Introduction

The enigmatic Smuts

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In recent decades, Smuts's life, thought and career have been extensively explored (e.g., Garcia & van der Waag, 2023; Joubert, 2023; Katz, 2022; Gravett, 2022; du Pisani, 2019; Baxter, 2017; Thakur, 2017; Steyn, 2015; Steyn, 2017; Lentin, 2010; Geyser, 2001; Trew, 1999). Despite the renewed attention, he remains an enigmatic character, whose many apparent contradictions are examined systematically, and often glossed over, as typical of a man of his times, which are said to be mitigating factors in any assessment of his long and often turbulent career, especially in domestic politics. This collection of essays has emerged out of the very first conference devoted to the life and legacy of Jan Christiaan Smuts, held at the Johannesburg Institute for Advanced Study, University of Johannesburg, July 2023, of which Bongani Ngqulunga, one of the editors, is the former Director. The book attempts to consider Smuts in a broad frame of reference in order to offer reconsiderations and reappraisals, of a man who was much celebrated and much maligned.

Smuts allows us a great deal of margin for interpretation because of his many apparent contradictions, which in his own mind, at least, he either ignored, or was able to reconcile.

He prided himself on being a devoted family man who delighted in the company of his children and grandchildren, yet he locked himself away for in his study for hours when he was at home, making it clear that he did not want to be

disturbed, even by house guests who had been invited to stay. He was often absent from home, sometimes for years on end, in the service of the state, or of humanity. He saw this as his duty above and beyond his obligations to family. His long-suffering wife, Sybella Margaretha Krige, known as Isie, whom he met at Victoria College, Stellenbosch as a fellow student, even when they were courting, had to become accustomed to long periods of separation (Grimbeck, 2010). On graduation in 1891 he went to Cambridge University, courtesy of the Ebden scholarship, to study law for four years. C.F.G. Masterman, later a famous Liberal cabinet minister and social historian, knew him at Cambridge, and described him as 'a bit of a racist!'[1] A reputation that was difficult to acquire in those days when Imperialism, and white race supremacy were considered the norm. Smuts was at this time enamoured with Cecil Rhodes and was an admirer of Paul Kruger, president of the Transvaal Republic.

Shortly after they - Smuts and Isie - were married, Smuts became deeply embroiled in the politics of the Transvaal, and the tragedy of the Second Anglo Boer War (1899 to 1902). In June 1900, Smuts, having no previous military experience, left his wife and child Kosie, to lead a band of Boer commandos on a campaign of guerilla warfare. In August, having lost two children previously, a third, Kosie, died. With Smuts out of communication, Isie had to endure the unbearable loss alone. Because of the British strategy of slash and burn, in order to isolate the Boer fighters from their support networks, Isie was ordered to relocate to British-held Pietermaritzburg, to stay with her sister. Frequent absences of varying durations were to remain the pattern of the rest of their married lives.

1 This observation was conveyed to David Boucher by Neville Charles Masterman, who lived to the age of 106 years, a historian of note and the son of C.F.G. Masterman. Masterman, in collaboration with David Lloyd George, under whom Smuts served in England, is famous for introducing part one of the National Insurance Act into Britain in 1911, which dealt with healthcare.

