

PC/11/7/9-37



CHAPTER ~~XXXVII~~ ~~XXXIII~~ XXXI
1945

The end of the war was now clearly in sight. When the Nationalists referred to it, they no longer praised Hitler; they condemned rather the folly of America and Britain in destroying Germany. The danger of Russia was now the theme of any important Nationalist speech, and history will be able to say better than we why Afrikaner Nationalism reacted so violently to Communism and so indifferently to Nazism, why it was revolted by Russia's godlessness and unmoved by Hitler's.

A profitable new line of attack now offered itself to the Nationalist Party. The Union's note issue had doubled in four years but there was less to buy. The price of food had risen by at least one-third, and not all the efforts of the Price Controller could keep it down. Under the Marketing Act of 1937, many surpluses had to be exported at a loss to keep up the price at home; thus the food of the poor, in whom were included the great majority of the African population, was sold to foreigners at prices the poor themselves could have paid.*

The position was made yet worse when there were no ships to take the exports away; they then rotted at home while people starved. The whole situation took a macabre turn when shipping suddenly became available, and the Maize Control Board, in a season of drought, exported maize that was not surplus at all, not even in this inhuman sense. Then Allied ships purchased great quantities of food at the ports, so that the South African civilians had to put up with occasional meatless days and the banning of white bread, and only the rich could afford to drink their troubles away. It seemed a trifle, this lack of white bread, but the Nationalists were to make it an election cry.

If there was one thing which Mrs. Hofmeyr thought of extraordinary importance, it was her son's food. She secured a permit to buy white bread, arguing that it was essential for his health, and that his health was essential for the country's good. It was more difficult to get meat, but she and her son received considerable publicity when she bought some of the whale meat offered for sale at Durban. They did not continue the experiment, partly because they didn't like the whale meat, partly because they didn't like the publicity, which made it look as though the Minister of Finance called on others to suffer and would not suffer himself. At a YMCA-Toc H luncheon in Johannesburg, the National Chairman of the Executive contrasted Hofmeyr with Jonah, in that the one swallowed the whale, and the whale swallowed the other. Hofmeyr →

*Twenty years later, this is still the case.

snorted, but it was not the snort of pure delight; the point was well taken, but not the jest.

There was great public dissatisfaction with the efficiency of those Government officials who were controlling food and prices. It was now widely said that the Cabinet, except for Hofmeyr and of course Smuts, was inefficient, and Strauss, the new Minister of Agriculture, was blamed for much of the food and production middle. Louis Esselen's health was declining, and Smuts thus lost the services of his life-long adviser. Barlow had written to Hofmeyr in his capacity as future Prime Minister:

- 'You will have to carry your Strausses, your Watersons and your Sturrocks and even your Pieter van der Bijls.
- 'No easy job.
- 'But you can thank goodness you will have no Stallards or Madeleys to look after.*

There was a growing belief that Smuts for all his genius, was useless at picking men. Even within the United Party, there was dissatisfaction with taxation, food shortages, and incompetence. Within the Coalition were also rifts. The Dominion Party, the upholder of the Empire, wanted sterner action against Indians. The Labour Party, the upholder of the working man, refused to agree to the training of non-white artisans to build houses for non-white people at lower wages, thus in effect preventing their training altogether.

In spite of these difficulties, Smuts's party was still, even without allies, extremely powerful. But the Nationalists were militant in the closing days of the war. For the second time in their history they took from Smuts the Transvaal seat of Wakkerstroom. What is more, they were angered when Smuts, yielding as he seldom did, proclaimed the ~~League~~ Broederbond to be a subversive organisation, to which a man could not be loyal, and at the same time be loyal to the country. He ordered public servants to resign from the Bond, or from the Public Service. Malan declared that the Broederbond had done no more than serve the Afrikaner people as the Sons of England had served the English-speaking South Africans, and the Jewish Board of Deputies had served the Jews. Yet this was not true. ~~The Broederbond had declared~~ *Neither of these societies had ever sought to become the ruler of South Africa.*

~~Brothers, our solution for South Africa's ills is that the Afrikaner Broederbond should rule South Africa.~~

Founded in 1918 as a cultural organisation, the Broederbond, with Malan as an early member, soon thereafter set itself the

*ARTHUR BARLOW'S WEEKLY, August 5, 1944.

aim of ruling South Africa. It took its first tremendous political step in 1934, a gamble that meant all or nothing, when it decided to reject the coalition of Hertzog and Smuts. Its membership was secret, and it met in secret; no notice or resolution was ever sent through the mails. Though small, its membership was powerful, containing almost every Afrikaner of note who was a 'true Afrikaner' in the Malanite sense. The Bond dominated the cultural Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurbewegings, the economic Reddingsaadbond, the political Herenigde Nasionale Party. No matter what the Electorate might decide, the Bond resisted uncompromisingly any dual-medium education. Its influence over the symbolic Trek of 1938 was immense; during that time the great United Party, especially its English-speaking members, felt their powerlessness. It was the Bond that decided that Malan must first praise the Ossewabrandwag, and then turn against it. The Ossewabrandwag was a people's emotional movement that would flame up today and burn out tomorrow, while the Broederbond was a movement of a couple of thousand picked men, whose emotions were indissolubly wedded to their wills. It was the people who brought Hertzog and Malan together in the great reunion at Monument Koppie on September 9, 1939; it was the Broederbond that threw Hertzog out when the popular emotion had subsided. It was only Smuts who ever successfully resisted the Bond, partly because of his own great gifts, partly because the war had loosed a passion and a fury and created a resolve that for a time overshadowed the passion and fury and resolve of the 'true Afrikaner heart'.

