

# **SMUTS: LOST IN TRANSMISSION?**

by

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation examines the transmission of the past and how it is affected by context, source materials, and the individual with regards to opinion and inherent bias. The subject of this analysis is Jan Christiaan Smuts and how he has been portrayed over the last century. Various authors are analysed with W. K. Hancock forming a kind of watershed given the access to primary material. The dissertation includes a brief discussion of South African historiography as well as a brief biographical outline of Smuts's life. The main concern is however a literature analysis of selected material which will set out to illustrate how information is often "lost in transmission."

**Keywords:** Smuts; Hancock; past; historiography; biography, transmission; literature analysis; South African history.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

OB-Ossewa Brandwag

RAF-Royal Air Force

UNO-United Nations Organisation

USA-United States of America

ZAR-Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Rationale for this study

Historical writing, and indeed all forms of writing, are naturally imbued with bias for a variety of reasons. Deliberate falsification, propaganda and the error of human subjectivity account for much of the distortion in historical reporting. Error can be because of direct motives such as political ambition or unintentional through ignorance.<sup>1</sup> Each historian looks at the past through the prism of his own time, background and culture, which is why history is continually reinterpreted leading to various accounts of the past or multiple pasts.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore the purpose of this dissertation is to illustrate that the transmission of the past is of equal, if not more importance, than the past itself; or as one historian puts it: “The point of history is to study historians, not to study the past.”<sup>3</sup> Or, to put it another way: “Before you study the historian, study his [sic] historical and social environment. The historian, being an individual, is also a product of history and of society.”<sup>4</sup>

As we move into the twenty-first century, such a study seems most apt. One important task of historians is to challenge socially motivated misrepresentations of the past.<sup>5</sup> To do this an example which has created much variety in the opinions of historians in the past needs to be used and examined. The example chosen for this study is Field Marshal Jan Christiaan Smuts due to the vast amount of literature focused on him. Smuts is also a highly enigmatic character that resulted in many of his contemporaries, and authors to this day, either admiring or despising him. Even his nickname of “Slim Jannie” evokes different emotions among different people. Famous people are often, and quite easily, portrayed as demons or saints, and Jan Smuts is no stranger to this.<sup>6</sup> John Tosh refers to “the towering political personalities of the past such as Oliver Cromwell or Napoleon Bonaparte who are interpreted in widely divergent ways by professional historians as well as by lay people, partly according to their own political values.”<sup>7</sup> Such a statement could very easily include a man of the stature of Smuts and this is in essence what this study sets out to do. By investigating the literature on

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<sup>1</sup> R. J. Shafer (ed), *A guide to historical method*, Dorsey Press: Homewood, 1980 pp 144-5; G. R. Elton, *The practice of history*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2002, p 96; M. MacMillan, *The uses and abuses of history*, London: Profile Books Ltd, 2009, back cover

<sup>2</sup> R. J. Shafer (ed), *A guide to historical method*, p 147

<sup>3</sup> R. J. Evans, *In defence of history*, London: Granta Books, 1997, p 98

<sup>4</sup> E. H. Carr, *What is history?*, Houndmills, Hampshire: Palgrave Publishers Ltd, 2001, p 38

<sup>5</sup> J. Tosh, *The pursuit of history*, London: Pearson Education Limited, 2002, p 21

<sup>6</sup> B. L. Michler, *Biographical study of H.-A. Junod: the fictional dimension*, M.A. Thesis, U.P., 2003, p 17

<sup>7</sup> J. Tosh, *The pursuit of history*, p 180

Jan Smuts this study seeks to show how this pivotal figure in South Africa, as well as the broader sphere of Western world history, has been portrayed. This study is in essence a literature review which will be contextualized both in terms of his life history as well as the context of the range of authors who wrote about him.

Thus unlike most history Master's dissertations which include a literature survey before the main body of analysis, in this dissertation the main substance of this study is the literature survey as the focus is on how various literary sources portrayed one individual. Due to the vast body of literature available on Smuts only those texts that are focused mainly on him will be used, rather than broader general histories. A few of the latter will be noted and an explanation will be given as to why they are included within the study.

Many of the authors who composed the relevant literature often had some form of bias or subjectivity, both of which are common amongst writers. According to Shafer, "subjectivity" can be described as an inescapable human quality, while "bias" is regarded as a human chosen commitment.<sup>8</sup> But often it is the primary documents that themselves create a bias as they are also written from a particular individual's point of view or vantage point.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the nature of the primary sources that are available, indeed accessible, also play a determining role in the historians ability to reconstruct the past. As indicated earlier, before we read the history, we need to examine the background of the historian. Therefore this approach involves the authors' backgrounds, historiographical approaches and the contexts that they are writing in.<sup>10</sup>

Any selection of sources will create bias thus in appraising the literature on Smuts a fairly wide range of sources have been selected – both in terms of period and ideological disposition.<sup>11</sup> In the light of the parameters of a Master's dissertation these sources have also been limited to publications written in English and/or translated into English so as to be accessible to a wider readership. These publications were therefore read both locally and abroad. Moreover given the expanse of secondary literature available on Smuts, and the nature of this study, no primary sources are used. In addition, given the vast expanse of the impact of Smuts across a broad spectrum, a concerted effort has been made to delimit the

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<sup>8</sup> R. J. Shafer (ed), *A guide to historical method*, p 169

<sup>9</sup> R. J. Evans, *In defence of history*, p 80

<sup>10</sup> G. R. Elton, *The practice of history*, p 62; R. J. Evans, *In defence of history*, p 81

<sup>11</sup> J. Tosh, *The pursuit of history*, p 208; G. R. Elton, *The practice of history*, p 56



focus of the analysis. Therefore issues and aspects that appear pivotal to the discussion of the transmission of the past have been specifically selected.

Just as Smuts is a product of his time so too are the authors. A person acts, consciously and unconsciously, in the light of the institutions and values of his culture and time.<sup>12</sup> Authors from an earlier generation reflect values and ideas of the past.<sup>13</sup> This is very true when one considers the writing on Smuts who lived through a very volatile and defining period in world history, the late nineteenth century to the mid twentieth century.

Thus for this dissertation a secondary source-orientated approach will be used which will allow the content of the sources to determine the nature of the enquiry, which in essence is the transmission of the past.<sup>14</sup> As Paul Maylam argues, historical texts are not verifiable, they can only be checked against each other.<sup>15</sup> The study will thus include a process of corroboration and contradiction, in other words the comparison of evidence, to further illustrate the transmission of the past.<sup>16</sup> Analysis of various aspects of Smuts's life along with a comparison of the various sources will reflect on how subjective the various authors are and illustrate how varied the transmission of the past can be.<sup>17</sup> By conducting a select literature survey, this study will focus mainly on chronological and historiographical differences. It will point to the extent of the contradictions within the sources. External criticism is not required because no primary sources are used; therefore the authenticity of the evidence is not relevant here. Rather, internal criticism is of relevance as the credibility of the evidence is required when considering corroboration and contradiction. It must also be noted that the historian is interested in the lies as much as he/she is interested in the truth.<sup>18</sup>

Shafer and others contend that one of the most commonly accepted propositions concerning historians is that the historians' cultural experience and/or environment affects their interpretation of evidence.<sup>19</sup> This leads to diverse "histories" when concerned with one event or subject leading to multiple and selective interpretations. This can lead a historian to believe that there is no necessary relation between the texts of history and the texts of

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<sup>12</sup> R. J. Shafer (ed), *A guide to historical method*, p 45

<sup>13</sup> J. Tosh, *The pursuit of history*, p 9

<sup>14</sup> J. Tosh, *The pursuit of history*, p 84

<sup>15</sup> P. Maylam, "Dead horses, the baby and the bathwater': 'Post-theory' and the historians practice". *South African Historical Journal*, 42:1, May 2000, p 122

<sup>16</sup> R. J. Shafer (ed), *A guide to historical method*, p 158

<sup>17</sup> J. Tosh, *The pursuit of history*, p 98

<sup>18</sup> R. J. Shafer (ed), *A guide to historical method*, p 141; J. Tosh, *The pursuit of history*, p 94

<sup>19</sup> R. J. Shafer (ed), *A guide to historical method*, p 12; E. H. Carr, *What is history?*, p 29

historians.<sup>20</sup> Or to go even further: the facts of history only speak when the historian calls on them to.<sup>21</sup> All sources of history, whether they are primary or secondary, are tainted in some way or other. And all historians agree on this from the time of Carr and Elton in the middle of the twentieth century, to contemporary post-modernists, although some may be more extreme than others in their arguments.<sup>22</sup> All individuals are susceptible to bias and this shines through in any observations that are made or written down. One person may focus on a particular aspect of an event, while another individual considering the same event will focus on a completely different aspect. From taking this further one can pick and choose between various sources deciding which is more reliable or more important for their own particular study. Therefore from the get-go history is foremost an interpretation that relies on an individual, and individuals themselves are subjective creatures. History is thus in essence a matter of interpretation.<sup>23</sup> But this does not mean that historical sources themselves are unusable, it just requires patience and understanding of context in order to recreate as untainted a reconstruction as possible. Documents and sources need to be accepted as open to reinterpretation and further discussion, and that there is no finite truth.

Put differently, history as a subject is not fixed, but rather evolving, which inevitably leads to reinterpretations of the past. These are often different due to the use of new information.<sup>24</sup> Reinterpretation also exists due to the simple fact that it is the only available option to a historian as no new evidence on the subject exists.<sup>25</sup> Another cause for reinterpretation in history is the obvious result of hindsight. Historians have the luxury of being able to see what the consequences of a particular decision were while the individual involved at the time does not. It is also the consequences of an event which in hindsight determine its importance or significance to later historians.<sup>26</sup> Some historians forget this which leads them to draw conclusions that are not that accurate as the context of the period is not included in the interpretation.

Much of the literature used in this study is biographical. Biography is a genre in its own right but has a very close relationship with history. The individual is important to the historian,

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<sup>20</sup> R. J. Evans, *In defence of history*, p 95

<sup>21</sup> E. H. Carr, *What is history?*, p 5

<sup>22</sup> E. H. Carr, *What is history?*, p 18; G. R. Elton, *The practice of history*, p 60 ; P. Maylam, "Dead horses, the baby and the bathwater': 'Post-theory' and the historians practice". *South African Historical Journal*, 42:1, May 2000, p 124

<sup>23</sup> E. H. Carr, *What is history?*, p 18

<sup>24</sup> R. J. Shafer (ed), *A guide to historical method* p 37

<sup>25</sup> R. J. Evans, *In defence of history*, p 85

<sup>26</sup> J. Tosh, *The pursuit of history*, pp 144-145

both as an individual and as a member of a certain society in a certain period, under the influence of the ideas and events of that period.<sup>27</sup> The individual has become a means to represent a particular historical context and historical processes.<sup>28</sup> Garraty also points out that “to tell the story of any man [sic], one must say something about the stage on which he acts out the drama of his life.”<sup>29</sup> This introduces the contextual aspect to biography. Often biographers are too sympathetic towards their subject, but many biographers can be commended for their critical approach to research and interpretation.<sup>30</sup> Although many biographies are not objective, biographies that were written by individuals who knew the subject can offer valuable insights, no matter how biased or exaggerated they are.<sup>31</sup> There are numerous biographies on Smuts and they often differ with regards to what is seen as accurate even though no new documents have come to light, unlike many other famous/infamous individuals.<sup>32</sup> Biographies in general, however, are a useful research tool when considering an individual and his/her time, especially in a broad literature survey like this study.

## 1.2 Historiographical trends

This section will present a brief overview of the various historiographical schools so as to provide context and some clarity for the subsequent literature analysis. It will attempt to provide direction and context for the various historiographical trends that have emerged in South African historiography during the twentieth century.

The most basic definition for the term “historiography” is that it is the history of historical writing.<sup>33</sup> But it can also be seen as the values and assumptions that are expressed in historical writing.<sup>34</sup> This means that it is the study of how historians have written in the past, as well as how they write today. Although South African historiography will be the main focus of this discussion, it is important to briefly explore the beginnings of Western historiography and the possible influences this might have had on South Africa.

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<sup>27</sup> B. L. Michler, *Biographical study of H.-A. Junod: the fictional dimension*, p 1

<sup>28</sup> B. L. Michler, *Biographical study of H.-A. Junod: the fictional dimension*, p 5

<sup>29</sup> B. L. Michler, *Biographical study of H.-A. Junod: the fictional dimension*, p 9

<sup>30</sup> R. J. Shafer (ed), *A guide to historical method*, p 21; J. Tosh, *The pursuit of history*, p 115; G. R. Elton, *The practice of history*, p 123

<sup>31</sup> B. L. Michler, *Biographical study of H.-A. Junod: the fictional dimension* p 18

<sup>32</sup> B. L. Michler, *Biographical study of H.-A. Junod: the fictional dimension*, p 19

<sup>33</sup> C. Saunders, *The making of the South African past: Major historians on race and class*, Cape Town: David Phillip, 1988, p 1

<sup>34</sup> J. Tosh, *The pursuit of history*, p 272

Leopold von Ranke is generally regarded as the first modern historical writer in Western historiography. He transformed history into a profession based on what he termed “scientific methods” such as hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is the science of interpreting the written word, and Von Ranke used it in an attempt to adhere to the “facts” and to “show how things were”.<sup>35</sup> Von Ranke had an immense influence on the development of Western history, but he did not assess or interpret the past. He was obsessed with finding the so-called “truth” and being “objective”.<sup>36</sup> However his scientific methods had a measured influence on many early South African historians. Apart from Von Ranke, the other major influence on South African historiography was Karl Marx. Marx’s influence on historical writing throughout the world was immense, yet he himself was not a historian. His influence was primarily based on the greater thought he gave to economic and social factors in history. Previously historians had focused on politics and important individuals, a “top-down” kind of approach, but Marx introduced historians to a new approach that focused mainly on economics and its social consequences, a more “bottom-up” approach.<sup>37</sup> As South African historiography developed, so Marx’s influence on its historical writing increased.

If Von Ranke was the West’s first professional historian, then South Africa’s was undoubtedly George McCall Theal. Theal (1837-1919) is considered to be part of the Settler school of South African historiography. His long-term influence on history in South Africa has more to do with the intensive research methods he used and his collection of documents and archives than his writing of history. The reason for this is that his historical writing and work have become outdated as more and more historical research has been done.<sup>38</sup> But his work remains immensely influential. Even in the 1960s and 1970s historians were still using his works as sources and many history textbooks were still based on his work.<sup>39</sup> Unfortunately, Theal cannot be included in this study for one very obvious reason. He had the habit of publishing old works under new titles and most of his works were completed before the twentieth century which makes his writing too early for a study on Jan Smuts.<sup>40</sup> He was, however, a major influence on South African historical writing over a wide spectrum. Because of what has been perceived of as his “pro-Boer” and “anti-black” sympathies he had

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<sup>35</sup> G. P. Gooch, *History and historians in the nineteenth century*, Boston: Beacon, 1959, p 74

<sup>36</sup> J.W Thompson, *History of historical writing*, Gloucester, Mass.: P. Smith Publishers, 1967, p 185

<sup>37</sup> B. Mazlish, *The riddle of history: The great speculators from Vico to Freud*, U. S. A.: Minerva Press, 1966, p 222

<sup>38</sup> K. Smith, *The changing past: Trends in South African historical writing*, Johannesburg: Southern Book Publishers, 1988, p 31

<sup>39</sup> K. Smith, *The changing past: Trends in South African historical writing*, p 31

<sup>40</sup> K. Smith, *The changing past: Trends in South African historical writing*, p 33

a direct influence on many Afrikaner historians. On the other hand he also had an indirect influence on liberal historians who objected and reacted to his works.<sup>41</sup> It is these trends, as well as the radical school, which are of importance in this analysis.

Afrikaans historiography began with amateur writers and historians, as did many historiographies throughout the world prior to the professionalization of the historian after World War 1.<sup>42</sup> Most of the early Afrikaner historians, and some of the later ones, believed that history was meant to serve a practical purpose and that it should be used to create and elaborate upon the emerging Afrikaner identity.<sup>43</sup> Smuts himself is guilty of this in his contribution to the pamphlet “A Century of wrong” which first appeared in 1899. This was essentially written as a kind of propaganda piece in an attempt to garner support for the Boers with absolutely no regard for historical accuracy.<sup>44</sup> As Margaret MacMillan points out, history can be helpful, yet it can also be very dangerous.<sup>45</sup> One important note to make with regards to “A Century of wrong” is that the actual author is unclear. It is now commonly believed that Smuts only edited the introduction and conclusion with the help of the historian E. J. P. Jorissen while the rest of the document was written by J. de Villiers Roos.<sup>46</sup>

Some Afrikaner historians, especially from a later period in South Africa’s history, took the opposite position and challenged these views and assumptions that had driven Afrikaner nationalism forward, such as Herman Giliomee.<sup>47</sup> Afrikaner historiography was often focused on “milestone” events such as the Great Trek and the South African War, but many Afrikaner historians have written histories that are relevant to this discussion, for example C. F. J. Muller, H. Giliomee and F. A. van Jaarsveld.<sup>48</sup> By studying numerous Afrikaner historians’ written material it will be possible to view what nationalist and more liberal views occurred within the Afrikaner historical fraternity when considering Smuts. This will reflect on how divided the Afrikaner nation was, as well as its academics, over one man who led them for over three decades in various capacities. Afrikaner historiography is a very broad, all-encompassing term that includes all Afrikaans historians, whether they are liberal or

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<sup>41</sup> C. Saunders, *The making of the South African past: Major historians on race and class*, p 19

<sup>42</sup> C. Saunders, *The making of the South African past: Major historians on race and class*, p 122

<sup>43</sup> K. Smith, *The changing past: Trends in South African historical writing*, p 60

<sup>44</sup> K. Smith, *The changing past: Trends in South African historical writing*, p 62

<sup>45</sup> M. MacMillan, *The uses and abuses of history*, p xii

<sup>46</sup> [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/A\\_Century\\_of\\_Wrong](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/A_Century_of_Wrong), Access: 2016/11/28

<sup>47</sup> K. Smith, *The changing past: Trends in South African historical writing*, p 57

<sup>48</sup> C. Saunders, *The making of the South African past: Major historians on race and class*, p 157

conservative. However, some may even be included in the Settler school or the Radical school of South African historiography.

Liberal historians in South Africa were greatly influenced by Marx and his focus on the economic and social problems that occurred with the process of rapid industrialisation. But their greater importance lies in the fact that they began looking at the role of blacks in South African history, who before had been for the most part marginalised in the historical writing. This Liberal trend emerged in the 1920s. In the beginning there were very few practitioners in this school but during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century more and more historians became involved in it.<sup>49</sup> The first and most prominent of the Liberal historians in South Africa was W. M. Macmillan who had a relatively significant influence on most of the Liberal historians who followed him up until about the 1970s.<sup>50</sup> Macmillan was interested mainly in poverty and he was influenced greatly by Fabianism which was a political organization in Britain which aimed to bring about socialism in a gradual and lawful manner. Initially he focused on the poor white problem, but eventually he realised that because of the integrated economy within South Africa the poor white and poor black problems were inseparably linked.<sup>51</sup> Another very important Liberal historian from the 1920s was C. W. de Kiewiet who was Macmillan's pupil and therefore immensely influenced by him.<sup>52</sup> Both Macmillan and de Kiewiet believed that race relations between black and white were far more important than the dominant focus on Afrikaans-English "race relations". But they were also very interested in social and economic dynamics as the foundation of historical change. They were paternalistic and believed in assimilation rather than segregation of the races.<sup>53</sup>

Another Liberal historian influenced by Macmillan was J. S. Marais who was an Afrikaans-speaking South African. He also believed that race relations were the major theme of South African history and that assimilation into a heterogeneous society was the way forward.<sup>54</sup> E. A. Walker is also considered a Liberal historian mainly because of the influence of de Kiewiet and Marais on his work. His histories were however primarily white-centred and not at all concerned with blacks.<sup>55</sup> Yet another important Liberal historian of the later twentieth century, although he did not see himself as one, was L. Thompson. He was regarded as very

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<sup>49</sup> K. Smith, *The changing past: Trends in South African historical writing*, p 103

<sup>50</sup> C. Saunders, *The making of the South African past: Major historians on race and class*, p 47

<sup>51</sup> C. Saunders, *The making of the South African past: Major historians on race and class*, p 53

<sup>52</sup> K. Smith, *The changing past: Trends in South African historical writing*, p 104

<sup>53</sup> C. Saunders, *The making of the South African past: Major historians on race and class*, p 96

<sup>54</sup> K. Smith, *The changing past: Trends in South African historical writing*, p 119

<sup>55</sup> K. Smith, *The changing past: Trends in South African historical writing*, p 122

liberal in his political outlook in his early years. One example of this is his outspoken opposition to the removal of the Coloured vote off the voters roll in 1951.<sup>56</sup> In his later years as a historian, however, he began to approach history with an Africanist trend and he made many important contributions to South African history from the 1960s until the 1990s.<sup>57</sup> It is interesting to note that none of these historians - Theal, Macmillan, de Kiewiet and Thompson - were born in South Africa and it was only Theal who adopted South Africa as his “new” country. All of them believed that this disposition gave them the advantage of being somewhat “detached” from the politics and history of the country.<sup>58</sup> Generally these Liberal historians were not well received by the broader Afrikaans-speaking public.

Roughly from the 1970s a new school of thought was developing that challenged the prevailing Liberal trend. This school of thought believed that the political domain was inseparable from the economic, and they therefore focused on the inter-relationship between the two.<sup>59</sup> But this Radical trend had its early beginnings in the 1940s with the growing black resistance to the white apartheid government; therefore many of these Radical writers were black themselves and often not professionally trained historians.<sup>60</sup> Macmillan, the famous Liberal historian, is seen as the pioneer of this Radical Africanist trend because he called for writing based on society and he often focused on blacks as well as whites.<sup>61</sup> The Radical trend has been given other names: Revisionist or Marxist, none of which are actually adequately encompassing. Marxism had a large influence on this trend, but only some of the work is marginally Marxist in its approach. Its influence comes mainly from the decolonization belief that Communist Russia expressed at the time, which gained it many supporters.<sup>62</sup> Well known Radical historians include M. Legassick, S. Marks, A. Atmore, S. Trapido, C. Bundy and F. Johnstone.<sup>63</sup> Although a relatively recent development in historiography, Radical writers provide a very different view on the past than that of their predecessors.

Postmodernism is a relatively recent school of thought that is very difficult to define as “postmodern” historians often change from writer to writer, and to actually classify a

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<sup>56</sup> C. Saunders, *The making of the South African past: Major historians on race and class*, p 123

<sup>57</sup> C. Saunders, *The making of the South African past: Major historians on race and class*, p 124

<sup>58</sup> C. Saunders, *The making of the South African past: Major historians on race and class*, p 121

<sup>59</sup> C. Saunders, *The making of the South African past: Major historians on race and class*, p 165

<sup>60</sup> K. Smith, *The changing past: Trends in South African historical writing*, p 155

<sup>61</sup> C. Saunders, *The making of the South African past: Major historians on race and class*, p 165

<sup>62</sup> K. Smith, *The changing past: Trends in South African historical writing*, p 162

<sup>63</sup> C. Saunders, *The making of the South African past: Major historians on race and class*, p 174

historian as a post-modernist essentially goes against the grain of post-modernism.

Postmodernism, in its very broadest sense, can be said to be a rejection of previous schools of historical writing as well as an acceptance of discourse analysis and deconstruction.<sup>64</sup> But it also implores historians to be more open in their work. This includes rejecting the farce of objectivity and declaring their own ideologies and values that direct and influence their works. Postmodernists also dismiss the differences between primary and secondary sources, as they believe all historical texts are imperfect and tainted.<sup>65</sup> Some postmodern premises are valid, such as that all texts are contaminated by ideology and that historians should be more reflexive. But to go totally against the historical profession and declare all previous historians as empiricists is regarded as rather crude and extreme. Rankean empiricism has not been the dominant trend within history for several decades and most historians acknowledge that what they write is incomplete and does require revision.<sup>66</sup> There are many inconsistencies and contradictions within postmodern epistemology and although some South African historians from the 1970s and 1980s can be regarded as postmodernists, it is almost impossible to attempt to classify them as such.<sup>67</sup>

The different schools, or trends, have different foci and different methods and therefore it should follow that they will differ from each other in their interpretation and analysis of one individual. One must also note that even historians belonging to one particular historiographical school might differ in their interpretations. Often, although certainly not always, an individual historian will change with the times and can be categorised in several different trends. To attempt to label a historian in one specific school particularly in the South African context can be deemed impossible, and it must be noted that historians have different opinions and understandings which change over time and cannot be set in stone.

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<sup>64</sup> P. Maylam, "Dead horses, the baby and the bathwater': 'Post-theory' and the historians practice". *South African Historical Journal*, 42:1, May 2000, p 121

<sup>65</sup> P. Maylam, "Dead horses, the baby and the bathwater': 'Post-theory' and the historians practice". *South African Historical Journal*, 42:1, May 2000, p 122

<sup>66</sup> P. Maylam, "Dead horses, the baby and the bathwater': 'Post-theory' and the historians practice". *South African Historical Journal*, 42:1, May 2000, p 124

<sup>67</sup> P. Maylam, "Dead horses, the baby and the bathwater': 'Post-theory' and the historians practice". *South African Historical Journal*, 42:1, May 2000, p 126



### 1.3 Biographical sketch

A very brief and linear biographical sketch of Smuts is required to provide a backdrop against which the subsequent analysis will be set. This will in essence be a timeline in order to provide context for the subsequent chapters.<sup>68</sup>

Jan Christiaan Smuts was born on 24 May 1870 on a farm near the town of Riebeeck West in the Cape Colony. He was the second child in the family.<sup>69</sup> At the age of 12, after the death of his older brother, he was sent to the village school in Riebeeck West.<sup>70</sup> He matriculated with distinction from the Victoria College in Stellenbosch in 1887 and in 1891 he received a double first in the combined literature and science degree examinations of the University of the Cape of Good Hope which won him the Ebden scholarship.<sup>71</sup> He entered Christ's College in Cambridge in October 1891 to read law and topped the list for all intercollegiate examinations in 1892-1893.<sup>72</sup> In 1894 he gained the unprecedented distinction of first place in the first class in both parts of the law tripos. In October 1894 he entered the Middle Temple and three months later passed the honours examination of the Inns of Court.<sup>73</sup>

When he returned to South Africa he began practising as an advocate in Cape Town and politically supported J. H. Hofmeyr and C. J. Rhodes. After the Jameson Raid of December 1895 his political views swiftly changed and he became an Afrikaner nationalist.<sup>74</sup>

Disillusioned, Smuts left the Cape Colony and settled in Johannesburg in the Transvaal Republic in 1897 and briefly set up a practice. In 1898 he became the State Attorney under the Kruger government and introduced various reforms and was a legal advisor throughout the build up to the Second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902).<sup>75</sup>

Initially Smuts did not take any part in the War but was left in Pretoria as a government representative. After the fall of Pretoria he was sent to the Western Transvaal as an assistant under General J. H. de la Rey, who also taught Smuts the methods of warfare.<sup>76</sup> In the middle of 1901 Smuts began an epic march in an attempt to invade the Cape Colony. Although he

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<sup>68</sup> This outline is essentially a sketch based on two key texts.

<sup>69</sup> W.J. De Kock (ed.), *Dictionary of South African biography*, Pretoria: Nasionale Boekhandel Bpk, 1968, p 737

<sup>70</sup> W.J. De Kock (ed.), *Dictionary of South African biography*, p 738

<sup>71</sup> D. J. Potgieter (ed.), *Standard encyclopaedia of southern Africa: volume 10*, Cape Town: National Book Printers Ltd, 1974, p 15

<sup>72</sup> W.J. De Kock (ed.), *Dictionary of South African biography*, p 738

<sup>73</sup> D. J. Potgieter (ed.), *Standard encyclopaedia of southern Africa: volume 10*, p 16

<sup>74</sup> W.J. De Kock (ed.), *Dictionary of South African biography*, p 738

<sup>75</sup> D. J. Potgieter (ed.), *Standard encyclopaedia of southern Africa: volume 10*, p 16

<sup>76</sup> W.J. De Kock (ed.), *Dictionary of South African biography*, p 740

succeeded in infiltrating the Cape, the invasion was not a success.<sup>77</sup> Smuts took part in the Peace of Vereeniging (1902), but only as an advisor, not as a delegate. After the signing of the agreement he resumed his legal practice in Pretoria.<sup>78</sup>

In January 1905 the *Het Volk* political party was established by several prominent Afrikaners, with Smuts and Louis Botha being the most active. At the end of the year Smuts went on a secret mission to London to gain support for self-government, which he duly received. By February 1907 Botha had become Prime Minister of the Transvaal and Smuts was made Colonial Secretary and Minister of Education.<sup>79</sup> Smuts was a major player in the creation of the Union of South Africa from 1908 to 1910 and was the main author of the new Union constitution. In 1910 he was made Minister of Defence, Interior and Mines, but in 1912 he exchanged the last two for Finance.<sup>80</sup>

At the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 an armed rebellion occurred within the country which was swiftly put down. The rebellion took place due to a split in the Afrikaner populace, some of whom supported Smuts, Botha and Britain, and the rest who did not. In April 1915 Smuts took part in the invasion of German South West Africa and eventually in 1916, after at first refusing, he took charge of the British Army in East Africa as a Lieutenant-General.<sup>81</sup> He secured the north and was about to invade the south of German East Africa when he was sent by Botha to London as a representative for the Imperial War Conference in 1917. He did much good work for the War effort and in maintaining Dominion status, as well as numerable other activities, including the creation of the Royal Air Force. Smuts also took part in the Paris peace conference and was a major driving force behind the founding of the League of Nations.<sup>82</sup>

After Botha died on 27 August 1919 Smuts became Prime Minister of the Union for the next five years. His first premiership included three crises in which he used the armed forces: the “Israelites” at Bulhoek (May 1921), the major revolt on the Rand in March 1922, and the Bondelswarts (May – June 1922). These three incidents contributed to Smuts losing the 1924 elections.<sup>83</sup> His time as opposition leader (1924-1933) allowed him to focus on his

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<sup>77</sup> D. J. Potgieter (ed.), *Standard encyclopaedia of southern Africa: volume 10*, p 16

<sup>78</sup> W.J. De Kock (ed.), *Dictionary of South African biography*, 741

<sup>79</sup> D. J. Potgieter (ed.), *Standard encyclopaedia of southern Africa: volume 10*, p 17

<sup>80</sup> W.J. De Kock (ed.), *Dictionary of South African biography*, p 742

<sup>81</sup> W.J. De Kock (ed.), *Dictionary of South African biography*, p 743

<sup>82</sup> D. J. Potgieter (ed.), *Standard encyclopaedia of southern Africa: volume 10*, p 18

<sup>83</sup> D. J. Potgieter (ed.), *Standard encyclopaedia of southern Africa: volume 10*, pp 18-19

philosophical and botanical endeavours. He also spent much of his time fighting parliamentary bills that amongst others attempted to remove the coloured franchise in the Cape.<sup>84</sup>

Smuts regained a position in government in 1933 with the fusion of his South African Party and J. B. M. Hertzog's National Party, which eventually became the United Party, with Smuts being Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice. But at the outbreak of the Second World War (1939) the government split with 80 members voting alongside Smuts to join the War on Britain's side, while 67 members joined Hertzog to remain neutral.<sup>85</sup> Smuts became Prime Minister for the second time in 1939 and was also Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces as well as Minister of Defence. During the Second World War he had to fight on two fronts: the international front, as well as the home front where there were many disgruntled anti-war sentiments.<sup>86</sup>

Smuts was also a close advisor to British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and other Allied War leaders during this period, and was made a Field Marshal in the British army in 1941. He was also later deeply involved in the creation of the United Nations Organisation (UNO).<sup>87</sup> In June 1948 Smuts was inaugurated as the Chancellor of Cambridge University, an honour that he valued above all others.<sup>88</sup> During his last years in power he attempted to reshape the "Native" policy in South Africa but the growing power of the National Party under Dr. D.F. Malan saw an end to this, and Smuts lost the 1948 elections, never to regain power.<sup>89</sup> Smuts died on the 11 of September 1950 at his home in Irene near Pretoria.<sup>90</sup>

#### 1.4 Outline of chapters

This chapter has essentially introduced the focus of the dissertation and outlined the various historiographical trends that could have influenced writings on Smuts and presented a very brief biographical sketch of Smuts as an outline against which the subsequent analysis will be considered. Following this the dissertation will explore the various writings on Smuts dividing these into three phases and chapters: Pre-Hancock; Hancock; and Post-Hancock. This is done because William Keith Hancock was, and still is, considered the key biographer

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<sup>84</sup> W.J. De Kock (ed.), *Dictionary of South African biography*, pp 746-747

<sup>85</sup> D. J. Potgieter (ed.), *Standard encyclopaedia of southern Africa: volume 10*, p 19

<sup>86</sup> W.J. De Kock (ed.), *Dictionary of South African biography*, p 749

<sup>87</sup> D. J. Potgieter (ed.), *Standard encyclopaedia of southern Africa: volume 10*, p 20

<sup>88</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968, p 408

<sup>89</sup> D. J. Potgieter (ed.), *Standard encyclopaedia of southern Africa: volume 10*, p 21

<sup>90</sup> W.J. De Kock (ed.), *Dictionary of South African biography*, p 753

of Smuts. Therefore it is important to illustrate if and why writings differed (or did not) before and after Hancock produced his seminal two-volume biography, much of which was based on archival material he meticulously sorted and accessorised. The final chapter will reflect on the former analysis and consider how Smuts has been lost in transmission.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> This dissertation follows on my preliminary Honours research report. The title and inspiration to do this Masters' study resulted from my then external examiner Mr N. D. Southey.

## CHAPTER 2: PRE-HANCOCK LITERATURE

This chapter focuses on literature that was written before the appearance of the first volume of Hancock's biography on Smuts, or to be exact, 1961. Ironically, 1961 was also the year that South Africa became a Republic under the National Party and leadership of H. F. Verwoerd. Much of the literature within this section can be classified as using pre-primary sources, as the Smuts Papers were not yet published nor were they accessible according to archival legislation. What this means is that much of the information within these books is drawn from oral evidence, newspapers, and more often than not, hearsay and even popular belief.

The following three chapters will follow a particular formula or "recipe" when doing the literature analysis. Several milestones within Smuts's life will be examined from each author's perspective and consider how they were written about. For example, Smuts was heavily involved in the creation of the Union of South Africa; and by illustrating whether various authors emphasize, omit or play down his role in the event will reflect on the authors stance on Smuts. The milestones include but are not limited to the following: his early life; as a Kruger man; as a Botha man; World War One; First term as Prime Minister; World War Two; and its Aftermath. This chapter will consider three non-biographical works as well as two biographical that appeared before 1961.

### 2.1 Non-biographies

The first book that is explored is *Complex South Africa* published in 1930 by W. M. Macmillan who, as indicated, was a prominent Liberal historian in the early decades of South African historiography. Due to his liberal leanings, Macmillan was a supporter of Smuts, except regarding the extent to which he would support Smuts when it came to segregation. He was very much against Hertzog and his National Party. In one incident Macmillan actually borrowed a phrase from Smuts with regards the Cape Coloured franchise which both wanted to maintain. Smuts told Macmillan in 1926 that "Our feet are on the edge of an abyss" and Macmillan used the exact same phrase a few months later in his book *The Cape Colour Question*, which indicates there was a relatively close relationship between the two.<sup>92</sup>

In *Complex South Africa*, Macmillan attempted to find an economic solution to South Africa's economic woes amongst blacks and whites. The book does not focus on individual

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<sup>92</sup> C. Saunders, *The making of the South African past: Major historians on race and class*, p 68; W. M. Macmillan, *The Cape colour question: a historical survey*, London: Faber, 1927, p 289

politicians often and is more of a refutation of segregation and against the removal of the qualified franchise.<sup>93</sup> Due to the time the book was written and its focus, none of Smuts's "milestones" are included. It is, however, still important to look at because Macmillan is a major influence on later South African historians and South African history. Smuts is only mentioned four times throughout the book, and each time he is criticised by Macmillan, although not excessively. In the first two cases Macmillan quotes from Smuts's Rhodes Lectures at Oxford in 1929, where Smuts stated that the Native population in the whole of Africa is growing the fastest in South Africa. Macmillan criticises this statement as lacking proof as the census reports of the time were "nothing to write home about".<sup>94</sup> This is not so much a criticism of Smuts himself, but rather of the poor governmental procedures of the time. The second case also involved a quote from the Rhodes Lecture series. Smuts indicated that the Transkei (a Native reserve) was one of the most fertile areas in South Africa. Macmillan agrees, but then goes on to attack the government for the lack of transportation facilities and infrastructure in the region.<sup>95</sup> As the government at the time was under the leadership of Hertzog, the attacks are directed against Hertzog rather than Smuts. The last case sees Macmillan agreeing with Smuts and supporting his belief that secure permanent family homes are of the utmost importance to solving the economic woes of blacks and whites in South Africa. But Macmillan does state that this solution will never be possible under segregation, something that Smuts himself did not believe.<sup>96</sup>

It can be seen that Smuts complied with Macmillan's ideas on the future of South Africa far more than the National Party. Macmillan was politically naïve because he believed that segregation could easily be removed without any political repercussions.<sup>97</sup> Smuts, however, learned of the power of reactionary constituents in the 1948 election. From the above it is evident that Macmillan and Smuts had several points of convergence which has led to the absence of criticism against Smuts on Macmillan's part.

The next author and book to be examined is Macmillan's pupil, C. W. De Kiewiet and *The Anatomy of South African Misery*. De Kiewiet is considered a liberal and was Macmillan's star protégé. He spent most of his academic time in England and America but usually focused his writing on South Africa within the context of British colonial policy. He often

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<sup>93</sup> W. M. Macmillan, *Complex South Africa*, London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1930, p 7

<sup>94</sup> W. M. Macmillan, *Complex South Africa*, pp 33, 232

<sup>95</sup> W. M. Macmillan, *Complex South Africa*, pp 132-133

<sup>96</sup> W. M. Macmillan, *Complex South Africa*, pp 263-264

<sup>97</sup> W. M. Macmillan, *Complex South Africa*, p 277

contemplated returning to South Africa and in 1934 he even applied for the chair in history at the University of Witwatersrand, the same chair that had just been vacated by his mentor Macmillan. Smuts, however, intervened and secured the position for another historian, who, it is said was leaning more towards Smuts's own politics: Leo Fouché.<sup>98</sup> Fouché was actually a friend of Smuts and he opposed the "Afrikanerization" of his previous institution, the University of Pretoria.<sup>99</sup> This eventually led to his removal from the University of Pretoria and allowed him to apply for the Wits position, which Smuts helped him gain.<sup>100</sup> An incident such as this could very well have influenced De Kiewiet to take a more subdued stance on Smuts, but it did not.

The book *The Anatomy of South African Misery* was published in 1956, six years after Smuts's death, and from the book's title and the chapter titles it is easy to deduce De Kiewiet's liberal stance. For example, the second chapter has the title of "The delusion of Apartheid". At the time that the book was written De Kiewiet was in America, yet he still focused on Britain and South Africa and he even mentions one of his great heroes as the British statesmen John Bright, a notable hero of Smuts as well.<sup>101</sup> Once again Smuts is not referred to often in this volume, but from the few times he is mentioned it is easy to see which "side" De Kiewiet was a supporter of: Pro-British and Pro-Smuts. In one section De Kiewiet praises Smuts for his spirit of co-operation and reconciliation with the British after the Anglo-Boer War. He also lambastes the Afrikaners for considering Smuts as "faithless and traitorous" as an attempt to "hide the truth"<sup>102</sup> due to Smuts not taking enough interest in the promotion of the Afrikaans language and culture during this period. De Kiewiet explains that after the Anglo-Boer War, Dutch was the predominant language amongst the Boers and Afrikaans was actually a secondary language.<sup>103</sup> This passage is very interesting considering that one would expect enmity between De Kiewiet and Smuts, especially considering Smuts's role in scuttling De Kiewiet's attempt for the Wits chair, but instead De Kiewiet praises Smuts, and Smuts alone. Louis Botha is not even included within the section even though at the time he was the Prime Minister and leader of the South African Party.

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<sup>98</sup> K. Smith, *The changing past: Trends in South African historical writing*, pp 113-114

<sup>99</sup> F. A. Mouton, "Professor Leo Fouché, the history department and the Afrikanerization of the University of Pretoria", *Historia*, 38(1), May 1993, p 51

<sup>100</sup> F. A. Mouton, "Professor Leo Fouché, the history department and the Afrikanerization of the University of Pretoria", *Historia*, 38(1), May 1993, p 61

<sup>101</sup> C. W. De Kiewiet, *The anatomy of South African misery*, London: Oxford University Press, 1956, p 14

<sup>102</sup> C. W. De Kiewiet, *The anatomy of South African misery*, p 16

<sup>103</sup> C. W. De Kiewiet, *The anatomy of South African misery*, p 17

De Kiewiet continues his pro-Smuts stance by referring to “the great merit of Smuts and his followers” in that they recognised that South Africa could not be isolated from the rest of the world. He also adds: “they were willing to trade a century of wrong for a new century of hope.”<sup>104</sup> This is obviously a direct play on Smuts’s pamphlet “A Century of wrong”. He continues by attacking Afrikaner nationalism which he believes developed during the Anglo-Boer War and was increased to such an extent during the First World War that it could never be mended. He argues that Botha and Smuts were vilified by aggressive Afrikaner nationalism that had a poor political agenda. Only once throughout the entire book does De Kiewiet criticise Smuts, and it is a criticism that seems to follow Smuts throughout history: “Smuts made no creative contribution to the native question.”<sup>105</sup> The “native question” was, and is, a huge bone of contention for most liberal historians and is certainly regarded as one of Smuts’s major blunders. The bulk of De Kiewiet’s book is devoted to attacking Afrikaner nationalism and apartheid itself. But the fact that he shows clear support for Smuts, rather than portraying him as a precursor of apartheid, clearly indicates that he was pro-Smuts rather than simply anti-apartheid or anti-nationalist.

The next author to be examined is E. A. Walker and two editions of his book *A History of South Africa*. These two editions have been selected in order to see if his opinions changed over time. The first edition was published in 1928 and the third edition over three decades later in 1962.