A life-long champion of freedom, human rights and self-determination, it was evident in his attitudes and native policies in South Africa that, while he preached universal principles, the enjoyment of them was qualified (Boucher, 2009). His Rectoral address at St Andrews, for example, delivered at the end of his tenure in 1934, was entitled *Freedom*, in which he warned that the gains in individual rights, foundational for world order, such as personal freedom, independence of mind, and participation in government, which seemed essential to him for 'all true progress' (Smuts, 1934:26), were threatened by World War I and its aftermath. There had been a decay in individual responsibility, and participation in government detrimental to the advance of humankind. He was here echoing familiar themes warning of the rise of the masses, and the subjugation of the individual will to the collective. With reference to European civilisation, Smuts was a Liberal in the continental sense, by which we mean, not classical laissez-faire Liberalism, but the social Liberalism advocated by T.H. Green, J.A. Hobson, and L.T. Hobhouse (1919), the latter two with whom Smuts was on close terms. European Liberalism was particularly exemplified by Guido de Ruggiero's, *European Liberalism* (1927); Miguel de Unamuno's *The Tragic Sense of Life in Men and in Peoples* (1921); and José Ortego y Gasset's, *The Revolt of the Masses* (1996). Ortega y Gasset, for example, was representative of Smuts's faith in Liberalism, when in 1930 he argued that there was a greater vitality in Liberalism than anti-Liberalism, and it had proved itself victorious time and time again. There was no doubt that the rise of the masses constituted a danger, and without minimising the immensity of the task, Ortega y Gasset believed that Liberalism would triumph (1996:104, cf. 94-96). In relation to achieving the ideal of a permanent peace, for example, Smuts was equally as optimistic, contending that the 'stars will fight for it in their courses. The universal forces that make human history and control human destiny will help it forward year by year. . . . In the end all will be well' (Smuts, 1930a:20).

Smuts is often accused of being a hypocrite because of his championing of 'universal' European values, such as human rights, when denying those very same rights to black people and other races. Christof Heyns and Willem Gavett attempt to explain Smuts's apparent contradiction between human rights and segregation by suggesting that it meant for him basic needs, such as food security, safety, freedom of expression and freedom of conscience. They suggest that Smuts did not think that human rights were synonymous with political or racial equality (cited in Steyn, 2015:230; also see Gravett, 2022:349-355). Such an explanation is implausible given the context of Smuts's pronouncements.

As with most Liberals, he saw no contradiction between the right kind of Imperialism and European values. Even L.T. Hobhouse and J.A. Hobson, severe critics of Imperialism, and friends of Smuts, approved of white settler Imperialism, or 'sane Imperialism', motivated by the civilising mission. L.T. Hobhouse, for example, was critical only of a certain type of Imperialism, namely 'aggressive' or 'insane' Imperialism, but strongly approved of 'sane' Imperialism. Hobhouse maintained: 'If Imperialism means a high sense of the honour of the Empire and of its duties to subject races, then we cannot have too much Imperialism' (1899:215). He objected to the disingenuous espousal of such high ideals and conceded that the evidence suggests that it is the destiny of the 'dying nations' to be absorbed by the Great Powers. It was imperative, Hobhouse argued, 'that the absorption of a barbaric world should not corrupt civilization' (1899:219).

Hobson equated 'insane Imperialism' with the ruthless exploitation by white colonists of the 'lower races', who were treated, not as ends in themselves, but as tools to exploit for the benefit of the white people (Hobson, 1988:11, 55, 65, 200, 246). In Hobson's view it was the use of Imperialism by financial capitalists, not to extend 'Imperial control' but to manipulate Imperial powers and personnel for furthering and protecting their own business schemes (Hobson, 1900). Such an attitude, Hobson believed, incorporated 'race-lust', which embraced the doctrine of the right to 'British paramountcy'

(Hobson, 1900:16). L.T. Hobhouse concurred that the 'new Imperialism' was 'a hard assertion of racial supremacy and material force' (Hobhouse, 1973:45).

For de Ruggiero, as it was for all social Liberals, including Smuts, freedom was an achievement. The principles are gradually acquired through the self-conscious possession, or development, of personality by the exercise of discipline and the deliberate cultivation of progress in moral action. The Liberal state has to facilitate the individual's self-discipline to attain moral progress, and reject the opposite extremes of, for example, forcing individuals to adopt and conform to projects for which they are ill-prepared, or of leaving that person alone, 'depriving him of that aid to progress which a political system, wisely designed and wisely administered can give' (de Ruggiero, 1927:ix).

