



Series Foreword

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In the annals of history, certain figures emerge whose legacies continue to provoke thought, incite debate, and inspire reflection long after their time. Jan Christiaan Smuts is one such figure. His life and influence, a mix of paradoxes and achievements, weaves through the landscape of the 20th century, spanning continents and ideologies and intersecting with pivotal events and movements that have shaped the world as we know it.

The editors of the African Political Science and International Relations in Focus book series, published by UJ Press, are pleased to present *Reappraising the Life and Legacy of Jan C. Smuts*, a book that delves deeply into the complexities and contradictions of Jan Smuts's life, presenting a nuanced portrait through a collection of insightful contributions.

In the book's first chapter, Anna-Marie Jansen van Vuuren and Alexander Holt examine the portrayal of Smuts in contemporary media, challenging prevailing historical narratives and exploring the moral dilemmas faced during the South African Wars. Next, Jonathan Hyslop's 'Jan Smuts and the World Counter-Revolution 1917-1923' captures the global dimensions of Smuts's political career, detailing his efforts against revolutionary movements and his influence on international policy during a period of intense ideological conflict. David Boucher's 'The Making of a Myth: Smuts and the South Wales Miners' explores the intersection of Smuts's mythic status and labour politics, revealing how his image was crafted and contested in diverse contexts far from South Africa.

Bhaso Ndzendze's chapter, 'First Ministers: Jan Smuts and Cabinet Government in the Early Union of South Africa',



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investigates the administrative strategies employed by Smuts and Botha, shedding light on the dual roles they played in shaping the nascent Union of South Africa. In 'Discovering General Smuts through the lens of the First World War in Africa', David Katz provides a detailed account of Smuts's military leadership, particularly during the campaigns in East Africa, illustrating his strategic acumen and the complexities of colonial warfare.

Christopher Allsobrook and Camilla Boisen's 'Illusions of Sovereignty with Postcolonial Governmentality: Jan Smuts, Trusteeship, and the League of Nations' delves into Smuts's role in international diplomacy and his vision for global governance, particularly through the concept of trusteeship and its implications for postcolonial sovereignty. Following this, Saul Dubow explores the question, Was Smuts a racist? and in 'Smuts and the Politics of Segregation: The prosecution of pass laws under the United Party government, Gary Baines scrutinises Smuts's domestic policies, particularly his approach to racial segregation and its impact on urban South Africa during his tenure.

In Bongani Ngqulunga's 'Jan Smuts, Alfred Xuma, and the Struggle for Racial Equality in South Africa, 1939-1948', the tensions between Smuts and African National Congress leader, Alfred Xuma, are highlighted, providing a critical examination of Smuts's stance on racial equality and the dynamics of resistance. Roger Southall's 'Smuts: Afraid of Greatness' offers a psychological and political analysis of Smuts, questioning his motivations and the contradictions within his pursuit of greatness.

The philosophical underpinnings of Smuts's theory of holism are explored in William Sweet's contribution, which examines the implications of this concept for his political thought and broader intellectual legacy. Smuts's theory of holism provides a foundation for a political philosophy rooted in the idealist tradition.

In Kobus Du Pisani's chapter, 'Father of holism: The intellectual legacy of Jan Smuts', he further elaborates on

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Smuts's holistic philosophy, tracing its development and impact on various fields of study. This chapter delves into Smuts as an intellectual, considering that he did not obtain additional formal qualifications but continued to be a lifelong learner through his reading and engagement with scholars. He stayed informed about scientific developments and actively engaged in the academic discussions of his era.

Jo-Ansie van Wyk's chapter on 'Jan Smuts and the Atomic Bomb' provides a fascinating glimpse into an understudied area: Smuts's involvement in global scientific and military developments, particularly his position on nuclear weapons in the post-World War II era. The chapter highlights Smuts's involvement at the beginning of the atomic age, his contributions to the advancement of nuclear science in South Africa, and his publicly stated stance on nuclear non-proliferation.

Reappraising the Life and Legacy of Jan C. Smuts explores both well-known and lesser-known themes on Smuts the man, politician and diplomat, offering a comprehensive and critical examination of Jan Smuts, revealing the intricate interplay between his local and global impact, his military and political strategies, and his philosophical and ethical beliefs. Through a spirit of reflection and inquiry, this volume invites readers to reconsider the grand narratives surrounding Smuts, encouraging a deeper understanding of his complex legacy and its enduring relevance in contemporary discourse, and helping us to better understand one of the most compelling figures of the 20th century.