Much like MacMillan and De Kiewiet, Walker (who was a foreign national) spent the majority of his academic career focusing on South Africa. Many of his books were written as textbooks, including *A History of South Africa*. Although considered a Liberal, it is ironic that in his later life he considered his best book to be his history of the Great Trek in which he presented it as a “romantic adventure”. Walker came to South Africa in 1911 and left again in 1936. But in 1944 Smuts asked him to return in order to write a history about South Africa’s wars. He never made it after suffering a mental breakdown, although he did return in 1968 following his retirement. It does, however, illustrate that Smuts and Walker were fairly close acquaintances. Walker is considered as one of the most important early South African historians, alongside Macmillan and De Kiewiet.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> C. W. De Kiewiet, *The anatomy of South African misery*, p 18

<sup>105</sup> C. W. De Kiewiet, *The anatomy of South African misery*, pp 18-19

<sup>106</sup> C. Saunders, “Walker, Eric Anderson (1886-1976), historian of South Africa”, 2006, Accessed: 2015/04/21, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/94128>.



Throughout the various editions of *A History of South Africa* Walker attempts to be unbiased, but it is evident that he is both repelled and attracted by certain individuals in South African history. The first mention of Smuts is as a young Cape advocate who had been placed in the position of State Attorney under Paul Kruger. But other than that Walker focuses more on Chamberlain and Milner rather than the South African connection of Smuts and F. W. Reitz which possibly indicates a Pro-British stance.<sup>107</sup> During this period as a “Kruger man” Smuts is hardly mentioned at all, and if so, then merely in passing. For example, the Smuts-Greene conversations only receive three sentences (Conyngham Greene was the British agent in the Transvaal) while Milner and Chamberlain receive much more attention.<sup>108</sup> There is also no mention of Smuts’s activities as the State Attorney which is significant as it was his first position in governmental office.

With regards to the Anglo-Boer War, Walker again focuses on the British side of things, even though it is a “history of South Africa”. One indication of where Walker’s allegiances lie is his belief that Milner was a “true prophet”.<sup>109</sup> The only mention Smuts receives is his victory at Modderfontein and a brief sentence about his famous (or infamous) “invasion” of the Cape colony: “Smuts and his khaki-clad followers rode into the Midlands of the Colony.”<sup>110</sup> Considering it was one of the biggest military movements in the War it seems odd that all it receives is one sentence. When Walker tackles the Peace of Vereeniging, Smuts once again is relegated to the background as Walker believes the true player in the Boer discussions was Christiaan de Wet. This despite the fact that several members of the Boer leadership made rousing speeches to wage for peace, including Jan Smuts.<sup>111</sup> Throughout this period that Walker writes about it is clearly evident where his loyalties lie and to which individuals he is attracted: in general it is the British.

As a Botha man, Smuts begins to draw more attention from Walker, although not enough to be mentioned as one of the founders of *Het Volk*, nor enough to be mentioned as one of the main combatants against the scheme to import Chinese labour. He does, however, receive some limited praise from Walker for his role in achieving self-government for South Africa from British Prime Minister Henry Campbell-Bannerman. However this appears rather reticent as he points out that Bannerman had “always advocated the grant of responsible

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<sup>107</sup> E. A. Walker, *A history of South Africa*, London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., 1928, p 478

<sup>108</sup> E. A. Walker, *A history of South Africa*, pp 484-485

<sup>109</sup> E. A. Walker, *A history of South Africa*, p 502

<sup>110</sup> E. A. Walker, *A history of South Africa*, pp 495, 500.

<sup>111</sup> E. A. Walker, *A history of South Africa*, pp 504-505

government”. He adds that Smuts had actually only been successful in the removal of the Chinese.<sup>112</sup>

Still continuing as a Botha man, Smuts’s role in the formation of Union is not regarded by Walker as nearly as significant as others. To Walker it was John X. Merriman and Botha who were the real heroes of the process towards Union and the only recognition Smuts receives is for his “flexible education act” which, to Walker as an Englishman, must have been seen quite remarkable. The opposing education act was in the Orange Free State and was under Hertzog’s guidance. It was a far more rigid policy that demanded bilingualism. With regards to the National Convention it is not Smuts alone who is portrayed as the brains behind the operation, but rather the young British scholars from Milner’s “Kindergarten” who had drafted the constitution with Smuts.<sup>113</sup> Walker’s pro-British leanings are easily discernable, and at this time Smuts was still considered a Boer with no pro-British feelings himself. Therefore he is of little relevance to Walker who still focuses on the English influence on South Africa and its history.

The 1914 labour strikes on the Rand were a chance for the government to test out the newly created Defence Force. Although this force was created largely due to Smuts’s efforts, he receives no mention in this regard. In fact, even though Walker praises the new Union government’s reaction to the strike for “no hesitation” and the limited loss “of only two lives”, the only time Smuts is referred to is how he “threw away much of the prestige thus gained by summarily and illegally deporting nine syndicalists”.<sup>114</sup> The whole scenario is reflected upon by Walker as one of good governance, although some may argue that it was a touch heavy-handed. 1914 also saw the outbreak of the First World War and the rebellion in South Africa, and although Smuts took an active part in the invasion of German South West Africa (Namibia today), once again there is no mention of this. Smuts is however commended by Walker for his War efforts in German East Africa (modern-day Tanzania) and he actually goes so far as to indicate that Smuts was robbed of complete victory by “a tardy subordinate”.<sup>115</sup> Who this subordinate was is not specified. But before one begins to think that Walker is slowly warming up to Smuts, he shows where his true fascination lies: General Louis Botha. To a great extent Walker explores Botha’s issues at home, and that his difficulties at home were only enhanced by Smuts’s departure to East Africa. Little mention

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<sup>112</sup> E. A. Walker, *A history of South Africa*, pp 516-518

<sup>113</sup> E. A. Walker, *A history of South Africa*, pp 528-531

<sup>114</sup> E. A. Walker, *A history of South Africa*, p 551

<sup>115</sup> E. A. Walker, *A history of South Africa*, p 562

is made of Smuts after this, there is no mention of their roles at Versailles or Smuts's role in the British War Cabinet, except merely in a passing reference: "in due time the two generals signed the Treaty of Versailles".<sup>116</sup> These are glaring omissions, especially considering this is the point in which South Africa was active on the world stage, not to mention the period that England began its admiration of both Botha and Smuts as world-class statesmen.

After Botha's death, Walker claims that Smuts was robbed of his "tactful *alter ego*", and this is the first and only time Walker speaks of them as a true partnership.<sup>117</sup> It is also a common theme that follows Smuts throughout his career: Smuts was the brains behind the more "tactful" and person-friendly Botha. When Botha died, Smuts was apparently left on his own with his disparaging manner that offended many people. Walker goes on to point out that, in his opinion, Smuts was left with a government that had a very poor domestic record which contributed to his eventual election loss in 1924. One important factor that Walker does insinuate is that the prestige Smuts had gained from his time in Europe was in fact an offence to his opponents at home.<sup>118</sup> Again this is a theme which followed Smuts until his death.

Despite all the issues Smuts had to deal with after Botha's death, Walker still only praises Smuts for creating South Africa's industry. This is however also watered down, if not undercut, by pointing out that this was only possible because of the agricultural revival which was "the fruit of Milner's reconstruction" after the Anglo-Boer War.<sup>119</sup>

Walker hardly mentions the "native problem", but when he does he praises Smuts for setting up a permanent Native Affairs Commission. The ugly scene that involved the Bulhoek incident is equally devoid of any major incisiveness from Walker, who instead focuses on how the police were ordered not to fire on the Israelites until matters got out of hand. Walker makes no mention of Smuts during the incident, even though it earned Smuts the nickname of "the butcher of Bulhoek". Similarly, the Rand Revolt of 1922 receives little attention from Walker with only one mention of Smuts. He points out that it was Smuts who truly ended the "revolution" by taking charge of the armed forces at "great personal risk".<sup>120</sup> As for the Bondelswarts incident in South West Africa, it appears as if Smuts is not even involved.<sup>121</sup> These three incidents all occurred around the same time and haunted Smuts for the rest of his

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<sup>116</sup> E. A. Walker, *A history of South Africa*, p 566

<sup>117</sup> E. A. Walker, *A history of South Africa*, pp 562-566

<sup>118</sup> E. A. Walker, *A history of South Africa*, p 567

<sup>119</sup> E. A. Walker, *A history of South Africa*, pp 571-572

<sup>120</sup> E. A. Walker, *A history of South Africa*, p 586

<sup>121</sup> E. A. Walker, *A history of South Africa*, pp 595-596

political career, especially immediately afterwards in the 1924 elections. It is surprisingly apparent that Walker makes so little of these serious political events, along with the individual most affected by them, Jan Smuts.

The third edition of Walker's *A History of South Africa* was published under a new title with the final impression published in 1962 as *A History of Southern Africa*. In the preface Walker admits that the only major changes he made were to do with the Great Trek (obviously an exciting subject for Walker) and the 1860s and 1870s.<sup>122</sup> At first it seems with regards to Smuts nothing has changed, but when Walker mentions the Smuts-Campbell-Bannerman meetings he now indicates that Smuts actually "convinced the sympathetic Prime Minister" to give the Transvaal self-government, an important difference from his earlier version, where it appears that Smuts is only able to get Campbell-Bannerman to remove Chinese labour.<sup>123</sup>

Another small difference that speaks volumes is the 1914 rebellion. In this later edition Walker now recalls the words of Merriman and refers to Smuts as a "ruthless philosopher".<sup>124</sup> Although they are minute differences that do not change the general scheme of the book, they do indicate that Walker, in this later edition, seems to have given Smuts a little more recognition and attempted to strengthen his place in the narrative.

Another important difference between the first edition and Walker's final edition is the inclusion of the "Jappie"[sic] Fourie execution. Unlike the first edition which makes no mention of this incident at all, Walker states the reasons for his execution: he never resigned his commission and he fought until the end, but again Smuts is not referred to at all.<sup>125</sup> The whole debacle was seen as a major issue amongst the Nationalists and the majority of the Afrikaners with Smuts being seen as the man "with blood on his hands" for executing one of his own. A further discrepancy between the two editions is that now a subordinate is not blamed for Smuts not being able to achieve complete victory in East Africa, instead he is just "robbed of complete victory".<sup>126</sup>

*A History of Southern Africa* extends beyond the period of the previous editions. When discussing the Second World War, Walker takes on an obviously pro-British stance and backs many of Smuts's decisions. He chastises Hertzog, Malan and their followers, especially

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<sup>122</sup> E. A. Walker, *A history of Southern Africa*, London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., 1962, p vi

<sup>123</sup> E. A. Walker, *A history of Southern Africa*, p 517

<sup>124</sup> E. A. Walker, *A history of Southern Africa*, p 554

<sup>125</sup> E. A. Walker, *A history of Southern Africa*, p 563

<sup>126</sup> E. A. Walker, *A history of Southern Africa*, p 565

Oswald Pirow, whom he blames utterly for the poor state of South Africa's Defence Force. His praise for Smuts on this point is paramount as he claims "volunteers of both sexes rushed into the forces... estimates were soon surpassed."<sup>127</sup> His positive stance can be seen with the sentence: "Thus did South Africa assume the ultimate responsibilities of a sovereign independent state by going to war with the Nazi *Reich*".<sup>128</sup> It is also during the Second World War that Walker begins to intimate that Smuts has dictatorial methods. On two separate occasions he refers to Smuts using the "guillotine" to pass through acts or remove opposition while acknowledging that Smuts was in total command of the South African War effort.<sup>129</sup> But Walker does offer a more positive portrayal of Smuts when he writes "So much depended physically on the one man who had brought South Africa into the war and kept her in it; so much depended spiritually and morally on the same man..."<sup>130</sup> Walker goes on to refer to Smuts as "among the prophets".<sup>131</sup> It seems that to Walker Smuts had finally achieved the greatness that only heroes such as Milner could attain. In this 1962 edition, Smuts had finally attracted Walker's positive attention and, one could venture to say, his admiration.

Walker's pro-Smuts stance extends throughout the rest of the book and is finalised when he refers to Smuts as the "last stand against South Africa",<sup>132</sup> before going into detail about his death and funeral.<sup>133</sup> No other South African individual receives such a tribute in either of the two editions of Walker's South African histories.

From the two editions it is very apparent that Walker was a virulent pro-British historian who focused on, and was attracted by, specific individuals. At first it seems that Walker was very restrained towards Smuts, devoting his attention to Milner and Botha, but as time passed Smuts became his leading man and his hope in a country that had spiralled into apartheid. By distancing Smuts from important negative events such as Bulhoek and Jopie Fourie, Walker presents Smuts in a far better light than others have suggested, and than he did in his first edition.

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<sup>127</sup> E. A. Walker, *A history of Southern Africa*, p 696

<sup>128</sup> E. A. Walker, *A history of Southern Africa*, pp 693-697

<sup>129</sup> E. A. Walker, *A history of Southern Africa*, pp 699, 704, 708

<sup>130</sup> E. A. Walker, *A history of Southern Africa*, p 712

<sup>131</sup> E. A. Walker, *A history of Southern Africa*, p 712

<sup>132</sup> E. A. Walker, *A history of Southern Africa*, p 814

<sup>133</sup> E. A. Walker, *A history of Southern Africa*, pp 813-814

## 2.2 Biography-Sarah Gertrude Millin

The next author is also the first full biographer of Smuts to be examined. Sarah Gertrude Millin was born in Lithuania in 1889 but her family moved to the Kimberley area when she was only five months old. Although famous during the interwar years, she later became infamous for her racism and her beliefs in the “sin of miscegenation”.<sup>134</sup> The Nobel laureate Nadine Gordimer once called her “the brilliant bigot”.<sup>135</sup> Millin used her husband’s connections (Phillip Millin was a judge in the Supreme Court) to garner a friendship with Smuts and his family and through this, gained the opportunity to write his biography. Through the friendship with the Smuts family she had access to letters and documents that were not available to previous authors. Because of this, Millin’s work is of utmost importance for the Pre-Hancock period as it was seen as the definitive biography of Smuts in that time.<sup>136</sup> The next biography to have as much inside information, and a whole lot more, would be William Keith Hancock with his access to the Smuts Papers. Millin made her fame through her novels about South African life<sup>137</sup> and through her two biographies: the one of Smuts (1936) and another biography on Cecil John Rhodes (1933). Although a friend of Smuts during the interwar years, after World War Two Millin became more adamant and outspoken regarding her racial beliefs and began to fully support the National Party and its apartheid policies, especially after the death of her husband in 1952. This could have led to a parting of the ways between Millin and Smuts, which could also have lent to a degree of ambivalence prominent in her biography of Smuts. Sarah Gertrude Millin died in 1968.<sup>138</sup>

In the preface to her 1936 biography *General Smuts* Millin advocates that the book was revised “as to its facts, but not its opinions” by J. H. Hofmeyr and Smuts himself. She goes on to claim that it was based on “his papers..., his writings..., the material collected and cherished over forty-seven years by Mrs Smuts”.<sup>139</sup> Her biography of Smuts was reviewed as not being “pure history”, but it was regarded as of utmost importance at the time.<sup>140</sup> It is

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<sup>134</sup> M. Pimstone & M. Shain, “Sarah Gertrude Millin”, Accessed: 2015/05/16, [www.jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/millin-sarah-gertrude](http://www.jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/millin-sarah-gertrude)

<sup>135</sup> P. Joyce, *South Africa in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: chronicles of an era*, Cape Town, Struik Publishers Ltd, 2000, p 52

<sup>136</sup> A. Fletcher, Review of S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 42, No. 3, 1937, p 549

<sup>137</sup> Millin, *God’s stepchildren*, 1926, *The Dark River*, 1920

<sup>138</sup> M. Pimstone & M. Shain, “Sarah Gertrude Millin”, Accessed: 2015/05/16, [www.jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/millin-sarah-gertrude](http://www.jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/millin-sarah-gertrude)

<sup>139</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, Glasgow: R. Maclehose and Company Ltd., 1936, p xi

<sup>140</sup> A. Fletcher, Review of S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 42, No. 3, 1937, p 549

interesting to note that Millin ends her book on Smuts when he joined the British War Cabinet in 1917, but the biography itself was only published some nineteen years later in 1936 - which did provide her with the luxury of foresight and hindsight. This could indicate that Millin was already turning away from Smuts when he left for Britain during the First World War. As mentioned she openly supported the National Party after her husband's death, but perhaps she had already agreed to many of its principles before then, including the National Party claim that "South Africa was too small for Smuts".<sup>141</sup>

From the beginning of Millin's biography she introduces the "two races" of South Africa: Boer and Briton, as well as briefly explaining Smuts's early life. For her the most important thing with regards to this is his "almost purely Dutch" descent - a very important aspect for someone obsessed with miscegenation. At the outset she also introduces a theme that is apparent throughout the book: the constant comparison between Smuts and Rhodes. Almost immediately in the book Millin already sees a similarity between the two figures as to how they signed their names: J. C. Smuts and C. J. Rhodes.<sup>142</sup> In reviews of her book, one reviewer follows Millin's lead and actually compares Smuts and Rhodes within the review itself.<sup>143</sup> In another review it is claimed that Millin shows bias against Rhodes and Milner. This I do not agree with and rather perceive the opposite, especially with regards to Rhodes. The author of the review also queries why she did not continue the biography to 1936?<sup>144</sup> Millin maintains the Rhodes comparative theme by indicating that eventually Smuts was taunted as a "reincarnation of the devil Rhodes", but she does accept that Smuts eventually became "a Kruger man", despite the dream he shared with Rhodes of a "United Africa".<sup>145</sup> This comparison with Rhodes could be because of the relatively close proximity of the appearance of the publication of the two books.

Another insinuation very early on in her book is that Smuts had, at the time of writing, very few friends. This belief, which is still prevalent today, is addressed by her as early as the eleventh page when she writes "for his intimates the very few there are call him Jan or Jannie".<sup>146</sup> Due to the lack of any references from Millin this can only be her opinion, and

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<sup>141</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 17

<sup>142</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, pp 7-11

<sup>143</sup> A. Fletcher, Review of S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 42, No. 3, 1937, p 549

<sup>144</sup> P. G. S., Review of S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, *Royal Institute of International Affairs 1931-1939*, Vol. 16, No. 5, 1937, p 793

<sup>145</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 31

<sup>146</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 11

perhaps she too was not considered an “intimate” by Smuts. She also introduces the theme of Smuts as a “traitor” very early on in the biography. When discussing Victoria College she explains how it eventually changed to the University of Stellenbosch and how it, “together with many other institutions and people in South Africa, hated Smuts for what [they] considered his traitorous relationship with the English.”<sup>147</sup> Millin is also not shy to indicate she was not a die-hard supporter of Smuts: “Smuts sees, not what his eyes traverse, but what lies on the far side. It is his virtue, and his failing...”<sup>148</sup>

With regards to Smuts’s early life Millin is brief and accurate. But her overriding goal during this period seems to be her attempts to explain why Smuts enjoys poetry. She explores in-depth his following of poets such as Shelley and Whitman over the vast majority of this section, while only including a brief sentence here and there as to his studies and his results.<sup>149</sup> Similarly, when discussing his Cambridge years, Millin is far more interested in Smuts’s economic woes, which arose due to an administrative misunderstanding, rather than his outstanding and unequalled results that he attained. Throughout the biography she persists with the idea that Smuts had no friends and was “contentedly lonely”, even at the time of writing.<sup>150</sup> The rest of his “Early Life” section is devoted to Millin attempting to analyse Smuts and his unpublished work on Walt Whitman. Again his education is only briefly explored (one paragraph)<sup>151</sup> and Millin’s “biography” seems to enter the genre of a novel.

Rhodes is featured in a later section of the book in a historical manner. This relates to when Smuts gave a speech on Rhodes’s behalf in Kimberley in 1895 shortly after his return from Cambridge. One comment stands out: “He [Smuts] does not realise how often he seems to be measuring himself against Rhodes.” This is in relation to a quote made by Smuts where he considers what Rhodes did in ten years compared to himself.<sup>152</sup> Millin compares nearly every aspect of Smuts’s life to that of Rhodes’s almost attempting to prove the similarities and furthering the cause for Smuts being the “reincarnation of the devil Rhodes”. Millin accentuates the comparison and connection with Rhodes to such a degree that it almost blurs the portrayal of Smuts.

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<sup>147</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 12

<sup>148</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 12

<sup>149</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, pp 16-30

<sup>150</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, pp 33-41

<sup>151</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, pp 42-51

<sup>152</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 54



After the Jameson Raid (1895) Millin indicates that Smuts became a “Kruger man” and describes their relationship was like “father and son”. According to her, in Smuts’s opinion Kruger was “the greatest man... which the Boer race has so far produced.”<sup>153</sup> But in truth their relationship only began when Smuts became the Transvaal State Attorney in 1898. As Millin correctly states, Smuts was two years too young for the position, and he was considered a “second-class burgher” because he was still a British citizen by birth having been born in the British Cape Colony. Kruger, however, pushed through the appointment and soon in the words of Millin a “man was revealed in the public life of the Transvaal like nothing known there before, and like nothing known in South Africa or Greater Britain since.”<sup>154</sup> This statement could be seen as a form of Millin’s ambivalence however it is a fairly loaded comment with no additional major praise or discredit of Smuts to clarify it.

When Smuts became State Attorney the biggest issue he was faced with was corruption in the police force, but he managed to clear it up with remarkable speed due to his “cold, direct eyes” which, according to Millin, obliged the chief of police to resign. The detective force was then put under his control, even though Millin claims Kruger was not “wholeheartedly behind Smuts.”<sup>155</sup> This last point is difficult to comprehend, as Kruger ruled as a virtual autocrat and he would not have let much happen without his personal approval. In fact, the first time Smuts came to Kruger’s attention was over the possibly illegal dismissal of the Chief Justice J.G. Kotze, which Smuts had supported. In essence Kruger overpowered the Chief Justice through political manoeuvrings that some saw as illegal. Smuts had supported Kruger because he believed that the Chief Justice should have no influence on politics.<sup>156</sup>

Another possible bone of contention and a possible distortion of the past was Smuts’s apparent resentment at “Milner’s contemptuous treatment of him at the Bloemfontein Conference”.<sup>157</sup> Yet when Millin broaches the subject of the Bloemfontein Conference Smuts is only mentioned as working “behind the scenes” urging concessions and there is no reference to any “contemptuous treatment” which Millin alluded to earlier.<sup>158</sup> This scenario is one that has been made apparent throughout numerous biographies and histories on Smuts although Millin, who first posits it, does not seem to have any actual proof to substantiate it

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<sup>153</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 71

<sup>154</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 76

<sup>155</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, pp 78-79

<sup>156</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 70

<sup>157</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 84

<sup>158</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, pp 85-96

and does not actually refer to the exact contemptuous treatment that Smuts so apparently resented.

During this period just before the Anglo-Boer War Millin suggests that Smuts was the only Boer still clinging to the possibility of peace and that “his effort was the most significant one in all the years of negotiation.”<sup>159</sup> This “effort” she speaks of is Smuts’s attempts at negotiating peace with Conyngham Greene, the British agent in Pretoria. Millin acknowledges that there were serious disputes between the two as to what had actually occurred in these meetings as each “had immediately afterwards made notes, and each proved that the other was wrong.”<sup>160</sup> This appears to be an issue that can only be put down to misunderstandings. Subsequently, Millin sees Smuts as the “noble negotiator” attempting a last stab at peace while the unfortunate Conyngham Greene was merely a puppet of Milner. For Millin, Milner was the real villain in the whole affair and, along with Kruger, the only “realist” in the whole situation whereby war was made inevitable.<sup>161</sup>

Millin claims that Smuts was “chiefly responsible” for the writing of “A Century of wrong”, a damning pamphlet that was an attempt to stir up passion and support among the Boers. It was an attempt to gain political support from other European nations and from within Britain itself by damning the British actions within southern Africa, particularly those against the Boers. She admits that Smuts later regretted his share in the production of it and points out that Isie Smuts was the translator for the English version.<sup>162</sup> She also refers to how those opposing Smuts, those “who think of Smuts as a traitor”, use it to taunt and humiliate him. But possibly her most damning statement throughout the entire biography is found with regards to this piece: while Smuts refers to himself as “a proper Boer”, while Millin retorts “a ‘proper’ Boer he never has been and never will be”.<sup>163</sup> Such a statement must have appealed strongly to anti-Smuts supporters, even for the decades to come. Whether Millin felt Smuts was “superior” to the Boer race and therefore could not be classified as one, or that she simply did not see Smuts as a Boer, is unknown. This statement, however, could only have caused Smuts endless trouble and added fuel to the fire of his opponents.

When Smuts stayed behind in Pretoria after the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek government had left in May 1900, the Government stores were looted, something which Smuts could not

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<sup>159</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 101

<sup>160</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, pp 102-103

<sup>161</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, pp 104-109

<sup>162</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 113

<sup>163</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 114

have prevented. Millin, however, indicates that Smuts “did not wish to”<sup>164</sup> prevent the looting, which seems highly unlikely considering Smuts knew that many more retreating Boers would be arriving in Pretoria throughout the next few days. Another possible discrepancy which continues to this day, due to the myth of the “Kruger millions”, is Smuts’s removal of the Government’s money, which Millin states, Smuts removed “under the threat of force”.<sup>165</sup> As will be seen in the later analysis, many authors disagree as to Smuts’s methods regarding the removal of this money.

Millin dedicates two full chapters to Smuts’s invasion of the Cape Colony and his exploits during this time. The vast majority of the information is taken from Deneys Reitz’s *Commando*, even though Reitz’s book was only about his own experiences, and not necessarily Smuts’s.<sup>166</sup> With two chapters out of forty devoted to one year of Smuts’s life, Millin must have thought it an important and defining period in his life. Much of it is however dedicated to military movements and descriptions of the countryside, an indication that Millin’s biography was targeted at non-South African audiences. It is here that she also promulgates the belief that Smuts had to do things himself as “essentially he doubted if [others] could do it as well as he could do it.”<sup>167</sup> This assumption implies a certain arrogance which reflects rather negatively on Smuts. Millin is referring to Smuts’s tendency to do the scouting himself when on a military movement, but this belief was to spread to all aspects of his life. It is interesting to note that this is also a contentious point amongst other authors as to whether this was a good or bad idea on Smuts’s part with regards to his military action.

In a few pages Millin visits three extremely important episodes in Smuts’s life that span a period of twenty years, yet they are contextually drawn together. Firstly, she refers to the case of Jopie Fourie who was executed during the 1914 Rebellion after Smuts confirmed the sentence. Fourie was sentenced to death (Millin does not say by whom) because he had joined the Rebellion in his South African Defence Force uniform and for leading some of his men into the resistance movement. Millin does not seem to take sides as she states “half the Boers in the Union thought it no more than right... to go into rebellion against England.”<sup>168</sup> But then she quotes Smuts as saying “from the higher point of view there was no question of

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<sup>164</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 129

<sup>165</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, pp 130-131

<sup>166</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, pp 147-171, 369

<sup>167</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 154

<sup>168</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 165

what was right. I had to confirm the sentence.”<sup>169</sup> From this it appears that Millin empathises with the Boers who thought the execution was wrong, and there is an implicit disdain for Smuts in quoting his rather spurious-sounding comment. However, she could also be seen as accepting his decision from a legal vantage point.

The second affair was the Rand Revolt of 1922 whereby Smuts used military measures to stop the “revolution”, an event that she and others believe “politically, ruined him”. She then adds a quote by Smuts “I knew it would.”<sup>170</sup> Although Millin is far briefer with regards to this incident than the Fourie affair, it is all a build-up to the main object of the discussion, Lemeul Colaine. As Millin states: “Those people who doubted the course of Smuts... should have remembered what happened to Lemeul Colaine.”<sup>171</sup> This statement comes across almost as a warning to future individuals who dare cross Smuts, and reflects negatively on what she perceives as a serious flaw in his character.

Colaine (or Colijn) was a Boer traitor who had stayed with one of the Commandos under Smuts’s command before suddenly disappearing. He later returned with a body of English soldiers that caused much devastation to the Boer commando. A few days after this event Smuts attacked an English camp where Colaine was found and identified by several of the survivors from the previous attack. He was immediately taken to Smuts, who after verifying his identity ordered his execution. The manner of this order is a point of discrepancy between several authors. Millin follows the line of Reitz in *Commando* by stating that Smuts ordered the soldiers to “Take him out and shoot him”, without so much as a court or any judicial procedure.<sup>172</sup> This is a damning affair that has many differing opinions and remains a contentious issue.

When addressing the Treaty of Vereeniging and the peace process building up to it, Millin shows her true thoughts about the Boer race. At first she praises the Boers as “natural orators”, and adds almost condescendingly or patronisingly “Why is the speech of primitive people more like literature...”<sup>173</sup> Evidently Millin believed that the Boers were a noble, yet primitive people. An English dictionary from the same period defines primitive as “characterised by the rudeness and simplicity of early or primitive times; not elaborate,

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<sup>169</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 165

<sup>170</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 165

<sup>171</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 166

<sup>172</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 167, D. Reitz, *Commando: A Boer journal of the Boer war*, Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 1983, p 293

<sup>173</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 178

highly developed or refined, old fashioned.”<sup>174</sup> This definition does not seem kindly which is possibly why she does not want to include Smuts as a Boer because of her ambivalent attitude towards him.

Unlike many of the previous authors, Millin sees the post-War Chinese labour issue as of utmost importance. This can be seen by her dedicating an entire chapter to the event, even though it is a short one.<sup>175</sup> In essence the Chinese labour issue was when some 65 000 Chinese indentured workers were brought to South Africa to work on the mines due to the lack of “native” labour.<sup>176</sup> South Africans and the English both disdained the entire process, but for Millin the biggest issue was “a new race conflict” and the thought of Chinese attacking “white girls and murder[ing] lonely farmers”.<sup>177</sup> Her racist hierarchies is ever present throughout the book. Her disdain for the Chinese is evident in her claim that the “only” reason for a Liberal government gaining power in England was because of the Chinese issue in South Africa. While the indentured Chinese scheme was indeed an electoral issue, she seems to exaggerate the importance of South African affairs in British politics.<sup>178</sup>

In 1904, Smuts started the *Het Volk* party with “Botha, Schalk Burger and a dozen others”<sup>179</sup> with the only object being responsible government. Millin ironically points out that it was the same year as Kruger’s death, the same year that Smuts apparently became a Botha man.<sup>180</sup>

With regards to the famous meeting between Smuts and Henry Campbell-Bannerman in 1906 Millin only quotes directly from Smuts, Lloyd George and Lord Riddell. None of her own thoughts are apparent and the whole scenario is written as a matter of fact.<sup>181</sup> In an interesting twist Millin quotes Smuts as saying that the period of 1902-1906 was the “darkest period in the history of the Transvaal”, while it was under the administration of Milner.<sup>182</sup> But immediately Millin rebukes this quote by attempting to justify that this period was actually the period that Milner worked “the best of his life”. She continues by insisting that Milner’s

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<sup>174</sup> H. C. Wyld (ed.), *The universal dictionary of the English language*, London: Routledge, 1932, p 476

<sup>175</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, pp 202-211

<sup>176</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 204

<sup>177</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, pp 205-206

<sup>178</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 211

<sup>179</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 210

<sup>180</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 210

<sup>181</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, pp 212-214

<sup>182</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 216

dream of South Africa was the same as the dream Rhodes and Smuts held. Again she equates Smuts with Rhodes.<sup>183</sup>

Millin goes to great lengths to differentiate between Smuts and Botha, with Smuts being “slim” and “tricky” while Botha was “the wise leader”.<sup>184</sup> She indicates that the “Botha” period in Smuts’s life began at the Vereeniging conference in 1902 because both already preached co-operation and peace.<sup>185</sup> Millin makes it apparent that she is an avid supporter of Botha, including his “wisdom, humanity and powers of attraction”. But for Millin his most important feature, perhaps because in her eyes it is the feature that Smuts lacked most, was his “tact”.<sup>186</sup>

Millin also goes into the racial alignment of Smuts, and in a sense reveals her own racial attitude herself. Firstly when Millin mentions race she is invariably talking about “white races”, for example Germans, English, Boers, etc. She states that Smuts was a major advocate for race admixture, yet he had racial predilections, unlike Rhodes who is again dragged into the biography. But later in the book Smuts (and possibly Millin) agree with Rhodes with regards to a meritocracy.<sup>187</sup> Millin praises Smuts for his opposition to restricted Jewish immigration that was passed by the Hertzog government in 1929. With regards to the “yellow and black races” Millin insinuates that Smuts has no time for either, especially the Asians. However, as regards the blacks, Millin seems almost uncomfortable with how close Smuts appears to be to them and his belief that “they have rights in South Africa.”<sup>188</sup> Millin even states that although Smuts had fought for “native rights”, for example his attempts to stop the removal of the Cape Coloured franchise, “one feels, his impulse towards “natives” resembles that of his fellow Boers.” She goes on to add “Smuts’s ideal of fusion stops before the danger of lowering civilization.”<sup>189</sup> Millin’s racist undertones are well known, and it is easy to see that Smuts’s “affection for natives”<sup>190</sup> perturbs her. At this point Millin attempts to make Smuts suddenly an average Boer with “hatred” of other races in his eyes, when earlier in the biography Smuts is not deemed a Boer in her view. Millin makes it blatantly apparent that

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<sup>183</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, pp 216-217

<sup>184</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 219

<sup>185</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 221

<sup>186</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, pp 219-220

<sup>187</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, pp 221-222

<sup>188</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 224

<sup>189</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 225

<sup>190</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 224

she believes: “Power must remain with the white races”<sup>191</sup> and on this point she appears to be often at variance with Smuts.

When considering Smuts in terms of his governmental performance, Millin refers to him as a “dictator by disposition”.<sup>192</sup> This image of Smuts the dictator is one that is referred to many times over in various pieces of literatures. She states categorically that a “Government which contained Smuts was not only dominated by Smuts - it *was* Smuts.”<sup>193</sup> Millin attributes this to his “impatience” with other people, another possible myth that has followed Smuts through time.<sup>194</sup> Millin also attributes the Union of South Africa and the entire constitution that was created for the process of Union as solely Smuts’s work with only a small input from John X. Merriman.<sup>195</sup> This is a bold statement considering all the combined work that went into the process of Union.

On numerous occasions Millin attacks Smuts’s dictatorial methods of government: “Smuts has, on several occasions... taken the law into his own hands” commanding that “Such doctrines destroy the sanctity of law and liberty.”<sup>196</sup> However, she also defends these so called “perilous” methods by saying that Smuts “would never use his public power for private gain.” She also adds that Smuts is “an inexplicable man to South Africans.”<sup>197</sup> Once again Millin is attempting to make Smuts out to be a foreigner in his own country, a man who fits in nowhere. Whenever she finds a fault in Smuts she immediately dismisses it with a positive spin on it. This is yet another example of her perpetual ambivalence towards Smuts.

With regards to Hertzog and the National Party, Millin comes across as pro-British and pro-Botha, although she finds Hertzog’s mission (the continuance of Boer culture) “admirable”.<sup>198</sup> Regardless of this sentiment Millin places all the blame for South Africa’s woes in the 1930s squarely upon Hertzog, and later, Malan’s shoulders: “a fight...that disrupted and all but ruined South Africa.”<sup>199</sup> Evidently Millin was still very much a pro-South African Party person at the time that the biography was written, and it was only later in

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<sup>191</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 225

<sup>192</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 228

<sup>193</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 228

<sup>194</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, pp 228-229

<sup>195</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, pp 250-252

<sup>196</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 261

<sup>197</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 261

<sup>198</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 275

<sup>199</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 276

life, after the death of Smuts, that she became an open National Party supporter and her ideals changed dramatically.<sup>200</sup>

Millin flits through the 1913 strikes in Johannesburg very briefly and essentially lays the blame and cause of the strikes on “hooliganism”.<sup>201</sup> The 1914 strikes, however, are given far more attention. She quotes Deneys Reitz and a Colonel Opperman that civil war was a great possibility and that General Beyers was behind it all. Her main focus of the discussion was the deportation of the strike leaders who she identifies disparagingly as, “not one born in the country.”<sup>202</sup> She does not mention the illegality of the deportation, but rather focuses on the fact that the deported leaders were not of South African birth, which, to her, allowed Smuts to deport them whether or not it was illegal. Ironically Millin was herself not a South African by birth.

Having mentioned the 1914 Rebellion in an earlier chapter she focuses once again on the 1914 Rebellion in the context of the outbreak of the First World War. Millin draws upon a comparison between Smuts and Kruger, even though at this point in her discussion Smuts was regarded as a fervent Botha-man. Smuts’s policy of “letting things develop” is compared by Millin to Kruger’s old principle of “waiting for the tortoise to put its head out”.<sup>203</sup> Millin defends any criticism of this strategy by saying it is “just and unjust” criticism because Smuts is waiting for things to develop, but he is also waiting for things to die down and not develop.<sup>204</sup> To align the strategies of two very different individuals and see in them the same process is rather misleading. Kruger was of the old Boer school while Smuts, as we have seen through Millin’s own work, should not even be included in any school of thought, let alone the Boers. It is perhaps through the constant comparisons made between Smuts and those men whom he followed that authors of Smuts have added to the enigma that surrounds him.

Continuing with the 1914 Rebellion, Millin only dedicates a paragraph to the Jopie Fourie incident. Although she spoke of it earlier she writes very briefly of his being the only death sentence due to his “acts of terrorism” and for going into “rebellion while on active service”.<sup>205</sup> Considering that this was an issue that was to haunt Smuts until his death, Millin

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<sup>200</sup> <http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/millin-sarah-gertrude>, access date: 13/05/2016 11:29AM

<sup>201</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 280

<sup>202</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 286 and p 287

<sup>203</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 319

<sup>204</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 319

<sup>205</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 322



passes over it rather lightly, although she seems more pro-Smuts and anti-Fourie in this particular case.

In the first military acts of South Africa in the First World War Smuts remained in Pretoria keeping the government in order while Botha took charge of the forces invading German South-West Africa (later Namibia). Smuts did eventually join Botha in the War effort, but only briefly.<sup>206</sup> Millin points out that during the period 1914-1915 Smuts was “hated” by a large percentage of the Boer population for his “Imperialism” (which again is compared to Rhodes) and because of the deaths of Jopie Fourie and General Beyers.<sup>207</sup>

For Millin, Smuts’s posting as a Lieutenant-General in the British army for the German East Africa ‘Tanzania’ campaign, was “a romance of the most astonishing kind, a British romance” and adds that now “England had discovered Smuts.”<sup>208</sup> She also notes that Smuts had previously refused the command, but when the previous commander had fallen ill he took up the position.<sup>209</sup> Her pro-British and pro-Smuts stance comes together to exonerate Smuts as her “champion”. But she is quick to comment that the more Smuts was loved in England, the more he was hated by the Nationalists in South Africa, an issue that Smuts would have to deal with time and again.<sup>210</sup>

Millin begins her explanation of the East Africa campaign much like her account of the South African War by describing the terrain, fauna, and flora, which she insinuates was nearly impossible to conduct war in.<sup>211</sup> She does this in such a way that it appears as if she is defending Smuts and his actions in the campaign before even explaining what happened. “It was the country, rather than the Germans, that had to be conquered. It was the country that was the deadlier opponent.”<sup>212</sup> Millin also makes the point that when Smuts took command of the British forces in the area they were on the defensive indicating that it was Smuts who pushed them onto the offensive almost immediately after his arrival, and the entire attack was co-ordinated under his plans.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, pp 324-326

<sup>207</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, pp 327-329

<sup>208</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 336

<sup>209</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 336

<sup>210</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 337

<sup>211</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, pp 338-341

<sup>212</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 340

<sup>213</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, pp 342-344

Millin states that the only reason that the entire operation got as far as it did and succeeded as much as it did was due to “the personality of that one man”<sup>214</sup> and that “he was the idol of his army”.<sup>215</sup> Millin underscores other admirers of Smuts by suggesting that the East Africa campaign was a success and Smuts was a “great soldier”, and a “great strategist and tactician.”<sup>216</sup> To back up her claims she refers to a Court of Inquiry that was convened by the British Army Council after several soldiers had made complaints. She points out that the Court dismissed the complaints indicating that Smuts had directed the campaign “in the best possible way.”<sup>217</sup> The East Africa campaign is a very difficult subject to broach as there are always two sides to it: one could argue that Smuts failed because he never completely defeated the Germans, but another could easily take up Millin’s view and argue that it was a great success because of the amount of territory won. It all depends with whom your loyalties lie, and from this incident it is easy to gauge who is pro-Smuts and who is anti-Smuts.

After the East Africa campaign when Smuts was called to England to take part in the British War Cabinet (at Botha’s insistence), Millin highlights the two fronts that Smuts would have to deal with throughout his career: the home front and the international front. 1917 is a pivotal date with regards to Millin as it shows her ambivalence towards Smuts, perhaps because of a parting of ways. She again compares Smuts to Rhodes, but in this case she takes on the role as an Afrikaner who is doing the comparison: “The counterpart of Rhodes, the equal betrayer of South Africa”.<sup>218</sup> She also introduces the idea that South Africa had become too small for Smuts, and claims that his going to England was much like him going “home”.<sup>219</sup> Millin ends her biography when Smuts arrives in England, but not before she dedicates several pages of praise from British statesmen and soldiers as a final accolade to Smuts.<sup>220</sup>

Overall it is evident that Millin was a supporter and admirer of Smuts, but not wholeheartedly nor convincingly as she does not abstain from criticism. For example she alludes to his dictatorial methods, his being too large for South Africa, his similarity to Rhodes and his allegiance to England. It is possible to say that the ambivalence shown by Millin throughout the biography is due to a parting of ways between Millin and Smuts, as Millin slowly started

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<sup>214</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 346

<sup>215</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 347

<sup>216</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, pp 350-351

<sup>217</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, pp 347-348

<sup>218</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 353

<sup>219</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 353

<sup>220</sup> S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, pp 353-355

to shift her ideals and principles towards a more National Party outlook. Her constant comparison of Smuts and Rhodes is odd and misleading, perhaps the only reason she does it so often is because these are the two individuals that she wrote biographies on. But to compare Rhodes and Smuts seems far-fetched: Rhodes was an empire builder of the first order who did everything for wealth and glory, while Smuts cannot be put in this same league. Another theme Millin accentuated was how unlike a Boer or Afrikaner Smuts was, something that I am sure must have rankled Smuts who often thought of himself as merely “a simple Boer.” Millin’s biography was one of the first on Smuts, and therefore it must have had much influence on those that followed on either positively or negatively.