Smuts, however equivocal he may have been at times, fully bought into the idea of the civilising mission of Europe. In 1895, in a speech at Kimberley, defending the policies of Rhodes, Smuts unequivocally subscribed to the idea of the duty of the white races to civilise the black 'barbarians'. He contended, 'I for one consider the position of the white race in South Africa one of the gravest responsibility and difficulty. They must be the guardians of their own safety and development, and at the same time they are the trustees for the coloured races. . . . The great conservative policy of South Africa embraced by the Bond-Rhodes alliance has for its object the stimulation of those forces which make for progress and the granting of rights in proportion as duties are learned' (cited in Joseph, 1970:41-2). Smuts's belief in the civilising mission of European involvement in the African continent and other places in what is often referred to as the Global South is a curious one. During his first premiership, he believed that black people had to develop along their own lines. In pursuit of this goal, he implemented a policy of territorial and institutional segregation. At that time, he thought Cecil Rhodes's belief in the limited extension of political rights to non-white people who qualified, was mistaken.

In 1938, his general outlook was much the same. Placing responsibility on the native peoples for taking advantage of civilisation, as Kruger had done in his inauguration address of 1888 (cited by Schowalter, the German editor, Kruger, 1902:41, fn 1), Smuts told the graduating students at Fort Hare, amongst whom was G.A. Mbeki, the father of Thabo Mbeki, that 'Europeans have come here as bearers of the higher culture.... [a] missionary race' (Smuts, 1938:16). The salvation of native peoples, however, would ultimately be in their own hands. In 1939, Smuts again emphasised the superiority of European civilisation. Mandela, hearing Smuts speak at Fort Hare in 1939, described the experience as exhilarating. Mandela maintained that he 'cared more that [Smuts] had helped to found the League of Nations, promoting freedom around the world, than the fact that he had repressed freedom at home' (Mandela, 1994:46).

In echoing the view, often articulated since at least the conquest of the Americas, which described native peoples as child-like, Smuts invoked the assumptions of a worldview that justified withholding rights until indigenous peoples were mentally mature enough to exercise them responsibly. Smuts believed that black peoples were 'a child-like type with a happy go-lucky disposition, but with no incentive to improvement' (cited in Cameron, 1994:115). He accepted, to a large extent, the stadial view of civilisations which placed them on a scale of development from savagery to barbarism and civilisation. Progress takes time and follows a process 'from domination, to understanding, consent and cooperation' (Smuts, 1934).

He was not deluded, Smuts told the graduates at Fort Hare, 'that there would be great problems in the forward march from the semi-barbarism of the past to a cultured future' (Smuts, 1938:19). He may have been disingenuous in articulating this view. The debate over the 1936 Hertzog's Native Bills was fundamentally over the question of what to do with educated Africans. Jan Hofmeyr's view was that the franchise should be maintained for educated Africans in the Cape (and possibly be extended to other similarly educated

Africans in other provinces). Smuts chose to side with Hertzog in removing enfranchised Cape Africans from the common roll.

In all that Smuts wrote on 'native' problems there is an ambiguity between polygenesis, and monogenesis theories of human origins. Polygenesis posits different origins for different races and was subscribed to in the eighteenth century by such notable philosophers as Voltaire and Hume, but it was also evident in much of the nineteenth century anthropology. The main thrust of its doctrine is that inequalities between the races are congenital, and that education and culture could make very little difference. Monogenesis is the belief that all humans have descended from the same source, and is central to the Abrahamic religions of Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Smuts's 1895 speech at Kimberley, and his views during the mid-1920s, for example, appear to subscribe to polygenesis, the splitting and separate development of human evolution. It is fair to say, however, that Smuts's views on race evolved over time. While his 1895 speech was essentially a racist point of view in the sense of a belief in the congenital difference of races, essentially in sympathy with Kruger. You could say Smuts's 1929 Rhodes Memorial Lectures also subscribed to this view. (Smuts, 1930b). His perspective shifted over time and took a more cultural relativist tone.

Hence, differences in abilities and attainments amongst peoples, are explicable with reference to progression in relation to environment and culture. Education and a conducive social environment are contributory factors in the civilising process, and the higher civilisations have a duty to assist the lower in this process. The relationship between black and white was one of trusteeship, or guardian and ward, which Smuts believed Rhodes had promoted repeatedly (Kiernan, 1943:160).