What was the Broederbond? A clique seeking power? Agitators playing on grievances? Afrikaner zealots with one overriding and patriotic purpose? Undoubtedly it was all these. Whatever else it may have been, it drew much of its power from the resentments of the 'Century of Wrong'. Its relation to Afrikaner Nationalism was vital yet obscure. Not every member of the Nationalist Party was a member of the Broederbond, and some Nationalists, among them General Hertzog, condemned it root and branch. Of course both the Broederbond and the Nationalist Party kept wounds open and played on grievances of the past, but who can doubt that the grievances were there? And what artists to play on them! Malan himself, the old veterans Swart, Strijdom, Erasmus, Eric Louw; and the newcomers, the smooth-tongued Dönges, and Hertzog's fanatical son Albert with the little pointed beard, and the up-and-coming editor Verwoerd, the professor who was now learning the art of applying psychology to a nation.

Smuts's banning of public servants from the Broederbond had little effect except to make Malan more than ever the champion of oppressed Afrikanerdom, and the unquestioned leader of any opposition. He called for a vote of censure on the Government for its laxity and incompetence in the distribution of food. The Nationalists exploited the position well. Swart painted a picture of the food shortages which would have convinced every poor white voter that the Nationalists were the real champions of the people. It is

a custom of white South Africans to entertain their friends at barbecues; chops and steaks and a national sausage called boerewors are grilled over glowing coals in the open air, and such an event is called a braaiivleis. The members of the Nationalist Party in particular liked to meet at a braaiivleis. While Swart was painting his dark picture of the food position, he was interrupted by that irrepressible Smuts man, Sarel Tighy, the M.P. for Johannesburg West.

- Tighy: You can't get meat for your braaiivleis evenings.
- Swart: That's the sort of answer you get when people are crying out for food.
- Tighy: That's because you eat it up at your braaiivleis evenings.*

The Labour Party pressed for a Ministry of Food, and for an assisted scheme of house ownership. Harry Lawrence, now Minister of Welfare & Demobilisation, admitted a serious housing shortage. Women marched to Strauss's Cape Town office, and when they found Strauss away, some of them demonstrated outside the main gates of Parliament, shouting, 'We want meat, we want Strauss.' The Speaker ordered the gates to be closed, and more police were put on Parliamentary guard. Van der Berg, of the Labour Party, and therefore a member of the Smuts coalition, went out and told the women that there was plenty of food but only the 'idle rich' could buy it.** Malan asked the Speaker whether the grounds of Parliament were controlled by Parliament or the Speaker. Sullivan doubted whether even the watered-down Social Security plan of the Select Committee would ever be implemented, and condemned the Government's reception of the National Health Services Report.*** Margaret Ballinger attacked the Government for refusing to create a Ministry of Food, because it was afraid of the farmers, and for rejecting the Health proposals because it was afraid of the Provincial Councils, who might turn against Smuts if they lost some of their regional powers. There was also excitement outside the House. Seventeen City Councillors in Cape Town called for a special meeting to discuss food and housing, and the Food Controller, using extraordinary powers, requisitioned sheep and cattle at sales held outside the controlled areas.

Smuts admitted that there were grumbles, but he denied that South Africa was exporting a great portion of her food. He said that the Minister of Agriculture was preparing a rationing system, but he must have known that rationing without a system of personal identification would prove impossible. He said the food difficulties

*NATAL MERCURY, January 30, 1945.

**NATAL MERCURY, February 1, 1945

*³ Smuts had said that the proposals were 'idealistic and impracticable'.

were the result of the amazing increase in consumption caused by the plentifulness of money. His answers did not satisfy his critics. A contemptuous Strijdom, becoming better and better known for his implacable opposition, said that Smuts was a man of high intellect who did not have the time to deal with the daily affairs of the ~~people~~ people. Strijdom said,

I hope that he will remain in good health until the next election so that Standerton can deal with him as Pretoria West dealt with him in 1924.**