### 2.3 Biography-H. C. Armstrong

The next biographical work on Smuts to be considered appeared some three years later. The author, H. C. Armstrong (1891-1942), was a British soldier and author who fought in the First World War, mainly in the Middle East and Turkey, where he was eventually captured. Armstrong wrote five books other than *Grey Steel, JC Smuts: A Study in Arrogance*, all of which dealt with topics on Turkey, Syria and Arabia.<sup>221</sup> From the outset it seems strange that an individual whose speciality lay within the Middle East would choose to write about a South African. One reviewer of the book agrees and goes further to state that the entire book is “supremely pro-British” and almost “virulently anti-Boer”. This reviewer also found a lack of background information on the book and its author, but felt that the book was not written for a South African audience.<sup>222</sup> Another reviewer agrees that background information on the author is lacking and also points to the lack of accuracy with regards to some of the historical information. He also believes that the manner of the writing of the story may also arouse resentment.

It is important to keep in mind that Armstrong was not a historian, but his biography is vital to any study of Smuts because it was first published in 1939 and then republished in 2006. This meant that, along with Millin’s biography, these were the two major works on Smuts before Hancock in 1961. Both the title and the subtitle, *Grey Steel, JC Smuts: A Study in Arrogance* makes it apparent from the outset that this biography is written from a negative and critical perspective. In the preface, or rather “Author’s note”, Armstrong makes it very

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<sup>221</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, Durban: Just Done Publishing, 2006, back cover; *Grey Wolf, Mustafa Kemal; Lord of Arabia, Ibn Saud; Turkey and Syria Reborn; Unending Battle; Turkey in Travail; Grey Steel* was originally published in 1937 but this was unfortunately unavailable for this dissertation.

<sup>222</sup> E. S. H., Review of H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, *Journal of the Royal African Society*, Vol. 37, No. 147, 1938, p 255

clear that “much of what [he] has written will not please [Smuts’s] admirers”.<sup>223</sup> Armstrong does defend this remark by twice mentioning that Smuts “is a great man” and that his reputation stands on “the firm foundations of his real qualities and achievements, and those foundations are steel.”<sup>224</sup> Armstrong admits to having no contact with Smuts, except with his close friends and opponents, and that he watched Smuts in action “from afar”. He also indicates that he has not been influenced in any way by his informants and that he studied Smuts “with an unprejudiced eye.”<sup>225</sup> This comment appears perhaps as a case of “The [person] doth protest too much, methinks.”<sup>226</sup> But one passage in the preface possibly indicates why Armstrong has from the outset taken a dislike of Smuts:

Out of the Great War (First World War) little remains. The peace treaties have been dishonoured; the ideals for which my generation died physically and morally have been found to be follies...the generals, admirals, and statesmen have been written off as fools or knaves: out of all that tremendous struggle there remains untouched by the fury of the iconoclasts only one man, Jan Christian Smuts.<sup>227</sup>

From this passage it is possible to detect a hint of resentment and anger, firstly directed towards the actual War, the post-War depression, and the failure that was the Treaty of Versailles, especially regarding those involved. Secondly, against the “one man” who was “untouched”. Thus Armstrong sets the scene for an interesting but tainted account of Smuts.

Almost immediately Armstrong appears vague in his narrative when speaking of Smuts’s birth. Instead of a direct date of birth Armstrong merely states that he was born “in May of 1870”.<sup>228</sup> Considering Smuts was born on the same day (not year) as Queen Victoria (later Empire Day) one would expect a British writer to be a bit more specific in the actual date of birth, especially if it is a biography. With regards to Smuts’s childhood Armstrong only focuses on just two matters; how sickly and weak Smuts was as a child, and how Smuts did well at school albeit in a derogatory manner: “He was born old and serious.”<sup>229</sup> He also

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<sup>223</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p xi and P. G. S., Review of H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, *Royal Institute of International Affairs 1931-1939*, Vol. 16, No. 5, 1937, p 793

<sup>224</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, pp xi-xii

<sup>225</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p xi

<sup>226</sup> W. Shakespeare, *The Complete Works*, Mumbai: Wilco Publishing House, 2013, p 581;

[www.literarydevices.net/lady-doth-protest-too-much/.com](http://www.literarydevices.net/lady-doth-protest-too-much/.com), Access: 2016/11/26

<sup>227</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p xi

<sup>228</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 5

<sup>229</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, pp 9-12

makes the peculiar blunder of indicating that Smuts went to school at the age of ten and he does not mention that Smuts only went to school - or was allowed to - because of the death of his older brother.<sup>230</sup> Armstrong finds it very difficult to understand how Smuts focused “solely on his studies” and had no time for games or recreation and that he was ill-tempered and physically weak.<sup>231</sup> This could indicate that Armstrong did not fully understand or research his subject or the setting surrounding Smuts, a rather problematic situation given that it could lead to incorrect assumptions. This is evident when Armstrong is shocked that Isie Krige (the future Mrs Smuts) was a fellow student, “for at Victoria College co-education was encouraged.”<sup>232</sup> Obviously this goes against the grain of an English gentleman brought up in the Victorian era, where women and education did not merge.

The entire biography amounts to a series of abrasive attacks on the very nature and being of Smuts. For example, when Armstrong merely describes Smuts he points out his “unsmiling cadaverous jowl” and how “egocentric” Smuts was.<sup>233</sup> These sorts of descriptions occur throughout the entire volume. Armstrong also shows his pro-Rhodes sentiment - a man of “exceptional capabilities”<sup>234</sup> - and his anti-Kruger beliefs - “uneducated old Dutchman, backward, primitive.”<sup>235</sup>

Throughout the book Armstrong makes numerous odd claims about Smuts. For one he indicates that Smuts was a member of the Afrikaner Bond, a dubious claim that has no factual backing but a claim he justifies by highlighting Smuts’s support of Rhodes.<sup>236</sup> He also argues that Smuts would develop a form of hero-worship with certain individuals, firstly with Rhodes and then later with Kruger.<sup>237</sup> Another claim with dubious foundation is that Smuts became “more hostile to the English than the staunchest of Kruger’s supporters.”<sup>238</sup> This is a theme that Armstrong often refers to, that Smuts was actually an Anglophobe who never trusted the English after the Jameson Raid. Armstrong also indicates that this “hatred” of the

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<sup>230</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 10

<sup>231</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 14

<sup>232</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 15

<sup>233</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 15

<sup>234</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 21

<sup>235</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 23

<sup>236</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 26

<sup>237</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 27 and p 46

<sup>238</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 41

English in Smuts was inflamed by Isie Smuts, who, Armstrong continually reiterates, was an ardent Anglophobe.<sup>239</sup>

The whole process of Smuts becoming State Attorney (1898), whereby Smuts backed Kruger rather than Judge Kotze over judicial power, is seen by Armstrong as “completely partisan” and underhand. Armstrong even contests the legal matter within Smuts’s argument which backed Kruger, even though he points out that Smuts was regarded by his law professor, F. W. Maitland, when at Cambridge as “by far the best student he had ever examined.”<sup>240</sup> This is just another continuation of Armstrong attempting to discredit Smuts constantly throughout the biography.

Interestingly, Armstrong glosses over Smuts’s appointment as Attorney-General by only commenting that the appointment “aroused surprise and some ill-feeling”.<sup>241</sup> Armstrong does not even mention that technically Smuts could not receive this appointment because he was two years too young. He does however attack Smuts for clamping down on the rampant corruption that was rife in the Transvaal claiming “he did no tactful waiting”.<sup>242</sup> An odd thing to attack Smuts about as many would see this as a most worthy and indeed “tactful” not to wait. Almost as an afterthought Armstrong admits that Smuts “was honest”, adding rather strangely that this was only because “money meant nothing to him.”<sup>243</sup> Armstrong also believes that this was the period when Smuts began to be known as “Slim Jannie”, which he interprets to mean “crafty”.<sup>244</sup> “Slim” is a very broad word in Afrikaans that can mean several things including “smart, cute, clever, wily, crafty, sly, etc.”<sup>245</sup> For Armstrong to define it as “crafty” indicates exactly where Armstrong stands with Smuts and reflects a certain prejudice.

When Sir Alfred Milner appears on the scene Armstrong describes him as “a clear-headed, strong-willed man with a sound sense of values” and also that “he did not want war.”<sup>246</sup> It is clearly evident whom Armstrong admired and where his bias lay, especially considering

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<sup>239</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 42

<sup>240</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 18 and pp 46-47

<sup>241</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 47

<sup>242</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 51

<sup>243</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 52

<sup>244</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 53

<sup>245</sup> D. B. Bosman, L. W. Hiemstra, I. W. Van Der Merwe, *Tweetalige woordeboek*, Cape Town: Nasionale Boekhandel Bpk, 1964, p 693

<sup>246</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 55

Smuts's "intense hostility to the English."<sup>247</sup> For the Bloemfontein Conference, Armstrong reserves his praise for Milner and states that Smuts "left the Conference in a rage" and that he was "determined more than ever to work for war."<sup>248</sup> Armstrong furthers this idea by indicating that the Greene-Smuts talks were merely a delay tactic by Smuts to ready the two Afrikaner republics for the coming War.<sup>249</sup> Armstrong also insinuates that Smuts was planning an "all-out attack" on the entire British Empire by fomenting revolt in India and Ireland,<sup>250</sup> a plan that seems so impossible as to make it highly improbable.

In one interesting section concerning the Anglo-Boer War Armstrong professes his admiration for Louis Botha, describing him as "tall and strong, always composed...he inspired confidence: his men trusted and liked him."<sup>251</sup> Botha is undoubtedly the first Afrikaner that Armstrong has found anything good to say of, perhaps because of his military prowess given that Armstrong was a military man. For Smuts, however, Armstrong remained on the attack: "All his [Smuts] calculations had proved incorrect. Military defeat had followed military defeat."<sup>252</sup> What these "calculations" were are not explained and thus we shall never know. Armstrong even goes so far as to state that Smuts had sent Judge Koch to go and blow up the gold mines in Johannesburg, a very serious accusation with no grounding in truth.<sup>253</sup> Armstrong also perpetuates the fallacy started by Millin that Smuts "ordered" the looting of Pretoria.<sup>254</sup>

As a soldier Armstrong shows some admiration along with measures of contempt for Smuts and his foray in the Anglo-Boer War: "Almost at once he [Smuts] showed a remarkable ability as a raider."<sup>255</sup> The most telling word in that quote, however, is "raider". Armstrong did not see Smuts as a soldier, but rather as a raiding bandit. Armstrong also makes the error of claiming that Botha had taken Smuts with him to the Middleburg conference, when in actual fact Smuts was miles away fighting with De la Rey in the western Transvaal.<sup>256</sup> A further indication of the unreliability of Armstrong's work is that he adds in a confrontation

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<sup>247</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 55

<sup>248</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 58

<sup>249</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 61

<sup>250</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 62

<sup>251</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, pp 71-72

<sup>252</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 75

<sup>253</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 75

<sup>254</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 76

<sup>255</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 80

<sup>256</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 80

at the conference between Smuts and General French, when French was not present at Middleburg either.<sup>257</sup>

When Smuts began his Cape Raid, Armstrong believes it was because “he had no family ties. His wife had been interned by the English and was living comfortably and well cared for in a private house in Maritzburg [sic].”<sup>258</sup> This is a statement that, quite assuredly, would have rankled Isie Smuts to the core. Armstrong does not praise Smuts at all for his escapade through the Orange Free State even though a massive drive by the English forces was under way. Instead he insinuates that it was a case of luck.<sup>259</sup> In fact, to Armstrong, the whole process of getting into the Cape was just luck: “Luck again was with him.”<sup>260</sup> Armstrong does admit that the expedition into the Cape had a marked improvement on Smuts physically, but not without a tongue-in-cheek comment that “from his parents he had inherited a sound constitution, the constitution of peasant ancestors”.<sup>261</sup> Again the comment is undercut by the inclusion of the reference to “peasant” parenthood. Another curious statement is with regards to Lemuel Colaine (Armstrong’s spelling) whom he describes as “a fine, upstanding fellow...he came to spy.”<sup>262</sup> Evidently treachery was seen as a merit to Armstrong. Armstrong follows Millin’s account that there was no court or any formality and repeats the infamous words ascribed to Smuts “Take him out and shoot him.”<sup>263</sup>

A theme that Armstrong visits time and again is that Smuts never trusted his subordinates or allowed his commando to split. This is blatantly incorrect as his commando was split up several times during the course of the raid, most often under the leadership of General Deventer but also under others.<sup>264</sup> Armstrong does have a moment of praise for Smuts’s “fine leadership and dogged courage,”<sup>265</sup> but again it is brief and so occasional that it does not change the overall perception Armstrong has of Smuts, which is overwhelmingly negative. Armstrong instead believes that real difficulties in the raid actually lay with the English who were attempting to intercept Smuts and his commando.<sup>266</sup> This is an indication of Armstrong

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<sup>257</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 81

<sup>258</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 85

<sup>259</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 85

<sup>260</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 86

<sup>261</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 87

<sup>262</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 89

<sup>263</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 90

<sup>264</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 90

<sup>265</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 93

<sup>266</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 93



subjugating any form of praise of Smuts, even if Smuts had completed an amazing task Armstrong would never acknowledge it.

It was at the peace conference in Vereeniging in 1902 that Armstrong unveiled the “queer piece of disloyalty by Kitchener” whereby Kitchener took Smuts aside and proposed the prospect of a Liberal government gaining power in England. This government would be far more conciliatory towards the Boers and “[would] grant you [Smuts] a constitution for South Africa.”<sup>267</sup> This was the first occasion that this event was recorded, which lends credence to the idea that it is possibly another myth that was created around Smuts, especially considering that it was not recorded in the Milner papers or anywhere else. As one reviewer puts it “though if the incident occurred as recounted, it is difficult to believe that Lord Milner would not have learnt of it subsequently.”<sup>268</sup>

Armstrong also puts forward the theory that of all the Boer leaders, it was Smuts and Botha (Smuts was now a Botha-man) that received most of the “blame” for surrendering.<sup>269</sup>

Armstrong also believes that Smuts became an even more ardent Anglophobe than before the War and that he directed most of his hatred towards Milner.<sup>270</sup> If Smuts was an ardent Anglophobe then he was almost whimsical in his hatred because within a few years he was fighting for the English. Armstrong continues with this theme throughout the biography, but more interestingly he states that the real Anglophobe was actually Isie Smuts, who did not allow any English to be spoken in their home.<sup>271</sup> Although Isie Smuts was implacable in her hostility towards the English for many years after the War, this claim is not entirely true.<sup>272</sup>

Similarly to Millin, Armstrong time and again compares Rhodes and Smuts. But for Armstrong it was a form of hero-worship on Smuts’s part, which is another theme that continues throughout the biography: how Smuts would continually find someone to follow, whether it be Rhodes, Kruger or Botha.<sup>273</sup> The predominant theme, however, is how Smuts was the “bitterest” Boer leader after the War, the greatest Anglophobe, and that Smuts was continuously attacked by his own people: “slim Jannie”.<sup>274</sup> “Smuts, like Rhodes, had no

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<sup>267</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, pp 103-104

<sup>268</sup> P. G. S., Review of H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, *Royal Institute of International Affairs 1931-1939*, Vol. 16, No. 5, 1937, p 794

<sup>269</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 112

<sup>270</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 113

<sup>271</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 114

<sup>272</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962, p 117

<sup>273</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, pp 114-117

<sup>274</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, pp 118-120

patience, while Botha, more solid, sounder, and more stable... Sometimes Botha saved him.<sup>275</sup> Armstrong like Millin obviously respected Botha immensely and this is apparent throughout the biography as Botha continually had to “save” Smuts.<sup>276</sup> This is a very bold, contradictory and if not abrasive statement to make as Smuts is usually seen as the “brains” and Botha the “face” of their partnership.<sup>277</sup>

Concerning the meeting between Campbell-Bannerman and Smuts Armstrong is very brief: only one paragraph for such an important event in South Africa’s, and Smuts’s, history. Armstrong also believed that it was not so much Smuts’s persuasive powers that made Campbell-Bannerman arrive at his decision for self-government, but rather that it would take the issue of the Chinese immigrants off their hands and on to the shoulders of Botha and Smuts.<sup>278</sup> Once again Armstrong managed to find a way to remove credit from Smuts and defer it to others.

In Armstrong’s view after his return from England, Smuts suddenly became an Anglophile and that “the Dutch were dour and unforgiving”.<sup>279</sup> This is a remarkable turnaround after only one brief visit to Britain, as according to Armstrong Smuts was the most vicious Anglophobe and had the utmost hatred for everything English. But Armstrong is quick to point out that Smuts finally had a chance for power and the limelight, things that he believes Smuts desired most in his life.<sup>280</sup> To say that Smuts actively sought power and that he craved to be in the limelight is a serious misrepresentation as well as a miscalculation of character. Power and limelight were forced on Smuts due to his choice of career, it was, after all, Botha who was in charge.

Armstrong also briefly glosses over the Smuts-Gandhi talks in 1907. He takes the side of Gandhi by intimating that Smuts broke promises that he had made to Gandhi, much like Armstrong insinuates about Greene and Smuts. He applauds Gandhi’s use of passive resistance, another incident that would haunt Smuts for the remainder of his life.<sup>281</sup> It appears that if there is a choice to be made, Armstrong will align against Smuts.

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<sup>275</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 121

<sup>276</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 118; W.J. De Kock (ed.), *Dictionary of South African biography*, p 741

<sup>277</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 143

<sup>278</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, pp 127-128

<sup>279</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 131

<sup>280</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 131

<sup>281</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, pp 141-142

It is also insinuated that Smuts would have failed if he did not have Botha by his side, due to the “many errors” Smuts made.<sup>282</sup> However, this does not explain how Smuts became Prime Minister on three occasions after Botha’s death in 1919. Armstrong also makes the statement “Smuts did not seem to realise he was unpopular,”<sup>283</sup> yet one could argue that Smuts himself was always aware of his opponents and those who thought ill of him. Armstrong claims that Botha also always kept a close eye on Smuts because of his “foolishness”.<sup>284</sup> But if this were true then the fact that Botha would leave Smuts in charge every time he left the country for his various duties does not make sense.

With regards to Union, Armstrong is full of praise, but in an odd twist he attributes Smuts’s concept of holism to Jan Hofmeyr and Rhodes. In the same breath he praises Smuts for “the greatness that was inherent in him” and how Smuts worked with his “usual ferocious energy” to create Union.<sup>285</sup> Armstrong also admits to the fact that Smuts was the driving force behind Union, but not without adding that much of the work was done by Milner’s “Kindergarten”, especially Lionel Curtis.<sup>286</sup> These kinds of undercutting or backhand compliments occur throughout the biography and are a common theme.

During the period of Union Armstrong finally admits that Smuts is “very complex”, and interestingly adds that “he worked for South Africa with a spirit of idealism akin to fanaticism.”<sup>287</sup> This comment flies in the face of many authors who believed Smuts was more concerned with international politics rather than South African.<sup>288</sup> Almost immediately, however, Armstrong falls back on explaining Smuts’s love for South Africa was merely to do with his own interests and because he “loved power.”<sup>289</sup> Yet another oddity with regards to Armstrong’s assertion that Smuts could never delegate matters to others, is that Armstrong states Smuts had “a staff of nineteen advisors, all experts on their own subjects” at the National Convention.<sup>290</sup> This is surely a sign of someone who does delegate work to others rather than shun the help of others. Although Smuts was the spokesperson for the Transvaal,

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<sup>282</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 143

<sup>283</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 144

<sup>284</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 144

<sup>285</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 147

<sup>286</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 149

<sup>287</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 153

<sup>288</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 296; S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 353; C. Saunders & N. Southey, *Dictionary of South African history*, Cape Town: D. Philip, 1998, p 154

<sup>289</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 153

<sup>290</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 154

he was seen as “slim and crafty” and the only reason so much success was gained was because Smuts had Botha backing him - or so Armstrong claims.<sup>291</sup>

After Botha and Smuts had been voted into power in the new Union government, Armstrong again refers to their political relationship. Smuts was “the professional politician”, “the one man supplemented the deficiencies of the other.”<sup>292</sup> For Armstrong, it seems Smuts’s deficiencies were immense and he only held power due to the enormous character of Botha. Smuts, however, did do most of the work and Armstrong admits that “in an incredibly short time he [Smuts] had the new machinery of government ready and working.”<sup>293</sup> But with this power Smuts became “arrogant once more” and Armstrong criticises his “autocratic ways”.<sup>294</sup> Armstrong’s obsession with Smuts’s “autocratic ways” and power, as well as his “arrogance”, sometimes comes across as personal attacks. This theme is also prevalent throughout the biography.

As Armstrong compared Smuts to Rhodes, Kruger and Botha, he continues in the same way with Smuts and Hertzog. There is one major difference though, with Hertzog Armstrong acknowledges that although “they were so alike and yet so different, that they could never agree.”<sup>295</sup> With the other men Armstrong sought out common nuances that would apply to Smuts, but Hertzog is the only one that Armstrong does not attempt to make common ground with. This is most probably because Armstrong blamed Hertzog for almost destroying the Union and reviving the animosity amongst white South Africans.<sup>296</sup>

Armstrong suggests that “trained agitators” initiated the strikes on the Rand in 1914, but that sending Smuts to confer with them was “an unfortunate selection” as he would only “make the strikers more angry and obstinate.”<sup>297</sup> Throughout the whole saga Armstrong lambastes Smuts for half-hearted attempts at government interference and his “method of neutrality”, whereby Smuts hoped the whole situation would blow over by itself.<sup>298</sup> Even when Botha and Smuts backed down and gave in to the strikers, it is only Botha who receives any praise from Armstrong, even though both men were involved in the same way.<sup>299</sup> It seems nothing Smuts

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<sup>291</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 155

<sup>292</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 163

<sup>293</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 163-164

<sup>294</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 165

<sup>295</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 169

<sup>296</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 173

<sup>297</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 177

<sup>298</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, pp 177-180

<sup>299</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, pp 179-180

did could be seen in a positive light by Armstrong. Later in 1914, when another strike emerged and Smuts acted with brutal efficiency, Armstrong still managed to find Smuts in the wrong. Smuts had several of the leaders of the strike deported, illegally, yet the strike ended almost as soon as it had started and the strikers themselves became powerless.<sup>300</sup> It is from this incident, claimed Armstrong, which people began to look upon Smuts as autocratic and as an “Oriental Despot”, another theme common throughout for Armstrong.<sup>301</sup>

Interestingly Armstrong introduces the Japie Fourie saga very early on in the 1914 Rebellion. Armstrong intimates that Fourie was actively supporting the uprising before it occurred by speaking in Pretoria with General Beyers.<sup>302</sup> No other source makes any mention of this and it is doubtful whether it is true, although it does indicate that Armstrong saw Fourie as a rebel long before others. Fourie was guilty because he had not resigned his commission when he went into rebellion like the other officers. But Armstrong believes that Smuts wanted to make an example out of him, hence his execution.<sup>303</sup> Armstrong makes no indication of what his thoughts were about the incident; instead he remains peculiarly concise about the matter.

With regards to the invasion of German South West Africa (Namibia) in 1915 Armstrong makes several damning claims. He first writes that the initial push made under Generals McKenzie and Grant was doomed to failure because of Smuts and his mishandling of important information.<sup>304</sup> He goes on to claim that none of the soldiers sent to the region under Botha’s command would have followed Smuts stating: “They made it bluntly clear that they would not follow Smuts.”<sup>305</sup> When Smuts did eventually join in the invasion Armstrong has nothing good to say about him. He criticises his methods and even states that Botha himself was worried about Smuts.<sup>306</sup> On several occasions Armstrong has noted Botha’s fears about Smuts, but once again there is no proof of such allegations.

When Smuts accepted the command of the British army in East Africa, Armstrong acknowledges that Smuts had refused it at first, but he still adds a tone of animosity in the way he says “[Smuts] believed in himself as a general”.<sup>307</sup> He also adds that Smuts accepted the command because he was fleeing the criticism from his political enemies, an allegation

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<sup>300</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, pp 181-183

<sup>301</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 184

<sup>302</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 191

<sup>303</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 199

<sup>304</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 201

<sup>305</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 203

<sup>306</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 204

<sup>307</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 211

that is refuted in several other biographies.<sup>308</sup> Armstrong himself criticises Smuts's military campaign, even though he himself was no general. Armstrong condemns the speed of the campaign and the appalling casualty list due to sickness.<sup>309</sup> With regards to the sickness, nothing could have been done as the region was infested with several diseases and viruses. As for the speed, it was necessary in order to attempt to end the campaign with minimal losses. Armstrong further states that Smuts "knew nothing of scientific staff work"<sup>310</sup> and that "for doctors he had no respect,"<sup>311</sup> two assertions that again lack proof. Once again Armstrong insinuates that Botha was worried about Smuts and his tactics and that the only reason Botha visited East Africa was to sort out all of the problems Smuts had caused.<sup>312</sup> This is another claim that is not validated by any source. Smuts was recalled by Botha in 1917 to attend the Imperial War Conference and according to Armstrong he handed over his command with a "sigh of relief".<sup>313</sup> Armstrong thus implies that Smuts was not committed or dedicated to the task at hand.

When Smuts arrived in England in 1917 Armstrong indicates it was to a massive fanfare that had been subtly built up by propaganda and media, but at home Smuts received little applause: "they respected-and suspected- his brains and mental agility" and that he was the "reincarnation of Rhodes".<sup>314</sup> Armstrong does, however, praise Smuts for his duties within the War Conference. He "showed his value" but only because he was under no pressure - or so Armstrong believed.<sup>315</sup> Armstrong also maintains the myth that Botha sent a message to Smuts, when he was offered the Palestinian command, that "We both know you are no general."<sup>316</sup> There is no evidence that this exchange ever took place, and Botha himself always commended Smuts's fighting abilities.<sup>317</sup>

Smuts was invited to join the War Cabinet by British Prime Minister Lloyd George, who Armstrong believes was very similar to Smuts. Armstrong then makes yet another

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<sup>308</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 212; S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, p 336; J. A. Brown, *They fought for king and Kaiser: South Africans in German East Africa*, Johannesburg: Ashanti Publishers, 1991, p ix; W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 409

<sup>309</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 212-216

<sup>310</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 215

<sup>311</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 216

<sup>312</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 218

<sup>313</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 220

<sup>314</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, pp 223-224

<sup>315</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 226

<sup>316</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 227

<sup>317</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 434

comparison between Smuts and Lloyd George<sup>318</sup> adding to the ranks of Rhodes, Kruger and Botha as another man Smuts supposedly attempted to emulate. Again Armstrong praises Smuts for his work in the War Cabinet, but again Armstrong undercuts his helpfulness by claiming it is because he was an “outsider.”<sup>319</sup> This is yet another back-handed compliment directed at Smuts. Armstrong does, however, give full praise and credit to Smuts for his involvement in the creation of the Royal Air Force (RAF) even going so far as to put the entire creation solely on his shoulders, and with no hint of a snide or negative remark.<sup>320</sup> While Smuts was in England Armstrong appears to come across far more supportive of Smuts with only a few personal snipes - this is a very different Armstrong considering the previous chapters in the biography. Perhaps the English in Armstrong could not bring himself to denounce an individual who helped England so much during a time of strife.

One incident goes against this general theme, however. Armstrong blatantly blames Smuts for the entire Flanders offensive because his “opinion carried the Cabinet.”<sup>321</sup> This incident must have created much anger for Armstrong, for as he said earlier, out of the devastation of the First World War, it appears as though only Smuts was “untouched.”<sup>322</sup> Such bitterness can only cause bias and subjectivity. From this period onwards Armstrong slowly becomes more and more virulent against Smuts, damning his every move, action and decision.

When in Paris for the Peace Conference in 1919, Armstrong acknowledges that Smuts was deeply unhappy, but not because of the political wrangling and cries for revenge, which was actually what upset Smuts. Instead Armstrong states that it was because Smuts was now unimportant, “he was no more than one member of the British delegation.”<sup>323</sup> This thought ties in with Armstrong’s assumption that Smuts was an incredibly arrogant individual who always needed to be in the limelight. This supposed arrogance is continued in the incident concerning Bela Kun, a Bolshevik dictator who had just gained power in Hungary. The Allies were keen to remove the Communist influence from the region and it was also an attempt to get into contact with the elusive Russian Lenin. Armstrong deemed the entire mission a failure solely due to Smuts’s arrogance, even though no success was possible.<sup>324</sup> Smuts was attempting to get into contact with Soviet Russia, but Lenin would not approve and the entire

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<sup>318</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, pp 227-228

<sup>319</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, pp 230-231

<sup>320</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, pp 237-239

<sup>321</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, pp 243-244

<sup>322</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p xi

<sup>323</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 257

<sup>324</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, pp 261-263

mission was doomed to failure. Very briefly Armstrong praises Smuts for the creation of the League of Nations, albeit with help from others, notably President Wilson of the USA and Lord Robert Cecil of Britain.<sup>325</sup>

On the death of Botha in 1919, Armstrong is of the opinion that Smuts became humbler. Smuts became aware “of himself and his imperfections” because Botha was the “shell” that protected him.<sup>326</sup> Although this may be true, it is just as easy to argue that Smuts went through a period of severe grief at the loss of such a great friend and mentor. It is also possible to argue that Smuts now knew that he would have to take on a far greater responsibility now that he no longer had Botha as his support.

Although Armstrong accepts that the South Africa inherited by Smuts had several major problems, he blames it all on Smuts because of his “inability to handle men” and the fact that “instinctively they [people] doubted Smuts.”<sup>327</sup> Any post-war society will have troubles and South Africa was no different. Armstrong also squarely puts the blame of the strikes that occurred on the Rand in 1922 on Smuts’s shoulders, an industrial upheaval that “handled wisely at once, might have been avoided.”<sup>328</sup> This can be seen as yet another case of hindsight is better sight.

Armstrong does however portray the perception that surrounded Smuts exceedingly well when he refers to Smuts as having two “personalities”, one overseas and one at home. Interestingly this resonates exactly with Millin’s take on Smuts after World War One.<sup>329</sup> In South Africa Smuts was “disliked and distrusted”, while overseas he was “the illustrious statesman, calm and deliberate”.<sup>330</sup> Armstrong seems to take pity on Smuts during this trying period (1919-1924): “Everything that Smuts did was twisted cleverly against him.”<sup>331</sup> This and the fact that the world was in a massive economic slump, along with his “roughshod”<sup>332</sup> are the reasons Armstrong provides for Smuts’s electoral defeat in the 1924 elections.<sup>333</sup>

It is evident that Armstrong was not a great supporter of Smuts. Although Armstrong compliments Smuts many times throughout the biography, almost immediately refutes this

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<sup>325</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, pp 264-265

<sup>326</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 274

<sup>327</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, pp 276-278

<sup>328</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 282

<sup>329</sup> See section 2.2

<sup>330</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 281

<sup>331</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 290

<sup>332</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, p 294

<sup>333</sup> H. C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel*, pp 291-296



with a shaded criticism or personal snipe. Armstrong was involved in the First World War and could very possibly have been envious of Smuts's successes. Although Armstrong does not doubt Smuts's abilities he does not show it too often which only enhances his bias. The main themes that run throughout the biography are Smuts's autocratic ways, his alleged arrogance, his "slimness" and the major influences and comparisons made between Rhodes, Kruger and Botha where Smuts is the lesser partner. In essence, Armstrong's biography has little substance behind many of its inflammatory or derogatory statements and is saturated with bias against Smuts.

Due to a lack of primary sources available to authors before 1960, much of the writing concerning Smuts during the Pre-Hancock phase was from hearsay and reflected opinions of the time. This inevitably led to a degree of bias, and the creation of several myths that have accrued around Smuts, even beyond his death. The compilation of the Smuts Papers by William Hancock and Jean Van der Poel dramatically changed the ability to write about, as well as the accuracy of any study on, Jan Smuts.

## CHAPTER 3: HANCOCK VOLUME ONE

### 3.1 W. K. Hancock

Sir William Keith Hancock was born on 26 June 1898 in Melbourne Australia. Having graduated from the University of Melbourne, Hancock won the Rhodes scholarship and entered Balliol College in Oxford, England in 1922. During his time in Oxford Hancock became interested in Italian history, in particular the region of Tuscany, which resulted in his first book: *Ricasoli and the Risorgimento in Tuscany* (1926). Hancock returned to Australia in 1926 to begin work at the University of Adelaide.<sup>334</sup> After his return, Hancock began to focus on Commonwealth history, that is the history of the Commonwealth and the nations within it, especially Australia and South Africa.<sup>335</sup> In 1951 he was asked by Cambridge University Press to write a biography of Smuts. He was however adamant not to be called “the official biographer”.<sup>336</sup> Hancock had several affinities with his subject, including a love of the environment and his love of internationalism and world order. Much like Armstrong before him, Hancock believed that because he was an outsider to South African political affairs he was an ideal candidate for the writing of this biography.<sup>337</sup>

However, before taking on this dense work, we need to note that Hancock also had an immense advantage over previous writers due to the creation of the Smuts Archive by Dr. Jean van der Poel and himself. The origins of this Archive begin shortly after the death of Smuts. Cambridge University Press wanted to publish an authoritative biography on the late Chancellor of Cambridge University. Hancock was invited to write the biography and he accepted only after receiving permission from Isie Smuts and J. C. Smuts (Smuts’s son).<sup>338</sup> A large collection of letters already existed in Doornkloof South Africa but they were in serious disorder. This led to the setting up of the Smuts Collection, which would eventually include letters and other material from several of Smuts’s contemporaries and himself. The process of sorting and indexing officially began in July 1952 and reached its completion after the publication of Hancock’s second volume in 1968.<sup>339</sup> These papers include a myriad of letters

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<sup>334</sup> J. Davidson, “Hancock, Sir William Keith (1898-1988)”, Access: 2015/10/22, [www.adb.anu.edu.au/biography/hancock-sir-william-keith-460](http://www.adb.anu.edu.au/biography/hancock-sir-william-keith-460)

<sup>335</sup> D. Munro, Review of *A three cornered life: the historian W. K. Hancock*, Access: 2015/10/22, [www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/1027](http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/1027)

<sup>336</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p xi

<sup>337</sup> [www.adb.anu.edu.au/biography/hancock-sir-william-keith-460](http://www.adb.anu.edu.au/biography/hancock-sir-william-keith-460), Access: 2015/10/22

<sup>338</sup> W. K. Hancock & J. van der Poel, *Selections of the Smuts Papers*, Vol 1, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966, p v

<sup>339</sup> W. K. Hancock & J. van der Poel, *Selections of the Smuts Papers*, Vol 1, p vi

and documents all pertaining to Smuts and provide a vast amount of information for any biographer of the man.<sup>340</sup>

In essence Hancock can be seen as the first true definitive biographer of Smuts as well as being an eminent historian. Due to this, his biography maintains a place of supreme importance in the analysis of works on Smuts and is regarded as the seminal work. Hancock's biography is also much more in-depth and far lengthier than previous attempts. This increases the intensity of this analysis which will therefore be broken up into certain periods of Smuts's life. This chapter will encompass his early life until the Union of South Africa (1870-1910) and political power and the First World War (1910-1919). Chapter 4 will focus on Smuts after the death of Louis Botha until the Second World War (1919-1939) and then the Second World War until his death (1939-1950).

### **3.2 Early years until the First World War**

With the very first sentence of the biography Hancock immediately makes two interesting points. He first writes Smuts's name as "Jan Christiaan Smuts" and notes: "I have followed the entry in the Baptismal Register".<sup>341</sup> This immediately indicates that Hancock has researched his subject thoroughly, and is an indication of empirical and scholarly training. The second point Hancock makes is that Smuts was born on the same day as Queen Victoria, 24 May. He goes on to add that it would later become Empire Day, in 1900, while Smuts was fighting against the British during the Anglo-Boer War.<sup>342</sup> Such observations were not made by previous writers on Smuts and again reflect on his historical accuracy and the meticulousness of his account of Smuts. There is also often detailed attention given to the historical context which adds to the value of the biography.

Hancock then moves into an argument that will continue through history: he claims that Smuts, throughout his life, was proud to call himself a "Boer". Hancock proves this by illustrating that Smuts himself had worked out seven generations of his ancestry from 1692 of which Dutch were the vast majority (85 out of 105 ancestors). This, Hancock believes, proves that Smuts was always a Boer at heart, especially considering when he would later still refer to himself as a Boer while others were rather using the term Afrikaner.<sup>343</sup>

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<sup>340</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p xii

<sup>341</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 3

<sup>342</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 3

<sup>343</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 3

Hancock goes into immense detail about the region where Smuts grew up (the Swartland) as well as his parents (Jacobus Abraham Smuts and Catharina Petronella). The influence of the environment would provide Smuts with a love for mountains and nature, while his parents on the other hand instilled a strict sense of discipline and learning.<sup>344</sup> One interesting point Hancock makes is that on the farm he grew up on Smuts gained a portion of the increase of the flocks and herds under his care. Therefore Smuts acquired a herd of cattle that could help pave his way in future life, as well as provide him with an early lesson in property and the meaning of it.<sup>345</sup> This is an interesting point not yet provided by other authors and it is relevant because it reveals that this was the only way Smuts managed to pay for much of his studies.

Hancock also has the tendency to relate stories that may seem trivial but are vital to an understanding of Smuts. One such story is about how Smuts became ill just before some examinations at his first school in Riebeeck West. Smuts was banned from reading books in order to recover and rest fully, but he persuaded the headmaster's young three-year-old son to fetch books from the library to saturate his seemingly unending appetite for literature, which almost surprisingly had nothing to do with his curriculum.<sup>346</sup> This story may seem unimportant but it provides insight into the character of Smuts, especially considering how academically brilliant he was. Another interesting snippet from this period of his life is that Smuts taught a Sunday School class at the local church which included D.F. Malan, a political antagonist in the future.<sup>347</sup> This is once again a fact that was missed by previous authors. Smuts matriculated after only four years at school at the age of sixteen.<sup>348</sup>

With regards to his time at Stellenbosch University, Hancock focuses on how Smuts remained pious (so much so that Hancock intimates that Smuts was on the verge of becoming a "religious prig"<sup>349</sup>), how he exercised by walking in the surrounding mountains, and the most detailed by far, his courtship of Sybella Margaretha Krige, known simply as Isie.<sup>350</sup> It was also during this period that Smuts developed the friendship of two important scholars who would have an impact on him for the rest of his life: Professor R. Marloth (Botany), and Professor J. I. Marais (Theology). Marloth would create an intense love for plants that Smuts

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<sup>344</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 4-8

<sup>345</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 9

<sup>346</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 11

<sup>347</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 12

<sup>348</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 15

<sup>349</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 15

<sup>350</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 15-18

would never lose, while Marais and Smuts would have a friendship that would last for the rest of Marais's life.<sup>351</sup> Hancock also explores the political environment in the Cape at the time which was one of liberal paternalism and to a degree a pro-British and pro-Boer stance under the leadership of J. H. Hofmeyr and his Afrikaner Bond.<sup>352</sup> Smuts, according to Hancock, would be a follower of Hofmeyr and his ideals for the rest of his life.

Smuts arrived in Cambridge in late 1891 and Hancock immediately notes how homesickness and loneliness were his biggest problems during his first year. Hancock ascribed these two issues to: the type of students at Cambridge during the time (young aristocrats who were miles apart from Smuts in personality, background and upbringing); and the lack of mountains in the English countryside (Smuts never took part in any sports throughout his life, preferring the outdoors and rigorous walks).<sup>353</sup> Hancock then investigates a seldom written episode from Smuts's life, his monetary issues at Cambridge. The Ebdon scholarship which Smuts had won was supposed to be worth £200, but due to a "bank failure" he only received £100. Smuts attempted to support himself by selling all of his livestock that he had earned on his father's farm, but this money ran out very quickly. Smuts instead had to rely on his Professor friend from Stellenbosch, Marais, who supplied him with loans which in the end amounted to £250 which was to be paid back at an interest of 5%. Smuts eventually repaid it back at an interest of 6%.<sup>354</sup> Yet again this is a seldom mentioned part of Smuts's life which also illustrates an important side of his character: Smuts was never interested in monetary gain, only enough to support himself and his family, and it shows a philanthropic side by paying back more than was required.

During his time at Cambridge Hancock also explores Smuts's tentative steps into philosophy, another subject that Smuts would continually delve into throughout his life.<sup>355</sup> Unlike Millin, Hancock notes that during his second year Smuts began to make friends and his loneliness receded. These friends included two Indian Moslems (Aftab Ahmad Khan and Sultan Mohammad) as well as a number of South African contemporaries (including F. S. Malan and N. J. de Wet). It was during this time that Smuts also became dear friends with the Hobson family (a family of radicals who, like Smuts, revered the teachings of John Bright), and an aging scholar H. J. Wolstenholme (another radical), whom Smuts would remain in

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<sup>351</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 20

<sup>352</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 22-27

<sup>353</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 33-35

<sup>354</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 35-36

<sup>355</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 37-41

contact with for the rest of their lives.<sup>356</sup> Hancock finishes his Cambridge chapter with a letter congratulating Smuts on his various honours and successes from F. W. Maitland who, in Hancock's opinion, was the greatest lawyer England had produced "within the past century and more."<sup>357</sup> This could just be Hancock illustrating how far Smuts had come - from being a young Boer in the veld to achieving some of the greatest academic achievements possible in England in a short span of twenty or so years.

In his next chapter, *The Way Home*, Hancock briefly explores Smuts's final year in Cambridge (his Honours examination and further prizes received), his brief visit to Germany (reading German philosophy for a month), and his unpublished book on Walt Whitman and the concept of Personality (a philosophical study whereby Smuts began to outline his idea of holism).<sup>358</sup> Smuts returned to the Cape in June 1895 and Hancock suggests that only two things were on his mind: to make a livelihood and to get married to his sweetheart, Isie Krige.<sup>359</sup> Although initially Smuts only attempted to gain employment in law, he soon became attracted to politics. In the Cape at the time there was one man at the summit with the help of Hofmeyr's Afrikaner Bond: Cecil John Rhodes. Smuts, being overseas for the last four years, knew practically nothing about Rhodes and his ambitions, but he knew Hofmeyr so he threw his lot in with him and his ideals, which were very close to his own.<sup>360</sup> Rhodes and Hofmeyr soon noticed Smuts's talents and enlisted him to defend Rhodes in a political speech in Kimberley which cemented his place in politics and provided him with an erstwhile enemy but soon-to-be friend, Olive Shreiner.<sup>361</sup> Although this is a well-known speech and episode in his life, Hancock is the first to point out that Smuts was ignorant of Rhodes and his schemes, and that he was in fact a mere "political pawn" at the time.<sup>362</sup>

After the Jameson Raid and after much retrospective thought, Smuts changed political sides and became allies with John X. Merriman against Rhodes. Hancock wrote a highly insightful comment on the whole debacle and Smuts's character: "Smuts could never give his loyalty in halves; he must always give it fully, or not at all."<sup>363</sup> Interestingly, unlike Millin, Hancock never compares Smuts to Rhodes; in fact for Hancock Rhodes seems to be a minor character

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<sup>356</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 41-44

<sup>357</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 46

<sup>358</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 47-51

<sup>359</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 51

<sup>360</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 52-55

<sup>361</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 56-58

<sup>362</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 58

<sup>363</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 59

in Smuts's life. Smuts, finding no meaningful work in Cape Town, moved to Johannesburg in January 1897 and soon found work at the Judicial Bar. In April of the same year he married Isie and by June 1898 they were living in Pretoria as Smuts was made State Attorney of the Transvaal. Hancock adds two points to this time of Smuts's life, the first being that Professor Marais married the couple, and that between 1898 and 1899 they had three children, but unfortunately all of them died at very young ages.<sup>364</sup> This is not mentioned by other authors before Hancock, along with the effect of the loss of three children that must have been enormous for the young couple.