In practice, Smuts was pragmatic, even disingenuous, preferring to defer the native problem, especially enfranchisement, for future governments. Education and healthcare, Smuts believed, were the key to assist native peoples in attaining the higher levels of their own civilisations,

parallel with, but separate from Europeans. He believed that South Africa had achieved more, for example, than any British protectorate, in advancing native education. Already, fair progress had been made, but he acknowledged that there was a great deal more to be done. Health, however, had been somewhat neglected because of the emphasis on education. Smuts contended that 'one of the heaviest tasks that lies immediately ahead of us as a civilised Government is to tackle this question of Native health and make much better provision for it' (Smuts, 1938:19). Given the audience he was addressing and how he resisted the more progressive views on race of his protégé, Jan Hofmeyr, and earlier of John X Merriman, we have to question the sincerity of Smuts's explanation.

Smuts was immensely practical, and even acquisitive in the amount of land he purchased as investments, while at the same time intensely cerebral. Internationally, his practical achievements are well attested, having served the interests of Great Britain and her Allies with distinction in both World Wars; keeping South Africa at the centre of discussions about the role of small nations within the Empire, and the three institutions he contributed so much to founding, the Commonwealth of Nations; the League of Nations; and the United Nations. As a soldier, he played his part in the Second Anglo Boer War, as well as in campaigns in East and West Africa during World War I. He played a significant role in British politics, appointed by David Lloyd George as the seventh member of the Imperial War Cabinet; establishing the Royal Air Force in Great Britain; acting as an arbiter of disputes around the country; as well as making a small contribution to the solution of the Irish problem in 1921, by exercising some influence on Eamonn De Valera, and Michael Collins. Smuts was not, however, satisfied with the outcome, which proved to be prescient of the on-going troubles.

Through his association with Professor Chaim Weizmann, a Russian Jew, who at Manchester University, developed a streamlined method for producing acetone, essential for the production of explosives, Smuts acted from a long-time empathy with the Jewish people, viewing South

Africa as a fellow-oppressed nation. On more mercenary grounds he believed there to be the pressing need to win over wealthy American Jews to the Allied cause, by showing a commitment to the creation of a homeland in Palestine. He was a member of the War Cabinet when David Lloyd George and Arthur Balfour, the Foreign Secretary, wrote a letter, known as the Balfour Declaration, on 2 November 1917 to Lionel Walter Rothschild, Baron Rothchild, in which Balfour ambiguously worded the British government's support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Smuts's influence on the creation of a mandate system at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, not only entrusted rule over South West Africa to South Africa, but conferred the temporary administration of Palestine, on Great Britain, to work in the interests of Jewish and Arab inhabitants. Many Arab Palestinians were incandescent with anger about the failure to grant them nationhood and self-government which they expected as a reward for their participation in the war against Turkey. Britain procrastinated over the future of Palestine because of the uneasy relationship between Jews and Arabs.

In the wake of World War II and the unimaginable suffering of the Holocaust, which generated considerable international support for Zionism and precipitated the UN partition of the Holy Land and the 14 May 1948 declaration of the nation of Israel, of which Smuts's friend Chaim Weizmann was its first president. Only ten days later, Smuts announced South Africa's recognition of the state of Israel (Steyn, 2015:157). Having been such a supporter of the establishment of the state of Israel, it is ironic that South Africa should invoke the 1948 Genocide Convention, to which both countries are signatories, to take Israel to the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court (ICC) over its actions in Gaza in November and December 2023. The ICC holds individuals responsible for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. The International Court of Justice arbitrates on disputes between nations (Corder, 2023).