What Strijdom said about Smuts and daily affairs contained much truth. This was February 1945 and in a few weeks he would be leaving again to spend nearly four months in Europe. He had such a tonic effect on Churchill and his Ministers that whenever he went to England they did not want to let him go back to South Africa. His enemies accused him of regarding South African affairs as small potatoes; his mind was full of the Great Bear and the American Eagle, and he was thought to understand their affairs with special insight. Geoffrey Clayton, the great Bishop of Johannesburg, gravely concerned over the squalor and misery in which so many of the city's African workers were living, and supported by his entire Synod, went to see Smuts. Clayton was an Englishman whose reserve hid deep and strong feelings, and the thought of a brave people living in physical misery with the rain flooding in through roofs of tin and sacking, in unlit streets stinking of sour mud, waking at four in the morning so that they could appear punctually before employers who expected them to rise out of the filth and shine, weighed down on him continuously. Clayton had been to the Johannesburg Municipality, whose officials had explained to him that they could not accept the whole responsibility and bear the whole burden of re-housing; the Government must help. Clayton then went to Smuts, and with justified hope, because Smuts had said publicly that something must be done about African housing; but Smuts explained to him that the Government could not accept as much of the responsibility and the burden as the Municipality thought it should. Smuts did not even promise to have the position sympathetically investigated, and Clayton came away shocked by his apparent indifference to the suffering of people. He said afterwards of Smuts and the Municipality, They put things before people, which for him was the severest of judgments.**

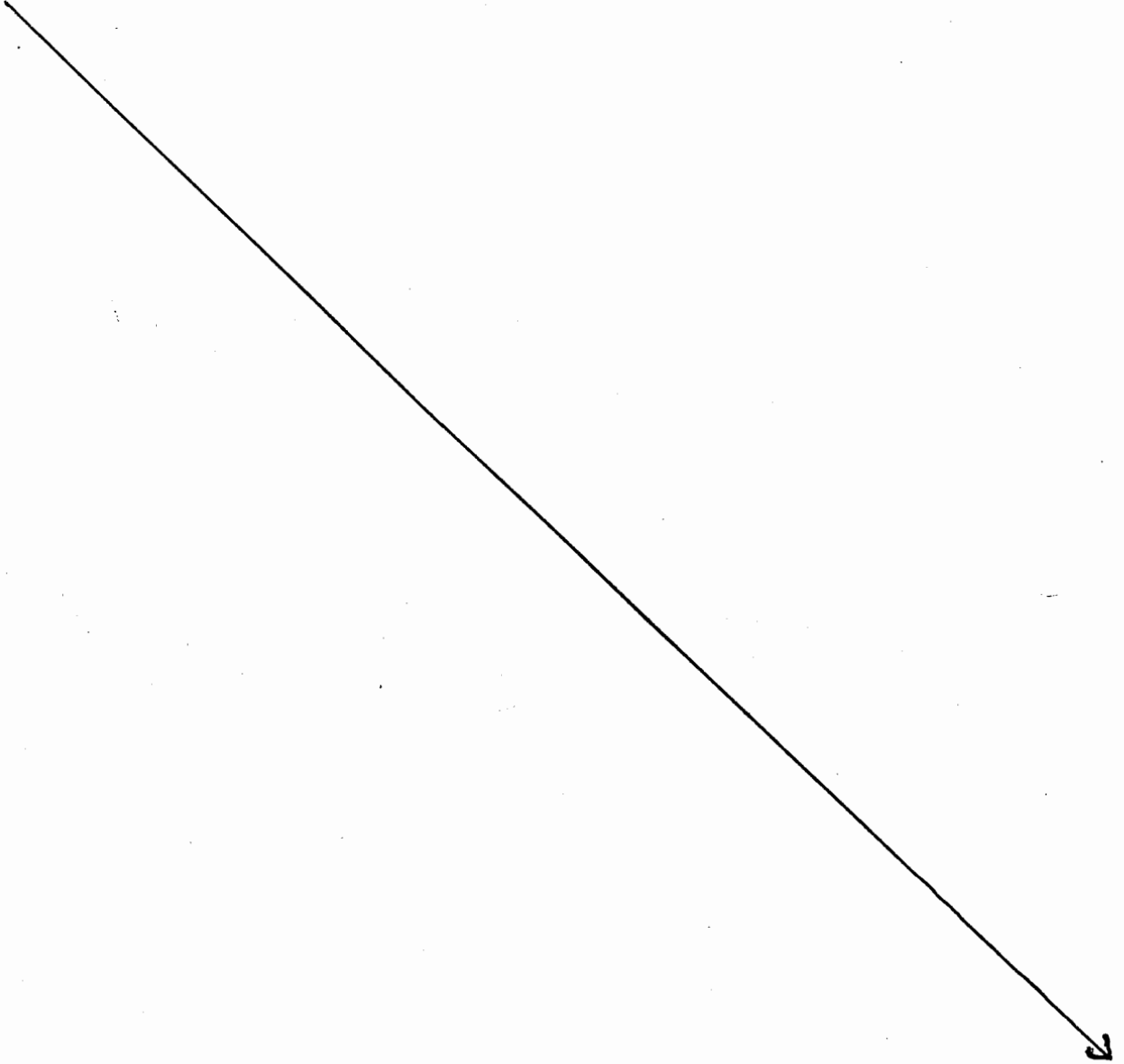
~~It would have been wonderful if, with Smuts as the international leader, Hofmeyr could have been the national one, planning the new world at home, with a Finance Minister like Frankel, eager to help, eager to please, eager to build this brave new world. It was a task Frankel would have given a lot for. He was ambitious, but it would have satisfied his ambition to have had a position of~~