Hancock notes that Smuts was created State Attorney even though he was two years too young and that he was not even officially a citizen of the ZAR. Hancock also goes on to illustrate how no surprise was shown by the media and how, in fact, the media had actually been speculating on the possibility of Smuts gaining the job in the few weeks before the appointment.<sup>365</sup> The detail that Hancock goes into about how Smuts met President Kruger and the first time that Isie met him shows how much information he had at his disposal when writing the biography. It also allows Hancock to reflect on more detailed and nuanced aspects of his subject. Kruger, when first being introduced to Isie, exclaimed to Smuts "Whatever were you doing to marry such an ugly woman?". But then he looked at Isie and said "And whatever were *you* doing to marry such an ugly man?".<sup>366</sup> Hancock also illustrates how the relationship between Smuts and Kruger developed to such an extent that he quotes Smuts saying that their relations were "like those of father and son."<sup>367</sup> Again it is evident that Hancock had so much documentation at his disposal that he could delve into details that other researchers before him did not have access to. He also had more scope given the length of his two volumes; over one thousand pages.

According to Hancock, the role of Smuts in the political and legal battle between the Chief Justice of the ZAR, J.G. Kotze, and Kruger, "has been greatly over-emphasised."<sup>368</sup> Hancock notes that all previous biographers (he does not specify whom) of Smuts, "almost without exception", portrayed Smuts as the lone legal mind to back Kruger, but several prominent lawyers were in support of the President's case. Smuts just happened to be among that

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<sup>364</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 63

<sup>365</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 67

<sup>366</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 68

<sup>367</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 69

<sup>368</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 71

group.<sup>369</sup> When Smuts is presented as a lone supporter of Kruger it shows him as heroic in the face of adversity, but as part of a group, it shows him as merely another supporter amongst many. This is but one of the many myths about Smuts that Hancock disputes in his biography.

To provide a backdrop to the build up to the Anglo-Boer War Hancock explains the political circumstances from 1895 to 1898 with little or no discussion of Smuts.<sup>370</sup> This is done to illustrate what sort of an environment Smuts was thrust into. But Hancock goes to great lengths to report that Smuts had no political office, he merely had a legal and administrative position. He also notes that the State Attorney's records from the time are incomplete, as much information from the period is "missing or illegible."<sup>371</sup> What is made evident by Hancock is that Smuts was soon involved in many political battles because he was asked to be the legal advisor by the *Volksraad* and the Executive Council. He was also in control of all criminal cases and the execution of sentences, except for the detective branch.<sup>372</sup> This division did not last long as soon it became apparent that the detective branch was also corrupt and Smuts got it under his control. Due to his clamping down on corruption and crime resulted in him receiving widespread praise.<sup>373</sup>

In Hancock's opinion from the New Year of 1899 Smuts was seen as the leading personality in the ZAR-obviously after Kruger.<sup>374</sup> He goes on to briefly describe what Smuts accomplished and what he failed at during the build up to the War. He notes that he is not attempting to unravel the causes of the War, but rather just to reveal Smuts's role and "his point of view".<sup>375</sup> With regards to this, Hancock makes it apparent that Smuts was in two minds in the preceding months before War: at one moment he would believe war was impossible, but the next moment it seemed inevitable. Hancock also blames much of the cause of the War on Milner.<sup>376</sup> One example of this is with regards to the Bloemfontein Conference: "Milner was going to Bloemfontein not for agreement but for victory."<sup>377</sup> It is important to note that Hancock was also in the position to have access to the Milner Papers, which many previous authors did not. Hancock also writes about the Conference from

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<sup>369</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 71

<sup>370</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 72-77

<sup>371</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 78

<sup>372</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 79

<sup>373</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 80-81

<sup>374</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 84

<sup>375</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 85-86

<sup>376</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 87-101

<sup>377</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 93



Milner's point of view due to the many "hundreds of thousands of words" that were printed in his own papers.<sup>378</sup>

During the final few weeks before War broke out Hancock makes the admission that there is a serious lack of sources with regards to Smuts's personal relations with his friends and enemies.<sup>379</sup> He does, however, believe that Smuts was heavily involved in the various drafts and proposals that were made during that time with regards to the communications between the respective governments.<sup>380</sup> When War did occur due to the Boer ultimatum, Hancock is of the same belief that it was drafted by Smuts because of the similarity to a memorandum Smuts had written a few weeks before.<sup>381</sup>

When opening his chapter on the Anglo-Boer War, Hancock relates a story which he flags as "probably true",<sup>382</sup> about a botanical expedition that Smuts attended during the 1920s. During the expedition a botanist from the United States asked the Professor of the event what a particular species of grass was. The Professor did not know and sent her to ask the "General" (Smuts). She was amazed by his knowledge and questioned how she could learn such information not from the Professor but from a General. Smuts replied "But, my dear lady, I'm only a General in my spare time."<sup>383</sup> Hancock goes on to say that Smuts always looked on wars as something that took up life's real business, even though thirteen years of his life was taken up by war.<sup>384</sup> Yet he states that Smuts also wanted to be at the centre of these wars, "to command his own forces was never enough for him...grand strategy was his true bent."<sup>385</sup> This corroborates the view of some of the previous authors who indicate the need for Smuts to be in the centre of things.

Smuts, Hancock asserts, had made a grand strategy in the last six weeks before fighting that composed of three plans: political warfare, economic mobilisation and military operations. For his political warfare plan, Hancock states that the author of "A Century of wrong" was unequivocally Smuts, of which he has an almost full translation of in his biography.<sup>386</sup> His source of this information is from a testimony made by Isie in 1951, a year after Smuts's

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<sup>378</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 95

<sup>379</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 103

<sup>380</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 102-103

<sup>381</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 106

<sup>382</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 107

<sup>383</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 107

<sup>384</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 107

<sup>385</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 107

<sup>386</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 108

death.<sup>387</sup> For Hancock, “A Century of wrong” was a rewriting of history as well as “rhetorical overture”, although he does add that Smuts would soon learn the lesson when dealing with reconciliation between Boer and Briton.<sup>388</sup> It is easy to understand that at the time Smuts must have been in a state of mind dominated by national pride and wish to inspire and motivate his people in the face of pending war. He therefore believed in his rewritten version of events such as Slachtersnek and the Jameson Raid.

With regards to Smuts’s economic planning, Hancock sets out all that Smuts envisaged. This included the belief of a long struggle that could only be possible through a complete shift of resources towards war.<sup>389</sup> Firstly, the Republics (ZAR and the Orange Free State) would need to field the maximum amount of men. These men would also need to be supplied with material, made by themselves for themselves, due to the naval blockade that would inevitably occur.<sup>390</sup> This would require the creation of new industries, but the most important point Hancock (and therefore Smuts) makes is that, at all costs, agricultural output must remain in place.<sup>391</sup> These are highly realistic plans to make under such circumstances, and with hindsight, appear practical and essential.

His military plans were quite simply an early offensive against the British forces hopefully resulting in a quick victory.<sup>392</sup> Hancock believes that this was an entirely feasible plan, but that its failure was due to the ineptness of the Boer commanders that were in charge at the time, such as Generals Joubert and Cronje.<sup>393</sup> Again this is an easy statement to make with the comfort of hindsight. The preceding months before Smuts joined in the action (approximately November 1899 until June 1900) Hancock indicates the scarcity of documentary evidence from Smuts’s part and therefore briefly brushes over that period.<sup>394</sup> Hancock continues the narrative when Smuts was forced to remove the government’s gold reserve by force from the National Bank. He also includes a statement by Smuts who ridicules the concept of lost “Kruger millions”.<sup>395</sup> Hancock is very brief with regards to this event and to him it seems that there is no possibility of any myths or disrepute in the whole event, unlike previous authors such as Armstrong.

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<sup>387</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 569

<sup>388</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 110

<sup>389</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 110

<sup>390</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 110-111

<sup>391</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 111

<sup>392</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 111

<sup>393</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 112

<sup>394</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 113-116

<sup>395</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 116

Before considering Smuts and his role in the fighting during the War, Hancock briefly outlines the nature of the War. He only includes one sentence on the attempt by a few Boers (led by Judge A.F. Kock) to blow up the Johannesburg mines, in which he noticeably does not even mention Smuts, who some authors believe was involved.<sup>396</sup> Interestingly Hancock also refutes the possibility that Smuts was the lone advocate for an invasion of the Cape Colony, as “it would be going beyond the evidence”. He does however indicate that Smuts was a major supporter of the plan.<sup>397</sup> Hancock goes on to illustrate how Smuts was educated in warfare by General De la Rey and the various skirmishes they fought in the western Transvaal and refers to Smuts’s continuing thoughts of the Cape invasion.<sup>398</sup> Another point Hancock makes is how Smuts craved an independent command, especially in the Cape, which he inevitably achieved.<sup>399</sup> This supports the belief that Smuts wanted ultimate power, alone. Hancock also explicitly states that Smuts had no involvement in the Middelburg Conference (in early 1901) that occurred between Botha and Lord Kitchener, even though some earlier authors state that he was in attendance.<sup>400</sup> This is another example of a “fact” or “assumption” being proven incorrect.

Smuts’s invasion of the Cape Colony was seen by the British as a serious problem, especially due to the large population of Boers and Boer sympathisers, but it was “too little, too late.” Hancock is quick to point out that this was not the fault of Smuts.<sup>401</sup> Hancock covers the various actions and the massive treks Smuts and his commando went through briefly, including how Smuts would scout ahead himself.<sup>402</sup> The most important event in this period is the execution of Colyn whom Hancock, in contrast to others, describes as “a mean creature”. Hancock also believes the entire episode has been over-dramatised by previous writers.<sup>403</sup> Hancock shows that the entire judgement (and the infamous words: “Take him out and shoot him.”) were completed under a constituted military court, of which the records exist in Smuts’s papers. Therefore Hancock states categorically that the “procedure was scrupulously correct and the verdict just.”<sup>404</sup> This event has been written about in a variety of emotional if not fantastical ways, even though documentation exists to substantiate the truth

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<sup>396</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 118-122

<sup>397</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 122

<sup>398</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 123-126

<sup>399</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 126

<sup>400</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 128

<sup>401</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 134

<sup>402</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 135-145

<sup>403</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 141

<sup>404</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 142

of the matter. This is yet another key example of how writers, biographers and historians select what they want to be heard or read. It is interesting to note that P.S. Krige, Smuts's secretary at the time of the execution, even protested to H.C. Armstrong when he included an over-dramatised version of this episode in his biography *Grey Steel*.<sup>405</sup>

Towards the end of the War, Smuts was seen by many of the British as a brigand and an individual with an implacable hatred for anything British, mainly due to his political pamphlets that he had written during and before the War. Hancock takes particular exception to this belief and puts it down to a "complex character". He also includes how as early as January 1902 Smuts was writing another pamphlet praising the British conscience.<sup>406</sup> He goes on to state how often this idea is written about in various documents, saving a special mention for Armstrong who, Hancock believes, projected this hatred to as far back as 1895.<sup>407</sup>

When writing of the peace negotiations after the Anglo-Boer War Hancock makes the point that although Smuts has often been ascribed a decisive, if not the decisive, part in the negotiations, he was not involved until the middle of May 1902, a full month after negotiations had begun. Hancock concedes Smuts was highly influential when he did arrive, but he also points out that Smuts was not an elected representative, only a legal advisor.<sup>408</sup> The episode whereby Kitchener took Smuts aside to apparently "ease the negotiations" has been written about by both men's biographers. Hancock believes it to be true due to the notes made by Smuts during this period, especially with regards to a note made about self-government.<sup>409</sup>

One serious discrepancy in Hancock's biography is the lack of information on Smuts's role in the creation and work of *Het Volk*, the political party started by Smuts and Botha.<sup>410</sup> On this period Hancock writes mainly about Milner and his various attempts at government, with the occasional mention of Chinese labour and Boer anger.<sup>411</sup> The only important comment with relevance to this dissertation is the idea that Botha "danced to Smuts's tune", which means

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<sup>405</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 570

<sup>406</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 148-149

<sup>407</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 147-148

<sup>408</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 154

<sup>409</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 158

<sup>410</sup> J. Butler, Review of W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 78, No. 3, 1963, p 464

<sup>411</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 188-204

that Botha did what Smuts told him.<sup>412</sup> Hancock disagrees with this idea and instead puts it down to linguistic difficulties on Botha's side. In fact he refers to Botha as having a "first-rate political brain".<sup>413</sup> We shall see further on that Hancock has the utmost respect for Louis Botha, perhaps even a bit too much. Hancock is also very brief about the often referred to meeting Smuts has with Campbell-Bannerman. All he includes is Smuts's own view of it which was one of the most important meetings of his life. He also makes the interesting point that Smuts had a portrait of Campbell-Bannerman hanging behind his desk in his study from the 1920s until his death.<sup>414</sup>

Hancock maintains that Smuts was the "draftsman" for the Botha-Smuts political relationship, but that Botha was "prime minister not only in name but in fact".<sup>415</sup> Hancock again makes his point that Botha was his own man and not just following Smuts's directions, perhaps also subtly distancing Smuts from the "power hunger" notion. Hancock also takes note of the immense amount of work Smuts did: thirty-seven bills in 1907 and thirty-eight in 1908, most of which Smuts was responsible for piloting through. He also states that Smuts spoke more often in parliament than Botha because of his bilingualism.<sup>416</sup> The theme that Smuts worked incredibly hard is common throughout the biography. Hancock briefly goes through the various important bills and acts but focuses mainly on Smuts's Education Act of 1907.<sup>417</sup> Hancock considered it "an educational code far more thorough and comprehensive than any that had existed hitherto in South Africa."<sup>418</sup> The controversy surrounding the Act was centred around the fact that it made English the mother tongue at schools while Dutch was optional. Hancock assigns the controversy around it to Hertzog (who made his Education Act stipulate complete bilingualism) and the fact that the Orange Free State had far fewer English speakers.<sup>419</sup>

When considering the creation of Union in South Africa, Hancock immediately states that "Smuts was pre-eminent" amongst the many men who worked towards it. He goes on to dismiss the notion upheld by the likes of Armstrong that the "fathers of the Union" were a

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<sup>412</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 192

<sup>413</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 192

<sup>414</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 214-216

<sup>415</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 230

<sup>416</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 231

<sup>417</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 233-245

<sup>418</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 239

<sup>419</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 241-243

group of English officials, Milner's "kindergarten".<sup>420</sup> Hancock also believes that the idea of Union was in Smuts's mind even at Vereeniging.<sup>421</sup> The next most pre-eminent individual involved in Union, in Hancock's opinion, was John X. Merriman.<sup>422</sup> He may have come to this conclusion because of the vast amount of surviving correspondence between the two men. Hancock briefly writes about the build up to the National Convention and the various proposals that needed to be figured out, mainly between Smuts and Merriman, based upon the huge amount of documentation available.<sup>423</sup> He also states that Smuts was the driving force behind the entire process, including the National Convention (end of 1908).<sup>424</sup> He finishes his "Union" chapter by saying that the "national constitution...of the Union of South Africa bears the imprint of one man's mind".<sup>425</sup> To Hancock, Smuts seems to be the sole architect and engineer of the Union of South Africa.

After Union, Hancock states that Smuts's political opponents began calling him "Slim". Hancock concedes this is not an easily translatable term and instead compares it to the adjective Homer used to describe Odysseus, which is: "a man who is crafty, astute, rich in stratagems and wiles."<sup>426</sup> From this description it shows how it depends on who is judging as to whether it is praise or criticism. Hancock, at this stage in the biography believes that Smuts acted in the good sense of the word.<sup>427</sup> The remainder of the chapter concerns Smuts's private life, which is not of direct relevance to this dissertation.<sup>428</sup> The same applies to the next chapter which concerns his philosophical undertakings.<sup>429</sup>

The next theme Hancock delves into is Smuts and his "native policy", an issue about which he has been repeatedly and severely criticised. Hancock admits that Smuts never had an answer with regards to "Native rights", and the solution seemed to allude and perplex him the older he got.<sup>430</sup> He goes on to illustrate the diverse opinions and ideas at the time (early 20<sup>th</sup> century) and how, in his opinion, Smuts never truly believed in any of them.<sup>431</sup> He claims to prove this by indicating Smuts's silence over the "Native question" during the early years of

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<sup>420</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 246

<sup>421</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 246

<sup>422</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 247-251

<sup>423</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 252-258

<sup>424</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 258-267

<sup>425</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 268

<sup>426</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 274

<sup>427</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 277

<sup>428</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 277-288

<sup>429</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 289-308

<sup>430</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 311

<sup>431</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 312

Union.<sup>432</sup> In Hancock's mind, when Smuts was silent over an issue it was because he had no solution for it.

Another noteworthy issue that Hancock focuses on is when Smuts and Gandhi first met because of the resistance to the Black Act (1 July 1907). As per usual Smuts took it upon himself to deal with the protest.<sup>433</sup> The controversy surrounding this meeting and the letters exchanged between them is an accusation by Gandhi that Smuts broke trust. Gandhi believed that Smuts was to repeal the Black Act, while Smuts claimed that he would "consider" making changes to it and that there was a serious unlikelihood it would be repealed.<sup>434</sup> The letters, which were what everyone considered to contain the agreement, make no mention of any repeal from either side.<sup>435</sup> Instead a misunderstanding occurred during the face-to-face meeting Smuts and Gandhi had on the 30<sup>th</sup> of January 1908. Smuts stated that he had discussed the possibility with Gandhi of moving the Black Act under the Immigration Act. This would have satisfied Gandhi's protests, but Smuts made no promises and unfortunately was unable to pass the legislation.<sup>436</sup> This led to further accusations which eventually resulted in the Indian Relief Act (July 1914) which was agreed to by Smuts and Gandhi. Hancock does note that both men mutually respected each other. In later years a friendship even blossomed and Hancock indicates that Gandhi never "imputed racial prejudice to Smuts."<sup>437</sup>

During the build up to the First World War Hancock criticises Smuts on the matter of the Afrikaans language movement. Hancock notes the power of the movement as a "dynamic force in Afrikaner nationalism", but he also states "Smuts stood aside and permitted Hertzog to gather prestige and power..."<sup>438</sup> Hancock supplies a reason for Smuts's apparent "aloofness": "He did not want to tear up his roots in Europe."<sup>439</sup> According to Hancock, Smuts was as much a South African as he was a European.

In the last section of the pre-War period, Hancock also gives Smuts full credit for the creation of the Union Defence Force and the defeat of the strike in January 1914.<sup>440</sup> He ascribes full blame to Smuts for the rash deportation of the nine leaders of the strike. His

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<sup>432</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 318-321

<sup>433</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 333

<sup>434</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 334

<sup>435</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 334-336

<sup>436</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 336

<sup>437</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 345-346

<sup>438</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 360

<sup>439</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 360-361

<sup>440</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 368

criticism lasts six pages and he clearly regards the entire episode as a huge mistake on Smuts's part.<sup>441</sup> This is in stark contrast to Millin's take on this action. There can be no denying the rashness of Smuts's actions, perhaps inexperience, both in the context of the nation and the individual, were to blame.

### 3.3 First World War and Botha's death

Hancock begins his discussion of the First World War with the 1914 Rebellion going into immense detail. He praises Smuts's actions throughout this episode including his parliamentary actions.<sup>442</sup> He also deals with the case of "Joseph [sic] Fourie" who had joined the rebels without resigning his commission in the Union Defence Force. All of the other rebels had been set free, but Fourie was to be executed.<sup>443</sup> A group of Fourie's friends attempted to remit the sentence by pleading with Smuts, but he was not present at the time. Smuts always considered the sentencing just, but "Jopie Fourie" became synonymous with Afrikaner nationalism and anything against Smuts.<sup>444</sup> To Hancock, this was an episode for which Smuts was to receive much criticism if not abuse.<sup>445</sup>

Hancock points out that in the German South West Africa campaign, Smuts used Botha's plans for his southern advance, not his own.<sup>446</sup> Hancock praises the "brilliant campaign" with various citations and opinions.<sup>447</sup> He also notes that Smuts, in his own words, accepted the German East Africa command "with many a pang and misgiving."<sup>448</sup> Hancock explores the campaign in detail and a few points are of interest to this dissertation. Throughout the chapter Hancock repeats how difficult the climate and terrain were, but he also often praises Smuts for his military prowess.<sup>449</sup> Hancock also notes that the campaign brought both praise and criticism<sup>450</sup> - a dual perception often present in appraisals of Smuts.

Hancock makes it clear that when Smuts was sent by the South African government to London in 1917 for the Imperial Conference, he showed no signs of eagerness and instead

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<sup>441</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 368-373

<sup>442</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 379-391

<sup>443</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 392

<sup>444</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 392

<sup>445</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 393

<sup>446</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 398

<sup>447</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 400

<sup>448</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 409

<sup>449</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 409-423

<sup>450</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 412



wanted Botha to go.<sup>451</sup> Another point Hancock makes, which is contrary to many other authors, is that Smuts tried his best to keep out of the limelight, to remain “apart from everything in order to avoid too much attention.”<sup>452</sup> Some believe that Smuts wanted to be at the centre of everything all the time (as seen for example with Millin and Armstrong), but Hancock sees Smuts as trying his best to not be in the public view in England. Hancock considers the Imperial War Conference and Smuts’s time in the British War Cabinet in 1917 in great detail.<sup>453</sup> The most important episode during this time was when Smuts refused the Palestine command. Hancock mentions that Armstrong used the supposed statement from Botha that read “Don’t do it, Jannie, you and I both know you are no general.” According to Hancock, the statement or quote comes from the prose of L.S. Amery, who thought the entire episode a good joke.<sup>454</sup> Hancock refutes this claim by indicating that Botha always thought Smuts was an excellent commander, and that the real reason why he declined was because both Botha and Smuts saw the operation as a sideshow to the main events.<sup>455</sup> As many other authors do, Hancock also gives Smuts full credit for the creation of the Royal Air Force (RAF).<sup>456</sup>

One myth related to the First World War that Hancock believes needs to be dismissed is that Smuts was the main supporter of an eastern front attack on the Germans (that is in France) which resulted in the battle of the Somme. The plan was in essence Sir Douglas Haig’s and Smuts did not recommend it to the War Cabinet, but instead he said it should be examined along with other alternative plans.<sup>457</sup> This view does not sound like a man doggedly following one idea or plan. Hancock also notes that Smuts tried his best to keep himself outside of British politics during his time in England (1917-early 1919).<sup>458</sup> Again Hancock goes into the War Cabinet in great detail with regards to 1918 and the tremendous volume of work Smuts undertook.<sup>459</sup> This also buttresses the depiction of Smuts as hardworking and committed.

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<sup>451</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 424

<sup>452</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 424

<sup>453</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 425-457

<sup>454</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 433-434

<sup>455</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 434-435

<sup>456</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 438

<sup>457</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 452

<sup>458</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 469

<sup>459</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 470-504

Hancock also deals with the Treaty of Versailles in immense detail, often illustrating how indecisive Smuts was throughout the whole process, thus reflecting on his humane side.<sup>460</sup> The first noteworthy issue is Smuts's influence over the League of Nations. Hancock quotes Lloyd George (British Prime Minister) as telling Smuts that Woodrow Wilson (U.S. President) was using Smuts's pamphlet on the League to get ideas of his own.<sup>461</sup> This just illustrates that the League was essentially Smuts's idea, and that Wilson gets perhaps too much credit for its creation. Another important aspect alluded to by Hancock is Smuts's deputation to see Bela Kun in Hungary. Previous authors have expounded what they believed happened, but Hancock, instead, used two diaries by individuals who were on the mission as well. Both diarists have nothing negative to say about Smuts at all, and instead praise his every move, especially when Smuts declined a lavish meal in the starving country.<sup>462</sup> Hancock also believes that the mission was doomed to failure from the start.<sup>463</sup>

He also makes a note that Smuts was not eager to sign the Treaty of Versailles as he believed the stipulations were too harsh against Germany, and the only reason why he did so was in support of Botha.<sup>464</sup> One myth that Hancock attempts to debunk in this regard is the charge against Smuts that he was the man responsible for imposing the cost of Allied war pensions on Germany. Hancock claims that the charge was first brought against Smuts in 1920 in the book *History of the Paris Peace Conference* which was edited by H.W.V. Temperley.<sup>465</sup> According to Hancock, Smuts had provided J. M. Keynes (who sorted out the entire war reparations) with legal advice, but he had also written a memorandum which was accepted by many of the politicians at the time. Keynes himself also criticised the book because of the blame being shifted to Smuts.<sup>466</sup> In the end Smuts probably deserved to share some of the accountability, especially considering his lack of expertise in economics.

Hancock concludes volume one with the death of Botha, which in a sense is also the end of a particular phase in Smuts's life, the end of an epoch.

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<sup>460</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 505-548

<sup>461</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 507

<sup>462</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 516-517

<sup>463</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 517

<sup>464</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, pp 534-535

<sup>465</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 541

<sup>466</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The sanguine years*, p 542

## CHAPTER 4: HANCOCK VOLUME TWO

### 4.1 Smuts alone

In the preface to this second volume Hancock again points to the immense amount of documentation available to him: “For almost every week from 1919 until... 1950 there has survived at least one long letter...”<sup>467</sup> Despite this plethora of primary material there is one admission in the preface that causes concern: Hancock admits that he “felt constrained” to tell the story of Bulhoek because “many of my readers have never heard of Bulhoek.”<sup>468</sup> Considering Bulhoek was one of the more serious events in Smuts’s political history it seems incomprehensible that Hancock fails to delve deeper into it, regardless of his audience.

From the outset Hancock makes the poignant point that after returning from Paris in 1919, Louis Botha died, and Smuts was “alone.”<sup>469</sup> Hancock immediately tackles the idea held that Botha brought “common humanity” to the partnership while Smuts brought an “uncommon brain.”<sup>470</sup> But Hancock dismisses this and ascribes any flaws Smuts might have had at the time to a lack of experience (as for example being the Opposition in Parliament), and to a lack of training.<sup>471</sup> After this Hancock briefly reminds the reader of the past few years that Smuts had lived through, that is the First World War, and the various personalities he had met or made acquaintances with.<sup>472</sup> In a sense he appears to be shifting the context slightly so as to absolve Smuts of the events that follow.

One important comment Hancock makes is that he agrees, to a degree, with Smuts’s political enemies that he found “his own country too small for him”.<sup>473</sup> Hancock backs his opinion up by pointing out that Smuts was still fretting about the wider world while fighting a political campaign in the Cape. But he immediately contradicts himself by stating that Smuts’s European friends would not let him forget about the World.<sup>474</sup> For the remainder of the first chapter Hancock explores Smuts’s philosophy and his occasional divergences into non-political life, for example botany, which he cherished above his political career.<sup>475</sup>

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<sup>467</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p xi

<sup>468</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p xii

<sup>469</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 3

<sup>470</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 3

<sup>471</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 3

<sup>472</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 4-10

<sup>473</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 10

<sup>474</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 10

<sup>475</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 11-20

In the second chapter Hancock focuses on South African politics. He starts by explaining the context of “racialism” at the time, which was essentially racism between the two white races of South Africa-Boer and Briton-and did not include the “colour question”.<sup>476</sup> In essence Hancock is arguing that Smuts’s first priority at the time was reconciliation between the whites of South Africa. In Hancock’s opinion, “conciliation was their (Botha and Smuts) watchword” and what Smuts constantly strove for.<sup>477</sup>

Hancock briefly revisits the politics of pre-War South Africa to provide a background<sup>478</sup> before indicating Smuts’s three “fundamental principles” as the new Prime Minister: maintenance of the British connection; union of the white races; and the industrial development of South Africa.<sup>479</sup> Hancock also writes about the early abortive attempts of reunion (*hereniging*) between Smuts’s South African Party and Hertzog’s National Party. Hancock argues that the failure of this reunion was due to the principle of keeping the British connection, which Hertzog refused.<sup>480</sup>

With regards to the 1920 elections, which Smuts barely won by a slim majority of four thanks to the help of the Unionist Party, Hancock believed that the shocking results, whereby the National Party had a slight majority, were due to post-War economic difficulties and voter apathy against the party that had led the country for the last ten years.<sup>481</sup> Smuts managed to govern the country relatively efficiently with a small majority thanks to the Unionist support, and eventually by the end of 1920 the South African Party had officially absorbed the entire Unionist Party.<sup>482</sup> He also makes the interesting point that the South African Party lost the majority of its seats in rural constituencies.<sup>483</sup> This indicates the allure that the National Party had to Afrikaners who were the majority population (of whites) in the country; it is also has an eerie similarity to the 1948 elections which Smuts also lost.

After the union between the South African Party and the Unionist Party (November 1920) Smuts called for another general election in February 1921. Smuts seized the initiative from the beginning despite the National and Labour (the National Party’s erstwhile allies) party’s attempts to derail his campaign. The election was a remarkable success for Smuts as his

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<sup>476</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 21

<sup>477</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 22

<sup>478</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 23-27

<sup>479</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 27

<sup>480</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 28

<sup>481</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 29

<sup>482</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 32-33

<sup>483</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 30

party's majority increased to twenty-two seats. Hancock, however, states that the real concern was that the gains were made at the expense of the Labour Party in cities, while the National Party continued to gain ground in the rural constituencies.<sup>484</sup> With hindsight it was easy for Hancock to point out these results as a possible issue for Smuts in the future. At the time however Smuts could not have foreseen what this future entailed.

Hancock then shifts his focus to Smuts in the international world. Perhaps the most important statement Hancock makes about this period in Smuts's life is that "his (Smuts) temperament and training made it impossible for him to envisage South African politics and world politics in isolation from each other."<sup>485</sup> This is a continual theme throughout most biographies regarding Smuts. In essence Hancock deals with Smuts's attempts to form the Commonwealth and to strengthen the League of Nations, two organisations whose creation were due much to Smuts's efforts, but were now, however, out of his hands and instead now controlled by the more powerful nations such as Britain. He also notes the range of opposition against these attempts, most notably from Malan and the National Party.<sup>486</sup> Hancock states that Smuts's main effort in this period (1921) internationally was to create the British Commonwealth of Nations with a "society of free and equal sister states."<sup>487</sup> He goes on to note that Smuts's memorandum of June 1921 was exactly what the Balfour Declaration of 1926 and the Statue of Westminster of 1931 contained, although Smuts gained no credit for this.<sup>488</sup> The remainder of the chapter is focused on Smuts's attempts to ease the "Irish question" which is not of significance to this discussion.<sup>489</sup>

The next chapter, titled "Disaster on the Rand", refers to another key event in Smuts's life: the attempted labour revolution on the Rand in 1922. Taking up twenty-six pages, it is evident that Hancock himself thought of it as an important event.<sup>490</sup> Hancock begins by pointing out that the main industry (in fact in his opinion the only industry) in South Africa at the time was the gold mines of the Witwatersrand. These mines were slowly creating other industries such as explosives and railways.<sup>491</sup> Therefore Smuts "knew well enough" that the

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<sup>484</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 33-35

<sup>485</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 36

<sup>486</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 37-44

<sup>487</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 46

<sup>488</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 48

<sup>489</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 49-61

<sup>490</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 62-88

<sup>491</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 62

country would “face economic ruin” if the mines failed to produce gold at a profit.<sup>492</sup> The issue facing Smuts and the mine owners was that white workers were paid far more than the black workers on the mines, whose workforce was estimated at eight times more.<sup>493</sup> If the gold price slumped (which it eventually did in December 1921) then the obvious answer to keep gold production viable was to promote cheaper black workers to the positions that were previously occupied by the more expensive white workers.<sup>494</sup> This was in essence a direct attack on the Colour bar and had serious implications.

Hancock points out that throughout this period of turmoil Smuts received the brunt of the miners’ anger, not Malan, who was the Minister of Mines at the time. This despite Smuts forcing the recognition of white trade unions and that Smuts himself was behind the protection of white workers on the mines.<sup>495</sup> He goes on to state that the white miners forgot these attributes and instead saw Smuts as the puppet of the mine owners which Hancock saw as the major impediment to Smuts solving the crisis.<sup>496</sup> Therefore, from early on in the discussion of the Revolt, Hancock places the blame squarely on the shoulders of the white mine workers rather than Smuts.

According to Hancock Smuts made his first intervention in the crisis in November 1921 by ensuring that both sides made small concessions and that direct negotiations between the two took place in December 1921. The mine owners conceded to not “attack” the white employees and the trade unions conceded to allow black mine workers to work slightly longer shifts (approximately three hours more).<sup>497</sup> What then occurred was that the Chamber of Mines announced on 28 December 1921 that it was removing the agreement of regulating the employment of semi-skilled labour on 1 February 1922 which could result in the loss of two thousand jobs for white miners.<sup>498</sup> The trade unions, who wrongly believed that the government supported this termination, rushed into a general strike rather than invoke their right to repeal the decision made by the Chamber of Mines. Instead of Smuts “allowing the situation to develop”, he postponed parliament for a month in order to stay in the Witwatersrand to attempt to resolve the situation and he created a conference for both parties

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<sup>492</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 63

<sup>493</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 63

<sup>494</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 63-64

<sup>495</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 64

<sup>496</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 64-65

<sup>497</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 65

<sup>498</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 66

to sort out their issues, which unfortunately failed.<sup>499</sup> Contrary to popular belief Smuts was not the type of person to allow problems to “develop”, rather he attempted to solve them immediately through discussion or action. In this case Hancock’s explanation is attempting to dispel the myth that tarnished Smuts and his handling of the Rand Revolt.

In the end the conference to negotiate between mine management and white workers failed because both parties were in no “mood for compromise” and the trade unions began a virulent campaign against Smuts and the mine owners as they believed they were in collusion.<sup>500</sup> Another factor was the support that the unions gained from the Opposition parties, in particular the Labour Party, which encouraged the strikers to fight for more concessions.<sup>501</sup> Smuts made two more attempts at a peaceful conclusion on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of February 1922 with major concessions made by the Chamber of Mines, but the strikers rejected them outright claiming that only “unconditional surrender would satisfy them.”<sup>502</sup> Hancock makes the point that Afrikaans author F. S. Crafford<sup>503</sup> repeated the myth of Smuts’s “inexplicable inactivity” in his biography of Smuts, *Jan Smuts: ‘n Biografie*.<sup>504</sup> Hancock contradicts this by stating that throughout the event and up until the very end of the first week of February 1922, Smuts had been a “persistent and fair minded mediator.”<sup>505</sup>

By 11 February 1922 Smuts and his government had had enough and he declared the mines reopened with those mine workers agreeing to return under police protection. Hancock does admit that this new policy was a grave mistake by Smuts that certainly turned the strike towards violence and reinvigorated hatred against himself and his government.<sup>506</sup> Parliament met on 17 February and Smuts’s plan was supported after a vote of sixty nine to fifty three, with the strikers gaining minimal support from the Opposition.<sup>507</sup> Initially some workers returned to the mines, but the majority were in the “mood for a fight to the finish.” Many of the slogans used by the strikers at the time were in a Communist vein, for example “Workers of the World to fight for a White South Africa.”<sup>508</sup> Unfortunately for both sides and the

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<sup>499</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 67-68

<sup>500</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 68

<sup>501</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 69

<sup>502</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 72-73

<sup>503</sup> Crafford’s book is not a part of this dissertation’s analysis. However other authors do rely on his interpretations.

<sup>504</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 73

<sup>505</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 73

<sup>506</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 74

<sup>507</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 77

<sup>508</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 79

government, “strike commandos” began appearing. These commandos took shape as military structures and began clashing with police which led to violence and several deaths and injuries towards the end of February.<sup>509</sup>

In March 1922 peace seemed a possibility, but soon the strike commandos took control of the strike movement and in the first two weeks of March a full scale revolution on the Rand seemed to be on the cards. A general assault against the police occurred as well as attacks by strikers on non–Europeans, especially on African miners.<sup>510</sup> Hancock contends that as a result of the escalating tensions and increased violence on 10 March Smuts declared martial law, which angered nearly all white South Africans, as the strikers and their commandos controlled basically all of the Rand. Within three days Smuts and the army had retained control of the region and the insurrection had been suppressed with much loss of life.<sup>511</sup> From this Smuts himself wrote that he had “earned an additional claim to the titles of butcher and hangman”, although Hancock himself was unsure that Smuts deserved them.<sup>512</sup> So ended the Rand Revolt of 1922, with Smuts a much maligned figure in the eyes of his opponents and many white South Africans – regardless of whether or not he deserved it.

The next chapter in Hancock’s second volume relates to the same myth of Smuts being a “butcher” and occurs at roughly the same time as the 1922 revolt. This along with the Bondelzwarts and Bulhoek incidents, did much to dismantle Smuts’s appeal at the time. However as indicated earlier, in the preface, Hancock “felt constrained” to write about these incidents because “many of [his] readers [had] never heard of Bulhoek.”<sup>513</sup> While the “Disaster on the Rand” chapter encompasses twenty six pages,<sup>514</sup> Hancock can only muster twenty one pages for Bulhoek and the Bondelzwarts combined.<sup>515</sup> Therefore the chapter and information is disappointingly brief and might be regarded as an attempt by Hancock to side-step these rather contentious and damning events. One important statement that Hancock makes, however, is that Smuts was directly involved in the disaster on the Rand, but with

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<sup>509</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 80

<sup>510</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 83

<sup>511</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 84

<sup>512</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 84

<sup>513</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p xii

<sup>514</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 62-88

<sup>515</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 89-110



Bulhoek and the Bondelzwarts, Smuts had no direct involvement in the catastrophes that occurred, although his government did.<sup>516</sup>

The Bulhoek saga culminated in a standoff between approximately eight hundred police and soldiers (including two artillery pieces and a maxim gun) and about five hundred Israelites (an African Separatist Church) armed with knobkerries and assegais. The Israelites charged and the resulting battle left a hundred and sixty three of them dead and a hundred and twenty nine wounded, while the government forces had only one injured trooper and a dead horse.<sup>517</sup> The main cause for the standoff was because the leader of the Israelites, Enoch Mgijima, and his followers were apparently illegal squatters on common land near Queenstown at a place called Bulhoek. Throughout 1920 Enoch Mgijima and more and more of his supporters erected permanent homesteads on land not legally owned by them which infuriated local “Natives”, and, furthermore, they ignored and refused to respond to numerous police summonses thereby exasperating the situation.<sup>518</sup>

Hancock cites many newspaper sources referring to the stand-off, including the *Star* and *Imvo*, a leading “Bantu” newspaper. He claims that all people at the time saw the Israelites as a serious problem with regards to not abiding by the law of the land and that removal by force was the only means forward.<sup>519</sup> The force the government put together for this was under the charge of Colonel Truter, the Commissioner of Police, who again attempted to reach a parley on 24 May 1921 without bloodshed. Once again the Israelites refused to accede and almost immediately charged the government forces who returned fire under the orders of Truter and Colonel Woon.<sup>520</sup>

Smuts was again blamed for various reasons, one being procrastination on the governments part, but in the end Hancock agrees with Sir Thomas Graham, the judge at Enoch Mgijima’s trial, and with Bishop G. M. Sundkler, a Swedish scholar and “impartial investigator”.<sup>521</sup> They both argued that the tragedy was inevitable and that both sides were fully to blame: the government for being “hesitant” and Enoch and his followers for being “fanatical and seditious.”<sup>522</sup> As has been shown, Smuts had little direct contact with the above incident and

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<sup>516</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 89

<sup>517</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 89

<sup>518</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 91

<sup>519</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 95

<sup>520</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 96

<sup>521</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 99

<sup>522</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 99

in fact gave the police force under Colonel Truter specific instructions to not use fire-arms “except in the very last resort.”<sup>523</sup> Therefore the Bulhoek incident can only be seen as a terrible tragedy with Smuts erroneously earning the name “Butcher of Bulhoek”.

In contrast Hancock presents a more detailed account of the Bondelzwarts affair. This event culminated in military operations towards the end of May and the beginning of June 1922 in South West Africa (Namibia). The Bondelzwarts were a cultural group within South West Africa attempting to fight for freedom from the South Africans, much as they had done eighteen years earlier against their German colonial masters. They were a Christian community of mixed Boer and “Hottentot” heritage who had been brutally subjugated by the Germans in 1906. The Bondelzwarts were led by Jacobus Christian and Abraham Morris both of whom were in exile in South Africa, the latter helping the South African invasion of South West Africa in 1915.<sup>524</sup>

A civil regime was started in South West Africa in 1920 under the leadership of G. R. Hofmeyr, but the main issue was the lack of qualified police in South West Africa.<sup>525</sup> Christian attempted to return to South West Africa from exile, but was arrested because he had no permission from the police which caused much consternation amongst the Bondelzwarts.<sup>526</sup> But the main issue for them was the high tax on the dogs kept by the community. The South African government were attempting to force the tribe into working for the white settlers, but the Bondelzwarts lived in such an inhospitable area that work was impossible to find. The final grievance they had was the continual ban on Morris joining his people, which he did illegally in May 1922.<sup>527</sup>

The Native Commissioner Major Manning attempted to solve the issues in May 1921, but the South West Africa administration was ill suited to deal with it and the problems continued.<sup>528</sup> A policeman, a Sergeant van Niekerk, was sent to arrest Morris who was willing to comply but his group was not and van Niekerk was forced to flee. This led to several discussions and a stand-off ensued which resulted in several inflammatory and panicky letters from the South

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<sup>523</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 97

<sup>524</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 102

<sup>525</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 103

<sup>526</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 104

<sup>527</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 105

<sup>528</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 104-105

West African regime to the South African government and seemed to blow the whole episode out of proportion.<sup>529</sup>

On this occasion the opposing forces were far more evenly matched with six hundred men fighting for the Bondelzwarts and less than four hundred men fighting for the government forces.<sup>530</sup> Both sides had fire-arms although the government had far more advanced weapons and the real disparity was the government's air force, although it was not responsible for many of the casualties.<sup>531</sup> Only two aeroplanes were used on the 29 and 30 May 1922 and they dropped bombs on the animals of the Bondelzwarts injuring seven women and children and killing two children who were amongst the animals.<sup>532</sup> In this case however due to aerial reconnaissance the Bondelzwarts were subjugated within the first week of June.<sup>533</sup> Hancock, perhaps, says it best: "The Bondelzwarts affair was not abnormal; but it received abnormal publicity."<sup>534</sup> The newly created League of Nations thought the whole affair a travesty, even though most of the colonial member nations were themselves involved in such affairs.<sup>535</sup>

The National Party kept quiet about the whole situation as they could not support a "Native" against the government, their Labour allies however could and did.<sup>536</sup> Smuts himself appealed several times to Hofmeyr to settle the issue peacefully, but rather than sacrificing a subordinate Smuts chose to shoulder the responsibility alone.<sup>537</sup> Again Smuts was not directly involved in the situation and again he attempted to stop any bloodshed. But once again he erroneously received the lion's share of the blame for this incident.