Domestically, Smuts's commitment to conciliating the 'white races' in South Africa was unrelenting, but his close

relationship with Great Britain, and to a united South Africa within the Empire, was considerably distrusted by Afrikaners, such as his arch-rival Hertzog, because of Smuts's perceived betrayal of the Afrikaner nation. As a young man, he showed considerable promise in the Kruger administration. He admired Kruger, as a man and president (Lentin, 2010:10). Kruger, of course, had a biblical view of the Afrikaner nation, and likened the Great Trek from the Cape to the Israelites leaving Egypt for the Promised Land. For the Boers, the native question was both religious and political. Paul Kruger could without difficulty believe in the idea of the survival of the fittest, while attributing its moral efficacy to God. In his inaugural speech as State President of the South African Republic, 12 May 1898, Kruger deliberately evokes the analogy between Moses and the Children of Israel and the trek to freedom from the Cape:[2] 'For God has so clearly led us that the blindest heathen and the greatest unbeliever must acknowledge that it was God's hand that gave us our independence' (Kruger, 1902:339). The native peoples were to be tolerated only under sufferance. The Boers regarded men of colour as Canaanites, whom they, as the chosen people, could justifiably oppress in every way. Kruger's biographer at the time Smuts served in his administration related that there was little that could make him more angry than someone asserting that the black people were the spiritual equals of the white people. Kruger believed that they were not fully human (Holmes, 1900:64-5).

The Boers described the interior of South Africa as terra nullius, empty or waste land, by which they meant sparsely populated and under-cultivated. The editor of Paul Kruger's memoirs reminded the missionaries: 'South Africa has room for only one form of civilization, and that is the white man's civilization' (Kruger, 1902:41, fn 1). The Fundamental Law of the Transvaal Republic included a prohibition on admitting

2 This may be the source of Smuts's steadfast support for the Jewish cause. In fact, he gave a speech to the South African Jewish Federation in 1919, in which he made direct parallels between Jews and Afrikaners and between Palestine and the Karoo in South Africa

'equality of persons of colour with white inhabitants, neither in State nor Church' (cited in Holmes, 1900:74).

When the Second Anglo Boer War broke out, and Kruger withdrew from Pretoria, Smuts shouldered greater responsibility in the running of the Transvaal, until he became actively engaged in the fighting. A British Intelligence profile at the time characterised Smuts as strong and wiry, with a small beard, and ill-fitting false teeth. He was described as ruthless, disciplining his men with an iron hand (British Intelligence, 1901). This ruthlessness was a character trait that persisted, and he used the most brutal methods against those he thought acting unpatriotically, such as engaging in strikes or demonstrations, as for example, the General Strike of 1914, the Bulhoek massacre of 1921, and the Rand mines strike (Rand Rebellion) of 1922. In both strikes, he declared martial law. In 1914, he deployed the commandos under General de la Rey to subdue the strikers, and then illegally deported nine of the labour leaders to Britain, asking parliament to approve only after the event. In 1922, Smuts deployed government forces to suppress mostly white Afrikaners in their dispute with the SA Chamber of Mines. Hertzog described Prime Minister Smuts as having footsteps dripping with blood (Grimbeek, 2010:4).

Regarding his role in achieving a united South Africa in 1910, Smuts never tired of praising the Liberal Prime Minster of Britain, Henry Campbell-Bannerman, for being magnanimous in victory, something that did not endear Smuts to many Afrikaners, nor indeed did the involvement of South Africa in both World Wars at Smuts's behest. The British, he told American, Welsh and Scottish audiences, had been a ruthless and brutal Imperial force by which all of their nations had been oppressed. Britain, however, had become the model of conciliation, an exemplar that encouraged him in his conceptualisation of holism. The Empire had become compassionate and a champion of small nations, which were able to transcend narrow national boundaries and contribute to the common good of mankind (e.g. Smuts 1930a:6-7, and 1934:14).

