-tops?' That was the question all the

Hofmeyr to Underhill.

\*14/9/29

~~to Africans, a spyker in die sie!~~

older men were asking, especially those who were irritated by the element of jauntiness in Hofmeyr's speeches, which they believed to contain the innuendo that Smuts and Hertzog had made a mess of things, and that Hofmeyr would teach them how to do better. This irritation was more marked amongst Smuts men than others, because it was Smuts, not Hertzog, who had always been the champion of Anglo-Afrikaner cooperation; and the comparison was inevitably made between the general-philosopher-statesman and the classroom prodigy who had never heard a shot fired except at athletic sports.

People wondered how the classroom prodigy, whose worldly knowledge, according to Heaton Nicholls, was acquired behind college walls, would face up to an election. They still looked upon him as a child, and were continually wondering how he would succeed in a new situation. The answer was that Hofmeyr was as magnificent a candidate as he had been an Administrator, and that throughout his Parliamentary career no candidate ever surpassed him, for industry, thoroughness, and efficiency. His committees worked with a will because he himself was tireless. The Rev. S.R. Hattingh, the Nationalist stalwart, who prophesied a victory for Duthie, caused much amusement by saying about Hofmeyr,

'We have not got to do here with a remarkably strong and wonderful man. We have to do with practically a dead man.'

It was precisely the kind of remark which delighted Hofmeyr. He told the story of the young dominee who played mediocre golf against his ageing beadle, and was beaten at the eighteenth hole. The beadle was indecently delighted, and exclaimed, 'It's ma hole, it's ma hole.' The dominee said that such behaviour was unseemly in one so near the grave, and that he would say so at the burial service. And the beadle said, 'Dominee, you can say what you like, but that will be ma hole too.'

'And so,' said Mr Hofmeyr, 'when the Rev. Mr. Hattingh comes to read the burial service over me, he will find that Johannesburg North is ma hole.'

That brought the house down. The RAND DAILY MAIL said Mr. Hofmeyr might not aspire higher than a musket-bearer, but he was a deadly shot with the instrument in question. Patrick Duncan said his election to Parliament might become a turning-point in political history. Deneys Reitz, soldier, hunter, and gifted story-teller, son of the late President of the Orange Free State, who had returned to South Africa after the Anglo-Boer war only because Mrs. Smuts had written to ask him if he was a better man than her husband, said that the psychological moment had arrived for Hofmeyr to intervene in the political struggle, because he had inherited no vendettas or feuds.

(1) RAND DAILY MAIL editorial 27/9/29

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Hofmeyr increased the party majority from ~~one~~ to ~~three~~ ~~hundred and five~~, in spite of the fact that the Prime Minister himself came to Johannesburg North to speak against him. Three other by-elections took place at the same time, and the Nationalist young hope, Oswald Pirow, won Gezina with an increased majority. Pirow had fought against Smuts at Standerton in the general election, and had lost. The Prime Minister ~~however~~ was determined to have him in the Cabinet to replace Tielman Roos as Minister of Justice. It so happened that there was a vacancy in the Senate, for a Government-appointment Senator whose qualification must be that he was acquainted with the reasonable wants and aspirations of the coloured people. The Prime Minister therefore appointed Pirow to the vacancy.

irals

Pirow's appointment in this way had a powerful effect on Hofmeyr. Though he may at that time have thought in categories unacceptable today, the direction of his evolution was already plain, and he was revolted that the Prime Minister should use this sole instrument of non-white representation for his own purposes. The appointment was made still more objectionable because Pirow had shown, and was to show throughout his political life, no sympathy whatever for the aspirations of non-white people. He spoke contemptuously of koelies and kaffers, and described the coloured people with that contemptuous word, mengelmoes.\* Pirow believed in white supremacy superiority, (and in its preservation at any cost). But he was an intelligent man, and even in those far-off days, he knew how to speak of the white man's moral responsibility for others, especially for the mengelmoes, which the white man himself had made, even to the extent of a contribution of blood. He was also absurd, and believed in the partition of Africa between black and white till as late as the end of the Second World War. This is the tragedy of Afrikaner politics that the most able men devote their lives to drawing blueprints for the impossible.