Hancock's next chapter about "Native Affairs"<sup>538</sup> is also disappointingly brief. Firstly Hancock laments at the poor state of the "Native Affairs Department" and at how little was done by Smuts's predecessors (including Botha), mainly due to the vigorous opposition of the National Party.<sup>539</sup> Hancock's main issue was the "backwardness" of scholarly insight into "Natives" and how the government still relied on the report of the Lagden Commission from

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<sup>529</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 106-107

<sup>530</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 100

<sup>531</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 101

<sup>532</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 101

<sup>533</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 101

<sup>534</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 108

<sup>535</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 108

<sup>536</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 109

<sup>537</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 109-110

<sup>538</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 111-127

<sup>539</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 111-118

1905.<sup>540</sup> He does praise Smuts for his Native Affairs Bill of 1920 which created a Native Affairs Commission and the establishment of Councils in “Native” areas to provide services.<sup>541</sup> Hancock does however reserve criticism with regards to two things. He is critical firstly with regards to the fact that the Bill was segregationist in essence, although for it to be anything other at the time would have been political suicide.<sup>542</sup> The other issue is that Smuts believed (at the time) that he had taken a major step to diffuse the “Native issue”, but Hertzog and the National Party could dismantle it if they ever managed to get into power, which they eventually did on both counts.<sup>543</sup> Smuts, it seems with hindsight, could never wrap his head around “Native Affairs”.

Much of the next chapter “Peace-Making and a Quarrel” is to do with Smuts and his international concerns, one of the most telling of which is his realisation that the occupation of the Ruhr by French soldiers would lead to another war.<sup>544</sup> Of more importance was the speech made by Smuts at the Imperial Conference in September 1923 whereby he lambasted the French actions, but called for all people to work and live together which brought much admiration from many Europeans.<sup>545</sup> But this speech incensed Indians at home and abroad as they claimed “he (Smuts) would do well to practice among his own people what he preached to other peoples.”<sup>546</sup> Hancock correctly states that contemporary opinion hardly wavered, but these claims “were ominous for the future.”<sup>547</sup>

In the chapter concerning Smuts’s first loss in the general elections, poignantly titled “Defeat”, Hancock begins with one of the most telling statements throughout both volumes of the biography: “His own countrymen applauded Smuts when the British press criticized him; but when it acclaimed him they gave him a mixed reception.”<sup>548</sup> For Hancock Smuts’s defeat at the 1924 elections was the result of two key problems. The first was that the Opposition combatted Smuts on two fronts very successfully: Smuts was the man whose “footsteps dripped with blood”,<sup>549</sup> and on the front of “civilised labour.”<sup>550</sup> With regards to “civilised

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<sup>540</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 114

<sup>541</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 119

<sup>542</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 124

<sup>543</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 126-127

<sup>544</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 131

<sup>545</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 134-138

<sup>546</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 139

<sup>547</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 139

<sup>548</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 150

<sup>549</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 162

<sup>550</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 159

labour” the National Party proposed that railways, mines and other industries rely on “civilised labour” which was white labour, rather than on the cheaper “uncivilised labour”, black labour.<sup>551</sup> This was in essence an attempt to subsidise living for poor whites which was hugely successful. Smuts’s party was not united on this matter and<sup>552</sup> party disunity at any time, especially just before an election, would only mean sure defeat.

The second problem was the general depression that the world was suffering at the time. Although Smuts and his government had established nation-wide electrification, plans to create ISCOR and several other bills to enhance industry, the government, and the world, did not have the necessary money to make any of the above a success.<sup>553</sup> In the end, Smuts could not firmly answer many of the attacks levelled against him and his government which finally resulted in the voters giving the National Party–Labour Party coalition a twenty seven seat majority.<sup>554</sup> Hancock believes that Smuts lost the election due to indecisiveness, a lack of firmness and bad luck as regards to the world economy. The lack of solidarity is especially ironic given that many contemporaries thought Smuts was too firm, for example the revolt of 1922. During 1922 Smuts was attempting to absorb Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) into the South African Union, which failed mostly due to the work of the Opposition (Labour and National Parties) and the revolt on the Rand.<sup>555</sup>

With Smuts out of power Hancock focusses the next chapter on Smuts’s philosophical and botanical pursuits.<sup>556</sup> This dimension of Smuts is of great significance and is one often focused on in studies on Smuts. The following chapter titled “Leading the Opposition”, focuses on an activity Smuts himself was unused to.<sup>557</sup>

After the loss of the 1924 elections Smuts and the South African Party secretary, Louis Esselen, began the overhauling of the party. Smuts believed there were three major issues: bad organisation, weak leadership in the middle ranks and poor and hesitant propaganda.<sup>558</sup> Hancock states that Smuts believed at the time that the Pact government under Hertzog would not last long, but he had to wait seven years before the fulfilment of his prophecy. He further

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<sup>551</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 159

<sup>552</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 160

<sup>553</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 158

<sup>554</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 163-164

<sup>555</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 151-154

<sup>556</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 169-197

<sup>557</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 198

<sup>558</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 198

states that Smuts had not foreseen how well his opponents would do,<sup>559</sup> which could be construed as arrogance. One important statement Hancock makes is that Smuts was not overly upset at the election loss, in fact he admitted “it was time for change.”<sup>560</sup>

Hancock ascertains that Smuts and Hertzog did agree on several issues, one being the need for a national flag, the other being South Africa’s status in the Commonwealth as an equal partner with Britain.<sup>561</sup> One bone of contention for Hancock however, was Hertzog and the National Party attempts to take sole proprietorship for the achievements of the Balfour Declaration of 1926 and the Statute of Westminster of 1931.<sup>562</sup> Hancock lays the blame at the feet of Hertzog’s biographers C. M. van den Heever and O. Pirow who both claimed Hertzog was the sole reason for the above successes.<sup>563</sup> But Hancock asserts that Hertzog used the exact same memorandum at the 1926 Imperial Conference that Smuts had attempted to pass through at the 1921 Imperial Conference, with less success.<sup>564</sup> Hancock believed that the only reason for Hertzog’s later success was due to there being more supportive Prime Ministers of the other Dominions.<sup>565</sup> Hancock also blames Hertzog for attempting to garner all the credit,<sup>566</sup> but it must be admitted that it is to be expected from a politician to attempt to gain as much prestige as possible from any event or success.

With regards to Smuts and his “native policy” during his time as leader of the Opposition Hancock considered Smuts did a tolerable job. His reasoning behind it only being “tolerable” was mainly due to the fact that the South African Party was a political party with many divisions. Smuts had to please several different factions, some more conservative from the Transvaal and Natal and some liberals of the Cape region.<sup>567</sup> Smuts, therefore, had to juggle several differing opinions within his own party and keep all sides happy, while attempting to combat the Pact government. Hancock also applauded Smuts for his attempts to stop the industrial colour bar which the government managed to pass in May 1926.<sup>568</sup>

Hancock saves the last few pages of the chapter to heavily criticise Hertzog and the National Party for the “Black Peril” election of June 1929 whereby the National Party used its

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<sup>559</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 199

<sup>560</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 199

<sup>561</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 199-200

<sup>562</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 204

<sup>563</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 201

<sup>564</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 200

<sup>565</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 203

<sup>566</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 205

<sup>567</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 206-207

<sup>568</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 210

propaganda machine to portray Smuts as turning his back on “white” South Africa.<sup>569</sup> They claimed that: “to vote for Smuts meant voting black.”<sup>570</sup> According to Hancock, Smuts lost the election by sixteen seats as the “propaganda proved efficacious.”<sup>571</sup> He also makes note that the South African Party had actually received more votes than the National Party, but due to votes counting more in rural areas Smuts lost the election, something he would regrettably experience nineteen years later again.<sup>572</sup>

In the next chapter Hancock focusses on Smuts’s academic and botanical pursuits while not in government.<sup>573</sup> This included when Smuts was made President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in September 1931, which Smuts himself referred to as “the great day.”<sup>574</sup> There is however one point of interest which is worth examining with regards to this dissertation. This is the idea and myth propagated that Smuts was forever “gadding to other countries”, never spending time in South Africa as it was too small.<sup>575</sup> Hancock dispels this myth by pointing out that Smuts was absent from South Africa only four times during the period 1924 to 1939. One of those absences was actually on public duty at the World Economic Conference in 1934 while others consisted mainly of academic lectures.<sup>576</sup> The total duration of his absence during this period was far less than twelve months. Therefore in a total of sixteen years Smuts was outside of the country for less than a year while lecturing or serving his country. This idea of Smuts “continually gadding to other countries”<sup>577</sup> seems absurd and Hancock makes this apparent.

In the next section, focusing on the “Reunion”<sup>578</sup> between Smuts and Hertzog and their respective parties, Hancock states that the reunion was inevitable and that most people welcomed it at the time.<sup>579</sup> Again it is easy to make such a statement with the fortune of hindsight. Hancock focusses on the build-up to reunion by pointing out various people, including Louis Esselen and Tielman Roos, who had made various calls for the two parties to join. But Hancock believed that the most important incident throughout the period building

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<sup>569</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 217-219

<sup>570</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 219

<sup>571</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 216-219

<sup>572</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 217

<sup>573</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 220-236

<sup>574</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 235

<sup>575</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 222

<sup>576</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 222

<sup>577</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 222

<sup>578</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 237-248

<sup>579</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 237

up to the reunion (1926 – 1933) was Hertzog’s unfortunate attempt to remain on the gold standard.<sup>580</sup> It was Smuts who denounced the government’s choice to remain on the gold standard and which consequently won over much support. The National Party government itself seemed on the verge of collapse and a coalition with the South African Party appeared the only option.<sup>581</sup> Eventually, after much negotiation, on 28 February 1933 Hertzog announced to parliament that a coalition had been formed with Hertzog as Prime Minister and Smuts as Minister of Justice, which was ironically very similar to his job as State Attorney in 1898.<sup>582</sup> It was as though Smuts had come full circle.

In the next chapter Hancock looks at the process from coalition to fusion between Smuts, Hertzog, and their respective parties.<sup>583</sup> The most important point Hancock makes is with regards to Malan and his creation of the “Purified National Party” after fusion had occurred to create the United Party.<sup>584</sup> Hancock indicates the danger that Smuts and Hertzog would have to face from Malan later on, thanks to hindsight, but he also believed that Malan was doing exactly the same thing that Hertzog had done to Botha twenty years before.<sup>585</sup> In essence, in the words of Hancock “Afrikanerdom was again in schism.”<sup>586</sup>

Another myth that Hancock attempts to refute is that Smuts was “the destroyer of the Cape Native Franchise.”<sup>587</sup> Instead, Hancock points out who in his opinion the real culprits were: the Natal contingent of the old South African Party namely Heaton Nicholls and Colonel Stallard.<sup>588</sup> Hancock points out that Smuts had always fought for the Cape Native franchise and he saw it as “fundamental doctrine”.<sup>589</sup> In effect, what occurred was that the more radical elements in the South African Party, most notably those from Natal, fought with the National Party against Smuts and the remainder of his party for the removal of the Cape franchise.<sup>590</sup> On 9 May 1930 a Joint Select Committee voted on what was to be done about the “Natives” and particularly about the “Native franchise in the Cape”.<sup>591</sup> In essentially what was the death warrant for the franchise, the Committee voted eighteen to eight for its eventual removal.

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<sup>580</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 242

<sup>581</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 243-245

<sup>582</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 247-248

<sup>583</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 251-258

<sup>584</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 253

<sup>585</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 253-254

<sup>586</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 253

<sup>587</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 266

<sup>588</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 262

<sup>589</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 262

<sup>590</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 260-263

<sup>591</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 263



Smuts himself was part of that minority.<sup>592</sup> Smuts always fought for the Cape franchise and it seems his being “misremembered”<sup>593</sup> as the “destroyer”<sup>594</sup> of the said franchise was as Hancock points out “unfortunate and incorrect.”<sup>595</sup>

The following chapter is concerned with the international developments in the build up to the Second World War, focusing on the years from 1934 until 1938.<sup>596</sup> Hancock includes a discussion of Smuts’s various opinions about these developments. The next chapter, however, focusses on the tensions within South Africa during the same time period and is titled “Tensions at Home.”<sup>597</sup> Hancock indicates that the major tension at home for Smuts at this time was Malan and the Purified National Party.<sup>598</sup> Hertzog, from whose party Malan had defected, attacked Malan repeatedly but to no avail.<sup>599</sup> Malan was using the same propaganda that Hertzog had used against Smuts so many times before to great success: “the black man” and the “new battle of Blood River.”<sup>600</sup>

Hancock, again with hindsight, points out that Malan was a formidable foe as the Afrikaner population was far outgrowing the English population. It was only a matter of time before Afrikaans voters would greatly outnumber English voters, with most of the Afrikaners voting for Malan.<sup>601</sup> Hancock contends that Malan probed for weaknesses in the fusion government and found several. One important weakness was with regards to the Jews and Jewish immigration.<sup>602</sup> Smuts was disposed to allow free entry to fleeing Jews, but the National Party caused such agitation against this that eventually the government introduced discriminatory legislation. Rather significantly, Hancock mentions Millin, who believed that “his [Smuts’s] fear of the agitators” held him from “appointing her husband to the Bench.”<sup>603</sup>

Hancock again points out the danger of Malan by indicating that in the May 1938 elections the Purified National Party became the de facto Opposition.<sup>604</sup> He also indicates that Smuts was struggling to keep the liberal aspects of his party appeased in the face of Hertzog and his

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<sup>592</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 263

<sup>593</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 266

<sup>594</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 266

<sup>595</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 266

<sup>596</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 267-286

<sup>597</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 287-298

<sup>598</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 287

<sup>599</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 288

<sup>600</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 289

<sup>601</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 288

<sup>602</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 290

<sup>603</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 290

<sup>604</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 295

supporters.<sup>605</sup> The most important of these members was J. H. Hofmeyr, Smuts's young prodigy, who eventually resigned in May 1939. "Among liberal-minded South Africans, his reputation by now was at its nadir."<sup>606</sup> Smuts was forced into many minor concessions to maintain the fusion government,<sup>607</sup> but some of his supporters thought they were too much. Smuts himself said that Hofmeyr was liable to "treat trivial matters as questions of principle."<sup>608</sup> This is just another example of Smuts considering the bigger picture and focusing on larger goals.

In one of the longest chapters in the entire biography Hancock examines how the fusion government broke up on the eve of the Second World War.<sup>609</sup> At first Hancock explores Smuts's physical and mental capabilities during the two years before the War,<sup>610</sup> but then he dispels the myth that Smuts was generally disliked in South Africa by relating two stories of how well Smuts got on with "simple folk".<sup>611</sup> In both accounts Smuts was on "safari" with an English friend, who related these stories in which local farmers would join Smuts at a campfire and have friendly and magnanimous discussions about everything and nothing. Interestingly these accounts are not found in any previous biography. This shows how at ease Smuts was with ordinary people, and Hancock states: "It is a myth, this theory that Jannie is disliked and distrusted in his own country."<sup>612</sup> Hancock therefore contends that particular people disliked Smuts, not South Africa at large.

Hancock continues by focusing on Smuts's botanical and religious pursuits<sup>613</sup> before finally looking at the politics surrounding South Africa's entry into the War. Hancock describes how Smuts, through his letters, was a man of two moods during the build-up to the War. Firstly he was an observer attempting to understand the events occurring before him; secondly he was a participator trying to figure out what his role was.<sup>614</sup> Hancock also points out that Smuts's main hope was for peace and that although he gave credit to Chamberlain for the Munich agreement of 1938, he still believed that war was inevitable.<sup>615</sup> In the next few pages

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<sup>605</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 292-297

<sup>606</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 298

<sup>607</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 292

<sup>608</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 297

<sup>609</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 299-325

<sup>610</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 299-301

<sup>611</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 302

<sup>612</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 302

<sup>613</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 303-308

<sup>614</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 308

<sup>615</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 308-309

Hancock uses many excerpts from Smuts's letters to indicate how Smuts's opinions and ideas changed constantly to the many international events throughout 1939. In essence Smuts did not have the luxury of hindsight and was initially confused by both Hitler and Mussolini.<sup>616</sup> But when war seemed inevitable Smuts made it clear that neutrality was not an option for him, if and when war came, participation was his duty.<sup>617</sup>

Hancock deals with another myth which Hertzog's biographers, O. Pirow in particular, have created. Hertzog wanted South Africa to remain neutral no matter what and he pointed to a decision the Cabinet had made in September 1938 which endorsed this. Hertzog's biographers have written that Smuts kept silent about his thoughts with regards to neutrality or participation, causing much grief for Hertzog.<sup>618</sup> Hancock, however, states that Smuts made twenty speeches between 1 October 1938 and 23 August 1939 which clearly illustrate what Smuts's thoughts and beliefs were at the time, and that was for participation. Hancock also notes that all of these speeches were front-page news, therefore they are and were easily accessible.<sup>619</sup> Hancock is of the view that Pirow seems "careless" for accusing Smuts of concealing his thoughts from the public and Hertzog, who he argues presumably read newspapers.<sup>620</sup>

When describing the fateful events of 2 – 4 September 1939 that eventually led to South Africa entering the Second World War, Hancock states that "the most illuminating and vivid was Harry Lawrence's [a Cabinet member in Hertzog's government] story."<sup>621</sup> Therefore Hancock uses Lawrence's descriptions as his main source. Lawrence (and Hancock) make it clear that that all Cabinet members spoke their own views at the initial meeting on 2 September and that at the end of that first meeting Smuts (pro-participation) had seven of the Cabinet members supporting him while Hertzog (pro-neutrality) had six.<sup>622</sup> The next day Hertzog declared to put the matter to the House with Hertzog tabling his neutrality motion and Smuts with his counter-motion.<sup>623</sup> In essence this meeting of the House was the end of the fusion government.

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<sup>616</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 309-313

<sup>617</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 314

<sup>618</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 315

<sup>619</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 315

<sup>620</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 317

<sup>621</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 319

<sup>622</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 319

<sup>623</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 320

On 4 September 1939 the House met and debated for the entire day until late in the evening. Both sides of the matter spoke long about the various possibilities, including Smuts and Hertzog.<sup>624</sup> In the end Smuts carried South Africa into war by thirteen votes (eighty to sixty – seven).<sup>625</sup> Hancock also notes that Smuts was fully aware of the division that was created by South Africa joining the War, but conceded that the division “could be repaired with time.”<sup>626</sup> Hancock also states that Smuts “went to war because he could see no alternative” and that Smuts’s first goal was the “security of his own country”, hence joining the War on the side of the Commonwealth as “the world was a dangerous place for small nations.”<sup>627</sup>

#### 4.2 Second World War and death

Hancock begins his sojourn into the Second World War by illustrating and reiterating how Smuts had to fight the War on “Two Fronts.”<sup>628</sup> Smuts was convinced that Africa, and therefore South Africa, would be involved.<sup>629</sup> He also pledged to not send South African forces overseas, but by his interpretation Africa was not overseas, it was “home ground.”<sup>630</sup> Hancock points out that although South Africa had a population of about ten million at the time, it could only muster a force of approximately 345 000 enlistments while Australia, with a population of about seven million, managed about 927 000 enlistments. Hancock puts this discrepancy down to the fact that in South Africa only whites were allowed to fight and at the time their population was only about two million.<sup>631</sup>

Smuts attempted on several occasions to enlist non–Europeans but the Opposition, and even his own Cabinet, refused such a revolutionary proposal.<sup>632</sup> The Opposition took it further by attacking Smuts for allowing non–Europeans into the military industry as non–combatants.<sup>633</sup> Hancock claims that this was all part of their main attack, which was against South Africa’s involvement in the War in the first place. He goes on to state that the main impediment to South Africa’s full military and economic mobilization was the “politics inside the

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<sup>624</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 320-322

<sup>625</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 323

<sup>626</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 324

<sup>627</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 325

<sup>628</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 329-340

<sup>629</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 329

<sup>630</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 330

<sup>631</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 330

<sup>632</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 331

<sup>633</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 331

boundaries of the Union.<sup>634</sup> Therefore illustrating his point that Smuts was fighting the War on two fronts: at home and abroad.

Hancock makes note of the deplorable state of South Africa's military at the outbreak of the War<sup>635</sup> and he swiftly lays the blame at the feet of Oswald Pirow, Hertzog's Minister of Defence for the previous five years.<sup>636</sup> The main fault of Pirow, Hancock states, was that his plans "had been great", but "his performance" was the greatest problem.<sup>637</sup> Smuts revamped South Africa's military in the air, land and sea but Hancock makes the important note that "all his recruits were volunteers."<sup>638</sup> He makes another important statement when summing up South African politics at the time: "each successive government had always borne the personal stamp of its leader – of Botha, Smuts, Hertzog."<sup>639</sup> Therefore people never asked themselves "What is the Cabinet doing?", but rather they would question "What is Smuts doing?"<sup>640</sup>

Smuts's main Opposition at this time was Malan who had just gained support from the remnants of Hertzog's party after the vote for War had concluded.<sup>641</sup> Hancock, however, points out that Malan himself was fighting on two fronts: the first being his own followers arguing with Hertzog's, and his battles with the more extreme Afrikaans organizations such as the Ossewa-Brandwag.<sup>642</sup> Parliament met again in January 1940 and Hertzog again proposed a motion against South Africa's involvement in the War. The voting ended with sixty seven in favour of Hertzog and eighty against.<sup>643</sup> This was an exact replication of the votes from the previous September. After this victory Smuts moved to pass the War Measures Bill which would give his government the necessary authority to deal with the emergency.<sup>644</sup> The Opposition fought the Bill and several others before Smuts finally decided to use the "procedure of guillotine",<sup>645</sup> an autocratic measure that Smuts approved of when in an emergency. Smut's own words were "How good it is for Democracy to have some of these

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<sup>634</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 331

<sup>635</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 331

<sup>636</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 332

<sup>637</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 332

<sup>638</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 333

<sup>639</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 333

<sup>640</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 333

<sup>641</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 335

<sup>642</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 335-336

<sup>643</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 337

<sup>644</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 337

<sup>645</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 337

weapons captured from the armoury of Autocracy!”<sup>646</sup> Episodes such as this only enhanced and endorsed the view that Smuts was an autocrat at heart.

In the next chapter, “Defiance”,<sup>647</sup> Hancock begins by stating what Smuts defined as his “job” during the War period: “to hold South Africa as a key position of the Commonwealth.”<sup>648</sup> This would require much fighting on both fronts. Hancock then explores Smuts’s physical and mental capabilities at the time as well as his philosophical and spiritual thinking throughout the early War period.<sup>649</sup> He also makes special mention of Isie as Smuts’s real support particularly during this time but also during his entire life.<sup>650</sup>

After Italy’s entry into the War (June 1940) Smuts assumed supreme command over the Union’s armed forces but not for autocratic measures or to lead the troops into battle himself. Smuts did this because it would allow an immediate “Yes” or “No” answer to any query of deployment by other leaders and commanders.<sup>651</sup> His fight on the home front increased as Germany won victory after victory which gave the Opposition plenty of ammunition and propaganda to lobby against Smuts, and in particular the Ossewa–Brandwag (OB), which was beginning to stir.<sup>652</sup> Dissension in the Opposition was growing between Hertzog and Malan with regards the aims and ideals.<sup>653</sup> Eventually Hertzog lost heavily in a party meeting vote about the equality of languages (Hertzog wanted equality). This led him to resign his leadership and his parliamentary seat in November 1940.<sup>654</sup> The damage from this split proved to be less damaging than Smuts had expected or hoped for.

The following chapter is concerned with the military events that occurred throughout 1941 and Hancock gives it the title of “Year of Destiny”. Hancock does this as he considers it the turning point in the War as it includes the entry of Russia and the United States of America (USA) into the War.<sup>655</sup> Essentially the chapter is only concerned with Smuts’s thoughts about the various developments in the War that occurred during the year. In March 1941 an Allied force of predominantly Australians and New Zealanders landed in Greece in an attempt to stem the advance of German forces. Although Smuts endorsed the decision he did not have

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<sup>646</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 338

<sup>647</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 341-356

<sup>648</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 341

<sup>649</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 341-350

<sup>650</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 342-343

<sup>651</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 350

<sup>652</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 350-351

<sup>653</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 352

<sup>654</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 353

<sup>655</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 357-363

any influence over it as it had already been made, therefore refuting any belief that he had forced this issue.<sup>656</sup> This is obviously an important event for Hancock as many Australians were killed in the action and his words illustrate that Smuts had little or no involvement in the tragic event.

The following section focusses on the “Struggle for Africa” with regards to both fronts for Smuts.<sup>657</sup> Initially Hancock writes about Smuts’s thoughts about the War in Europe and Asia, but he then states “From all his global explorations he kept returning to Africa”.<sup>658</sup> This can be seen as an illustration of what was most important to Smuts: home. For Smuts, his most needed duty to the Commonwealth was to keep the Cape route secure and this meant maintaining his power in South Africa. The main Opposition at this time was the National Party under Malan, but they themselves were under strain from extra-parliamentary and anti-parliamentary organizations, such as the OB.<sup>659</sup>

The OB began its own paramilitary wing under the leadership of Dr J. F. B. van Rensburg who had National Socialist tendencies. Smuts prohibited all government servants from becoming members of it and he allowed the OB to “play soldiers”, although without weapons.<sup>660</sup> Smuts called in all rifles and only reissued them to men who were members of the home defence force.<sup>661</sup> This outraged Afrikaners as it went completely against their tradition, but the protests of the National Party were muted. The reason for this was that the OB was becoming as much of a problem for the National Party as it was for the government.<sup>662</sup> Both the OB and the National Party claimed to be the representative of Afrikanerdom which eventually led to a struggle for power between them.<sup>663</sup> In the end the OB received such a battering that the Minister of the Interior, Harry Lawrence, commented “Instead of the Government having to ban the OB Dr Malan has done it for us.”<sup>664</sup>

A major event that the Opposition was up in arms about in March 1942 was Smuts’s commitment to the idea that if the Japanese attacked South Africa he would arm blacks and

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<sup>656</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 359

<sup>657</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 364-384

<sup>658</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 367

<sup>659</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 367

<sup>660</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 368

<sup>661</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 368-369

<sup>662</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 369

<sup>663</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 369

<sup>664</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 370

Coloureds.<sup>665</sup> Several thousand “non-whites” were already in the armed forces as non-combatants, but Smuts and several of his army commanders understood the need for extra manpower in the event of an invasion.<sup>666</sup> Hancock claims that Smuts’s reasons for arming blacks and Coloureds was twofold: firstly the need for extra manpower, and secondly because of “their loyal service”.<sup>667</sup> On the result of this the Opposition attempted to pass a motion for a Republic. Smuts moved his own motion in January 1942 reaffirming South Africa’s membership in the Commonwealth and the government’s declaration of war, which was carried by eighty one votes to fifty six.<sup>668</sup>

Hancock also indicates in the context of Africa that Smuts was gravely concerned about the situation in Egypt throughout the early period of the War.<sup>669</sup> In July 1942 Smuts was called to the Cairo Conference by Winston Churchill who gave Smuts much credit for the two decisions made there. The first was a clear-cut definition of two separate areas of command, and the placing in command of Montgomery and Alexander.<sup>670</sup> After August 1942 Churchill kept on requesting Smuts to join him in London, which Smuts accepted reluctantly.<sup>671</sup> Smuts informed a friend that he was “growing more and more of an African” and he made sure his visit was short: only five weeks from October to November 1942. Hancock reiterates the point that for the previous eight years Smuts had only left South Africa for a few brief visits to the front.<sup>672</sup>

Hancock also refers to “slim” Smuts with regards to the elections of July 1943.<sup>673</sup> With the War going well for the Allies Smuts declared elections to endorse his position. To Hancock, Smuts was being a “shrewd tactician”, but to his enemies he was the “wily politician” and he was being “slim.”<sup>674</sup> The results of the elections left Smuts and his United Party with a huge majority of sixty seven.<sup>675</sup> Hancock, however, points out with the advantage of hindsight the more foreboding result of the election: the National Party had obliterated its rivals leaving it

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<sup>665</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 370

<sup>666</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 370-371

<sup>667</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 371

<sup>668</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 373

<sup>669</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 374-377

<sup>670</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 378

<sup>671</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 378

<sup>672</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 379

<sup>673</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 380-381

<sup>674</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 381

<sup>675</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 383



as the only Opposition to Smuts.<sup>676</sup> Smuts could not have known that in just five years this “famous victory” would be all but forgotten.<sup>677</sup>

At the beginning of the next chapter Hancock attempts to describe and explain what and who Smuts was towards the end of the War and his life. He acclaims him as “a son of the soil, an Afrikaner”, yet he was also “perhaps the greatest African that had yet appeared.”<sup>678</sup> He also contends that Smuts was a European, but he was more than that, he was obsessed with humanity and the species that is *Homo sapiens*, therefore Hancock also classifies him as a “Terrestrial.”<sup>679</sup> Thus for Hancock Smuts was all these things: an Afrikaner, an African, an European, and a Terrestrial. Hancock also points out that Smuts was “detached in many of his human relationships but not that he was unsocial.”<sup>680</sup> For the remainder of the chapter Hancock explores Smuts’s philosophical, botanical and spiritual undertakings during the last few years of the War.<sup>681</sup>

Hancock writes a telling statement in the first lines of the next chapter: “During the first four years of war almost everything that Smuts did proved effectual; but during the last two years almost nothing.”<sup>682</sup> In Hancock’s opinion 1943 was the watershed of Smuts’s fate. He goes on to illustrate in the next few pages how Smuts’s influence in international politics and the War effort slowly diminished, including the peace treaty that followed.<sup>683</sup> For the remaining few pages Hancock notes how from 1944 the war–time coalition that was the United Party began to disintegrate not allowing Smuts full control of parliamentary proceedings.<sup>684</sup>

Towards the end of the War Smuts turned his thoughts to peace and an institution to maintain that peace, which was for him the United Nations, the result of the now defunct League of Nations.<sup>685</sup> Unlike the League of Nations, where Smuts had a major influence, he had little to do with the initial creation of the United Nations.<sup>686</sup> Hancock admits, however, that initially the United Nations seemed exactly like the old League of Nations with only the nomenclature

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<sup>676</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 383

<sup>677</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 384

<sup>678</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 385

<sup>679</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 386

<sup>680</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 385

<sup>681</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 386-411

<sup>682</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 412

<sup>683</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 412-419

<sup>684</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 420-425

<sup>685</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 426-429

<sup>686</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 429

differing.<sup>687</sup> Smuts's own aim for the United Nations was an international organization "with teeth."<sup>688</sup> Smuts had seen how fragile the League of Nations was and how futile the attempted sanctions were. Therefore he desired an organization that would not crumble under pressure or threats. According to Hancock Smuts made two important contributions to the creation of the United Nations. Firstly Smuts persuaded the British and Americans that Russia would have to be involved in the UNO. Smuts believed that if Russia was left out it would create its own rival organization.<sup>689</sup> This was a prophetic statement that would come true during the Cold War. Secondly, Smuts drafted the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations with Sir Charles Webster.<sup>690</sup> Ironically this would lead to Smuts's downfall as a respected world statesman because of the concept of "fundamental human rights" that Smuts himself had introduced.<sup>691</sup> Hancock notes that from "that time onwards they [the concept of fundamental human rights] became a stick with which to beat South Africa."<sup>692</sup> The remaining few pages make reference to the atomic bomb and Smuts's friendship with the Danish physicist Neils Böhr.<sup>693</sup>

The following chapter focusses on "The Shift of World Power" which essentially is how America and Russia emerged as the most powerful forces after the War.<sup>694</sup> The next chapter explores "The Quarrel with India"<sup>695</sup> and focuses on the concept of "fundamental human rights" that Smuts included in the United Nations Preamble. At first Hancock explores India's route to independence<sup>696</sup> before making the point that Smuts knew relations between South Africa and an independent India would be intolerable. Hancock comments quite critically "For Smuts, the nineteenth-century maxim 'liberal abroad, conservative at home' would cease to be serviceable."<sup>697</sup>

Hancock then examines previous Indian legislation in South Africa's history<sup>698</sup> and alludes to the idea that Smuts, while involved in the Second World War, was playing for time with

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<sup>687</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 429

<sup>688</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 430

<sup>689</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 431

<sup>690</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 432

<sup>691</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 433

<sup>692</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 433

<sup>693</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 434-439

<sup>694</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 443-449

<sup>695</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 450-472

<sup>696</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 451-454

<sup>697</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 455

<sup>698</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 455-458

regards to the “Indian question” at home.<sup>699</sup> Smuts set up a commission in 1941 under the leadership of Judge F. N. Broome after complaints against “Indian penetration in white areas.”<sup>700</sup> After the results of the commission, which showed that Indians were moving into the centre of Durban, Smuts introduced and passed the notorious “Pegging Act” in April 1943.<sup>701</sup> The Act was “notorious” because it disallowed any Indians from buying property in Durban centre for three years, and outraged the Indian government.<sup>702</sup> Almost immediately Smuts created another commission, again under the leadership of Broome, to investigate and create another solution for the Pegging Act which was an “interim measure”.<sup>703</sup> Smuts and A. I. Kajeje worked out a memorandum which was agreed upon in April 1944 and was known as the Pretoria Agreement and was moderate in its content.<sup>704</sup> Unfortunately for Smuts, he had to leave South Africa for the Commonwealth Conference immediately after the Agreement.<sup>705</sup> In his absence the whole of white Natal rose in political revolt and through a select committee effectively extended the Pegging Act for all time rather than implementing the Pretoria Agreement.<sup>706</sup>

After this India imposed an economic boycott and it managed to put the treatment of Indians in South Africa on the agenda for the first United Nations General Assembly in 1946.<sup>707</sup> During the entire General Assembly in San Francisco, from November to December 1946, India attacked Smuts and South Africa for its treatment of Indians.<sup>708</sup> In the end the United Nations voted in favour of India in forcing South Africa to remove or adjust the Indian legislation that was in place.<sup>709</sup> It was indeed a humiliating beginning for Smuts at the Conference around a concept that he himself had conceived.

Smuts’s views on “Colour” and the Native policy is the concern of the next chapter and Hancock begins by relating anecdotes in this regard.<sup>710</sup> Smuts acknowledged that segregation had been a failure and his belief was that whites were bound in duty to supply specific needs

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<sup>699</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 459

<sup>700</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 459

<sup>701</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 460

<sup>702</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 460

<sup>703</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 461

<sup>704</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 462

<sup>705</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 463

<sup>706</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 464

<sup>707</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 467

<sup>708</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 468-470

<sup>709</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 470

<sup>710</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 473-476

to the “Natives” namely education, health, housing, nutrition and wages.<sup>711</sup> The main issue for the Native Representatives, most notably Margaret Ballinger, was the plight of the urban black worker, especially during the War years.<sup>712</sup> Ballinger did, however, congratulate the government in January 1947 for its improvements with regards to Native policy. She however constantly attacked the government for its slow pace in introducing reforms.<sup>713</sup> Unfortunately Hancock reveals that she seemed to forget that there was a war in progress.<sup>714</sup>

Hancock points out that Smuts and his government were attempting to bring reforms in during a period of major upheaval from roughly 1942 until 1948. The world economy was poor and South Africa’s administration was in terrible shape.<sup>715</sup> Hancock indicates that some improvements were made such as the expansion of social security across the colour bar in 1945.<sup>716</sup> Smuts knew his government had to “liberalize its social policies”, but that it would also have to “carry public opinion along with it.”<sup>717</sup> Smuts acknowledged this need by writing “I shall do as much of the right thing as possible, but always keep before me the paramount necessity of winning the election!”<sup>718</sup> He even referred to the election as possibly the “most important ever held in this country.”<sup>719</sup> In essence Smuts knew that South Africa’s Native policies were antiquated and incorrect, but he did not know if the rest of the country knew that and whether they would follow his lead.

At the beginning of his next chapter Hancock initially examines Smuts’s physical and mental pursuits just after the Second World War.<sup>720</sup> He then explores the propaganda used by Smuts and the National Party, which essentially was a fight between the Fagan and the Sauer reports.<sup>721</sup> The Fagan report, which was endorsed by Smuts, attempted to explain how different races could live together. In contrast the Sauer report, which was endorsed by the National Party, explained how different races could live apart.<sup>722</sup> May 1948 was another “Black Peril” election which Smuts lost yet again by the small margin of eight seats.<sup>723</sup> It was

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<sup>711</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 476

<sup>712</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 478

<sup>713</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 478

<sup>714</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 479

<sup>715</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 480

<sup>716</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 480

<sup>717</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 486

<sup>718</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 488

<sup>719</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 488

<sup>720</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 492-496

<sup>721</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 496-504

<sup>722</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 491

<sup>723</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 505

the end of an era.<sup>724</sup> After his electoral loss Hancock concludes that Smuts found solace in the honour of being elected in January 1948 and inaugurated as Chancellor of Cambridge University on 12 June 1948.<sup>725</sup>

The final chapter of the two volume biography deals with Smuts's last few years as the Opposition, which were generally uneventful as the country spiralled into the apartheid period which coincided with Smuts's slow decline and ultimate death.<sup>726</sup>

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<sup>724</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 507

<sup>725</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, p 508

<sup>726</sup> W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: Fields of force*, pp 511-529

## CHAPTER 5: POST-HANCOCK LITERATURE

This chapter deals with literature written after the publication of Hancock's final volume in 1968. As in Chapter 2 this section will be divided between non-biographies and biographies. One of the considerations for this chapter is to evaluate whether Hancock and the Smuts Papers had any effect on a selection of authors writing about Smuts. It also considers the changing views on Smuts. Two Afrikaans works that have been translated into English have also been included in order to investigate how apartheid-era historians wrote and thought about Smuts, C. F. J. Muller and F. A. van Jaarsveld.

### 5.1 Non-biographies

The first book examined is a general history of South Africa edited by C. F. J. Muller, who at the time (1969) was Head of the Department of History at the University of South Africa. Titled *Five Hundred Years: A History of South Africa* the book was the first general history in the Afrikaans language to be translated into English.<sup>727</sup> One important note to make is that this volume "is not in the vigorous tradition of Afrikaner nationalism; it reflects instead the new spirit of white unity in South Africa."<sup>728</sup> A reviewer of this book, however, found that the information regarding black people in the volume was seriously lacking and often untruthful.<sup>729</sup>

In this general history twelve prominent historians working in South Africa collaborated to produce the volume, of which only one was English.<sup>730</sup> Muller himself was born in Stellenbosch in 1916 where most of his education comes from, apart from a few international stints as a Rhodes Scholar in Oxford, an archivist in North America and in Europe as a Nuffield Fellow.<sup>731</sup>

The first mention of Smuts is with regards to the Great Trek of 1836-1854 whereby it is noted that many "British subjects, such as J. H. Brand, T. F. Burgers and J. C. Smuts, were to play significant parts in the development of the republics [Transvaal and Free State] throughout

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<sup>727</sup> M. Legassick, Review of C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, *African Historical Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 1970, p 491

<sup>728</sup> M. Legassick, Review of C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, *African Historical Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 1970, p 491

<sup>729</sup> M. Legassick, Review of C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, *African Historical Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 1970, pp 492-495

<sup>730</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, Cape Town: Academica, 1975, front cover

<sup>731</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, back cover

the late nineteenth century.”<sup>732</sup> This was because of the “almost chronic shortage of political leaders” within the two republics.<sup>733</sup> Smuts is again mentioned when Kruger began appointing local Afrikaners into government rather than Hollanders: “Another important appointment of this period was that of the young Cape jurist, Advocate J. C. Smuts, as State Attorney.”<sup>734</sup> What is interesting to note is that Smuts’s age is not brought up, even though he was too young for the position by law, and that no mention is made of Smuts’s previous relationship with Rhodes.