*NATAL MERCURY, February 9, 1945

**Said to the writer.

ALAN
PATTON
CONFIDENTIAL

It would have been wonderful if, with Smuts as the international leader, Hofmeyr could have been the national one, planning the new world at home, the kind of world that men and women had been talking about during the years of war. It would have been the kind of world in which men and women would have been shielded from the grosser misfortunes, and would have had food enough for themselves and their children, and in which the grosser disparities of wealth and privilege would have been wiped out. Among helpers, whom better could Hofmeyr have had than Frankel, eager to be used, eager to please, eager to study the problems of the brave new world, and to advise Hofmeyr how to build it. It was a task Frankel would have given a lot for, to be the Director of the Institute of the Brave New World, examining, studying, testing, advising. He was ambitious but not vulgarly; it would have satisfied his ambition to have had a position of _____





high responsibility under Hofmeyr. He had never forgotten Hofmeyr's kindness to him when he had been a poor but aspiring student. To put it plainly, he loved him.

Frankel loved Hofmeyr. Did Hofmeyr love him? Who would know? The writer never heard Hofmeyr use the verb in that way. 'Fell in love?' Yes, of others. 'Love of neighbour?' 'Love of country?' 'Love of comfort?' Yes. But never, 'I loved.' ~~Frankel~~ Frankel not only loved him, he wanted to serve South Africa through him, with him, under him. During these years of the Finance Ministry, Hofmeyr could have called on Frankel any hour of the day or night. Frankel was prepared to devote to Hofmeyr every hour that he could spare from his professional duties at the University of the Witwatersrand, Raikes willingly agreed. ~~that Frankel should use all the facilities of his department to help the Minister.~~

had (and) to

Hofmeyr adopted by no means all of Frankel's suggestions. In the late thirties, when Hofmeyr was free of the Cabinet, Frankel was one of those who wanted him to come out as a Liberal. It was only later he learned he was asking for something that for Hofmeyr was temperamentally impossible. When in the early forties, scents of the new world were in the air, Frankel was one of those intoxicated by them. Surely there was a job for him in such an age, something more than teaching economics or advising on a budget! But councils and committees were created to plan for the new age; the initiative which in Frankel's eyes should have come from Hofmeyr, who surely of all South Africans understood best what the new world should be like, was passed to others. Smuts set up the Economic and Social Planning Council with van Eck as chairman, while Hofmeyr examined their blueprints with a cold and judicial mind. Then Oxford offered Frankel a professorship. At once he let Hofmeyr know, hoping with all his heart that Hofmeyr would say, 'Don't go, there's a job for you here. I've work for you here.' He wanted him to say, 'Smuts will be going soon, and I'll need you, Frankel.' He hoped that Hofmeyr the Finance Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, who was so careful not to put his hands on any man, who was so scrupulously correct in his use of public servants, who had never emulated Pirow's example when he made the young van Rensburg Secretary for Justice, or Smuts's example when he made the young Hofmeyr Administrator of the Transvaal - he hoped that perhaps now, when he knew that Frankel might be going, he might say to him, 'I've a job for you to do.' Frankel's wife had said to him more than once, 'You're wasting your time, why don't you do something for yourself?' But he went on hoping that he would be able to do something that would be both for himself and Hofmeyr.

Apparently never thinking to get Frankel put on it.

(etc)

When Hofmeyr made no response, Frankel accepted the Oxford offer. He went over to Pretoria to break the news. Hofmeyr was pensive, said Frankel, and then he said, 'I don't blame you.' To

Frankel it was both a shock and a revelation; it was his first insight into the relationship between Hofmeyr and Smuts. Frankel never quite recovered from the words, 'I don't blame you.' It explained to him much of the events of the late 'thirties and the early 'forties. He remembered the excitement of those earlier days, when they had been writing COMING OF AGE, when he was a young man had been admitted into the select company of Hofmeyr, Haarhoff, Brookes, Schreiner, Ramsbottom, and Currey. He said to the writer, with a mixture of sadness and pain, 'Damn it, Paton, what has it all come to?'

When Frankel left for England, the Institute of International Affairs in Johannesburg, of which he had been secretary, cooperated with the Economic Society in arranging a farewell evening for him. Frankel was to give a farewell paper on 'Immigration', which to him was essential to the political and economic future of South Africa. His friend W. J. Busschau, who with Frankel's wife had always told him that he could expect nothing from Hofmeyr, was angry to hear that Hofmeyr, though Chairman of the Institute, would not be there. He sent a long telegram to the Minister, telling him plainly that at least a farewell message was called for, and this Hofmeyr sent. But for that, Frankel would have received no public praise.