It was already being said that the future lay with Pirow and Hofmeyr. They represented two distinct though not diametrically opposite views. Pirow stood openly for white supremacy, for what later came to be called baasskap. Hofmeyr believed in white responsibility for a just order, later called trusteeship.

In his election campaign Hofmeyr was challenged by Pirow to state his views on racial segregation. He replied:

- With regard to segregation, this is, in my view, the most logically satisfactory, in fact the ideal policy, but we should not forget that it is not an easy policy to give

\*Mengelmoes is a mixture, but is contemptuous, as in English hotch-potch.

effect to, and that it calls for sacrifices on our part....)

an urgent matter to face the position and to consider whether we are willing to pay the price.'



What did Hofmeyr and Pirow mean by ~~the word~~ segregation? It seems clear from the context that they were talking about territorial separation, later to be called ~~apartheid~~, and still later, ~~Autogenous Development~~. That was the way Hofmeyr was thinking on the eve of his entry into Parliament; and it was Pirow, with his absurd dream of dividing Africa between black and white, who as much as any person helped Hofmeyr to clarify and modernise his ideas.

Separate  
K

Hofmeyr's Labour Party opponent, Mr. John Duthie, called on the voters to vote for a white South Africa; meanwhile Hertzog's Minister of Labour, Mr. Sampson, said in Durban that Indians would be admitted to the Typographical Union. Hofmeyr made great play with this, and it is a popular election tactic to this day for the main opposition party to attack the Nationalists when they relax their apartheid ~~principles~~ policies, and to do something humane. Oliver Schreiner did not like it, and he was one of the few South Africans who could write to Hofmeyr, and tell him that better could be expected. I feel that the platform is not the place for compromise, wrote Schreiner; it is the place for saying what one really feels and what one hopes to persuade other people to feel.\* Many people would not have kept such a letter, but Hofmeyr did, this seeming to indicate some kind of humility in him, some determination to set his standard higher, and to listen to those whose own standards he respected.

The Nationalist paper ONS VADERLAND used the most complimentary language about Hofmeyr's election conduct. It said that it delighted in the clean way in which he had fought.\*\* But it thought he had won because he had not identified himself with the South African Party. It prophesied that he would be a greater burden to his own party than to the Nationalists.

One consequence of Hofmeyr's victory was that he became immediately a South African figure. As a speaker he was in demand everywhere. A feature of these speeches was his cordial references to the Prime Minister, who was now asking publicly for cooperation in settling once and for all the native question. Hofmeyr referred sympathetically to Hertzog's anxiety about agitators who are inciting natives to follow a course which can only lead to lawlessness!

□ 'The position is unsatisfactory and legislation necessary. There is a certain number of people, though certainly not so many as we sometimes suppose, whose activities should

Schreiner to Hofmeyr

\*7/12/29

\*\*Veel behage gesten. A strong expression. I use the word delighted in the sense of Isaiah Chapter 42, verse 1. xlii.1.

be checked. Such activities will only embitter racial relations; they do positive harm to the individuals and expose natives to the penalties of lawlessness to which they were incited. Moreover, they excite the hostility of Europeans who otherwise might be well disposed towards them.\*



Another feature of Hofmeyr's speeches was that, after having won a seat for the South African Party, he kept on calling for realignment. In some places he stated specifically that although he had come to discuss political questions, it was not as a politician. What the party bosses thought, no one knows. Smuts was away in England, talking about his dreams for the White Highlands of Africa.

Hofmeyr had had a busy half-year since his return, and he rounded it off by accepting an invitation from the Provincial Executive in Natal to act as chairman of a Commission to lay down boundaries for the growing city of Durban. Having done this job with his usual efficiency and dispatch, he, ~~and his mother,~~ <sup>with</sup> went off to Klerksdorp to spend Christmas with Mrs. Donald, his mother's sister. Soon after that he and she would take the famous parliamentary train to Cape Town, and he would embark on an entirely new way of life.

*he, with his mother, went off ...*

\*Speaking in Grahamstown, November or December 1929.