When considering the Anglo-Boer War Smuts is mentioned as one of the main supporters of an invasion of the Cape, which he eventually led himself. The author of this chapter, W. J. de Kock, agreed with this strategy as he believed it would have caused severe disruptions for the British as well as “how easily they could have caused an uprising” amongst the Cape Afrikaners.<sup>735</sup> The renowned removal of the “republic’s gold supplies” by Smuts is presented as an instruction from the Executive Council,<sup>736</sup> and no mention is made of a forced removal at gunpoint like previous authors such as Millin and Armstrong. According to de Kock it is noted, however, that Smuts was sent to De la Rey to assist in “punishing traitors and in instituting local government bodies” after the administration of the Western Transvaal was delegated to De la Rey.<sup>737</sup> It seems that Smuts’s education in war was a side-show and his real reason for being there was for administrative purposes: “So the talented Smuts, who was later himself to be promoted to the rank of general, was initiated into the art of war by De la Rey.”<sup>738</sup>

Smuts is briefly mentioned as gaining his own command in the Gatsrand area of the Western Transvaal and his success at Modderfontein before it is noted that the “idea of invading the Cape Colony in force had been advocated constantly by Smuts.”<sup>739</sup> This is a well-known fact but it is interesting that the “talented Smuts” is mentioned in regards to this invasion alone as it portrays him as the main, and sometimes only, proponent of the invasion. Smuts’s invasion of the Cape is written about relatively extensively and is considered “heroic.” His various

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<sup>732</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 180

<sup>733</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 180

<sup>734</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 290

<sup>735</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 328

<sup>736</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 339

<sup>737</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 341

<sup>738</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 341

<sup>739</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 347

engagements and travels and his commando is related in moderate detail, in fact in as much detail as Botha's and De Wet's movements.<sup>740</sup>

After the Anglo-Boer War several representatives of the people were chosen by the commandos themselves to attend the peace process while "General J. C. Smuts was summoned from Namaqualand."<sup>741</sup> This statement does not expressively say that Smuts was not himself elected; but comes across as relatively ambiguous. Smuts is then praised alongside Hertzog for their "important" role in the drafting of the peace agreement and their roles as lawyers and advisors.<sup>742</sup> One interesting piece of information not referred to before in the literature accessed in this study, including Hancock, is that De Wet was adamant that his reluctant acceptance of the peace required Hertzog and Smuts to draft a resolution which accepted the peace proposals but which should also include a "severe indictment against British policy".<sup>743</sup>

Smuts is also mentioned as one of several leaders of the newly founded *Het Volk* political party<sup>744</sup> and is specifically referred to as "the brains behind *Het Volk*".<sup>745</sup> Campbell-Bannerman is also given nearly all the credit for granting self-government to South Africa and that it was his idea alone, while Smuts was "successful" in his mere urging of the British government to grant this.<sup>746</sup> Smuts is also referred to as Botha's "right-hand man" after *Het Volk* was elected into government in 1907 and both are praised for never "deviating" from their original policy of conciliation.<sup>747</sup> Criticism is reserved for Smuts with regards to his Education Act of 1907 and his lack of support for the cultural revival of Afrikaans<sup>748</sup> which is perfectly understandable within a general history written in Afrikaans. Smuts is mentioned alongside Gandhi when the Indian question is examined although very briefly: "although Smuts and Gandhi reached a temporary understanding in January 1908, the matter was by no means settled."<sup>749</sup>

The National Convention of 1908 and its build-up are examined in detail in the text and Smuts is mentioned several times, firstly as one of the major statesmen who was in support of

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<sup>740</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 350

<sup>741</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 355

<sup>742</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 356

<sup>743</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 357

<sup>744</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 363

<sup>745</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 364

<sup>746</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 364

<sup>747</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 365

<sup>748</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 366

<sup>749</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 367



it, along with Merriman and Steyn.<sup>750</sup> It is also noted that Merriman, Smuts and Steyn did not want any form of union, or discussions towards it, until “Afrikaner-supported, anti-imperialist parties had come to power”, therefore they waited until February 1908 before they allowed the unification movement to gather momentum.<sup>751</sup> It is also accepted that it was Smuts’s resolutions that were “unanimously accepted” by the Convention,<sup>752</sup> and that to Botha and Smuts unification was the perfect opportunity to achieve self-determination and true conciliation.<sup>753</sup> Smuts is regarded as the “outstanding delegate of the Convention” and that “because of his powers of intellect, his devotion to duty and his assiduous groundwork” one can consider that “to a large extent the Constitution of the Union of South Africa was his creation.”<sup>754</sup>

One interesting point concerning the 1913 strikes is that “Smuts, as the responsible minister, was obliged to call in the help” of the British troops still in South Africa.<sup>755</sup> What is interesting is that no blame or negative remarks are made of this move by Smuts. With regards to the deportation of the strike leaders in 1914 Smuts receives minimal criticism: “This autocratic move evoked much criticism, but it certainly helped to quell the miners’ urge to strike.”<sup>756</sup> This can almost be seen as recognition if not praise for Smuts’s toughness and no-nonsense attitude. The most important issue in this section is that no mention is made of Smuts with regards to the execution of Jopie Fourie. In fact the only occasion the Smuts is mentioned with regards to the entire 1914 rebellion is “from that time on Botha and Smuts were branded by a section of the Afrikaners as henchmen of Britain and betrayers of the Afrikaners.”<sup>757</sup> The absence of a referral to Smuts concerning the Fourie incident is of extreme value as it possibly indicates that the author/editor was attempting to protect Smuts from further disrepute under the apartheid government.

Smuts is briefly mentioned as Botha’s “able lieutenant” during the German South-West Africa campaign<sup>758</sup> and again when he accepted the command of British forces in German East Africa.<sup>759</sup> No mention is made of Smuts accepting the command reluctantly, however.

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<sup>750</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 369

<sup>751</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 369

<sup>752</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 370

<sup>753</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 371

<sup>754</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 371

<sup>755</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 386

<sup>756</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 387

<sup>757</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 390

<sup>758</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 392

<sup>759</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 393

The author of the chapter, B. J. Liebenberg, admits that Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, the German commander in the area, “was a military strategist equal, if not superior to Smuts”,<sup>760</sup> therefore when Smuts left in 1917 Germany was still undefeated in the region, although no blame or criticism is levelled at Smuts. Smuts receives immense praise for all of his efforts in London throughout 1917 and 1918, including recognising him as “the father of the British Air Force.”<sup>761</sup> Acknowledgement is also given for his part in the creation of the League of Nations “which earned him the admiration of statesmen and historians.”<sup>762</sup> Botha and Smuts are also praised for their disappointment and unhappiness over the “unfair treatment” of Germany at the peace conference of Versailles. Smuts is specifically commended for his “far-sightedness” and is quoted as writing “It is a terrible document”.<sup>763</sup> It seems strange that Smuts would receive so much praise for his international work in an Afrikaans history text considering that he was often accused by many Afrikaners of spending too much time overseas.

After Botha’s death, Smuts became Prime Minister and is referred to as “a man of exceptional intellect... who lacked Botha’s personal following.” Another important point made is that Smuts now faced the “difficult task to lead a party whose popularity was steadily declining.”<sup>764</sup> Again it seems like Smuts is being protected by the authors as he was trying to save a sinking ship. Smuts is criticised for his “stern measures” when countering the various strikes and incidents that occurred in 1921 and 1922 which made Smuts “more unpopular than ever.”<sup>765</sup>

For the Bulhoek incident Smuts is described as being “severely criticised” as he was “the responsible minister”<sup>766</sup> although no criticism is made by Liebenberg. With regards to the Rand Revolt Smuts is criticised for his idea to “let things develop” before his “sudden ruthless quelling of the rebellion”<sup>767</sup> which is a common belief. When examining the Bondelzwarts incident the author does not criticise Smuts directly, but rather illustrates how the Opposition “seized on the incident” in order to further damage Smuts’s reputation.<sup>768</sup> Smuts’s loss of the 1924 elections was mainly ascribed to three things by Liebenberg:

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<sup>760</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 393

<sup>761</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 393

<sup>762</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 393

<sup>763</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 393

<sup>764</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 394

<sup>765</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 395

<sup>766</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 395

<sup>767</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 398

<sup>768</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 398

Rhodesia's decision to not be incorporated into the Union of South Africa; the formation of the Pact between the National and Labour parties; and most importantly, Smuts's "disregard of the White worker."<sup>769</sup> Perhaps a better way to state the above is his "apparent" disregard, as Smuts was a pragmatist and his decisions were always based on the betterment of his country.

With regards to the Imperial Conference of 1926 and the Statute of Westminster in 1931, which gave South Africa (and the other colonies of Britain) a larger degree of freedom within the Commonwealth, Hertzog is given all the credit. Smuts is only mentioned as attempting to achieve this at the 1917 Imperial Conference<sup>770</sup> and his disagreement with Hertzog that South Africa still owed it to Britain to join "any war into which Britain might enter".<sup>771</sup> Smuts is often given the credit for this change in "dominion status" with an indication that Hertzog merely used Smuts's ideas at the right time. Therefore it seems odd that Smuts receives so little praise and mention for an event he was heavily involved in. Smuts does, however, receive a moment of praise at the end of this particular chapter as one of the "chief architects" for dominion status alongside Hertzog and two others,<sup>772</sup> even though scant mention is made of him previously.

Smuts does receive some praise for his insistence that South Africa to remove itself from the gold standard during the Great Depression<sup>773</sup> and he is also mentioned briefly with regards to the Fusion government<sup>774</sup> although the author finds that the breaking up of the National Party was the most important event from this period.<sup>775</sup> Much of the time that Smuts is referred to or mentioned in this general history he comes across as a side-player, a man who is present but who has no major impact on developments. The outbreak of the Second World War and the collapse of the Fusion government is also briefly explained before Smuts, in his "triple capacity of Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Officer Commanding the South African forces, threw all his amazing energy into the South African war effort."<sup>776</sup>

The South African involvement in the War in Africa is briefly explained before it is noted that "Smuts now revoked his 1939 promise that South Africans would fight only in

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<sup>769</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 399

<sup>770</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 403

<sup>771</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 404

<sup>772</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 407

<sup>773</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 409

<sup>774</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, pp 410-412

<sup>775</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 412

<sup>776</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 417

Africa”.<sup>777</sup> “Revoked” is a very strong word for the above statement and is perhaps incorrect in its usage. The author, however, finds that the most important issue during the War period was “Afrikaner strife and discord” at home which Smuts worked “carefully” to prevent.<sup>778</sup> The author then focusses on the reunification attempts of the National Party during the War period while there is little information on what Smuts did in South Africa at the time.<sup>779</sup> This can be seen as an attempt by the author and/or editor to focus on what they thought was most important: the National Party and its eventual rise to power under D.F. Malan.

Smuts is also accused of allowing race relations to deteriorate “rapidly” during the Second World War and that even Smuts’s “great international prestige was unable to counter the attacks on South Africa’s racial policy.”<sup>780</sup> Smuts receives further praise for his immense international fame and that he “filled his roles as soldier, statesman, philosopher and prophet with distinction.” Moreover it is stated that “No other South African had ever risen to such heights of international fame.”<sup>781</sup> But as before, any praise of Smuts comes with criticism: “Afrikaner nationalists considered Smuts to be a great Englishman but a bad Afrikaner. They wanted at any cost to prevent Smuts from governing South Africa for another five years.”<sup>782</sup> It is indicated, however, that Smuts lost power in 1948 because of the “colour” question and that the “idea of apartheid... attracted the White electorate.”<sup>783</sup> After this electoral defeat Smuts is referred to as “a tired old man” who had no “constructive solution” to counter Malan’s apartheid policy and that he had always “shied away” from the “colour question”.<sup>784</sup> His death is mentioned in one sentence: “Smuts died in September 1950 and in accordance with his wish was succeeded...by J.G.N. Strauss”<sup>785</sup>-a rather ignoble end to an immense life.

Similarities can be seen within this general history and Millin’s biography with regards to both the ambivalence and ambiguity. Often throughout this general South African history Smuts receives much praise but almost immediately it is followed by criticism. Smuts is praised as a great international figure abounding with supreme energy and intellect, but he is portrayed as never being good enough, as never being a true South African or true Afrikaner.

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<sup>777</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 418

<sup>778</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 419

<sup>779</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, pp 419-422

<sup>780</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 424

<sup>781</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 426

<sup>782</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 426

<sup>783</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 426

<sup>784</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 431

<sup>785</sup> C. F. J. Muller (ed.), *500 years: a history of South Africa*, p 431

Smuts is shown in two lights: as the most famous South African at the time, and as a traitor who turned his back on South Africa and in particular Afrikaners.

The next text examined is that by F. A. van Jaarsveld and his history *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster: 1652-1974*. Van Jaarsveld was born in the Transvaal on 5 June 1922. He gained his MA in History in 1945 and completed his doctorate in 1950 at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. Van Jaarsveld then worked at several universities in South Africa, including the University of South Africa and the University of Pretoria.<sup>786</sup> Initially Van Jaarsveld criticised Afrikaner historiography for serving Afrikaner nationalism and being “too apologetic”.<sup>787</sup> By the 1960s, however, “his Afrikaner loyalties came to the fore.”<sup>788</sup> Van Jaarsveld lashed out at any criticism against Afrikaners and eventually came to be known as the “Afrikaner’s historian” who in “his textbooks particularly...perpetuated Afrikaner myths.”<sup>789</sup> One reviewer criticises *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster* for Van Jaarsveld’s attempts to “defend and justify the Afrikaner and his ethos against what he saw as the anti-Afrikaner bias of [other] books.”<sup>790</sup> Although Van Jaarsveld was for a time a supporter of apartheid, towards the end of his life he turned away from it and sought other means to justify the position of his people.<sup>791</sup> It can therefore be seen that during the time that *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster* was written (1975) Van Jaarsveld was still possibly a supporter of apartheid as it was only in the late 1970s that he began to doubt its methods. This should be kept in mind in analysing this particular text.<sup>792</sup>

The first notable mention of Smuts is his appointment as State Attorney under Kruger, but interestingly of the “several Cape Afrikaners” who were “entrusted with important positions” Smuts is the only one mentioned by name.<sup>793</sup> Smuts is again briefly mentioned in the context

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<sup>786</sup> F. A. Mouton, “F. A. van Jaarsveld (1922–1995) — a flawed genius?”, *Kleio*, 27:1, 5-11, DOI: 10.1080/00232089585310011, 1995, p 5

<sup>787</sup> F. A. Mouton, “F. A. van Jaarsveld (1922–1995) — a flawed genius?”, *Kleio*, 27:1, 5-11, DOI: 10.1080/00232089585310011, 1995, p 6

<sup>788</sup> F. A. Mouton, “F. A. van Jaarsveld (1922–1995) — a flawed genius?”, *Kleio*, 27:1, 5-11, DOI: 10.1080/00232089585310011, 1995, p 7

<sup>789</sup> F. A. Mouton, “F. A. van Jaarsveld (1922–1995) — a flawed genius?”, *Kleio*, 27:1, 5-11, DOI: 10.1080/00232089585310011, 1995, p 7

<sup>790</sup> F. A. Mouton, “F. A. van Jaarsveld (1922–1995) — a flawed genius?”, *Kleio*, 27:1, 5-11, DOI: 10.1080/00232089585310011, 1995, p 7

<sup>791</sup> F. A. Mouton, “F. A. van Jaarsveld (1922–1995) — a flawed genius?”, *Kleio*, 27:1, 5-11, DOI: 10.1080/00232089585310011, 1995, p 11

<sup>792</sup> F. A. Mouton, “F. A. van Jaarsveld (1922–1995) — a flawed genius?”, *Kleio*, 27:1, 5-11, DOI: 10.1080/00232089585310011, 1995, p 7

<sup>793</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster 1652-1974: An introduction to the history of the Republic of South Africa*, Johannesburg: Perskor Publishers, 1975, p 192

of the Anglo-Boer War as one of several generals who “distinguished themselves on the battlefield.” In fact, “Smuts and Hertzog even invaded the Cape Colony” but no mention is made of how successful either general was.<sup>794</sup> As regards the creation of *Het Volk* and South Africa gaining self-determination from Campbell-Bannerman, no mention is made of Smuts. He is only mentioned afterwards as the new Colonial Secretary in the Transvaal under the leadership of Botha.<sup>795</sup>

Smuts is considered a major player in the National Convention of 1908 and South Africa’s eventual Union. “Conciliation” was Botha’s and Smuts’s main policy and Smuts is referred to as “the intellectual force behind Botha.” Smuts also eventually became the “theoretician” of the British Empire.<sup>796</sup> Van Jaarsveld admits that, along with John X. Merriman, Smuts was one of the “great architects of the future Union.” But he continues almost damningly “One may say, with justification, that his share in the creation of the Union was the most lasting achievement in Smuts’s political career.”<sup>797</sup> This is a bold statement considering that Smuts was new to politics and he still had another forty years of his immense life remaining, but perhaps this is the most important part of Smuts’s life in Van Jaarsveld’s opinion. Van Jaarsveld does accept that much of the good and reasons for Union and the National Convention were due to Smuts’s efforts and initiative.<sup>798</sup> Smuts is also seen as the major architect due to his legal mind and he was the major instigator for Union rather than Federalism.<sup>799</sup>

One surprising source of criticism appears with regards to the division of votes in 1908. Smuts argued for a greater weight on rural votes in order to create a balance between rural and urban constituencies. Van Jaarsveld, however, correctly points out the major problem with this plan: it created the possibility that a minority could gain the majority of seats.<sup>800</sup> This was to backfire on Smuts later in his career, but it is not pointed out by authors and historians too often. Smuts is also heavily criticised for his Education Act of 1908 because he did not “provide for equality of the languages” which Hertzog did and Hertzog therefore gains much praise from Van Jaarsveld. According to Van Jaarsveld, this was an effort by Botha and Smuts to try receive as many English votes as possible as the English were “bent

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<sup>794</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster 1652-1974*, p 207

<sup>795</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster 1652-1974*, p 214

<sup>796</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster 1652-1974*, p 215

<sup>797</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster 1652-1974*, p 216

<sup>798</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster 1652-1974*, p 217

<sup>799</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster 1652-1974*, p 218

<sup>800</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster 1652-1974*, p 220

on picking the fruits of war.”<sup>801</sup> Van Jaarsveld also states that Botha and Smuts “accepted that the future of the Union lay entirely within the British Empire and that it was to follow the course laid down by Britain”.<sup>802</sup> This statement makes it seem like Botha and Smuts had become completely subservient to Britain.

Smuts receives further criticism for his and Botha’s supposed lack of support for “Afrikaner culture.” Van Jaarsveld states that “Botha and Smuts were not taking into account the possibility of the young Afrikaner culture being overwhelmed by the mighty, centuries-old British culture”.<sup>803</sup> The protection of Afrikaner culture seems to be of the utmost importance to Van Jaarsveld and in his opinion Smuts failed at that protection at every turn. Smuts is noted in the First World War as “distinguishing” himself in the invasion of German South West Africa but it is also noted that when Smuts left German East Africa after his posting there “the territory had not yet been conquered.”<sup>804</sup> No explanation is given as to why or how, simply that Smuts had not completed his task. Interestingly it is worth noting that no mention is made of Smuts when Van Jaarsveld examines the Jopie Fourie incident. Praise is retained for Smuts with regards to his membership in Lloyd George’s War Cabinet and he “began to distinguish himself as a statesman of world stature.”<sup>805</sup> Van Jaarsveld also concedes that Smuts signed the Treaty of Versailles “reluctantly” because he foresaw future conflict coming from it.<sup>806</sup>

Smuts is mentioned briefly in connection with the Rand Revolt of 1922 as having declared martial law<sup>807</sup> and that Smuts was accused of “being hand-in-glove with the capitalists” because of his actions during the strike.<sup>808</sup> This, Van Jaarsveld believed, was why Smuts lost the 1924 elections. Smuts is also accused by Van Jaarsveld for being “slow to react” and then acting too brutally during the 1922 Rand Revolt.<sup>809</sup> Another interesting point is that no mention is made of either the Bondelzwarts or Bulhoek incidents. It is Hertzog that receives all the credit for the change in dominion status that occurred at the Imperial Conference in 1926 and the Statute of Westminster in 1931.<sup>810</sup> Van Jaarsveld does, however, indicate that

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<sup>801</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster 1652-1974*, p 224

<sup>802</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster 1652-1974*, p 278

<sup>803</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster 1652-1974*, p 232

<sup>804</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster 1652-1974*, p 237

<sup>805</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster 1652-1974*, p 237

<sup>806</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster 1652-1974*, pp 237-238

<sup>807</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster 1652-1974*, p 238

<sup>808</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster 1652-1974*, p 240

<sup>809</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster 1652-1974*, p 320

<sup>810</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster 1652-1974*, pp 240-242

Smuts became the “theoretician of the Imperial concept” and that “some of his views gained support at the prime ministers’ conferences.”<sup>811</sup> This could almost be seen as a hint that Smuts’s role in the 1926 Imperial Conference and the 1931 Statute of Westminster was perhaps larger than Van Jaarsveld suggests.

With regards to the merger of Smuts’s and Hertzog’s political parties, there is scant mention of Smuts as Van Jaarsveld instead focusses specifically on Hertzog and Malan.<sup>812</sup> Van Jaarsveld also believes that Smuts’s victory in the polls in 1943 during the Second World War was “his greatest triumph.”<sup>813</sup> Smuts also “played a remarkable role in the world affairs.” He was made a Field Marshal in 1941 and he drew up the Preamble for the Charter of the United Nations. But as before, praise of Smuts comes with criticism: “the nationally-orientated Afrikaners saw him as a *British* statesman, estranged from the people of his origin, and as one who no longer cared for his cultural interests.”<sup>814</sup> Van Jaarsveld does however indicate that most of the Afrikaner leaders did not approach politics as Smuts did, who looked at the world from “an international political angle”, while Hertzog and Malan “continued to look *inwards*”.<sup>815</sup> Van Jaarsveld also acknowledges Smuts for leading “the Union quietly through the war” despite “great bitterness” and “suppression”.<sup>816</sup>

After the War the Smuts government administration was “not above criticism”<sup>817</sup> and with regards to the industrialisation and urbanisation of black people Van Jaarsveld indicates that Smuts “had no clearly-formulated policy.”<sup>818</sup> Smuts’s “liberalism”, and especially that of his young protégé J. H. Hofmeyr, sparked “fears” that Smuts would lead South Africa to “racial integration.” Van Jaarsveld argues that because of this the National Party “revived the old policy of segregation as an election issue under the new slogan of *Apartheid*.”<sup>819</sup> By this reasoning it is only because of the “threat of liberalism” from Smuts and his United Party that apartheid exists. Smuts’s death receives the briefest of mentions and only with regards to the weakening of the United Party, because of his and Hofmeyr’s deaths.<sup>820</sup>

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<sup>811</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster 1652-1974*, p 281

<sup>812</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster 1652-1974*, pp 242-245

<sup>813</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster 1652-1974*, p 246

<sup>814</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster 1652-1974*, p 248

<sup>815</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster 1652-1974*, p 248

<sup>816</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster 1652-1974*, p 249

<sup>817</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster 1652-1974*, p 251

<sup>818</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster 1652-1974*, p 252

<sup>819</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster 1652-1974*, p 254

<sup>820</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster 1652-1974*, p 259



Smuts is also criticised for his lack of concern with regards to the black people, in particular his Native Affairs Act of 1920 which provided local and general councils in “Bantu” areas. Along with the previous Native Land Act of 1913 this was, as “far as Smuts was concerned”, the end of the matter.<sup>821</sup> Smuts is also quoted as stating that the “Native problem” was something to be solved in the future generation and in 1942 it is noted that Smuts rejected territorial segregation outright.<sup>822</sup> With regards to the industrialisation and urbanisation of blacks, Smuts is again criticised as he “had no solution to the problem and matters had to take their course.”<sup>823</sup>

Van Jaarsveld continues with a kind of ambivalence towards Smuts much as Muller and Millin did. Smuts is praised for his numerous contributions to international politics but receives little to none for his efforts at home. Some myths are perpetuated in the sense that Hertzog receives all the credit for South Africa’s dominion status, while Smuts is stripped of any credit. For every time that Smuts receives praise from Van Jaarsveld criticism is never far behind. The last important note to make is that Van Jaarsveld did use Hancock as a source which makes it seem odd that so little is written about Smuts and a few pieces of information appear incorrect.

The next text examined is Leonard Thompson’s *A History of South Africa* which was first published in the United States of America in 1990. Thompson was born in England before moving to South Africa briefly whereby he became one of Van Jaarsveld’s most “hated enemies.”<sup>824</sup> Thompson then moved to the United States of America in 1960 and the first point to make is that two reviewers consider this work to be written exclusively for American readers.<sup>825</sup> One reviewer criticises the work for being too short and lacking in clear direction before concluding that a better history was De Kiewiet’s *History of South Africa: Social and Economic* (1941).<sup>826</sup> Another reviewer praises Thompson for having “no time for the Afrikaner nationalist version” found in Muller’s *Five Hundred Years* as well as his “attacks”

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<sup>821</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster 1652-1974*, p 351

<sup>822</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster 1652-1974*, p 352

<sup>823</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster 1652-1974*, p 353

<sup>824</sup> F. A. Mouton, “F. A. van Jaarsveld (1922–1995) — a flawed genius?”, *Kleio*, 27:1, 5-11, DOI: 10.1080/00232089585310011, 1995, p 9

<sup>825</sup> A. D. Roberts, Review of L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 109, No. 430, 1994, p 273; N. Etherington, Review of L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 1993, p 451

<sup>826</sup> A. D. Roberts, Review of L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 109, No. 430, 1994, pp 273-274

on Afrikaner mythology.<sup>827</sup> One reviewer, also believed that “the good guys”, who he identifies as Smuts and Hofmeyr, are “usually distinguished by education and intelligence” while “the bad guys”, Hertzog and Kruger, by “ignorance and fanaticism”.<sup>828</sup> He concludes that Thompson sees Smuts and Hofmeyr as having their faults, “but they are much preferred to Kruger and Hertzog”. Overall, the reviewer applauds this “short modern history.”<sup>829</sup>

The first mention of Smuts in Thompson’s history is as one of the “younger members” in the Transvaal government who was “trying to purge it of its worst abuses.”<sup>830</sup> Thompson also introduces Smuts as having “been born in the Cape Colony and had had a brilliant career at Cambridge University.”<sup>831</sup> Smuts is also noted as attempting a last-ditch attempt at peace just before the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War which failed due to Chamberlain.<sup>832</sup> There is, however, no mention of Smuts during the Anglo-Boer War or even at the Peace of Vereeniging. Smuts and Botha are noted as the leaders and creators of *Het Volk* in reaction to Milner’s Chinese miners, and Smuts is again described in this context as “Cape-born” and “British-educated.”<sup>833</sup>

Campbell-Bannerman and his government receive full credit for the return of self-government with no acknowledgement of Smuts who is only again seen, along with Botha, in power of the Transvaal and practicing “conciliation.”<sup>834</sup> Thompson briefly examines the National Convention and mentions that Smuts had “arrived with a well-thought-out constitutional scheme”.<sup>835</sup> Apart from this single sentence there is no other mention of Smuts, even though his importance in the Convention was paramount. When examining Botha and Smuts in power post-1910 Smuts is again described as “an able and ambitious Cambridge-educated intellectual.”<sup>836</sup> Thompson’s repeated obsession with Smuts’s education and intellect is most apparent.

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<sup>827</sup> N. Etherington, Review of L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 1993, p 451

<sup>828</sup> N. Etherington, Review of L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 1993, p 452

<sup>829</sup> N. Etherington, Review of L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 1993, p 452

<sup>830</sup> L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990, p 140

<sup>831</sup> L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, p 140

<sup>832</sup> L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, pp 140-141

<sup>833</sup> L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, p 145

<sup>834</sup> L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, p 147

<sup>835</sup> L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, p 149

<sup>836</sup> L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, p 157

With regards to the First World War Thompson again praises Smuts for his “remarkable wartime career” which included “commanding imperial forces”, “serving as a member of the British Imperial War Cabinet” and “contributing to the creation of the League of Nations.”<sup>837</sup> Thompson does reserve some criticism for what seems like his hero as he states that upon Smuts entering the world stage he “became largely preoccupied with international rather than local affairs” commenting that this displeased Afrikaner nationalists.<sup>838</sup> Smuts is also briefly mentioned by Thompson with regards to the 1922 Rand Revolt as “eventually” coming “down heavily on the side of the [mine] owners.” Thompson, however, does not seem to lament the loss of life but rather that “the political costs were high.”<sup>839</sup> It is also important to note that “largely at Hertzog’s instigation” South Africa received Dominion status and that the Statute of Westminster came into being with no mention of Smuts.<sup>840</sup> He is however again briefly mentioned when taking over the government at the outbreak of the Second World War.<sup>841</sup>

Interestingly, only Botha is mentioned when Thompson examines the 1913 Natives Land Act.<sup>842</sup> Smuts is not mentioned at all throughout his examination of segregation in South Africa between 1910 and 1939.<sup>843</sup> Smuts is referred to as maintaining segregation throughout the War period, but quickly adds that “there was much uncertainty about the future.”<sup>844</sup> J. H. Hofmeyr is also introduced as “Smuts’s ablest cabinet colleague” and that both “raised liberal hopes” with regards to segregation and discrimination.<sup>845</sup> Thompson also notes that Smuts “took part in drafting the Charter of the United Nations.”<sup>846</sup> Thompson is critical of Smuts in that he “never wavered in his belief that Africans were an inferior people”, although again he is quick to point out that his opinion was much like “most contemporary white people.”<sup>847</sup> Thompson then focusses on the efforts of Malan to gain power<sup>848</sup> before he notes that at the

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<sup>837</sup> L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, p 159

<sup>838</sup> L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, p 159

<sup>839</sup> L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, p 160

<sup>840</sup> L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, p 160

<sup>841</sup> L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, p 162

<sup>842</sup> L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, p 163

<sup>843</sup> L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, pp 163-170

<sup>844</sup> L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, p 180

<sup>845</sup> L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, p 180

<sup>846</sup> L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, p 181

<sup>847</sup> L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, p 182

<sup>848</sup> L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, pp 183-185

1948 elections Smuts “was tired and out of touch” as well as being ironically responsible for his own defeat due to the constitution “for which Smuts had been primarily responsible.”<sup>849</sup>

In conclusion Thompson seems to generally admire Smuts. Although he does criticise Smuts occasionally, every time he appears to immediately find a reason to praise him or nullify the criticism. Interestingly there is no mention of Bulhoek or the Bondelzwarts, nor is there any debunking of myths with regards to Smuts. In the end, Smuts comes across as a highly intellectual individual with a few faults, but unfortunately Thompson fails to evaluate several key events involving Smuts. It is also important to point out that Thompson did use Hancock as a source.

The next book to be analysed is *A History of South Africa* (1998) by Frank Welsh, another English author who was educated at Cambridge University as was Smuts.<sup>850</sup> Welsh also enjoyed a career in business which included a stint as chairman of a South African mining company which gave him “insights” when dealing with South African history.<sup>851</sup> Reviewers praise Welsh for his narrative style and the extent of the history he produced,<sup>852</sup> although criticism is reserved for his lack of information with regards to events such as the Native Lands Act of 1913.<sup>853</sup> Welsh’s history is an immense study and is of importance as it just preceded another volume with which it is often compared to the fifth edition of; *South Africa: A Modern History* (2000) by T. R. H. Davenport and C. Saunders.<sup>854</sup> It is also important to point out that Welsh himself refers to his own book as “a colonial history.”<sup>855</sup>

Welsh first refers Smuts when lamenting that Kruger was almost “alone in the 1880s among Transvaal politicians” for having any knowledge of the world beyond the Highveld until 1895, and the arrival of “such capable young men as Jan Smuts”.<sup>856</sup> Welsh points out that Smuts was “forced to reappraise all his previous ideas” after the Jameson Raid and due to his previous admiration for Cecil Rhodes. It is also noted that Smuts was a graduate of Stellenbosch and Cambridge.<sup>857</sup> This aspect of Smuts’s life, that is his change of heart about

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<sup>849</sup> L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, p 186

<sup>850</sup> D. M. Coger, Review of F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa, Africa Today*, 2001, p 182

<sup>851</sup> D. M. Coger, Review of F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa, Africa Today*, 2001, p 183

<sup>852</sup> D. M. Coger, Review of F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa, Africa Today*, 2001, p 182; A. Cousins, Review of F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa, History*, Vol. 86, No. 283, 2001, p 1

<sup>853</sup> A. Cousins, Review of F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa, History*, Vol. 86, No. 283, 2001, p 1

<sup>854</sup> A. Cousins, Review of F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa, History*, Vol. 86, No. 283, 2001, p 1; the first four editions were written solely by Davenport.

<sup>855</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2000, p xxvii

<sup>856</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 303

<sup>857</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 318

Rhodes, often receives very little attention from authors, therefore it can already be discerned that Welsh's book is indeed detailed and that he is an admirer of Smuts.

When concerned with the possible destruction of the mines during the Anglo-Boer War Smuts is again referred to but not as one of the main protagonists for the destruction. Instead he is mentioned as being in favour of leading a "scorched-earth commando", but he was dissuaded by Botha.<sup>858</sup> Smuts also receives much praise as a "most interesting" man who "made his name in the war and became thereafter a figure of international importance."<sup>859</sup> Welsh goes on to state that Smuts was "a man of quite extraordinary talents." Welsh also refers to Smuts's double first at Cambridge, his military career as a "brilliant and ruthless guerrilla leader" and him becoming a British Field Marshal, as well as his role in the creation of the Union of South Africa, the League of Nations and the United Nations.<sup>860</sup> Welsh also notes that Smuts attempted on several occasions to stop the War. Perhaps the most telling statement is, however, that "Smuts attracted bitter enmity and fervent admiration in similar proportions."<sup>861</sup>

Smuts is praised for his attempts to prevent the War while Welsh lays all blame for the outbreak of it at the feet of Milner and Chamberlain.<sup>862</sup> Welsh also states that it was "almost certainly" Smuts who drafted the ultimatum that eventually led to the outbreak of hostilities, as well as commending him for his initial military plan for the Boers to invade the British colonies.<sup>863</sup> When writing about the latter parts of the War, Smuts is also referred to as one of a "handful of brilliant guerrilla commanders" along with De Wet, Botha and De la Rey.<sup>864</sup> Welsh regarded the Boer commandos as "magnificently successful,"<sup>865</sup> but Smuts receives particular mention for his raid into the Cape Colony, which is even included in a map within the book while no other generals are noted.<sup>866</sup> Smuts is mentioned one more time during the Anglo-Boer War for his commando's massacre of black civilians at Modderfontein.<sup>867</sup> This is an intriguing addition considering Welsh had up until this point nothing but good things to

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<sup>858</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 325

<sup>859</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 326

<sup>860</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 326

<sup>861</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 326

<sup>862</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, pp 328-329

<sup>863</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 330

<sup>864</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 331

<sup>865</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 334

<sup>866</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, pp 332-333

<sup>867</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 336

write about Smuts. The Jopie Fourie incident is not mentioned yet this relatively unknown incident in which Smuts himself was not involved is.

Welsh makes two factual errors by firstly stating that Smuts was involved in the initial peace negotiations in April 1902 in Pretoria when he was actually still fighting in the Cape Colony; and secondly he notes that Smuts was an “elected” negotiator at Vereeniging while he was merely a legal advisor.<sup>868</sup> Welsh then goes on to state that Smuts “displayed the skills that earned him the name of ‘Slim Jannie’” when he changed the wording of the peace document slightly so that franchise rights would be decided after self-government rather than it being a foregone conclusion that it would be granted.<sup>869</sup> It is interesting to note that Welsh does not delve into the meaning of the name ‘Slim Jannie’.

Smuts, along with Botha, receive praise as “the real leaders of the Transvaal Afrikaners” and that “Smuts, decisive to a fault, allied to this an intellectual arrogance which lost him much support.” Welsh then refers to Smuts as a great man but that his “career to 1902 gives cause for some serious criticism.”<sup>870</sup> Firstly Smuts is praised for his attempts to avoid the War and his attempts at modernizing South Africa, but then he is blamed for prolonging the War with his invasion of the Cape Colony which led to “great misery” and the concentration camps.<sup>871</sup> Welsh goes on to criticize Smuts for his role in the writing of “A Century of wrong”, although he refers to it as *A Hundred Years of Wrong*.<sup>872</sup> It almost seems as if Welsh is insinuating that Smuts had a direct involvement in the creation of the concentration camps, which is preposterous as several other Boer generals continued to fight throughout the country although they are not mentioned; Smuts alone is noted.

While Botha and Smuts are referred to as an ideal political combination, Welsh also indicates that they “became imperialists, to a sometimes embarrassing degree.”<sup>873</sup> Smuts’s “interview” with Campbell-Bannerman is also noted, albeit very briefly, and without much conviction as to its value as it was “anathematized by Milner.”<sup>874</sup> Welsh also refers to Smuts’s stance on “native rights” as an “undefined and abstract altruism, a confused philosophic escapism.”<sup>875</sup>

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<sup>868</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 339

<sup>869</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 340

<sup>870</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 340

<sup>871</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, pp 340-341

<sup>872</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 341

<sup>873</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 346

<sup>874</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 359

<sup>875</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 360

He then quotes Smuts who basically believed the problem would be easier to solve by future generations.<sup>876</sup>

Smuts, along with Merriman, is also given credit for being the main players in the formation of Union and the National Convention.<sup>877</sup> Smuts is also referred to as being “all things to all men” during the latter event by trying to appease all involved, and he is again criticised for his belief at the time that “natives” should not have any form of political power<sup>878</sup> even though this was the general belief of the majority of whites at that time. Smuts is also accused of wanting the removal of the Cape franchise as soon as possible,<sup>879</sup> an issue which is not indicated in previous histories. Apart from the above, little other mention is made of Smuts with regards to the National Convention and the coming of Union.

Welsh makes the bold statement that “real discrimination” only began in South Africa after the founding of the National Party by Hertzog. He goes on by adding that the National Party was distrustful of anything English, “especially of that turncoat Smuts, ‘Slim Jannie’ – Sly Jannie – too clever by half.”<sup>880</sup> Clearly Welsh favours Smuts or appears to support him, but he does reflect the feelings of many Afrikaners at the time. His point that “real discrimination” began with the founding of the National Party also seems a bit naïve and one could argue that this possibly impacts on his appraisal of Smuts.

With regards to Smuts and Gandhi, Welsh uses a direct quote from Hancock by stating that “He [Smuts] and Gandhi, who was ‘if anything more deeply in love than Smuts was with the British constitution and the habit of British compromise’, maintained a friendly relationship throughout their disputes.”<sup>881</sup> No mention is made of the Smuts-Gandhi agreement or any discussions that they had, let alone the discord that emerges as well. Smuts and Gandhi are both attacked by Welsh for being “unequivocally racist” and that Smuts was a true segregationist.<sup>882</sup> Welsh does, however, concede that Smuts had to play a balancing act between a more liberal stance on the one hand while not losing too many white votes because of this on the other.<sup>883</sup>

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<sup>876</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 360

<sup>877</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 364

<sup>878</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 367

<sup>879</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 369

<sup>880</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 375

<sup>881</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 379

<sup>882</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 394

<sup>883</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 395

At the outbreak of the First World War Welsh proclaims that “Botha and Smuts were enthusiastically, even perhaps romantically, dedicated to Imperial solidarity.”<sup>884</sup> He goes on to claim that “Smuts continued to the end of his long life to be a symbol of Empire and Commonwealth unity.”<sup>885</sup> But perhaps the most brazen statement Welsh makes with regards to this period is that up to 95 per cent of Afrikaners were against the War.<sup>886</sup> This is probably to make a clear distinction between Smuts (and Botha) and their pro-British stances that set them apart from the bulk of the Afrikaners. Welsh also believes that the execution of Jopie Fourie “on the orders of General Jan Smuts” was a grave mistake that “joined the mythology of British persecution, to be treasured as yet another example of British wickedness.”<sup>887</sup> This also comes across that to Welsh, Smuts was “British” and was an enemy of Afrikaners. Welsh continues this theme by making the claim that Smuts “always wrote to his wife in English” and that he was “considerably more fluent in English than in Dutch.”<sup>888</sup> The latter statement is possibly true, but the former is questionable if not incorrect.

With regards to Smuts’s deportation of strike leaders during the general strike in early 1914 Welsh refers to it as “dubiously legal”<sup>889</sup> which is again a questionable statement. He also states that Smuts was a “British General” in the German East Africa campaign which is untrue as he was a Lieutenant-General. He also claims that the sending of South African forces to Europe convinced the National Party that “Smuts and Botha were traitors to the *volk*.”<sup>890</sup> Smuts is praised for his international work during the War and Versailles<sup>891</sup> but he is criticised for his “much less sure grasp of domestic politics.”<sup>892</sup> In possibly his most damning assessment Welsh refers to Smuts as being “everyone’s honest broker, except in South Africa.”<sup>893</sup> Smuts has always been attacked for his supposed “greater interest” in international affairs than domestic, yet it is not often that such criticism is made by an English author.

The 1922 Rand Revolt is briefly examined and the only important point made by Welsh as regards Smuts is that “the violence gave an opportunity for Smuts’ enemies to attack him

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<sup>884</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 379

<sup>885</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 379

<sup>886</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 379

<sup>887</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 380

<sup>888</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 381

<sup>889</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 382

<sup>890</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 384

<sup>891</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 387

<sup>892</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 388

<sup>893</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 389



once more as a bloodthirsty tyrant.”<sup>894</sup> Again Welsh seems to side with Smuts considering the extent of possible criticism available. But once again Smuts is criticised for his “unholy alliance” with capitalists, he is also referred to as “the murderer of Afrikaner workers.”<sup>895</sup> Welsh also very briefly examines the Bulhoek and Bondelzwarts incident with Smuts only receiving one mention: that he “felt obliged to support the incompetent Hofmeyr.”<sup>896</sup> By briefly examining very important incidents that haunted Smuts, and only mentioning him very briefly, makes it seem that Welsh is making an attempt to protect Smuts.

Welsh is also very critical of Hertzog when comparing him to Smuts, who was “brilliant, masterful”,<sup>897</sup> although he again makes the blunder that at this time (1924) Smuts was writing “exclusively” in English.<sup>898</sup> Welsh gives Hertzog no credit for the 1926 Imperial Conference, instead praising Canadian Prime Minister William Mackenzie King.<sup>899</sup> Welsh also notes that Smuts was attacked for his perceived lack of respect for the Afrikaans language.<sup>900</sup> He would forever be seen as a traitor who was “enmeshed with imperialism” and therefore was not a “true Afrikaner.”<sup>901</sup> Welsh condemns Smuts for changing his mind with regards to the Second World War by insinuating that Smuts initially was against South Africa joining,<sup>902</sup> which is unsubstantiated and incorrect. In fact Welsh believes that the only reason Smuts fought for South Africa to join the War was because of “moral authority.”<sup>903</sup> Smuts is also mentioned as a great friend of Churchill yet a speech of his during 1943 is commented upon as “memorable, but exposed the basic vagueness of his feelings.”<sup>904</sup> In Welsh’s opinion such ambivalence seems to be a curse for Smuts.

Smuts is, however, praised by Welsh for his world stature during the War and is even forgiven for his discrimination against Indians (for the “Pegging Act”) which Welsh attributes to political necessity.<sup>905</sup> Although little was written about Smuts during the 1922 Rand Revolt, for the strike of 1947 Welsh comments that Smuts reacted with “unnecessary

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<sup>894</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 391

<sup>895</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 392

<sup>896</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 393

<sup>897</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 396

<sup>898</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 397

<sup>899</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 399

<sup>900</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 415

<sup>901</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 417

<sup>902</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 419

<sup>903</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 419

<sup>904</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 420

<sup>905</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, pp 422-423

violence” like “he had twenty-four [sic] years previously”<sup>906</sup> therefore making his disapproval apparent. Smuts’s death is mentioned very briefly. Essentially Welsh laments that with the loss of Smuts the United Party was ruined.<sup>907</sup>

Welsh comes across as a huge supporter of Smuts, perhaps because of his pro-British stance, yet he succumbs to the ambivalence apparent among much of the numerous previous authors. Once again it can be seen that with every comment of praise for Smuts there is almost immediately criticism. Welsh examines several issues that many authors do not, yet he also leaves out many important ones as well. Basically Welsh appears to respect and admire Smuts, yet reveals a degree of ambivalence.