Frankel's experience was painful but not unique. Others would have come running had Hofmeyr called them, but he did not call. Some thought it should have been easy for Hofmeyr to call them, because he was so near to Smuts. But Hofmeyr was never to Smuts what Smuts had been to Botha, or what Havenga had been to Hertzog. And the reasons for that were plain. In the first place, the difference in age had proved for Hofmeyr insurmountable. In the second, Hofmeyr was weighed down by sheer hard work, and it must be concluded that the lack of creative leadership and the burden of administrative labour were closely connected with each other; there is here a deep secret of temperament and nature that defies easy analysis. Had Hofmeyr in 1945 enjoyed the health and self-confidence of the period of his Administratorship, had Hofmeyr from the beginning enjoyed a more independent relationship with Smuts, with weaker elements of submissiveness and stronger elements of assertiveness, then perhaps he could have undertaken the national leadership while Smuts roved abroad. But there was yet another reason why Hofmeyr proved disappointing to the would-be builders of the new South Africa; for him the first priority was still the winning of the war.

His last war budget was for a record expenditure of £189,000,000. Of this, £82,500,000 was for the war, as compared with £102,000,000 for the previous year. £106,500,000 was for expenditure other than defence, as compared with £78,000,000 for the previous year. Thus Hofmeyr was clearly preparing for the transition from war to peace.

Yet he encountered sharper criticism than ever before. Though he had left the gold taxes as they were, he increased the diamond taxes for the second time. He left the disliked Excess Profits Duty and the Fixed Property Profits Tax as they were. He introduced a wartime surcharge on Transfer Duty, and made people pay still more for their cigarettes, tobacco, and liquor.. Industrialists, who were being allowed a 15% write-off for the years 1945 to 1947 on all new machinery needed for post-war reconstruction, declared that industrialists of other countries would pay premiums far above 15% in order to get the machinery, and would leave South Africa behind in the industrial race.

Whatever Hofmeyr felt about these outside criticisms - and he affected to feel little or nothing - he was clearly intensely irritated by Mushet's annual criticism from within. To use Hofmeyr's

own words, Mushet had generally lauded the budget, but when he came to the taxation his praise took the form of faint damns.* He had said that the Minister should have overhauled the tax machinery. He had said that some of the best brains in the country were idle; they asked, What's the good?**

To that Hofmeyr replied that the Excess Profits Duty had the previous year yielded £2,500,000 more than expected. In 1943 the number of new companies increased by ~~22~~ 1405 and capital by £18,000,000. In 1944 the number had increased by 1932 and capital by £49,000,000.

Had Mushet known it, Hofmeyr was in one of his cold and devastating moods. But he did not know it, and he accepted the Minister's challenge. Hofmeyr had just said that Mushet's demand was for the overhaul of the machine; he meant the Excess Profits Duty and the Trades Profits Special Levy.

□ Mushet: Not necessarily at all.

HOFMEYR: What are the main features then of the system of war taxation?

Mushet: You have the super tax.

Hofmeyr: That is not part of the system of war taxation. My hon. friend now says there is the super tax. Let me accept that. In other words, my hon. friend wants a relief of super tax.

Mushet: I do not want immediate relief at all. I want a new machine.

Hofmeyr: But my hon. friend said the changes should have been made now.

Mushet: I said you should announce your new machine now.

Hofmeyr: In other words, I should announce the taxation which is to come into operation a year hence. Surely one does not do that sort of thing. Let me make this perfectly clear. If taxation is to be reduced, super tax or whatever it is, so that people at the top who are now sitting back pay less taxation, someone else must pay more, and

*HANSAARD, Vol. ⁷51-54, Col. 3495.

**NATAL MERCURY, March 8, 1945.

my question is: who are the people who will have to pay more so that the people at the top may pay less, and so that enterprise may then be stimulated?



Hofmeyr asked how he could be expected to announce a new taxation machine when he was still having discussions with the representatives of Commerce and Industry, and they had not given him their final proposals yet.

Mushet: Announce that you are going to have a new system of taxation.

Hofmeyr: I did announce that in my speech. I announced it perfectly clearly.

□ Hofmeyr then said he wanted to ask Mushet a final question.

□

(The hon. member for Vasco said there was a great deal more excuse for the Minister during the war period doing nothing than there is today. Are we not still in the war period? ... what I want to say to the hon. member and those outside the House who hold similar views to those expressed here is this. Would these people have been proud of South Africa if we had put forward a budget which implied that ours was the first of the belligerent countries to overhaul its system of war time taxation, to make changes before the war is over, and so inevitably create the impression in the world outside that South Africa has lost its interest in the war?*

There were few people who could stand up to Hofmeyr in such a mood. Mushet felt as most people would, angry, humiliated, and shown up to be a bit of a slacker. He left his seat and went out into the lobbies, and his friend, R. M. Fawcett, M.P. for Griqualand East, followed him. Mushet said to him, I feel like a small boy who's had his pants taken down and been given a hiding in public.