Despite being so actively engaged in domestic and international politics, Smuts's powers of intellect are legendary. He did not confine himself to narrow specialisms, although he became an expert on grasses of the veld and was an enthusiastic botanist. He was well-read in modern science, and widely acknowledged as an authority so much so that he was elected President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1931, its centenary year. In addition, he read widely in African and European History; Law, for which he gained a double first at Cambridge; Poetry and Literature, on which he wrote a study of Walt Whitman (1973); and Philosophy. His major intellectual contribution to the life of the mind is his 1926 book *Holism and Evolution.* It is a work of synthesis, which may be said to constitute the connecting thread of principles which explain and define his view of the relation between theory and practice. He believed in a truly holistic and integrative approach to science and philosophy. A time would come, Smuts believed, when a true holistic and integrative approach to science would emerge. He thought that the compartmentalisation of science into separate disciplines inhibited rather than facilitated the development of our knowledge and understanding, and our capacity to comprehend and contribute resolutions to the world's most intractable problems.

Holism and Evolution is fundamentally a philosophical study which R.G. Collingwood, in his *The Present Need of a Philosophy* (1989:166-170), ranks along with R.N. Whitehead and Samuel Alexander as the best of its kind at a time of turbulence in Europe. They constituted a nascent 'philosophical movement in which epistemological discussions and old controversy between idealism and realism have fallen' (Collingwood, 1989:169). The initial inspiration for holism, however, came to Smuts while a student at Cambridge, fascinated by the idea of personality, which for him permeated and explained the great works of Goethe and Whitman. In studying their personalities, Smuts formulated the idea of holism (Smuts, 1926:x). The process of creating wholes out of disparate fragments was a tendency he found

in all things. For example, on returning from Cambridge, just before the Jameson Raid, Smuts witnessed 'huge waves of racial strife' (Smuts, 1942:148). After the Jameson Raid, years of political and social friction culminated in the Second Anglo Boer War, which, for Smuts, constituted a problem in holism. Smuts contended: 'We were left the fragments out of which we were to make a whole, and it was a problem of South African statesmen to follow up the ideal solution to our political problems' (Smuts, 1942:148; Joseph, 1970:125).

It is reasonable to assume that Smuts's voluminous collection of philosophy books provided much of the impetus for his own theory of holism. At Cambridge he was discouraged from reading philosophy, and not allowed to sit-in on lectures. He was therefore largely self-taught in philosophy (Lean, 1980:6, 27). In addition to Kant and Hegel, Smuts read extensively into pragmatism, a philosophy heavily influenced by philosophical idealism. He was also interested in Bergson's creative evolution, as well as the writings of J.A. Hobson (1909, 1988) and L.T. Hobhouse (1899, 1919, 1973). The greatest concentration of philosophical books he owned were written by the British idealists, not only T.H. Green, Edward Caird and Bernard Bosanquet, but also the lesser-known figures such as Henry Jones, H.H. Joachim, and David G. Ritchie, who wrote *Hegel and Darwin* (1893). The list of Smuts's books at his house is incomplete because some may have been taken by the children after his death, but there are books by important idealists, such as R.G. Collingwood and Michael Oakeshott, which are on his shelves, but not listed at all in the inventory held at the house and University of the Witwatersrand.

Smuts, like the philosophical idealists such as Hegel, begins with the assumption that experience constitutes a whole. Whereas the idealists begin with the idea of an undifferentiated whole, which requires an ontology to explain how this whole has become differentiated into all of the variety of experience we know, such as work, play, religion, civil society and so on, Smuts begins with atoms, inanimate objects, microbes, living organisms and consciousness as a series of wholes that combine to form more complex and sophisticated

wholes, including the universe as whole. The fundamental proposition is that these wholes are more than the sum of their parts, and that the particular is only meaningful because of its place in the greater whole. For Smuts, the process is at once natural and continuous. The source of its volition is energy, combining and creating novel and original material, both phenomenal and noumenal, giving rise, for example, to the higher spiritual forms such as music and philosophy. The processes are not always positive and guiding them to their ultimate goal requires intellectual vigilance, as for example in the creation of the League of Nations for a sustainable peace. Holism, Smuts believed, was an idea that assists us in comprehending the universe and life as systematic and purposeful. As intelligent components of it, human beings have a duty to contribute creatively to sustaining its achievements and promoting progress (Grimbeck & Savage, 2010:5).