T.R.H. Davenport was the long-term Head of the History Department at Rhodes University and authored the first four editions (1977, 1978, 1987, and 1991) of *South Africa: A Modern History*. In the fifth edition (2000), which shall be analysed, Christopher Saunders of the University of Cape Town joined Davenport in writing the volume.<sup>908</sup> This book is widely praised and prescribed and is considered an excellent history.<sup>909</sup> There is however one interesting piece of criticism which one reviewer refers to: namely that often an incident is mentioned in passing before being fully examined far later on in the book.<sup>910</sup>

Smuts is first mentioned as the young State Attorney of Kruger’s government who had been given “free hand to reform the Law Department.” But on this occasion Davenport and Saunders reports that Smuts “may have endorsed the angry sentiments of J. de V. Roos’s ‘Century of Wrong’ but only wrote a small part of it.”<sup>911</sup> This is the first occasion in the books analysed for this dissertation that has not given Smuts major credit for “A Century of wrong.” Smuts is next referred to as attempting to avoid the Anglo-Boer War through negotiations between himself and the Rand Capitalists.<sup>912</sup> He is, however, only mentioned in passing and no praise or criticism of the causation of War can be discerned.

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<sup>906</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 425

<sup>907</sup> F. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, p 434

<sup>908</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, London: MacMillan Press Ltd, 2000, p back cover

<sup>909</sup> J. Lambert, Review of T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: A modern history*, *H-SAfrica*, H-Net Reviews, January, 2001, pp 1-2; B. Le Cordeur, “What is South African history”, Review of T. R. H. Davenport, *South Africa: A modern history*, *South African Historical Journal*, Vol. 26, No. 1, 1992, pp 39-43

<sup>910</sup> B. Le Cordeur, “What is South African history”, Review of T. R. H. Davenport, *South Africa: A modern history*, *South African Historical Journal*, Vol. 26, No. 1, 1992, p 40

<sup>911</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 97

<sup>912</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 221

Davenport and Saunders note that at the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War Smuts's estimates of Boer forces were a slight over-estimate and of the British forces a slight under-estimate. He is, however, praised for his criticism of the lack of offensive spirit amongst the older Boer leadership.<sup>913</sup> Smuts is also praised for being among a group of "determined Boer commanders" that rejuvenated the War effort and consolidated the Boer commandos.<sup>914</sup> Smuts's expedition into the Cape Colony is referred to, but not in great detail and is merely mentioned in passing that he was in the Cape, and that he believed that a general uprising in the Cape was unattainable.<sup>915</sup> It is also noted that Smuts wrote a critical letter accusing the British of arming the "native tribes", although it is accepted that the "truth of such reports is hard to ascertain."<sup>916</sup> Smuts is also briefly mentioned for his role, along with Hertzog, Kitchener and Sir Richard Solomon for creating the Treaty of Vereeniging, although again the event is only very briefly explored.<sup>917</sup>

The Smuts-Gandhi relationship is also briefly referred to and Davenport and Saunders immediately point out that the pair fell out after a "misunderstanding" which "discerning commentators concur, there is room for more than one interpretation."<sup>918</sup> Davenport and Saunders are being extremely objective with this comment, choosing no side and portraying none. Smuts, Botha and Hertzog are all praised for their rapid organisation of political opposition just after the Anglo-Boer War.<sup>919</sup> Interestingly Davenport and Saunders refer to the mood of Smuts and Botha as "unconciliatory",<sup>920</sup> which seems strange as both Botha and Smuts became famous, if not infamous, for their dedication to "conciliation", which only the more "sophisticated" Boer leaders later used.<sup>921</sup> Davenport and Saunders do note that "Botha and Smuts developed the new tactics with finesse."<sup>922</sup> Evidently Botha and Smuts were the "sophisticated" leaders from before, which indicates much admiration for both men.

Smuts's meeting with Campbell-Bannerman is also explored in detail and he is criticised for being too "shrewd." In a rather disparaging tone Davenport and Saunders point out that the British government had already decided to grant self-government to South Africa before

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<sup>913</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 223

<sup>914</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 225

<sup>915</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 230

<sup>916</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 232

<sup>917</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 234

<sup>918</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 245

<sup>919</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 245

<sup>920</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 246

<sup>921</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 247

<sup>922</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 248

Smuts's arrival.<sup>923</sup> Most interestingly, however, is their apparent defence of Smuts-in the light of the former comment: "It does not seem necessary to belittle the personal impact of Smuts on Campbell-Bannerman."<sup>924</sup> In fact Davenport and Saunders believe that Smuts's visit encouraged Campbell-Bannerman to pursue self-government as soon as possible, thereby speeding up South Africa's eventual independence.<sup>925</sup>

Davenport and Saunders also give full credit to Smuts for the proposal that led to the National Convention as well as the timing of the document (May 1908).<sup>926</sup> Merriman also receives praise for promoting a Union system rather than a federal one, and Smuts and Merriman both receive credit for South Africa attaining Union. Davenport and Saunders point out that Smuts's reasons for Union rather than Federalism was due to his holistic philosophy while Merriman's reasons were due to cost reduction.<sup>927</sup> Smuts and Merriman are also commended for their tactics during the Convention and Davenport and Saunders even refer to the "Merriman-Smuts proposal" rather than the "Smuts proposal" as other authors do.<sup>928</sup> Overall, however, Smuts receives much praise and positive appraisal for his role in this period of South African history.

In stark contrast, Hertzog is praised while Smuts is criticised for their respective Education Acts (1908 and 1907 respectively).<sup>929</sup> Botha and Smuts are also both heavily criticised as their period of power (1910-1924, Botha was in charge from 1910-1919 and Smuts from 1919-1924) was "the most formative until the era of Verwoerd." This is done with reference to segregationist policies with special criticism reserved for the Native Land Act of 1913.<sup>930</sup> Davenport and Saunders do, however, acknowledge that Smuts and Botha were merely building on the segregationist structure that had already been created by the British.<sup>931</sup>

The Smuts-Gandhi issue is again visited briefly but Smuts is criticised for his stance on Asians as most "Dominion prime ministers accepted that their policies towards Asians were capable of improvement."<sup>932</sup> Smuts, however, was not one of those prime ministers as he could not grant rights to Asians without granting them to Africans, which he could not do due

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<sup>923</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 252

<sup>924</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 252

<sup>925</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, pp 252-253

<sup>926</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 257

<sup>927</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 258

<sup>928</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 259

<sup>929</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 268

<sup>930</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 271

<sup>931</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 272

<sup>932</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 279

to overwhelming resistance of the white electorate.<sup>933</sup> Smuts's actions during the 1913 strikes are briefly glossed over except for his deportation of the nine strike leaders which they describe as having "deeply offended"<sup>934</sup> several individuals, including Hertzog and Merriman.<sup>935</sup> It is also noted that Smuts "covered his actions", and no mention of illegality or the heavy-handedness highlighted by others is made.<sup>936</sup>

It is insinuated that Smuts was at fault for appointing Generals Maritz and Beyers who rebelled in 1914.<sup>937</sup> Jopie Fourie is mentioned as one of the new "legends and martyrs" from the 1914 Rebellion, while Smuts's only mention with regards to the whole situation is that Malan attempted to get his execution interceded through Smuts.<sup>938</sup> It is also noted that Smuts was initially reluctant to assume command of the German East Africa campaign, while he "was denied the fruits of victory... by the brilliant rearguard defence of the German commander, Von Lettow-Vorbeck."<sup>939</sup> Smuts is also acknowledged as the driving force behind the amalgamation of the South African Party and the Unionist Party that occurred through the period of 1919 to 1921.<sup>940</sup>

With regards to Smuts's period in the British War Cabinet, Davenport and Saunders are rather dismissive as they note that "Smuts's military advice proved to be of little consequence."<sup>941</sup> Smuts is regarded as the creator of the Royal Air Force, so it seems odd that his advice was of "little consequence." He is praised for his role in the creation of the League of Nations, although most of the credit is given to Wilson. It is also indicated that Smuts signed the peace treaty with "great reluctance."<sup>942</sup> Davenport and Saunders also note Smuts's numerous and failed attempts to incorporate further territory into South Africa, for example Southern Rhodesia and Swaziland.<sup>943</sup>

Interestingly Davenport and Saunders give Smuts much credit for his role at the 1917 Imperial War Conference and the 1921 Imperial Conference in "bringing about the definition

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<sup>933</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 279

<sup>934</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 281

<sup>935</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, pp 281-283

<sup>936</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 283

<sup>937</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 284

<sup>938</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 285

<sup>939</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 286

<sup>940</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 287

<sup>941</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 288

<sup>942</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 288

<sup>943</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, pp 289-291

of dominion status for which General Hertzog received most of the credit in 1926.”<sup>944</sup> In fact Davenport and Saunders accept that Smuts’s proposals in 1921 were the main features of the Statute of Westminster of 1931.<sup>945</sup> Although praised for his international efforts, Smuts is heavily criticised for his “short-sightedness” with regards to “international disapproval over racial policy.”<sup>946</sup> The Bondelzwarts incident is briefly explained with Smuts attempting to restrain the Administrator of South West Africa in private, but defending him “in public at the cost of his own reputation.”<sup>947</sup> Similarly, discussion of the Bulhoek incident is very brief with not even one mention of Smuts.<sup>948</sup> The Rand Revolt, however, is what “really destroyed the image of the Government”,<sup>949</sup> but again Smuts is not directly implicated.

Davenport and Saunders make an in-depth examination of the causes of the Revolt and also use Hancock as one of their sources in this regard.<sup>950</sup> Smuts is shown as attempting to negotiate between the strikers and mine-owners before he “came down clearly on the side of the owners with an ‘abrupt change of front’ (Hancock).”<sup>951</sup> Smuts could easily be blamed for the violence that resulted, but instead the blame is laid at the feet of the mine-owners.<sup>952</sup> In fact Davenport and Saunders claim that Smuts was incorrectly accused by Hertzog for waiting for the situation to develop, when in actual fact Smuts was waiting to see if the situation would develop peacefully.<sup>953</sup> Davenport and Saunders are of the opinion that unfortunately for Smuts these accusations stuck and it was easy for people to “caricature him as one whose footsteps ‘dripped with blood.’”<sup>954</sup> Despite Smuts’s faults and mistakes Davenport and Saunders still come across as supporters if not admirers of Smuts.

When concluding on the Botha-Smuts government Davenport and Saunders make a remarkable statement: “the Botha-Smuts ministries had insisted on white political and economic hegemony, and placed segregationist legislation on the statute book without being entirely convinced of its desirability, which had led them to suppress black discontent rather than seriously try to satisfy it.”<sup>955</sup> Such a statement seems to detract blame for the racial

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<sup>944</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 291

<sup>945</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 291

<sup>946</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 292

<sup>947</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 292

<sup>948</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 292

<sup>949</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 293

<sup>950</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, pp 293-295

<sup>951</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 295

<sup>952</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, pp 295-296

<sup>953</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 296

<sup>954</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 296

<sup>955</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 299

tensions during the time away from Botha and Smuts, and rather imply that the reason for such tension was due to the white electorate.

Smuts is praised for his criticism of Hertzog's 'native policies', but is criticised for supporting the move against too much political power of Africans, which is again acknowledged as being because of the pressure of the white electorate.<sup>956</sup> Interestingly, Davenport and Saunders indicate that Smuts attempted to persuade Hertzog in February 1928 to create a "common franchise" throughout South Africa based on "occupation and income or salary which was to apply to all."<sup>957</sup> If Hertzog thought this too much then Smuts also supposedly suggested that Hertzog extend the representation of the Cape 'native franchise' by a few seats, neither of which came to pass.<sup>958</sup> Smuts and his Party also receive much praise for their opposition to the Natives' Parliamentary Representation Bill and the Coloured Persons' Rights Bill in 1929,<sup>959</sup> the latter being seen by Smuts as a "raw uncouth immature scheme."<sup>960</sup> It is not often that Smuts is shown in this light of a defender of 'native rights'. An interesting point made by Davenport and Saunders is that in the 1929 election "segregation was not in fact the issue which divided the major parties," the major difference was that the National Party relied solely on white votes which allowed more volatile slogans and support.<sup>961</sup>

With regards to the creation of the Fusion Government Davenport and Saunders make the point that the real protagonists for Fusion were the lesser members of the respective parties rather than Hertzog and Smuts.<sup>962</sup> In fact they report that it was "by no means certain that Smuts really wanted it [Fusion]."<sup>963</sup> In the end Fusion did occur, although probably far more to Smuts's advantage than Hertzog's, especially with regards to South Africa's sovereign status and its position in the British Commonwealth.<sup>964</sup>

Smuts is acknowledged for attempting to stop the various franchise bills that Hertzog and the Fusion Government managed to pass through during that period (1933-1939). Davenport and Saunders indicate that the SAP was split with regards 'native rights' and Smuts was relatively

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<sup>956</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 309

<sup>957</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 310

<sup>958</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 310

<sup>959</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 310

<sup>960</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 311

<sup>961</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 312

<sup>962</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, pp 318-319

<sup>963</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 320

<sup>964</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, pp 322-323

helpless to stop this division.<sup>965</sup> Smuts is also mentioned as being a part of the “minority” that “continued to oppose the Native Representation Bill” and that “Smuts himself had constantly voted with the minority [with regards to the bills].”<sup>966</sup> When Smuts and his followers eventually did vote to pass the bills due to support for Hertzog from Malan and the Purified National Party “retreat still had merit” because he thought he was “seeking to delay the complete exclusion of African representation.”<sup>967</sup> Again Smuts comes across as a defender of ‘native rights’, which is not very common in most of the other histories analysed for this dissertation.

It is also noted that both Hertzog and Smuts were “League of Nations men” and that although Hertzog “kept foreign policy largely to himself” Smuts, “though father of the League”, managed to keep in contact with the world through several prominent friendships.<sup>968</sup>

Davenport and Saunders also make note that from Versailles Smuts had “to shoulder more of the blame for the harshness of the treaty than his role at the peace conference warranted.”<sup>969</sup>

Because of this Smuts saw “the rise of Hitlerism as a monstrous consequence of an unjust peace” while Hertzog, who had no involvement at Versailles, saw Germany and Hitler as a recovering downtrodden nation.<sup>970</sup> From this they argue a split between the two was inevitable. Smuts agreed that neutrality for South Africa during the Second World War was a “legal right” but because of the international crisis in 1939 he believed that South Africa’s only option was to join the War against Hitler and Germany.<sup>971</sup> Therefore it is argued that South Africa joined the War under the leadership of Smuts.

Accordingly Smuts lead South Africa into War “out of concern for the future of the human race” and his main focus during the War period was external affairs and defence.<sup>972</sup>

Davenport and Saunders also praise Smuts for his “coolness with which it handled threats to the security of the State”, a lesson he had learned from the First World War.<sup>973</sup> Smuts is praised for his role in the defence forces he raised and surprisingly no criticism is made for his about turn with regards to sending white troops overseas.<sup>974</sup> The main focus of Davenport

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<sup>965</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 326

<sup>966</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 327

<sup>967</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 329

<sup>968</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 341

<sup>969</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 342

<sup>970</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 342

<sup>971</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 343

<sup>972</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 344

<sup>973</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 345

<sup>974</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 345



and Saunders during the early years of War is on Hertzog and Malan, as well as the various Afrikaans splinter groups such as Pirow's New Order Group and the OB which fought bitterly with each other and made Smuts's life far easier.<sup>975</sup>

Davenport and Saunders make the noteworthy statement that Smuts "inherited the Hertzogian racial policy" with several barriers against "African pressure."<sup>976</sup> They also include an interesting piece of information that the United Party set up the Willcocks Commission to see if damage done by Hertzog's policies could be rectified, but unfortunately it had no clear idea on how to solve or rectify the problem.<sup>977</sup> When Smuts took over in 1939 he, "instead of promoting segregation [he] preferred to allow that policy to run down, and perhaps even contemplated its reversal."<sup>978</sup> Davenport and Saunders believe that the reason for this was due to a labour shortage,<sup>979</sup> but Smuts is still portrayed as someone protecting, and possibly even fighting, for native rights.

With regards to Smuts's native policy towards the end of his life and career (1946) Davenport and Saunders quote Smuts as stating that "our native policy would have to be liberalized at a modest pace", but more importantly "public opinion has to be carried with us."<sup>980</sup> They continue by explaining that Smuts was in the process of granting limited rights to Africans but "effective political power" for Africans was "an unthinkable concession" for Smuts.<sup>981</sup> The Fagan Commission is also praised, but Davenport and Saunders do note that Smuts could not make any meaningful concessions until the publication of the Fagan Report in February 1948, which was too late for real change to take place.<sup>982</sup> For his role in the "Pegging Act" of 1946, which is seen by Davenport and Saunders as "highly discriminatory legislation against Indians" Smuts is criticised.<sup>983</sup> Smuts's loss in the elections of 1948 is put down to poor preparation and counter-productive strategies.<sup>984</sup>

Davenport and Saunders use Hancock as a source extensively which is evident throughout the text. Smuts comes across as one of the major forces in South African history and most of the major incidents in his life are examined. In the end Smuts is portrayed as a defender of native

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<sup>975</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, pp 348-353

<sup>976</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 353

<sup>977</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, pp 353-354

<sup>978</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 354

<sup>979</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 354

<sup>980</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 359

<sup>981</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 359

<sup>982</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 360

<sup>983</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 369

<sup>984</sup> T. R. H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history*, p 370

rights in the face of National Party racism. Interestingly his roles overseas are muted in the discussion as his home politics are examined in far more detail. Overall it seems that Davenport and Saunders are great admirers of Smuts and the influence of the wealth of primary material taken from Hancock is easily discerned.

The final non-biography examined in this section is *New History of South Africa* edited by Herman Giliomee and Bernard Mbenga which was first published in 2007. Giliomee, Mbenga and twenty-five other scholars produced the above work in an effort to “neatly press our history” into 437 pages and most agree that they were successful.<sup>985</sup> One criticism is that the history is often generalised while another is that the usual terms of “ethnicity” still remain, therefore we are “still captives of the anthropological approach.”<sup>986</sup> Two further criticisms are about the Great Trek due to unrequired “political correctness” which disrupts the narrative as well as the lack of information about the “Coloured” population in South Africa’s history.<sup>987</sup> Apart from these few criticisms the book is seen as an excellent new history and one reviewer automatically dismisses the possibility of the book being “Eurocentric” as “poppycock” although there are “of course bias and omissions.”<sup>988</sup>

The first interesting point to note is the fact that the only white face on the cover of the book is that of Jan Smuts, juxtapositioned between Shaka Zulu and Nelson Mandela.<sup>989</sup> This almost immediately portrays the importance that Giliomee and Mbenga attribute to Smuts. The first mention of Smuts, however, is very brief. A quote by Smuts is used about Kruger’s personality just after his death: “he typified the Boer character both in its brighter and darker aspect.”<sup>990</sup> Smuts is also referred to as one of Kruger’s “bright new men” whom he had appointed just before the Anglo-Boer War.<sup>991</sup> The authors main focus is on Kruger, but Smuts is the only ‘bright new man’ mentioned, and admiration from the authors for using a quote of Smuts rather than any other is also most pertinent. The next mention of Smuts is much in the same vein. With regards to the Boers being pushed by Britain to possibly give up their

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<sup>985</sup> C. Thomas, Review of H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, *New Contree*, No. 56, November 2008, p 145; The book does not give an indication of who authored a particular chapter.

<sup>986</sup> C. Thomas, Review of H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, *New Contree*, No. 56, November 2008, p 146

<sup>987</sup> C. Thomas, Review of H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, *New Contree*, No. 56, November 2008, p 147

<sup>988</sup> C. Thomas, Review of H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, *New Contree*, No. 56, November 2008, p 148

<sup>989</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2007, front cover

<sup>990</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 198

<sup>991</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 198

national autonomy Smuts is again merely quoted that it would have been a “humiliating solution.”<sup>992</sup> No mention is made of Smuts during the build-up to this period or his role in the negotiations that occurred just before War broke out. Another interesting point is that no mention is made of Smuts’s admiration of or connection to Rhodes before the Jameson Raid.

With regards to “A Century of wrong” Smuts and Roos are now seen as equal authors, rather than Smuts writing only a small portion.<sup>993</sup> Although the strategy of the Boers to attack first is noted, Smuts, possibly one of its main promoters, is not mentioned. Instead it is claimed that Smuts was “hoping... for diplomatic intervention” which, if it should fail, then he “anticipated a long and brutal struggle in which the Boers would have to be bled into submission.”<sup>994</sup> Again it seems that Smuts is not one of the major players in these episodes, yet his quotes and opinions are vital to the narrative. Smuts is also briefly mentioned for his role in the 1902 Vereeniging peace terms, in particular the article he drafted which allowed the former republics to decide on “native franchise” at a later date. Although, interestingly, it is stated that Britain was more than willing to allow white political power to continue.<sup>995</sup>

Another interesting view not mentioned in many other histories is that one of the reasons that Botha and Smuts gave for peace at the end of the War was because of the possibility of an all-out outbreak of “black hostilities” against the Boer republics.<sup>996</sup>

With regards to Milner’s “Kindergarten”, Smuts, who for the first time is noted as Cambridge educated, is again quoted in a scathing attack whereby he refers to the “Kindergarten” as “a show of dolls.”<sup>997</sup> Very interestingly, and not seen before in the books analysed for this dissertation, is the claim that Botha, De la Rey and De Wet, who had travelled to Europe to gain funds, actually met up with Kruger who gave them access to the old republican funds that were still overseas. It is then stated that Smuts “privately explained” that these funds were not for relief, which they left to the British, but rather for “an Afrikaner political revival.”<sup>998</sup> No other mention of this arrangement is made in books previously examined within this dissertation, including Hancock.

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<sup>992</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 209

<sup>993</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 210

<sup>994</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 211

<sup>995</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 216

<sup>996</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 217

<sup>997</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 224

<sup>998</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 228

Smuts is indicated as a supporter of Botha in “Het Volk” along with C. F. Beyers and “other South African War notables.”<sup>999</sup> Again Smuts’s importance to the editors/author/s is evident as only him and Beyers are actually named. With regards to Union Smuts is mentioned only twice, even though we have seen before his role was immense. The first occasion is just in mere passing that Botha and Smuts saw Union or Federation as a way to gain self-determination “within the framework of the empire.”<sup>1000</sup> The second states that it was only due to ex-President Steyn that English and Afrikaans gained equality through Union while Smuts, “who believed English should become the sole official language, kept silent.”<sup>1001</sup> Considering Smuts’s influence at the National Convention and throughout the Union process it seems odd that he is only mentioned twice. The first is so brief it hardly seems worth it while the second makes Smuts seem like a bigot and possible traitor of his own language and people.

Another important point is that no mention is made of Smuts as regards the 1913 Natives Land Act. Instead, Hertzog and J. W. Sauer are referred to as the main architects.<sup>1002</sup> The Smuts-Gandhi discussions are also very briefly discussed. All that is mentioned is that it resulted in the Indian Relief Act of 1914, while no references to any of the controversies surrounding these deliberations are included.<sup>1003</sup> Smuts is also briefly referred to in the discussion of the 1914 Rebellion and again it is as a quote. Smuts stated “the people’s genuine dislike of the German South West African expedition.”<sup>1004</sup> The author/editors are also quick to point out that there were “unfounded rumours of government complicity” in the accidental death of De la Rey,<sup>1005</sup> thereby removing any possible doubt that Smuts and Botha were involved in his death.

Jopie Fourie’s execution is referred to as “a grave political mistake on the part of Botha and Smuts” which “alienated” many Afrikaners and Fourie himself became a “martyr.”<sup>1006</sup> No mention of Smuts is made with regards to the campaign in German East Africa, apart from a quote of his which is about his hopes that white South Africans would return with “more

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<sup>999</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 229

<sup>1000</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 230

<sup>1001</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 230

<sup>1002</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 233

<sup>1003</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 235

<sup>1004</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 238

<sup>1005</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 238

<sup>1006</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 240

kindly feelings” towards Indians who served as stretcher-bearers during the campaign.<sup>1007</sup> This seems very strange considering Smuts was the leader of the controversial campaign and Botha is noted as the leader of the German South West Africa campaign.<sup>1008</sup> Smuts is also very briefly referred to as having attended the Paris peace conference and that he may, “in some respects, be said to have sharper insights than other delegates” with regards to the peace terms.<sup>1009</sup> No mention is made of him disagreeing with the terms and signing under protest.

Under the heading “Post-war crises” at the beginning of Chapter Ten, Smuts is noted as “struggling to find his feet after a prolonged absence abroad”, while it is also mentioned that Hertzog stated that Smuts’s footsteps “dripped with blood.”<sup>1010</sup> This appears as an ominous beginning to a chapter concerning Smuts’s first years in power. Smuts’s favour drops further in the Giliomee and Mbenga book when referring to his deportation of nine strike leaders in 1914. It is noted that he “deported nine of them summarily and illegally.”<sup>1011</sup>

With regards to the 1922 Rand Revolt Smuts is shown in a better light. It is noted that Smuts was in a conundrum, he “did not wish to antagonise either party.”<sup>1012</sup> Another common idea repeated is that Smuts “had already created the impression that he was unsympathetic towards the strikers” as there were “suspicions that he failed to put substantial pressure on the mine owners to negotiate.”<sup>1013</sup> What is possibly most important with the above statement is that the writer chose the word “suspicions” rather than an outright accusation of complicity between Smuts and the mine owners. There is no direct mention of excessive violence by the government although it is stated that “his handling of the strike was widely criticised and cost him the 1924 election.”<sup>1014</sup> Again the author seems to avoid criticising Smuts directly.

When approaching the Bulhoek incident it is interestingly noted that Smuts “refused” to meet with the Israelites leader Enoch Mgijima and that “the management of the incident did Smuts’s personal image a great deal of harm.”<sup>1015</sup> It is also stated that “his enemies later referred to him as the ‘butcher of Bulhoek’” as well as the idea that the government took too

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<sup>1007</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 241

<sup>1008</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 240

<sup>1009</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 244

<sup>1010</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 245

<sup>1011</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 246

<sup>1012</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 246

<sup>1013</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 246

<sup>1014</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 247

<sup>1015</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 247

long to act.<sup>1016</sup> Smuts is however not blamed directly for the incident. Smuts is again quoted at length, this time on his thoughts about black urbanisation during the inter-war years and he is shown as paternalistic and far more sympathetic than National Party leaders at the time.<sup>1017</sup> In fact it is shown that Smuts first attempted a Native Urban Areas Bill in 1923 that would provide “freehold property” and “improved administration” for blacks. Unfortunately Smuts caved in to the National Party and instead the harsher Native Urban Areas Act was passed.<sup>1018</sup> He is thus, in a sense, exonerated from direct implicity.

Smuts is again shown in a far better light than his contemporaries with regards to the colour bar on the mines. Smuts is quoted as not wanting white labour to “tyrannise everything” and that “no statutory barrier should be placed on the native who wishes to raise himself in the scale of civilisation.”<sup>1019</sup> In fact to Smuts a legal colour bar “was an admission by whites that they could not compete against blacks.”<sup>1020</sup> Therefore Smuts lost much of the white labourer support as well as a large number of the Afrikaner vote due to the gaining popularity of the National Party that held opposing views in the 1924 election.<sup>1021</sup>

Throughout the book ‘side-boxes’ are found that examine an individual or an incident in detail. On page 274 Smuts receives his own entitled “Jan Smuts, A World Figure.” It immediately begins “Jan Smuts and Nelson Mandela were the two South Africans world opinion regarded most highly during the twentieth century.”<sup>1022</sup> Such a comparison is immense in any capacity. It is also noted that F. W. Maitland, a famous Cambridge legal scholar, called Smuts his most outstanding student and that he came “not only first but brilliantly first” in both parts of the law tripos. Smuts’s scientific and philosophical pursuits are also noted as well as his role in the creation of the Union of South Africa and the League of Nations.<sup>1023</sup>

The final section of the ‘side-box’ deals with Smuts in England during the Second World War and, more importantly, his stance on white-black relations. Smuts is referred to as “uniquely gifted” before quoting Hancock in his statement that Smuts “excluded crude

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<sup>1016</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 247

<sup>1017</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 251

<sup>1018</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 251

<sup>1019</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 252

<sup>1020</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 252

<sup>1021</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 253

<sup>1022</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 274

<sup>1023</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 274

notions of racial inequality due to his scientific endeavours.”<sup>1024</sup> In one instance it is noted that Smuts wrote a letter to Gandhi attempting to explain how “his policy towards Indians was not based on prejudice.” It is followed by a quote from Gandhi saying “I understood what he said.”<sup>1025</sup> It is also shown that Smuts preferred the gradual approach towards racial equality, but that it was impossible due to the two competing “white communities.”<sup>1026</sup> It is easily discerned that Smuts is admired by the author/s and that Smuts, in the author/s opinion, was not able to create any sort of racial reform in the political environment he was involved in.

When discussing the creation of the United Party it is noted that Smuts “easily gained the support of his party”<sup>1027</sup> and that he saw it as “the great experiment.”<sup>1028</sup> It is also stated that Hertzog knew that Smuts would not remain neutral if Britain went to war.<sup>1029</sup> This is an often disputed statement which can possibly further indicate Hancock’s influence on this book. Smuts is quoted again on his stance with regards to the disenfranchising of the blacks. Smuts disliked the bill but he saw in it sufficient “justice and fair play and fruitfulness for the future.”<sup>1030</sup> He is also briefly mentioned as attending the centenary of the Great Trek in Pretoria in 1938 “but he did not speak.”<sup>1031</sup>

Contrasting what was previously stated, it is now claimed that Smuts “went along” with neutrality in the possibility of Britain going to war and that his mind was only changed after the “German invasion of Czechoslovakia.”<sup>1032</sup> With regards to the fateful parliamentary session on 4 September 1939 Smuts was “blunt” and he is quoted as saying that he fought for “the fate of humanity and the future of our civilisation.”<sup>1033</sup> It is also noted that the 80 to 67 vote “went largely along the ethnic division in the white community.”<sup>1034</sup> It is further stated that “an authoritative journal [*Round Table*]” thought it likely that an anti-war faction would have won any elections had they occurred after the parliamentary vote.<sup>1035</sup> The author/s also notes that this parliamentary vote solidified the divide between the two white populations and

<sup>1024</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 274

<sup>1025</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 274

<sup>1026</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 274

<sup>1027</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 284

<sup>1028</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 285

<sup>1029</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 285

<sup>1030</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 288

<sup>1031</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 290

<sup>1032</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, pp 293-294

<sup>1033</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 294

<sup>1034</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 294

<sup>1035</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 294

probably led to the National Party coming to power in 1948 and apartheid.<sup>1036</sup> It must be noted again that no matter what incident or event Smuts was involved in, he is never overly criticised nor blamed.

Smuts is noted as “almost personifying the war effort” because of his several roles during the Second World War.<sup>1037</sup> He is praised for his attempts to change segregation during the War, most notably his comment that segregation had fallen on “evil days” is included to illustrate this point.<sup>1038</sup> Smuts is, however, criticised for not following through with the new “rights” that the blacks had gained during the War.<sup>1039</sup> It is also noted that to Smuts “political power for blacks was unthinkable.”<sup>1040</sup> It is important to note that Smuts is mentioned close to the end of the book, again as a quote, with regards to the 1980s and 1990s in South Africa. It is a quote from 1949 and in essence it is a warning that the “whole world is moving into a Colour phase of history, with the results none can foresee.”<sup>1041</sup> From what has been seen Smuts was greatly admired by Giliomee and Mbenga and the authors of this general history, yet he was criticised often. Smuts appears to be the ultimate enigmatic character as he has both positive and negative attributes.

## 5.2 Biography-Anthony Lentin

Anthony Lentin is a British author from Cambridge who wrote *Jan Smuts Man of Courage and Vision*. This is a short book focused mainly on Smuts’s role at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919.<sup>1042</sup> One reviewer admits that Hancock’s two volumes of Smuts still remain the best, but Lentin’s biography is well written. He indicates that apart from a few “small slips” as well as it being too uncritical, it is apparent that Lentin is a huge admirer of Smuts.<sup>1043</sup> Apart from this, Lentin’s brief biography is relatively recent (2010) and Lentin’s expertise in Versailles and the Paris Peace Conference should bring new insight. One last

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<sup>1036</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, pp 294-295

<sup>1037</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 295

<sup>1038</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 297

<sup>1039</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 298

<sup>1040</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 308

<sup>1041</sup> H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 437

<sup>1042</sup> C. Saunders, “Who remembers Smuts?”, Review of A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, *South African Journal of Science*, 2011;107(1/2), Art. #530, 1 page. DOI: 10.4102/sajs.v107i1/2.530, p 1

<sup>1043</sup> C. Saunders, “Who remembers Smuts?”, Review of A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, *South African Journal of Science*, 2011;107(1/2), Art. #530, 1 page. DOI: 10.4102/sajs.v107i1/2.530, p 1



criticism is that Lentin focusses almost exclusively on Smuts's international role, leaving only a few brief pages concerning his background and his legacy.<sup>1044</sup>

From the beginning Lentin professes his admiration for Smuts and claims that he was the "most principled, level-headed and far-sighted" of all the delegates at the Paris Peace Conference.<sup>1045</sup> Another interesting point made early on by Lentin is that Smuts is regarded as a "racist" and "imperialist" due to "historians who consider it their task to judge the past against current nostrums of 'equality' and 'diversity'."<sup>1046</sup> Lentin continues by stating "contemporaries saw him differently" before quoting Alan Paton as saying: "Even the great thought he was great."<sup>1047</sup> It is also important to note that the Smuts's Papers were used<sup>1048</sup> and so were Hancock's volumes.<sup>1049</sup>

Lentin begins his biography with a concise overview of South African history up until the birth of Smuts.<sup>1050</sup> He then illustrates Smuts's education very briefly, and his inclusion of individuals such as John Wolstenholme indicates his usage of Hancock.<sup>1051</sup> He includes the statement that Maitland considered Smuts the "best he ever taught."<sup>1052</sup> Interestingly Lentin also includes Smuts as an "enthusiastic supporter" of Rhodes, which is often ignored by other authors.<sup>1053</sup> His appointment as State Attorney is noted, but so is the early loss of twins in 1898 that Isie and Smuts had to deal with.<sup>1054</sup> This is again a piece of information that is often absent from other books and/or biographies.

Smuts's role in supporting Kruger when he dismissed his Chief Justice is very briefly explored and no mention of illegality is made. Instead Lentin focuses on Smuts's and Kruger's growing friendship.<sup>1055</sup> It is also noted that Smuts attempted to gain peace with Britain and that "Milner...treated Smuts with marked hostility."<sup>1056</sup> Lentin asserts that Smuts was the sole author of "A Century of wrong" and that "Smuts's advice [in the War] was

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<sup>1044</sup> C. Saunders, "Who remembers Smuts?", Review of A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, *South African Journal of Science*, 2011;107(1/2), Art. #530, 1 page. DOI: 10.4102/sajs.v107i1/2.530, p 1

<sup>1045</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2010, p x

<sup>1046</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p x

<sup>1047</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p xi

<sup>1048</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p xii

<sup>1049</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 209

<sup>1050</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, pp 3-5

<sup>1051</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, pp 5-7

<sup>1052</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 7

<sup>1053</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 8

<sup>1054</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 9

<sup>1055</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 10

<sup>1056</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 10

rejected” with regards to a fast, mobile invasion of the Cape and Natal.<sup>1057</sup> He mentions that Smuts and Isie lost another child during the Anglo-Boer War,<sup>1058</sup> another incident not often noted.

Smuts’s expedition into the Cape is considered by Lentin as “the stuff of legend” and is even compared to Xenophon’s *Anabasis*, an Ancient Greek epic.<sup>1059</sup> Smuts’s escapades during this expedition is described in great detail<sup>1060</sup> and Lentin states that Smuts gained the “respect of the Afrikaners generally” and that the British admired Smuts and Botha as “the finest of the Boer generals.”<sup>1061</sup> These are bold statements as both can easily be refuted or at least argued as being untrue. It is possible that Smuts gained much respect, but De Wet and De la Rey could easily be argued as finer generals. Lentin also makes the mistake regarding the Colaine incident that Smuts said “Take him out and shoot him.”<sup>1062</sup> This has already been proven incorrect so it is surprising Lentin includes it in his biography.

Lentin is also glosses over the Peace of Vereeniging and he makes it seem that Smuts actually signed the document when he was merely an advisor. The Kitchener incident is also mentioned, although Lentin places it at Vereeniging rather than on the way to the conference.<sup>1063</sup> Smuts’s children are referred to but interestingly a previously unnoted fact is that Lentin states that the Smuts family also adopted a daughter.<sup>1064</sup> Smuts and Botha are seen by Lentin as the “recognized political leaders in the Transvaal” although this only occurred because Lentin argues Smuts fell under Botha’s spell.<sup>1065</sup> Smuts’s acquaintances in England are explored<sup>1066</sup> along with his visit with Campbell-Bannerman, with Lentin actually giving most credit to Campbell-Bannerman than Smuts.<sup>1067</sup>

With the election of “Het Volk” Lentin believes that the only reason why anything worked or happened was due to Smuts who “was immensely hardworking” and who “laboured incessantly behind the scenes.”<sup>1068</sup> In fact Smuts “was known to be the driving-force in

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<sup>1057</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 11

<sup>1058</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 12

<sup>1059</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 12

<sup>1060</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, pp 13-16

<sup>1061</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 15

<sup>1062</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 15

<sup>1063</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 17

<sup>1064</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 18

<sup>1065</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 19

<sup>1066</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 20

<sup>1067</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 21

<sup>1068</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 22

Botha's government" as well as being "Slim Jannie", which Lentin translates as "clever or crafty."<sup>1069</sup> It is also important to note that Lentin refers to Millin as Smuts's "friend."<sup>1070</sup> This again is a statement that comes across as rather dubious considering the lack of proof to substantiate it.

Smuts receives almost all the credit for the National Convention and eventual Union: "Smuts... made the most active contribution to union" which was a result of the influence of Botha and Rhodes.<sup>1071</sup> Smuts's role in the early Union is also highlighted, although no criticism is directed towards him by Lentin, specifically with regards to his entrenchment of the colour bar in the mines and his role in the franchise issue.<sup>1072</sup> Gandhi is also very briefly noted and this is limited to Smuts having "a high regard for Gandhi" on a "personal level."<sup>1073</sup> In fact the only criticism Smuts receives from Lentin is his deportation of the 1914 strike leaders which was "admittedly unlawful" although Lentin is quick to point out that "Parliament passed an act of indemnity to protect him."<sup>1074</sup> Lentin goes to great pains to show Smuts in the most possible positive way with as little criticism as possible. Apart from the above, there is relatively little information with regards to this period in Smuts's life.

As regards the Fourie incident, Lentin indicates that the court was "unanimous" about the sentence of execution and that Smuts could not have allowed a reprieve. Using Smuts's own words he became the "best-hated man in South Africa."<sup>1075</sup> Throughout the biography Lentin uses numerous Smuts quotes, on some occasions his quoted words make up most of the pages and none of them are analysed. Instead they seem to be selected to validate a point that Lentin is choosing to make with a view that they speak for themselves.

With regards to German East Africa, Smuts's challenges are listed, in particular disease and climate, but most importantly Lentin claims that by "January 1917 Smuts had fulfilled his instructions to the letter, [even] though Lettow-Vorbeck held out until after the Armistice."<sup>1076</sup> Not many would agree with this view as the entire campaign is still regarded as controversial which Lentin accepts, although he sidesteps it with further praise especially

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<sup>1069</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 23

<sup>1070</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 23

<sup>1071</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 24

<sup>1072</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 27

<sup>1073</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 29

<sup>1074</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 29

<sup>1075</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 31

<sup>1076</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 33

with regards to Smuts's chivalry: his forwarding of the Iron Cross from the Kaiser to Lettow-Vorbeck.<sup>1077</sup>

Smuts's arrival in England is explored in great depth by Lentin. He goes to great lengths to illustrate how much the British loved him with several anecdotes,<sup>1078</sup> including the possibility that German East Africa might be re-named "Smutsland."<sup>1079</sup> It is also noted that the concept and very name "British Commonwealth of Nations" was created by Smuts in May 1917. Lentin goes on further to state this was the "forerunner of the Statute of Westminster (1931) and a milestone in the political emancipation of the Dominions."<sup>1080</sup> Very few authors give Smuts so much credit with regards to this. Lentin also uses a quote from Smuts to refute the idea that "South Africa was too small for him": "Every drop of blood and every bit of courage and determination I have in me will go to the service of my country."<sup>1081</sup>

Lentin also points out in this context that Smuts's appointment as a member of the War Cabinet was "unprecedented" and Smuts had "a natural dignity and an unaffected cordiality" which was viewed with suspicion in South Africa, but not in Britain.<sup>1082</sup> Lentin also uses many contemporary quotes, such as one by C. P. Scott, editor of a British newspaper, who stated that Smuts was "obviously a big man" because of his modesty.<sup>1083</sup> Smuts's intellect is also praised as is his idea for a League of Nations, which Lentin states occurred already in May 1917.<sup>1084</sup> Lentin also defends Smuts's decision to approve Haig's military campaign in the Flanders region which degenerated into a bloodbath. He states that Smuts claimed that Haig would give up the offensive if it did not work immediately, yet he admits that later Smuts accepted that the offensive saved the War.<sup>1085</sup>

Smuts's talks with Mensdorff, an Austrian Ambassador, are also included although it is shown that Smuts, almost immediately, realised that a separate peace was impossible.<sup>1086</sup> This is also not often made apparent in other histories of Smuts, or if so, it is mentioned incorrectly. Smuts's refusal of the Palestinian command is noted by Lentin to be because of the lack of "support of the War Office, [as] it would turn into a secondary side-show."

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<sup>1077</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 34

<sup>1078</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, pp 34-6

<sup>1079</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 34

<sup>1080</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 36

<sup>1081</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 36

<sup>1082</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 37

<sup>1083</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 37

<sup>1084</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 39

<sup>1085</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 40

<sup>1086</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 41

Smuts's support of the Zionist movement is also mentioned,<sup>1087</sup> which again is rarely noted in other histories. Lentin continues to praise Smuts's various roles during the remainder of the First World War<sup>1088</sup> but for Lentin Smuts's most important role was the creation of the Royal Air Force.<sup>1089</sup>

With regards to the peace making process Lentin's first emphasis is on the huge amount of work that Smuts had to do. He outlines the British policy at the Peace Conference; the League of Nations; the Commonwealth; the War Cabinet; the Demobilisation Committee; and finally South Africa's territorial claims.<sup>1090</sup> Lentin's details with regards to certain events and incidents are immense. He also goes into detail about Smuts's personal feelings and opinions as he illustrates all the processes and discussions that occurred during the peace conference. Lentin's main sources are letters found in the Smuts Papers during this discussion.<sup>1091</sup> One statement that attracts interest is that, when the British general election began on 14 December 1918, Lentin writes that "Smuts scrupulously resigned from the War Cabinet."<sup>1092</sup> This is just another example of Lentin's vast admiration of Smuts.