All the above from ~~NEWS~~ ⁷ Vol 16 Col 349 et seq. <

**Told to the writer by Mr. Fawcett.

in his diary
Musket was all the more humiliated because he was twelve years older than Hofmeyr, and had been in Parliament for a quarter of a century. Kilpin recorded that Hofmeyr held the House spell-bound, but that the sharpness of his attack on Musket caused a certain amount of consternation among his own party.

The Nationalists were perturbed by quite other features of the Budget. The Government had already extended benefits and pensions to the blind, invalid, and aged of all races. Hofmeyr had already said that every child at school would receive a daily free meal. Now he had gone further. He had created a new vote to be called Native Education, and had swept away the old makeshift of relating the revenue from African taxation to the expenditure on African education. Furthermore he proposed to increase the expenditure by a further £255,000.

Malan wanted to know direct from the Prime Minister where South Africa was going? What was the future of the white race? Would there eventually be a white race? One could not arm 100,000 non-white men and send them to a battlefront, and not expect them to say,

(If we are good enough to carry arms, and give our blood, then we are good enough to have the same rights in every respect as the Europeans in South Africa.)**

x others
Malan said the Communists were preaching the end of all colour bars, and coloureds and natives sat next to whites in the buses and trams. There were about 100 non-white students at the University of Cape Town, ~~more~~ at the University of the Witwatersrand and 134 at the Natal University College. The Fort Hare Native College was being forgotten. Formerly Smuts had supported separation; now he said segregation had failed; he said that South Africa's days of isolation were past, and that relations between white and non-white should now be considered not from South Africa's point of view alone. Malan said that the Prime Minister had a habit of not looking at matters from a South African point of view.

Malan, if he was genuinely worried, need not have been. There were two Smutses, the one Smuts who wanted to deal actively with the problems of the world and was a war leader in a thousand, the other Smuts who shirked the problems of his own country, and yielded, first to Hertzog on the grand scale, second to Hofmeyr on the petty scale, little niggardly concessions that pleased the ~~many~~

~~*From Ralph Kilpin's diary.~~

**NATAL MERCURY, March 13, 1945.



Joneses and the Brookeses and the Ballingers for one reason only, that they were so used to nothing. Smuts might say that segregation had failed, but he did nothing, and there is no evidence that he ever intended to do anything, to put something in its place; he might coin as he did as far back as 1937, the magnificent phrase, racial indifference, but it was only playing with words.*

ital,

Smuts had yielded to Hertzog, and made concessions to Hofmeyr; now he was yielding to Stallard, whose party controlled the city of Durban. The Natal Provincial Council had passed a Housing Ordinance which created a Housing Board with powers to buy ~~properties~~ properties in danger of passing from one race to another. The Ordinance had been declared ultra vires, and now Smuts promised national legislation. He said there were certain things on which all South Africans were agreed; it was fixed policy to maintain white supremacy. He said that South Africans had kept their race pure for 300 years, and were determined to maintain it so. He did not want ~~racial separation~~ residential separation to be forced unnecessarily. It could be done by providing separate housing areas. In regard to Africans, his idea was to develop them in their own areas in harmony with native life and traditions.** Smuts did not favour preventing rural Africans from coming to look for work in the cities; because a man had a black skin there was no reason to prevent him from seeking work.

There was Smuts's practicalism in a nutshell. White supremacy, race purity, residential separation but not by unnecessary force, economic integration, freedom to seek work, development of the reserves. One could be cynical about it. Why did a white supremacist take up arms against the Nazis? Surely Smuts was the very prototype of white South Africa, pursuing the supreme goal of self-preservation, sometimes brutally, sometimes with noble affirmations, which in their turn were sometimes true, sometimes false, but most often a compound of true and false, so blended by time, so familiar through use, so learned from infancy, that one no longer knew which one was which. Yes, one could be cynical about it, but Smuts would close with a disarming peroration, which would show that separation did not exclude togetherness, and that the pursuit of a supreme mono-racial goal did not exclude cooperation in interracial goals. ~~He said~~

run

*When he was installed as Chancellor of the University of Cape Town.

**This material and these quotations are from NATAL MERCURY, March 15, 1945.

He concluded that only by a policy of cooperation between all classes and colours of the community could South Africa find her future.*