For both Smuts and the idealists it is an evolutionary process, in which the progress from inanimate objects to organisms, nature and intellect, or spirit, is continuous, unlike, for example, T.H. Huxley (1989), and Alfred Russel Wallace (1889 and 1913), who posited a break between natural and ethical evolution. Principally, the idealists asserted the unity of life, and more importantly that man's mind must be continuous with animal perception, and that 'moral activity is continuous with non-moral impulse' (Sorley, 1904:34). The idealists call it the 'higher' evolution. While agreeing with naturalistic evolutionists that humanity is continuous with nature, the idealists contended that the lower must be explained and understood in terms of the higher. Seth, although dissenting from Hegel in many respects, agrees that: 'Nothing can be more certain than that all philosophical explanation must be explanation of the lower by the higher' (Seth, 1887:89). The Darwinian contention, Sorley succinctly summarised, is the belief that 'the higher forms are in all cases developments from simpler and lower forms' (Sorley, 1904:34). Smuts is, however, closer to Darwin than the

idealists in believing that the lower wholes on the scale of evolution explain the composition and existence of the higher.

It is a cliché to say that Jan Smuts is a neglected statesman, but it is true to say that his many international achievements were somewhat overshadowed and downplayed during the period South Africa was considered an international pariah (Garland, 2010). The fact that he had languished in relative obscurity, and that his career has only been excavated for study again by historians over the last couple of decades may account for the fact that statues and monuments to commemorate him largely escaped the wave of destruction that swept the memorials of prominent Imperialists and racists. For example, the statue commissioned by Winston Churchill to commemorate Smuts in Parliament Square, Westminster, unveiled in 1956, was not considered under threat after the toppling of Sir Edward Colston's statue in Bristol, England. Ironically, it was Winston Churchill's statute that was protected from perceived threats after it was defaced with graffiti denouncing him a racist. Even in Leicester there were calls to remove a statue of Gandhi, a long-time adversary of Smuts over discriminatory laws against Indians in South Africa, on the grounds that Gandhi too was a racist (BBC News, 2020). And in South Africa it is predominantly Cecil Rhodes, rather than Smuts, who has provoked the ire of anti-Imperialists. Nevertheless, the monuments of both Botha and Smuts have been defaced in Cape Town following the removal of Rhodes's statue in April 2015. In the same month, Louis Botha's statue was defaced in Parliament Square, Cape Town, and in June 2021, after the University of Cape Town agreed to rename the Smuts Hall student residence, members of the university's Economic Freedom Fighter's Student Council defaced the statue of Smuts that adorns it, placing plastic bags over his head, and demanding the removal of the statue. The legacy of apartheid and Imperialism continues to cast its dark shadow over Africa, and their architects are rightly reconsidered in the light of their consequences. This book is a contribution to that re-examination, offering, it is hoped, an

unvarnished and balanced assessment of the life and legacy of J.C. Smuts.

In this book the authors cover both familiar and unfamiliar themes. One of the principal themes running throughout the book addresses head-on the deficiency in the literature highlighted by Saul Dubow, namely, the question of racism and Smuts's reluctance to implement 'native' policies that may have averted future problems, rather than postpone them. We see throughout, a gap between the rhetoric and policy, and between policy and practice in its implementation. Amongst the familiar themes that are reappraised, are Smuts's successes and failures in policies and leadership, domestically and internationally, such as the role on the world stage (Hyslop); policy of trusteeship (Allsobrook & Boisen); as a strategist in World War I (Katz); style of premiership (Ndzendze); his reputation as a conciliator (Boucher, 2009); his native and social legislation before and during his second premiership (Dubow, Ngqulunga, Baines & Southall); and the philosophical basis and legacy of Holism (du Pisani & Sweet). Amongst the unfamiliar are Smuts's portrayal on film (Holt & Jansen van Vuuren); and his association with the atomic bomb (van Wyk).

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