Lentin's support for Smuts with regards to the League of Nations is present throughout the biography. But again it seems to be his workload that impresses Lentin: Smuts *also* [my italics] drew up a constitution for the League."<sup>1093</sup> When writing of Smuts's pamphlet with regards to the League Lentin quotes Lloyd George as saying it was "one of the ablest state papers he had read."<sup>1094</sup> Lentin also quotes Smuts as stating that "the real business of this Conference" was the League.<sup>1095</sup> Smuts's "prestige" at Paris in 1919 still "remained second to none" and his "liberal credentials were exceptional."<sup>1096</sup> This is a bold claim to make considering the fact that the French were vehemently against Smuts's belief in a more forgiving peace.

Lentin also contends that Smuts was the "true architect" behind the League of Nations with Wilson taking most, if not all, of the credit.<sup>1097</sup> He also insinuates that Wilson stole many of

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<sup>1087</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 41

<sup>1088</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, pp 42--45

<sup>1089</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 44

<sup>1090</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 49

<sup>1091</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, pp 50-63

<sup>1092</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 53

<sup>1093</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 54

<sup>1094</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 53

<sup>1095</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 58

<sup>1096</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 56

<sup>1097</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 58

the proposals from Smuts: “Wilson was soon talking of the Covenant as if it were all his own work”, although he does admit that Smuts did not mind emphasising his humbleness.<sup>1098</sup>

Lentin also notes the irony that South Africa could not annex German South-West Africa outright because of his mandate system incorporated within the League of Nations.<sup>1099</sup> Smuts wanted this territory because he “dreamed of a Greater South Africa under white rule.”<sup>1100</sup>

There is, however, no criticism of this well-known dream that Smuts held which goes against modern contemporary thought.

Smuts’s distaste for the Versailles treaty is made evident in great detail by Lentin<sup>1101</sup> and he reserves criticism for the French who saw Smuts as a “friend of Germany.”<sup>1102</sup> When discussing Smuts’s mission to Hungary the detail is far more than other histories and Lentin points out that his mission was “to reassert the authority of the Allies and to hold the ring between Hungary and Romania [who had just invaded Hungary].”<sup>1103</sup> Smuts, however, also saw the possibility of making peace with Russia.<sup>1104</sup>

When Smuts and his companions arrived in Vienna in 1919 a “sumptuous luncheon” was prepared which Smuts saw as “a gross error in taste” considering that the entire country of Austria was starving due to blockades.<sup>1105</sup> After this incident, Smuts ordered that his party would live off army rations for the remainder of the mission. Smuts also declined hotel accommodation in Budapest and he insisted that all meetings occur at the railway station because Smuts was “scrupulous to give no appearance of official recognition to Kun’s regime.”<sup>1106</sup> Smuts disliked Communism avidly and he knew that Kun’s regime would not last (it only survived for six months).<sup>1107</sup> Therefore Smuts got permission to terminate the mission and he left Budapest at the appointed time, leaving an unknowing Kun “standing speechless on the platform.”<sup>1108</sup> Smuts may have failed in his mission, but he brought to the attention of other countries the serious plight of starvation in Eastern Europe.<sup>1109</sup> This version of events is

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<sup>1098</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 58

<sup>1099</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 61

<sup>1100</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 60

<sup>1101</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, pp 64-69

<sup>1102</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 70

<sup>1103</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 71

<sup>1104</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 71

<sup>1105</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 72

<sup>1106</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 72

<sup>1107</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 73

<sup>1108</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 73

<sup>1109</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 74

very different to those found in works by for example Armstrong, and makes Smuts seem like the victor.

With regards to Smuts's involvement in war reparations, Lentin quotes Hancock as stating "it has done more damage to his reputation than any other document that he ever produced in his whole life."<sup>1110</sup> Lentin, and Hancock, are alluding to Smuts's legal opinion that he wrote for Wilson after being pushed by Lloyd George to show that Britain required a large share of war reparations from Germany.<sup>1111</sup> The crux of the argument was that Smuts believed that military pensions and separation allowances should not be separate from reparations that were to be paid for "damage done to the civilian population...and their property."<sup>1112</sup> Smuts believed that legally a soldier was merely a civilian who had been called to arms, therefore all reparations and pensions should be in the same sum. No one expected the final total to inflate and actually triple.<sup>1113</sup> Although Smuts was attacked on several fronts for this opinion, especially from Hertzog at home and from Keynes overseas, Lentin does note that Keynes "regretted the irony that Smuts of all men should take the blame."<sup>1114</sup> In Lentin's version of events, Smuts merely provided his opinion, the true decision makers like Wilson and Lloyd George are the real culprits.

After Smuts's return from Budapest he was immediately "dismayed" by the draft Treaty that had been created while he was away, especially with regards to the reparations chapter which he saw as "impossible."<sup>1115</sup> Smuts attempted political pressure, in particular on Lloyd George, but due to French pressure in the opposing direction he failed and the terms remained the same: harsh and unreasonable. Smuts and Botha refused the military guarantee that Britain provided to France, but Lloyd George simply reworded the guarantee which essentially provided independence to the Dominions.<sup>1116</sup> Therefore although Smuts failed in his immediate goal, he still managed to gain South Africa a more advanced level of independence.

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<sup>1110</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 77

<sup>1111</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 76

<sup>1112</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 76

<sup>1113</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 77

<sup>1114</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 78

<sup>1115</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 81

<sup>1116</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 82

Lentin further explores Smuts's failed attempts to force a revision of the Treaty in detail<sup>1117</sup> as well as referring to possibly Smuts's most important comment at the time: "I think the world deserves a good peace."<sup>1118</sup> This single sentence is in essence what Smuts fought for and can be seen as his knowledge of peace treaties when considering Vereeniging and South Africa after the Anglo-Boer War. Lentin also praises Smuts for his various proposals, especially with regards to allowing the Germans to discuss the Treaty: "Few more obvious or sensible comments have been made on the Paris Peace Conference"<sup>1119</sup> and "Smuts's objections were wise, far-sighted and accurate."<sup>1120</sup> To Lentin Smuts was the outstanding individual at the Conference.

Lentin's detail on some matters is beyond the parameters of this dissertation but it is interesting to note that he does criticise Smuts on one occasion: "Smuts's logic was impeccable; his psychology was flawed."<sup>1121</sup> Lentin's criticism is that Smuts focused too much on "dry legalities" rather than on the psychology of the nations and people who had been involved in the entirety of the First World War.<sup>1122</sup> Lentin also criticises Botha for his apparent lack of support for Smuts's objections: "its absence [Botha's support] visibly weakened Smuts's authority."<sup>1123</sup>

Lentin illustrates how torn Smuts was on whether to sign the document or not in great detail,<sup>1124</sup> but his more important commentary is how close Smuts came to becoming a full-blown English politician. Lentin indicates that Smuts was asked by several prominent English politicians to remain in England, even the King, and that Smuts later admits that "there was some temptation not to come back [to South Africa]."<sup>1125</sup> This could very well be the comment that elicited the notion that South Africa was too small for Smuts, although Lentin does not make this point.

Smuts wanted to resign in order to not sign but he came to "the simple realisation that he could not let down Botha" because Botha, being the head of a delegation, "had no choice." They had to sign to "validate the legal recognition of South Africa's independent

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<sup>1117</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, pp 85-92

<sup>1118</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 86

<sup>1119</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 89

<sup>1120</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 90

<sup>1121</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 102

<sup>1122</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 102

<sup>1123</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 104

<sup>1124</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, pp 105-112

<sup>1125</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 109



statehood.”<sup>1126</sup> Another reason for signing was that if he did not and Botha did, it would cause a split in the politics in South Africa.<sup>1127</sup> It is, however, ironic that Keynes, Smuts’s ally in the reparations dilemma, resigned from the British delegation shortly before signing in protest.<sup>1128</sup> Smuts was not allowed such a compromise.

Lentin examines the immediate results of the Treaty at length<sup>1129</sup> before briefly exploring the remainder of Smuts’s life. Lentin quotes Smuts as saying the only reason he returned to South Africa was “because of Botha.”<sup>1130</sup> This is an interesting point, considering that many authors who are supporters of Smuts usually attempt to show that Smuts was a “true South African” and that he would never leave South Africa permanently. Lentin seems to take the opposite view by continually indicating that Smuts felt he had to return to South Africa for other people and reasons, for example Botha.

Smuts as Prime Minister from 1919-1924 is very briefly explored (one page) and the only notable comment from Lentin is that Smuts “acted boldly” with regards to the 1922 Rand Revolt.<sup>1131</sup> He makes no reference to Bulhoek or the Bondelzwarts. Another telling comment by Lentin is: “So often a prophet without honour in his own country, Smuts was still held in great esteem and affection in Britain.”<sup>1132</sup> It is a very bold claim to consider Smuts as a prophet and Lentin is far more focused on Smuts’s international status than his home profile. For example, Lentin goes into detail about Smuts’s involvement with the Irish question during the 1921 Imperial Conference.<sup>1133</sup> The remainder of the chapter briefly examines Smuts in the Fusion government<sup>1134</sup> with Lentin noting that in 1938 “Smuts’s attitude...was contradictory.”<sup>1135</sup> What Lentin is stating is that Smuts believed in appeasement with regards to Hitler to a point, but once that point had been crossed he would always fight for Britain.

Smuts receives immense praise from Lentin for his role during the Second World War<sup>1136</sup> and especially for his cautious approach which did tellingly not result in “another Jopie

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<sup>1126</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 111

<sup>1127</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 111

<sup>1128</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 110

<sup>1129</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, pp 117-123

<sup>1130</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 123

<sup>1131</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 124

<sup>1132</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 125

<sup>1133</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, pp 125-126

<sup>1134</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, pp 127-133

<sup>1135</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 131

<sup>1136</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, pp 134-142

Fourie.”<sup>1137</sup> Lentin also makes note of the close friendship between Churchill and Smuts<sup>1138</sup> which is also not often mentioned in other histories. It is also noted that Smuts drafted the preamble for the United Nations and that Smuts “was given pride of place” at the San Francisco meeting which was the founding of the United Nations.<sup>1139</sup> Lentin also points out that “he [Smuts] held throughout his career to the traditional Afrikaner prejudice” with regards to white supremacy.<sup>1140</sup> There is no criticism of this issue on Lentin’s part, however, and he writes it very matter-of-factly.

As indicated from the outset Lentin also includes the novel idea that Smuts and Nelson Mandela would have been friends because they were kindred spirits.<sup>1141</sup> Lentin also states that Mandela wrote “magnanimously of Smuts” because Mandela “cared more that he had helped the foundation of the League of Nations...than the fact he had repressed freedom at home.”<sup>1142</sup> Lentin also states that Smuts was merely “gratified” after being installed as Chancellor of Cambridge University<sup>1143</sup> which is different from previous biographies. Lentin briefly surveys Smuts’s final years<sup>1144</sup> before ending with the belief that Smuts lived “on in South Africa in men like Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu” because of his “persuasive belief in reconciliation and the contagion of magnanimity.”<sup>1145</sup> It would be interesting to ascertain if these two individuals would have agreed on such a comparison.

In conclusion it is evident that throughout the biography Lentin quotes Smuts continuously. This is obviously due to his access to the Smuts Papers and Hancock (who is also quoted at length). Generally after successive quotes Lentin explains Smuts’s meanings in his own opinion. Therefore although the biography brings many previously less regarded aspects to the fore, it is, however a very opinionated book with little or no criticism directed at Smuts. That Lentin is an admirer of Smuts is obvious and the detail of certain events (for example the Paris Peace Conference) is vast. Lentin leaves out several important incidents that could provide a wealth of criticism (for example Bulhoek) on purpose in order to show Smuts in the best possible light. His access to Hancock and the Smuts Papers have dismissed many

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<sup>1137</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 136

<sup>1138</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 138

<sup>1139</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 143

<sup>1140</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 146

<sup>1141</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 147

<sup>1142</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 147

<sup>1143</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 148

<sup>1144</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, pp 148-152

<sup>1145</sup> A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts: man of courage and vision*, p 153

previous myths, but some still continue most probably due to his almost excessive pro-Boer stance.

### 5.3 Biography-Richard Steyn

The final piece of literature examined for this dissertation is the recent publication (2015) by Richard Steyn titled *Jan Smuts: Unafraid of Greatness*. Steyn's biography is split into two sections: the first examines his life and times,<sup>1146</sup> which is of importance to this dissertation, while the second examines Smuts's personal life.<sup>1147</sup> Many reviewers give a broad outline of the book rather than make an actual examination of it,<sup>1148</sup> although it is noted that the biography is written "from a South African perspective" and "mostly for South African audiences."<sup>1149</sup> Steyn notes that he attempted to write "a shorter and less daunting book" in order to increase the readership.<sup>1150</sup> He makes the point that he has attempted to write "a sort of journalism about the past" which suits his journalistic background.<sup>1151</sup> Steyn also writes that his main sources were Hancock, Kenneth Ingham, F. S. Crafford, Piet Beukes and Piet Meiring.<sup>1152</sup> Therefore one would expect a relatively unbiased account with perhaps a slightly heavy interest in the Afrikaans version of history due to the predominance of Afrikaans historians used by Steyn. It is also important to note that like Lentin Steyn immediately places Smuts on par with Mandela in that they "added lustre, in the eyes of the world, to the country they led."<sup>1153</sup>

Steyn begins his biography, quite oddly, achronologically with Smuts's death and funeral in an attempt to illustrate Smuts's importance.<sup>1154</sup> Steyn also begins a theme that is constant throughout the biography: the school relationship between Smuts and Malan whether they be friends or enemies at the time.<sup>1155</sup> Steyn then looks at the various ways people paid tribute to Smuts, for example the "heartfelt" tribute in Britain because of his "heroic status" there<sup>1156</sup> or

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<sup>1146</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2015, pp 3-166

<sup>1147</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, pp 169-251

<sup>1148</sup> J. Erk, Review of R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, Vol. 54, No. 3, 2016, pp 445-447; P. Sorenson, Review of R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, *International Journal of Environmental Studies*, Vol. 73, No. 2, 2016, pp 325-331

<sup>1149</sup> <sup>1149</sup> J. Erk, Review of R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, Vol. 54, No. 3, 2016, p 446

<sup>1150</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p ix

<sup>1151</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p x

<sup>1152</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p x

<sup>1153</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p ix

<sup>1154</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 3

<sup>1155</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 3

<sup>1156</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 4

Malan's comment on radio that Smuts was "a great South African,<sup>1157</sup> and even two thousand blacks who stood along the railway to show their respect.<sup>1158</sup> Most importantly as indicated from this section, however, is another theme introduced by Steyn and is common throughout the biography: a comparison between "two men who have left deep footprints on the sands of time, not only in their own country but in the wider world as well."<sup>1159</sup> These two men are Jan Smuts and Nelson Mandela. It is also interesting to note that the majority of the sources used in this beginning section are newspaper reports.<sup>1160</sup>

At the beginning of the next chapter, which is concerned with Smuts's youth, Steyn seems to make the attempt of excusing Smuts's paternalistic tendencies later in his life. Steyn makes the statement that "colonialism was regarded as natural, legitimate and, by and large, in the interests of both rulers and ruled."<sup>1161</sup> Steyn is already trying to illustrate that Smuts was merely born into racism and colonialism, perhaps even indicating a belief that Smuts should not be blamed for his beliefs and ideals. Steyn deals with Smuts's youth briefly although he does note that "as an adolescent, Jan must have been an awful prig."<sup>1162</sup> This possibly unfair statement is in relation to a remarkable letter Smuts sent to a Professor at Stellenbosch just before he arrived whereby he asked for protection from "puerile elements."<sup>1163</sup> I believe the statement to be unfair because Smuts was still only sixteen years old and going to a far larger community than any he had seen before. Any young teenager would probably have found the entire event quite stressful, rather than just being "a prig."

Another prominent theme throughout the biography occurs during Smuts's tenure at Stellenbosch, the continual noting and comparison of Smuts and "his eventual political foe, DF ('Danie') Malan."<sup>1164</sup> In this instance it is with regards to Smuts inviting Malan to join his debating society.<sup>1165</sup> Steyn, however, focusses mainly on the young love blossoming between Smuts and Isie only briefly examining his Cambridge years.<sup>1166</sup> With regards to Smuts's failure to open up a successful law practice in Cape Town Steyn follows the lead of "FS

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<sup>1157</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 4

<sup>1158</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 6

<sup>1159</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 7

<sup>1160</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, pp 3-7

<sup>1161</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 8

<sup>1162</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 10

<sup>1163</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 10

<sup>1164</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 11

<sup>1165</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 11

<sup>1166</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, pp 10-15

Crafford” who believed that it was because of Smuts’s “austere personality.”<sup>1167</sup> Smuts’s personality has always been a major bone of contention and Steyn agrees with Crafford that Smuts’s “aloof tactlessness” made it difficult for him “to rub along with the common man.”<sup>1168</sup> It seems most enlightening as to which author Steyn relies on with regards to certain aspects of Smuts and evidently for him Crafford is his best measure of Smuts’s character for this occasion.

After the Jameson Raid, Steyn notes that Smuts did not take part in the “general vilification” of Rhodes, but Steyn asks if this was because Smuts “saw a kindred spirit” in Rhodes.<sup>1169</sup> Although this is a pertinent question there is no answer provided. Smuts’s role in the Transvaal just before the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War is also very brief<sup>1170</sup> and the only important statement is that in “the determined young State Attorney [Smuts], the patrician and uncompromising Milner found his match in arrogance.”<sup>1171</sup> Once again the source of this opinion is Crafford and it echoes Armstrong in its assumption of Smuts’s arrogance.

Smuts receives much praise from Steyn for his pre-War work effort: “As usual, Smuts worked himself to the bone, shouldering the heaviest burden of anyone in government...”<sup>1172</sup> With regards to “A Century of wrong” Steyn notes that “the impulsive young Smuts took a step he would later regret.” He also notes that the original document was in Dutch and that it was translated into English by Isie Smuts,<sup>1173</sup> although no source is mentioned. Crafford is again mentioned as observing that “there must have been few things in life that Smuts was to regret more than his authorship of ‘A Century of wrong.’”<sup>1174</sup> It is immediately obvious that Crafford is a major source for Steyn, and possibly a major influence.

Little mention is made of the incident, and possible controversy, where Smuts shipped the government’s gold out of Pretoria; apart from that he did it successfully.<sup>1175</sup> No mention is made of Smuts’s grand strategy of invasion, besides that Smuts had always “attached more importance to the Colony than his colleagues.”<sup>1176</sup> Steyn also refrains from implicating Smuts in any way with the Boer plan to blow up the mines. For Smuts’s foray into the Cape Colony

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<sup>1167</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 16

<sup>1168</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 16

<sup>1169</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 17

<sup>1170</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, pp 18-21

<sup>1171</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 21

<sup>1172</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 23

<sup>1173</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 23

<sup>1174</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 23

<sup>1175</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 26

<sup>1176</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 29

Steyn's main source is Deneys Reitz<sup>1177</sup> which is possibly why he makes the same mistake as other authors by placing Smuts at the "Colyn" incident.<sup>1178</sup> Steyn also notes it as a "celebrated occasion."<sup>1179</sup> More interestingly, however, is his use of Crafford when describing what Smuts allegedly said at the hearing: "No, Colyn, for you there can be no mercy. You have done the dirty work of the English."<sup>1180</sup> This is the first time where this additional phrase is added. No one seems to be able to agree about this event and it certainly has entered the popular conscience as a legend.

With regards to after the Anglo-Boer War Steyn uses Armstrong as a source when stating that without Kruger, Smuts "was sorely in need of a new leader to inspire him in the way the old president, and before that Rhodes, had done."<sup>1181</sup> This is a common theme in many biographies and Steyn merely continues in the vein of those before him. Armstrong is again used as a source when Steyn makes the remarkable statement that by "the early 1900s, Botha and Smuts had become universally recognised as the leaders of Afrikanerdom."<sup>1182</sup> This is very debatable and many would disagree. Steyn also believes that Smuts was the guiding force behind the creation of "Het Volk."<sup>1183</sup>

Steyn tentatively states that Smuts "was by common consent the architect and designer of the Union of South Africa."<sup>1184</sup> He does concede that others played "significant roles" in the process (including Botha and Merriman) but that Smuts's ideas "finally prevailed."<sup>1185</sup> Steyn however, criticises Smuts for his "controversial education policy" (whereby English would be the dominant language) and that Smuts "was so intent on wiping out differences between the two white groups that he failed to give proper consideration to what was so dear to Afrikaners."<sup>1186</sup> Although Steyn comes across as an admirer of Smuts, he does show his Afrikaner background by joining previous Afrikaner authors in his criticism of Smuts's treatment of Afrikaans and Afrikaners.

Steyn also refers to Smuts as "often uncommunicative and inaccessible" as well as stating that his "enemies, who claimed he was too clever by half, called him *Slim Jannie*, a nickname

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<sup>1177</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, pp 31-40

<sup>1178</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 36

<sup>1179</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 35

<sup>1180</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 36

<sup>1181</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 41

<sup>1182</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 45

<sup>1183</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 45

<sup>1184</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 48

<sup>1185</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 48

<sup>1186</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 49

that was to stick.”<sup>1187</sup> Steyn then continues his opening stance by comparing Botha and Smuts to Mandela and Mbeki.<sup>1188</sup> He also notes that Smuts was “the true voice of government.”<sup>1189</sup> Similar to previous authors Steyn cannot criticise Smuts without praise, or vice versa. The enigma of his personality extends to those writing about him. Steyn also makes the astute statement that “Smuts, as usual, was at the centre of any controversy,”<sup>1190</sup> this being mainly due to his workload and his involvement in most, if not all, governmental decisions. He appears at times larger than life.

The Smuts-Gandhi agreement is briefly examined with Steyn instead focusing more on the characters of the two men and what their relationship was like, noting their respect for each other and avoiding the contentions.<sup>1191</sup> With regards to the 1914 strike Steyn again uses Crafford as his source when stating that Smuts ordered that the “strikers should be handled with the greatest severity.”<sup>1192</sup> No other author examined has previously mentioned this alleged quote. Steyn also notes the immense criticism Smuts received for his illegal deportation of the strike leaders, although he himself does not criticise Smuts directly.<sup>1193</sup> The Jopie Fourie incident is briefly mentioned, but Steyn does his best to not implicate Smuts and he is not mentioned in any way with regards to the final sentencing. Instead Steyn sidesteps the issue by indicating that a contingent of churchmen, “which included DF Malan” attempted to see Smuts but were unable to do so.<sup>1194</sup>

Smuts receives much praise from Steyn for his role in the German East Africa campaign and also points out like others before him that the climatic and geographic conditions were more of a problem than the Germans.<sup>1195</sup> Steyn astutely makes the point that “military historians have always argued about Smuts’s performance in East Africa.”<sup>1196</sup> No one can agree on whether it was a success or a failure, or if it was inbetween the two. Steyn writes that Smuts received much praise in Britain on his arrival in 1917 compared to the “chilly atmosphere at home” and, more interestingly, that this praise “served to persuade him that the international

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<sup>1187</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 51

<sup>1188</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 51

<sup>1189</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 51

<sup>1190</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 59

<sup>1191</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, pp 61-64

<sup>1192</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 65

<sup>1193</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, pp 65-66

<sup>1194</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 68

<sup>1195</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, pp 75-77

<sup>1196</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 78

arena might be where he truly belonged.”<sup>1197</sup> This statement seems to imply if not accentuate the belief that South Africa was too small for Smuts.

Steyn gives Smuts full credit for the 1931 Statute of Westminster because of his role at the 1917 Imperial Conference where he put forward the idea of a Commonwealth, as the “constitutional road ran straight on to the Statute of Westminster.”<sup>1198</sup> Steyn points out that Smuts supported the ill-fated Flanders offensive in the First World War, but he does not include Smuts’s trepidations and fears about it.<sup>1199</sup> He also perpetuates the myth that Botha thought of Smuts as “a fine guerrilla leader but not a great general.”<sup>1200</sup> This has already been refuted. Smuts also receives praise for being the “Father of the Royal Air Force.”<sup>1201</sup>

Steyn makes an interesting point when he states that the British Lord Curzon called Smuts “a crafty fellow” after his role in alleviating strikes in Wales in 1917. The point of interest is that Steyn writes that in South Africa “people would have nodded their heads and called him *slim*.”<sup>1202</sup> Steyn also heaps praise upon Smuts for his immense amount of work done during the First World War, especially his involvement in the League of Nations.<sup>1203</sup> With regards to the Paris Peace Conference, Steyn notes that Smuts “felt frustrated at no longer being at the centre of affairs.”<sup>1204</sup> This is a continuation of the view or perception that Smuts had to be at the centre of everything and craved power.

Smuts’s visit to Hungary to see Bela Kun shows him in a favourable light, most probably because the source used by Steyn is Hancock and not Armstrong.<sup>1205</sup> With regards to the War reparations incident Steyn reports that Smuts was against crippling Germany with massive debt, but that Smuts “was widely criticised for apparently contradicting himself.” Steyn, however, adds that this occurred because Lloyd George had asked Smuts “for a quick legal opinion” with regards to pensions for British servicemen, just before he was set to leave for Hungary. Smuts “opined that Germany should indeed pay for all British war pensions.”<sup>1206</sup> The way that Steyn has portrayed the event it seems that the entire thing was a misunderstanding and that no blame should be laid at Smuts’s feet.

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<sup>1197</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 80

<sup>1198</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 82

<sup>1199</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 84

<sup>1200</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 84

<sup>1201</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 85

<sup>1202</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 87

<sup>1203</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, pp 81-91

<sup>1204</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 92

<sup>1205</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 94

<sup>1206</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 96



The next chapter is called “A Reluctant Prime Minister” and Steyn alludes to the possibility that Smuts was not ready or prepared to become Prime Minister. He also notes that from now on (1919) “both party and cabinet were to be ruled with a rod of iron.”<sup>1207</sup> Once again Crafford is the main source used and the above statement continues the belief that Smuts used dictatorial methods. In fact Steyn goes on to state that “soon the autocratic Smuts was perceived as more than just the head of government: he *was* the government.”<sup>1208</sup> Smuts is also accused by Steyn with regards to the Bulhoek and Bondelzwarts incidents as not caring enough about Africans and focusing instead on Europe and the world’s problems.<sup>1209</sup> Smuts is also implicated in both incidents by Steyn, but concedes that it “was his treatment of the miners that cost him even more support.”<sup>1210</sup>

Steyn does note that the 1922 Rand Revolt was mainly due to misunderstandings and the fact that neither the strikers nor the mine-owners would back down, but that Smuts made the mistake of “seeming” to be on the mine-owners side.<sup>1211</sup> It is also noted that the strikers were hijacked by a radical group who forced the issue with violence.<sup>1212</sup> Smuts acted swiftly and brutally and although he “saved the country from anarchy” he had made a political mistake which allowed his opponents an additional claim of him being a “butcher and hangman.”<sup>1213</sup> Steyn notes that the 1924 election was “noteworthy for the bitterness of the personal attacks on Smuts”<sup>1214</sup> and that the reason for his loss was his impatience at calling an early election.<sup>1215</sup>

The following chapter focusses on Smuts’s activities outside of power, mainly his many scientific and philosophical pursuits.<sup>1216</sup> With regards to the next chapter, which examines the creation of the Fusion government, Steyn states quite interestingly that it “is generally agreed by historians that ‘poor-whiteism’ was a primary driver of the segregationist policies of both the Pact government and Smuts’s SAP.”<sup>1217</sup> This again is a highly debatable statement, and

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<sup>1207</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 100

<sup>1208</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 101

<sup>1209</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 104

<sup>1210</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 107

<sup>1211</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 108

<sup>1212</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 108

<sup>1213</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 109

<sup>1214</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 110

<sup>1215</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 111

<sup>1216</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, pp 112-120

<sup>1217</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 121

no mention is made of the historians who agree on this. Steyn also astutely notes that the new United Party was “more of a marriage of convenience than a union of hearts and minds.”<sup>1218</sup>

Steyn believes that Smuts followed a gradualist policy, especially with regards to the ‘native policy’, and that he felt that there was no viable policy that “could solve South Africa’s social, racial and economic problems once and for all.”<sup>1219</sup> Steyn contends that Smuts could do little to go against the damning bills of Hertzog’s that took away the Cape franchise, even though he had tried to do this before when he was the main opposition. Smuts had to keep the Fusion government together and even within his own party the consensus was mixed as to supporting them or opposing them.<sup>1220</sup> Therefore Smuts’s hands were essentially tied and he could do little to stop them, apart from the complete dissolution of government.

Steyn makes the point that during the Second World War Smuts had to fight “on two fronts: domestic and military.” He also praises Smuts for his rebuilding of the defence force, which was “militarily naked.”<sup>1221</sup> He illustrates how War caused a new division amongst whites in South Africa, especially due to the “tough measures” that Smuts resorted to, including the confiscation of weapons from civilians.<sup>1222</sup> The remainder of the chapter (“War Leader”) focusses on Smuts’s travels and the military involvement of South African troops.<sup>1223</sup> Steyn does, however, note that in the 1943 election Malan and his supporters “ominously...were turning the colour issue to their advantage.”<sup>1224</sup>

Smuts is praised for his endeavours with regards to the United Nations, but it is noted that his wording of the Preamble were to be the cause for his eventual downfall and his diminishing of international influence.<sup>1225</sup> Steyn continues the belief that world politics was far more fascinating for Smuts than South African by stating: “With weary resignation he once again took up his post-war responsibilities as South Africa’s prime minister.”<sup>1226</sup> Steyn also claims that Smuts’s arguments against India’s calls for South Africa to stop segregation were entirely valid due to the caste system and massacre of Muslims in India at the time.<sup>1227</sup> He

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<sup>1218</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 123

<sup>1219</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 126

<sup>1220</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 128

<sup>1221</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 131

<sup>1222</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 133

<sup>1223</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, pp 133-141

<sup>1224</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 141

<sup>1225</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 147

<sup>1226</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 151

<sup>1227</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 152

also notes that ironically Smuts was “the first victim of the new institution he had been instrumental in creating.”<sup>1228</sup>

Steyn makes the important observation that Smuts was continuously in a conundrum: that is if he appeared too liberal he would lose local votes, but if he was too illiberal he would lose international support.<sup>1229</sup> The last few pages are about Smuts’s last years and focus on his scientific honours and travels.<sup>1230</sup> The final word on Steyn is from the section not examined in this dissertation but is of importance. Steyn notes that Smuts’s major failure in his life was not only his loss in the 1948 elections which Steyn believes he could have prevented, but also the fact that he failed to address the one issue that he tried to avoid his entire life: the “native question.”<sup>1231</sup>

Steyn’s biography is brief (251 pages) yet surprisingly full of important information. Unfortunately he seems to rely on a few selected sources far more than others, for example Crafford for his interpretations and Hancock almost as an archive for quotations. This leads to several ‘myths’ being perpetuated in the biography and can also be seen to illustrate a lack of objectivity. Although Steyn comes across generally as an admirer of Smuts, the whole biography makes Steyn seem ambivalent: that is that Smuts was a great individual but he had several major faults that deserve criticism.

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<sup>1228</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 152

<sup>1229</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 157

<sup>1230</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, pp 158-166

<sup>1231</sup> R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: unafraid of greatness*, p 232

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

As has become evident in the selection of literature presented in this dissertation, there is a wide variety of opinions with regards to Smuts and the various roles he played throughout his lifetime. Authors choose the aspects of his life to elaborate upon which illustrate where their loyalties, biases and preferences lie. The transmission of history is chosen by those who study it, and in Smuts's case it is clearly evident that this depends on where the allegiances of the authors are and in what context and genre they are writing. Essentially this study endorses what Evans contends: "The point of history is to study historians, not to study the past."<sup>1232</sup> This conclusion thus takes a brief look at what Shafer terms subjectivity and bias-the former being an "inescapable human quality" and the latter a "human chosen commitment."<sup>1233</sup>

In reflecting on these selected sources, various patterns appear whereby authors can be clustered according to the way in which they portray Smuts, his actions and the events he was involved in. Those clusters include but are not limited to those who are contradictorily ambivalent, those who are negatively ambivalent, those who are positive with their ambivalence, those who are supporters, and finally those who are outrightly opposed to Smuts. Also, there are overlaps and blurrings between these clusters.

First up are the authors, particularly Millin and Steyn, who come across as contradictorily ambivalent and it seems that they cannot make up their minds as to whether Smuts deserves to be applauded or to be criticised. Millin in particular is often contradictory with her praise and criticisms. This could be because of Smuts's supposed enigmatic character, although he could be seen as "enigmatic" due to this ambivalence. Walker and Welsh could almost be included in this section, but they are slightly more positive with regards to Smuts, therefore they could be classified as positive ambivalence. This positivity shows their admiration for Smuts, but in many cases they are ambiguous in their praise illustrating their ambivalence, albeit in an occasional positive light. Smuts was involved in a large number of events and incidents throughout his long career and it is up to the author to pick and choose which events are of relevance. It is very easy to "lose" past information by simply ignoring it and instead focus on "good" or "bad" events that show Smuts in whatever particular way the author deems correct or relevant.

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<sup>1232</sup> R. J. Evans, *In defence of history*, London: Granta Books, 1997, p 98

<sup>1233</sup> R. J. Shafer (ed), *A guide to historical method*, p 169

Some authors, H. C. Armstrong in particular, come across as cynical and negative. Smuts was most certainly the type of individual who created many enemies and this comes across in several pieces of the literature examined. Other authors who are bordering on the negative include Muller, Van Jaarsveld, and Giliomee and Mbenga. Often the above authors are highly critical of Smuts yet they often do not mention Smuts when discussing possibly damning events such as the Jopie Fourie incident. This could illustrate the context in which they were writing, in particular Muller and Van Jaarsveld, who were writing in the period of apartheid, of which Smuts was no friend.

On the opposite side of the spectrum there are authors such as De Kiewiet, MacMillan and Lentin who can be seen as ardent supporters of Smuts and portray him as a brilliant individual who did little wrong. Smuts receives minimal criticism from such authors and any criticism is usually glossed over or completely ignored and in many cases Smuts receives their active support. Such cases of outright negativity or blind applause could be argued as being because of the contextual background of the authors. For example Afrikaans historians, such as Muller and Van Jaarsveld, from apartheid South Africa do not count Smuts amongst their heroes due to his perceived support for everything British. Armstrong himself seems to have a particular dislike for Smuts due to his actions during the First World War, which Armstrong believes Smuts should take criticism for.

Other authors, particularly liberals, see Smuts as a champion for liberal causes even though it can be argued Smuts did little with regards to this. Notable inclusions within this section are Lentin, De Kiewiet, MacMillan, and Davenport and Saunders. Smuts was considered a liberal in his own time and so would receive admiration from such authors. Smuts is an individual that he can be shown in several different ways and often it is in the context of the authors, rather than Smuts in his own time, that determine how Smuts will be seen. It must also be noted that to evaluate an individual from a different period in time is fraught with possible errors of judgement due to differing ideals. For example, during the middle of the twentieth century segregation was a common belief throughout the world, and Smuts could even be considered as a liberal with regards to this. To criticise Smuts for his racist tendencies retrospectively would be farcical as contextually he was a world away.

One author who is not included in this division of thought is Hancock who can instead be seen as a yardstick or even as a 'medium' as his work is still considered the best biography on Smuts. Hancock's work with regards to the Smuts Papers provided him with an

unprecedented amount of primary material that no previous authors had, and allowed those who followed him access to the same material. This can also be seen in the later works that were examined in this dissertation. It is important to note that Hancock himself is guilty of a few omissions, such as the ignoring of the Bulhoek and Bondelzwarts incidents. This could be seen as him trying to deflect any damaging indictments against Smuts. Even so, Hancock's two volumes remain the seminal biography of Smuts in its depth and objectivity.

This last section briefly considers how historians only call on the "facts of history"<sup>1234</sup> when and if they want them to speak. A few of the key omissions and inclusions will be highlighted to make the point. It will also illustrate how some of the clusters overlap.

Although there are many minor factual errors that have been highlighted throughout this dissertation, one that stands out is the authorship of "A Century of wrong". No author seems to agree as to what was Smuts's role in this document was. Millin believes Smuts was chiefly responsible, while Hancock and Lentin state that Smuts was the only author, with Hancock basing his facts on Isie's testimony. Welsh, Davenport and Saunders note that Smuts had a role of sorts in the authorship and Giliomee and Mbenga note that Smuts and Roos were equal contributors. Steyn, in a slightly ambiguous way, also believes that Smuts was the sole author. "A Century of wrong" can be seen as a damning document and whoever considers that Smuts is the sole author could be seen as criticising him or not favouring him ideologically. Considering that "A Century of wrong" has been around for over a century it seems amazing that there is still controversy as to who the contributors were and how much of a contribution they made.

The German East Africa campaign is also a contentious issue with several discrepancies amongst the authors. Walker is very positive about Smuts with regards to the whole affair and believes that Smuts was robbed of victory, although interestingly he makes no mention that Smuts was initially not interested in the position. This places Walker in the positive cluster with regards to this event, yet in other sections he is ambivalent and ambiguous which again illustrates the fluidity of the clusters. Millin sees the entire event as romantic and notes that Smuts initially turned down the offer. She also believes that Smuts was a brilliant soldier and most importantly blames any problems he experienced on the terrible climatic and geographical conditions. Millin's notions of this being a romantic adventure possibly illustrate her naivety, but it is also important to remember that at this point she was still an

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<sup>1234</sup> E. H. Carr, *What is history?*, p 5

admirer of Smuts, hence the positive review. Armstrong also notes the terrible conditions and that Smuts was reluctant to accept the command, but he is highly critical blaming the many deaths on Smuts's techniques. He also believes that Smuts was fleeing criticism when he accepted both the command for German East Africa and again in 1917 when he went to the Imperial Conference. Armstrong is entirely negative about the entire campaign which is indicative of his general negative feelings for Smuts. Hancock notes both the terrible conditions and Smuts's reluctance, but he also mentions that the campaign brought both praise and criticism, although in general he praises Smuts. This further vindicates Hancock as a yardstick as he often has the most detailed analysis and he portrays the facts as they are, even though he is often positive with regards to Smuts. Muller also mentions the terrible conditions and praises Smuts's military prowess, but no mention is made of Smuts being reluctant and there is no criticism of Smuts not invading the whole country, even though this is mentioned. This illustrates Muller's ambivalence to Smuts, albeit this time in a slightly more positive light. Van Jaarsveld does not analyse the event in detail and all that is noted is that Smuts left the area without completing his task. From this it can be seen that Van Jaarsveld is ambivalent and slightly negative. Davenport and Saunders note that Smuts was reluctant to participate, and that Smuts was denied victory only because of the brilliance of Von Lettow-Vorbeck. This can be seen as being very supportive of Smuts as they remove any blame from him and instead indicate that it was all due to Von Lettow-Vorbeck for Smuts failing to complete his task. Lentin mentions the terrible conditions and, exactly opposite to Van Jaarsveld, indicates that Smuts completed his task to the letter. Obviously Lentin is an ardent admirer of Smuts. Finally Steyn notes the conditions and indicates that there was much praise and criticism for the campaign, although he does not give his own opinion on the affair which further indicates his general ambivalence to Smuts.

Another contentious example is the execution of Jopie Fourie. Several authors refer to Smuts with regards to the incident such as Millin, Armstrong, Hancock, Lentin, Welsh and Giliomee and Mbenga. Some are very supportive of Smuts and seem to defend his decision to carry through the execution, including Hancock and Lentin. Others such as Millin come across as ambivalent and appear to be sitting on the fence and trying not to get too involved in a controversial issue. Most importantly, however, is the lack of any mention of Smuts by several authors when discussing the entire incident. This includes Walker, Muller, Van Jaarsveld, Davenport and Saunders, and Steyn. This seems odd considering it is an important event in Smuts's, as well as South Africa's, history and one could easily show Smuts in a

good or bad way from just this single event. This could also be interpreted as a sign of ambivalence which illustrates the fluidity of these clusters. It could also be seen as the authors protecting Smuts from criticism or as them attempting to not get involved in a situation whereby their own bias and opinion could be proven wrong. Welsh, Giliomee and Mbenga see this event as a grave political mistake which is obvious with hindsight, but no further analysis takes place. This incident is highly controversial and can be used as a marker to gauge the author's opinion. These are just a few examples of many that show how bias and opinion can affect the transmission of the past.

Numerous such examples occur throughout the literature analysed for this dissertation and they illustrate how varied the opinions of the examined authors are. Such events such as the above three, as well as the Bulhoek and Bondelzwarts events, are nearly always mentioned, but more often than not the analysis is brief and shallow which leads one to conclude that many of the authors were possibly afraid to delve into such controversial incidents. It could also be seen that perhaps some authors, most notably Hancock, are attempting to protect Smuts from further criticism, or that the ambivalence inherent in many of the authors is just accentuated when concerned with such issues. One possibility that can be ruled out is a lack of primary source material as it was widely available from the origins of these events. This could mean that some authors did not want to analyse them too deeply as it could prove their beliefs wrong.

It is also important to remember that Smuts lived through a period where massive changes took place politically as well as with regards to ideals and beliefs. Even more changes took place after his death and the entire twentieth century can be seen as a period of political and ideological upheaval. This naturally leads to reinterpretations of the past which results in different opinions on the same subject, even though the subject (Smuts) is the same. All of this means that each author, depending on their own context and environment, will come to a wide range of different interpretations. Therefore it is up to the individual author, more so than the actual subject, to determine what shall be transmitted through the literature.

While minor peripheral errors are also apparent that which is explained or omitted often reflects more on the period and history than on Smuts himself. The differing views of the authors can be seen as a testimony to the dramatic changes that occurred both within Smuts's lifetime and in the twentieth century, as well as on Smuts's "enigmatic" character. Such changes in beliefs, ideologies and political structures can easily lead to reinterpretations of



past events and people. Therefore the transmission of the past is affected by the changes in ideology and thought as much as the possible bias inherent in humanity. What is “lost” in this transmission is not so much about Smuts himself, but more to do with the authors who are affected as much by context themselves, as are historical figures from past times. The transmission of the past is of equal, if not more, importance than the past itself.

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