On this occasion Hofmeyr said nothing. He had already expressed himself in favour of some control in Durban, on the grounds that it would apply equally to white and Indian. His paper the FORUM was unequivocally in favour of residential segregation, though not of economic segregation. Surely he too was a prototype, of another kind of white South Africa, moving with painful slowness, for some too painful, for others too slow, away from the cruelties ~~learned at a mother's knee.~~ Yet slow though Hofmeyr's evolution might be, it was too fast for the great majority of his fellow MP's. On March 29 Hofmeyr saw Smuts off at the Cape airport on his way to London for the Prime Ministers' Conference, and then to San Francisco to lay the foundations of the United Nations Organisation. Three days later he moved the second reading of the Native Education Finance Bill, the projected law that made the education of African children a charge on general revenue, and while leaving such education in the hands of the provinces, established a Union Advisory Board of Native Education, with the Secretary for Native Affairs as Chairman, and with Hofmeyr's own Union Education Department providing the secretariat. Out of consideration for provincial feelings, and with regard no doubt for provincial voting, Hofmeyr left control with the provinces. If he had thought central control necessary, he would have vested it in his own Union Department of Education. There was one thing he would not have done; he would not have vested it in the Department of Native Affairs. It was the fear of missionaries, African teachers and parents, liberal educators, and indeed all who belonged to what Strijdom called the liberalistic clique, that African education would pass out of the hands of education into that of administrators and officials, many of whom upheld the ideal of development of the native along his own lines.

For the Nationalists, M.D.C. de Wet Nel of Wonderboom protested against provincial control; instead of learning his own folk history, the African child learned about Henry VIII and his wives, and his natural talents for animal husbandry and botany were not developed. He said that the present system made the ~~native~~ want to ape the white man, and this was a danger to white civilisation; he wanted control to go to the Native Affairs Department. Another Nationalist, W.D. Brink of Christiana, said that whites would have to pay for black education, and so would work for their own decline. General Kemp also objected to paying for black education, and promised that the Nationalists would one day repeal the Bill.**

Dr. L.S. Steenkamp of Vryheid, member of the United Party,

*All from NATAL MERCURY, March 15, 1945.

**All from NATAL MERCURY, April 3, 1945.

also wanted central control, and he wanted to see a more practical type of education for rural Africans. S.A. Cilliers of Zoutpansberg, another United Party man, said that African children should be trained only to read, write, and be skilled in their own handicrafts; to go further would be to damage the interests of both black and white.

The Bill was welcomed by G.K. Hemming and Margaret Ballinger, two of the Native Representatives, but the most remarkable speech of all was made by Arthur Barlow. He said there were two distinct Native policies in South Africa, Hofmeyr's, and the policy of van der Bijl, the Minister for Native Affairs.)

I back Mr. Hofmeyr's policy because it is the policy of Christ. It is the policy that the man on top must take the man who is down below by the hand and guide him along. White South Africa is doomed if it rejects that policy.**

Hofmeyr's Bill was passed, and so for the first time in South African history, the education of African children was financed out of general revenue. As we have seen, Hofmeyr was enabled as a consequence to increase the education vote by a further £255,000. There was also the hope, though there was no guarantee, that the disproportion between the amounts spent on white and black education would progressively be made less shocking, for at that time the amount spent on each white pupil was approximately seven times the amount spent on each African pupil.* General Kemp's threat that the Act would be repealed was partly realised; in 1955 the Nationalist Government pegged the contribution from general revenue at £6,500,000 plus four-fifths of the African general tax.

On April 12, 1945, the people of the Allied world were shocked to learn that the great Roosevelt was dead. Parliament met in a state of tension, not only because of the news, but because it was known that Malan refused to cooperate with the Government in a vote of condolence. He had told Hofmeyr it would be a precedent, and that one day the House would be asked to mourn for Stalin. Reluctantly Hofmeyr decided to drop the matter and told Malan so.

Natal Mercury, 4.4.1945

*NATAL MERCURY, April 3, 1945.

**Ibid. April 4.

edition

*³ I could not find the figures for 1945. Hailey, AN AFRICAN SURVEY, Revised, gives the annual expenditure for 1949 as, White, £42.0, Coloured and Indian, £16.6, African, £6.4. Ellen Hellman, RACE RELATIONS JOURNAL, Vol. XXVIII, No 3, gives the figures for 1953 as £63.9, £20.2, £9.0. In 1960 the expenditure per white child had risen to £79, the expenditure per African child had dropped to £6.9. See PROVINCIAL AUDITOR'S REPORT, Natal, and S.A. Information Fact Paper, No. 88, p. 7

But many members of his party were rebellious. The House was in committee, and Barlow told Hofmeyr that he would move to report progress so that something could be done. Hofmeyr later informed the House, 'I said he could do so, and why not?'*

When Barlow moved to report progress, Hofmeyr said he was still willing to move a vote of condolence if Malan agreed. Malan was outraged and said that Hofmeyr's behaviour was scandalous; why had not Hofmeyr done what Smuts would have done, and sent a cable in the name of the people? Kemp asked why Hofmeyr had not forbidden Barlow to intervene. Dönges explained that Hofmeyr was new to the job, but asked why he couldn't keep his satellites in order.

The debate was little short of disgraceful. Van Nierop the Nationalist from Mossel Bay put the matter well. He said,

'I want to ask honourable members if anyone should come into this Chamber and hear us talking about the death of a great man, sitting here and laughing and shouting at each other - could such a person think it possible in these circumstances to express our condolences on the death of this great man?'

McLean of Port Elizabeth urged that discussion should cease at once. Barlow's motion was put and agreed to. The Chairman retired and the Speaker returned, whereupon Hofmeyr moved the adjournment as a mark of respect and deep regret on the occasion of the death of the President. The motion was then allowed to go through unopposed.

Hofmeyr was certainly embarrassed by this unpleasant episode. It was not only Nationalists who criticised him. Barlow for one decided that Hofmeyr was not the leader he had thought him to be** Hofmeyr had been caught between his passion for order and precedent, and the strong emotions aroused by Roosevelt's death. Rather than disturb order and precedent, he would deny the House release for its emotions. Perhaps ~~Hofmeyr~~ Malan smiled to himself, for though in him emotion was disciplined, he knew exactly what could be done with it, and when it should not be ignored. But Hofmeyr would ignore the emotions rather than the precedents. On this occasion the sticklers for order in his own party supported him, but there were others who thought he should have moved a vote of condolence and let the Nationalists disgrace themselves if they wished.

*NATAL MERCURY, April 14, 1945.

**Barlow, ALMOST IN CONFIDENCE, p.224. In this book Barlow wrote belittlingly of Hofmeyr. That was his own affair. But he made his judgment valueless by suppressing many favourable opinions which he had held strongly and expressed openly during his parliamentary career.

With Smuts away, the burden on Hofmeyr was heavy. This was the fourth time that he had acted as Prime Minister. It was the end of the summer, an occasional hot day, and sometimes a fair amount of wind, but on the whole a good climate, and much beauty all around one.* He was feeling better in health and more cheerful in mind than he had felt for some time; he wrote to Underhill that he was grateful to have been able to carry the burden so long with virtually no holidays, and without any apparent physical impairment. He wrote, If only one could look forward to something in the way of a real break ahead.** Then the dry Cape summer ended, and the rains began, bringing with them cold and damp. The Woolsack, so beautiful in summer, was cheerless in the winter, and he was a little worried about his mother's health. He wrote again to Underhill,

It is always a difficult problem for me when she is not well. We have only native (men) servants, and she won't have another woman about the house.**

x home

There were exceptions. Sometimes Mrs. Hofmeyr's sister, Mrs. Donald of Klerksdorp, would come to stay. One of the stepdaughters, Hester, then Mrs. Forbes, would also come. Although she was a woman in her sixties, she always came with apprehension. Her visits were a kind of duty, and she would live like a mouse in the house till the duty was done, and she could return to the warmth and freedom of her son's ~~house~~ at Conway, a tiny station on the line from Port Elizabeth to Johannesburg. All the stepdaughters were proud of their young stepbrother, and who prouder than Hester when the train made a special stop at Conway so that the Minister of Finance could get down for a moment to talk to his stepsister. One of the stepdaughters never visited at all, and that was Susie, who more than fifty years before, when she had qualified as a school-teacher, had run away from home, and brought disgrace on her home. That was why Mrs. Hofmeyr always said she had three stepdaughters, partly because the one was not worth mentioning, partly because it was painful to mention her. Hofmeyr's own brother A.B., the attorney, would come visiting the Pretoria home with his wife Bertha; but the two women disliked each other so much that the visits were fewer than they might have been. A.B. and his wife never slept there, but Bertha would not have wished to. Her dislike was increased by the way Mrs. Hofmeyr spoke to her elder son, as though he were sixteen and not nearly sixty, and the way she

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*Hofmeyr to Underhill, March 4, 1945.

**Hofmeyr to Underhill, May 6, 1945.

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compared him with the model, industrious, younger brother. A.B. had a cheerful, happy-go-lucky manner, but sometimes his hurt and resentment would pour out of him like a flood, so that he lost control of it, and he told things he would have liked later not to have told at all. He had been in financial difficulties more than once, and his younger brother had come to the rescue, another thing Mrs Hofmeyr would not forget and would not let him forget.

Between the two brothers there was a strange companionship; A.B. was proud of his younger brother, and Hofmeyr in his turn enjoyed the quite fabulous wealth of gossip that A.B. could retail, about the private lives and infidelities and defalcations and intrigues of Nationalists and mine magnates and editors and business men and professional men and professors and ministers of religion. A.B. could eventell him things about his own Cabinet colleagues and their wives and sons and daughters that Hofmeyr had never heard. In a strange way also Hofmeyr would give A.B. great credit for a kind of popular political nous, and would ask him how things were going here and there, and what the feeling was here and there, and what they were saying in Johannesburg and Vereeniging and Potchefstroom and Heidelberg.

These family comings and goings were not many. Just as the elder son and the step-daughters had felt themselves excluded in the little house in Rheeders Street fifty years before, so they still knew that the relationship between Mrs. Hofmeyr and her son Jan Hendrik was a thing apart. Not that they wished to be included; they were always uncomfortable in their mother's house. They never saw the charm that so many of Mrs. Hofmeyr's friends saw in her. They felt only the strength of her imperious will, which in its eighty-second year was as terrifying as ever.